

Siting Futurity

The “Feel Good” Tactical Radicalism
of Contemporary Culture
in and around Vienna

Susan Ingram



SITING FUTURITY

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Fig. 1. Hieronymus Bosch, *Ship of Fools* (1490–1500)

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Preface

This project was decisively shaped by the experience of thinking about the distance between Vienna and the York University Senate Chamber in Toronto. Austrian Airlines used to run a wonderful direct flight between the two cities, and the proximity of York to Toronto's Lester B. Pearson Airport meant that it was a relatively comfortable overnight experience after an early afternoon class. That distance was much further for the undergraduate students who, during the longest strike in Anglo-Canadian academic history — the 2018 CUPE 3903 strike, spent over two months in York's Senate Chamber in support of the precarious teaching force that delivers at least half of their classes.¹ For many at York, Vienna exists rather nebulously and for the most part only discursively, in so far as they encounter it in class or on a screen. My attempt here is to elucidate and build on the connections I see between these two spaces, which are two of the most profoundly charged and potentially progressive po-

¹ The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) is Canada's largest union and represents nearly three-quarters of a million workers in such crucial areas as education, health care, social services, and transportation. CUPE 3903 represents nearly three thousand precarious education workers: teaching, graduate, and research assistants as well as contract faculty. That it is the largest union at York is indicative of the high percentage of teaching done by non-tenure-track faculty.

litical spaces I have encountered, spaces which provide answers to the urgent issues of unthinking sovereignty and practicing collectivity in the face of increasingly ingrained neoliberal intransigence.²

The 2018 CUPE strike was a marked departure from previous York strikes in the Employer's intransigence and usurping of the power of Senate, the body where academic governance is mandated to happen by the York Act. Senate Executive mandated that the university remain open during the strike, a decision that created all manner of havoc and that was condemned in a series of hortative motions on the part of many of the university's academic units. The blatant insistence on running a "business-as-usual" regime, which involved an authoritarian takeover of the purportedly "public" news spaces of university representation, such as York's campus newsletter, the Y-File, and the screens located all over campus, had created an atmosphere in which undergraduate students had felt it necessary to take some kind of action to voice their protest. After a shockingly violent Senate meeting in March 2018, when a student senator was brutally barred from entering the Chamber by private security hired by the administration, a group of students decided not to leave until a list of demands had been met. They established an impressive social media presence and quickly shifted from calling themselves an "occupation" to a "reclamation" as those among them with affiliations with First Nations felt uncomfortable siding with occupiers, while reclaiming land in the aftermath of the Standing Rock protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline resonated more with them.

On August 9, 2018, the day after CUPE 3903 formally dropped their unfair labor practice suit against York and less than three weeks after the union had been ordered back to work by the newly elected conservative government of Doug Ford, five union members (all PhD students) and three undergraduate members of RECLAIM YorkU, all of whom had been highly vis-

2 Matt Hern offers a good summary of these issues in Chapter 4, "The Kindness of Neighbors" of *What a City Is For* (Hern 2016).

ible during the strike on social media, were singled out by the university and charged with complaints regarding the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The students responded by establishing a Twitter handle (@8Defend), a FaceBook presence, and a website, “Defend Student Activists at York U!,” where statements of support, a petition, a “GoFundMe” campaign, and information about events could be accessed. The five PhD union members were then confronted with a lengthy, punitive tribunal process controlled at every level by the administration, something they took the university to court over. On June 18, 2019, the Ontario Supreme Court ruled in favor of the students and quashed the sanctions that the tribunal had tried to impose on them, finding that York did not have jurisdiction to use the student code to discipline student-employees for actions related to their employment and that their rights to procedural fairness and natural justice had been violated in the process of the tribunal.

The three goals for this project come from the experience of the 2018 CUPE strike and its aftermath. My first goal is to provide “a guide for navigating the distrust and loneliness of capitalism” (@antalalakam, Aug 21, 2018). One of the Reclamationists underscored the need for such a thing in a tweet during the traumatizing remediation period that followed the end of the strike as the Employer implemented punitive policies to make the lives of the first- and second-year CUPE graduate students, who had held out against them, as difficult and uncertain as possible. Given Boltanski and Chiapello’s assessment over a decade ago of “virtual stagnation when it comes to establishing mechanisms capable of controlling the new forms of capitalism and reducing their devastating effects” (2007, xvi), and the perceived need for what Émile Durkheim called “collective effervescence,” that is, “the energy that people share when they’re bound together by a common focus, especially if it includes some challenge” (Mann 2018), it seems more important than ever for academic work to function as this kind of guide.

My second goal comes from my work in Urban Studies and is a response to Matt Hern’s important question in *What a City*

Is For: Remaking the Politics of Displacement. Hern asks “how to establish solidarity across difference when our shared histories are so dominated by violent violations of trust?” (Hern 2016, 98–99), and his answer, which motivates his methodology of talking to as many people involved in the area he is working on as possible, is “to find ways to enact trustworthiness repeatedly and deliberately and consistently” (ibid., 99). As I share Hern’s love of the idea of thinking and acting “a material commonality” and “radically abandon[ing] the ‘law of scarcity’” (ibid., 99), I too went looking for “some inspirations, some new ideas in action, where imagination meets struggle” (ibid., 100). Unlike Hern, whose focus on new ideas leads him to ways to rethink “the city as postsovereign space” and “urban land beyond property” (ibid., 233), Vienna sprang to my mind as an apposite lens with which to focus on imaginative struggle in the context of urbanism.

This leads to my third goal: “to identify problems and topics that clearly communicate why the humanities matter in contemporary society” (Apter 2013, 5). I take this challenge from Emily Apter’s *Against World Literature*, a text I was looking forward to teaching in a seminar on Comparative and World Literature when the 2018 strike intervened. As an Anglophone comparatist at a Canadian university that only allowed a graduate diploma of Comparative Literature to be established when it was bundled together with a graduate diploma of World Literature, I am sympathetic to Emily Apter’s arguments against the increasing monolingual hegemony of World Literature, especially as David Damrosch and Martin Pichler have been institutionalizing it at Harvard with the formation of an annual world literature summer institute, on the one hand, and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), on the other. This liberal retrenchment serves to fix “literature” in its eighteenth-century meaning of imaginative fiction by excluding the theoretical notions of *écriture* and textuality that have been hallmarks of Comparative Literature since that discipline helped to usher French theory into the North American academy in the 1970s. This retrenchment is part of the larger, dual backlash we are currently experiencing against

not only the humanities in general on the part of a threatened, Anglophonic, STEM-oriented society desperate for employment but also against “postmodern” theoretical orientations on the part of those in the humanities that seek protection against cutbacks by retrenching into an elitist, now neocolonial insistence on the type of education the humanities has traditionally provided for the formation of an educated citizenry dominated by primarily cis white males, for whom Jordan Peterson has become a patron saint. It would likely surprise both branches of this onslaught against “theory” that Vienna, of all places, would have something to offer in support of the type of scholarship that the Sokal hoaxes were intended to throw into disrepute.³

I consider it important to write about Vienna and its surroundings for a number of reasons, which I discuss in the introduction. Other places no doubt have similar histories that lend themselves to a similar kind of locational analysis.⁴ The fact that I am as unfamiliar with them as many of the Toronto-based faculty and students I encounter are with Vienna points to the need for this study. Here I take my cues from two studies I greatly admire. Just as Boltanski and Chiapello defend the “limited scope of [their] analyses, restricted to France” (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, xxi) as “a manageable level” that prevents globalization from being presented “as the ‘inevitable’ outcome of ‘forces’ external to human agency” (ibid.), so too is my limited scope

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- 3 The first Sokal hoax was perpetrated by Alan Sokal, a physics professor at NYU, who in 1996 submitted an article to *Social Text* entitled “Transgressing the Boundaries: Towards a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity,” which he had written as a parody of what he considered to be the style of postmodern cultural studies to see whether it would be published (Sokal 1996). In 2017, a group of academics concerned with eroding criteria for academic publications conducted a similar experiment, submitting bogus articles with non-existent authors to journals in cultural, queer, gender, fat and sexuality studies, some of which were accepted for publication, and in one case even awarded. The scandal became known as “Sokal Squared.”
- 4 Vancouver and Hong Kong are two such places that, because of the vagaries of my rather peripatetic experience, I know lend themselves to such analysis. There are no doubt others.

intended to support my study's goals. I also share Claire Bishop's not unrelated skepticism about the "the world is my oyster' approach, in which authors attempt to gain an omniscient overview of practice globally" (Bishop qtd. in Eschenburg 2014, 177). Moreover, just as Boltanski and Chiapello hoped "that future work, with a similar methodological approach, will make it possible to enrich a fine-grained vision of the way in which, under the impact of local variables, new constraints have been established that local economic and political actors can, in all good faith, have a sense of being subjected to from without, as if they were forces that it was difficult — even impossible — for them to oppose" (Boltanski and Chiapello 2007, xxi–xxii), it is my ardent hope to initiate a discussion that demonstrates the importance of humanities-based academic work for the sustenance of equitable societies worth fleeing to and that helps to make available further material for countering the political forces gaining momentum that are bent on turning those societies into exclusive, hierarchized places of masters and servants.

Special Thanks

It is very important to me that this book is appearing with punctum books, an independent, open-access publisher that prides itself on operating in the same radical spirit as the material I deal with here, and I am very grateful to Vincent and his team for the great expertise and care with which they made this volume a reality. Because its point is to offer an updating of what is known about Vienna in English on the basis of little known, and often hard to access, material, the original German has always been included together with an accompanying translation, which unless otherwise indicated, is mine. Most of the chapters are based on material presented at conferences that was later expanded on for publication. My heartfelt thanks also goes to all the organizers that made these sessions and projects possible. Without the important feedback I received during these processes, my work would not have taken on whatever nuance it has. How this core material has been refocused and developed

to draw attention to how it illustrates my argument here about locationality is acknowledged in each chapter.

Finally, as in all my work I am profoundly grateful to the Reisenleitners, through whose eyes and hearts I have had the immense privilege of seeing and experiencing Vienna over the past two decades. I dedicate this book to them and especially to Hardy, who sadly is no longer among us to see it in print, but whose warm, unconditionally supportive presence and keenly historical aesthetic sensibility remain in his subtle photography just as they do in the fond memories of many I am proud to know.

Introduction

“When the present has given up on the future, we must listen for the relics of the future in the unactivated potentials of the past.”

— Fisher (2013, 53)

“The best gift of all enlightenments is reasonable doubt. The best guarantee of all worldliness is attention to space and time.”

— Spivak (2010, 35)

Space over time. Foucault made it sound so simple when, in the “Des espaces autres” [“Of Other Spaces”] lecture he gave in March 1967 to a group of architects, he diagnosed the shift from the mid-nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century as moving from a temporal focus on history to the epoch of space.¹ Understanding and theorizing the implications of this shift have proven a vexed affair, and just as geographers such as Nigel Thrift have long bemoaned that the discipline “neglected the time horizon of its own concepts” (Thrift qtd. in Sharma 2014, 10), so too has the slow but accelerating cancellation of the future weighed

¹ My thanks to Tyler Ball for reminding me of the relevance of the lecture’s context.

heavily on cultural theorists.² Not only does space continue to be “the valorized site of political life” (Sharma 2014, 10), but in our age of extraction, it has morphed into what Saskia Sassen has termed “extreme territories” (Torino 2017). What now dominates our political imaginary is, as Bruno Latour makes a point of in his recent work on climate change, regressive territorial language: an “attachment to the soil” [“attachement au sol”] based on a refusal to recognize common ground or share the planet’s limited and increasingly harmed and drained resources (Delbourgo 2018). This attachment, as Delbourgo perceptively notes, tends to be characterized “by a yearning to retreat from ‘the global’ to ‘the local,’ and to define ourselves as defending our soil from external enemies who will not only land but also somehow destroy us.”³

As the readings in this book make clear, flights toward the local need not involve retreat, nor need they be based on a regressive “attachment to the soil.” On the contrary, even among the Europeans so rightly provincialized in postcolonial discourse, there are territorial languages of location worth recuperating because they reflect progressive, indeed often radical ways of engaging with the local, ways based on principles that focus on the amelioration of social inequality by fundamentally altering value systems so as to discourage capital reproducing by exploitative, competitive, and hierarchical means. The question is how to go about locating and analyzing these local languages. The

2 Mark Fisher’s work and fate are emblematic and deserving of further attention (Fisher 2014).

3 Delbourgo further notes that “Ironically, such nativism — truth to soil, if you like — is driven by escapist flight: flight from the reality of anthropogenic climate change, and flight from empirical evidence to ‘alternative facts.’ Trumpism is the ultimate mental staycation: there is only here, and there is nothing outside of here to care about. Let’s lock ourselves in. In other words, the political world now under construction is one of paradoxical *flight toward the local, rather than away from it*; we don’t share the same planet, and so there’s no common ground. If any grassroots connected all of us once upon a time, those roots seem to have been pulled up like so many inconvenient weeds in the name of protection from our enemies” (Delbourgo 2018).

answer I pursue here focuses on local cultural production that is both historically and politically aware.

The role of artists vis-à-vis radical politics is, as J. Keri Cronin and Kirsty Robertson discovered in editing *Imagining Resistance: Visual Culture and Activism in Canada*, “fraught” and “cut across with complexities, disagreements, and debates” (Cronin and Robertson 2011, 1), and not only in Canada. Because radical cultural practitioners of all kinds find themselves “without a relation to an existing political project (only to a loosely defined anti-capitalism)” (Bishop 2012, 284), as Claire Bishop, Irene Grüter, and others have persuasively argued, they keep “being assigned a political task that society has failed to accomplish” (Grüter 2007) and so internalize “a huge amount of pressure to bear the burden of devising new models of social and political organisation,” something they “are not always best equipped to undertake” (Bishop 2012, 284).⁴ Director Ivo van Hove identifies a “crucial dividing line” between politics and art, with politics concerning itself with order and art with chaos; however that line, like so many in postmodernity, is blurring as politics becomes increasingly chaotic and art all the more orderly in comparison. If van Hove can nevertheless still claim that “in a society in which many question whether living together peacefully is still a viable option, the theatre and other forms of art can play a crucial role” (van Hove 2018, xxii), it is because he recognizes that the task of the work of art, to echo Gilles Deleuze echoing Walter Benjamin’s understanding of translation, is not to communicate but to resist: “A work of art has nothing to do with

4 To give but one example of this kind of pressure, W.J.T. Mitchell has written that “[f]rom the earliest moments of my aesthetic research I had been convinced by William Blake’s claim that the function of art is to ‘cleanse the doors of perception’ and to overturn the hierarchies of sensibility, as well as of wealth and power, that separate people into classes” (Mitchell 2009, 134). I agree with Bishop’s assessment that the solution is not to collapse art and ethics but rather to “produce a viable international alignment of leftist political movements and [...] support the progressive transformation of existing institutions through the transversal encroachment of ideas whose boldness is related to (and at times greater than) that of artistic imagination” (Bishop 2012, 284).

communication. [...] In contrast, there is a fundamental affinity between a work of art and an act of resistance. [...] Counter-information only becomes really effective when it becomes an act of resistance” (Deleuze cited in Didi-Huberman 2018; ellipses in original). Art, in this understanding, is necessarily resistant. It does not reaffirm what we already know but rather “creates a rupture, forcing us to see and think things differently” (hoogland 2014, 13).⁵ To be considered worthy of the name, art “should seek to attribute blame, to dig deep, to publicly pinpoint this wound of history. To behave, to put it frankly, in a *critical form*” (Didi-Huberman 2018; italics in original). By this standard, Ai Weiwei’s refugee documentary *Human Flow* (2017) should be understood as a work of philanthropy and a celebration of an artist but not as art, as it approaches the topic from on high, deigning to look down on and mingle with subjects understood as unfortunates, and in the process humiliating them in ways Hannah Arendt warned against (Didi-Huberman 2018).

While its global reputation has come to be primarily based on what Didi-Huberman would consider decoration and not art, Vienna also has a tradition of critical, resistant art because it is a place that history has taught to appreciate what Gayatri Spivak has called “the invaluable clue” left to us by Raymond Williams. Although he “certainly could not imagine a globalized world, nor did he take note of gender,” Williams nevertheless recognized that, in capitalism, “the dominant ceaselessly appropriates the emergent and rewards it as part of the thwarting of its oppositional energy, channeled into a mere alternative” (Spivak 2010, 41). What I am interested in is how strands of emergent Viennese culture somehow manage to maintain their oppositional energy and resist the lure of the dominant. An important precursor to this study, Allyson Fiddler’s *The Art of Resist-*

5 Art is intended here broadly to encompass the strong tradition of interest in the intersecting relationship between political struggle and aesthetic innovation that stretches well beyond art history. For a recent example, see the international conference on Transnational Radical Film Cultures at <https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/conference/fac-arts/clas/transnational-radical-film-cultures/index.aspx>.

ance: Cultural Protest against the Austrian Far Right in the Early Twenty-First Century situates the “seismic wave of artistic and everyday protest” that Vienna experienced at the turn of the millennium (Fiddler 2018, 1) in terms of how it was “predicated on political history” (ibid., 3). She establishes that what gives the wide range of works she discusses

their *raison d'être* and their artistic power is indeed their status as *art* that promotes or bears the traces of reaction and resistance to the politics of the FPÖ [Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs] or to the political direction presented by the combined forces of the conservative right and the populist far right. (ibid., 2; italics added)

Whereas Fiddler is guided in her research by the question of identifying the causes of protest against the government (ibid., 3), and she does an admirable job in outlining how objectionable the 2000–2006 coalition government’s strategies and policies were, it is a particular tactic on the part of some politically astute, contemporary cultural practitioners that I am interested in here and how it has emerged from, and is part and parcel of, the city’s history of spatial politics.⁶

A crucial chapter in this history is that of Red Vienna. Not merely “one of the most extensive and significant large-scale urban interventions in interwar Europe,” it was also, as Eve Blau has done important work on, “one of the most important examples of the political deployment of architecture in the 1920s and 1930s, and of the instrumentality of architecture itself as an agent of spatial transformation” (Blau 2014, 179–80). In the aftermath of the war that brought an end to Vienna’s status as imperial capital, the Social Democrats adopted “a comprehensive urban project that set itself the task of making Vienna a more equitable environment for modern urban living” (Blau 2016). They reshaped the city with “a broad set of social, cultural and

⁶ The “some” in this sentence is intended to echo the title of Victor Burgin’s *Some Cities*, while “tactic” is from the vocabulary of Michel de Certeau.

pedagogical institutions” (Blau 2014, 182) as well as “the construction of 400 buildings known as *Gemeindebauten*, in which housing, social services and cultural institutions were distributed throughout the city” (Blau 2016). Of all of the benefits the *Gemeindebauten* provided, Blau underscores that, in addition to extremely necessary affordable housing, they also “conferred new political, social, and economic status on Vienna’s working class” (ibid., 183) through “the new organization of dwelling space” (ibid., 189) “inserted into the existing urban fabric of Vienna itself” (ibid., 191) in such a way that “actually transformed the underlying organization of the city” (ibid., 197) according to social democratic principles, principles that continue to inform those who live in and around these massive structures. It is not an accident that contemporary gentrification is being driven by renovation of tenement and bourgeois “Altbau” apartment buildings and not the socialist *Gemeindebauten*, which decidedly do not lend themselves to *Dachausbauten* (rooftop additions) (cf. Zoidl 2019a).

The strand of Vienna’s politicized culture that I call “feel good” is at least as worthy of attention as the much better known New Austrian “feel bad” cinema (von Dassanowsky and Speck 2011), such as Barbara Albert’s *Nordrand* [*Northern Skirts*] (1999), Stefan Ruzowitzky’s Academy Award-winning *Die Fälscher* [*The Counterfeiters*] (2007), the Austrian part of Michael Haneke’s oeuvre, or anything by Ulrich Seidl. That Austro-pessimism is not limited to cinema but rather cuts across other media can be seen in the title of Fiddler’s chapter on Robert Menasse’s *Das Paradies der Ungeliebten* (2006) [*The Paradise of the Unloved*]: “Menasse: Something is Rotten in the State of Austria” (Fiddler 2018, 166). What both “feel good” and “feel bad” modes have in common is a recognition of affect and its blockages. Since Fredric Jameson diagnosed “the waning of affect” as an integral part of the postmodern condition in 1984, we have been aware that changes in the form of capitalism have resulted in “a whole new type of emotional ground tone” and “a virtual deconstruction of the very aesthetic of expression itself” (Jameson 1991, 10, 6, 11). The latter phrase is particularly evocative as it points

to the way that new technologies have contributed to a loss in communicative ability. renée hoogland cogently explains how this necessitates post-poststructuralist theorizations involving affect: “[a]ctualized in the expressive event, affect or intensity is that which remains outside and eludes theories of signification that ‘are still wedded to structure even across irreconcilable differences’” (hoogland 2014, 10). What I find valuable about such theorizing are the spatial implications of its focus, that “[a]ffect is thus not the description of a concept, but rather a term that attempts to think, in Braidotti’s terms, ‘through flows and interconnections,’ to expand a theoretical reason that is ‘concept-bound and fastened upon essential notions,’ in favor of representations for ‘processes, fluid in-between flows of data, experience and information’” (ibid., 10–11), which helps me locate where, and why, my focus diverges from the scholarship on “feel bad” cinema. While this cinema does contribute to important consciousness-raising about society’s ills, one of the characteristics of “feel bad” films is, as Robert von Dassanowsky and Oliver C. Speck have shown, that they tend to take place in “non-places”: “[t]he people we see drifting through Austria in these films could also be travelling through any other landscape” (Dassanowsky and Speck 2011, 3). Moreover, “no relations, historic roots or regional identities can help the protagonists position themselves” because they find themselves at the mercy of a temporarily created “zone of exception,” à la Agamben (ibid., 4). The cultural practitioners I am interested in do precisely the opposite. They activate site-specific histories in their work to create theater performances, films, and photography projects that don’t demoralize audiences by presenting them with brutality but rather in depicting forms of agency in places with deep historical traditions, re-enliven activist traditions.

However, not all “feel good” modes work in the same way. The mode I detail here is emphatically not that of melodrama, specifically the “left melodrama” common in American popular culture. As Joe Tompkins nicely details in his reading of *The Hunger Games* franchise, melodrama works to contain activism

because the “facile nature” of the conclusions and solutions it offers “fails to smooth over the contradictions manifested in the happy ending” of boring domestic bliss (2018, 79). Viewers, who are not dupes, are aware of the contradictions, and that knowledge helps the blockbusters to function ideologically to maintain “business as usual — by encouraging our cynical distance from those underlying fantasies” (ibid., 89). While the cultural phenomena I deal with here similarly make us conscious of “the fundamental antagonisms that structure our society,” they do not encourage us to “live out the dream of revolution as mere entertainment” (ibid., 90). On the contrary. In offering us the opportunity to engage the histories of their environments, these enjoyable productions confront audiences with histories of action and invite them to participate and to make possible futures worth inhabiting.⁷ How and why histories of place mattering can have a political impact is what I am working to establish here.

It may be something of a truism, but it is nonetheless worth pointing out in this context that it is the ruling powers in cities that determine the look a city takes on during their regime. Just as we are now experiencing the hegemony of the globalizing form of financial capital that came to power over the course of the last third of the twentieth century (cf. Boltanski and Chiapello 2007) and is resulting in the construction of cities of glass à la Vancouver (Coupland 2009), historical circumstances led to Vienna’s primary look being Baroque with a historicist core. As is detailed in *Wiener Chic*, Vienna, like Rome, Paris, London, Moscow, and Brussels, was an imperial city during the periods of its main growth prior to contemporary gentrification. To speak in its local language, it was a *Residenzstadt*, the permanent

7 It should be clear that the theoretical underpinnings of this study offer an implicit critique of Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s very outmoded critique of the “culture industry,” in which they, as my colleague Dan Adler so concisely phrases it, “equated fun with notions of false consciousness and political idiocy” (Adler 2018, 6). The works in this study are clear proof that art need not be “dissonant” in its refusal of the immediacy or presentness of pleasure” to nonetheless be politically savvy (Adler 2018, 7).

residence of the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperors beginning with Ferdinand II (1578–1637), and its central thoroughfare, the Ringstrasse, was established with the growth of the bourgeoisie in the second half of the nineteenth century. The centralized vision of Vienna that resulted was challenged in the aftermath of World War I and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire with the growth of a socialized housing culture in the outer districts on the part of what has come to be called Red Vienna and then by waves of immigrant guest workers and refugees in the aftermath of the destruction of World War II and the *Wiederaufbau*, or reconstruction, that followed. These counterhegemonic groups have become associated with sites in the city that have taken on the connotations of these associations and become available for cultural practitioners to tap into. These sites, however, remain as counterhegemonic as the groups associated with them.

The Vienna one often encounters is of a piece with the enchanted, neo-baroque playground the city appears as in *Before Sunrise* (1995, Richard Linklater), (cf. Ingram and Reisenleitner 2013, 43). In Film Spektakel's almost three-minute infomercial for the city, for example, the second in their "A Taste of ..." time-lapse series after New York, the city appears in all its touristy splendour, diverting from Linklater's vision only at 01:13 with a shot of the D.C. Tower 1 in Donau City, which at its opening in 2014 was the tallest skyscraper in Vienna. The interjection of its towering, criss-crossed facade into the usual tourist sites seems intended, as are shots of the Donauinselfest⁸ and the neon lines of traffic that also appear occasionally, to provide assurance that Vienna has more to offer lifestyle-seekers than musealized European cities like Florence and Venice. It is also a hulking re-

8 This outdoor music festival takes place on an island in the Danube at the end of June and, thanks to Austria's Social-Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, SPÖ), is free to attend. Attracting some three-million visitors over three days, it claims to be the largest free music festival in the world.

minder of the incursions global capital has been able to make into Vienna's politically protected cityscape.⁹

My project thus nuances Saskia Sassen's concept of tactical urbanism into a kind of tactical culturalism. If "[t]actical urbanism can find diverse spaces in such cities, spaces that might have been previously submerged, invisible, or without voice" (Sassen 2018), tactical culturalism describes diverse cultural projects that enliven the histories of urban places and make space for the voices of radical pasts that are, for the most part, ignored or dismissed by scholars and other cultural practitioners interested in more elite forms of culture and therefore for the most part unknown both outside of Vienna and in Austrian and German Studies. Which brings us to the challenges of working on Vienna and its environs, especially for someone who does not self-identify as an Austrian or even as a German Studies scholar. Rather, my academic background is in Comparative Literature and my post-national focus here is on not Austria but Vienna. While the Humanities program I am in is, at the time of writing, in the process of being "rethought" in response to much the same kind of woes facing national language, literature, and culture programs,¹⁰ its wide-ranging approaches distance themselves from the "regressive territorial language" and "attachment to the soil" that Latour identifies as a key aspect of the anti-climate change discourse and that remain a key orientation

9 How much longer this remains true is admittedly a question. Vienna's status as a UNESCO world heritage site is once again imperiled, this time by a development at the Heumarkt in the inner city that threatens to include high rises that would mar the city's postcard-perfect profile. Previous threats of tall constructions have been defeated, such as the book tower that was proposed for the Museumsquartier, or limited to the city's periphery, such as UNO City on the Danube, the Hundertwasser smokestack at the Economic University (WU), and the new development in the twenty-second district. All are far enough away from the center that UNESCO does not feel they blemish the city's historical core.

10 For a reasonably up-to-date discussion of these issues by prominent scholars in the United States, United Kingdom, and Austria, see the special section entitled "Forum: Austrian Studies" in *The German Quarterly* 89, no. 2 (Spring 2016): 221–39.

point for Germanists. In the wake of the thoroughgoing *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [coming to terms with the past] that German society underwent in the final decades of the twentieth century, making reunification not just a possibility but a reality, Germans, and by extension Germanists, became sensitized to the fascist language of *Blut und Boden* [blood and soil] and the necessity of promoting anti-fascist practices so that they would never again [*nie wieder*] happen. The rise of Jörg Haider's far-right Freedom Party (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, FPÖ) in the 1990s was in some ways a backlash against the success of the German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* of the 1980s, but also, more locally, against the debates over Kurt Waldheim's election as President in 1986, which Katya Krylova notes "changed Austria from the ground up" (2017, 3). Krylova is building on Dagmar Lorenz's assertion that "the political activism instigated by the Waldheim Affair was the first step towards an Austrian civil society" (Lorenz qtd. in Krylova 2017, 6), something well documented in Andrea Reiter's study, *Contemporary Jewish Writing: Austria after Waldheim* (2013). The self-characterization of Austrian Studies in the us as "populated by people who don't quite fit into their institutional homes, who constantly seek to make a place for themselves and their scholarly interest and who often have a bit of a revolutionary edge" (Herzog and Herzog 2016, 238) is in no small part due to the ongoing resurgences of dark forces in Austria's political landscape that is the stuff of Fiddler's study.¹¹

A related challenge that anglophone, academic study of Vienna brings with it is the kind of black-hole effect Vienna and Austria seem to generate. While they continue to understand themselves as central in terms of Europe and the tradition of

¹¹ The election in October 2017 of Sebastian Kurz's conservative Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP) and their decision to form a coalition government with the FPÖ is a more recent, and indeed more troubling, episode. The EU's lack of condemnation of this coalition, in contrast to the action they took in 2000 against Haider, is cause for concern on a number of fronts that Fiddler enumerates in her conclusion (Fiddler 2018, 190).

learning and culture that emerged from Europe at the onset of modernity, Austria and the Viennese have for all intents and purposes dropped off the Anglo-American map except insofar as they are associated with bundles of clichés around the triumvirate of fin de siècle, city of music, and fascism. The international press's fascination with outbursts of right-wing populism frustrates many progressive Austrians (Rauscher 2018), something I can relate to as a Canadian whose country also tends to end up in international headlines when something scandal-worthy happens. As a scholar of Comparative Literature, one of the most paradigmatically interdisciplinary of disciplines whose practitioners are often viewed as dilettantes by those who specialize in a narrow discipline, such as a national literature, I can also relate to the frustration of Austrian Studies specialists such as Katherine Arens, who has complained vociferously about, and devoted an admirable career to overcoming, the “scholarly imperialism” among American Germanists as far as Austria is concerned.¹² One manifestation she gives as an example is the failure of her attempt to change the name of their division in the MLA to “germanophone literatures and cultures.” It remains “German literatures and cultures” so that “Robert Burns gets to be from Scotland, not the U.K., but Kafka and Hofmannsthal still remain ‘German’ in MLA programs” (Arens 2016, 223).¹³

12 That the academic barriers to studying and researching topics on Vienna and Austria in German Studies are as “ongoing and real” (Arens 2016, 223) as the very limited nature of the anglophone press coverage of these places can be seen in recent, most welcome German Studies’ interest in topics related to social justice in the form of the *Envisioning Social Justice in Contemporary German Culture* volume, edited by Jill E. Twark and Axel Hildebrandt. However, despite the fact that the editors refer to “the German-speaking authors, filmmakers, artists and musicians discussed in this volume” (Twark and Hildebrandt 2015, 3), their declared aim is to explore how these works “promote an understanding of how *Germany* as a European country is currently wrestling with its socioeconomic, political and cultural issues” (ibid., 5; italics added). No Austrian cultural workers are discussed, and there are a mere half-dozen references to “Austria” and “Austrian” in the volume.

13 I consider myself most fortunate in being able to have made a career in North American academia without ever having officially attended or

These are all names, I should add, with which the majority of my students, the majority of whom come from non-European backgrounds and have enjoyed a postcolonially oriented multicultural education in Toronto, are unfamiliar.¹⁴

Like Vegas, then, most of what happens in Vienna, not to mention Austria and Austrian Studies, tends to stay there and to take on a heightened local significance out of proportion with external ramifications. These are thus concentric rather than eccentric places, to evoke Lotman's terminology. Whereas an eccentric city "is situated 'at the edge' of the cultural space: on the seashore, at the mouth of the river" and "is interpreted either as the victory of reason over the elements, or as a perversion of the natural elements," the concentric city is "as a rule associated with the image of the city on the hill (or hills)," in Vienna's case, terraces, and in Austria's, the Alps.¹⁵ A concentric city is "the mediator between heaven and earth" and "the focus for myths of origins[...], it has a beginning but no end" (Lotman 2000, 192). That the image of a concentric city may be heavily contested internally, or may in other ways not conform to its external image, does not register in the outside world because of the vertical directionality of this mediating quality, which makes it appear as a powerful center and erases internal divisions, silences and forgettings.¹⁶

presented at the MLA.

- 14 While demographically very different, the constraints of my undergraduate teaching at York are not too dissimilar from those Jennifer Marston William describes in teaching German film at Purdue, "a Midwestern, public land-grant university that is heavily oriented toward engineering programs," to students who "have not yet left the state of Indiana in their lives, let alone traveled outside the country," who "know precious little about German culture and history upon starting the course" and "regularly confuse Socialism with National Socialism" (2006, 91, 92).
- 15 As one reads in Maderthaler and Musner, "[f]or Vienna's topography follows a concentric model in which inner and outer suburbs are grouped around the center in a social gradient" (2008, 2).
- 16 I am thinking here in particular of Ruth Beckermann's comments at the "Wir sind Wir" ["We Are Us"] session in the Volkstheater's Rote Bar on December 2, 2018 that she made *Waldheims Walzer* [*Waldheim's Walzes*] after realizing in discussions with young people that they had no knowl-

* * *

In examining the nexus of cultural performance and location, this study follows the historical vectors this nexus opens up in order to reveal the struggles of counterhegemonic groups and the cultural workers that support them against the plutocratic forces of capital that continue to make bot-like incursions into the material realm of urban space. By taking these spaces back at the level of representation and re-enlivening them with stories and images that look at the same time both backwards and forwards and that encourage audiences to inform themselves and take action, these productions offer important impetus in creating action-oriented alternatives, something that ongoing neoliberal onslaughts continue to encourage us to believe is impossible. While the overwhelming scale of contemporary technological development and the ensuing problems and crises may not have been deliberately designed to induce resignation, passivity, and despair, those who benefit from the related hyperobjects of financialization and climate change must find it convenient that they do, as demoralization reduces resistance to their profit-making machinations.

It is in this context that Vienna's long tradition of resistance and radicality, which dates back to its time as a Protestant center in Catholic Habsburgia, deserves to be better known, especially as it tends to get erased in nationally oriented works like Fiddler's that take Austria and not Vienna as their focus. One sees the difference by comparing Fiddler's claims that "Austria [...] has but a slim track record in protest movements or civic unrest" (29), and "Austria is not known as a country of protest or strife" (ibid., 30), with the opening of the "Prolo Chic" section of *Wiener Chic*:

Class and political conflict have been a staple of modern Viennese history, from the imperial army retaking the city in

edge about the affair or any political matters from that era, such as the Watergate coverup.

October 1848 to the uprising in Ottakring on September 17, 1911 (cf. Maderthaler and Musner) to the riots in July 1927, during which the Palace of Justice was set on fire. (Ingram and Reisenleitner 2013, 63)

A proper appreciation of the length and strength of Vienna's radicality can actually be dated back much further, at least as far as the *Wiener Neustädter Blutgericht* (Blood Court of Wiener Neustadt) of 1522, a show trial of strength put on by Archduke Ferdinand, who had been awarded the Austrian lands at the Diet of Worms the previous year (the one at which Martin Luther was declared a heretic). Ferdinand wanted to put an end to the *Ständeregierung* [estate-led government] that opposed him. To that end he had Viennese mayor Martin Siebenbürger and seven others (two nobles and five commoners) executed, all of whom had been part of the revolutionary movement that had chased the Habsburg regiment out of Vienna after the death of Maximilian I in 1519. The corpses were then brought to Vienna, where, in a macabre display of sovereign humor, they were displayed at the city's *Fleischmarkt* [meat market].¹⁷ Fiddler's national focus thus sweeps Vienna's extraordinary history of protest and political action under the carpet, making it seem as though the resistance she analyses in works that are mostly from and about Vienna did not build on a long history but sprang fully formed from the head of a mythical god in the early 1990s in response to the rise of Jörg Haider's FPÖ.¹⁸

17 For greater detail, see Winkler 2010 and "Wien Geschichte Wiki" n.d.

18 The one study Fiddler cites, Robert Foltin's *Und wir bewegen uns doch: Soziale Bewegungen in Österreich* [Actually We Do Move: Social Movements in Austria], is an excellent resource but also one limited to contemporary history [Zeitgeschichte]. Its thirty-eight-page historical chronology begins with the founding of the second Austrian Republic on April 27, 1945 and continues through to a strike of railway employees in November 2003 against the privatization and dismantling of the ÖBB as well as incursions on workers' rights (Foltin 2004, 283–311). A perusal of Maderthaler 2018, Maderthaler and Musner 1999, and Ebner and Vocelka 1998 will also familiarize readers with the more recent history of protest culture in the city.

The purpose of the chapters that follow is to correct that impression and show how cultural practitioners in and around Vienna have drawn on the strength with which their cultural-historical knowledge of locality provides them in order to create rousing productions designed to get audiences to inform themselves about useful aspects of history, engage their presents, and make possible more socially equitable futures. Chapter one's subject is the revival of the *Proletenpassion* [*Proletarian Passion*] in 2015 by Werk X, a politically progressive theater company looking to put itself on Vienna's cultural map after moving out to a converted cable factory in the gentrifying outer district of Meidling. The *Proletenpassion*, a two-and-a-half-hour, Marxist musical journey through the modern history of revolt — from the peasant wars in the wake of Luther's Reformation through the French Revolution, the Paris Commune and the rise of fascism to the need to resist contemporary consumer culture — occupies a venerable position in Viennese cultural history as it helped to spark one of the city's largest and most influential occupations: of an abandoned slaughterhouse in the city's third district for 100 days in the late summer of 1976. The site of this occupation, the Arena, has gone on to become one of the city's most recognized centers of alternative culture. By drawing attention to Werk X's decision not only to mount a revival of the *Proletenpassion* as one of its signature pieces but also to perform it in the Arena as well as its new digs in the twelfth district, the chapter establishes the importance of location in supporting the company's aim to provide a space for engaged artistic work beyond the repertoire of the state theatres that favors a critical view of the contemporary social order and works towards an understanding of art and theatre as a vital part of democratic society.

In chapter two we turn our attention to Ottakring, one of Vienna's rapidly gentrifying outer districts but the one with arguably the highest name recognition as the home of the city's only brewery, not to mention the city's longest street market and a legacy of revolt. Here we look at popular films made in the last several years in the district and contrast the culture-clash

comedies *Kebab mit Alles!* [*Kebab with Everything!*] (2011, dir. Wolfgang Murnberger), *Die Freischwimmerin* [*A Female Swimming without Supports*] (2014, dir. Holger Barthel), and *Kebab extra scharf!* [*Kebab Extra Spicy!*] (2017, dir. Wolfgang Murnberger), with *Planet Ottakring* (2015, dir. Michael Riebl), an under-appreciated romantic comedy that takes on the banking industry as the force underpinning the district's gentrification. In championing the idea of an alternative currency, Riebl's film shows how mobilizing historical knowledge, made approachable in a costume of graffiti and grunge, can provide a working, not to mention working-class alternative to the gentrification threatening local housing stocks.

The following three chapters then examine the effect that the presence of international stars, the first two of whose reputations have in the meantime been overtaken by their tragic deaths, can have in the context of significant cultural sites in the city. Chapter three tackles the Viennese production of *Lazarus*, David Bowie's first and only musical, which, to the surprise of many, has become a huge hit on German-language stages. This chapter identifies and analyzes what distinguishes the Volks-theater's production from the other Germanophone productions and considers how it is in keeping with the history of Vienna's "theater of the people."

Chapter four takes as its focus controversial German film and theater director Christoph Schlingensiefel's engagements in Vienna and Austria, most prominently his action in protest against the inclusion of the far-right Freedom Party as a coalition partner in the federal government in 2000. In contrasting the documentary of that action, *Ausländer raus! Schlingensiefel's Container* [*Foreigners Out! Schlingensiefel's Container*] (2002, dir. Paul Poet), with Ruth Beckermann's documentary response to the coalition government, *Homemad(e)*, which depicts encounters in her neighborhood — Vienna's old textile quarter, I show how the considerable cultural distance between these two documentaries and their locations, one at the southern and the other at the northern edge of the Ringstrasse that encircles Vienna's first district, reveals the considerable political distance between

Schlingensief's preference for political grands récits and the kind of local historical knowledge Beckermann champions.

Chapter five reveals a similar locationality in Wes Anderson's much beloved *Grand Budapest Hotel* (2014) and unpacks Anderson's displacement of Stefan Zweig's historical legacy in the service of creating Cold War-inflected Eastern European ruin porn by comparing its film location, Görlitz, on the borders where Germany meets Poland and the Czech Republic, to first Detroit and then to the struggling Austrian Ur-kurort of Semmering.

The next chapter, chapter six, then revisits a film that could well have served as a touchstone for much of the work already discussed, Hans Weingartner's 2004 hit *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, cleverly translated into English as *The Edukators*. As Weingartner's oeuvre centers on Berlin, he tends to be treated in Cinema Studies circles as an outlier of the Berliner Schule. As my reading demonstrates, his early hit is more properly placed in the tradition of the "feel good" Viennese cultural production delineated in this study. While the influence of the Berliner Schule does increasingly make itself felt in Weingartner's growing oeuvre, political locationality can be shown to radiate from its sensitivity to the classed positionality of urban and non-urban locations. *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei*, for example, features a climactic getaway to Achenkirch in the Tirolean Alps, which allows for a revisiting of the Bergfilm tradition.

In the final chapter we see how it all comes together in Hallstatt, an über-picturesque lakeside village in the Salzkammergut south of Salzburg. Hallstatt's capacity to help us reflect on the role that images play in place-making was strengthened when it was cloned to produce a gated community in the booming industrial heartland of China's southern Guangdong province on the South China Sea. Two intricate visual works, Ella Raidel's *Double Happiness* and Norbert Artner's *Hallstatt Revisited I*, tap into the Chinese interest in Hallstatt's impressive history and natural attributes and demonstrate how the locality has produced an intrinsically fractured imaginary that continues to invite, and, indeed, thrive on mediatization. Mediatization points

to the power of cultural production as well as the increasingly complex and daunting qualities of our present, something I contextualize with the *Jurassic Park*, and now *World*, franchise.

Given the overwhelming nature of the fears citizens are confronted with in popular culture and beyond, and at our global conjuncture these boundaries too continue to collapse, it becomes all the more important to focus not on big, fascinating, scary monsters but on building up a citizenry capable of thinking and acting collectively to ensure that a good life is within reach of as many as possible, which includes an awareness of our material surroundings and how they are being increasingly inflected by capitalist-driven immateriality, in the interrelated form of images and finance capital. The following case studies offer a primer in cultural citizenship-building: learning how to navigate one's surroundings by approaching them historically and then working to activate the parts of those pasts that lead to the kinds of futures one would want to still be alive for. They are why I love Vienna.

(Re)Forming Vienna's Culture of Resistance: The Proletenpassions @ #Arena

“Mit uns kommt die neue Zeit” [“The new era accompanies us”].

—Gustav, “Die Hälfte des Himmels” [“Half of Heaven”]
from the musical *Alles Walzer, alles brennt*
[*Everything's Burning, Let's Waltz*]¹

“Some ghosts are more equal than other”

— A Marxist mashup of *Animal Farm*

The Arena in Vienna's third district has not always been one of the city's premier venues for alternative concerts, which is to say concerts not of classical or pop music but harder genres such as punk and death metal.² It started out in 1970 as an avant-garde theatrical stream “für junge Leute” [“for young people”] of Vienna's renowned summer cultural festival, the Wiener Fest-

1 This chapter reworks and builds on material that appears in Ingram (2019), a special issue on spectral cities, for which it was framed in hauntological terms.

2 That that is its current status can be seen on its website at <http://arena.wien>.

wochen, and ended up lending its name to what is arguably the most influential occupation in Viennese history, that is, of an abandoned slaughterhouse in the light industrial St. Marx area for 100 days in the late summer of 1976. The Arena's demands to turn the *Auslands-abattoir* [foreign slaughterhouse] into an autonomously governed cultural center were not realized as they wanted, and the site went on to become a textile center. However, they were able to secure the smaller *Inlands-abattoir* [domestic slaughterhouse] nearby, which has since taken on symbolic as well as practical importance as a site for resistant cultural practices. The Arena occupation is credited with sparking the city's slumbering tradition of activist willingness to take a stand, whether on stages, in the streets or in buildings abandoned to the nascent forces of speculation, in support of demands for a more equitable social distribution of the city's and the country's resources. As the former director of the Wien Museum, Wolfgang Kos, put it, "the Arena was a gate-crasher, a real impetus for youth movements and media and political movements, too. It changed the city fundamentally; it broadened it" (Kos, cited in V. Buckley 2012).

In showing how the Arena went from naming part of a cultural festival to naming both a movement and a physical location, this chapter demonstrates the mechanism by which spaces can become historically saturated places that make future practices possible, in this case of both theatrical and political resistance. It details, first, the formation of the Arena, how and why it came into being, and the tradition of occupation it helped to spawn to confront the increasing profitability of real-estate speculation. Then, in turning to the most influential of the pieces that debuted there in the summer of 1976, the *Proletenpassion* by the *Schmetterlinge* [Butterflies], it shows how Vienna's radical theatrical practitioners continue to find space outside the city's central institutions to keep alive a tradition of political engagement that involves both cultural productions and social practices.

Occupying Vienna³

In the post-World War II reconstruction period known as the *Wiederaufbau*, Austria's Social-Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs, SPÖ) had a stronghold in Vienna but not at the federal level, where they were part of a coalition with the conservative Austrian People's Party (Österreichische Volkspartei, ÖVP). During the period 1966–70, the conservatives gained a majority at the federal level for the first time since the occupying powers, led by the Soviet Union, had officially left Austria in 1955. 1968 has been nicknamed the “tame revolution” by Austrian historians, which, given that some protest events featured the Actionists who specialized in a politics of transgression involving acts such as defecating on the public stages of university auditoria, gives one an idea what is consid-

3 One could translate *besetzen* into English with either “occupy” or “squat.” Sedlmaier, like many others, opts for the latter in his definition of it as “the unauthorised occupation of abandoned buildings” (Sedlmaier 2014, 208). The question of that authority is made more transparent in the online Oxford dictionary's definition of “to squat”: “unlawfully occupy (an uninhabited building).” Because this understanding renders any such action necessarily illegal, thereby acquiescing to the sanctity of private property, I prefer to speak of “occupation,” which is admittedly not an unproblematic term. As mentioned in the Preface to this book, the students who occupied the Senate Chamber during the 2018 York strike favored the term “reclaim” over “occupy” to emphasize their claims to the space as students and because of their discomfort with the colonial implications of occupation relevant in their local context. Similarly, as Ann Kaun notes in her study of the Occupy Stockholm and Occupy Latvia movements, one of the aims of the Latvian movement was to reclaim the notion of occupation itself: “[a]s reason why no Occupy encampment emerged in Latvia after 2011, two of my informants suggested that the name Occupy did not appeal to citizens and potential activists, given Latvia's occupation by Germany and the Soviet Union in the first half of the twentieth century. In that sense, one of the Occupy movement's main aims, namely, to overturn and reclaim the notion of occupation, failed in the Latvian context” (2017, 138). It is in the spirit of reclaiming occupation and the welcome political connotations it acquired during the 2011 protest actions, which emphasize the space itself and its contested use value, that I favor it over “squat.”

ered tame by Viennese standards (Ebner and Vocelka 1998).⁴ The conservatives lost their majority in 1970, the year after color television came to Austria (Mantler 2002), and the socialists enjoyed a majority from 1970 to 1983, led by Chancellor Bruno Kreisky, who initiated a plethora of reforms.

It was in this color-filled, socialist national context that Vienna caught up with European movements protesting the prioritizing of the land under buildings as a profit-making machinery over the buildings themselves as spaces for living. Faced with the need to house increasing populations, European cities in the grip of the modernizing zeitgeist of the 1960s and 1970s were quick to tear down buildings in need of repair and erect much taller, sleeker, and more profitable structures in their place, something that met with substantial resistance as “[a]ctivists confronted a dubious system in which the state protected owners’ right to destroy their property profitably” even in the face of an enormous housing crisis (Sedlmaier 2014, 208):⁵

Diese Flächensanierung — also die Zerstörung gewachsener kleinteiliger Strukturen und ihre Ersetzung durch monofunktionale Bebauung — sowie ihre zentralstaatlich-bürokratische Durchsetzung waren vielfach umstritten; vor allem brachte die Sanierungspolitik kaum Abhilfe für die drängenden Wohnungsprobleme. Denn der neue soziale Wohnungsbau war teurer als die Mieten in den abgerissenen Altbauten, und die Ausschreibung von Sanierungsgebieten und ihre öffentliche Finanzierung begünstigten den spekulativen Leerstand von Wohnungen.

[This form of renewal — the destruction of structures with small pieces that had grown together and their replacement

4 Clips of the Actionists’ actions can be found online on *UbuWeb* under the heading “The Films of the Vienna Actionists” at http://ubu.com/film/vienna_actionists.html.

5 While the circumstances a century earlier, when Paris built its boulevards, and Vienna, its Ringstrasse, were very different, the effects on the cities’ morphologies and class structures were not too dissimilar.

with a monofunctional development—as well as the bureaucratic, centralized reinforcement that made it possible, was contested on a number of fronts. Most of all this policy for renewal did not provide help for the pressing problem of providing housing because the new subsidized housing was more than the rents in the old buildings that had been torn down, and putting the construction out to tender on contracts the city was paying for encouraged speculation on apartments and letting them stand empty.] (Mayer 2012, 44)

Public policy encouraged owners to let their buildings fall apart so that they would receive public funds to replace them with something more “modern,” leading to the organization of protests. In 1965 students in Amsterdam occupied buildings to prevent them from being demolished; in 1968 young people in Zürich fought police in the streets to try to get the site set to become Switzerland’s first shopping center turned into an autonomously governed social center (Sedlmaier 2014, 205), while in 1971 abandoned military barracks and ramparts in the Christiania section of Copenhagen were moved into by people interested in creating a self-governing, economically self-sustaining “freetown,” which still exists, although residents were forced in 2012 to buy, that is, take out a mortgage to purchase, the land they had been living on for over forty years.⁶ Other notable early protests occurred in West Berlin, where “the early squats, the Georg-von-Rauch-Haus (December 1971) and the Tommy-Weisbecker-Haus (March 1973), were named after two members of “Movement 2 June” who had been killed in shootouts with the police” (Sedlmaier 2014, 206); in Frankfurt in 1972–73, when ten houses in the posh west end were “politisch besetzt” [“occupied for political reasons”]; and in Hamburg in 1973, when some 200 youths occupied a house in the Ekthofstraße for five weeks to turn it into a much needed “Studenten-, Lehrlings- und Gasarbeiterwohnhaus’ und Begegnungszentrum” [“apartments for

6 The lengthy *Wikipedia* entry on “Freetown Christiania” offers a useful overview of the history of this development.

students, apprentices, and guest workers' and a meeting center” (Mayer 2012, 45). The spread of what was referred to then as the squatting movement was made clear by the West Berlin monthly, *Der lange Marsch*, which reported in May 1973 of squats in “American slums, London Islington, and Milan’s Via Tibaldi” (Sedlmaier 2014, 213).

The oldest of the fifty-one selected historical and active sites of occupation in Vienna mapped in the catalogue of the 2012 *Besetzt! Kampf um Freiräume seit den 70ern* [*Occupied! Struggle for Free Spaces since the '70s*] exhibition at the Wien Museum (Nußbaumer and Schwarz 2012, 78–79) is the Amerlinghaus, a beautiful building two blocks behind the Museumsquartier in the seventh district, which dates back to 1700 and in which painter Friedrich von Amerling was born in 1803. By the early 1970s, the building, although protected as a historical site [*denkmalgeschützt*], stood empty in a stretch of buildings that were falling apart. A day-long festival held in the Spittelberg neighborhood in the summer of 1973 became a week-long Spittelbergwoche in 1974, while the following year, in the face of demolition, an occupation proved an important first step in converting it into the cultural center it is today.⁷

The following summer of 1976 brought more threats to places important to those beyond the mainstream and inadequately provided for by bourgeois institutions. While neglecting the

7 In 1980 a second occupation proved necessary, and in 2012 the story was far from over (cf. Reinprecht 2012). At the time of writing, it continues to function as a space of resistance, with the understanding that “Engagement braucht Raum und eine solidarische Infrastruktur, die diesem wohlwollend und unterstützend entgegen kommt, niedrigschwellig zugänglich und administrativ gut koordiniert ist. Räume gesellschaftlicher Teilhabe und Involvement sind unverzichtbar, und gerade angesichts einer zunehmenden bedrohlichen Faschisierung und Entdemokratisierung sind Orte, an denen kritische Basis/kultur/arbeit stattfinden kann, nötiger denn je.” [“Engagement requires space and an infrastructure of solidarity that fosters and supports it, is easily accessible and well organized. Spaces of social participation and involvement are essential, and especially in the face of increasingly threatening fascist and anti-democratic tendencies, places in which foundational critical cultural work can take place are more necessary than ever”] (<http://www.amerlinghaus.at>).

city's social and cultural infrastructure, the modernist-minded city was now proposing to turn the main thoroughfare into the city center from the west (the Wienzeile) into a highway and destroy the city's central Naschmarkt and the Otto Wagner Bridge in the Gumpendorfer Straße in the process (Höllnerl and Spanbauer 2012b, 107). At the same time, the Arena, which had in the meantime established itself as a highly popular part of the Wiener Festwochen and had the previous summer moved out to the spacious slaughterhouse in St. Marx, learned that its new home, which had been abandoned since the mid-1960s, was about to be sold and demolished. Thanks to the attention its Festwochen performances had attracted the previous summer, the city had been able to find a buyer for the slaughterhouse in the form of the Schöps clothing company, whose owner, Leopold Böhm, was discovering that real estate was a much better business to be in than clothing.⁸ Böhm's plan was to tear down the slaughterhouse and erect a large wholesale textile center on the site, and the city was clearly going to support him.⁹ How-

8 As one of his obituaries has it, “[e]ine Karriere wie aus dem Bilderbuch: 1954 übernahm Leopold Böhm die Firma seines Onkels Richard Schöps und expandierte in ganz Österreich. Ähnlich dem Billa-Gründer Karl Wlaschek eröffnete er ein Geschäft nach dem anderen, bis die Marke in ganz Österreich bekannt war. [...] Das wirklich große Geld machte Böhm allerdings mit Immobilien. Branchenkenner schätzen seinen Besitz auf 30 bis 40 Immobilien. [...] Der ‘Trend’ führte Böhm 2006 sogar auf Rang 34 der 100 reichsten Österreicher.” [“A picture-perfect career: [i]n 1954, Leopold Böhm took over the company of his uncle, Richard Schöps, and expanded throughout Austria. Like Billa-founder Karl Wlaschek he opened one store after the other until the brand was known in all of Austria. [...] However, he really made his money in real estate. Experts in the field estimated he owned 30 to 40 properties. [...] In 2006 [the year before his death], ‘Trend’ ranked him at 34 among the richest 100 Austrians”] (“Schöps-Gründer Leopold Böhm tot” 2007).

9 There is reason to suspect this deal was not completely above board: “mit großer Selbstsicherheit und trotz der Aufdeckung — zurückhaltend formuliert — problematischer Machenschaften rund um den Verkauf des Geländes an die Firma Schöps reagierten die Rathausverantwortlichen mit Hinhaltetaktik und schikanösem Verhalten, das auch die von den BesetzerInnen als ‚Kulturmutti‘ apostrophierte Stadträtin nicht kompensieren konnte.” [“With great self-confidence and despite the discovery

ever, because city council still had to officially approve the sale, he could be convinced to postpone the demolition until after the 1976 festival season.

Enter the Schmetterlinge [Butterflies], a political folk-rock band who that summer debuted the perfect piece of musical theater to spark a summer of protest, the *Proletenpassion*. In setting to music the stories of the peasant wars in the wake of Luther's Reformation, the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the rise of fascism, and the need to resist contemporary consumer culture, the collective who created it, and the audiences who flocked to it, understood the piece as a political secularization of Johann Sebastian Bach's Passions.¹⁰ Very much in the spirit of Bertolt Brecht's "Fragen eines lesenden Arbeiters" ["Questions of a Reading Worker"] (Unger 2015, 12), the *Proletenpassion* begins with an overture entitled "Wer Schreibt die Geschichte?" ["Who Writes History?"]:

Wer schreibt die Geschichte?
 Jeden Morgen, wenn wir zur Arbeit fahren,
 wird eine neue Seite ins Geschichtsbuch geschrieben. Wer
 schreibt sie? Geschieht Geschichte mit uns? Oder machen
 WIR unsere Geschichte?
 Unsere Geschichte ist die Geschichte von Kämpfen
 zwischen den Klassen, eine wütende Chronologie.
 Doch gelehrt wird uns die lange Reihe von Kronen und
 Thronen, und über allem waltet ein blindes Geschick.
 Wenn wir so vieles nicht erfahren sollen —
 wer hat Interesse daran, daß wir es nicht wissen? Wenn so
 vieles nicht in den Lehrbüchern steht – wer will, daß es
 nicht gelehrt wird?

of — to put it mildly — problematic machinations around the sale of the land to the Schöps company, those responsible at City Hall reacted with stonewalling and bullying behavior, which the Councillor the occupiers nicknamed 'Mama Culture' could not compensate for") (Nußbaumer and Schwarz 2012a, 19).

10 Johann Sebastian Bach provided a number of Passions for Good Friday services in Leipzig and Weimar.

[Who writes history?
 Every morning when we go to work,
 a new page is written in the history books. Who writes it?
 Does history happen to us?
 Or do *we* make our own history?
 Our history is the history of struggles,
 between the classes, an angry chronology.
 Yet we are taught a long list of crowns and thrones, governed
 by a blind fate.
 When we are not supposed to learn that much —
 who benefits from our not knowing? When so much isn't in
 the schoolbooks, who doesn't want what to be taught?]
 (Unger 2015, 13)

With questions like these in the air, the city should not have been surprised that its plans to demolish the slaughterhouse met with the resistance it did.

On the afternoon of June 27, 1976, a Sunday and the day of the final Arena performance that season, the Schmetterlinge and a cabaret group called Keif performed at an Anti-Schleifer (anti-razing) event at the Naschmarkt.¹¹ At the end of their performance they called for the rescue of the slaughterhouse as well. Hundreds spontaneously headed to St. Marx, where *Schabernack II*, a musical protesting the highway by the group

11 As Friesenbichler relates (2008, 108–9), *Schleifer* is an ambiguous term in German, referring to the tearing down of buildings but also to a sadistic drill sergeant. The protest was multi-pronged and in the first instance against scandals in the army. First to break had been the case of Kurt Wandl, an eighteen year old doing military service, who collapsed and died on August 15, 1974, during a drill involving heavy equipment carried out on one of the hottest days of the year. Journalists soon discovered it was not an isolated case, and when in May 1976 another incident was reported in the *Rennbahnexpress*, a magazine for young people, of a near-death (Werner Grusch barely survived punishment for complaining about the exorbitant prices in the canteen and collapsed after an hour and a half of carrying gas masks around), a protest was called for that overlapped with the one against the planned highway. Grusch also appeared on the protest's program.

Misthaufen, was being performed (Weidinger 2012, 96). After the performance, not only did the audience refuse to leave, but they were joined by the protesters, swelling the crowd.¹² Quickly a list of four demands was put together (the slaughterhouse was not to be torn down, it was to be turned into a year-round cultural center, it was to be run not by the city but by those interested in it, and the costs for its maintenance were to be covered by the city), and the realities of the situation took hold. Some forty or sixty people stayed over the first night, and a number of work teams sprang up to look after organizational practicalities.¹³ Their first “Fest” took place two days later, on Tuesday, with two thousand visitors, while over eight thousand showed up the following weekend for the free “[d]as ist Schlachthof Arena: Konzerte, Theater und Kabarett, Lesungen und Filme, Ausstellungen, Vorträge und Diskussionen” [“This is Schlachthof Arena: concerts, theater and cabaret, readings and films, exhibitions, talks and discussions”] (Weidinger 2012, 97). The success of these events received wide and for the most part very positive coverage in the press, which aided those in the slaughterhouse immeasurably by bringing further support.¹⁴ They also notably received the support of the *Kulturstadträtin* [City Councilor Responsible for Culture] Gertrude Fröhlich-Sandner, who

12 As Weidinger notes, its size is difficult to determine. Estimates in the press run from two hundred to over a thousand (2012, 100 fn. 7). The question of who opened the door so that the crowds could enter is also a question, to which the likeliest answer seems to be Ulrich Baumgartner, the head of the Wiener Festwochen.

13 Weidinger claims 40 (97), Friesenbichler around 60 (110). In retrospective interviews held in 2011 for the *Besetzt* exhibition at the Wien Museum, participants stress the impressive level of coordination and cooperation that was achieved, describing the occupation as “ein Wunder an spontaner Organisation” [“a miracle of spontaneous organization”] (Höllerl and Spanbauer 2012a, 101) and “wie ein wunderbar funktionierendes Dorf” [“like a wonderfully functioning village”] (Höllerl and Spanbauer 2012b, 108).

14 “Only the *Arbeiter-Zeitung* [Workers Newspaper] emphasized the illegality of the action, denounced the hygienic conditions in the slaughterhouse, and presented the Arena as a collection of drug addicts and criminals” (Weidinger, 2012, 97).

earned at least some of the occupiers' admiration for coming out to the slaughterhouse to talk to them "mit Ihrem Chauffeur und ihrem Handtäschchen im Schneiderkostüm" ["in a tailored suit with her purse and chauffeur"] and who is on record as wanting to find a solution that "would give the young people the chance to actualize themselves" (Höllnerl and Spanbauer 2012a, 102).¹⁵

The protest was the talk of the town, especially around the university area and was only displaced from the headlines by the tragic collapse of the Reichsbrücke on August 1. Fliers, posters and comics circulated about the events at the slaughterhouse, and people took to the streets to show their support. Besides the Schmetterlinge, most of the city's folk and rock musicians performed for the occupiers, leading sing-alongs of protest songs adapted to the local dialect and situation. For example, the Civil Rights Movement's protest song "We Shall Not Be Moved," which was originally an African-American spiritual called "I Shall Not Be Moved" and became popular as "No Nos Moveran," the translation done for the Spanish Civil War, was translated into "[u]nd wann die Polizei kommt, mia gengan nimmer fuat!" ["Even if the police come, we're not gonna leave!"].¹⁶ When Leonard Cohen was in town as part of the European tour, he couldn't help but hear about the occupation and, after his scheduled concert at the Stadthalle, went out to the slaughterhouse to perform a Yiddish folk song as a show of solidarity for the occupiers. The occupation came to an end after the *Gemeinderat* [Viennese city council] finally approved the sale of the property on September 27. By October 6 the occupiers had decided to leave peacefully (Weidinger 2012, 100), and they did so a few days later, but not before staging an "Arena Begräbnis" funeral procession from the slaughterhouse to City Hall, where moving speeches were held and the Internationale sung (Höllnerl and Spanbauer 2012b, 109).

15 The original reads: "[E]ine Lösung zu finden, die den „jungen Menschen die Chance geben [wollte], sich selbst zu verwirklichen.“

16 Arena-Besetzung 1976. Martin Auer und BesetzerInnen singen "Mia gengan nimmer fuat!" is available on *YouTube* at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n7hC8tYzwUc>.

That the Arena occupation was going to be an influential part of Viennese cultural history was already clear in the 1977 documentary, *Arena besetzt* [*Arena Occupied*], (dirs. Franz Grafl, Josef Aichholzer, Ruth Beckermann), thanks to which the above performances have survived.¹⁷ While it remains open to speculation whether the kidnapping of Schöpfs owner, Ludwig Böhm's wife, Lotte, in December of that year was connected to the Arena occupation,¹⁸ the *Proletenpassion* necessarily was, in no small part due to the key role that the Schmetterlinge played during the occupation and both their and the piece's success. The latter can be gauged by the fact that in the next two years it was performed a further 130 times, eighty of which in Germany. The studio recording that followed in the fall of 1977 appeared in many LP and CD editions as well as pirated versions (Unger 2015, 20),¹⁹ helping the piece to become "such a touchstone among the Viennese left that unions there made it part of the training that apprentices underwent" (Ingram and Reisenleitner 2013, 68) and engaged teachers used the songs in their lessons (Unger 2015, 7).²⁰ The Schmetterlinge went on to represent Austria at the 1977 Eurovision Contest with the satirical song "Boom Boom Boomerang"²¹ and their popularity spilled over into the very successful career of one of their members who was particularly active in the occupation, Willi Resitarits, who left the band

17 The documentary continues to be screened on occasions such as the fortieth anniversary of May '68, when Vienna's Film Museum showed it.

18 She was released five days later after he paid the twenty-one million Schilling ransom that was demanded. The kidnappers were caught a few weeks later, after the Christmas holidays, when they made a suspiciously large bank deposit. That Böhm was at the time the President of the FK Austria Wien soccer team, may also have been a factor.

19 See also "Schmetterlinge (Oesterreich) – 6 Alben" n.d.

20 One can see the nostalgia it awakens in one critic's description of its having been "damals in einer eleganten roten Box auf drei Langspielplatten veröffentlicht" ["produced back then as three long-play records in an elegant red box"] (Mießgang 2015).

21 They came second-to-last.

in the early 1980s to become Dr. Kurt Ostbahn and start his own group, Ostbahn Kurti und die Chefpattie.²²

Proletenpassion ff and WERK X

“Encore un effort!” [“One more effort!”]

— de Sade (1795, 70)

Some thirty years later, as Vienna struggled to accommodate waves of refugees pouring into the EU from war-torn locations to its south and east and as the far-right gained momentum both in neighboring countries and in Austria itself, a small, politically progressive theater group looking to put itself on Vienna's cultural map after relocating to a converted cable factory in the gentrifying outer district of Meidling decided to mount a rousing revival of the Schmetterlinge's “Klassenkampf Oratorium” [“class-struggle oratorio”], which they not only performed in their new theater but also in the Arena.

One sees that the *Proletenpassion* had remained a vibrant part of Austrian protest culture in the reminiscences of director Christine Eder, who helped bring the *Proletenpassion* back to life in 2015:

Die *Proletenpassion* kenne ich aus meiner Kindheit [...] wir haben sie als Kinder rauf und runter gehört, während auf dem Plattenspieler Spielzeugautos Karussell fuhren, die man immer über die Schranke des Tonarms heben musste, damit kein Unfall passierte. Später begegneten mir die Lieder wieder, meist auf Protestveranstaltungen, spätnachts nach Demos an Lagerfeuern erklang das Jalava-Lied, von bewegten Gitarreros mit heiserer Stimme dargeboten [...] Ich hatte schon seit Jahren den Wunsch, sie aus der gegenwärtigen Sicht neu zu inszenieren.

22 For more on Resetarits's career, see Ingram and Reisenleitner 2013, 68–75.

[I've known the *Proletenpassion* since my childhood [...] as children we listened to it up and down while toy cars raced on the record player — one always had to lift them over the arm to prevent accidents. I encountered the songs again later, mostly at protests. At campfires late at night after demonstrations the Jalava song rang out, offered by emotional guitar players with husky voices [...] For years I've wanted to put on a new interpretation of it from a contemporary perspective.]
(Unger 2015, 7)

Eder was finally able to fulfil her ambition thanks to WERK X, a troupe that dates back to 2004, when Grazer Harald Posch and Viennese Ali M. Abdullah founded an association called Drama X. Their political “pop-up” theater attracted both attention and awards, and, in November 2008 as part of a Vienna theater reform, they received four years of funding to establish a theater that worked as a space for negotiating important social and political questions. From 2009 to 2014 they ran Garage X in the basement of a Biedermeier building on the Petersplatz in the first district that had housed entertainment since 1873 and, most recently, Dieter Haspel's Ensemble Theater; Haspel had directed the *Proletenpassion* at the Arena.²³ Their inaugural production was called *Auf Basis der aktuellen Eigenkapitalerfordernisse von nur vier Prozent stellt dies kein Problem dar* [*With the Current Bank Capital Requirements of only 4%, That's Not a Problem*], a quote by a banker at Lehman Brothers, just before it collapsed and was not bailed out.

After their funding ran out, the X team had to find a new location.²⁴ With the city's support, they entered into an agreement

23 Their respect for Haspel can be seen in their staging of the tribute “HASPEL-THEATER 1967–2015 — Mehr als Erinnerungen” [“More than Memories”] on April 30, 2016 in the Petersplatz (<http://werk-x.at/produktion/haspel-theater>).

24 The funding situation for Viennese theater has not changed appreciably since Henriette Mandl noted in 1968 that “not even the big theaters can live on their takings. [...] The state theaters exist by means of subsidies, and the private theaters (the medium and big ones) receive financial aid

with the Palais Kabelwerk. At one point the largest factory in Europe for producing cable, it had been taken over by Siemens, who shut down its production in 1997. Afterwards the area was gradually turned into a new neighborhood with apartments, businesses, and a cultural center, which cost the city nearly three and a half million Euros to renovate and just over one and a half million to run for five years (L. Lorenz 2019). In 2014 WERK X opened at the Kabelwerk with a mission similar to the one at the Petersplatz. Its intellectual pedigree as well as its political orientation were on display in the English website it had for the 2016-2017 season, which opened with a quote from Antonio Gramsci about fascist monstrosity — “The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born: now is the time of monsters” — and ended with a reference to Giorgio Agamben’s coming community — “We will feature critical perspectives on contemporary monsters, neo-nationalistic and neo-fascist as well as the contours of a ‘coming community’ [...] defined by an unconditionality that eliminates the very need for membership.”

One can understand WERK X’s desire to stage a revival of the *Proletenpassion* as one of its signature pieces, especially in light of the piece’s continued popularity. After premiering on January 22, 2015 to a sold-out audience in its cavernous new digs in the Kabelwerk, it not only played that season and was held over in the fall, but like the original, it also toured in Germany and Austria, and June 21–23, 2016, it played the Arena.²⁵ Indeed, many of those attending those performances were under the impression that they were in the same building that the original had been performed in, and not the smaller slaughterhouse nearby, which lent an appropriate sacrality to the *Passion*’s performance.

from various institutions and from the municipality of Vienna” (Mandl 1968, 41).

25 In the spring of 2019, it went on another Austrian tour: April 19, 2019, Arbeiterheim Fohnsdorf, Heimgasse 4, 8753 Fohnsdorf; April 26, 2019, Stadttheater Wels, Kaiser-Josef-Platz 50, 4600 Wels; May 11, 2019, Lugner City, Gablenzgasse 11, 1150 Wien; June 25, 2019, Posthof - Zeitkultur am Hafan, Posthofstrasse 43, 4020 Linz.

The troupe cultivated this feeling of homage by opening their performance with the ghostly voice of Willi Resitarits reciting the prologue from the 1977 recording and by having one of the actors on stage, Bernhard Dechant, take on the role of master of ceremonies and begin:

Proletenpassion. Wir erwecken heute die *Proletenpassion*
wieder zum Leben.

Und genauso wie die Schmetterlinge 1976,
erzählen auch wir die Geschichte der Revolution,
die Geschichte der Klassenkämpfe,
die Geschichte von unten.

Denn wer will, dass sie nicht gelehrt wird?

[Today we are again bringing the *Proletenpassion* to life.
And just like the Schmetterlinge in 1976, [at which point he
gives the audience a knowing look,]
we too tell the history of revolution,
the history of class struggles,
history from below.
Because who is it that doesn't want it to be taught?]²⁶

This introduction ensures that all those present are properly aware of the piece's pedigree.

WERK X is but one of a number of theaters performing hard-hitting, political plays in Vienna these days, and the *Proletenpassion* is but one of the many hard-hitting political plays in their repertoire. Yet it is the only one that taps directly into the moment in the city's history when a movement emerged that surprised the entire city and initially also itself, with its energy, scope, and ability to self-organize and create on a small scale the type of society it wanted to live in, one based on full par-

²⁶ The final line echoes the final one in the original overture. The premiere was recorded and shown on the ORF, Austria's national broadcaster.

ticipation in all decision-making and communal respect.²⁷ As an event, the Arena brought people from very different walks of life but with shared social ideals and goals together in the same space and gave them visibility. The graffiti-like logo served as a brand and created momentum that is still available to be tapped into:

[I]t would be easy to dismiss the entire movement as the naïve dream of a well-fed generation without much immediate responsibility. But this would be to do it an injustice. The Arena occupation and its offshoots proved to be of lasting significance for the schnitzel-stuffed city that begot them.

The occupiers lost their battle: the *Auslands-abattoir* was demolished. But they won the war, with Chancellor Bruno Kreisky later admitting that the city did indeed need an alternative cultural centre and a permanent venue for other than traditional entertainment; the neighbouring *Inlands-abattoir* was set aside for just that purpose, which it retains to this day. The Rosa Lila Villa still provides support and advice for gays and lesbians; the Ernst Kirchweger Haus still welcomes migrants and refugees; the wuk (Werkstätten- und Kulturhaus) still operates as a community cultural centre [...] Not least, you're now allowed to sit on the grass in the Burggarten.

So maybe it's true: If you believe you can make a difference, and you believe it hard enough, sometimes you really can. (V. Buckley 2012)

As we see in the next chapters, this “feel good” spirit of emphasizing small victories and turning places not only into symbolic sites but also into institutions like the Arena that provide for marginal groups that would otherwise fall through the cracks of the city's cumbersome bureaucratic apparatus, continues to be alive and well. These institutions draw on, and at the same time

²⁷ The misogyny of the “Rockers,” a motorcycle gang that was part of the initial occupation, led to conflicts with the rest of the community and their expulsion (Mesner 2012, 61).

build on, Vienna's historical legacy as a place where there are people who prioritize the local communal good and mobilize cultural means to do social good, and put up roadblocks against incursions of commodity- and property-oriented prioritization, whether on the part of local conservatives or tourists from far-flung parts of the world.

What this will all mean for the Arena remains in flux. Plans for a "lighthouse project" could well change the site:

Kürzlich präsentierte Ludwig den Standort für die Multifunktionshalle: Auf dem ehemaligen Schlachthofareal Neu Marx soll ein "Leuchtturmprojekt in Europa" entstehen. Man setzt auf Riesenevents mit bis zu 20.000 Besuchern, die mit der O2-Arena in London oder der Kölner Lanxess-Arena konkurrieren sollen. Von der Förderung lokaler Kunst und Kultur war zuletzt nicht mehr viel zu hören.

[Recently [Mayor] Ludwig presented the venue for the multi-functional space: at what used to be the grounds of the slaughterhouse in Neu Marx, a 'lighthouse project in Europe' is set to arise for large events with up to 20,000 visitors, which can compete with the O2 Arena in London or Cologne's Lanxess Arena. Recently there hasn't been much to hear about the support of local art and culture.] (L. Lorenz 2019)

Given the ongoing political tensions in the city, one wonders what it would take to spark another occupation.

Converting Kebab and Currency into Community on Planet #Ottakring

“Ich mag Wien, besonders an den Rändern” [“I like Vienna,
especially at the edges”]

— Unger (2015, 6)

“Wo Häuser brennen, brennen auch Menschen” [“Where
houses burn, so too do people”]

— Affenzeller (2018)

Visitors to Vienna consulting the *Lonely Planet* guide to the city are told that “[a]part from a few well-trodden routes, tourists rarely venture into the mostly residential outskirts [...] but if you want to experience the real heartbeat of Vienna” (Bedford 2004, 97), that is where it is to be found — outside the Gürtel, the outer ring road which separates the inner districts from the ones that the working classes streamed into in the nineteenth century and continue to do so.¹ The outer district with the highest name-

¹ This chapter builds on material from Ingram (2018a), in which *Planet Ottakring* is read through the dual lens of precarity and *Heimatlosigkeit*, the

recognition factor is probably Ottakring, home to both the city's one and only brewery and the city's longest street market, which is the Brunnenmarkt, named for the fountain that enlightened monarch Joseph II had connected to the Hernalser water pipe in 1786, so that people outside the city walls had access to the fresh drinking water that flowed down from the Wienerwald to the Hofburg palace in the center of town. The district's socio-cultural conditions came to be shaped by "an above average share of a migrant population, which started to become apparent mostly in a transforming local economy in the 1990s, and which was recurrently problematized in public discourse" (Suitner 2015, 36). That, together with the area's low quality housing stock, led to a thorough-going revitalization between 2005 and 2010, sparking considerable culturally led gentrification in the surrounding Brunnenviertel (ibid., 36). Developments in the area can be gauged in a section of a report on the district entitled "Vom gründerzeitlichen Arbeiterviertel zum ethnisch geprägten Quartier zur urbanen Trendzone" ["From nineteenth-century working-class quarter to a neighborhood known for its ethnicities to urban hipsterdom"] (Antalovsky et al. 2008).

The tensions wrought by these developments have made Ottakring a favored location for contemporary screen culture interested in tackling issues related to multiculturalism and gentrification. *Kebab mit Alles!* [*Kebab with Everything!*] (2011, dir. Wolfgang Murnberger), *Die Freischwimmerin* [*A Female Swimming without Supports*] (2014, dir. Holger Barthel), *Planet Ottakring* (2015, dir. Michael Riebl), *Kebab extra scharf!* [*Kebab Extra Spicy!*] (2017, dir. Wolfgang Murnberger), and *CopStories* (since 2013 on ORF) all extrapolate the district's demographics into thoughtfully trenchant, solution-oriented meditations on living together. Yet they differ considerably in focus, with the only local director, Michael Riebl, not representing the district in terms of an identitarian culture clash.² In choosing to empha-

theme of that special issue.

2 Riebl describes his childhood as spent between the Ottakring Cemetery and the Brunnenmarkt ("meine Kindheit hat sich zwischen Ottakringer

size another aspect of the district's history, namely, its history of revolt, Riebl makes a distinctive film debut with *Planet Ottakring*, after many years of working in television as a cameraman and director of police procedurals such as *Kommissar Rex* [*Commissioner Rex*], *Tatort* [*Crime Scene*], *Schnell ermittelt* [*Fast Forward*], and *CopStories*. In the first part of the chapter, I examine Murnberger's and Barthel's films before turning to Riebl's.

Culture-Clash Comedies

Both of Wolfgang Murnberger's *Kebab* films and Holger Barthel's *Die Freischwimmerin* focus on the problems characters of Turkish heritage encounter fitting into everyday life in Ottakring. In the *Kebab* films, two small businessmen — one a bigoted but supposedly likeable Austrian coffeeshop owner, played by the well-known Viennese cabaretist, Andreas Vitásek, the other an upstanding restaurateur, played by Turkish-German Tim Seyfi, whose film appearances include *Gegen die Wand* [*Against the Wall*] (2004, dir. Fatih Akin) — find that they have been cheated in the purchase of the same property and need to find a way to coexist in relative peace for the prosperity of both. For its part *Die Freischwimmerin* brings two fatherless, headstrong yet troubled young women together through their love of swimming and sees the Austrian teacher, played by Viennese-born Emily Cox, win over the Turkish student, played by Berlin-born Selen Savas (Brier 2014), for the school swim team by first convincing her to wear a burkini and then giving her the choice to wear a competitive swimsuit to help out the school's relay team in the big annual competition. The *Kebab* films and *Die Freischwimmerin* belong to the category of film called “culture-clash Komödien” in German and “multicultural comedies” in English.³ In

Friedhof und Brunnenmarkt abgespielt” [“my childhood took place between the cemetery and the Brunnenmarkt in Ottakring”] (“Presseheft: LUNAFILM Präsentiert Planet Ottakring, Ein Film von Michi Riebl” 2015)), while Murnberger is from Wiener Neustadt and Barthel, from Stuttgart.

3 I prefer to use a translation of the already anglicized German term as it captures the clashing dynamic of the genre, which my analysis in this sec-

these films religious difference is depicted as unbridgeable and fundamentally cultural. It is understood as naturalized, something one imbibes with one's mother's milk and language and is to be played for laughs. Their generic status as comedies comes not so much from the humor of their content, which is based on laughing at rather than laughing with. As Peter Verstraten points out of the Dutch versions of the genre, "[t]he primary function of the coarse humour in these films is to test the limits of 'bad taste'" (Verstraten 2016, 83). In actor and theater founder Alexander Pschill's astute analysis,

Meiner Meinung nach ist die Komödie die beste Form, Inhalte zu transportieren und sie einem Publikum näherzubringen, einem Publikum, das die Wahl hat, mit einem Inhalt konform zu gehen oder nicht. Die Komödie erzwingt nichts. Die Komödie vermittelt von Natur aus die "kind human message." Sie funktioniert im Idealfall frei von Trends und Traditionen und entflieht somit leichtfüßig sowohl der Daumenschraube der verstaubten Erwartungen, also des Konservativen, als auch dem Diktat des bemüht Angesagten.

[In my opinion, comedy is the best form to convey content and bring it closer to an audience, an audience that has the choice to deal with context in a conformist way or not. Comedy isn't extortive. In its nature comedy communicates the "kind human message." Ideally, its functioning is free of trends and traditions and in that way nimbly escapes both the thumbnail screw of dusty expectations, that is, of the conservatives, but also the prescribed views of the well-meaning followers of fashion.] (Affenzeller 2019).

Because their idealistic liberalism is so bothered by talk of homogeneous cultures with "proper" locations that they cannot help but desire to show up their shortcomings, culture-clash comedies find themselves locked into the populist positions of

tion reveals, much better than the more neutral "multicultural" does.

that discourse. The conflict in culture-clash films is brought about by a “foreign” culture’s presence in the “home” culture, where it does not belong, is clearly not welcome and causes problems. While what leads to the specific conflict is overcome by the end of each film and there is a “happy end,” which for the filmmakers is a means of demonstrating how to overcome the clashes they see happening around them, the reconciliations their films reach can only ever be temporary because the ongoing presence of the culture whose fundamental differences are blamed for causing conflicts is never accepted as being part of the mix of the “home” culture. The plot of each *Kebab* film revolves around a conflict symbolized by an animal gift to the Turkish family (a lamb and a donkey to be ritually slaughtered), and the weakness of the second film comes to the fore in the disappearance of the donkey from the plot. This type of construction has practical advantages in that it leads to the possibility of serial development. While no sequel has yet been made of *Die Freischwimmerin*, the reconciliation of its ending — a successful swim meet in which the team wins a silver — could as easily be disturbed by a new conflict or threat as was introduced in *Kebab extra scharf!* with the arrival of the Turkish patriarch insisting on his grandson’s circumcision.

The genre of culture-clash comedy is neither new nor restricted to Austria. Rather, it tends to feature in countries when minority populations achieve mainstream success that is experienced by locals as threatening, a dynamic masterfully given expression in the character of *Kebab mit Alles*’s coffeeshop owner. The purpose of such films is, as Reika Ebert and Ann Beck point out in their reading of *Kebab Connection* (2004, dir. Anno Saul), to offer “social pathways that promote multiculturalism in contemporary” society (Ebert and Beck 2007, 87).⁴

4 In Britain one saw this with films such as *East Is East* (1999, dir. Damien O’Donnell) and *Bend It Like Beckham* (2002, dir. Gurinder Chadha), while in the recent *Green Book* (2018, dir. Peter Farrelly), there is an attempt to promote racial tolerance in contemporary America by locating race problems in the past. Its portrayal of a growing friendship between an African-American classical and jazz pianist and his Italian-American

With the rise of anti-immigrant populism in Europe, the popularity of these films seems to be increasing there. “Welcome to” titles such as *Bienvenue à Marly-Gomont* (2016, dir. Julien Rambaldi), translated into English as *The African Doctor* and German as *Ein Dorf sieht schwarz*, and *Willkommen bei den Hartmanns* (2016, dir. Simon Verhoeven), translated into English as *Welcome to Germany* and left untranslated in French, evoke with their titles the immensely successful *Bienvenue chez les Ch'tis* (2008, dir. Dany Boon) and depict the difficulties well-off locals have when confronted with African immigrants. In Austria, these films have a precursor in *I Love Vienna* (1991, dir. Houchang Allahyari). An important difference of this story of an Iranian German teacher and Sisi fan, who must come to terms with a Vienna that does not conform to the myths he is expecting when he leaves Iran with his younger sister and son, so that the son does not have to do military service, is that it is told from the perspective of the migrant and does not play how awful Austrians are for laughs but rather shames them.⁵ The protagonist does remain a “foreigner,” however, with all of the problems that brings with it. As Christina Kraenzle reminds us, such an approach “does little to escape national paradigms of analysis and — at its worst — falls back on troubling notions of a national *Leitkultur* ‘enriched’ by importing new voices and ‘foreign’ influences” (Kraenzle 2009, 91). Drawing on the work of Hito Steyerl, Kraenzle specifies that “[s]ubsuming transnational cultural production within national rubrics can also be a way avoiding larger political questions regarding civil inequalities, migration policies and minority rights” (ibid.). As we should remember from the theoretical debates around Michael Walzer’s 1997 *On Toleration*, attempts to create tolerance are doomed to fail because even if the intolerant in the audience are made somewhat more tolerant, neither they nor the already tolerant

driver and bodyguard was criticized as “a continuation of white privilege” and of “the turgid black-white buddy trope” after the film won the Oscar for Best Picture (Davies 2019).

5 For more on this film see Ingram and Reisenleitner (2013, 88–93).

liberals will be moved to reject the racialization of identity that led to the conflict in the first place. Moreover, the debate will provide fodder that continues to stoke the flames.

Just as the new arrivals in contemporary German culture-clash films such as *Willkommen bei den Hartmanns* are no longer Turkish but African, the protagonists in contemporary Viennese culture-clash comedies are no longer Iranian but Turkish, and culturally Turkish but not particularly pious. Indeed, they are no more religious than their Austrian counterparts. When the daughter takes to wearing a hijab in the second *Kebab* film, she does so not out of religious conviction but rather to upset her parents, and even her Turkish grandfather, who insists on his grandson's circumcision and strongly encourages his grandchildren to speak Turkish, finds her wardrobe ridiculous. Similarly, in *Die Freischwimmerin* the swimmer's decision to don religious apparel is motivated by her father's death and is not a sign of religious conviction but of mourning.

Despite their secularism and fluent German, the characters in Austrian culture-clash films are nevertheless presented as Turkish and not Turkish-Austrian, something that would in any case be difficult in terms of accent as the protagonists are played by Turkish-German actors. The Turkish presence in Germany is substantially different than in its Catholic neighbor and not only for religious reasons. As the *Kebab* films underscore by naming the Viennese coffeeshop Prinz Eugen after Eugene von Savoy, the Habsburg leader famed for his decisive victories in the early seventeenth century over the Ottoman Turks during the second Turkish siege of Vienna, Turks were historically Austria's greatest threat. The portrait of the Prince even comes to life in *Kebab mit Alles* and offers the Austrian coffeeshop owner strategic counsel in his campaign against "the Turk" before being dismissed on what for the coffeeshop owner is a humorous note — as a "französischer Poof" ("French fag"), while in the follow-up *Kebab extra scharf!*, he remains in the portrait and is unceremoniously covered up with a portrait of Atatürk for the plot-driving visit of the Turkish wife's father.

That said, one cannot discount the influence of religion in Viennese culture-clash films. Another reason the Turkish protagonists are presented as Turkish and not Turkish-Austrian is because Austrians are presumed to be Christian, something one sees by turning to *Herrgott für Anfänger* [*Learning to Pray for Beginners*] (2017, dir. Sascha Biglar), in which a secular Muslim taxi-driver with a Turkish background is given the opportunity to inherit a Heuriger (a restaurant-type establishment associated with a vineyard) in Grinzing from one of his devoted customers if he converts to Christianity and has himself baptized, something his lack of faith in any religion ends up preventing. Rather, after many convoluted plot twists, he is “saved” by the discovery of jewels in the back of his taxi, which allows him to buy the Heuriger anyway. The film ends with a “comedic” flourish and the now former taxi-driver discovering Buddhism from some of the Heuriger’s customers.

What becomes evident in this discussion is how replaceable Ottakring is as a location in the *Kebab* films. Just as the Catholic presence that drives *Herrgott für Anfänger* is not specific to Grinzing, the *Kebab* films could just as easily be set in Vienna’s fifth or tenth districts, where coffeeshops coexist uneasily with Döner shops on many street-corners and squares. Similarly the Viktor Adler Market in the tenth district could as easily serve as the backdrop for the fictitious Viktor Frankl Gymnasium in *Die Freischwimmerin* as the Brunnenmarkt. There actually is a Prinz Eugen Hotel in Vienna — not in Ottakring but rather where it makes historical sense, that is, a few blocks down the Gürtel from the Belvedere, Eugene’s palace. Indeed, the nickname for the Ottakringer Strasse, the *Balkanmeile* [Balkan Mile], points to the fact that the migrants who come to Ottakring tend to come from not Turkey but rather the Balkans, something that statistics show is a long-standing tendency.⁶ Moreover, as of

6 “Durch eine Extrapolation der für ganz Wien ausgewerteten Daten zur Umgangssprache ergibt sich, dass die ex-jugoslawischen Communities in Neulerchenfeld 2001 etwa 21,8% und die türkischen bzw. kurdischen Communities etwa 14,8% der Bevölkerung gestellt haben dürften” [“ex-

2018, this tendency was also true for the entire city.⁷ Turkey appears neither on the accompanying chart of the main countries from which migrants come to Vienna nor is it mentioned in the article as a country from which migrants come to Vienna.

That Turks provide the *Leitkultur* in culture-clash comedies for the “problem” “foreigners” are depicted as posing to German-language society has both historical and contemporary causes. Not only has the Muslim served as the traditional enemy of the Christian West since the *Song of Roland*, but, as we have seen, Vienna’s *cultural* achievements are perceived as being very much bound up in its having beat back the Ottoman Turks, not once but twice. Moreover, the films discussed in this section were all made for television, with *Die Freischwimmerin* achieving a market share of 14.4% with over four million viewers. Films that resonate with the Turkish-German experience of interculturality rather than the Austrian experience of Balkan refugees tend to have greater appeal for the larger German-language market.

trapolating from data on slang spoken for all of Vienna, the result [of the census] in 2001 is that approximately 21.8% of Neulerchenfeld consists of ex-Yugoslav communities and approximately 14.8% is Turkish and Kurdish communities” (Antalovsky et al 2008, 42). One sees in this quote a typical tendency to conflate groups that are hostile to each other and would not themselves want to be seen as part of the same community, such as Turks and Kurds, and the “ex-Yugoslavia.” Only a profound disinterest in history allows them to be lumped together and their internal conflicts to be ignored.

- 7 “2018 stellte Serbien das Hauptherkunftsland: Diese Bevölkerungsgruppe wuchs um 1.739 Personen, gefolgt von Rumänien, Deutschland und Bulgarien. Die wichtigsten Herkunftsländer von Zuwanderern liegen damit wieder in Europa. Erst dahinter folgen Syrien und Afghanistan” [“In 2018 Serbia placed at the top of the list of countries migrants came from. This part of the population grew 1,739, followed by Romania, Germany, and Bulgaria. The most important countries that migrants come from are once again in Europe. Behind them are Syria and Afghanistan”] (Krutzler 2019).

Planet Ottakring

By contrast, *Planet Ottakring*, which saw its Austrian cinematic release on August 14, 2015, tackles not only the Balkan presence in the city but also the German one, and offers a pedagogically savvy introduction into the workings of local economies worthy of its Ottakring setting.⁸ Described in the screenplay as a “sozialromantische Gaunerkomödie” [“a socially aware romantic comedy about small-time criminals”], *Planet Ottakring* opens in the Ottakring cemetery with the burial of the district’s godfather, Disko. Not only does this enable “Disko ist tot” [“Disko is dead”] graffiti,⁹ it also hearkens back to “likely the largest and most impressive mass demonstration Vienna had ever known” (Maderthaner and Musner 2008, 125): the funeral on February 16, 1913 of Franz Schuhmeier. Schuhmeier was

the most popular Viennese Social Democrat at the turn of the century, a mass politician of a new style, talented both as a populist agitator and as persuasive public speaker, a child of the suburb who had risen from the poorest conditions to the highest political functions. He had succeeded like no one before him in leading the politically and socially deprived of the suburbs from their isolation into an organized and politically conscious mass movement that gave them a new identity. (ibid., 127)

Setting the scene by reminding viewers of a key event in the making of Viennese proletarian suburban culture, the film thus issues a clarion call to think of how Ottakring had once served as both site of and “screen for the display of a political counter-culture” that, after the First World War, with the achievement of suffrage, resulted in Red Vienna (ibid.).

8 The same is also true of the TV series *CopStories*, and particularly the “Schmähstad” episode directed by Riebl and shown on ORF1 on August 28, 2018.

9 One notes that the film’s playful postmodern approach to comedy further differentiates it from the culture-clash comedies.

Disko's heir is the film's protagonist, Sammy, a local tough played by Michael Steinocher who suddenly finds himself in possession of Disko's little black book, whose intricate book-keeping system, much of which is in Cyrillic as Disko was from an unspecified part of the former Yugoslavia, he has difficulty deciphering. He gets help in this task both from his grandfather, a retired accountant, played by Lukas Resitarits, whom he helps out with grocery deliveries and who tutors him in the basics of finance capitalization, and from the German business student, Valerie, played by Cornelia Gröschel, whose research on the "Schwarzmarkt des europäischen Subproletariat" ["black market of the European subproletariat"] has taken her to the Brunnenmarkt, where she is immediately hassled by local youth and Sammy comes to her rescue. After the local loan shark, Frau Jahn, played by Susi Stach who was nominated for the 2016 Austrian Film Prize's best supporting actress for the role, agrees to give her an unpaid internship, Valerie and Sammy again cross paths and become romantically involved. Together, they figure out that Disko's ledger corresponds with Frau Jahn's customers, meaning that Disko had been laundering his ill-gotten gains by covering the neighborhood's debts. Disko's death had brought about an imbalance in the system, and when locals could no longer meet their debt payments, it also meant extra work for Frau Jahn's goons. Putting the education he has received from his grandfather to good use, Sammy comes to the neighborhood's rescue with an alternative currency called "Kommunisten," or red Schillings.¹⁰ The circulation of "Kommunisten" helps the locals not only get their businesses back on their feet but also pay their debts, which threatens Frau Jahn's business as

¹⁰ The Schilling was Austria's currency between 1925 and 1938 and from the end of World War II until the Euro was introduced in 1999. While Schillings have been officially out of circulation since 2002, billions still exist: "Altbestände von rund sieben Milliarden Schilling (507 Millionen Euro) horten die Österreicher noch oder liegen verborgen in Verstecken" [Schilling in the amount of about seven billion (507 million Euro) remain either hoarded by Austrians or otherwise hidden] ("Kik akzeptiert wieder den Schilling als Zahlungsmittel").

her customers are suddenly able to pay off, and not just down, their debts. Her goons first attempt intimidation, leading to another burial, that of Sammy and his friends' cat. It is the collective neighborhood response that is of interest. When Frau Jahn's goons come to inflict on Sammy and his trusty sidekick, Ticket, the same type of treatment that had been inflicted on the poor cat, the goons prove no match for the locals, who appear like a cavalry in a local show of force. The film ends with Valerie back in Germany, detailing to her class the benefits of local alternative currencies and announcing that she will be returning to Vienna to help run Planet Ottakring, an establishment specializing in "Coffee and Credit," as is advertised in English on the sign above the door.

Not only does Riebl's film depict how a small-scale alternative currency works in practice, but the press kit that accompanied the film and was referenced in reviews also explicitly mentions the historical and contemporary models on which the "Kommunisten" in his film are based. Indeed, the press-kit offers a veritable history lesson in the workings of alternative currencies. So as not to create the impression that they are a thing of the past, Riebl mentions the Sardinian Sardex. As he details, "[d]ie Sardinier haben den 'Sardex' erfunden, eine Internetwahrung, die genau auf dem gleichen Prinzip basiert. Kredite waren viel zu teuer, also haben sie sich eine Wahrung erfunden, mit der sie sich ihre Leistungen bezahlen" ["The Sardinians invented the 'Sardex,' an internet currency based on exactly the same principle. Loans were too expensive, so they came up with a currency with which they could pay for their activities"] ("Presseheft" 2015). Interestingly, far from being economists, these Sardinians were a small group of "[a]rts and humanities graduates with little financial experience" (Posnett 2015) but superior research skills. By 2009 the core team of Gabriele Littera, Piero Sanna, Carlo Mancuso, Giuseppe Littera, and Franco Contu had become convinced that, as Giuseppe Littera states,

something "had to be done" as no existing institution was ready to tackle the economic depression that was on its way.

As correctly forecast by Crenos, in the years 2009–2014 credit conditions deteriorated 4 years in a row. Repossession rates soared, credit to SME decreased 3.5% and credit to households decreased 2.2% from 2013 to 2014, while [in 2014] non-performing loans stand at 12.6% of the total. At the same time, we were reading many studies — such as those by Ufficio Studi CGIA Mestre — on the banking sector reducing on lending for two consecutive years, cutting as much as 100b Euro previously lent to businesses and families. (Littera, cited in Sartori n.d., 4)

The failure of existing banking structures in the face of dire economic conditions led these young Sardinians in 2010 to establish a system that complemented the official one. They set up an online mechanism whereby companies that passed a vetting for creditworthiness were extended a line of credit in return for agreeing to accept a certain number of credits. As Sartori explains, “Sardex does not charge transaction fees and negative (or positive) balances do not incur any interest charge (or growth); however, they need to be recovered through the sale of products or services within twelve months or they will need to be repaid in Euro,” which “motivates the holders of positive balances to spend them, stimulating the local economy” (ibid., 5). The Sardex’s success has been substantial: “[b]y December 2014, Sardex had 2500 members, businesses and employees, that conducted 66,000 transactions since January 2012” with an annual turnover of thirty-nine million Euros (Iosifidis et al. 2015). Sartori’s figures for the following year are somewhat higher — “as of the end of 2015, the mass of credits in circulation was four-million Euro, while the total value of products and services backing this money over a twelve-month period was eighty-million Euro” (Sartori n.d., 5) — and by no means call the Sardex’s success into question, on the contrary.

For their part the Sardinians were inspired by the Swiss WIR. The WIR, which stands for “‘Wirtschaftsring,’ German for ‘economic circle,’ but also means ‘we’ in German, emphasizing the community and solidarity aspects of the currency” (Sartori n.d.,

3n6), was founded to counteract the effects of the interwar depression. Unlike the Tyrolian case to be discussed below, the WIR was not shut down but, on the contrary, granted a banking license in 1936, two years after its founding. It continues to exist as an electronic complementary currency, and the private currency it manages, the WIR franc, is mobilized to help the Swiss franc and stabilize the Swiss economy during periods of financial downturns and turmoil (Stodder 2000). The WIR is referenced in the award-winning *Demain [Tomorrow]* (2015, dirs. Cyril Lion and Mélanie Laurent), a documentary in the positive spirit of *Planet Ottakring*, which identifies concrete initiatives that have proven to be successful responses to the economic, political, and social challenges of the twenty-first century.

Riegl's interest in and knowledge of alternative currencies reaches into the Austrian countryside as well as into the past:

[a]uch im Waldviertel gibt's jetzt irgendwas, glaube ich, wo sie sich mit Arbeitseinheiten bezahlen. Wo der eine seine Marmelade macht und der andere sein Schweinevieh schlachtet, der andere wo putzen geht oder dem Kind Gesangsunterricht gibt. So etwas gibt es immer wieder, um sich unabhängig zu machen von den Banken und der großen Konsumindustrie.

[In the Waldviertel as well I think there is now something where they pay with work units. Where one makes jam and the other slaughters pigs, another cleans or gives children singing lessons. There keep being these things that help people from being dependent on banks and the whole consumer industry.] ("Presseheft" 2015)

Other references he could have mentioned include the open-access *International Journal of Community Currency Research* and the Independent Money Alliance, created in 2014 by Bristol Pound CIC to lend others looking to set up their own currencies the benefit of their experience. As it is, Riegl's comments, which were made for the express purpose of being circulated

in the press, direct attention towards the fact that “[a]round the world, alternative local currencies are becoming more common” (Gowling 2014), if not necessarily better known. Given the difficulty of discussing *Planet Ottakring* without referring to alternative currencies, the film’s pedagogical purpose in encouraging interest in them can be considered an important part of its politics, akin to the proletarian film and theater clubs of the interwar period for which discussion of works’ themes was an integral part of their programs.¹¹

That *Planet Ottakring* has indeed had an impact in this regard can be seen in the fact that the most important historical model Riebl refers to in the press kit, the “Wunder von Wörgl” [“Miracle of Wörgl”], was made into a feature film in 2018, starring one of Austria’s best-known actor-directors, Karl Markovics, who plays the protagonist mayor of Wörgl. *Das Wunder von Wörgl* (dir. Urs Egger) follows the historical plot as outlined by Riebl in the press-kit:

[e]s gab in Österreich in der Zwischenkriegszeit das “Wunder von Wörgl.” Die Wirtschaft lag am Boden, keiner hatte Geld zu investieren. Irgendein findiger Bürgermeister ist auf die Idee gekommen, Schwundgeld zu drucken. Der hat gesagt, wir geben Geld heraus, das sehr rasch seinen Wert verliert und investiert werden muss. Das hat die Leute inspiriert, sehr schnell zu investieren, ihre Stellen auszubauen, ihre Pensionen. Das hat so gut funktioniert, dass die Regierung gedroht hat mit dem Bundesheer zu kommen, weil man ja nicht eine andere Währung im Land existieren lassen kann.

[During the interwar period in Austria there was the “Miracle of Wörgl.” The economy was in the pits, no one had any money to invest. A creative mayor came up with the idea of

11 My thanks to the highly engaging seminar at the 2017 ACLA in Utrecht on “Rethinking Political Cinema” that Christina Gerhardt co-organized, which in providing a genealogy of political film helped me to recognize this connection.

printing time-limited money. He said, we're printing money that will lose its value very quickly and must be invested. That inspired people to invest very quickly, to expand their positions, their pensions. It worked so well that the government threatened to call in the army, because one can't let another currency exist in a country.] ("Presseheft" 2015)

Before *Planet Ottakring*, Wörgl's experiment was only mentioned in the occasional article in the press, for example on its seventy-fifth (Broer 2007) and eightieth anniversaries (Dunst 2012). It will be interesting to see whether this renewed interest in alternative currencies translates into more knowledge about them and more in actual circulation.

In trumpeting alternative currencies and explaining in detail the way they work on the ground, *Planet Ottakring* takes precisely the opposite tack of more mainstream financial films, which tend to focus on extremely complicated, algorithmically driven virtual financial instruments invented for the specific purpose of making self-styled "masters of the universe" very wealthy very quickly. While films such as *Inside Job* (2010, dir. Charles Ferguson), *Margin Call* (2011, dir. J.C. Chandor), *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013, dir. Martin Scorsese), *Master of the Universe* (2013, dir. Marc Bauder), *The Big Short* (2015, dir. Adam McCay), *Equity* (2016, dir. Meera Menon), and *Banking on Bitcoin* (2016, dir. Christopher Cannucciari), deal with complex trading practices of dubious legality and tend to garner comments such as "[w]atching the film without any economics or basic banking/trading knowledge could be hard at times" (helloamazon), Riebl's film provides precisely such basic knowledge. It makes clear that just as water is necessary for a human body's circulation, the circulation of currency is equally important to the healthy functioning of local shops and services.¹² When this circulation is disrupted by processes of accumulation, local economies, which provide for the livelihood of local citizens, suffer. It is not bor-

12 My thanks to Carrie Smith-Prei for helping me to nuance this analogy so that its economic import was clearer.

rowing or debt per se that is depicted as causing hardship, nor the presence of foreigners, but rather the fact that no new currency is making its way into the neighborhood. The loan shark Frau Jahn only becomes a problem when the crime boss Disko is no longer around to offset her accumulation. As the relation between Frau Jahn and Disko demonstrates, banks only become a problem when governments refuse to inject new money into the system, as they do in adopting neoliberal austerity measures.

Riebl could easily have made a morality tale that blamed the human greed of bankers, something Austrians are all too familiar with on account of the BAWAG banking scandal. Three years before the American banking crisis, Austrians received a terrible lesson in the realities of “banks too big to fail,” when what had traditionally been the bank of their workers, the BAWAG (Bank für Arbeit und Wirtschaft AG [Bank for Labor and Commerce]) with its close ties to Austria’s Social-Democratic Party (SPÖ) and the trade unions, was discovered to have made bad loans to the CEO of Refco, an American commodities brokerage company that had been involved in risky derivative investments held in off-balance-sheet vehicles. Refco’s creditors came after the BAWAG, and its owners, the Österreichische Gewerkschaftsbund (ÖGB), the trade unions’ national representative body, saw itself forced to divest itself of the bank, which was sold to an American consortium called Cerberus, which has in the meantime been trying to make it profitable through the type of layoff-based restructuring with which *Up in the Air* (2009, dir. Jason Reitman) has become synonymous.

Instead of a film about the sophisticated dealings of amoral bankers, Riebl preferred to make a romantic comedy that draws attention to banking’s basic structures and how intimately they are imbricated in everyday life, that is, the lives of everyday people and not a few white male masters of the universe. As he put it, “[e]s geht um Leute, die gerade irgendwie durchs Leben durchschlupfen und es gerade irgendwie schaffen” [“It’s about people who somehow barely manage to find a way and somehow barely manage to make it”] (“Presseheft” 2015). And those people are in Ottakring, where historically “the people” experi-

enced the violence of the state in the form of its police force, and where more recently they have been experiencing the violence of global finance capital in the form of the real estate market.

In the “Anarchy in Ottakring” chapter of *Die Anarchie der Vorstadt: Das andere Wien um 1900* [*Unruly Masses: The Other Side of Fin-de-siècle Vienna*], Maderthaler and Musner detail, in addition to the funeral of Franz Schuhmeier, the “wretched” living conditions in the district (2008, 19) and the fabled riot that took place there on September 17, 1911 — the first time since the revolutionary struggles of 1848 that the army fired on the people of Vienna, “[s]omething that had not happened even during the most violent storms of the struggle for universal suffrage” (ibid., 7). Their account builds on Otto Bauer’s, whose name has become synonymous with Austro-Marxism. For Bauer, “it was the ‘global calamity’ of inflation, intensified in Austria by a series of particular circumstances, that had driven the mass of Viennese working people to ‘desperation’ and inflamed an ‘ordinary street demonstration’ into the (apparently) ‘aimless revolt’ of the suburbs” (ibid.). For Maderthaler and Musner, “this uprising represented more than what Otto Bauer so brilliantly analyzed in terms of economics and politics” (ibid., 19). More was at stake, namely, a form of inscription in which the district was clearly positioned as “a world outside of bourgeois rationality and urban order” (ibid., 20). This “instrumental narrative” created the conditions for “the ‘colonization’ of the suburbs and their comprehensive reordering, when necessary deploying police and military means” (ibid., 21). In the twenty-first-century, colonization has taken on a new form, namely, property development, which, as we have seen in the previous chapter, has resulted in violence as squatters desperate for a roof over their heads have sought shelter in buildings left empty and been forcibly evicted.¹³

13 An example at the time of writing was those forcibly evicted from Neulerchenfelderstrasse 35 as soon as their story hit the headlines (“Polizei räumte besetztes Haus in Wien” 2018). One can understand how galling they must find it that the authorities prefer to let buildings stay empty and fall into disrepair, rather than allow people to inhabit and care for them at no cost.

As a *gebürtiger*- [born-] Ottakringer, Riebl is very familiar with the district's history, so much so that he confessed that his depiction of the district was closer to its historical reputation than its current reality:

Ursprünglich war Ottakring ja ein Arbeiterbezirk, aber heute ist das ja auch ein hipper Bezirk und gleichzeitig, noch mehr als damals, ein Einwandererbezirk. Aber mein Ottakring im Film ist natürlich ein poetischer Blick darauf, fast ein bisschen historischer.

[Ottakring was originally a working-class district, but today it is also hip, and at the same time, even more than it was back then, a district of immigrants. But my Ottakring in the film naturally looks at it with a poetic gaze that's almost a bit historical.] ("Presseheft" 2015).

This condensation of Ottakring's past and present has the effect of making an important political point.

In choosing to title his film *Planet Ottakring* and to set it in the Brunnenviertel-Yppenviertel vicinity, Riebl very cannily claims the politics of the district's proletarian heritage for an area known for residents of immigrant heritage. While not yet a majority, the percentage of immigrants in the district is considerable:

[n]icht weniger als 37,5% der Bevölkerung des Zählbezirks hatten einen Geburtsort, der nicht in Österreich liegt. Der Anteil der nicht-österreichischen StaatsbürgerInnen lag zu diesem Zeitpunkt bei 32,1%. Entsprechend der Wiener Zuwanderungsgeschichte der letzten Jahrzehnte dominieren die ex-jugoslawischen und türkischen Herkunftsgruppen: So wurden 17,4 % der Wohnbevölkerung im ehemaligen Jugoslawien geboren (10,3% in Serbien und Montenegro) bzw. hatten 16,8% die Staatsbürgerschaft einer der jugoslawischen Nachfolgestaaten. 8,0% der EinwohnerInnen wurden in der

Türkei geboren, ebenso viele verfügten 2001 über die türkische Staatsangehörigkeit.

[Not less than 37.5% of the population in the district had a birthplace outside of Austria. At the time the percentage of non-Austrian citizens was at 32.1%. In keeping with Vienna's immigration history of the last decades groups with ex-Yugoslav and Turkish backgrounds dominated: 17.4% of the population living there had been born in the former Yugoslavia (10.3% in Serbia and Montenegro) while 16.8% were citizens of states resulting from the breakup of Yugoslavia. 8.0% of inhabitants had been born in Turkey, and as many were Turkish citizens in 2001.] (Antalovsky et al. 2008, 42)

Unlike culture-clash comedies, Riebl's film does not play up the unsettling, "uncivilized" habits of non-Christian groups for laughs (they slaughter lambs and donkeys! They circumcise their sons!). Rather, *Planet Ottakring* depicts a community whose members all face the same debilitating financial forces, which serves to draw attention to the working-class status of the majority of immigrants and to question why racialized groups are denied access to working-class identities in the Austrian mainstream. While neither Sammy nor Valerie has a "migrational" background, many of their friends and neighbors do, such as Sammy's girlfriend at the beginning of the film and the bartender in his establishment. Sammy and Valerie serve as a linchpin around which an alternative community emerges, in Gibson-Graham and the Community Economies Collective's sense of "not a fixed identity nor a bounded locality, but [...] a never-ending process of being together, of struggling over the boundaries and substance of togetherness, and of coproducing this togetherness in complex relations of power" (Gibson-Graham et al 2018, 5). That Christian marriage is not a necessary foundation for this community is made clear in the fact that Sammy's grandparents are divorced and his parents completely absent, while Valerie's landlady, Frau Jahn, and Disko are both

depicted as single or without known partners. Moreover, non-human elements subject to violence and requiring care, such as the cat and Disko's vintage vehicle, are important members of the community.

Strikingly, none of the characters in *Planet Ottakring* are pictured in inadequate abodes, although many are immigrants indebted to a local loan shark, something that contrasts with the culture-clash comedies, which tend to work in references to how inadequate the housing of immigrants is. The swimmer in *Die Freischwimmerin* is introduced to us as she trips over a skateboard on her way out of the ill-lit hallway of the dingy building her fatherless family lives in, while the Turkish restaurateur in the *Kebab* films has bought the entire building together with the restaurant space on the main floor and in the first film is repeatedly called upon by his immigrant tenants to fix problems with the plumbing. What *Planet Ottakring* emphasizes is the difference in the size and opulence of dwellings, for example between Sammy's grandfather's modest cottage and Frau Jahn's luxurious villa, underscoring the heterogeneity of the neighborhood's housing stock.

Gentrification, however, is for the most part a non-topic in *Planet Ottakring*, something that fits a larger pattern of denial that both New York and Berlin also experienced, in the 1970s and 1990s respectively (Kadi 2016). While Vienna's much vaunted reputation for social housing is commonly seen as buttressing the city against gentrification, the gentrification debate in Vienna is shrouded in myth, as Justin Kadi has shown, particularly "Mythos 1: Der soziale Wohnbau in Wien hat Gentrifizierung weitgehend verhindert" ["Myth 1: social housing in Vienna has to a great extent prevented gentrification"]; Ottakring may have a "vergleichsweise größeres Angebot an Sozialwohnungen" ["a comparatively large offering of social housing"] (Kadi), but at 35% there are still considerable private rentals and ownership, something one also sees when one considers the regeneration of the housing stock that Ottakring has undergone: "72% of the renovated houses since 2000 were subsidised which means a set

of strict rules apply to them. However, 28% of the projects were completely privately financed” (Riegler 2012).

In reminding viewers of what Ottakring stands for locally—its historical status as Vienna’s prototypical working-class district, home to its brewery, a famous uprising, and the cemetery in which Franz Schuhmeier “was enshrined as a political icon of a proletarian suburban culture” (Maderthaler and Musner 2008, 127)—Riebl’s film champions the alternative the district stands for: a place of neighbors with built-in checks and balances, where foreigners, whether from the Balkans or Germany, are accepted and given both lodgings and work, and criminals who do harm, such as by selling hard, as opposed to recreational, drugs, are swiftly made aware of the errors of their ways. Roughing foreigners up a little is a form of acclimatization, and it is only if they do not respond by becoming good neighbors that they are treated more harshly.

The film’s overarching argument is about internal self-regulation and the district’s ability to provide itself with its own capital. In fact, it is due to the City of Vienna’s careful regulating of its housing stock over the course of the twentieth century that the district has taken the form it has. As scholars of gentrification such as Johannes Riegler have pointed out, the current phase of gentrification is merely the latest in a long history of urban planning: “gentrification, although disguised by terms as urban renewal and revalorisation, is a governmental strategy for creating social balance in Brunnenviertel,” seen as necessary given “the downward trend” in the district and its reputation as a place of small-time criminals. Riegler finds that “[t]he governmental strategy chosen was appropriate to do so as it brought important impulses and improvements.” However, the effects of this strategy now need to be reined in as “the different social groups do not intermingle and mix in public space since both ethnic groups and the newly arriving people have different places and corners to meet. The next step has to be to connect the groups and to foster integration” and prevent “a development towards an island of middle and upper classes” typical of gentrification processes.

As no other district in Vienna could, Ottakring distils the social implications of “successful” gentrification in an ironically economical manner, something Riebl expertly channels in *Planet Ottakring*. The problem of the property market is depicted as the distance between Frau Jahn and her extortionist practices, which are depicted in visual terms as sado-masochistic, and Dis-ko’s more humane, hedonistic ethos. The solution that Sammy and Valerie represent is that of a next generation, which needs to overcome national (German versus Austrian) divides while at the same time standing up to the onslaught of what one might call, paraphrasing Sharon Zukin, “gentrification by cappuccino.” While the culture-clash comedies also demonstrate an awareness of intergenerational renewal, the cultural solutions they offer in terms of either accepting or rejecting gendered bodily markers such as head scarves or foreskin pale in comparison to Riebl’s film’s advice to become informed about the workings of finance capitalism so as to steel oneself against the negative effects its seductive workings can have on the everyday life in one’s neighborhood. Serving up coffee with credit in English is not only a way of translating the global into the local but also a way of protecting the local by mobilizing the communal politics that have long been at home in Ottakring rather than the harmful identitarian politics that characterize culture clashes. It is also a way of helping the district transcend its reputation as a logical place for culture-clash comedies. Riebl’s film demonstrates an awareness that Ottakring has gone global:

[i]m Wechselspiel zwischen demographischer und sozio-ökonomischer Entwicklung des Brunnenviertels, top down- und bottom up-Interventionen sowie dem politischen bzw. öffentlichen Diskurs konnte eine sich gegenseitig verstärkende Dynamik entstehen. Diese Entwicklung führt zu einem Imagewandel des Viertels, wodurch Zuwandererkulturen als positiver Aspekt urbaner Entwicklung wahrgenommen werden und das Brunnenviertel eine Neupositionierung im gesamtstädtischen Gefüge erfährt sowie als identitätsverändernder Faktor wirkt.

[In the play between demographic and socio-economic development of the Brunnenviertel, top-down and bottom-up interventions as well as political and public discourse have been able to help a mutually strengthening dynamic to develop. This development leads to a change in the area's image, whereby migrational cultures are perceived as a positive aspect of urban development and an identity-changing factor, and the Brunnenviertel experiences a new positioning in, as well as serves as a factor in changing the identity of, the overall urban fabric.] (Antalovsky and et al 2008, 39).

To match the district's new positioning, *Planet Ottakring* deserves recognition for the way it re-enlivens the district's proletarian past and offers an important counterbalance to the identity-producing discourses of the culture-clash comedies. A particularly vibrant strand of the city's "feel good" cultural production, it shows how history continues to resonate, to matter, in Vienna.

Lazarus's Necropolitical Afterlife at Vienna's #Volkstheater

“Tomorrow belongs to those who can hear it coming.”

— Bowie, cited in D. Buckley (2015, 64)

“The practice of violence, like all action, changes the world, but the most probable change is to a more violent world.”

— Arendt, cited in Nelson (2012, 243)

While the Arena occupation was going on in the late summer of 1976, among the offerings showing in West German, and possibly also Austrian, cinemas was David Bowie's screen debut in *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976, dir. Nicholas Roeg).¹ The film follows the misadventures of Thomas Jerome Newton, an alien who comes to earth in search of water for his dying planet, uses his advanced technology to amass the necessary wealth to ship water back to his planet but in the process falls victim to corporate intrigue and his own weaknesses. As he attempts to flee on his spaceship, he is outed as an alien and ends up an incarcer-

¹ This chapter reworks and builds on material that appears in Ingram 2020. The release date for the film in West Germany was August 1976, but no date could be found for Austria.

ated alcoholic. The story resonated with Bowie as it came at the end of his drug-addled American period, after which he fled for the healing anonymity and productivity of Berlin. As Dene October notes in his reading of what he calls the Bowie-Newton matrix, “[p]laying the role had a profound effect upon him, one he felt more intensely than with his other characters, like he was outering ‘a spirit within’ [...], an identity that crystalized in the artwork to the albums *Station to Station* and *Low*, re-emerged in the Thin White Duke, and again, much later, in work that reflects back on his life” (October 2019, 107).

When a liver cancer diagnosis forced him to confront the certainty of death, Bowie chose to revisit the unhappy, immortal alien he had so uncannily embodied in the 1970s, who had wanted to die but could not. *Lazarus*, his first and only musical, on which he collaborated with Irish playwright Enda Walsh, picks up the story where the film left off, finds a derelict, gin-soaked Newton in his Manhattan apartment slowly going out of his mind and follows his interactions with a number of characters who may or may not be figments of his imagination. Its debut on December 7, 2015, in the New York Theater Workshop in New York’s East Village, was Bowie’s last public appearance before his death the following month, on January 10, 2016, two days after his sixty-ninth birthday.

To the great surprise of many, including *Lazarus*’s German translator Peter Torberg, it has not been on English-language stages but rather on German-language ones that *Lazarus* has taken off. Of the first dozen productions of *Lazarus*, only the first two, in New York and London, were not in German. After playing in New York until January 20, 2016 and at London’s King Cross Theatre from November 8, 2016 to January 22, 2017,² *Lazarus* saw its German premiere on February 3, 2018 at the

2 One of the London performances was filmed and screened for one night only in New York on May 2, 2018.

Schauspielhaus in Düsseldorf, with its Austrian one following on May 9, 2018 in Vienna's Volkstheater.³

Unlike the New York and London productions, in both of which *Dexter* star Michael C. Hall played Newton and which were “exact replicas” of Bowie’s vision,⁴ the only thing the German-language productions have in common is that they are based on Torberg’s translation. Otherwise, each is entirely its own entity, featuring its own concept, direction, and cast.⁵ As the reading in this chapter reveals, the Viennese *Lazarus*, directed by Miloš Lolić and with an almost unrecognizably youthful Günter Franzmeier as Newton, radically distinguishes itself from both the Anglophone original and its Germanophone counterparts, as is appropriate to its place of performance.

Vienna’s Volkstheater was co-founded in 1889 by the writer Ludwig Anzensgruber and the industrialist Felix Fischer with the explicitly counterhegemonic mission of providing alternative offerings to both the imperial and music-oriented commercial theaters. After tracing the Volkstheater’s history as a revolutionary place for “the people,” I turn in this chapter to the colorfully postmodernist yet deadly serious distinctiveness

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- 3 Further premiers followed on June 9, 2018 in the Theater am Goetheplatz in Bremen, September 27, 2018 in the Großer Saal Musiktheater in Linz, November 17, 2018 in the SchauSpielHaus Hamburg, February 2, 2019 at the Staatstheater Nürnberg, May 18, 2019 in the Theater Bielefeld, June 6, 2019 in the Schauspielhaus Leipzig, and June 15, 2019 in the Deutsches Theater Göttingen. It also began to spread both within and outside Europe, with the Norwegian premier in Oslo on May 11, 2019, an Anglophone stint at the Arts Centre in Melbourne from May 18 to June 9, 2019, the Danish premier at the gala opening of the Aarhus Festuge summer festival on August 30, 2019, and the Dutch premiere on October 13, 2019 at the DeLaMar Theater in Amsterdam. At the time of writing, more German productions are set to open at the Kampa-Halle Minden on March 31, 2020 and the Musik- und Kongresshalle Lübeck on April 1, 2020.
- 4 Producer Robert Fox claimed that “[i]t’s absolutely as he wanted it. It’s absolutely as he saw it, [...] What we did in London was an exact replica of what he saw, and what he approved. We wouldn’t change that” (von Aue 2018).
- 5 The director of the Melbourne production, Michael Kantor, boasted in a similar spirit that “[t]his isn’t some pre-made production we bought off the shelf from New York, like *The Lion King*” (Lallo 2019).

of its *Lazarus* production and the contribution it made to the ensemble's repertoire at a critical time in the theater's history. I show how its unique interpretation of the necropolitical tensions inherent in the work, which underscore the violence in American culture, supports a feminist revisiting of sadism and the decoupling of it from masochism *pace* Deleuze's argument in *Coldness and Cruelty*. The Viennese *Lazarus* helps us answer to the fundamental questions the musical and its afterlife pose: why, as he lay dying, did Bowie choose to return to the character of Newton, and why has that return resonated so much in the Germanophone sphere?

Vienna's Volkstheater

The "Deutsches Volkstheater" was established at a formative moment in Viennese socio-cultural history, as key work by Marion Linhardt and W.E. Yates details. After six decades of relative institutional stability, Vienna and its cultural institutions transformed markedly in the last third of the nineteenth century:

The rapid expansion of the city from about 500,000 by 1860 to nearly 750,000 by 1885 (over a million, counting the districts outside the city boundaries which would be incorporated in 1891) and over 1,600,000 by the end of the century; the increase both of the urban bourgeoisie and of the working class, in a city where mass poverty had already become a problem by 1848; the rise of nationalism that followed the Treaty of Prague and the constitution of December 1867; the growth of anti-Semitism; the financial crash of 1873 — all these factors colour the theatre history of the period. (Yates 2008, 51)

That history tells of the effects of a shifting, expanding demographic on the growth of the city's theatrical offerings:

[A]s Vienna underwent rapid expansion in the last third of the nineteenth century, the Viennese theatre scene caught

up with developments that had taken place decades before in the much larger metropolitan cities of Paris and London: instead of attracting a more or less homogeneous audience that was rooted in local traditions, the *Volkstheater* [popular, commercial theatres] became dependent on a heterogeneous cross-section of the urban population, a collection of anonymous spectators from very different backgrounds. (Linhardt 2008, 69)

Up until the replacement of the glacis, the former military fortification that protectively encircled the first district, by the Ringstrasse, which began in 1859, Vienna “basically had five professional theatres: two court theatres and three commercial ones” (Yates 2008, 52). The latter — the Theater in der Josefstadt, the Theater in der Leopoldstadt, which became the Carltheater, and the Theater an der Wien — were all outside the old walled centre. While what was then still called the k.k. Hof-Burgtheater was relocating from the Michaelerplatz to a prestigious new position across the burgeoning Ringstrasse from the City Hall and the University, where it officially opened in 1888, new theaters were opening mostly in the Vorstadt outside the ring. Joining the Harmonie-Theater in the ninth district in the Wasagasse, which opened in 1866; the Etablissement Ronacher, in the central Seilerstätte, which opened in 1888; the Raimundtheater in the sixth district, which opened in 1893; the Kaiserjubiläums-Stadttheater in what is now the Volksoper, which opened in 1898 and was originally a “notorious ‘Aryan theatre’”; and the multi-media complex Venedig in Wien [Venice in Vienna] in the Prater in 1895 (ibid., 52); the Deutsches Volkstheater opened in 1889 on the other side of the glacis, next to what had been the royal stables, which is now the Museumsquartier.

These new theaters had to accommodate their repertoire to the audiences finding their way to them. As Linhardt documents in *Residenzstadt und Metropole* [*Imperial Capital and Metropolis*], her “immensely informative examination of the structure of the theatre scene from 1858 to 1918,” the period saw a dramatic revolution in taste in favor of operetta so that “by 1910 the total

seating capacity of theatres staging operetta in Vienna was four times greater than that available for spoken theatre” (ibid., 52). Spoken theater, too, struggled to accommodate the “considerable increase in foreign influence on the repertoire,” which “was being recast as a conflictual relationship” between the *Alt-Wien* [Old Vienna] of the *Vormärz* period before the revolutions of 1848 and the beginnings of modernism (Linhardt 2008, 70–72).⁶

As befitting its name and the didactic impulses of co-founder Anzengruber (Yates 2008, 60–61), the Deutsches Volkstheater entered the fray with the mission of providing as wide a spectrum of the population as possible with as wide a variety of plays as possible. To that end, its repertoire ranged from the classics and the type of comic folk plays Anzengruber had become known for to modern realism, and it was built with a capacity of 1901—1401 seats and 500 standing places—the largest in the German-speaking realm at the time.⁷

Over the course of its history, the Volkstheater has pursued a mission of providing affordable entertainment while maintaining a reputation for daring, revolutionary productions.⁸ In the interwar period it became known for its highly controversial modern repertoire of such works as Hermann Bahr’s *Die Stimme* [*The Voice*], Hans Müller’s *Die Flamme* [*The Flame*], and

6 This conflict helps to explain the slump the Theater in der Josefstadt experienced during this era: “in the period between 1865 and 1899 it went through eleven directors or lessees, and it speaks volumes that on the current [2008] website of the Theater in der Josefstadt under the heading ‘Historisches’ [Historical Information] there is a gap between 1860 and 1899” (Linhardt 2008, 71).

7 Over the years, its size has shrunk. The damage it suffered during World War II brought it down to 1539 and renovations in 1980–1981 to 1148. Its current capacity is 832, making it the second largest theater in Vienna and the third largest in the German-speaking realm. (“Volkstheater (Wien)” 2018).

8 To mark its 100th anniversary, Evelyn Schreiner’s *100 Jahre Volkstheater. Theater. Zeit. Geschichte* [100 Years of the Volkstheater: Theater, Time, History] was published in 1989. It has become a standard work and made possible excellent online resources, such as the “Volkstheater” entry on the *Wien Geschichte Wiki* and the German *Wikipedia* entry. The information in this section has been compiled from these sources.

Arthur Schnitzler's *Professor Bernhardt* and *Reigen* [*La Ronde*]. It also featured prestigious guest performances by a who's who of the Berlin theatrical world, such as Fritzi Massary, Asta Nielsen, Elisabeth Bergner, Adele Sandrock, Curt Goetz, Heinz Rühmann, Conrad Veidt, Fritz Kortner, Paul Wegener, and Emile Jannings starring in Gerhart Hauptmann's *Fuhrmann Henschel* [*Drayman Henschel*]. Rudolph Beer, who served as Director from 1924 to 1932, was even able to secure Moscow's Kammertheater under the direction of Alexander Tairoff to perform *Giroflé-Girofla*. During the Nazi period, the Volkstheater daringly offered theatrical resistance in performances of George Bernard Shaw's *St. Joan* and Ferdinand Raimund's *Der Diamant des Geisterkönigs* [*The Ghost-King's Diamond*]. Director Walter Bruno Iltz, who had already crossed swords with the Nazis during his decade as General Director of Düsseldorf's public stages from 1927–37 and been denied membership in the party due to his "liberal-Marxist attitude," used the theater to protect vulnerable actors and artists.

After the war, the theater continued with its revolutionary modern repertoire. Despite the fact it was in the American sector, it put on neglected Russian dramatists, such as Alexander Ostrovsky, Ivan Turgenev and Anatoly Lunacharsky. After the Soviet withdrawal in 1955, it came to be called "the bravest theater in Vienna" for featuring the work of contemporary playwrights such as Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Sean O'Casey, Jean Cocteau, Eugène Ionesco, Jean Genet, Thornton Wilder, Tennessee Williams, William Faulkner, Jean Anouilh, John Osborne, James Baldwin, Heinar Kipphardt, Friedrich Dürrenmatt, Max Frisch, and Václav Havel. It was the theater that in 1963 put an end to the decade-long, Burgtheater-led "Brecht Boycott," during which works by the playwright, who had been granted Austrian citizenship by the provincial Salzburg government in 1950 and who died in East Berlin in 1956, were discouraged from being staged anywhere in Vienna.⁹ It was also the

9 Well-known writers Friedrich Torberg and Hans Weigel prominently advocated against Brecht due to his communist ties. For example, in a speech

first theater in Vienna to hire a woman as its general director, Emmy Werner, in 1988.

The second woman to serve as the Volkstheater's general director, Anna Badora, originally came to Vienna from Krakow in 1979 to study directing at the Max Reinhardt Seminar, the first woman ever to do so. After having staged *Emilia Galotti* at the Volkstheater during Emmy Warner's tenure, she worked as an assistant and freelance director at a number of German theaters in Cologne, Basel, Essen, Ulm, Munich, and Darmstadt. Badora was then contracted in Mainz for five years as Director of Acting, and in Düsseldorf and Graz for ten years each as General Director before coming to the Volkstheater in 2015. It was on Badora's watch that *Lazarus* premiered on May 9, 2018, three months after the German-language premier in Düsseldorf.¹⁰

Badora's five-year, unrenewed term at the Volkstheater proved highly contentious. Upon arriving, she replaced all but four of the ensemble's actors with ones she brought with her from Graz and heaped an enormous workload on them — in her first season the repertoire featured the work of seventeen directors from nine different countries ("18 Neue Schauspieler

entitled "Soll man Brecht im Westen spielen?" ["Should one perform Brecht in the West?"], which was printed in *Der Monat* (1961), Torberg declared that "Bertolt Brecht, daran ist nicht zu rütteln, war ein Anhänger der kommunistischen Diktatur. Er war ihr im vollen, ursprünglichen Sinn des Wortes verschrieben, er hat sein Werk und seine Person — die sich so wenig voneinander trennen lassen, wie sein Werk sich in einen künstlerischen und in einen politischen Teil aufspalten ließe — restlos und vorsätzlich in den Dienst der kommunistischen Sache gestellt, und er hat für diese Sache Propaganda gemacht, wo immer er konnte. ["There can be no denying that Bertold Brecht was a supporter of the communist dictatorship. He was committed to it in the full, original sense of the word. He put his life and his work, which are as hard to separate as the artistic and political parts of his work, intentionally and completely at the service of the communist mission, and he propagated for it wherever he could"] (Torberg).

- ¹⁰ As coincidence would have it, just as Badora had previously worked in Düsseldorf, the director of the Düsseldorf performance, Mattias Hartmann, had worked in Vienna at the Burgtheater from 2009–14, leaving under the shadow of a financial scandal.

am Volkstheater” 2015). *Lazarus* director Miloš Lolić is a typical example. From Serbia, where he studied at the Belgrade University of Performing Arts before making a career on the German-speaking stages of Europe, Lolić won a Nestroy Prize, Austria’s top theater award, in 2012 for best upcoming director for the production he staged at the Volkstheater of *Magic Afternoon* by Wolfgang Bauer, one of Austria’s most important modern dramatists. Lolić also won the Volkstheater’s Dorothea Neff Prize in 2018 for best production of the season for his *Lazarus* production. Another director Badora commissioned was Christine Eder, who did the revival of the *Proletenpassion* for WERK X that was discussed in the previous chapter. At the Volkstheater, Eder has directed a number of didactic musicals in the *Proletenpassion*’s spirit: *Alles Walzer, alles brennt. Eine Untergangsrevue* [Everything’s Burning, Let’s Waltz: An Apocalyptic Musical Revue] in the 2016–17 season, Jura Soyfer’s *Der Lechner Edi schaut ins Paradies* [Journey to Paradise] in 2017–18, and *Verteidigung der Demokratie* [Defending Democracy], a musical about Hans Kelsen and the Austrian constitution in 2018–19.

That Badora favoured conceptual, experimental productions can also be seen in her own staging of *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* [The Merchant of Venice] in the 2018–19 season. At the beginning of each performance, the audience was asked to vote for the actor who would play Shylock that evening by clapping as loudly as they could for their choice, which was measured by an applause meter. The three choices were a typical twenty-first-century businessman-banker, a woman, and a small-statured Jewish man of orthodox appearance. All three actors had to be prepared to play both Shylock and a number of supporting roles. At the performance I attended the orthodox Jew was the top choice of an audience made up of mostly elderly women.

Attendance and profitability fell rather dramatically during Badora’s term, especially in comparison with the Theater in der Josefstadt, with its similar proximity to the Burgtheater — both are a mere ten-minute walk away from Vienna’s main stage on the Ring. In addition, as noted in the previous chapter on the *Proletenpassion*, the number of politically engaged smaller

theaters in Vienna was rising in response to the ongoing political chaos, and the audience for these productions, while keen, is neither as large nor as lucrative as the aging conservative crowd that supports tradition-rich offerings. As Schmidt has argued, a better strategy than competing with other stages would be to attract new audiences:

Dabei wäre das Volkstheater neben den Mittelbühnen sowie der freien Szene genau der richtige Ort, um in der Breite neue Publikumsschichten zu generieren: junge Menschen, migrantisches Publikum, Bobos, Ausgewillige und — nicht zuletzt — vor allem politisch denkende Menschen.

[The Volkstheater, together with the mid-sized theaters and the independent scene, would be precisely the right place to attract new strata of audiences: young people, a migrant audience, bourgeois bohemians, those who like to go out, and — last but very much not least — the politically minded.] (V. Schmidt 2019)

The *Lazarus* production was very much in this spirit, selling well to a younger and more diverse audience than usual, and not only in Vienna. The Düsseldorf production has been described as “einer der spärlichen Quotenkracher der deutschen Theater-saison wurde” [“one of the few hits of the German theater season”] (Sichrovsky 2018).

Vienna’s Necropolitical Staging of *Lazarus*

It would be a mistake, however, to write the Viennese *Lazarus* off as mere audience-bait. Irrespective of its being extended another season in Vienna, not atypical for a Germanophone *Lazarus*, Lolić’s production offers keen insights into the life-and-death thematic of Bowie’s musical unavailable elsewhere. As this reading demonstrates, it not only calls for but stresses the timeliness of a reconsideration of sadomasochism along the lines theorized by Gilles Deleuze.

In conceptualizing an appropriate space between life and death for the Volkstheater's staging of *Lazarus*, set designer Wolfgang Menardi let himself be inspired by the taxidermied specimens in the nearby Natural History Museum and created a psychedelic menagerie to house his hallucinating hero. Instead of anything recognizably rocket-like, a form that featured prominently in the Anglo-American, Amsterdam, Düsseldorf, and Hamburg stagings, Menardi designed a towering contraption of asymmetrical, glass cases and placed it at the center of a double revolving stage. Around it were a number of spaced-apart, upright screens and mirrors capable of revolving and refracting light so that the stage glowed in the colors of the rainbow as its middle revolved in one direction, its outside in the other, and its reflective contents all on their own. The staging thus conceptually mirrored Newton's confused state, while affording him, and the others in the cast, the possibility of stepping off the revolving stage and having a respite from the maelstrom. In littering the stage with specimens of exotic animals — a polar bear, moose, sheep, monkey, seal, turtle, ostrich, snakes, and some unidentifiable birds, along with a large swordfish loomingly suspended overhead to complete the effect — the production emphasized the play's concentration on life and death. The radiant neon of the costumes and lighting pulsed with vital, life-giving forces, amplifying the energy of the music, while the taxidermied animals gazed out at the audience with their dead eyes, reproachfully posing the question of who had had the right to take their life. More forcefully than either the Linz production's choice of a morgue setting, Nuremberg's of a railway station waiting room, Leipzig's deconstructed cabaret, Bielefeld's abstract hospital-bed constructions, Bremen's even more abstract rising and falling black stairs, or Göttingen's tinselly, water-logged cocktail lounge, the Vienna production drew attention not to the transitory nature of life and the desirability of *carpe noctem* but to the actual, physical taking of it.

That the play's central theme is not dying, but killing can be seen in the character of Valentine. This "mass murderer" (Bowie and Walsh 2017, viii) comes from the fourth cut on *The Next*

Day, in which Bowie poked fun at the commercialization of Valentine's Day's perversion of love by making Valentine a pathetic killer with "a tiny face" and "scrawny hands," who has "sold his soul" and told the narrator that "the teachers and the football stars" were "who's to go." *Lazarus* sets Valentine against Newton's immortality. Even though Newton claims he wants to die and lives accordingly in the addictive, self-destructive manner consumption-oriented, capitalist culture encourages and thrives on, the musical makes clear that there is also a part of him that values life and wants to hang on to it for as long as possible. What Valentine has to do, therefore, is to get Newton to kill himself or rather to kill what is keeping him alive, namely, hope. That is what is shown to bind Newton to life on earth and what he needs to free himself from so that he can embrace death heroically, if just for one day. Only after Valentine has convinced Newton to kill his last hope, embodied in the person of the Girl, can Newton declare that he is "done with this life." Only then, after they sing a re-versioned "Heroes" that ends with Newton singing the final line "[j]ust for one day" by himself, does the Girl leave, and "Newton finds rest" (*ibid.*, 63).

Most productions of *Lazarus* stage this deliberately ambiguous ending in a way that fosters hope. Düsseldorf has Newton lifting off to the stars in his spaceship; Bremen has him climbing a white ladder; Leipzig has him looking out over the stage from the bridge of the set's deconstructed cabaret contraption; Linz has him standing triumphantly at center stage with his arms raised; Göttingen has him contentedly reclining against a grand piano; and even in the Nürnberg production, which shows him expiring very slowly, this happens with him lying on his back with his head resting on the lap of the Girl. In Vienna, in contrast, Franzmeier teeters off the revolving stage to the front of the stage, where he sings "[j]ust for one" and then collapses as the lights go out, leaving the audience to fill in the final "day." Rather than suggesting any type of otherworldly continuation, this heart-stopping finale makes an extraordinary impact, confronting audiences with the reality of death as an unavoidable end and provoking them to reflect on the experience. What will

one see when one looks death in the face? What will that face look like? How much will that depend on one's demographic markers, such as race, class, and gender? And where will one find oneself—bandaged in a hospital bed connected to “life-support” the way Bowie appeared in the video for “Lazarus”? Will one stare into the cold-blooded eyes of an unfeeling or desperately disturbed individual? Will one be packed into a cattle car and carted off to a camp? Will one capsizе on a small, overcrowded raft in the middle of the Mediterranean because “civilized” nations refused to harbor either those vessels or any that dared to rescue them?

The Vienna production thus makes explicit the underlying locational critique in Bowie and Walsh's play that other, more hope-oriented productions do not acknowledge, namely, the historical journey that the musical performance charts from a world that looked up to the America of the American Dream, which prided itself on offering an empathetic welcome to poor immigrants dreaming of a better life they are more than willing to work for, to a world dominated by “Amerika” of the “tortured brow,” which, as the lyrics of “Life on Mars?” have it, is no longer a place of dreams but of nightmares—“Micky Mouse has grown up a cow.” This Amerika is infamous for having produced an ultra-violent, gun-worshipping, racist, xenophobic, homophobic culture exported throughout the world via popular culture. The third song in *Lazarus*, “This Is Not America,” reminds the musical's audiences of what America had once stood for, namely, “The New Colossus” at whose “sea-washed, sunset gates [...] A mighty woman with a torch” named “Mother of Exiles” stood, from whose “beacon-hand/ Glows world-wide welcome” and who so notably cries “With silent lips, ‘Give me your tired, your poor, / Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, / The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. / Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed to me: / I lift my lamp beside the golden door.’” These iconic lines, which are imprinted on the base of the Statue of Liberty and are included at the end of both the printed book of the original *Lazarus* (*ibid.*, 65) as well as the program of the Vienna production, were written in 1883 by Emma Lazarus

as part of a fundraising effort for the statue project. As Yasmin Sabina Khan tells us, Lazarus was at the time “involved in aiding refugees to New York who had fled anti-Semitic pogroms in eastern Europe. These refugees were forced to live in conditions that the wealthy Lazarus had never experienced. She saw a way to express her empathy for these refugees in terms of the statue” (Khan 2010, 165–66).

A dozen songs later, the hopeful future Emma Lazarus had worked hard to make possible is also a thing of the past, and together with Newton we find ourselves distressingly mired in the present. According to Tony Visconti, “Valentine’s Day” was inspired by “a spate of high school shootings in America” (October 2019, 110), a spate that has in the meantime spread to malls, nightclubs, mosques, and even food festivals (Winton et al. 2019). The year of the song’s release on *The Next Day* saw the birth of a grassroots response to the latest headline-grabbing form of killing “made in the USA,” namely, that of young black men by white police officers. The year 2013 was the year #BlackLivesMatter started after the acquittal of George Zimmerman in the shooting death of Florida teen Trayvon Martin. Because of the too many shootings since then, the movement has taken on international proportions, with branches in Australia, Canada and the UK that point to the settler colonial foundation of the phenomenon it opposes.

*Lazarus as Necropolitical Sovereignty:
Decoupling Sadism from Masochism*

The violent taking of life is what necropolitics is all about. As Achille Mbembe introduced it in an influential article in *Public Culture*, necropolitics is “the ultimate expression of sovereignty resides, to a large degree, in the power and the capacity to dictate who may live and who must die” (Mbembe 2003, 11). There has been

growing interest in the necropolitical as a tool to make sense of the symbiotic co-presence of life and death, manifested

ever more clearly in the cleavages between rich and poor, citizens and non-citizens (and those who can be stripped of citizenship); the culturally, morally, economically valuable and the pathological; queer subjects invited into life and queerly abjected populations marked for death. (Haritaworn et al. 2014, 2)

As Sunera Thobani points out in her prologue to the groundbreaking 2014 volume on *Queer Necropolitics*, however, “it is wise to remember that sovereignty is not abstract. It has a particular name, a face, an address, a geographical coordinate. Its face is white, it remains housed in white bodies, it is located in Westernity” (Thobani 2014, xvii). From that perspective, Bowie’s return to Newton in *Lazarus* can be seen as a concretizing of sovereignty in that the face, address, and location he gave it rubs our noses in the contemporary order of things. Given that the original literary character of Newton presaged the billionaire CEOs of media-tech empires, Newton’s Manhattan apartment on Second Avenue is appropriately in the belly of the financial beast, a heart of darkness 2.0. The entire play is rooted in the apartment, from the initial visit of Newton’s friend Michael to Valentine’s finagling of his way in after he has dispatched with Michael and Ben, precipitating Newton’s end. The apartment is Newton’s lair in every sense of the word, something Valentine calls attention to in getting Newton to commit an act of violence there that horrifies Newton and something the Viennese staging underscores by littering the stage with exotic animals.

Newton’s desperate final act of violence stands in stark contrast to Valentine’s sadistic *modus operandi*. Not only does Valentine pick a fight with Michael before offing him, he also “aggressively holds ELLY against the wall. It looks like he’s going to strangle her”¹¹ and terrifies Newton when he “suddenly strikes

11 Michael’s fate is left somewhat ambiguous — he is described as “slumped opposite VALENTINE — dead” but once Valentine starts singing “Love is Lost,” he “suddenly gets up — his shirt bloody — and leaves the apartment” (Bowie and Walsh 2017, 20),

BEN in the stomach hard with the knife,” after which he “grabs BEN by the hair and drags him ‘outside” (Bowie and Walsh 2017, 52). While Vienna’s Valentine, played by Christoph Rothenbuchner, was not as aggressively violent as his counterpart in Leipzig, played by Dirk Lange, whose Village People costume was a match for the bravado with which he played the role, or as elegantly evil as André Kaczmarczyk’s raven-winged demon in Düsseldorf, the Vienna production nonetheless made clear the character’s brutality, something by no means to be taken for granted. In Göttingen, Daniel Mühe played Valentine as sweetly angelic, and the audience could be forgiven for not recognizing he was supposed to be a serial killer. In rejecting the spectacle of sadistic, necropolitical power that Bowie and Walsh’s text confronts us with in the character of Valentine, Göttingen turned the play into a liberal fable with a focus on dying and not killing.

What the original play-text insists on, however, and what in contrast to Göttingen the Vienna production does not deny, is that there are characters who derive pleasure from achieving mastery over others. As the song “Valentine’s Day” puts it, they enjoy having “all the world [...] under [their] heels.” Much has been made over the years of Bowie’s flirtation with fascism in the 1970s. Yet, as Brooker underscores in the patient reading he performs in *Forever Stardust* of Bowie’s whiteness, it was not the case that Bowie was being racist in adopting the character of the Thin White Duke. Rather, by *performing* an exaggerated whiteness, he was drawing attention to racializing tendencies, not ascribing to them himself (Brooker 2017, 101–3). The violence staged in *Lazarus* can be read in a similar fashion. The play refigures death as a deliberate killing of life and, in case we are not paying attention, it underscores this shift by making one of the protagonists a serial killer who not only deliberately kills life, and clearly takes pleasure in doing so, but also brings Newton to the point he is able to commit such an act, albeit without the pleasure.

The difference between the quality of the stabbings that Valentine and Newton commit points to the need for caution in theorizing sadism in works in which Bowie was involved. While

it may be correct that, as Rosalind Galt argues, Bowie's film "performances are most resonant when his oddity centers a queerly disoriented textual system" and that his "success as an actor comes in some measure from his ability to select directors who could harness and amplify these qualities," one should not jump to the conclusion that "another crucial aspect of his queer performance [is]: his play with sadomasochistic erotics" (Galt 2018, 131). Productions of *Lazarus* vary considerably in this regard, with Leipzig's featuring the most graphic sadomasochistic erotics thus far. But Vienna's would seem to be alone in taking the position that the suffering and violent taking of life in *Lazarus* have nothing to do with masochism but are solely a matter of sadism. It is tempting, for example, to stage Newton's household assistant Elly as masochistic. She is stuck in an unfulfilling marriage and undergoes an identity crisis in which she feels she is being taken over by Newton's desire for his old love, Mary Lou. But rather than following her husband off stage after telling him, "[y]ou need someone easier. Someone better," as the script calls for — it reads "ZACH leaves — ELLY follows" (Bowie and Walsh 2017, 53) —, the Viennese Elly, played by Isabella Knöll, does an Ibsenesque Nora and goes her own way.

This feminist-inspired rejection of masochism is in keeping with Nancy J. Holland's explicating of what Gilles Deleuze has to say to battered women. Building on Deleuze's *Coldness and Cruelty*, Holland spells out the gendered implications of uncoupling masochism from sadism theoretically by showing "how the three themes of consent, pleasure, and victimization are interwoven in the traditional account of what is called sado-masochism" (Holland 1993, 16). In these traditional accounts, Freud's and Sartre's in particular, "the tacit assumption" is "that the subject of this discourse is always male and that, by extension, those involved are equal partners" (ibid., 19). Such an assumption, which one notes applies to the powerful, white, male characters Bowie plays in *Merry Christmas*, *Mr. Lawrence* and *Labyrinth* that Galt analyzes, "allows theory to ignore consent descriptively and to assume it normatively, that is, to see all victimization here as voluntary and limited" (ibid., 19). Rather than

blaming the victim as a co-creator of her own unconsciously desired misfortune, Holland encourages us to question the consensuality of Elly's situation, something the Viennese production takes to a logical, emancipated conclusion.

In separating sadism from masochism, the production also encourages an appreciation of how Deleuze's characterization of the sadist as "an apathetic, classical, rationalist lecturer who would negate reality" (ibid., 20) grows more relevant with every passing day that our reality is negated by rationalists uninterested in anything but their own sadistic satisfactions.¹² Similarly his parallel description of the masochist as "a romantic, mythopoetic educator who would suspend reality (suspense is as central to masochistic eroticism as pain — just as reiteration is vital to sadism)" (ibid., 20) offers a diagnosis of those on the Left who have proven helpless in the face of sadism and who need to recognize that they do not, in fact, control the fantasy.¹³ It is only by refusing to suspend reality, which is to say by consciously acknowledging and rejecting their desire for the optimism Lauren Berlant has so masterfully explicated as cruel, that they stand a chance of preventing the mechanical reiteration of violence essential for the sadists' satisfaction.

Vienna's resolute staging of *Lazarus* reveals a sophisticated comprehension of both sides of the problematic to which Deleuze drew theoretical attention. In comparing the urtexts by Sade and Sacher-Masoch, he noted a key conceptual difference between the two psychic phenomena: in masochism, "the contractual nature of the relationship also means that ultimately the 'victim' (the passive masochist) controls the fantasy" and the fantasy ends when Wanda ceases to play along, whereas "it

12 At the time of writing, an op-ed made this point using exactly this language: "I and many Americans are in a state of stunned disbelief that this is who we have become. A culture's values trickle from the top down, and what's trickling down from Trump and his oligarch friends is the idea that cold-blooded cruelty to the weak and defenseless is not only justified but energizing and exciting. A turn-on" (Prose 2019).

13 It is (perhaps appropriately?) painful for me to realize the implications of this division for work done in my part of the academy.

is quite clear in *Sade* that not only does sadism require an unwilling victim, but the death of that victim does not destroy it" (Holland 1993, 19–20). In refusing to sugar-coat the ending of *Lazarus* while at the same time retaining the original's distinction between Newton's anguished and Valentine's euphoric expressions of violence, the Viennese production demonstrates its understanding of the conceptual distance between fantasy and reality. Even if one wants to anthropomorphize the human condition as being in a contractual relation with a grim reaper, it is a sadistic rather than a masochistic relation in that there is no way for us to control the fantasy after our deaths; on the contrary, our deaths are necessary for its prolongation. Hence the rage Newton expresses in "Killing a Little Time," one of the four songs Bowie wrote explicitly for the musical. This gut-wrenching song expresses the violence and pain of dying, "the rage in [him]" as he falls, chokes, fades, and experiences himself as "a broken line."

When confronted with having to die, then, it was just like Bowie to stage that confrontation in a way that held up a mirror to it that we could look into and reflect on death and the implications of how all it can come about.¹⁴ But it was also just like Vienna to stage the musical in a way that paid homage to Bowie's playful, postmodernist performativity while at the same time showing how Bowie used his final work to flip the question from "why must we die?" to "why do people kill?" as well as "why doesn't it bother people to live in such a way that others die?" Recognizing that Bowie's final work involved a confrontation with a death drive he suddenly felt he understood the full extent of, Vienna's Volkstheater produced a *Lazarus* worthy of the theater's long tradition of radical politics. Coming away utterly moved by a staging of necropolitical power as the sadistic spectacle it is speaks to the ensemble's range and the enormous talents that made the production a reality.

14 As Brooker reminds us, mirror images are a common motif in Bowie's work, while "clones, doubles, twins (or triplets) and alter egos" are also recurring features (Brooker 2017, 177).

Hardly Homemad(e): #Schlingensief's Container

“Das theatralische Gefühl der Österreicher macht diese Stadt [Wien] einmalig.” [“Austrians’ theatrical sensibility makes this city [Vienna] unique.”]

— Peymann (2018)

“Ausländer rein, Piefkes raus!” [“Foreigners in, krauts out!”]

— Poet (2002)

A clean-cut young man in jeans and a short-sleeved black shirt carrying a red megaphone struts around a large crowd gathered around a fenced-in shipping container that has been set up in the square in front of Vienna’s Staatsoper [State Opera House].¹ He shouts inflammatory statements into the megaphone, and incensed individuals in the crowd shout back, their remarks often laced with obscenities. One can see the scene, as well as “[t]he installation, its conception and construction, the progression of the six-day duration of the artwork, together with

¹ This chapter builds on material in Ingram (2012), which situates *Schlingensief's Container's* engagement with Austria in European identity-producing discourses.

interviews with Schlingensiefel and contemporaneous reactions from many different commentators (artists, philosophers and collaborators, as well as television news contributors)” (Fiddler 2018, 39) in *Ausländer raus! Schlingensiefels Container* [*Foreigners Out! Schlingensiefel’s Container*] (2002, dir. Paul Poet), the documentary controversial German film and theater director Christoph Schlingensiefel had made of the millennial media spectacle he was commissioned to perform as part of the same Wiener Festwochen that had twenty-four years previously hosted the *Proletenpassion*.² As Allyson Fiddler has noted, “[t]he artwork or site-specific installation is internationally known and has generated a sizeable secondary literature” (Fiddler 2018, 39). However, as far as I have been able to ascertain, none have yet to analyze Schlingensiefel’s work locationally, as I do here. In outlining Schlingensiefel’s considerable dealings with Vienna and Austria and then contrasting his container action with Viennese documentarist Ruth Beckermann’s response to the controversial 2000 coalition government, namely, *Homemad(e)*, the artistic rendering of her neighborhood—Vienna’s old textile quarter in the first district at the opposite end of Vienna’s inner city from the Staatsoper, this chapter demonstrates the considerable cultural distance between these two documentaries’ locations, one at the southern and the other at the northern edge of the Ringstrasse that encircles Vienna’s first district. My reading goes beyond identifying the works as merely site-specific to demonstrate the historical forces of these central Viennese locations that, whether unwittingly or cannily, were brought to bear in their respective artworks and generated the politicized responses they did. In doing so, Schlingensiefel’s final work in the city, a staging of *Mea Culpa — eine ReadyMadeOper* at the Burgtheater in 2009, a year before his death on August 21, 2010 after a lengthy battle with lung cancer, reads like a sign of the lessons

2 Schlingensiefel’s projects are notoriously boundary-breaking. As Alexander Kluge asked, “[i]s a work by Schlingensiefel an installation, an opera, a series of number, a total work of art, a working through of reality, a piece of theater, an intermission or backstage activity? They are all interventions, transcriptions, transliterations, continuations” (Kluge 2010, 2).

his work in the city and the country taught him about the power of its traditions of oppositional culture and the strength they lend its public sphere.

Encounters of the Increasingly Close Kind

Bitte Liebt Österreich — erste österreichische Koalitionswoche [*Please Love Austria — First Austrian Coalition Week*] was by no means Schlingensief's first project in Austria. That honor goes to the play *Hurra, Jesus! Ein Hochkampf* [*Hurray, Jesus! A Fight*], which premiered on September 30, 1995, as a co-production of the United Stages of Graz and the Steirischer Herbst, an international festival for contemporary art held every fall in the Styrian capital. The Graz audience seems to have enjoyed Schlingensief's humorous attack on the Church. They invited him to back to the Steirischer Herbst three years later to mount an Austrian follow-up to the highly controversial *Chance 2000* action he had run in the lead-up to the German federal election of 1998.³ For *Chance 2000*, Schlingensief had "founded a political party with the aim of supporting disabled, unemployed, and other marginalized people to become independent electoral candidates" (Forrest and Scheer 2010, 10). The medial highpoint of this action was the invitation to go *Baden im Wolfgangsee* [*Bathing in Lake Wolfgang*], a well-known summer holiday destination not far from Salzburg. Schlingensief invited all six-million German unemployed (and the number six million is not innocent in the German context as it is the number of Jews exterminated in the Holocaust) to join him on August 2 on the shores of the lake in Sankt Gilgen next to Chancellor Helmut Kohl's cottage and to all jump in at the same time to raise the lake level and flood said cottage ("Chance 2000 – Partei der letzten Chance

3 That he had in the intervening three years scored major hits with *Rocky Dutschke, '68* (1996), *Mein Filz, mein Fett, mein Hase!* [*My Felt, My Fat, My Hare!*] (1997), *Passion Impossible: 7 Tage Notruf für Deutschland* [*Passion Impossible: 7 Day Emergency Call for Germany*] (1997), and the television program *Talk 2000*, as well as a score of theater productions speaks to Schlingensief's extraordinary productivity.

/ Wahlkampfzirkus '98/Wahlkampftournee/ Wahldebakel '98" n.d.). While they may not have succeeded in their stated goal, the wave of unflattering press generated by the event may well have had something to do with Kohl and his Christian Democrats [Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU] being roundly defeated in the election.

Schlingensief followed up his bathing action by switching his attention from the unemployed to the homeless. From October 4 to 10, 1998, less than two weeks after the German election on September 27, *Chance 2000 für Graz* took place, a much more major action than the play he had staged in the city three years previously.⁴ In the town's main square, eight pillars were built around the existing *Mariensäule* [Column of the Holy Mary]. Homeless people were invited to sit on the pillars, and the one who managed to remain there the longest won 70,000 schillings, around 5,000 Euro.⁵ Additionally, every day at 5:30pm, Schlingensief appeared and threw 7,000 schillings in twenty-schilling bills (about 1.50 Euro each) at passersby, who scrambled for them in front of the homeless sitting on the pillars. The history of the site added to the piquancy of the performance in ways Schlingensief did not make mention or use of. Also called the *Türkensäule* [Turkish Column], the column at the Iron Gate is one of Graz's most visible public monuments. Erected in 1670, it commemorates the victory of Habsburg troops in the Battle of Szentgotthárd/Mogersdorf/Monošter on August 1, 1664, which came to be celebrated as a great Christian victory against

4 The full title of the action was *7 Tage Entsorgung für Graz — Künstler gegen Menschenrechte* [7 Days of Waste Disposal for Graz — Artists Against Human Rights]. The following account is taken from ("Christoph Schlingensief, *Chance 2000 für Graz*" 1998).

5 As mentioned in the chapter on *Planet Ottakring*, the Schilling was Austria's currency between 1925 and 1938 and from the end of World War II until the Euro was introduced in 1999. The fixed exchange rate when the Euro was introduced in Austria was €1 = 13.7603 schilling. Although the Euro became the official currency of Austria in 1999, Euro coins and notes were not introduced until 2002.

the Turks.⁶ While the Mariensäule has been moved about a fair amount in its more than 300-year existence (it was previously on the Karmeliter and Jakomini squares), it has been at the Iron Gate since 1928, long enough to become a fixture on postcards. While it is difficult to ascertain what role the Holy Maria's presence on top of the column overlooking Schlingensief's shenanigans played in the far right taking offence to the performance, the FPÖ nevertheless took its lead from the column's reputation as a bastion of Christendom and did its best to put a stop to the performance, collecting 10,000 signatures with that demand. Schlingensief counterattacked by threatening to occupy their party headquarters in the Griesplatz on the other side of the river, a less than fifteen-minute walk from the Mariensäule, something he was prevented from doing by the mobilization of twelve police officers. The resulting coverage in the German-language press demonstrated Schlingensief's prowess in making his opponents look ridiculous ("Christoph Schlingensief, Chance 2000 für Graz" 1998). It also provided Schlingensief with a target and a template for his next major Austrian action.⁷

The Main (Container) Event

After the major loss suffered by Helmut Kohl's CDU in the 1998 election, the Austrian election the following year on October 3, 1999 was hotly anticipated, and it did not disappoint. Since 1986 Austria had been governed by a coalition of the Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs (SPÖ) and its junior partner, the Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP), and the share of the extreme-right populist FPÖ had grown from 5% to 27%, mainly due to its charismatic leader, Jörg Haider. During the 1999 election campaign, the leader of the ÖVP (since 1995), Wolfgang Schüssel, at-

6 See the entry for "Graz, Marien- oder Türkensäule" on the *Türkengedächtnis* [*Turkish commemoration*] website for details (Türkengedächtnis).

7 His skewering the institution of psychoanalysis in *Schnitzler's Brain* at the Schauspielhaus Graz in May 2000 was not as major as his outdoor events of this period ("Schnitzler's Brain – Freiheit für Alles" 2000).

tempted to consolidate the right by announcing that his party would not form part of next government if it should fall below its second-place status. While his promise did mobilize his voters as he had planned, it did not have the desired effect. Schüssel's ÖVP came in third behind Haider's FPÖ by the slimmest of margins: both parties won 26.91% of the votes and 52 seats, with the FPÖ getting 415 more votes than the ÖVP in a country with a population at the time of over 8 million — 8,032,926 in the 2001 census, and the actual count was 1,244,087 votes to 1,243,672. After protracted negotiations among the three parties, the ÖVP and the FPÖ announced at the end of January 2000 that they would be forming the next government. This agreement saw the Freedomites share the government for the second time since being founded in 1956.⁸ The agreement was met with great consternation by the EU, which issued a statement urging the Austrians to rethink such a step. When the coalition nonetheless went ahead on February 4, the EU-14 — the other EU member-states besides Austria — unanimously decided to suspend diplomatic relations with the country. Only when Haider resigned as FPÖ leader and the coalition issued a declaration promising to abide by EU values, were the sanctions against Austria lifted in September 2000.⁹

The decision on the part of the Wiener Festwochen to solicit Schlingensief's spectacle *Please Love Austria* for its 2000 program is thus to be understood as “a political statement by festival director, Luc Bondy, in response to the election outcome” (Varney 2010, 109). Building on his experience with the unemployed and the homeless, Schlingensief this time turned to the refugees that were the bane of the far-right's existence, and whose presence they continue to milk successfully to curry favor with supporters happy enough to blame the refugees for all the ills in the

8 The first time was in 1983 when a particularly liberal version of the party led by Norbert Steger was in a coalition with the SPÖ, which lasted until Jörg Haider took over the FPÖ leadership in 1986.

9 Fiddler's reading of Jelinek's 2000 *Das Lebewohl: Ein Haider-Monologe* [*Farewell: A Haider Monologue*], turns on the double meaning of resignation (Fiddler 2018, 148–55).

country. Ingeniously Schlingensief positioned asylum seekers as the contestants in a twisted reality-TV show. A container was set up next to the Staatsoper with blue FPÖ flags hoisted above it as well as the logo of the *Kronen Zeitung*, Austria's largest newspaper renowned for its populism, and, lest there was any doubt about these references, a large sign declaring "Ausländer raus" ["Foreigners Out"] was mounted on top. Then, just as in the Dutch television show *Big Brother*, which began airing in 1999 and was immensely popular in Germany and Austria, twelve people identified as asylum seekers were brought in to live in the container and were subject to round-the-clock coverage on an internet-TV channel set up expressly for the spectacle: www.auslaenderraus3.at. The public was invited to not just watch but to call in every day and vote for the two candidates they wanted to see deported from the country. At 8 o'clock every evening the two who had received the most votes that day were (un)ceremoniously removed from the container and shoved into a waiting vehicle. The prize for the last remaining non-deportee was 30,000 Austrian schillings, around 2,180 Euro or less than half the prize money offered in Graz, and marriage to an Austrian citizen through which they would attain the status of a legal resident.

The show was intended to push all kinds of political buttons, and of course it did. Not only was the website unable to manage the amount of traffic it got and kept crashing, people turned out in droves to take in the spectacle, and there was a week-long public debate. The event ran from June 11–17, and one of the more interesting moments came on Thursday, June 15, when "about 600 protestors attacked the container and tried to demolish the 'Ausländer raus!' sign" (Weiss 2001, 61). It was initially unclear whether the action was supposed to be part of the spectacle or not, and when it in fact turned out not to be, but was rather Viennese protestors looking to show up Schlingensief, he and his team derided them, leveling critique "at the failure of 'well-meaning leftie activists' to mount an effective

opposition to Haider and the far right” (Varney 2010, 113). In contrast the protestors were very pleased by the action:

Mathias Lilienthal recalls the way that the situation was defused by selecting a delegation of six protestors to bring their message to the “asylum seekers”: “We want to liberate you! We want to bring you freedom! We are from the anti-fascistic front!” they shout. The situation is defused as Schlingensief’s team accede to releasing the “asylum seekers” — though this is shown to amount to little more than bundling them into the same black Mercedes as was used to take previous “losers” to be “deported” — and one of the protestors is shown happy and smiling, declaring that “Now they will all be freed.” (T. Schmidt 2011, 6–7)

In the online *Neue Lager Zeitung* that documented the events of the action, a boastful headline read “The Fortress was Stormed; the Asylum Seekers Almost Freed,” with the action of the “Widerstandsdemonstration” [“resistance demonstration”] likened to “Indians” attacking a fort in a wild-west film. The text goes on to assure readers that “the asylum seekers are in safety — they are well” (“Die Burg ist gestürmt: Asylanten fast befreit” 2000), as though the demonstrators were a greater danger to the asylum seekers than the conservative crowds that gathered daily around the container.¹⁰ One sees a similar pro-

¹⁰ The original text describing the incident reads: “Widerstandsdemonstration griff an! Wie im Wildwestfilm: Das Fort von Indianern überwältigt. Die allwöchentliche Demonstration zog zum Container und beinahe mit ein. Die Asylanten sind in Sicherheit — es geht ihnen gut. Donnerstag abend, kurz nach 20 Uhr. Lagerleiter Schlingensief verliert gerade die Namen derer, die abgeschoben werden sollen. Eine Menschenmenge bewegt sich auf die Container zu: Trotz verstärkter Security war es nicht möglich, die einzelnen Stürmer zurückzuhalten. Sie kletterten über den Zaun, drangen durch die Türen, stiegen über das Vordach des Containers in den Innenhof. Ihr gemeinsames Ziel: Die Asylanten zu befreien und das Transparent mit dem Text ‘Ausländer raus’ herunterzureißen. Beides gelang nur fast. Die Containerinsassen wurden vom Team der Lagerleitung und der Security mit einem Wagen in Sicherheit gebracht. Heute sind sie

German spirit in the reference to “the failed attempt by activists on day four of the performance to ‘free the refugees’ and shut down the container compound” (Varney 2010, 120n32). This account emphasizes “Schlingensief’s continued provocation to the coalition to tear down the sign, ‘Foreigners Out,’ and its failure to do so, pointed to the path not taken by the authorities” (Varney 2010, 116), rather than drawing attention to the protestors’ success in reaching and desecrating the sign with graffiti.¹¹

The action taken to free the refugees from Schlingensief showed his team what real Viennese actionism was about.¹² It was also an offshoot of locally organized protests against the national coalition government—the so-called “Donnerstag Demos,” demonstrations that took place every Thursday.¹³ Moreover, the site of the Container was bound up in a local tradition of demonstration, namely the “Opernball Demos,” the first of which was held in 1987 to protest a planned Bavarian nuclear facility. It happened that the arch-conservative Bavarian head-of-state, Franz-Joseph Strauß, attended the Opernball that year, and the Green Party organized a demonstration that turned ugly, resulting in street-battles between the police and protesters. The following years saw a continued escalation of

schon wieder im Container und weigern sich nach wie vor, abgeschoben zu werden. Das Transparent ist beschädigt, steht aber noch - und wird erneuert. Der Lagerleiter: ‘Der Test läuft, wie lange sich die Koalition dieses Schild leisten kann.’ Heute findet eine Großabschiebung statt, vier Personen müssen Österreich verlassen” (ibid., bold in original).

- 11 The pro-German slant of the *Art without Borders* volume can be seen in their not including *Chance 2000 Graz* in their List of Titles (v).
- 12 Vienna Actionism refers to the performance actions of a number of radical Viennese artists in the 1960s who, in order to express their rejection of the increasing commodification of art and society, staged transgressive actions such as “Kunst und Revolution” [Art and Revolution] in June 1968. See Widrich and Export.
- 13 Fiddler deals with these demonstrations at length. They started up again on October 4, 2018 after another ÖVP–FPÖ coalition took power and began dismantling the post-World War II achievements of the social partnership, such as introducing a sixty-hour workweek, and quickly spread to other Austrian cities, and even Berlin. See “3.000 Demonstranten legen Wiener Ring lahm” (2018).

these demonstrations, which began to be organized against the bourgeois attendees of the Opernball with titles such as “eat the rich” and the “Anti-Obern-Ball” — against those above, a play on ‘ober’ [above] and ‘Oper’ [opera]. By the time of the 2000 event, there were over 10,000 protesters clashing with the police and being brutalized and arrested. Had *Schlingensiefel’s Container* taken place in the square in front of Vienna’s City Hall or in front of St. Stephen’s Cathedral in the center of the city, it would not have been as over-determined to be demonstrated against as it was on the square in front of the State Opera House.

After the attack by the local resistance demonstrators, Schlingensiefel insisted on playing out the rest of the farce and having it made into a documentary as they had planned.¹⁴ He was similarly recalcitrant in refusing to address the amount of protest his pro-populist position generated:

A man shouts at Schlingensiefel, “You are an enemy to Austria and you have to be deported!” Someone who hates the xenophobic messages breaks in at night and tries to set the containers alight. Another attacks the structures with acid. A protestor is shown being taken away in a police car after defending the rights of foreigners. “Where are the dirty pigs who authorised this?” he shouts as he is dragged away. Another woman first attempts to persuade the gathered crowd that “those who already stay here shall remain here, and they shall have equal rights to the Austrians.” But then, [...] she

14 Director Paul Poet’s 2002 *Ausländer raus! Schlingensiefel’s Container* won several awards at international film festivals and enjoyed a rerelease six years after its premiere, on account of another political crisis in Austrian politics brought on by difficulties between the two coalition partners. In the snap election held on September 28, 2008, just two years after the previous election, both the SPÖ and the ÖVP did terribly, with the worst election results in their history; however, despite the strong gains made by now two anti-immigrant, anti-EU parties, who together won an unprecedented 28% of the vote and more seats than the ÖVP, and despite Jörg Haider’s death in a car accident less than two weeks after the election, a traditional SPÖ–ÖVP coalition assumed power, and the threat of once again having an extreme right party in the Austrian government abated.

shouts, “[t]hose Piefkes [an offensive term comparable to ‘Krauts’] always start these things!” She demands that the container be taken down, “otherwise there is going to be a war between us! We want to have our peace,” she shrieks, again without any apparent awareness of irony, as she smashes her hand violently against the fence surrounding the container. Soon she is marching through the crowd, chanting “Kick out the Piefkes! Foreigners in!” (Schmidt 2011, 5–6)

The presence of Germans and their condescending attitude towards Austria continues to be cause for some consternation in Austria, a problematic noted in Chapter 2 in the reading of *Planet Ottakring*.

Schlingensiefel’s practice reveals the contempt in which he held traditional activism, and the need he saw to operate “on the level of appearance, of spectacle, of the representational regime of images.” In his view, “[t]he whole container-thing was a machinery to disrupt images!” (ibid., 7). He also confessed at another point that one of the central concerns was “to put public spaces to the test” (Gade 2010, 91). The public space in front of Vienna’s State Opera turned out to be highly charged and allowed for much conflictual contestation. As Claire Bishop notes, “[a]lthough in retrospect — and particularly in Poet’s film — it is evident that the work is a critique of xenophobia and its institutions, in Vienna the event (and Schlingensiefel’s charismatic role as circus-master) was ambiguous enough to receive approval and condemnation from all sides of the political spectrum” (Bishop 2012, 282). If Schlingensiefel designed the event, as was his wont, to interrogate the exclusionary mechanisms inherent in a particular public space, then from the fact that the square in front of the State Opera made space for all to enter, it would seem that it passed Schlingensiefel’s test with flying colors. The “disturbing lesson” that we have to take away from the test, however, is, as Claire Bishop underscores, “that an *artistic* representation of detention has more power to attract dissensus than an *actual* institution of detention” (ibid., 283; italics in original).

A Homemad(e) Take on Intercultural Relations

In stark contrast to Schlingensief's deliberately outrageous, highly visible orchestration of one of the most prominent central tourist locations in the city, Ruth Beckermann's *Homemad(e)* (2001) quietly introduces viewers to the locals in the street in which she lives at the opposite end of the first district from the Staatsoper, namely, the Marc Aurel Strasse, which runs parallel to the Judengasse and is quite close to the city's central synagogue. After making her film debut with *Arena besetzt* [*Arena Occupied*] (1977), discussed in chapter one, and then establishing her countercultural credentials with *Auf amoi a Streik* [*All of a Sudden a Strike*], (1978) and *Der Hammer steht auf der Wiese da draußen* [*The Hammer is in the Meadow Out There*], (1981), and co-founding the Filmladen, one of Austria's largest film distributors, Beckermann turned her attention to her Jewish heritage in the trilogy *Wien retour* [*Vienna There and Back*] (1983), *Die papierene Brücke* [*The Paper Bridge*] (1987), and *Nach Jerusalem* [*Toward Jerusalem*] (1990), establishing herself as a prominent member of the second generation of Jews in Austria, who "embraced their Jewish identity in protest against Waldheim and his supporters [...] in a public way that put them at odds with the survivor generation" (A. Reiter 2013, 1–2). As in *Die papierene Brücke*, so too is Beckermann's point of departure in *Homemad(e)* "the house in Vienna where she lives"; here too is her interest "her father's Ashkenazic culture of origin in Eastern Europe" (D. Lorenz 2014, 72). Yet this time, with a blatantly anti-Semitic party ensconced in the federal government attracting the wrath of the EU and European avant-garde media circus directors such as Schlingensief, her travelogue remains firmly grounded in her local surroundings and documents the comings and goings around the Café Salzgrües, which is now a hip hangout called the Billiardcafé Küü, of mostly creative types, retirees, and a few older housewives. As her opening voiceover explains, she has arrived back in Vienna after making *Ein flüchtiger Zug nach dem Orient* [*A Fleeting Train to the Orient*] (1999) and wants now to turn her attention to her

neighbors: “Von einer großen Reise mit einer großen Kamera zurückgekehrt, nehme ich meine kleine Kamera mit auf kleine Reisen, nicht weiter als vor meiner Haustür mitten in Wien” [“Having arrived back from a large trip with a large camera, I take my small camera on a small trip, no further than in front of my door in the middle of Vienna”]. As the opening conversation among the three elderly Jewish gentlemen makes clear, her goal is not, as one of them immediately supposes, to depict how “deppert” [“stupid”] they are, a subtle or maybe not-so-subtle dig at Schlingensiefel, but rather how well they get along, even with Iranian hotel-owner Djavad Alam, the “Araber” who runs the Café Bar Butterfly across the street. Unlike Schlingensiefel, whose resolute focus on the Austrian political situation blames them all equally for allowing something so terrible to happen, Beckermann does not ask residents for their political views until the last twenty minutes of the almost ninety-minute documentary, preferring to establish their characters and lifestyles first. She leaves us with what Christina Guenther calls “a final gesture of friendship, however flawed or uneasy” (Guenther 2004, 42), namely the question of whether being good neighbors is enough in a Vienna, where “das ganze Leben ist ein Theater [all of life is theater]” and “alles ist vergänglich [everything is fleeting]” as the main character, Adolf “Adi” Doft, muses in the final conversation with his Iranian neighbor. The final scene shows Doft shutting up his tailor shop and going home for the evening. Young people pass by; a young mother pushes a carriage and a young man rides a bicycle. Doft encounters Alam, who reveals his vanity by removing his glasses for the camera and commenting a bit derisively on Doft’s attractiveness to the camera women, namely Beckermann and her assistant.¹⁵ The conversation that ensues illustrates the challenges of intercultural relations. Alam’s attitude towards Doft is condescending, while Doft responds good-naturedly but with some reserve. Alam seems to have been asked to make small talk for the camera.

15 Christina Kaindl-Hönig is credited as the “Regie-Assistenz,” which fits which Doft addressing them as “Mädls” [“girls”].

He asks where Doft is going, how he will spend the evening, what he will have for dinner. Soup, hamburger, mashed potatoes and stewed fruit comes the reply. Homemade stewed fruit? Oh yes, always, Doft responds, and also a small Ottakringer beer for 4 Schilling 90, at which Alam remarks, smirking and looking at the cameraperson: “Oh, Preis muss man unbedingt wissen” [“oh, one must absolutely know the price”]. When his “joke” flops with those present, he goes to assure everyone that they are “gute Nachbarn, das ist wichtig, sehr gute Nachbarn” [“good neighbors, that is important, very good neighbors”]. Doft responds, “[j]a, ja, ich glaube, ich bin ein guter Nachbar” [“yes, yes, I think I’m a good neighbor”], implying that he’s not so sure about Alam. He grabs Alam’s hand and wishes him good health and praises Alam’s responding wish of “alles Gute” [“all the best”] with “[i]n Ordnung” [“ok”], something Alam doesn’t quite get. He turns to the camera people and asks them, “[w]as soll das bedeuten?” [“what does that mean?”], as the camera follows Doft walking away down the street and the credits roll. While in *Jenseits des Kriegs* [*The Other Side of War*] (1995), Beckermann set out to “examine why veterans and other Austrians of the war generation visit an exhibition of material that indicts them in the strongest terms” (D. Lorenz 1999, 323), here she depicts an everyday encounter of a Holocaust survivor and a more recent anti-Semitic immigrant businessman to show how Jews manage to live with everyday racism that wears a friendly face. In doing so she reveals both how much the FPÖ’s blanket condemnation of “foreigners” misses the mark and the terrible irony that some of those foreigners are likely their supporters.

A New Stage

While there is no evidence to suggest that Schlingensiefel took on board the lessons of Beckermann’s documentary, or that he could even understand its difficult, local dialect had he watched it, when he next returned to perform in Austria, with the world premiere of the anti-Iraq-War play *Bambiland* at the Burgtheater on December 12, 2003, it marked a decisive development in his

performative practice. It was the first time he staged a theater text by another author (Koerner 2010, 153), and not just any author but the soon-to-be Nobel Prize winner, Elfriede Jelinek, who won the prize the following year. Having participated in *Chance 2000* and *Please Love Austria*, Jelinek considered herself a Schlingensief fan, and as Morgan Koerner relates, she had discovered from Frank Castorf's radical 1994 staging of her *Raststätte oder Sie machens alle* [*Services or They All Do It*] "a process of creative collaboration with directors in which she encourages (if not forces) them to respond to her associative texts with further associations" (ibid., 156). Her choice of Schlingensief to direct *Bambiland* at the country's most prestigious stage and her enthusiastic response to the production confirmed the compatibility of their dissonant styles and approaches. She gushed, "I am thrilled. It was one of the most overwhelming reactions that my texts have ever received. Even though not much of the text appears, it corresponds to my method of writing. This text is an amalgam of media reports about Iraq, and Schlingensief amalgamised it once more with this overwhelming visual level" (ibid., 154). He in turn "was moved to tears" when she was announced the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2004:

Ich war zu Tränen gerührt, als ich die Nachricht über die Zuerkennung des Nobelpreises an Elfriede Jelinek erhalten habe. Das ist eine der besten Entscheidungen des Nobelpreiskomitees. Jeder irrt sich, wenn er meint, das war die Frauenquote. Da ist eine wirkliche Dissidentin zum Mainstream gewählt worden. Ich würde sie als die Cassandra der zeitgenössischen Literatur und des deutschsprachigen Theaters bezeichnen, jene Cassandra, die das Schreckliche kommen sieht, das Unheil, den Abgrund, den Tod, und niemand glaubt ihr.

[I was moved to tears when I received the news about the awarding of the Nobel prize to Elfriede Jelinek. This is one of the Nobel Prize Committee's best decisions. Everyone who thinks it was because of the female quota is mistaken. A real

dissident of the mainstream was chosen. I would describe her as the Cassandra of contemporary literature and the German-language stage, that Cassandra who sees what's terrible coming, calamity, the abyss, death, and no one believes her.] (Schlingensiefel 2010)

In the “Jelinek and Schlingensiefel” section of Pia Janke and Teresa Kovacs’s *Der Gesamtkünstler Christoph Schlingensiefel* [*The Total Artist Christoph Schlingensiefel*], which is devoted to a consideration of their relationship, Jelinek in turn calls him “mein Assistent der [*sic*] Verschwindens” [“my assistant of disappearance”].

The depth of Schlingensiefel and Jelinek’s mutual admiration paved the way for two further experimental installation-performances at the Burg: *Area7 Matthäusexpedition* [*St. Matthew’s Expedition*], which opened on January 20, 2006, and *Mea Culpa*, which played from March 20–25, 2009. Unlike his earlier incendiary outdoor actions, which awakened the histories of the sites on which they took place and were very much in the tradition of what Claire Bishop has called the “expanded field of post-studio practices” (Bishop 2012, 1), these final works modulate that understanding of “expanded” to bring it into line with Joseph Beuys’s expanded art (Vogel 2006) by returning indoors, into renowned theatrical spaces such as the Burg in Vienna, and pushing at the limits of what they will allow as though he were seeking to explode them from within. Sabine Vogel conveys the post-theatricality of *Area7* very well:

As in all Schlingensiefel’s works, whether TV talk shows, theater pieces, or films, *Area7* evinces a deep antipathy to narrative, going so far as to destroy the normal course of a theater visit. Once arriving on a set evening, visitors must structure their own time, without seating, intermission, or most other conventions of the theater. The stage and a portion of the auditorium and the orchestra level are changed into a giant installation guests may walk through, albeit only in small groups. Cobbled together in a self-consciously slop-

py way from lathes, boards, bed sheets, steel, mirrors, and sand, stuffed to bursting with monitors and stage props, the structure has visitors stumbling from one room to the next, pressing against beds, baby carriages, shelves full of rabbits, and a giant mask (said to be Beuys's death mask). In its open mouth runs a video of the decaying rabbit already used to great effect in *Parsifal*. This is "the birth chamber, where the myth and legend begin," according to Schlingensief. On the rotating stage is an installation called "The Animatograph," including such things as an "Ur-Clo" ["Ancient Toilet"], "Kreuzweg" ["Stations of the Cross"], "Myonenregen" ["Muon Rain"], and, in the midst of everything, a boar from Namibia, where Schlingensief was stationed recently with his team and where he made a film, part of which now graces the Vienna installation. (Vogel 2006)

The presence of a Namibian boar is evidence of Schlingensief's desire, as he approached the end of his life, to embed parts of the colonizers' and the colonized's cultures physically into each other. In addition to initiating a project to build an opera house in Burkina Faso and collaborating with performers from Burkina Faso on his last production *Via Intolleranza II*, he also put on an exhibition of film and photos from his trip to Kathmandu and Bhaktapur in Nepal at the Kunstraum Innsbruck from February 16 to March 29, 2008 entitled *Der König wohnt in mir* [*The King Lives in Me*]. Given his earlier projects, this staging of encounters with art from "foreign" places would seem intended to provoke confrontation and critical thought about the cultural processes involved in (de)colonization.

Yet his final performance in Vienna was entitled *Mea Culpa*. Of course, given that it is Schlingensief, the phrase requires some interrogation. While he in his usual inimitable style half-jokingly blamed himself and his decision to stage Wagner's poisonous *Parsifal* at Bayreuth in 2004 for his terminal illness, calling it "Todesmusik" ["death music"], he also used the occasion to draw attention to the shaming that the ill, and especially the terminally ill, too often undergo. In his own words,

he turned his illness into a social sculpture: “[i]ch gieße eine soziale Plastik aus meiner Krankheit” [“I pour a social mold from my sickness”] (Dössel 2010).¹⁶ In mock-confessing in the manner of the Christian guilt that isolates and individualizes, Schlingensiefel stealthily sought its condemnation.¹⁷ After staging *Area7* in a way that forced audiences to navigate the space of a deconstructed stage in small groups, in *Mea Culpa* he tried to give those groups a language to revisit and reconstruct those navigations. Over the course of his life Schlingensiefel reiterated how damaged he felt by his petit-bourgeois upbringing, a point on which he bonded with many in the artistic world, such as Elfriede Jelinek. Yet how exactly can one locate the great harm done by organized religion, including its participation in colonization, in specific cultural performances? As this chapter has explored, Schlingensiefel’s answers can be located in the significant slice of his oeuvre that was carried out in Vienna and Austria.

16 Susan Sontag’s *Illness as Metaphor* (1978) is an obvious point of connection.

17 Exploring the question of whether all kinds of guilt, religious and otherwise, do so would take us far afield. My point here is to highlight the connection between Christianity’s sustaining ideology and capitalism.

From Grand Hotels to Tiny Treasures: Wes Anderson and the Ruin Porn Worlds of Yesterday

“Mr. Moustafa: To be frank, I think his world had vanished long before he ever entered it — but, I will say: he certainly sustained the illusion with a marvelous grace! (Pause.) Are you going up?”

— Dilley (2017, 197)

“Spitzmaus [shrew]: 1) A small insectivorous mammal resembling a mouse, with a long, pointed snout and tiny eyes; 2) A bad-tempered or aggressively assertive woman”

— *Lexico*

Upon its release in 2014, Wes Anderson’s *Grand Budapest Hotel* appeared as “nothing if not a nostalgic, loving, and almost perversely fastidious recreation of a phantom Habsburg Empire” (Isenberg 2014, 72). This view was primed by Anderson’s acknowledgement of the influence of Stefan Zweig’s writings on his vision for the film. Focus on Zweig’s connections to Vienna, and not the Budapest of the title, led to the film being read as unveiling “not only a primal urge suited for diagnosis by Dr.

Freud but a central core of the psycho-geography that is Viennese cinema” (ibid., 72). As we saw in this study’s introduction, this understanding of Viennese cinema is often conflated with that of the new Austrian cinema and that cinema’s feel-bad tendency to transcend the specificity of historically practiced space to produce “non-places,” that is, places from which protagonists have been cut off and in which they cannot meaningfully locate themselves (Dassanowsky and Speck 2011, 3). In searching out the filming location of *The Grand Budapest Hotel*, namely the city of Görlitz, Germany, near the confluence of the German, Polish, and Czech borders, and discovering how, like Detroit, Michigan, it is currently struggling to reinvent itself in the age of global finance capitalism by using cultural production as a motor to spark local prosperity, this chapter reveals the grand hotel of Anderson’s title to indeed be a non-place but befitting the auteur sensibilities Anderson shares with fellow Texan, Richard Linklater, not one of the usual sort.¹ *The Grand Budapest Hotel* traps its protagonists, and also the audiences that identify with them, in a particular attitude towards the past, with implications for both present and future. Like insects caught in amber or “trapped within the airless interior spaces of a doll’s-house” (Firebrace 2014, 73), they become fixated on a melancholic relation of loss.² However, as we saw in the previous chapter on Christoph Schlingensiefel’s dealings with Vienna and Austria, the

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- 1 Donna Kornhaber, who approaches Anderson as “an expat member” of “an Austin filmmaking community committed to the idiosyncratic vision of the writer-director, figures who are as deeply immersed in exploring and refashioning film history as they are insistent on remaining independent of Hollywood trends” which is to say, “indebted not to the outward trappings of Texas identity but to the pioneering spirit it is meant to embody” (2018, 126).
 - 2 This world and its affective coordinates are similar to those of much of the New German Cinema, as diagnosed by Thomas Elsaesser: “[d]rawing on Freud’s essay ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ (‘Trauer und Melancholie’, 1917) and its analysis of ‘parapraxis,’ Elsaesser suggests that the world reflected in much of the New German Cinema was caught in an ultimately self-destructive loop of melancholic repetition, in which the films’ protagonists were invariably able only to perform the failure of the nation to mourn its past, a process of mourning which is necessary for a true comprehension

arc of this one also shows how Anderson's encounter with a caricatured version of one aspect of Vienna's international reputation led to him, too, being given the chance to reflect on some of the presuppositions of his own artistic practice and to learn how an historical orientation to contemporary cultural practices in the city has the potential to help one refocus, and build on forward-looking aspects of the past rather than remain fixated on and fixed in glorified, destructive pasts. The problem of pasts and their material remnants is something that is underscored in the final section of the chapter, which returns to the grand hotels in and around Vienna and compares how they, like Görlitz and Detroit, are having to respond to the challenges of our contemporary conjuncture. While not thus far having to traffic in ruin *per se*, their substantial infrastructure and its histories are making it difficult for these localities to imagine socially equitable futures for themselves.

Budapest, Görlitz, Detroit

The Grand Budapest Hotel could not have been more aptly named. “[S]et mostly in the 1930s in the fictitious republic of Zubrowka, an alpine land of snowy peaks, cable cars, chalets, ski runs and isolated mountaintop monasteries” (Firebrace 2014, 66), the convoluted story follows the adventures of a flamboyant hotel concierge, played with great zest by Ralph Fiennes, through the eyes of the wide-eyed, foreign lobby boy whom he trains and who becomes his devotee, played as a youth by Tony Revolori and by F. Murray Abraham as an older man. The layers of history these adventures delve back into — from 1985 to 1965 to 1932 — are unambiguously Eastern European, and each is shot in a film format typical of the time: “1985 at 1.85 [...]; 1965 at a widescreen 2.40:1; and the bulk of the film 1.37:1, the traditional format for movies shot in the 1930s and 1940s” (Firebrace 2014, 68). Critics have pointed out that “the dates provided ap-

of the nation's guilt and which in turn could bring about the population's final redemption” (Elsaesser, cited in Cooke and Homewood 2011, 11).

proximate — but do not align with — real-life events” (Wilkins 2018, 166), yet that approximation matters: “1985 maps loosely onto a post-1989, post-Iron Curtain moment; the film’s 1968 action has no connection to the May events but rather hints at the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that summer; and he sets the central action in 1932, though, in fact, Hitler came to power only in 1933 and began military incursion in 1938” (Brody, cited in Wilkins 2018, 166). Against the claim that the film “does not evoke a period in time; it creates an artificial version of a period in time” (Conklin 2014), it is very clear that not one but three identifiable periods are, in fact, evoked: “the first is the ‘world of yesterday’ which Zweig captures in his literature (pre-World War I), second, a period of indeterminate war and fascism (with the Nazi-like ss insignia changed to zz), and third, the period of Communism in Eastern or Central Europe” (Dilley 2017, 184). One understands why the film had to be set in a grand *Budapest* hotel and not a grand *Vienna* one. Somewhere associated only with Western Europe would not had have the requisite associations of cultured, old-world grandeur meets the totalitarianism that put an end to that world, and neither would Eastern European places such as Marienbad and Karlsbad, which, although in the Czech Republic, are nevertheless firmly rooted in the world of art-house film thanks to Alain Resnais’s 1961 film and the Karlovy Vary international film festival, respectively. Given its status as the capital of the half of the Dual Monarchy that ended up behind the Iron Curtain, Budapest’s connotational coordinates are much more appropriate for the historical imaginary Wes Anderson wanted his film to call forth than Vienna’s would have been.

While Budapest was appropriately positioned to evoke the imaginative world of Anderson’s film, neither it nor Vienna could do so practicably. While “[a]ll film worlds — both those filmed on location and those filmed on a set” are, by definition, “artificial worlds,” Anderson’s distinguish themselves by signaling their own artifice (Wilkins 2018, 152). They are “hermetically sealed fantasias” (Rainer 2014), and to create such a “hermetic and enclosed world” requires that they be made in environ-

ments that allow for a “juxtaposition [of singular referents] and fetishistic almost collector-orientated accumulation of signs and objects,” resulting in a narrative world, “which becomes in some sense ‘timeless’” (Gorfinkel, quoted in Wilkins 2018, 153). These “collection” worlds have often been dismissed as affectedly quaint or twee; however, as Tom Hertweck explicitly and other contributors implicitly argue in the Summer 2018 special issue on Anderson of *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, one needs to consider the way “twee aesthetics serve as a kind of protection from the outside world so as to fixate on the passionate investment in personal expression” (Hertweck 2018, 130), which takes the form, one should add, of displacing personal trauma onto historical conflict.

Anderson’s twee aesthetics serve to protect the troubled characters in his films, “who either desire to — or actively — inhabit institutions that are designed as only transient or transitional spaces” (Wilkins 2018, 167). Like the motel, school, mansion, train, and island in Anderson’s other films, the eponymous hotel serves this function well:

[U]nlike the “lived in” spaces of the domestic home, hotels are constantly in the process of erasing recent histories; they aim to “remove the trace of previous guests. [...] The objective of hoteliers [is] to suppress time, to reproduce the comforts of an old family home without the wear and tear of history [...]. Whereas homes are created as personal territories through the presence of collected objects that signify the accumulation of past moments within the space, the private spaces of hotels are designed to be anonymous and duplicable: constructed for masses of anonymous people, who are “drifting without settling.” (Wilkins 2018, 168)

While it is true that hotels may be non-places from the perspective of the guests, what about those who work in them, whose cramped, spartan spaces Anderson makes a point of juxtaposing with the grandeur of the lobby? Following Rhodes and Gorfinkel, Wilkins reasons that if “‘identity is constructed in

and through place,' then the desire of these characters to inhabit transitional spaces as though they were permanent discloses a perception that they do not belong in more stable settings" (ibid., 167–68), which is the case with the homeless, placeless characters of the concierge and lobby boy, who are associated with a specific hotel in a specific place that is ravaged by a specific history. It is not the case that "their private lived environments bear no traces of them" (ibid., 168). On the contrary, the point of the film is that for the guests M. Gustave the concierge *is* for all intents and purposes the hotel. His character is as imprinted on it as the hotel character is on his. Moreover, even if both the concierge and the lobby boy use the hotel as "a surrogate for the familial (Mr. Moustafa's voice-over 'I never asked who his family had been' implies that Monsieur Gustave has no family, while Zero's were killed in war)," I remain unconvinced by Wilkins's reading of this "surrogacy" as an inadequate replacement that "does 'not allow for the demarcation of personal territory through decoration and reordering'" (ibid., 168). On the contrary, given the terrible and unnecessary divisions, hardship, and suffering that precisely this type of demarcating and insistence on biological motherhood continues to wreak, to argue for its inadequacy seems irresponsible.

The problem Anderson faced in making the film was to find a hotel appropriately grand enough for M. Gustave. Given that the film is set in a fictional republic that Anderson has described as "an invented country that is part Czechoslovakia, part Hungary, part Poland" and whose name is an anglicized form of Żubrówka, a Polish brand of vodka (Firebrace 2014, 70), Anderson and his crew sought out locations in that vicinity with appropriate hotels, such as "the Grand Hotel Pupp, founded by Johan Pupp, a confectioner, and the Palace Bristol Hotel, with its bright pink exterior, both in Karlovy Vary (formerly Karlsbad) in the Czech Republic" (ibid., 70). As both proved "so changed that they could no longer produce the atmosphere Anderson was looking for," he and his team became creative and decided to use the interior space of the Görlitz Kaufhaus, "the only

surviving Jugendstil department store in Germany,” which had closed in 2009 (*ibid.*, 66, 67, 69).³

Görlitz proved to be exactly the type of ravaged, Eastern European location Anderson was looking for. A small city in Germany’s easternmost district on the German-Polish border, close to the Czech Republic and less than three hours by car from the Babelsberg Studio in Potsdam, where the American-German co-production was based, it was ideally suited to Anderson’s purposes because the quirks of history first allowed it to develop and then prevented its outright destruction while at the same time providing it with considerable patina: “[i]t was beyond the range of the RAF [Royal Air Force] (who gave it the code name Nautilus) and thus not subject to the devastating firebombing meted out to other German cities” (*ibid.*, 68).⁴ While one article drily claimed that “Armut ist der beste Denkmalschützer” [“poverty is the best preserver of monuments”] (Heinz 2015), Görlitz has only been poor since it escaped the decimation of nearby Dresden during World War II. Before that, because of its cloth production and location on the ancient and medieval trade route known as the *Via Regia*, it was a very prosperous town, which is how it came to have the impressive historic infrastructure it does (Firebrace 2014, 68). Görlitz managed to enter the twenty-first century “as though on an ark” with around 4000 “Baudenkmale” [“monumental buildings”] (Heinz 2015), including:

[R]emarkable medieval churches and towers, an unusual full-scale reproduction of the Holy Tomb in Jerusalem and a large number of Renaissance and baroque palaces and streets. To the south of the centre is a sizeable nineteenth-century extension, with wide streets, tree-filled squares and

3 Given that Berlin’s Kaufhaus des Westens, which opened in 1907, six years before the Görlitz Kaufhaus, still exists, what I take Firebrace to be claiming here is that the Görlitz Kaufhaus is the only one not to have experienced extensive damage and restoration.

4 That it was not located in an alpine setting was not a factor, given Anderson’s propensity for interiors and fantasy landscapes.

large houses with ample flats modelled after Berlin. Görlitz has the air of the perfect miniature city, furnished with one each of all the requisite building types, seemingly borrowed from somewhere else but reduced in scale — the railway station with its vaulted duck-egg blue ceiling, the crenellated post office that looks like a toy castle, the diminutive natural history museum with its collection of local snakes and reptiles. In addition to the Kaufhaus, Görlitz has a wide array of Jugendstil buildings, dating from its boom years in the early twentieth century, including the only surviving Jugendstil synagogue (the interior was burnt out by the Nazis but has since been restored), the large Stadthalle by the river, the Church of the Holy Cross, with a tower that seems to belong to a power station and various large residences such as the exotic Villa Ephraim in Goethestrasse. (Firebrace 2014, 68)

Despite these treasures, its more recent history has been one of privation and shrinkage: “There is little left today of Görlitz’s pre-1989 industry, as state-subsidised factories have been asset-stripped and closed. The population has dropped to half its pre-war figure, from 100,000 to 50,000, with many of the younger inhabitants having to move west for education and employment” (Firebrace 2014, 69). It is not surprising that the city has been happy to reinvent itself as a film set: “Able without too much cosmetic scenery to transform itself into various other cities, it has stood in for Paris in *Around the World in Eighty Days*, for a Sicilian town in Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds*, and for any number of other German cities in *The Reader*, *The Book Thief* and various TV films” (Firebrace 2014, 69).⁵

Görlitz thus finds itself having to walk a tightrope similar to the one we will see Hallstatt confronted with in the concluding chapter. Just as Hallstatt’s natural beauty is threatened by the masses of Asian tourists attracted to that beauty, so too is the faded glamor that makes Görlitz attractive to the film industry in danger of being changed beyond recognition by the atten-

5 IMDB lists fifty-one productions made in Görlitz.

tion it has attracted: “Fakt ist, die Bekanntheit der Stars färbt auf die Szenerien ab und auf die ganze Stadt, in der allein 2014 vier neue Hotels eröffnet wurden” [“it is a fact that the high profile of the stars is rubbing off on the scenery and on the entire town, in which four new hotels opened in 2014 alone”] (Heinz 2015). Renovations of the Görlitz Kaufhaus have been announced: “Ein Investor will aus dem Prachtbau das KaDeO, Kaufhaus der Oberlausitz, machen. Allerlei Zeichnungen hängen schon in den Schaufenstern und werden von Passanten entschlüsselt, ein Schriftzug verspricht „Hier wird renoviert, was Sie morgen fasziniert“” [“an investor wants to turn the majestic building into a KaDeO, department store of Oberlausitz” [a reference to Berlin’s famous KaDeW, Kaufhaus des Westens]. All kinds of drawings hang in the windows and are decoded by passersby; a sign promises ‘here is being renovated what will fascinate you tomorrow’”] (Heinz 2015). If these renovations go ahead, the site will no longer be as appealing to future filmmakers and their crews, just as the grand hotels in the Czech Republic did not have the right kind of decrepitude for Anderson, raising the question of who exactly it is that investors are imagining will be the department store’s future customers.

Görlitz’s appeal and struggles are, then, much more akin to Detroit’s than Hallstatt’s. Both the filmmakers who seek Görlitz out for location shooting and the tourists who flock there to go on “Film ab!” [“Rolling!”] tours are drawn by the onscreen images of the town as a run-down, crumbling, dingy place. In other words, and not to mince them, Görlitz is finding itself forced to peddle ruin porn. Most commonly associated with Detroit, the concept of ruin porn receives masterful analysis in two excellent books by academics at Detroit’s Wayne State University published in the aftermath of Detroit’s declaration of bankruptcy on July 18, 2013: *Beautiful Terrible Ruins: Detroit and the Anxiety of Decline* by Dora Apel in the Art and Art History department and *A Violent Embrace: Art and Aesthetics after Representation* by renee c. hoogland in the English department. Both aim to understand the mechanisms of ruin porn, the underlying forces driving its creation, and the political and ethical implications of

aestheticizing “rubble into ruin” (High 2015, 151). As Apel warns, “[w]e must recognize that the implicit warning against imperial hubris and the burden of grief imparted by the images are in conflict with the impulse to find beauty in the ruins. Yet these contradictory narratives coexist—the beautiful and the terrible—indeed, one mediates the other, beauty making the terrible bearable” and thus assuaging the anxiety motoring disaster capitalism (Apel 2015, 2).

Imperial hubris and grief are the cornerstones upon which *The Grand Budapest Hotel*'s plot is erected. The terrible loss of the hotel's imperial splendor, which is desecrated first by the Nazis and then by the Communists, as well as the deaths of both M. Gustave and lobby boy Zero's beloved Agata, are redeemed by being turned first into the tragic beauty of the novel that serves to frame the narrative and then into the farcical beauty of the film. In seeking to understand the attraction of ruin images, “how this imagery engages the anxiety of decline and [...] what cultural and political work it does (ibid., 10), Apel ascertains that “within the context of real economic precarity, sublimatic depictions of urban abandonment assuage anxiety by exotifying and safely situating ruins elsewhere on the map” (Stacey 2016, 254). That this corresponds to the workings of pornography proper is something Hoogland underscores. Pornography is, as she reminds us, “always at a distance, always mediated. [...] The essence of porn, in other words, is the pleasure derived from observing something that is not actually there, from an encounter with a two-dimensional (nowadays usually a screen) surface, a visual reality without any real-life or social depth, an image or imaginary realm without the *presence of the real*” (Hoogland 2014, 115–16; italics in original). Ruin porn similarly acts to dichotomize between present and absent, in its case, between the “out-of-towners—tourists of sorts” (Tange 2015, 9), who, after the “experience” of having visited a ruined place, “enjoy the luxury of going home to someplace stable, orderly, and altogether more pleasant” (McLemee 2015) and those who have to live with having been present for the experience as well as with the circulation of potentially embarrassing and demoralizing images of

their homes. Given that identity is constructed in and through place, the shrinking city phenomenon is to be expected, as people leave places they no longer want to be associated with. Like sex workers, Görlitzers have fought back against their stigmatization by taking pride in their work and in the success of the films made there: “[a]ls bei der Oscarverleihung 2015 der Streifen *The Grand Budapest Hotel* den Goldjungen gleich vierfach erhielt, unter anderem für das beste Szenenbild, knallten auch in Görlitz die Sektkorken.” [“When in 2015 *The Grand Budapest Hotel* received four gold statues, among them for best production design, the sekt corks also popped in Görlitz”] (Heinz 2015).

Ruin porn works, then, by creating what Apel calls an “de-industrial sublime” that acts to temper anxiety about decline by containing it aesthetically and locating it *elsewhere*. Places such as Detroit and the Grand Budapest Hotel in Anderson’s film serve as “a geographic repository for society’s irreconcilable emotions about the present and future of capitalism” (Steady 2016, 255). If we recall that the title and set of Anderson’s film locate it firmly in a failed Eastern Europe, then it behooves us to recognize that this failure is by no means a thing of the past and that, as Agata Pyzik eloquently argues in her 2014 *Poor But Sexy: Culture Clashes in Europe East and West*, there is a pressing need to “take stock of the myths, stereotypes, and ‘great narratives’ of the Cold War that [continue to] haunt East-West cultural relations today” (Zychowicz 2015, 155). After “exploring the plight of young people under socialism against the backdrop of the years after the more recent economic collapse of 2008,” (ibid., 156), she declares:

So yes, the East is still more beastly than the West, but perhaps it has become more so during the “transition,” finally fulfilling all of the negative stereotypes the West had about it while it was ruled by its decaying communist parties [...] The dissolution of communism in the countries involved led to a social desert, in which people are more than others immersed in a capitalist “state of nature.” (Pyzik 2014, 3–4)

In condensing twentieth-century Eastern Europe history into a twee narrative, *Grand Budapest Hotel* enacts a double disavowal of the plight Pyzik depicts, first of the fact that “economically the contemporary West has never had so much in common with the East as it does now” (ibid., 9), something that does not bode well for great swaths of both, and second of the role that American cultural and political imperialism has played in contributing to this condition.

The success of *The Grand Budapest Hotel* should give us pause. As Geoff Dyer has observed, “[r]uins do not encourage the viewer to dwell on what they were like in their heyday. The Coliseum in Rome or the amphitheater at Leptis Magna has never been anything but ruins. They are eternal ruins. [...] Rather than make you think of the past, ruins direct you towards the future. The effect is almost prophetic” (Dyer, cited in Schalliol 2018, 106). In depicting a Cold War world in ruins, Anderson’s film enjoyed great success with precisely this message: “[t]his is what the future will end up like. This is what the future has always ended up looking like” (ibid., 106). With Trump in the White House doing his best to realize a Cold War vision of the world in ruins and Detroit becoming “America’s great comeback story,” one is tempted to fall into despair.

Yet that would be to disregard the works of artists and scholars that push back against the unidirectional narratives of ruin-porn decline and phoenix-like rebirth. Just as Rebecca Kinney reminds us that the great America comeback story hinges on “the white possessive” concomitant privileging of whiteness and property (Kinney 2018, 777), Kaston Tange spells out for us how these “national narratives of an invigorated city rising from the ashes of its former self” can be just as detrimental as those of ruin porn:

For the phoenix rising builds a mythology of a fully formed—though perhaps smaller, more nimble—entity emerging whole and functional from the flames. As surely as the narrative arc of inevitable decay implies that processes of decline, through their very inevitability, are beyond hu-

man control, so the trope of the phoenix rising replaces effort (and the potential for failure) with the image of a fully realized success springing forth. It takes the story of one successful family as representative of a system that is, improbably, rebirthing itself—and it ignores the fact that the success of one family does not repair the situations of scores of others. If pockets of Detroit are already experiencing a renaissance, such narratives imply, then one need not ask the hard questions about where the responsibility lies for the systemic problems that are not magically repaired by one successful new business. The great bird rising from the ashes highlights a mythos of rebirth rather than insisting on difficult, practical, long-term, coordinated efforts, which are the only thing that will really enable a post-industrial city to thrive again. Ironically, though they may have roots in individual success stories, such narratives often also subtly privilege a vision of cities as buildings and economies, while deemphasizing that these are ultimately places full of inhabitants whose individual lives matter—because they are narratives that take the single success as representative of the success of the whole. (Tange 2015, 10)

While not explicitly naming de Certeau, she makes a plea to recognize space as practiced place: “as our current cultural moment has made vividly clear, if one is tasked with budget-cutting and stop-gap measures, it is apparently all too easy to ignore the human element of cities in favor of statistics, systemic biases, or columns of accounts” (ibid., 10–11). Similarly, in reading Osman Khan’s performative sculpture *Come Hell or High Water*, which was “part of the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit’s (MOCAD’s) show (*in*)*Habitation: A Reconsideration of Domesticity* (June 7–July 13, 2013), Judith Hamera shows how the slow, repeated flooding of a “quintessential American middle-class Rustbelt living room” on display in a see-through acrylic container “both evokes and disrupts images of Detroit’s crumbling residential infrastructure” (Hamera 2014, 12, 13), while David Shalilol draws welcome attention to how in *Detroit Is No Dry*

Bones: The Eternal City of the Industrial Age (2016), Camilo José Vergara “mutes the romanticization of ruination” and “prompt[s] the reader to investigate the built environment and question the processes that produce the observed context” by including images such as “startling Crime Stoppers billboards that feature a photograph of a murder victim and the charge, ‘You know who killed me’” and “a ‘kind of fantasy architecture’ made possible by new building materials that allow architects and builders (and others) to transform the simple profiles of small churches, Detroit’s unique Coney Island hot dog restaurants, and strip clubs into new “ornamental forms,” with bold columns, waving roofs, and dramatic curves” (Schalliol 2018, 106).

In addition to the potential consciousness-raising that ruin images can do “[b]y evoking the very fears they mean to pacify” and thereby “mak[ing] visible our continuing fall into widening inequality and decline” (Apel 2015, 157), they also draw attention to the affective workings of our increasing visual culture, something renée hoogland explores in her post-Deleuzian consideration of local documentary photographer Julia Reyes Taubman’s *Detroit: 138 Square Miles*. hoogland insists that we attend not to some ethereal concept of affect but rather to what works of art do to us — how and why they affect us in the ways they do. If one considers the soggy furniture in Khan’s *Come Hell or High Water* or the even more bedraggled teddy bears nailed to the outside of houses in the Heidelberg Project, an “outdoor art environment” that reclaimed a street on Detroit’s East Side, one gets a sense of the transformative power that art can have and the importance of its materiality.⁶ As we have seen in this study, the historical locational specificity of this materiality is a mode that cultural practitioners in Vienna find open to them, and as we see in the next section, this is precisely the lesson Vienna presented Wes Anderson a chance to learn.

6 For more on the project, see its informative website at <https://www.heidelberg.org>.

Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin, or The Taming by the Shrew

The Grand Budapest Hotel is not the end of the story of Anderson's engagement with Viennese culture, but rather its opening chapter. After having been seduced by Zweig's world of yesterday and turning it into a seductive, childlike paracosm, one "providing a secure fantasy location, forever accessible, always the same, protected from the outside world" (Firebrace 2014, 72–73), Anderson did not return for long to the apartment in Paris he has maintained since 2005 (Amsden 2007). On top of beginning work on his next film, the stop motion animation *Isle of Dogs* (2018), he accepted an invitation from Vienna's Kunsthistorisches Museum to participate in a special exhibition series in which "remarkable creative individuals [...] present their own personal selections of objects drawn from the museum's historical collections" ("*Spitzmaus Mummy in a Coffin and Other Treasures Wes Anderson and Juman Malouf*" 2018). Given the importance of collecting to Anderson's filmic aesthetics and the way his films "place disparate objects from various sites of popular culture in concert with each other to create anachronistic, unnatural worlds that can be considered quirky or whimsical" (Wilkins 2018, 153), one can understand the museum's decision to invite Anderson for their series, which was part of a larger effort to capitalize on the welcome global visibility *Museum Hours* (2012, dir. Jem Cohen) brought the institution. That year, adjunct curator Jasper Sharp was tasked with establishing a new programme of talks and exhibitions on modern and contemporary art, and as a result:

[s]ince January 2012, the Kunsthistorisches Museum has been inviting leading figures from the world of Modern and Contemporary art to spend time at the museum and speak publicly about their responses to it. The list of past speakers includes Jeff Koons, Edmund de Waal, Nan Goldin, Tobias Meyer, Ed Ruscha, Lawrence Weiner, Sandy Nairne, Thomas Demand, John Currin, Elizabeth Peyton, David Dawson, Ugo Rondinone and many more. ("Talks" n.d.)

In issuing an invitation to Anderson, Sharp did not reckon with the fact that, unlike the two previous curators in the series — pop art artist Ed Ruscha, who put together *The Ancients Stole All Our Great Ideas* in 2012, and Edmund de Waal, who is best known for his porcelain ceramics and his memoir *The Hare with Amber Eyes* (2010) and who assembled *During the Night* in 2016 — Anderson had no previous experience with curatorial work. Working together with his partner, fashion designer, writer and actor Juman Malouf, who also does not speak much German, Anderson began the project with typically grand ambitions. As reported in the *New York Times*, “Mr. Anderson wrote in the exhibition catalog that he hoped the show might unlock some new way of seeing not just the museum’s collection, but also ‘the study of art and antiquity’” (Delistraty 2018). However, the couple soon began to appreciate the daunting nature of the task they were facing. After “digging through 4.5 million works — most of which are stored in a warehouse near Vienna’s airport,” they ended up selecting over 400 objects, many of which were kept in storage and had never before been displayed (ibid.). As Sharp related to the *New York Times*, “[a] project that was meant to take two and a half weeks took closer to two and a half years.” For his part, Anderson described the exhibition in his opening-night speech as “the culmination of several years of patient, frustrating negotiation, bitter, angry debate, sometimes completely irrational confrontation, and often Machiavellian duplicity and deception” (“Wes Anderson — Opening Speech”). That the exhibition was not an easy process is underscored by Sharp’s comments that “[t]his was an incredible headache for them” and that “putting the show together felt at times ‘like we were in some kind of insane Japanese game show’” (Delistraty 2018). One suspects he had occasion to hear about Anderson’s plans for future projects.

As disdainful art critics relished pointing out, neither Anderson’s filmmaking nor Malouf’s novel-writing and illustrating could prepare them to curate an exhibition because of the fundamentally different nature of these forms of artistic engagement. Whereas in films, fiction, and drawings “the artists

manipulate feelings by controlling the characters they created. But in an exhibition, they can handle only existing artworks that have their own histories.” Moreover, Anderson’s and Malouf’s specific practices are “all about creating narratives and moods — of yearning, of melancholy, of passion. [...] Unlike a director moving actors around a set, a museum curator cannot dictate how the works will make a viewer feel” (ibid.). That is, Anderson and Malouf found themselves facing intransigence and recalcitrance both on the part of the objects and the museum-goers. No longer able to order people about and draw lines wherever they saw fit, they had to accommodate the preservational needs of their surroundings, not to mention each other and their relationship. Unlike in their respective fictional worlds, objects and pesky characters like adjunct or fellow curators could not be simply destroyed or killed off; rather their autonomy, fragility, and worth had to be respected.

Being cut off from his usual narratives and having to negotiate and debate with his co-curator may not necessarily have been a pleasant experience for Anderson, but one sees that it was a valuable one in the title and upbeat mood of the exhibition. As one astute critic noted in a sly dig at his more arrogant colleagues:

It would be easy to dismiss the simplicity of Anderson and Malouf’s approach, treating them as mere dilettantes. To do so would miss how *Spitzmaus Mummy* bursts with the joy of discovery. It allows us to relive those moments we first fell in love with things, when the shelves in libraries, bookshops, museums, or galleries seem to extend infinitely into the distance. (Feldman 2018)

That this joy of discovery was appreciated and shared by museum-goers is evident in Instagram comments such as “I love the color blocking that reminds immediately of Wes Anderson’s movies! [film camera emoji]” and “[f]or me all in all it’s a fun experience to walk through these rooms and discover all the little details and unknown exhibits. For those who expect any

contentual [sic] or intellectual approach they might be disappointed” (Eckhardt 2018). In other words, museumgoers found themselves affected by looking at and wondering about each object but not only that; unlike the distanced disdain of the critics and the melancholy of his movies, these affects were not based on a relentless, debilitating sense of loss. On the contrary:

[T]he curators show an admirable optimism in their choices, as if suggesting that human creative powers are the same everywhere and inspire equal wonder, like the titular coffined *Spitzmaus* (shrew), a tiny wooden sarcophagus from Ptolemaic-period Egypt (fourth century BCE). Time has chipped and dirtied the wood, but this does not matter, since the creature has spent about 2,400 happy years in the afterlife. It is a fitting centrepiece to a truly distinctive exhibition. (Feldman 2018)

The fact that Anderson and Malouf chose not only the *Spitzmaus* as their centerpiece but to leave the name of the titular coffined creature in the original German in an otherwise global English title points to how affected they were by their discovery of it and how responsible the power to display it made them feel. It became a character for them, one worthy of a name, or perhaps more aptly, a nickname (the German word for nickname is *Spitzname*), because it had a touching history. Something had brought its coffin to Vienna at some point in the past, where it had found a refuge in the museum’s storage spaces. While it may be true that the show had “Mr. Anderson’s surface-level aesthetic but none of the underlying narrative or emotion of his movies” (Delistraty 2018), the reading of ruin porn in this chapter leads one to query the value of simply generating affect regardless of the quality and directionality of the emotions produced. As we have seen, those generated by *The Grand Budapest Hotel* tend towards backward-looking melancholy, whereas in establishing that objects are not doomed to be relegated to archival dustbins, the exhibition produced something more posi-

tive and forward-looking. Even in storage objects now have reason to look forward to future display with other recognized and unrecognized treasures.

Learning from Semmering

How do the grand hotels in and around Vienna measure up to Anderson's filmic and curatorial visions? What does their futurity look like? How are these worlds of yesterday managing and what kinds of futures are they making possible? Here *The Grand Budapest Hotel* is useful in drawing attention to the fact that grand hotels differ somewhat according to their location. Made possible by the nineteenth-century development of the railway and the holding of world exhibitions, which created "obvious needs for greatly increased lodging space (Denby 1998, 81), grand hotels arose once "the idea of living in palatial rooms at will and without responsibilities had caught the imagination of the well-to-do" (ibid., 102). While they tended to be located "beside, or were attached to, the great railway stations of every major European city" as well as "at the distant ends of the railway lines, on the coast and in the mountains, where they catered to those seeking bodily and spiritual renewal in pure air, clean waters, 'untouched' landscape, the sublime grandeur of the mountains or the sea" (Lachmayer et al. 1991, 33), in Vienna grand hotels developed not in conjunction with the railroads but rather the ring boulevard that was built beginning in 1858 to replace the glacis, the military parade grounds that surrounded the first district. The grand hotels Denby lists in her study—the Imperial, which was built in 1867 to be Duke Philippe of Württemberg's palace but was never used for that purpose and was converted to a hotel six years later for Vienna's one and only World Exhibition; the Metropole, which was built in 1873 explicitly for that world exhibition; the Britannia, which was completed in 1870; the Donau, which was built from 1870 to 1880; and the Hotel Sacher, which was developed by the enterprising butcher Eduard Sacher, who in 1880 purchased "the site where the old Kärntnertor Theatre had been replaced by a new build-

ing [...] which he proposed to transform into a hotel to fulfil the growing fashion and demand for well-appointed accommodation” (Denby 1998, 102), were all located on or near the Ringstrasse. And as global tourism continues to grow, palace after palace both along and inside the Ring is converted into a hotel or serviced apartment.⁷

Unlike Vienna’s grand hotels, those that developed in its hinterland did so according to the usual pattern of mountain railroad development, something the Habsburg Empire led in. Recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site in 1998, the Semmering Line was built to connect Vienna with Trieste, the Empire’s main port on the Adriatic. Upon its completion in 1854, it became the first railway to successfully solve the considerable challenge of spanning a major mountain chain: “one of the greatest feats of civil engineering from this pioneering phase of railway building,” it represented, according to UNESCO, an “outstanding technological solution to a major physical problem, whose construction made ‘areas of great natural beauty [...] more easily accessible’” (cited in Frank 2012, 193 n24).⁸ As Alison F. Frank perceptively notes, driving these developments was a desire to commodify the elements, in the first instance air but also water. As the same time as their

7 A counter-development is that smaller historical hotels in Vienna that are not central are falling into decay, such the Hotel Roter Hahn in the Landstrasser Hauptstrasse in the third district, in which Beethoven and Mozart are said to have stayed and which has been shuttered since 2000; the Hotel Aphrodite at Praterstern 28 in the second district, which was a four-star wellness hotel in the 1970s but closed in 2008; the Gartenhotel Altmannsdorf in Meidling, which used to host the SPÖ “chancellor parties” and closed over a year ago, and the Hotel Thüringer Hof in the eighteenth district, which used to be a Tulip Inn and has been on the market for several years (Zoidl 2019b).

8 Railway enthusiasts like to refer to its impressive statistics: sixteen viaducts, some with several levels, fifteen tunnels, 142 structures above ground, 129 bridges and built in only six years. Its story is told in admiring detail in Mario Schwarz’s preface to Vasko-Juhász (2018).

social use value was being created by the labor of scientists and doctors [, ...] the labor of architects, engineers, hoteliers, entrepreneurs, and a whole host of construction workers and railway technicians was making it possible to sell [...] access to it. (Frank 2012, 185)

South of Vienna, tourism quickly took shape along the new railway line:

Die erste Konzentration von Kurorten entstand durch die Südbahn entlang der Thermenlinie südlich von Wien mit Baden und Bad Vöslau. Bald folgten die Kurorte um Reichenau und schließlich das Semmeringgebiet.

[The first concentration of cure towns developed on account of the *Südbahn* along the row of thermal baths south of Vienna with Baden and Bad Vöslau. Cure towns soon followed around Reichenau and finally the Semmering area.] (Vasko-Juhász 2018, 78)

By 1882 the *Südbahn* had built a grand hotel in Semmering, which was soon surrounded by villas and three further grandiose Kurhotels: the Panhans, the Erzherzog Johann, and the Kurhaus. Upon the completion of the latter in 1909, Semmering solidified its status as one of the leading travel destinations in Europe, attracting a wealthy clientele from the furthest reaches of the monarchy (Vasko-Juhász 2018, 225). The majority, however, came from Vienna. As Frank notes, “[t]he railway made it easy to reach, but only the construction of a luxury hotel in the 1880s — interestingly enough, by the Southern Railway Society itself — made it an attractive destination for Vienna’s most fashionable society; skiers and hikers joined poets and playwrights — the works of Arthur Schnitzler and Peter Altenberg are unthinkable without it” (Frank 2012, 193).

The large strokes of history Wes Anderson draws to frame his *Grand Budapest Hotel* loosely correspond to those experienced in Semmering. By 1932, the year Edmund Goulding

turned Vicky Baum's 1929 novel into the classic film in which Greta Garbo declares that she "want's to be alone, the Südbahnhotel and Panhans were competing to see who could build the most attractive swimming pool while the Kurhaus continued to acquire the latest in medical technology. By April 1938, however, the Südbahnhotel found itself draped in swastika flags.⁹ It served as a military hospital during WWII and opened its doors again four days after the capitulation of May 8, 1945, although those doors were no longer as elegant as they had once been.¹⁰ Indeed, all eleven hotels in Semmering suffered considerable damage and looting during the war and its aftermath. Semmering was split between the British and Soviet occupation zones, and even after the Soviets left in 1955, it never returned to its pre-war levels and type of tourism. In 1976 the Südbahnhotel shut its doors (*ibid.*, 374), while the Panhans was initially rescued by new ownership in 1982, which resulted in a *Bundesfachschnule für Fremdenverkehrsberufe* ["vocational college for tourist trades"] opening there in 1984, followed by an international institute for tourism and management in 1986. Both hotels have since acquired new owners; the Südbahnhotel was bought in the 1990s by the Klinik Bavaria Rudolf Presl GmbH, which replaced its roof (*ibid.*, 176) but has in the meantime put it on the market again (Zoidl 2017); while the Panhans declared bankruptcy in 2012 and together with the Erzherzog Johann Hotel was purchased the following year by the Swiss Renco Invest AG ("Hotel Panhans an Schweizer verkauft" 2013). It turned out that the Swiss company had suspicious connections to Ukrainian investors accused of money laundering, not to mention FPÖ repre-

9 There is a stunning image of it in Désirée Vasko-Juhász's *Die Südbahn: Ihre Kurorte und Hotels* (2018, 371), which one wonders whether Wes Anderson had seen.

10 As Vasko-Juhász relates: "Doch unbeirrt von alldem öffnete das Südbahnhotel bereits vier Tage nach der Kapitulation, die am 8.5.1945 erfolgte, wieder seine Pforten, die nun allerdings nicht mehr so nobel wie früher waren" [Undeterred by it all the Südbahnhotel opened its doors only four days after the capitulation achieved on May 8, 1945, but they were not as elegant as they had been"] (Vasko-Juhász 2018, 373).

sentative Thomas Schellenbacher. In the meantime, charges of illegal hiring of construction workers have been laid, among other scandals (Wammerl 2017). At the time of writing, the Panhans remains under construction. In the summer of 2017, it was unable to participate in the *Kultur Sommer Semmering* festival, which has been taking place since 2011 to attract audiences from Vienna and Graz from July through September with a cultural program that features literary, musical, and culinary events that bring in funds while at the same time helping to maintain the increasingly rickety structures through use. In the summer of 2019, the Kurhaus joined in Panhans in not being able to participate in *Kultur Sommer Semmering* due to the exorbitant demands of its Kazakh owners, something festival director Florian Krumpöck personally regretted and found unnecessary, although he tried to put a positive spin on the new program possibilities that would be offered by having the Südbahnhotel as the festival's sole venue (Rosenberger 2019). The influence “[w]er heute eine Rast am Semmering riskiert, bedauert das triste Ambiente” [“those who dare to make a stop in Semmering regret its sad atmosphere”] (Urbanek 2019).

When viewed in light of Semmering's recent history, it is clear that Wes Anderson left off his grand hotel's story just as it was set to enter the age of global finance capitalism. As Frank details, the invention of the Alpine sanatoria, which she translates as air cure towns, did not take place in Semmering but in Davos, thanks to Alexander Spengler, a law student who had led a student rebellion in Mannheim in March 1848 and then fled to the Swiss alps to avoid arrest (Frank 2012, 186). Long associated with Thomas Mann's 1924 *Zauberberg* [*Magic Mountain*], Davos is now better known as the site of the invitation-only annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF), which prides itself on bringing together the chief executive officers of its 1,000 member companies with movers and shakers in the world of politics, academia, religion, and the media. The kind of future that these annual gatherings at the end of January work towards is obviously very much in the rapacious spirit of the capitalism that developed Davos and other air cure towns with grand ho-

tels in the first place, which is to say, the kind that generates the anxiety that drives disaster capitalism and that, for places with failing industries, can result in ruin porn.

We have seen in this chapter how this spirit chews up the profits of once-new technologies like spa hotels and automobile factories for breakfast and then moves on to a new technology, if necessary in another part of world, for lunch, leaving the places that have sprung up around the often massive technological infrastructure that has been produced to their own devices. As we have seen, how they turn the wreckage they have inherited into something that can be exchanged for profit in the new economy that has evolved thanks to the new technology varies. We have also seen how the production of art and artistic events, such as installations in which furniture is flooded at regular intervals and literary readings and concerts held in hotels on the verge of collapse, can breathe not only new life into distressed places but a new kind of life, one which prioritizes the kind of non-economic exchange artistic creation has the potential to make possible. Apel concludes her study of Detroit by noting that “[t]he imagery of ruination challenges us to imagine a society that would eliminate the bankruptcy of cities and the impoverishment of their inhabitants, and to ask how ruin imagery might be harnessed to an emancipatory struggle that would eliminate the constant drive for accumulation, privatization, commodification, and monetization” (Apel 2015, 158). While Wes Anderson’s *Grand Budapest Hotel* may not inspire such imagining or questioning, as we have seen here, probing the history of grand hotels in the context of Vienna can.

Capitalism, Schizophrenia, and #Vanlife: The Alpine Edukation of Hans Weingarter

“Safety is an illusion [...] What’s the point of prolonging a life you don’t enjoy when you can create a life that you love.”

— Sammon (2019)

“Cinema by all means has to be dangerous!”

— Barbara Pichler, cited in von Mering (2012, 108).

The scenario has in the meantime become well known: a pair of young anti-capitalist activists spend their nights “educating” the wealthy by breaking into their houses, moving their furniture around, and leaving behind messages that say “die fetten Jahre sind vorbei” [“the days of plenty are over”] — the film’s German title, or “Sie haben zu viel Geld” [“you have too much money”] and are signed by “die Erziehungsberechtigten” [“the guardians”]. When one becomes involved with the other’s girlfriend, the new pair undertakes an educative action that goes off the rails: the villa owner comes back unexpectedly, and “the Edukators” (the translated title under which the film gained international recognition) find themselves involved in a kidnapping of

a former '68er turned corporate shill, who puts their revolutionary principles to a test. Released in the year the EU enlarged by ten countries, most from behind what had been the Iron Curtain, Hans Weingartner's smash hit was celebrated as a welcome repoliticization of *German* filmmaking for a new generation and part of a larger turn in *German* cinema towards social and political issues.¹ Sabine Hake spoke of "an emerging cinema of dissent" in the "new *Germany*" that found itself in a "unified Europe" (Hake 2008, 192; italics added) and listed Weingartner among

several socially conscious directors — some of them trained or born in the GDR — [who] have enlisted the social and cultural topographies of post-unification Berlin in diagnosing the failures of reunification [... and t]he affinities between established subcultures and the new urban underclass. (Hake 2008, 220)

For his part Eric Rentschler, who included Weingartner in a group with Angela Schanelec, Almut Getto Moore, Benjamin Quabeck, Hans Christian Schmidt, Andreas Kleinert, Andreas Dresen, Oskar Roehler, Fatih Akin, and Tom Tykwer, was also very positive about *German* cinema's prospects in the new millennium, writing that: "Contemporary *German* films, at long last, once again manifest an ability to take risks, to dare to be spontaneous and tentative. By illuminating obscured spaces and respecting marginal perspectives, they seek to expand our regard both for what is real and what might be possible" (Rentschler 2002, 5; italics added). It is difficult to capture Weingartner's goals as a filmmaker more precisely. Yet whenever scholars compare his work to others, they invariably end up noting that he "sets himself apart not only from other contemporary *Ger-*

1 This trend has received attention in a number of survey works, such as Cooke (2012) and the second edition of Hake (2008), and edited collections: Fisher and Prager (2010), Cooke and Homewood (2011), Mueller and Skidmore (2012), and Nagib and Jerslev (2013).

man filmmakers but also from his generation of fellow Germans in general” (Cook 2010, 310; italics added) and that his early hit “represents something of a departure from some of the other related films” and has “a somewhat different attitude to its critical reckoning with German society” (Palfreyman 2011, 172; italics added) as it “suggests that resistance might be possible in the real world rather than only within the framework of the kind of countercultural discourses cinema can construct” (Leal 2012, 129).

By this point in the book, not to mention the italics in the previous paragraph, astute readers will suspect, if they don’t already know, that Weingartner is not German. Indeed, he is from Feldkirch in the westernmost part of Vorarlberg on the border to Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Yet typically this fact is relegated to the category of “I know but all the same,” as in Roger Cook’s comment that “Although Austrian by birth, the director Hans Weingartner belongs to this genus of recent German filmmakers” that have shifted towards the mainstream of representational narrative cinema as it has been propagated globally by the Hollywood film industry (Cook 2010, 310). In paying attention to Weingartner’s political sensitivity to location, this chapter situates him among those who have absorbed the spatial lessons Vienna’s fraught cultural historical landscape makes available, something that could well have happened during his time studying at the University of Vienna.² I am not contesting the fact that *The Edukators* “engages with the history of the Federal Republic, and indeed with German film history” (Palfreyman 2011, 171). Rather, I seek to locate the coordinates of

2 According to Roger Cook, “After studying physics and computer science and conducting brain research at the University of Vienna, he studied film and television at the Kunsthochschule für Medien Köln (1997–2001)” (Cook 2010, 310). Weingartner himself described what he studied in Vienna as “Neurowissenschaften” [neurological studies] (Weingartner 2012). He also earned a diploma as a camera assistant from the Austrian Association of Cinematography. No doubt his time living in a squat in Berlin in the 1990s also had something to do with his politicization, especially in conjunction with his studies in a Vienna in which Jörg Haider’s presence was starting to make itself felt (see Fiddler 2018).

Weingartner's political critique, which is, indeed, very much in the spirit of Guy Debord's society of the spectacle, as Palfreyman establishes in connection with generational conflict and Cooke and Stone do in connection with American hobos, slackers à la Linklater, and idiots à la von Trier. his chapter probes how Weingartner makes use of locations to mix and reversion genres in his work, particularly

that most German of genres, the mountain film, a favoured form under the Nazis made famous in the 1930s by the likes of Leni Riefenstahl and Arnold Fanck, when the nation's spectacular countryside provided a dramatic backdrop to their melodramatic stories of rural folk negotiating a new sense of belonging in the face of modernity. (Cooke and Stone 2013, 96)

Its goal is to establish how attention to the specificity of location has contributed to whatever optimism Weingartner's oeuvre has been able to maintain.

Between Capitalism and Schizophrenia: The Problematic Place of Collectivities

“Jedes Herz ist eine revolutionäre Zelle” [“Every heart is a revolutionary cell”]

— *The Edukators* (2004)

“live
your life as if dread has not
changed you.”

— Hummel

Not only an influential, two-volume tome by French theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, capitalism and schizophrenia mark the poles between which the five feature films Weingart-

ner has made to date have shuttled.³ His successful 2001 debut, *Das weiße Rauschen* [*The White Sound*, lit. *White Noise*], starred Daniel Brühl as a young man diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia, who struggles to deal with his condition. It was followed by the 2004 *Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei* [*The Edukators*], which, as noted above, tackled the problem three young people, played by Daniel Brühl, Julia Jentsch, and Stipe Erceg, face in finding effective ways to challenge contemporary capitalism in light of the failures of the '68 generation, represented by Burghard Klaußner. Based on its success, Weingartner raised the level and specificity of critique in his next film, the 2007 *Free Rainer — Dein Fernseher lügt* [*Reclaim Your Brain*, lit. *Free Rainer, Your Television Lies*], in which another star of the German screen, Moritz Bleibtreu of *Lola rennt* [*Run Lola Run*, 1998, dir. Tom Tykwer] fame, plays a fast-living TV station-manager who, after a Fatih Akin-like car accident, realizes the error of his ways and assembles a motley gang to hack television ratings and, in manipulating them, improve the level of television programming. However, the film did not resonate with audiences the way his previous films had, revealing the indifference of audiences, and especially the youthful ones who had propelled *The*

3 He has also made a number of shorts, most notably an episode in *Deutschland 09* (2009), a collection of 13 shorts on the state of the nation by leading German filmmakers initiated by Tom Tykwer. “Gefährder” [“Potential Threat”] was based on the hair-raising story of the 2007 arrest and jailing of Andrej Holm, a sociologist who was accused of conspiring with “terrorists” to firebomb a German military base, kept in solitary confinement for a month and then under surveillance until his case was formally dismissed in 2010 due to lack of evidence. The episode presents Germany as a police state and ends with three admonishing screens that inform audiences that: “Andrej Holm, auf dessen Geschichte dieser Film basiert, wurde noch ein Jahr nach seiner Freilassung überwacht. / Die ‘Antiterrordatenbank’ enthält mittlerweile 334 Datenbanken von Polizei und Geheimdiensten. Darin sind 112 Millionen Datensätze gespeichert. / Sie können davon ausgehen, dass auch Ihre Daten darin gespeichert sind” [“Andrej Holm, whose story this film is based on, was surveilled for a year after his release. / The ‘Antiterror database’ already contains 334 police and secret service databases containing 112 million pieces of data. / You should presume that your data too are stored there”].

Edukators to international renown, to what figured imaginatively, if not in reality, as an outmoded medium.⁴ For his next film, the 2011 *Die Summe meiner einzelnen Teile* [*Hut in the Woods*, lit. *The Sum of My Individual Parts*], Weingartner returned to the realm of psychiatry in depicting the plight of a man with hallucinations, played by a little known actor from the former GDR, Peter Schneider, who is released from a psychiatric clinic, makes a home for himself in the forest and befriends a young Russian boy there before again being institutionalized. His latest film, the 2018 *303*, is a romantic road movie that takes its inspiration from Linklater's *Before Sunrise* (on which Weingartner had worked as a production assistant and in which he had a cameo appearance) and has its picture-perfect blonde leads (played by Mala Emde and Anton Spieker) engage in intricate, well-informed debate on issues such as the "Vereinzelungsstrategie des Kapitalismus" ["capitalism's strategy of individualizing"] and free love (Taylor 2018).⁵

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- 4 Sabine Hake offers a good overview of the realities of German film financing in the "film-making in the new Germany and a unified Europe" section of the second edition of *German National Cinema*, in which she explicitly mentions the growing influence of television channels: "In addition to the public television channels such as WDR [Westdeutscher Rundfunk], MDR [Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk], and NDR [Norddeutscher Rundfunk], the Franco-German cultural channel Arte, founded in 1992, plays an ever more important role in the financing of European co-productions" (193). One notes that both *Die fetten Jahre* and *Free Rainer* are German-Austrian co-productions, while his two more recent films were strictly German productions. In an interview about *Free Rainer*'s lack of box-office success, Weingartner commented on the irony that more viewers will see his critique of television on television than in the cinema ("Der Tod des Kinos" n.d.).
- 5 The seven-year gap between *303* and *Hut in the Woods* speaks to the difficulty Weingartner had in making his latest venture as a German television company withdrew its financing at the last minute and others proved, perhaps unsurprisingly, less than keen to support him. As he put it, he had to "wieder Klinken putzen gehen und das Geld zusammenkratzen. Ich konnte das selbst nicht glauben. Die Fernsehsender und Filmförderungen wollten den Film einfach nicht" ["go door-to-door and cobble the money together again. I myself could not believe it. The television channels and film boards simply didn't want the film"] (B. Reiter 2018). That Weingart-

In shifting back and forth between capitalism and schizophrenia, Weingartner's growing oeuvre makes their similarities increasingly clear by depicting how both function to isolate individuals and make it difficult for them to communicate revolutionary ideas and work together to realize them. While he may share Deleuze and Guattari's critique of normative structures, what Weingartner promulgates is — as can be seen in the tagline for *The Edukators*, “Jedes Herz ist eine revolutionäre Zelle” [“Every heart is a revolutionary cell”] — the opposite of a body without organs. Rather than reject “those aspects of subjectivity which constitute the liberal individual (such as agency, self-knowledge, consistency, coherence, and the ability to effect change rather than be affected by it)” (Stark 2012, 102), all he wants is those individuals to become more critical of the capitalist waters in which they tread and the capitalist air they breathe, which is why he imparts their natural counterparts with the value he does. He may have started out his career believing that if he only explained things properly so that people could understand them, they would be less afraid and able to see things as he does; as he put it in an interview, “das, was man versteht, davor hat man weniger Angst” [“one is less afraid of things one understands”] (Delius 2011). However, when asked

ner has found the German film industry a challenging environment and one in which he remains an outsider can also be seen in the fact that 303 was his first film to be accepted by the Berlinale, and even then it was not selected for the main competition but rather for the “Berlinale-Sektion Generation für Kinder und Jugendliche,” the section for children and teenagers. In an interview about *Hut in the Woods* he had commented “Inzwischen ärgert mich das nicht mehr. Das Konkurrenz-Denken in diesen Festival-Wettbewerben ist doch genau das, wogegen sich mein neuer Film wendet” [“in the meantime it doesn't even make me angry anymore. The competitive spirit of festival competition is precisely what my new film attacks”] (Weingartner 2012). While it might seem puzzling from the position of the German film industry that Weingartner expects it to support radical work highly critical of its workings, if that industry worked the way the production of academic knowledge traditionally has, that is, in a not-for-profit, state-supported mode with the aim of fostering an informed, critical citizenry, he would not have found it as difficult to find funding.

about *Hut in the Woods* and whether his politics had changed since *The Edukators*, he replied, “Es scheint so. Der Kapitalismus ist ein Zug, der auf den Abgrund zurast. Ich glaube nicht mehr so recht daran, dass man ihn aufhalten kann, indem man sich auf die Schienen setzt. Vielleicht ist es sinnvoller, runterzuspringen“ [“It would seem so. Capitalism is a train speeding towards the abyss. I no longer believe in the same way that we can stop it by sitting on the tracks. Maybe it makes more sense to jump off”] (Weingartner 2012). However, it is not that the protagonists in 303 are any less rebellious or critical than his earlier ones. As one critic noted, his protagonists always react against a capitalist society they experience as repressive and in which those who either do not want to or cannot participate in the hunt for money, a career or power sink; they all rebel in their own way against the system (Taylor 2018).

Important in this observation is that his characters are depicted as not only experiencing but recognizing the world they live in as repressive. That one can experience repression without recognizing it is the point of Lauren Berlant’s work on cruel optimism, something Vegso and Abel refer to in their biopolitical reading of *The Edukators*, in which they identify that:

[t]he pressing political problem, in other words, is neither that people somehow “want” to be repressed nor that they are tricked by ideological lure into passive submission to power. Rather, as Daniel W. Smith argues, the problem is that people invest serious stakes in social systems (such as neoliberal capitalism) — despite the fact that these systems thwart their interests — because our desires (drives, affects), far from being owned by us as subjects, are part of the capitalist infrastructure itself. (Vegso and Abel 2016, 5)

Weingartner’s contribution is to show that such a fate is not inevitable and that it is possible to make alternate forms of investment that claw back one’s desires from the capitalist infrastructure by taking one’s life into one’s own hands, whether in the

more radical mode of setting off to disrupt signal towers in the Mediterranean that supply television programming to Western Europe or simply by removing oneself from society to watch waves crash on a beach or to build a hut in the forest with an imaginary friend.

Nature Calls

The Edukators established Weingartner's reputation as one of the chroniclers of the growing urban hipness of Berlin in the early naughts. That the non-urban in the film nonetheless received academic attention speaks to its significance. Rachel Palfreyman identified *The Edukators* as "a generically hybrid film which might be described as a love triangle, a Heimatfilm, a heist film, a family melodrama, a mountain film, or an anti-capitalist fable" (Palfreyman 2011, 169), but it soon becomes clear which of these genres captures her imagination. While noting that the film's "love triangle recalls the mountain films *The Holy Mountain* (*Der heilige Berg*, 1926) and *The White Hell of Piz Palü* in which rivalry over a woman leads to disaster" (ibid., 179), she prefers to read the mountains as a "Heimat locale" (ibid., 169), a "Heimat setting" (ibid., 181) "in the middle of a Heimatfilm" (ibid., 184), in which a "Heimat intermezzo" (ibid., 169) takes place that features "a kind of Heimat commune" (ibid., 182). For their part, Paul Cooke and Rob Stone pick up the question of genre Palfreyman raises in reading the film as part of a longer politicized cultural tradition about drifters, noting that *The Edukators* even "seems to drift across genres" (Cooke and Stone 2013, 95), including that of the mountain film. They see Weingartner as having averted "the potential problems of invoking the mountain film" (ibid., 97) because the mountain locale "that recalls the films of Riefenstahl and National Socialism [...] provides a space for the *Edukators* to learn about the ghosts of Germany's activist past" at the same time as it "gestures to earlier generational conflicts and the anger the 68ers felt towards their parents for failing to accept their culpability for the crimes of the Third Reich" (ibid., 96). Positioning the 68er as a representative of the

generation being rebelled against “offers a moment of reflection on the trajectory of West German political activism since the 1960s, the zeal of the younger generation, the so-called 89ers who have come of age since unification, being countered by the tired pragmatism of this 68er” (ibid., 96).

What both Palfreyman and Cooke and Stone are sensitive to is what Weingartner’s shift in *The Edukators* to the mountains makes possible. Time there is slowed down by shifting from movement-images to time-images (Cooke and Stone 2013, 96), and a different kind of relation is called forth by “the one sleeping area in the hut,” a relation “which emphasises kinship, the kinship of the mountains” (Palfreyman 2011, 182). What kind of kinship is this? Palfreyman describes the foursome as somewhere between a family group and a commune (ibid., 182), which gets at the fundamental exploration driving Weingartner’s oeuvre: how to form a collectivity that is good for both its members and their larger society and frees everyone from the curse of property and feelings of possessiveness. That urban development contributes to this curse is made clear both in *The Edukators* and in his contribution to *Deutschland 09*, “Gefährder” [“Potential Threat”], in which the sociologist Andrej Holm, the eponymous threat of the title, is shown lecturing on gentrification. But what about Weingartner’s own relation to the non-urban?

Generally, in his films such spaces are those of freedom and exploration. The psychically damaged male protagonists in his schizophrenia films seek out the solace of the sea and the forest, while for those in his capitalism films, the road, and the mountains and coasts it invariably leads to, provides a space to probe the limits of monogamous relationships. *The Edukators* and *303* undermine the German romantic tradition of solitary Byronic wanderers on mountaintops by translating it into the contemporary idiom of online dating: it is not conquering they are interested in but in connecting. With *303* Weingartner set out to make a film in which his protagonists try not to fall in love, but like their namesakes in *The Edukators*, they find it is not to be avoided and so needs to be accommodated into their

individual, biologically based quests (for the father of her baby and his biological father) in such a way that can transcend the individuation capitalism has proven so capable of exploiting.

To claim, therefore, that Weingartner's films have "Bergfilm" or "Heimatfilm" components simply because they take place in the mountains or the forest diverts attention from the structural purpose that the nature settings in his films serve. The white noise of Weingartner's first feature (*Das weiße Rauschen*), which ends with a long take of the protagonist staring out at breaking waves, could not be more different than *Der weiße Rausch* [*The White Ecstasy*, 1931], which Riefenstahl is depicted deriving from skiing exploits on death-defyingly high craggy slopes. It is not snowy mountain peaks such as those in what was already then the famous ski resort of Sankt Anton am Arlberg, where *Der weiße Rausch* was filmed, that feature in *The Edukators*, but rather a 2.0 version of Fanck's alpine hut: a cozy vacation cabin on a verdant Tirolean hillside northeast of Innsbruck. More specifically, it is near Jenbach overlooking Tirol's largest lake, the Achensee, which the Tirolean Tourist Board noted is "lovingly dubbed 'Fiord of the Alps,'" when they hired Daniel Brühl to promote it over a decade after the film was shot there ("Set Jetting: Achensee Lake Area Starring Daniel Brühl in 'The Edukators'" 2017). The mountains are not hell for Weingartner, but rather something that can still provide a bulwark against hell while at the same time needing protection from the growing tourist industry and the Airbnb-ification of accommodation.

The question of "Heimat" is more complicated. Since it emerged as a modern concept in the late eighteenth century "as 'a feminized space of identity and origin'" (Eigler and Kugele 2012, 7), understandings have tended to shift generationally and to gain a welcome critical edge in the process, at least since the 1980s, leading to its having lost "much of its cringe factor for Germans" (Ludewig 2014, 435). The concept's "rich set of cultural and ideological connotations that combine notions of belonging and identity with affective attachment to a specific place or region" (Eigler 2012, 27) are now "more likely to question what Heimat could be than to provide answers or to define

it” (Ludewig 2014, 389). As Ludewig notes, since 1988 there has been a film festival held annually in Freistadt, Austria, dedicated to “Der neue Heimatfilm” [the new Heimatfilm], which includes films from around the world “in a variety of contexts, genres, and styles” and conceptualizes Heimat as “a lifelong personal quest that unites people from all parts of the globe” (Ludewig 2014, 389). There can be no mistaking Weingartner’s answer to the question of “where one feels at home with oneself and the world” (ibid., 436). His disdain of affective attachments to property rather than people radiates from the image of the pyramidal furniture construction that one of the families the educators have visited returns home to find, which contrasts with the simple construction the protagonist of *Die Summe meiner einzelnen Teile* erects for himself and his young friend in the woods and with the campervan the pair share in 303. Weingartner has made clear in interviews how highly he values the ability to share any kind of space:

Man hat den Individualismus als Folge auf zwei Schocks gepredigt. Das Kooperative hat in den letzten 70 Jahren durch den Nationalsozialismus, der ja eine Art Massenbewegung des Bösen war, einen schlechten Ruf bekommen — und dann noch einmal durch den Kommunismus, der auch völlig ausgeartet ist. Jetzt kommen wir langsam drauf, dass eine Menschheit aus acht Milliarden Individualisten nicht funktioniert. Der Nummer-eins-Glücksfaktor, wie man aus der Forschung weiß, ist soziale Nähe. Happiness is only real, when shared. Das ist ein Satz aus dem Film “Into the Wild”, der einer meiner Vorbilder für meinen Film war.

[One began preaching individualism as a consequence of two shocks. Cooperation got a bad rap in the last 70 years through national socialism, which was a kind of mass movement of evil, and then again through communism, which also got completely out of hand. Now we’re slowly starting to realize that a human society consisting of eight billion individualists doesn’t work. As one knows from research, the

number one factor for happiness is social proximity. ‘Happiness is only real when shared.’ That is a sentence from the film *Into the Wild*, which was one of the models for my film.] (B. Reiter 2018)

He has his edukators invade well-appointed bourgeois dwellings in Berlin-Zehlendorf in the city’s posh south-west to draw attention to the fact that the relations such spaces encourage are mediated by commodities and work not only to increase social distance, particularly between the generations usually housed in such structures, but to pit them against each other as well as against those in neighboring dwellings, to wit — keeping up with the Joneses by having higher quality possessions, going on vacation to more exotic destinations, and having one’s offspring go to more prestigious schools, all of which, of course, are not merely more expensive but work to limit value to its monetary meaning.

As clichéd as it sounds, Weingartner’s films suggest that, for him, home is where the heart is, which, given the provision that the heart is a revolutionary cell, implies that the bourgeoisie are heartless. Home, in this understanding, can be anywhere, as long as it remains open to one’s fellow travelers. The way Weingartner has come to realize the value of his own upbringing in Feldkirch has no doubt contributed to the contempt with which he depicts institutionalized forces in his films. Having grown up with seven siblings, Weingartner became accustomed early on to finding his own way: “An meinem ersten Schultag, das weiß ich noch genau, sagte mir keiner aus der Familie, wo die Schule ist, ich wusste nicht einmal, ob ich schon im richtigen Alter bin” [“On my first day of school, I still remember it exactly, no one in my family told me where the school was and I didn’t even know if I was the right age”] (B. Reiter 2018). Moreover, that upbringing took place on the edge of a forest he could escape into whenever adults caused him stress:

Ich bin in Vorarlberg in einem Dorf am Waldrand aufgewachsen. Wenn ich als Kind mit Erwachsenen Stress hatte,

bin ich oft stundenlang durch den Wald gelaufen und stark wieder herausgekommen. Im Wald merkst du erst, was für ein starkes Tier in dir steckt. Und wie sehr dieses Tier die Freiheit braucht.

[I grew up in Vorarlberg in a village on the edge of a forest. When, as a child, adults caused me stress, I would often walk in the woods for hours and come out strong. In the forest you notice for the first time what kind of strong, wild animal is in you. And how much this animal needs freedom.] (Weingartner 2012)

Weingartner's films draw attention to the ways in which the incursion of control society into the bourgeois family, which the unholy combination of new technologies and old fears has encouraged, has robbed its members, and particularly the children, of access to such spaces.

It is not only bourgeois social institutions that Weingartner rejects in his films. When asked in an interview conducted in conjunction with a screening of *303* in Vienna about what kind of building in Berlin he lived in, an apartment or a house, he surprised the self-declared Tirolean interviewer by telling her that he lived in the Mercedes camper that features in the film because he found he could sleep in it the best. Having suffered from problems sleeping, he had tried the camper and soon realized that he didn't have to drive out into the forest but could rent a small dacha and park in the garden (B. Reiter 2018). This is neither the lifestyle kind of van living celebrated on Twitter with hashtags such as #vanlife, #vanlifeuk, #vanlifediaries, #vanliving, #vanlifers, #vanlifer, and #vanlifecommunity, nor the #sad trend in the United States of the working poor having to live in their vehicles because they cannot afford anywhere else.⁶ In choosing not to invest in the property on which he sleeps, Weingartner is taking a principled stand against participating in

6 For a good account of the relation between the two and the extent of and reasons for these phenomena, see Sammon (2019).

the gentrification he has watched overtake Berlin over his past fifteen years in the city.

To conclude, I would like to question whether, or in how far, this stance can properly be described as nostalgic. It seems quite a commonplace in German film scholarship to categorize *The Edukators* as “another quirky, *nostalgic*, social satire” (Cliffe 2005; italics added) and to include it as part of the cycle of *Ost-* and *Westalgie* films produced at the beginning of the new millennium (H. Farr 2011), of which *Goodbye Lenin!* (2003, dir. Wolfgang Becker), which also featured Daniel Brühl and Burghard Klaußner, has come to be seen as paradigmatic. According to Alexandra Ludewig, “in the wake of the fundamental social and psychological changes affecting German citizens east and west of the disappearing Wall since 1989 — which has given rise to a sense of crisis that has provoked a sense of nostalgia of sorts for the disappearing GDR as well as the old FRG — a longing for *Heimat* has found expression in German film production” (Ludewig 2014, 435). If anything, Weingartner’s films are more appropriately classed as *Ostalgie* rather than *Westalgie*, as Sabine Hake implicitly perceived, which only serves to draw attention to the problems with the lives that actually existed on both sides of the Wall. Rather than nostalgia what the film engages in is *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, coming to terms with the past so that one can move on: “In a bid to move beyond legacies left by older generations, the film shows the characters negotiating feelings of guilt and perpetration during a journey into the Austrian Alps” (H. Farr 2011). Weingartner’s type of return to the past is not nostalgic but a very rational *Auseinandersetzung*, a real engagement, with it.⁷

7 To include Weingartner in those that “responded to the erosion of old patterns of understanding and the ideological restructuring of Central Europe through the use of narratives which — beyond science and rationality — centre of the mythical to explain the new German order” as Ludewig does (2014, 435) would seem to indicate that she sees Marxism as a myth. It is a pity she does not explore this point in more detail.

Where a stronger case for nostalgia can be made is in the realm of style.⁸ Noting the “[d]ope, long hair and idealism” of the trio in *The Edukators*, Cliffe characterizes them as “radical hippies” (Cliffe 2005). What this comment gestures towards is the way the accoutrements of the drop-out lifestyle of the ’60s seem to lend themselves to the making of commodified come-backs, most recently the campervan. The desires they kindle can indeed be described as nostalgic — for a time when there were still parts of the world that unreflectively privileged, middle class young people from both sides of the Atlantic could set out for to escape the stifling, standardizing propriety of their upbringings. If one looks into *The Edukators*’s soundtrack, one sees Weingartner commenting on this theme in two tracks in particular. When Jan and Peter are kicking back on their narrow balcony in a side street in gentrifying Prenzlauerberg, they listen to “Heimweh” [“Homesickness”]), the 1956 German version of Dean Martin’s “Memories Are Made of This” that launched Austrian singer Freddie Quinn’s mercurial career as a Schlager singer.⁹ Second is setting Jan and Jule’s growing feelings for each other to Jeff Buckley’s pluckily distinctive version of Leonard Cohen’s “Hallelujah.” In both cases, the reversionings underscore the film’s theme of needing to update and learn from aspects of the past that one feels drawn towards, to explore the nature of the attraction, to interrogate how it might work in the present to make possible the kind of future one would prefer to inhabit, and to have fun in the process. As Weingartner declared about *The Edukators*, “The main reason why I wanted this film to have an optimistic tone and to reproduce the comedy of life

8 While Weingartner’s style may diverge somewhat from Helmut Lang’s, they share a cognizance of the workings of style and a rejection of institutional authorities, not to mention shared experiences of the Austrian Alps as a refuge and Vienna as a springboard. For a locational reading of Lang, see Ingram (2018b).

9 Schlager music is nicely described on *Wikipedia* as “a style of popular music which is generally a catchy instrumental accompaniment to vocal pieces of pop music with simple, happy-go-lucky, and often sentimental lyrics” (“Schlager Music”).

was that I didn't want to make a classic political film. I wanted to break with that tradition a little bit" (Weingartner qtd. in Leal 2012, 124).

The problem with *Heimweh*, and the way nostalgia is too often conceptualized, is that the personal does not tend to be political but rather remains individual. Memories tend to be one's own personal memories, of the house one grew up in, the school one went to, etc. It is here that the post-memory of visual culture has made an impact, especially via social media. The privileged generations born in the aftermath of the summer of love may not have any personal memories of it, but not only are they well aware of its style, they seem happy to have at least the chance to buy into it. Weingartner's oeuvre encourages us to ask what kind of futures that forecloses, and what kinds it makes possible.

#Hallstatt: Welcome to Jurassic World

“Globalization takes place only in capital and data; everything else is damage control.”

— Spivak (2010, 36)

“Insofar as the fake points to unresolved problems in the world today, it should be analyzed, not dismissed.”

— Abbas (2008, 252)

In 1993, *Jurassic Park* (dir. Steven Spielberg) unleashed a frenzy of cloned, CGI-generated dinosaurs from a tropical island theme park onto multiplex screens.¹ With the “inevitable” failure of Jurassic Park’s security (Scott 2014), and the equally inevitable success of this “contemporary descendent” of *Frankenstein* (Mitchell 2005, 172), rampaging dinosaur clones have become a regular

¹ This chapter builds on Ingram and Reisenleitner (2014), a theoretical and photographic meditation on Norbert Artner’s *Hallstatt Revisited I* that draws on Ackbar Abbas’s juxtaposition in “Faking Globalization” of Deleuze’s “any-space-whatever” and Mario Gandelsonas’s “X-urbanism.” In our reading Artner’s series represents a kind of “twenty-first-century urbanism with Chinese characteristics” and makes clear the need to distinguish among different forms of copying.

feature in a franchise of novels, films, animations, comic books, video games, and Universal Studios water rides. That the world has become a rather different, more intense place than it was when Michael Crichton's novel was published in 1990 is evident in the franchise's fifth film and second in the Jurassic World series, *Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom* (2018, dir. J.A. Bayona). Just as Arnold Schwarzenegger's T-800 in the *Terminator* series goes from being the threat in the original to the only force strong enough to save the good humans from the more evil machines that are developed in later sequels, so too is it a staple of the *Jurassic* franchise to have the dinosaur that was originally seen as the greatest threat turn around and save the good humans from a more dangerous clone.

Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom makes two innovations to this pattern that justify its title. First, it is the first time that the cloned dinosaurs do not just break out of the theme park in which they are enclosed on a fictional Central American island — they and their DNA make it to the mainland and, not irrelevantly, northern California, i.e., the home of Silicon Valley. Second, it is the first time that not only dinosaurs are cloned but also humans, in the subplot twist in which the granddaughter of one of the original dinosaur cloners turns out to have been cloned after her mother died, something about which her grandfather and father disagreed and which could be what has driven the father over to the dark side. It is not a coincidence that at the beginning of the film the dinosaurs on the island are confronted with an extinction event in the form of a volcanic eruption, from which a select few are rescued in an ark-like transport. The lesson of the *Jurassic World* series seems to be that it is no longer just the case that, as W.T.J. Mitchell noted back in 1998, “The author (like many of his fellow human beings and all NAWMAS [North American White Male Adults]) may even feel, at times, like a dinosaur himself” (Mitchell 1998, 7). Rather, in the *Jurassic World* series humans officially become dinosaurs both in facing the threat of extinction in being surpassed by clones, but also in being subject to the same process of cloning as the dinosaurs.

In 2012, Austrians were made aware that cloning was no longer merely the stuff of blockbuster films, nor restricted to sheep and CGI-generated dinosaurs. Rather, they learned that when it comes to places, it has become something of a Chinese speciality. Much to the shock of its citizens, who numbered 778 as of January 1, 2018, but were slightly more numerous in 2012, Hallstatt, a tiny, *über*-picturesque village in Austria's Salzkammergut, a tourist region "famous for its pristine alpine scenery, lakes, mountains, and church steeples towering over villages and small towns" (Reisenleitner 2017, 201–2), was turned into what Bianca Bosker, in *Original Copies: Architectural Mimicry in Contemporary China*, calls a "simulacrascape" (4): a themed environment built to look like a famous site in "the West." Called "Hallstatt See — Huizhuo" [五矿·哈施塔特], the "made in China" gated-community version of Hallstatt came about rather by chance. The wife of the CEO of Minmetals Land Inc., the real estate branch of China's largest metals trader, was often in Austria as she was a huge fan of classical music, and upon visiting Hallstatt, she was so taken by its beauty that she convinced her husband to replicate it (Fischer-Schreiber 2014). Hallstatt See was built at an estimated cost of US\$ 940 million (Zaveloff and Johnson 2012) and located in Boluo, a city of 820,000 that has been described as "a run down sort of place with a factory town feel" (Shepard 2012b). Boluo is in turn in the larger, 4.6 million municipality of Huizhou, a two-hour drive north of Hong Kong in the booming industrial heartland of China's southern Guangdong province on the South China Sea.

Paradoxically, the original Austrian Hallstatt has managed to maintain its uniqueness by being copied. It serves as the culmination of this study because the way it has responded to being turned into a simulacrascape is instructive in its postmodern pragmatism and lack of clonophobia, the fear of cloning that W.T.J. Mitchell addresses in *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present*. Generic, "usual suspect" Chinese "copy towns" exist in multiples, such as Chengdu's British Town, which was completed in 2005 and modelled on Dorchester (Patterson 2011); Thames Town just outside Shanghai — a prototypi-

cal English town with mock-Tudors, pubs, a statue of Winston Churchill, and a copy of Christ Church in Bristol that is a very popular spot for Chinese wedding photos (Medina 2013); and Oriental Windsor County in Taizhou with a bar called Treasure Island and “[b]right, red, London style phone booths [...] scattered around the complex—apparently so the army of security guards that patrolled the place 24/7 could have a place to take shelter in the cold and rain” (Shepard 2012a). In contrast, it was not merely elements of Hallstatt that were reproduced in China. Rather, its entire core was replicated, making it not a “copy” but a “clone” town.² While there have been claims that it is the only such place to have received such treatment, that “Never before in known human history has one country built a full-scale copy of a place in another country. Hallstatt, China is the mother of all knock-offs” (Shepard 2012b), one can also point to “Shanghai’s Holland Village [...] which] replicated, whole cloth, the urban plan for Kattenbroek, a section in the city of Amersfoort in the Dutch province of Utrecht” and even used the same architect, Ashok Bhalotra, of the firm KuiperCompagnons (KCAP) (Bosker 2013, 43).

Nevertheless, Hallstatt *is* special. As Markus Reisenleitner has pointed out, “Chinese property developers did not just stumble over a random little village in Upper Austria, and Hallstatt is not just another interchangeable tourist spot available to be transplanted as an image of ‘Olde Europe’” (Reisenleitner 2017, 205).³ Rather, Hallstatt is the core of the Kulturlandschaft Hallstatt–Dachstein/Salzkammergut [Hallstatt-Dachstein/Salz-

2 See, for example, Wittek’s MA thesis, *Hallstatt Made in China — An Austrian Village Cloned* (Wittek 2015).

3 He further notes that “The spectacularization of Hallstatt as a New Urbanist theme park all but obliterates the dark sides of a historical trajectory in which capitalism was built, among other things, on environmental damage (still somewhat visible in the mines) and on the social control of an absolutist Baroque theocracy and its fear-mongering mobilization of religious orthodoxy (still manifest in the ossuaries and frescoes of Hallstatt’s churches), a violent trajectory that escalated during the past century in a fascist state whose memories are now buried in a deep lake and are only occasionally resurrected in popular culture” (Reisenleitner 2017, 215–16).

kammergut Cultural Landscape], which has enjoyed UNESCO World Heritage site status since 1997 on account of the village's Celtic pre-history and the area's fabulous natural beauty. In what follows, I show how Hallstatt's qualities have given rise to a reflective mis-en-abîme structure, the dynamics of which are captured in two intricate visual works: Ella Raidel's *Double Happiness* and Norbert Artner's *Hallstatt Revisited I*. After probing Artner's and Raidel's works to see how Hallstatt's spectacular singularity has managed to produce an intrinsically fractured imaginary that continues to invite, and, indeed, thrive on mediatization, I look into the political potentiality of the way it continues to deal with the consequences of its "having-been-copied" status.

Happiness Doubled

"'Jeder in China kennt Hallstatt,' sagt sie. 'Jeder.'" ["'Everyone in China knows Hallstatt,' she says. 'Everyone.'"]

— Kazim (2018)⁴

Ella Raidel's *Double Happiness*, which won the 2015 best film prize at Lisbon's Architecture Film Festival, opens with long takes that focus on the elemental beauty of Hallstatt's location, "nestled into the steep inclines of the Alps" at the edge of a deep lake (Reisenleitner 2017, 206). The salt in the mountains behind it may have provided Hallstatt with its wealth and history of settlement, something we are briefly introduced to in a sharp cut to Yan Zhongming, an urban planner who works for Yansplan in Shenzhen; however, it is not salt but its majestic setting that is the key to Hallstatt's current prosperity. Until the late nineteenth century the tiny village could only be reached by boat or treacherous trails, and when a train station was built in 1877, it was

4 Thanks to Jing Xu for pointing out the level of exaggeration in this comment. It is an important part of the phenomenon addressed in this chapter that the places in question are used for the purposes of distinction in Bourdieu's understanding of it as a way of accruing social capital.

on the other side of the lake and connected by a ferry service, whose approach to the village Raidel takes us on.⁵

These opening long takes and cuts prime viewers to be attentive to the specificity of both Hallstatts. In Deleuze's typology of movement images, the long shot is associated with the perception image, while the close-up and medium shot are associated with the affection image and the action image. Had Raidel opened with a series of close-ups, she would have been encouraging viewers to focus on the expression of emotions and to read these places as "any space whatever." As Ackbar Abbas has helpfully outlined,

[t]his concept helps not only to underline the important relation between affectivity and space but also to differentiate between space and place, affectivity and emotion, along the following lines: as "space" refers us to places we do not yet understand, or no longer understand, so affect refers us to emotions we do not yet have, or no longer have a name for. In both cases, some kind of shift has occurred. As Deleuze explains it, any-space-whatever is the polar opposite of an actualized "state of things," which is always framed in terms of spatiotemporal-psychic coordinates that we tacitly understand. By contrast, any-space-whatever involves a series of deframings. (Abbas 2008, 244–45; italics in original)

By constantly emphasizing framing, Raidel's documentary works to compensate for the way the construction of Hallstatt, China, has implicitly deframed Hallstatt, Austria. It feels weird to walk around a place one knows has been copied, and this feeling is intensified by the strong presence of Asian tourists, which has risen from fewer than 50 in 2005 to the point that, a decade

5 When a road to Hallstatt was finally built in 1890, it needed to tunnel through the surrounding mountains, and citizens have vociferously resisted the construction of a highway through the village ever since ("Exklusiv-Talk Mit Bürgermeister Alexander Scheutz (Hallstatt) — Newsletter" 2014). In anticipation of the coming discussion of duplication, I note the tunnel's atypical construction in having two separate entries and not just one.

later, four members of the thirteen-member town council belong to an association, the BfH — Bürger für Hallstatt [Citizens for Hallstatt], that campaigned with the slogan “Tourismus mit Maß und Ziel” [“Moderate and Targeted Tourism”] (“Wahlzeitung” 2015).⁶ I will return to the sentiment that “Vienna must not become Hallstatt” (Bruckner 2018) in the conclusion.

Calling Hallstatt’s story “a true romance of globalization,” Raidel, who comes from Gmunden on the nearby Traunsee and had at that point lived in Taiwan for more than ten years, set out to make a documentary that would help audiences understand that “romance,” and especially the Chinese side of it (Raidel 2018).⁷ To that end, the majority of the film focuses on Hallstatt See in China, including clips from a Chinese promotional video for the gated community, a discussion of it and the Chinese propensity for theming on a Hong Kong television talk show,⁸ interviews with star architect Ma Yansong and not one but two urban planners who work in Shenzhen, as well as foot-

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- 6 As Kazim reported, “Die Bürgerliste Hallstatt, die sich dafür einsetzt, ist 2015 auf Anhieb mit 28 Prozent der Stimmen ins Kommunalparlament gewählt worden. Man wolle Qualitätstourismus, nicht Massentourismus, sagen deren Mitglieder. Sprich: Die Besucher sollen nicht nur ein paar Stunden, sondern mehrere Tage bleiben” [“the Citizens for Hallstatt list, which is mobilizing [in order to increase bus parking fees] was elected in 2015 with 28% of the vote. Its members say that people want quality tourism not mass tourism. In other words: visitors shouldn’t stay for just a few hours but rather for several days”] (Kazim 2018). The group also explicitly states in its election materials that it is an association and not a political party and therefore open to the views of all citizens and not only those who support it.
- 7 Since 2017 she has been working at the Kunstuniversität [Art University] in Linz, the same institution at which she earned her MA in 1989 and her PhD in 2009 and where Artner is doing his PhD.
- 8 Like all the other Chinese-language dialogue in the film, this clip is in Mandarin despite the fact that is not one of the main languages spoken either in Hong Kong or in Huizhou, where the main languages are Hakka Chinese (Huiyang dialect), Huizhou dialect, Hokkien dialect, and Cantonese. This could simply be a reflection of Riedel’s own language abilities, given that she lived in Taiwan, but it nevertheless draws attention to the fact that Hong Kong television is being increasingly colonized by mainland forces.

age of painters in the village of Dafen, near Shenzhen, which is famed for producing copies of oil paintings,⁹ and of a couple on a motorcycle driving around Boluo so that viewers can form an impression of the extent of the construction in the surrounding area. As Eli Horwatt commented after the showing at the 2015 Hot Docs in Toronto, the film “offers an unusual mirror to the West through the lens of contemporary China” (Raidel n.d.).

That mirror is deliberately disorienting. In the opening section in Austria, which is shot through with cuts to China, Raidel encourages the development of viewers’ perceptive abilities by repeatedly challenging them to evaluate what it is they think they are seeing. Chinese women are shown wearing Austrian folkloric dress — are they in Austria or in China? In an interview, the owner of the Grüner Baum hotel, Monika Wenger, boasts that after she learned of her hotel’s duplication, she had her establishment renovated and that all of the interior furnishings were made in China and shipped to Austria in four containers. When we are then shown the hotel’s reception, we see that the reception sign is in German and Chinese — are we still in Austria, or has the documentary once again cut to China? We have already seen a young Chinese boy playing in the fountain in Hallstatt’s main market square that has turned out to be in China, as there are bright-orange fish in the fountain. We also see Chinese lanterns in a waterside restaurant full of Chinese patrons that those who know the original would recognize is in Austria. There is then another abrupt cut to the back of a man looking out to a huge working harbour. That we are now decidedly no longer in Austria is confirmed with a street market scene of people wearing straw hats cleaning fish.

Because Hallstatt is such a small place with very recognizable sites, viewers find themselves noting differences among the

9 Raidel’s inclusion of Dafen and not a karaoke bar, which would have served equally well to draw attention to the skill that copying requires but is not specific to southern China, is in keeping with her overall agenda of explaining to Euro-American “Westerners” how Hallstatt came to be copied and where and how it fits into the Chinese scene.

various types of reproductions of places that recur, such as in paintings, models, and television reports. As Raidel explained to an interviewer at the Rotterdam Architecture Film Festival, she is

interested in how images are created, distributed and perceived, and what kind of reality is created with these images. I would say that *Double Happiness* is a lot about what's going on with images, first of all, what's copied [...] from *The Sound of Music* to the village, which is actually now a backdrop for wedding pictures. They're also shooting soap operas there. So what's going to happen with all these images and how will they transfer and become something else? (Raidel 2018)

Adding to the conglomeration of images is not her priority as much as drawing viewers' attention to it. As Ackbar Abbas noted in the context of Hong Kong, a historical *site*, even one that is preserved, such as the Hong Kong Cultural Center, can be created to be a consumption *sight*, which has the effect of the preservation of history being used "to bring about the disappearance of history" (Abbas 1997, 66). Part of our introduction to the original Hallstatt in Raidel's film includes a pair of swans (two, of course, not just one), which is intercut with a beautiful Chinese woman in an Austrian folkloric costume, who hums and stretches her neck out in a manner similar to the swans. Viewers may wonder whether they are being encouraged to consider whether there are swans in the Chinese Hallstatt as well and, if so, whether the Chinese have gone so far as importing "real" Austrian swans. However, when swans recur in the documentary, as they inevitably do, they are neither Austrian nor Chinese but in an oil painting. It also turns out that not all the swans in Austria are "real" in the sense of living birds, as pedalboats in the shape of swans are a popular pastime.

Hallstatt See, Raidel's documentary suggests, has come to life through images. Monika Wenger shows us the initial plans and photographs she discovered of her village, and a brochure for the Chinese facsimile that she claims tourists could not distin-

guish from the original. While the resemblance of Hallstatt See to the original may be “down to the smallest detail,” one visitor has described the Chinese clone in terms that reveal the elements that prevent it from being a perfect clone of the original:

There were flowers everywhere, the sound of birds tweeting were [sic] *playing throughout the streets from hidden speakers*, the streets themselves were paved with bricks laid in semi-circular patterns, the fountain in the town center was an identical match, and the *Sound of Music* soundtrack *playing on an endless loop* could be heard everywhere. The Chinese not only cloned the buildings, but they carved out the physical landscape as well. (Shepard 2012b; italics added)

It is in the realm of the mechanical reproduction of nature that one recognizes the copying most forcefully. One can indeed hear birds chirping and the strains of “Doe, a deer, a female deer” in the clip of the Hallstatt See marketplace in Raidel’s documentary. The latter is particularly jarring for anyone with Austrian local knowledge. That Austrians do not associate the 1965 Hollywood film starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer with Hallstatt and that they have great difficulty relating to the enormous success of the *Sound of Music* tours in Salzburg are points Raidel stresses in the Rotterdam interview (Raidel 2018). It is interesting that she does not show us the “British-style fake phone booth in Hallstatt See” that Wittek mentions in her thesis (Wittek 2015, 24). Rather, Raidel makes do with a “Traffpunkt” (instead of Treffpunkt) typo on a sign to gesture towards the way the Austrian media who initially visited the Chinese knock-off amused themselves by pointing to typos, inaccurate dimensions, and inappropriate foliage, not to mention the fact that many of the buildings were unoccupied and some mere facades filled with rubbish. While Mayor Alexander Scheutz declared with pride after his visit that “One recognizes immediately that it’s Hallstatt,” one sees in *Double Happiness* that it is precisely *not* Hallstatt, Austria but Hallstatt See, China. It is a typical simulacrascape in that it is “a deliberate customization.” As Bianca

Bosker explains, “the Chinese are less concerned with an exact copy and more interested in replicating the aspects of the European or American ‘other’ they find most iconic, attractive, and desirable” (Bosker 2013, 49), something Western architects are sometimes unable to deliver:

Lisa Bate’s experience as an architect in China confirms Xie’s conclusion [that foreign designers won’t design the type of foreign architecture the Chinese want]. The Canadian, a principal with B+H Architects, was hired to design a Canadian-style residential development in Shanghai, Canadian Maple Town, and recalls a major controversy with her client on how the ‘Canadian’ theme would be made manifest: ‘The client was insistent on a Canadian character, but we got into huge issues on whether that meant Canadian design or theming. They wanted something more thematic, more Disney-ish. We tried to tell them that’s not what ‘Canadian’ is.’ (ibid., 49)

The *Sound of Music* and British telephone booths in Hallstatt See may not be “Austrian” for Austrians, but after watching Raidel’s documentary, one can appreciate the desire encapsulated in the reference in the English-language title to “the happiness that’s increased twofold when a couple decides to spend the rest of their lives together” (Ungerböck n.d.). One hopes that, for the prosperous Chinese who choose to make themselves at home in Hallstatt See and not in the endless rows of soulless apartment towers in its hinterland and beyond, if any in fact do, which is a real question and the one with which I conclude the chapter, Hallstatt See’s theming delivers on the locale’s promise of providing a breath of sorely needed fresh air.¹⁰

¹⁰ China’s legendary pollution problems can be seen in the fact that “Sogar abgefüllte Hallstätter Luft gebe es neuerdings in Dosen zu kaufen” [“Even cans filled with Hallstatt air are now available for purchase”] (Kazim 2018). As noted in the section of chapter five on health resorts, Austrian alpine air was already being sold in the nineteenth century, when “one enterprising businessman found a way to sell mountains to those who wished to see their restorative powers outlast their visit to the Alpine town of Mariazell

Revisiting Hallstatt and Its Doubling

Norbert Artner shares Ella Raidel's interest in images, but he is more interested in their doubling than in what they can communicate about a distant culture and its propensity for duplication. *Hallstatt Revisited I* consists of ten large-scale photographs Artner took in Hallstatt See that were displayed at various outdoor sites in the original Hallstatt from July 21 to October 31, 2014. Each photo was accompanied by a relatively small white poster with a map of the locations of all ten photos and the following bilingual explanatory text by Thomas Macho, the co-supervisor of Artner's PhD on *Nach den Bildern. Konstruktion und Wirklichkeit* [*After Images: Construction and Reality*] at Linz's Art University:

Seit 2012 gibt es Hallstatt nicht mehr im Salzkammergut, sondern auch in China. In welchem Verhältnis stehen Vorbild und Kopie, Original und Zitat? In seinen Photographien ist Norbert Artner an beiden Orten den Fragen nach Imagination und Globalisierung, Funktion und Oberfläche, Inklusion und Exklusion, Ideal und Klischee nachgegangen. Die Aufnahmen entstanden im Zeitraum eines Jahres in "Hallstatt See" in der chinesischen Region Guangdong. Nun sollen die Photographien im Salzkammergut zu einer Auseinandersetzung mit der Spiegelung und Verdopplung des Ursprungsorts Hallstatt einladen und inspirieren.

[Since 2012, Hallstatt is no longer only to be found in the region of the Salzkammergut in Austria, but also in China. What is the relationship between model and copy, original and quotation? In his photographs Norbert Artner has pursued questions of imagination and globalization, function and surface, inclusion and exclusion, ideal and cliché in both

by advertising Styrian Silver Fir Tree Perfume, whose ozone content was 'guaranteed to bring the fresh, healthy mountain air into your home'" (Frank 2012, 205).

places. The pictures were taken over the course of a year in “Hallstatt Lake” in the Chinese region of Guangdong. Now in the Salzkammergut the photographs are intended to invite and inspire an engagement with the mirroring and duplication of the original location of Hallstatt.]

That the text appeared on all ten posters twice, in German and in English (and not in Chinese), is in the spirit of that engagement, as is the fact that the exhibition itself was duplicated. Under the title of *Hallstatt Revisited*, a second exhibition took place the following fall, from September 3-7, 2015, during the Ars Electronica festival in Artner’s hometown of Linz, the capital of Hallstatt’s province, Upper Austria. The promotional materials for *Hallstatt Revisited* differ somewhat from the *Hallstatt Revisited I* poster, and they reveal that the process took somewhat longer than a year: “Artist Norbert Artner’s high-quality photographs taken between 2010 and 2014 recorded this process of reflection involving the two Hallstatts.”¹¹ However, no matter the period over which they were taken, the photos clearly reflect an interest “in what possibilities of innovation are introduced by this form of imitation.”

Like Raidel’s documentary, Artner’s photographic project, with its English-language title similarly gesturing towards the artist’s cosmopolitan, post-national orientation, was also structured around doubling. Just as there were not one but two images in the grounds of the Hallstatt museum, there were also two in the center of town, two mounted on barnlike structures in outlying housing areas, and two in carparks, which were the hardest to find. While the two remaining photographs were not obvious doubles, the one on the boatshed along the lake could be seen to match the one on the central grocery store, as both are sites of sustenance. In terms of content, the photographs from China were also mounted to reflect (on) an aspect of their

¹¹ The Ars Electronica website was hacked while this book was going to press, and their archive (<https://ars.electronica.art/festival/de/archive/>), in which this quote was originally found, now only results in a loop.

surroundings, such as one of water mounted on the boat shed and one featuring the church tower in China mounted in a parking lot looking out over the original church. At the most popular spot in town for taking portrait photographs as it provides a stunning mountain backdrop, one found a photograph of a Chinese wedding party, with a photographer photographing a wedding couple with his helper holding up a large reflector to ensure proper lighting for the wedding photographs.¹² While it used to be rare to find wedding couples among the Asians taking pictures of each other at this spot (I can provide much documentary evidence for this claim), the opening of Kazim's report from October 2018 indicates that that is changing:

Eine junge Chinesin schreit auf. Ihr ins Haar gesteckter Schleier wurde von einer Windböe erfasst und ins Wasser des grün schimmernden Sees geweht. Dahin das Hochzeitsbild! Der Bräutigam schimpft, auf Mandarin, man kann nur ahnen, was er sagt. Derweil versucht eine Freundin, die Braut zu trösten. Es ist ja nur ein Fake-Foto — die echte Hochzeit wird noch in China gefeiert, wo dann die Bilder aus Hallstatt den Gästen gezeigt werden.

[A young Chinese woman shrieks. The veil that was attached to her hair has been taken by a gust of wind and blown into the shimmering green lake. The wedding picture is ruined! The bridegroom curses, in Mandarin, one can only imagine what he's saying. In the meantime a girlfriend comforts the bride. It's only a fake photo, after all — the real wedding will

12 There is much evidence that wedding photography features prominently in both Hallstatts. In Raidel's documentary, there is a wedding photography scene, in which the reflector for lighting ends up occupying the entire screen. Fischer-Schreiber also comments on the popularity of weddings in Hallstatt See in the "Hochzeitstrubel" ["Wedding Whirlwind"] part of the report of her visit, in which she deems Hallstatt See "eigentlich eine ziemlich gelungene Kulisse" ["actually a quite successful stage set"] (Fischer-Schreiber 2014).

be celebrated in China, where the guests will be shown the pictures from Hallstatt.] (Kazim 2018)

Fittingly, even the weddings in Hallstatt turn out to be doubled.¹³

Once one is looking for it, it is hard not to notice doubling in Hallstatt, most strikingly in the altar of the town's main church, Maria am Berg, which consists of a late Gothic and nineteenth-century historicist model next to each other, labelled so that tourists appreciate which is how much older. One also cannot fail to catch sight of reflections that make one sometimes wonder which the copy is, or if both are. Indeed, for each of the late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century images of Hallstatt in the Austrian National Library's collection, it is not difficult to provide a twenty-first-century update.

What this doubling points to is fracturing, which one sees in the remnants of Celtic culture on display in Hallstatt's museum as well as in a number of public artworks around town. That Hallstatt is a fractured space and that the artists who engage with it cannot seem to avoid replicating its fractured quality can be traced back to its history as the oldest known salt mine in the world as well as to the large cave structures in the neighboring Dachstein. The history of Hallstatt's mountains being cleaved apart by both human and natural forces could also have been part of its appeal to the Chinese. As Reisenleitner notes, there are some remarkable parallels between the original Hallstatt's history and its replica's context and aspirations.

It is with the question of aspirations that I wrap up my reading of the Austrian visual imagery of the Hallstatts. What has happened to Hallstatt See since its ceremonial opening in 2012, which the Austrian mayor attended? Rather than the residential area it was planned to be, Hallstatt See would now seem to number among the many underpopulated places Wade Shepard writes about in *Ghost Cities of China*. Similarly in his feature

13 The immersive yet temporary quality of wedding photography parallels that of the very popular "rent a dirndl" service in Hallstatt and could well point to an interest in cosplay and certain video games.

on “Hallstatt — An Austrian Town in China Where No One Is Home,” Lukas Messmer notes:

The area around Chinese Hallstatt is the result of a real estate boom gone wild. China’s GDP growth relies heavily on property development. Also, many people use real estate as a means to hedge against inflation and gain wealth. It has created vast urban developments nobody lives in. Hallstatt is one of them. [...] Beijing is aware of the situation. Ghost towns, or in communist lingo, “sleeping towns,” were a hot topic at annual meetings in the last years. Following Premier Li Keqiang’s work report in 2014, the government issued a policy paper urging local governments to stop “extensive development” and heal “city sickness.” (Messmer 2015)

Given how widespread the copy town phenomenon is and how difficult it can be to get access to unfiltered news out of China, it is difficult to determine the extent of “city sickness.” Thames Town, for example, seems to be making a comeback. Writing in 2015 Lachmann described it as

eine reine Villensiedlung mit Zaun und Pförtner (Gated Community). Doch die Stadt ist bis auf wenige Menschen unbewohnt. Auch wenn viele Häuser und Grundstücke verkauft wurden, scheinen sie bis auf wenige Ausnahmen nur wenig genutzt zu werden. Im Kernbereich der Siedlung finden sich noch einige Geschäfte, der Rest wirkt verlassen. Nur um die Kathedrale herum, deren Original in Bristol steht, ist meist etwas los, denn sie bildet einen gefragten Hintergrund für Hochzeitsfotos. Ansonsten sind in Thames Town hauptsächlich Wachleute und Putzkräfte zu finden.

[a proper gated community with fence and guards. However, except for a few people, the city is uninhabited. Even when many houses and properties were sold, except for a few exceptions no use seems to be made of them. In the central area there are some shops, but the rest seems deserted. Only

around the cathedral, whose original is in Bristol, is usually something going on, as it's a popular backdrop for wedding photos. Otherwise in Thames Town one mostly finds security guards and cleaning personnel.] (Lachmann 2015)

By 2018, however, Bianca Bosker reported that: “The 27-year-old owner of a boutique selling clothes by up-and-coming Chinese designers told me Thames Town had grown busier since 2014, thanks in part to the expansion of the subway system, and in part to the swelling population of Shanghai proper. (Between 2000 and 2016, the city had grown by the population of New York City, pushing the city limits closer to Thames Town)” (Bosker 2018). At the same time, she was quick to admit that “Not every former ghost town has come to life. In Shanghai’s Holland Village (no relation to Liaoning’s), most storefronts along the main street stood empty or deserted, their dusty concrete floors littered with desiccated bouquets or curled posters. [...] Several buildings, including replicas of Amsterdam’s Maritime Museum and De Bijenkorf department store, were under construction—just as they had been during a previous visit in 2008” (ibid.). “Tianducheng (Sky City),” the replica of Paris on the outskirts of Hangzhou, may have recovered: “In recent years, as more people moved into Tianducheng, the city has been transformed from a ghost town to a normal place where people live. Nowadays, most of the parking spots are occupied, couples stroll its streets in the evenings, and beneath the faux Eiffel tower, tourists and wedding parties can be seen posing for photos throughout the day, every day” (Zhao 2018), as has the northern port city of Tianjin’s replica of Manhattan (“China’s Copy of Manhattan Is No Longer a Ghost Town” 2017). But many have not.

What is striking about Hallstatt See is that, like Sky City and also, to an increasing extent, the original Hallstatt, it has become “a tourist town and a mecca for wedding photographers” (Messmer 2015). That is, it is not merely the case that Hallstatt See was brought into existence via images—the photographs the Chinese took in, and the plans they made of, the original that Ella Raidel has Moniker Wenger present us with in *Double Hap-*

piness. It is also being sustained thanks to the image-making of tourists and the meaning of weddings among the growing Chinese middle class. What Ackbar Abbas wrote about Asian cities in “Faking Globalization” — that they are where “the urban experiments of the 21st century will take place” because Asian cities “make it clear that the city exists as not just a physical, political and economic entity that can be documented, but also a *cluster of images*, a series of discourses, an experience of space and place, and a set of practices that need to be interpreted” (Abbas 2008, 244; italics added) — is true not only of Hallstatt See but of both Hallstatts. That is what the Austrian “BfH — Bürger für Hallstatt” [Citizens for Hallstatt] mobilized against in their 2015 local election. Of the opinion that bus tourism was hurting both the quality of life of many Hallstätter as well as the holiday experience of those guests staying on for longer than a few hours, they formed an association to push for action, such as raising the parking fees for buses.¹⁴ What the Hallstätter were noticing is that mass tourism was hollowing out their village, robbing it of its heart and turning into a soulless place subject to the “tourist gaze” (Urry and Larsen 2011). In other words, their village was becoming increasingly not just like its Chinese clone but also like “the standard narrative of the clone” as Mitchell outlines it: a “headless, mindless, soulless creature, the exemplification of the human organism reduced to ‘bare life’ [...], the reduction of the human organism to a purely instrumental and commodified condition” (Mitchell 2011, 37). Cities, we are reminded, are living organisms that can sleep and be in need of resuscitation. The Chinese cloning of them encourages us to see them as living *images* and to probe their, which is to say our, futurity in the final section, by revisiting the *Jurassic* universe.

14 Statistics bear them out. The mayor reported at the beginning of 2019: “2014 hatten wir 7917 Reisebusse, 2018 waren es 19.344” [“In 2014 we had 7914 coaches; in 2018 it was 19,344”] (“Hallstatt will Touristenmassen besser lenken” 2019).

The Future: We're Not in Kansas, Anymore

“[T]he image (as always) goes before the word, foreshadowing the future if only we knew how to read it. It is the older sign, the archaic sign, the ‘first’ sign, as C.S. Peirce would put it. That is why images not only ‘have’ a future related to technology and social change, but are the future seen through a glass darkly.”

— Mitchell (2009, 140)

“[F]rom farther away we look mechanically reproduced / [...] I am not your object of study / and I am not here for you.”

— Polyck-O’Neill (2018)

Critics have had no trouble identifying the ideological coordinates of the *Jurassic* universe. Like most action blockbusters, it is a form of left melodrama, which, as discussed in the introduction and as we also saw in the culture-clash comedies, makes us, on the one hand, conscious of “the fundamental antagonisms that structure our society” while at the same time encouraging us to live out the possibility of revolution and even reconciliation “as mere entertainment” (Tompkins 2018, 90). That is why *Jurassic World* can present itself as “anticapitalist, antimanagementism, and anti-GM” while also remaining, as Richard Dyer draws our attention to, “anti-feminist, racist, species-ist, and decidedly not queer” (Dyer 2015, 19). Nothing fundamental has changed in terms of the *Jurassic* universe’s ideological coordinates since Crichton’s original, in which, as Briggs and Kelber-Kaye point out: “[w]hat is interesting—and anti-feminist—[...] is the story of reproduction he links it to, one in which ‘good’ reproduction takes place in white nuclear families where gender roles are properly adhered to, and ‘bad’ reproduction takes place in Third World families” (Briggs and Kelber-Kaye 2000, 97).¹⁵ In

15 As a corollary to the *Frankenstein* parallel, it is noteworthy that in *Fallen World*, both human and dinosaur relations revolve around motherhood: Blue, the good velociraptor that ends up saving them, is brought from the island to serve as a mother so that the deadly new weapon clones can imprint on her, while it is the young granddaughter, who turns out to be

contrast to more recently developed franchises in spe such as *Pacific Rim* (2013), which feel they can no longer afford not to take Asian markets into account, the *Jurassic* universe has remained resolutely transatlantic Euro-American, which is to say, hegemonically ethnically white. Stephanie Turner underscores the prejudice against Asians in Crichton's novels: "The Japanese investors funding this mess, whom the reader never sees, serve as the novels' behind-the-scenes scapegoat, Crichton's reference to Reagan-era hostility toward Japan's considerable share of the American automobile and electronics markets. Indeed, the reengineered Toyota Land Cruisers, their faulty transmission apparent from the start, are the bad copies signifying this social disorder" (Turner 2002, 904). This prejudice shifts in the films from the Japanese to the Chinese, reflecting the changing geopolitical status of those two nations. The evil geneticist role in *Jurassic World* is reprised from *Jurassic Park* by B.D. Wong, who came to prominence playing the Chinese opera singer lover of a French diplomat in *M. Butterfly* on Broadway and who remains the only "far-east" Asian in the *Jurassic* cast.

The layering that Wong's character represents affords us insight into the fears that, like a magnet, he is anticipated to attract: racism, homophobia, but also, importantly, clonophobia. What Mitchell pursues in *Cloning Terror* is "a deep cultural logic" that he reads as symptomatic of "a comprehensive cultural formation summarized by Michel Foucault as 'the birth of biopolitics,' and of a period that extends back into the Cold War era that [Mitchell] has called 'the age of biocybernetics reproduction,'" whose figurehead is the clone (Mitchell 2011, 19–20). Mitchell's focus is resolutely US-centric. What was urgent for him when he was writing was to engage the link between cloning and the terrorism "that began to manifest itself visibly after 9/11" (*ibid.*, 19). He therefore ignores the question of the Chinese, a key strand of the *Jurassic* universe's DNA that remains to be teased out.

a clone, and not a grandson. Moreover, the granddaughter provides the lynchpin for the white nuclear family that Claire and Owen form at the end, replacing her bad guy, single father.

Consideration of Mitchell's imagology encourages us to ask what places want, while consideration of the Chinese directs us to the contradiction of places as living entities and as property, and to the thus far unsatisfying results of their having been cloned. A reviewer of *Ghost Cities of China* plaintively asks why, given that the Chinese government has the power to make and remake cities, the results are "so sad":

Copycat "western" towns, endless Central Business Districts, huge malls; this is urbanisation purely for quantity and profit. Other writers have argued that certain municipalities, such as Chongqing, have managed a more egalitarian statedriven urbanisation than others, like Guangzhou, but Shepard doesn't explore the question. Neither does he address the future: once the ghost cities are populated, what next? (Hatherley 2015)

Such questions also occupy Bianca Bosko in *Original Copies*:

How will living in a replica of Germany or Beverly Hills affect Chinese citizens and their lifestyles? Will this trend continue into the future, or is it a passing fad? How will history treat the simulacra townships? Will the popularity of these foreign building types choke the growth of a national, distinctly Chinese, architectural style — or will it inspire it? (Bosker 2013, 18–19)

Her argument is that "it is, in part, within these communities that the Chinese are beginning to stage sites of 'otherness' where a rising middle class lays claim to economic and cultural power and even incubates an embryonic political identity" (ibid., 4), and she underscores that these middle classes "are only the latest in an ancient and venerable line of borrowers from the archive of historical architectural styles," which includes immigrants to the United States who, in the late nineteenth century proved "exceptionally adept at transplanting European townscapes to the new continent" (ibid., 6). The question she does not ask about

this embryonic political potential is whether, in light of the development of new technologies and the ensuing bastardization of democratic principles, the Chinese middle classes, or for that matter the middle classes in the US and elsewhere, remain in a position to act like citizens and to reflect on, and act on, the prioritizing of any kind of greater good.

What Hallstatt and its cloning encourage us to reflect on is how much has changed since America was a rising nation keen on establishing the hegemony of its dream, and how best to deal with the rise of China. In an interview with NPR, Chinese novelist Yan Lianke, who has been both celebrated but also had some of his works banned in China, elucidates the challenges in terms of simulacra:

[B]asically in China's reality today, the real is unreal. All of us who are living in China today basically exist in a kind of fantasy already — in a kind of elusive reality. Our everyday life is already filled with both a kind of fantasy of the future, a kind of denial of the present. We really don't have a full grasp on what might be happening or what might not be happening to us in everyday life. So when I write my seemingly fantastical novels like *Explosion Chronicles* or *The Day the Sun Died*, I'm really trying to write a kind of reality that people are not facing and people are not seeing, but in fact exists. (Lianke 2019)

When asked about the state of anxiety he feels, he replied:

Yes, I certainly feel a great deal [of] anxiety and unease and maybe perhaps even the sense of danger. I feel it day after day. But I wouldn't say it's based on any specific incident or set of reasons, and in that I'm not alone. I think people in China all feel this way. Intellectuals feel this way. But everyday life is a sense of constant anxiety, constant unease — you don't know where the danger is coming from. The danger could be the curbing of free speech, but the danger could also be in poisoned or contaminated vegetables. It could be in a

financial crisis. But all in all, we spend every single day in a state of anxiety and I'm not exempt from it. (ibid.)

Is this to be *our* future? What can one do in the face of fear-generating hyperobjects like China and climate change? How to prevent fear from making things worse? What can one understand that will make a difference?

A key difference between the two Hallstatts is that the Chinese one is surrounded by a massive property development. Piecing the case studies in this book together encourages us to see the way the Chinese state has used property as a form of alternative currency. As Wade Shepard's work draws attention to, "The first thing to understand is that nobody in China actually *owns* property. Land is still nationalised, and leases are sold for up to as many as 70 years" (Hatherley 2015; italics added). Chinese have been encouraged to invest in property, and not GICs or gold, not as places to live but in order to provide for their own individual prosperity. What else it is important to understand is the scope and the significance of these developments:

In 2009, fully 45 percent of China's population, or about 570 million people, were estimated to be living in urban areas. [...] By the end of 2005, 80 percent of urban Chinese owned their homes. [...] Even amid the turmoil that struck the international financial markets in 2008, government statistics indicate China's residential property sales jumped around 80 percent to approximately 3.8 trillion RMB in 2009, as individual home mortgage lending rose nearly 50 percent over the previous year. (Bosker 2013, 4–5)¹⁶

16 In its scope, this phenomenon resembles the new financial regime in the US that Saskia Sassen has described as "a kind of Frankenstein of a special kind: it can never lose" (Sassen 2019). Where it differs from the Chinese is that while the Chinese system concentrates on circulation, the US system is purely extractive, as one sees in the example Sassen gives of their "succeeding in passing a law in Congress that establishes this [student debt] is a debt that can never be excused. So there is a capability at work here that the traditional bank never had. I am not saying debt is a new phenom-

Most of the empty apartments in the forests of towers around Hallstatt See and beyond were purchased with what, in the spirit of *Planet Ottakring*, we might call “Kommunisten,” in that they have worked the same way they do in the film to build up the economy, but on a much more massive scale.¹⁷

What this study also helps us see is the profoundly hybrid state of what is generally held to be, and interacted with as, reality. As each of the book’s case studies makes clear in its own way, it is not only the new copy-towns in China that should be understood as simulacrascapes. Our engagement with all places is overlain on at least three levels: by the images and forms of cultural production that exist of them, by the histories of past events that have taken place in them, and by the unconscious fears and desires we project onto them. The problem, as Adrian Ivakhiv so cogently explains in *Shadowing the Anthropocene*, is that we have been trained to see only the physical world and not its shadows:

Commodity capitalism has been profoundly successful at encouraging us to think that objects are real, and at projecting value into those objects so that they serve the needs of individuals, even if they never manage to do that (which is, of course, the point). The effects of our actions, on the other hand, are systemic and relational, and we won’t understand them unless we come to a better appreciation of how systems and relational ecologies work and of how we are thoroughly enmeshed within them. (Ivakhiv 2018, 23)

enon, but this type of debt is part of a new regime of power that is capable of binding and expelling in ways that are novel. Those students will have that debt until they die, but the debt will not die, even when they die. It passes on to whoever is pertinent. And in the meantime, finance can make it work for its purposes — it is not just sitting there. Via algorithmic mass you can transform it into a working element.” Frankenstein, indeed.

- 17 One can thus better appreciate the implications of the announcement across the news services on January 18, 2019, that Beijing was finally going to open its banking, insurance, and securities markets, something it had promised repeatedly to do since joining the World Trade Organization in 2001.

As my case studies underscore, it is not only the case that we are thoroughly enmeshed in the various invisible cultural, historical, and psychic layers of our surroundings. As Mitchell reminds us in *What Do Pictures Want?*, mediation has always been an integral part of those surroundings: “If images are life-forms, and objects are the bodies they animate, then media are the habitats or ecosystems in which pictures come alive” (Mitchell 2005, 198). However, Mitchell’s conclusions are not mine, primarily because of the considerable distance in our respective ‘we’s and in the material we are dealing with. Mitchell’s could not be more US-centric:

The Hooded Man of Abu Graib, accused terrorist, torture victim, anonymous clone, faceless Sone of Man, will remain the icon of *our* time for the foreseeable future. And behind the veil of this spectral enemy, the faces of Jesus, Mohamad, and Moses will continue to haunt *us*. (Mitchell 2011, 167; italics added)

My examples demonstrate a different kind of hauntology, namely, a posthuman one whose ‘we’ understands that category as Rosi Braidotti does, which is to say as *negotiated*: “‘We’ categorize ourselves as a ‘we’ of humans and humanity, where actually ‘we’ are a group of subjects who all have very different agendas, experiences, and knowledge” (Wilde 2020, 1039). What follows is “an understanding of ‘we subjects,’ as a type of recognition of similarity yet difference” (ibid). From the reviving of the *Proletenpassion* in the Arena to the politically pedagogical demonstration of alternative forms of currencies and community in *Planet Ottakring*, from the necropolitical performances of *Lazarus* in the Volkstheater to the hijacking of Christoph Schlingensiefel’s neo-colonizing container performance in the square in front of Vienna’s Staatsoper, and from the dedicated keeping operational of at least one sleeping-giant Kurhotel in Semmering and Hans Weingartner’s repeated figurings of natural settings as potential spaces for the practice of new forms of collectivity to Hallstatt’s parrying of tourist masses attracted by its sleeping

giant clone in China, the case studies here all offer an alternative kind of “how-to” guide to recognizing workable collectives capable of negotiating and navigating their surroundings, using historical coordinates, ghosts if you will, to avoid succumbing to the overwhelming complexity wrought by digital technologies on those surroundings.

Ivakhiv has shown how quickly the scary monsters that are hyperobjects can be, and indeed have been, produced:

The AnthroCapitalist Thing (henceforth, A/C Thing) includes humans, ruminants, cereal grasses, fossil fuels, combustion engines, cities, techno-economic networks, and a proliferating array of things made *for* the Thing and things made to *make* other things for the Thing. Even things made by the A/C Thing seem to be getting livelier and more complex: digital life, nanotechnology, online worlds. We are building a complex meganetwork atop a complex meganetwork, but with relations between the two—Terra 1.0 and Terra 2.0—growing ever more tenuous and fragile. (Ivakhiv 2018, 29–30; italics in original)

A phrase both Bosker and Mitchell employ now strikes me as quite prophetic: “Boots on the ground are a must,” Bosker declared in her acknowledgements (Bosker 2013, xi), while Mitchell describes a clone army as consisting of “*all foot soldiers, ‘boots on the ground’ as the standard synecdoche for infantry puts it*” (Mitchell 2011, 41; italics in original). In order to reclaim “the digital future as humanity’s home” (Zuboff 2014), we need to pay proper attention to where our boots are and to recognize and tap into the life-giving strands of our surroundings. Adopting a Buddhist-like zen attitude towards possessions and imagining the Anthropocene and humankind as a geological layer of history, as Ivakhiv proposes as a way of addressing “the crisis of agency” that is very much a part of our historical moment (Ivakhiv 2018, 18), may work well in the context of those haunted by the faces of Jesus, Mohammad, and Moses and thus

attuned to see spectral enemies because they have been trained to see enemies spectrally.¹⁸ As my examples demonstrate, that effort can be usefully supplemented by historically sensitive cultural practitioners, audiences, and academics, who are called on to redouble their efforts and engage in activating the ghosts of radical pasts in such ways that they reach and maintain a citizenry worthy of that name. That citizenry, like the Hallstätter and the Donnerstagdemo demonstrators, and the Arena occupiers before them, needs to be capable of thinking and acting collectively to ensure that a good life is within reach of every “one,” which is to say every “thing” in a given environment. In other words, they need to be able to identify with the cloned granddaughter in *The Fallen World* rather than position her as Pandora 2.0 (or 4.0 or wherever we are now) as the film does. How we bring the drinking bros in the finance world into such a position (and they are, of course, merely the tip of an iceberg of toxic masculinity that needs to be melted with a very different kind of climate change), is the stuff of another study. The contribution of this one is to point out what all there is to be learned from a strand of Viennese culture not often associated with the city. Its feel-good focus on specific sites and places and their histories at least provides us with a starting point and workable scope for future efforts.

18 My thanks to Justyna Poray-Wybranowska for reminding me that Buddhism has also played a central role in my colleague Marcus Boon's work.

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