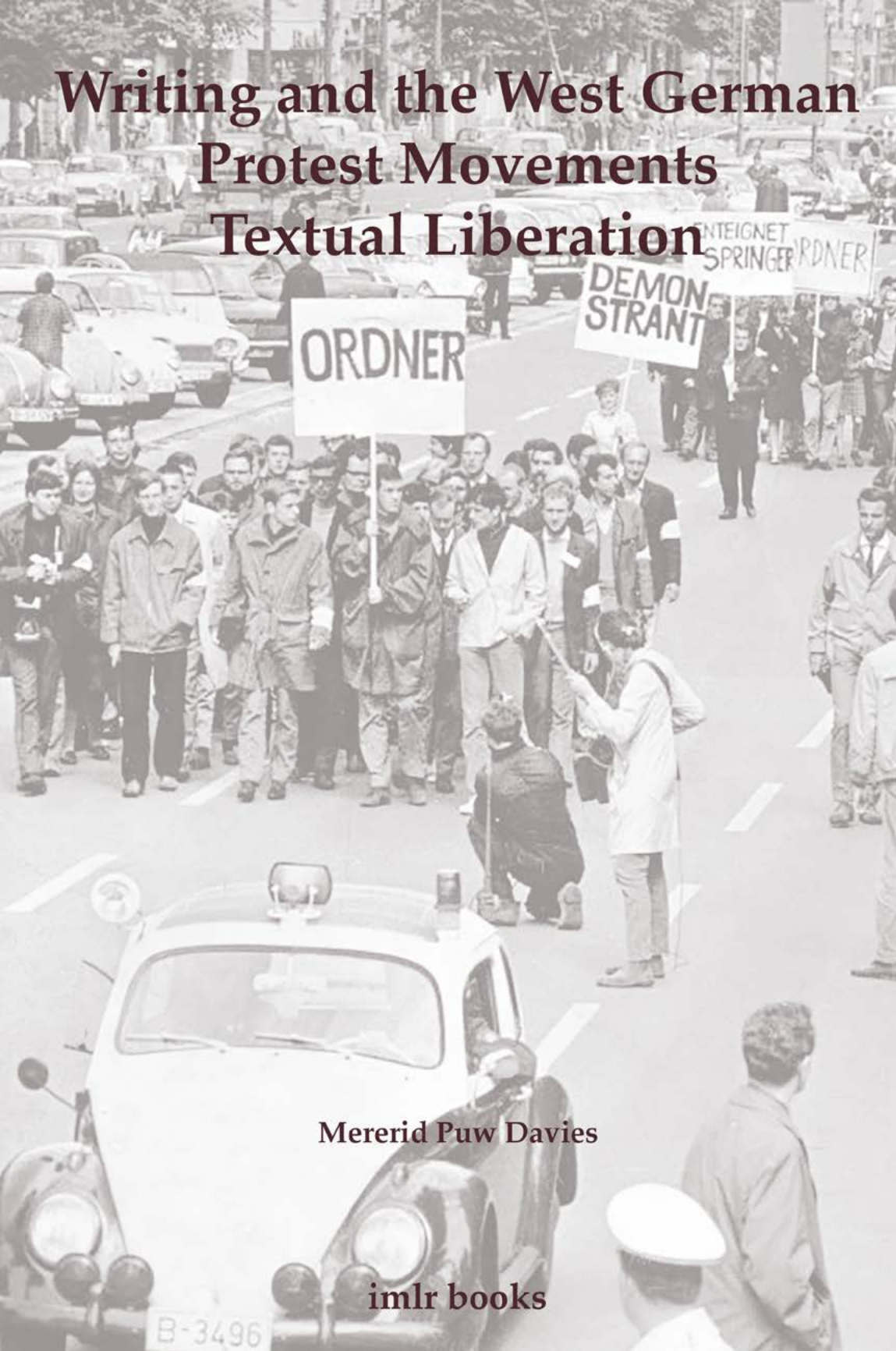
Writing and the West German Protest Movements
Textual Liberation



Mererid Puw Davies

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The Textual Revolution

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Writing and the West German Protest Movements
The Textual Revolution

by

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Abbreviations

APO	Außerparlamentarische Opposition [extra-parliamentary opposition]
APO-Archiv	Extra-Parliamentary Opposition Archive
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
CDU	Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands (Christian Democratic Union)
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union (Christian Social Union)
DKP	Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (German Communist Party)
DRV	Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)
FU	Freie Universität Berlin
GDR	German Democratic Republic (East Germany)
HIS	Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung
KI	Kommune I (Commune I)
KPD	Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)
NLF	National Liberation Front (Viet Cong)
NS	National Socialist (Nazi)
RAF	Rote Armee Fraktion (Red Army Faction)
RVN	Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam)
SDS	Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (German Socialist Federation of Students)
SÖS	Sozialistischer Österreichischer Studentenverband (Austrian Socialist Federation of Students)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SI	Situationist International

For Dan

An Introduction

An Emblematic Protest, 1967

In October 1967, West Germany's pre-eminent literary forum, Gruppe 47, met in rural Franconia for one of its celebrated literary conclaves.[1] The traditional privacy of this meeting was interrupted by protesters from the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS) [German Socialist Federation of Students], the organization most closely linked with the West German protest movements of the mid- to late 1960s. These young men and women carried with them the flag of the anti-US Vietnamese rebels, the National Liberation Front (NLF, often better known as the Viet Cong), balloons, a megaphone, an accordion and many large, hand-painted placards. These bore slogans like 'Gruppe 47 adieu' [Farewell Gruppe 47] and condemned the political stance of Gruppe 47.[2] Chants of 'Dichter, Dichter' [Poets, poets] rang out, a term used pejoratively here, for these demonstrators were challenging what they saw as Gruppe 47's outmoded, dangerous preference for art over active politics. The protest targeted, too, the influence of the conservative, anti-protest and pro-US Springer media group, which owned many West German newspapers and hence became the object of an animated 'Anti-Springer-Kampagne'

1 Toni Richter, 'Oktober 1967 im Gasthof "Pulvermühle" bei Waischenfeld' and Guntram Vesper, 'Eingeladen, meiner Hinrichtung beizuwohnen', in Toni Richter, *Die Gruppe 47 in Bildern und Texten* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1997), 138 and 139–41 respectively. Compare Klaus Briegleb, *1968 – Literatur in der antiautoritären Bewegung* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1993), 123–30; *Die Gruppe 47: Ein kritischer Grundriß. Sonderband text + kritik*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1980), 251–54. While in the post-war period the FRG and West Berlin were not formally one entity, for concision references here to the FRG or West Germany include West Berlin unless otherwise indicated.

2 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are the author's own.

[anti-Springer campaign].[3] Protesters burned copies of Springer papers and criticized Gruppe 47's authors for the ways in which their supposedly inadequate political engagement helped align them, albeit no doubt inadvertently, with the policies of Springer.

This meeting of Gruppe 47, the very embodiment of West German high literature at the time, proved to be its last. The demise of Gruppe 47 was neither immediate nor a direct consequence of the SDS protest, and this specific demonstration was not an originary event of the West German protest movements. Nonetheless, as this introduction will show shortly, this encounter can be read as an emblematic moment in West German literary history, in the way it encapsulates a shift from one dominant cultural paradigm to another.

'Revolution Deutschland?'[4]

In October 1967, when the demonstration against Gruppe 47 took place, the West German protest movements involved many differences, and groupings beyond the SDS.[5] It is for this reason that this study

3 In the FRG, the Springer press controlled a large proportion of daily newspapers (31% in 1964), and especially regional (89%) and Sunday papers (85%). In West Berlin, Springer owned 67% of daily newspapers. Nick Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2003), 165. Compare Gerhard Bauß, *Die Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und Westberlin. Handbuch* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1977), 71–111; Bernd Rabehl, 'Medien', in *'68 und die Folgen: Ein unvollständiges Lexikon*, ed. by Christiane Landgrebe and Jörg Plath (Berlin: Argon, 1998), 69–74. While a resolution criticizing the Springer press was produced and signed by many authors at the Gruppe 47 event, to protesters intent on action this move would have seemed meaningless.

4 'Revolution in Germany?' (front cover, *Stern*, 28 April 1968).

5 On the protest movements, see, for example, Bauß, *Die Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und Westberlin*; Rob Burns and Wilfried van der Will, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany: Extra-Parliamentary Opposition and the Democratic Agenda* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988); *1968 – Vom Ereignis zur Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, ed. by Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998); *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung: Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail. 1946–1995*, ed. by Wolfgang Kraushaar, 3 vols (Hamburg: Rogner & Bernhard bei Zweitausendeins, 1998); Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000) and *1968: Das Jahr, das alles verändert hat* (Munich and Zurich: Piper, 1998); Gerd Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt: Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution 1967–1977* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001); Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance: Student Protest in West Germany and the United States in the Global Sixties* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010); Siegward Lönnendonker and others, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte: Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund nach der*

prefers the plural term 'protest movements' to the singular 'protest movement', which implies a greater coherence and homogeneity than was really the case for alternative politics in the mid- to late 1960s in West Germany.[6] It is for the same reason that this enquiry makes use, too, of the more inclusive expression 'außerparlamentarische Opposition' (APO or Apo) [extra-parliamentary opposition]. This formulation was used at the time in question to encompass the very wide range of political agents and groupings which characterized the protest movements. Those collectives (formal or loose), ideas and individuals did not necessarily have much in common at all, beyond the fact that they opposed the political mainstream, broadly speaking from left of centre. However, the idea that a true political opposition had to exist outside parliament was especially important at a time when parliamentary opposition was more or less non-existent due to the Grand Coalition which, between 1966 and 1969, united the Conservative CDU/CSU and Social Democratic SPD in government. Furthermore, the term APO usefully highlights the concomitant, significant suspicion of many in the protest movements towards established political structures and institutions of any kinds. In addition, this study refers specifically to individual strands within the revolts as appropriate, notably anti-authoritarianism, as outlined below. Finally, in its last two chapters in particular, as this study looks beyond the late 1960s, it will make use of the idea of the 'red decade' coined by the historian Gerd Koenen to describe the years of left-wing and alternative political activism which extended from the mid-1960s into the mid-1970s.[7]

By contrast, this study will make only limited reference to the familiar expression 'student movement'. This description is important on one hand in that it was commonly used at the time of the revolts, rightly identifies universities as important centres of activism, and highlights the fact that many protesters were young

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Trennung von der SPD. Band 1: 1960–1967 (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002); Karl A. Otto, *Vom Ostermarsch zur APO: Geschichte der außerparlamentarischen Opposition 1960–70* (1977) (Frankfurt a.M. and New York: Campus, 1980) and *APO: Die außerparlamentarische Opposition in Quellen und Dokumenten (1960–1970)* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1989); and Thomas, *Protest Movements*. A mass of studies, polemics, memoirs, biographies and collections of documents began to appear around the movements' thirtieth anniversary in 1997–98 and continues to do so today. On such publications up to 2000, see Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*, 253–347.

6 On terminology for these movements around 1968, see, for example, Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*, 257–59.

7 Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt*.

and perceived themselves to be involved in a generational struggle. On the other hand, when used indiscriminately, the term 'student movement' overlooks the participation of many activists who were not students, and came instead from contexts as varied as Church groups, trade unions, the art scene or street culture. Likewise, not all protesters were even under thirty, the era's cut-off point for supposed youthfulness, according to the contemporary slogan 'Trau keinem über dreißig' [Trust no-one over thirty].[8] That said, the term 'student movement' or its cognates will be used here where students and/or their organizations are involved.

Similarly, this monograph avoids using the date '1968' as a metonymic shorthand for the protest movements themselves. This usage originates in the political purposes of a different generation entirely, for as Wolfgang Kraushaar has indicated, in West Germany terms derived from the date 1968 to describe the unrest of the 1960s emerged only in the 1980s as new youth movements distanced themselves from the 1960s movements.[9] The term '1968' is convenient in that it creates an association between events in the Federal Republic and other countries like France, which saw important rebellions in 1968. However, such an alignment of events in the Federal Republic with an international context is in other ways unhelpful, obscuring as it does some of their most significant features. In fact, if a single year has to be identified as central to West German protest at all, then 1967 was more crucial than 1968. The writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger, for instance, who was a key voice in the movements, as this study will show (and who turned thirty-eight in 1967), has described himself as 'eher ein 67er' than an '68er' [more of a '67er than a '68er].[10] As this volume suggests, too, the nature and tone of protest shifted importantly between 1967 and 1968, broadly speaking from a more utopian to a more dystopian mood. Thus, the blanket use of '1968' occludes and homogenizes some of the era's earlier and most important aspects. Moreover, the identification of the protest

8 This slogan, in line with many of the time, has an important double meaning. On one hand, it suggests that the older generation, with its vested interests in the status quo, is not to be trusted. But on the other, it resonates with the era's critique of West Germany's National Socialist past, for it suggests that Germans who were over thirty around 1967–68 (and were not from groups persecuted under Nazism) would have been implicated in Nazism, as later chapters of this study will explore.

9 Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*, 257–59.

10 Wolfgang Kraushaar, 'Vexierbild. Hans Magnus Enzensberger im Jahre 1968', in *Hans Magnus Enzensberger und die Ideengeschichte der Bundesrepublik*, ed. by Dirk von Petersdorff (Heidelberg: Winter, 2010), 45–63 (46).

era with one particular year erases its place in a long historical continuum, with deep roots in the past and significant reach into the future, aspects which are central to the present study.

The West German protest movements were so heterogeneous because they developed *inter alia* from roots in Pacifism, Socialism, Existentialism, student activism and non-conformism. They had been galvanized on one hand by such international issues as the Vietnam War, as the 1967 demonstration at Pulvermühle shows, and on the other by a host of domestic factors and events. Amongst these, the protest movements were catalysed above all by the fatal police shooting in West Berlin on 2 June 1967 of a peaceful first-time demonstrator called Benno Ohnesorg. That tragic event, according to Nick Thomas, 'changed the political landscape irrevocably'.[11] It led many, especially the young, to fear that the Federal Republic, despite its claims to the contrary, was a dangerously repressive state.

The protest movements, formerly limited, thus grew exponentially following Ohnesorg's death. Thomas estimates that while only 2,000–3,000 people attended the particular protest at which Ohnesorg was killed, around 200,000 may have demonstrated soon after in response across the Federal Republic; 65% of students claimed to have been politicized in the aftermath of this tragedy.[12] Protesters were motivated and radicalized, too, by the authorities' vehement responses to further protest in the wake of Ohnesorg's killing, and by an assassination attempt at Easter 1968 on the prominent and charismatic student activist Rudi Dutschke. That attack was believed by many to have been triggered by the anti-protest stance of Springer newspapers.

The strength of the demand for revolution in the later 1960s in the Federal Republic became such that in 1968 the mainstream news magazine *Der Spiegel* issued a special publication entitled *Ist eine Revolution unvermeidlich?* [*Is A Revolution Inevitable?*] This booklet responded to a recent public statement by Enzensberger: 'Das politische System in der Bundesrepublik läßt sich nicht mehr reparieren. Wir können ihm zustimmen, oder wir müssen es durch ein neues System ersetzen. *Tertium non dabitur*' [The political system in the Federal Republic is beyond repair. We can endorse it or we must replace it with a new system. *Tertium non dabitur*].[13] The weekly *Stern* asked on its front cover, 'Ist die Revolution noch zu stoppen?'

11 Thomas, *Protest Movements*, 107.

12 Thomas, *Protest Movements*, 109, 114.

13 *Der Spiegel fragte: Ist eine Revolution unvermeidlich? 42 Antworten auf eine Alternative von Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, ed. by Walter Busse [n.d., no pl., no publ.] [Hamburg: Der Spiegel, 1968].

[Can The Revolution Still Be Stopped?]; and *Der Spiegel*, 'Revolution Deutschland?' [Revolution in Germany?].[14] Such sensational titles were certainly driven by commercial interests and should be treated with due caution. Nonetheless, they reflect the fact that revolt was a central feature of the FRG's political and cultural life at the time; and even the belief of some, both in and outside the protest movements, that a genuine revolution might be on its way.

Yet as the year 1968 wore on, the movements were already beginning to disintegrate amidst disagreements, amongst other things over the legitimacy of violence as a means of protest or resistance, the role of the working class in the revolutionary process and the movements' sexist culture. So, while the revolution invoked by *Stern* and *Der Spiegel* did not take place, the events and ideas of the mid- to late 1960s were a transformative moment for politics and for the Federal Republic itself. Various successor movements emerged, including a more conventional Communism, the nascent Green movement, the Neue Frauenbewegung [New Women's Movement] and the urban terrorism of such groups as the Rote Armee Fraktion (RAF) [Red Army Faction] and the Bewegung 2. Juni [Movement of the 2 June]. The latter group was named after the date of Ohnesorg's shooting, as a reminder, according to its founder Michael 'Bommi' Baumann, that the state had fired the first shot. All these developments had significant, if diverse and controversial effects on the later political life of the Republic. While Enzensberger, for example, wrote later that the protest movements had made the country habitable for the first time, by no means all his fellow citizens would agree.[15] But while views as to whether the protest movements changed the Federal Republic for better or worse diverge greatly, for many subjects caught up in them, the era of protest changed everything on an individual level.[16] Such effects are of course difficult to quantify, but they are widely reflected, for example, in the wealth of life-writing and literature about the movements, both affirmative and critical, which has emerged ever since and continues to do so unabated.[17]

14 *Der Spiegel*, 24 June 1968; and see note 4.

15 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Wie ich fünfzig Jahre lang versuchte, Amerika zu entdecken', in *Der Zorn altert, die Ironie ist unsterblich: Über Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, ed. by Rainer Wieland (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999), 96–111 (110).

16 See Kraushaar, *1968: Das Jahr, das alles verändert hat*, 320–23; 313–14.

17 See, for example, the works listed in note 59.

Gruppe 47/SDS

To return to the example of the SDS demonstration against Gruppe 47 in Franconia in October 1967, this event is characteristic of many aspects of the FRG's protest movements. For example, it mobilizes students in a generational clash; and, taking place as it did in 1967, it highlights the importance of that year for the West German revolts. In particular, this demonstration is typical of the era's anti-authoritarianism. While it is impossible to generalize about anti-authoritarianism, put most broadly, this was a non-aligned, loose and often radical strand or trend in the wider protest movements. Anti-authoritarianism was often (though not at all exclusively) associated with students and parts of the SDS and, as the term implies, it was deeply critical of authority in all its forms, from the political to the psychological.[18] This term can refer to specific, if often informally constituted and fluid, groups and individuals who would have identified themselves explicitly as anti-authoritarian. This term would have seemed attractive in the way it avoided any expression of affiliation to established political groups, and foregrounded the ideas of opposition and political critique. However, anti-authoritarianism can also be used to denote a style of thought and action which became widespread across protest culture much more generally, and the present study uses it in both the narrower and broader senses.

Influences on anti-authoritarianism included Critical Theory, Socialist and Anarchist traditions, political psychoanalysis, theories of liberation from what was then called the Third World and avant-garde thought and practices.[19] It thus moved away from orthodox Socialism and its organizations, and towards more unconventional practices and ideas. It was distinctive too for the ways in which it brought together some intensely intellectual tendencies with popular, action-based impulses. Such thinking was often linked to the SDS and student actions in urban centres like West Berlin and Frankfurt am Main. That said, by no means all anti-authoritarians were students, and many SDS members as well as other protesters deplored their unconventional, intentionally divisive and at times offensive activism, which increasingly tested the boundaries of

18 See Lönnendonker and others, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte*.

19 On the movement's intense readings of the Frankfurt School, which had unique resonances with German intellectual culture, see, for example Kraushaar, *Von der Flaschenpost zum Molotowcocktail*.

legality.[20] Subsequently, in many cases it was amongst (former) anti-authoritarians that the late 1960s' turn to violence emerged.

The Gruppe 47 demonstration illustrates just how strongly anti-authoritarianism, like other branches of protest, privileged the symbolic in the mid- to late 1960s. This emphasis is mirrored, for instance, in the era's leading cultural journal *Kursbuch* [*Railway Timetable*], which under Enzensberger's editorship carried some of the extra-parliamentary opposition's most significant publications. As two well-informed commentators and activists, Bahman Nirumand and Eckhard Siepmann, put it in that periodical in 1968:

> Die studentische Avantgarde kämpft […] in der Bundesrepublik z.B. nicht für höhere Löhne, sondern für die Enteignung des Springerkonzerns, stürmt nicht die Konferenzsäle der Unternehmerverbände, sondern dringt in Kirchen und Theater ein, streitet nicht für die Zulassung der KPD, sondern für die Ersetzung des Parlamentarismus durch ein Rätesystem. Nicht die Mitbestimmung des Arbeiters im Betrieb ist ihr Ziel, sondern seine Selbstbestimmung und schöpferische Entfaltung in allen Bereichen des Alltagslebens als Keime einer neuen Gesellschaft.[21]
>
> [The student vanguard in the Federal Republic is fighting […], for instance, not for higher wages, but for the expropriation of the

20 After 1965, the SDS was split between its traditionally Socialist and anti-authoritarian wings. See Tilman Fichter and Siegward Lönnendonker, *Kleine Geschichte des SDS: Der sozialistische deutsche Studentenbund von 1946 bis zur Selbstauflösung* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1977); the second, revised edition appeared as *Macht und Ohnmacht der Studenten*: *Kleine Geschichte des SDS* (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 1998); Tilman Fichter, *SDS und SDP: Parteilichkeit jenseits der Partei* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1988); *Linksintellektueller Aufbruch zwischen 'Kulturrevolution' und 'kultureller Zerstörung': Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund (SDS) in der Nachkriegsgeschichte (1946–1969): Dokumentation eines Symposiums*, ed. by Siegward Lönnendonker (Opladen and Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998); Lönnendonker and others, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte*.

21 Bahman Nirumand and Eckhard Siepmann, 'Die Zukunft der Revolution', *Kursbuch*, 14 (August 1968), 71–99 (93). Further references follow in the main body of the text. At Christmas 1967, during a notorious demonstration against the Vietnam War at a service in West Berlin's Gedächtniskirche, Dutschke was injured. See, for example, Ulrich Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke: Eine Biographie*, 2nd edn (Munich and Zurich: Pendo, 1993), 197–200. A parallel action took place in a Tübingen church. Both services were to be televised, thus amplifying the potential symbolic impact of the protests, although footage of the Tübingen protest was ultimately not shown, to the disappointment of Annette Schwarzenau, its initiator, and also Siepmann's sister. See Annette Schwarzenau, 'Nicht diese theoretischen Dinger, etwas Praktisches unternehmen', in *Die 68erinnen: Porträt einer rebellischen Frauengeneration*, ed. by Ute Kätzel (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2002), 41–59 (44–45).

> Springer group. It isn't storming the meeting rooms of employers' organizations, but forcing its way into churches and theatres, it isn't arguing for the legalization of the KPD, but for replacing parliamentary politics with revolutionary workers' councils. Its aim isn't for workers to participate in decision-making in the workplace, but for them to make decisions for themselves and to undergo creative development in all areas of everyday life, these being the seeds of a new society.]

Here, Nirumand and Siepmann point to differences between the more traditional demands of the social democratic left, such as better pay for workers, on one hand, and anti-authoritarian politics on the other, which identifies culture as a key political forum.[22] As these authors put it elsewhere in the same essay: 'Die Revolution in den Metropolen muß vorbereitet werden durch eine Kulturrevolution als unabdingbare Voraussetzung für eine Revolutionierung der Massen, die ihrerseits Voraussetzung ist für eine sozialistische Revolution' [The foundation for revolution in the metropoles must be laid by a cultural revolution, which is the indispensable prerequisite for the revolutionizing of the masses, itself in turn the prerequisite for a Socialist revolution] (93).

Dovetailing with this thinking, many anti-authoritarians believed that there had to be a revolution in society's superstructure, for its very symbols and language constituted the power of the Establishment to keep order, just as much as more material issues did.[23] Thus, to demolish that order meant to overthrow not only economic arrangements, but also symbolic hegemonies, represented for some demonstrators in 1967 by Gruppe 47 and its works. Thus, the Franconian demonstration is not only interesting as one of a range of anti-authoritarian actions of the time which sought to provoke the authorities, all kinds of institutions and establishments, bystanders and even its supposed allies: in this case, writers who had formerly been revered mentors or role models to many. The action is characteristic of anti-authoritarianism too in its specific critique of intellectual authority in particular. The demonstration also expresses

22 The Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) [Communist Party of Germany] was illegal in the FRG from 1956 until 1968, when it was re-formed legally as the Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP) [German Communist Party].

23 For example Ulla Hahn shows how protesters became increasingly aware of language not as a neutral vehicle for expressing ideas about the Vietnam War, but as a powerful political discourse which was fundamentally implicated in it (Ulla Hahn, *Literatur in der Aktion: Zur Entwicklung operativer Literaturformen in der Bundesrepublik* (Wiesbaden: Athenaion, 1978), 44–46).

a classic anti-authoritarian scepticism regarding the role of literary culture as evidence for the liberal culture of West Germany. On the anti-authoritarian analysis, the FRG displayed what the philosopher Herbert Marcuse had influentially termed 'repressive tolerance', a disingenuous claim to allow free speech while in reality suppressing it.[24] Therefore, one criticism the SDS protesters no doubt sought to make of Gruppe 47 was that, in claiming to provide the Federal Republic with a meaningful forum of intellectual debate, it served in fact as a fig-leaf for the state's more repressive aspects.

In order to create the new kind of culture described by Nirumand and Siepmann in the quotation above, traditional cultural and political forms had to be changed and new, powerfully creative solutions invented; the SDS demonstration of October 1967 can be seen in this light too. In its apparently disorderly, fluid form of expression, it contrasts vividly with Gruppe 47's highly formalized rituals.[25] It seeks to replace Gruppe 47's high literary texts, which could be confident of posterity, with ephemeral, operative texts like slogans and banners. It demands from the established authors, too, a new kind of culture better suited to promoting subjective liberation. And the demonstration thus emphasizes too the visual, rather than the aural mode of a traditional literary reading and shows a lively interest in its own photogeneity, for anti-authoritarian protest was often mindful of and sought to exploit its media appeal. This focus reflects, in addition, the era's excitement about film and the moving image.

In their reference, quoted above, to the workers' need to make decisions for themselves and develop creatively in everyday life, Nirumand and Siepmann allude also to anti-authoritarianism's deep preoccupation with the experience of the quotidian. As Ulrich Enzensberger, a founder member of West Germany's most notorious anti-authoritarian grouping, Kommune I (KI) [Commune I] (and Hans Magnus's younger brother), put it, he and his comrades revolted against 'die diffuse Wut und die aus allen Augen starrende Angst, die wir allerorten heute beobachten können, - vom sonntäglichen

24 Herbert Marcuse, 'Repressive Tolerance', in Robert Paul Wolff and others, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1969), 93–137. The importance of this essay for West German anti-authoritarianism can barely be overstated. It appeared in German with the prestigious publisher Suhrkamp in October 1966, and in pirate editions. This concern with repressive tolerance is central to protesters' critique of the Springer group, seen as evidence for the lack of a genuinely free press in West Germany.

25 The SDS protest was not, however, spontaneous as it shows signs of careful planning, such as co-ordinating transport to the rural location and producing banners.

Autowaschen, Krächen, vergnitzten Gesichtern auf der Straße und in Verkehrsmitteln' [the unfocused rage and the fear that stare out of everyone's eyes everywhere, that come from washing the car on Sundays, from rows, from angry faces on the street and riding around in various forms of transport].[26] On this analysis, submission to an oppressive society both caused and was guaranteed by its subjects' anxiety and misery.[27] This daily terror was enforced by blinding ordinary citizens to their true needs and depriving them of non-alienated experience and genuine agency.

Hence, the emancipation of the subject was a crucial political goal for anti-authoritarians, and any social change would be both meaningless and impossible without subjective change.[28] As Nirumand and Siepmann wrote:

> Der 'lange Marsch durch die Institutionen', die Emanzipation der Sinnlichkeit und des Bewußtseins der Menschen sind kein verlegenes Alibi für eine echte Revolution; sie sind der taktisch einzig zu rechtfertigende Bestandteil in der Phase der Vorbereitung der Revolution unter den Bedingungen der spätkapitalistischen Gesellschaft. (93)
>
> [The 'long march through the institutions', the liberation of the sensuality and consciousness of human beings are not a token substitute of last resort for a real revolution; they are the only justifiable component, in tactical terms, of the preparatory phase of revolution under the conditions of late capitalism].[29]

26 Comment ascribed to Ulrich Enzensberger in an internal SDS document, reproduced as 'aus der SDS-Korrespondenz Nr. 2, Juni 1966' in Kommune I, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung* ([Berlin: Kommune I], 1968), no pag.

27 As Ulrich Enzensberger pointed out with reference to US student protest: '[I]n Berkeley [war] der revolutionäre impetus [*sic*] nicht ausschließlich ein politischer, sondern auch die Wut der Studenten über das allzu frühe schließen [*sic*] der Aufenthaltsräume, schlechtes Essen' [[I]n Berkeley the revolutionary impulse wasn't purely political, but came too from the students' rage at their common rooms being locked too early, bad food] in Kommune I, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, no pag.

28 The anti-authoritarian calls mentioned by Nirumand and Siepmann for a 'Rätesystem' [system of revolutionary workers' councils] in preference to parliamentary politics are based in such thinking about the so-called subjective factor of politics, since such a system would supposedly allow each individual in society a chance to participate in politics in fulfilling and meaningful ways, rather than being in tutelage to élite, elected representatives.

29 The 'long march through the institutions' is a well-known topos associated with the protest movements and their aftermath. It alludes to the 'long march' of the Chinese Communist Revolution, reflecting the influence of Chinese Communist thought on anti-authoritarianism, and refers to the idea of activists

As the celebrated contemporary slogan 'Die Phantasie an die Macht' [All Power to the Imagination] had it, no familiar political method would be adequate to the immense task in hand of revolutionizing a society's subjectivity and culture.[30]

Most importantly, the SDS protest described at the start of this introduction can be linked to that project. In 1968, Dutschke criticized traditional demonstrations for being 'fast reine Informationsveranstaltungen' [events aiming to provide almost nothing but information].[31] For Dutschke, since such demonstrations intended primarily to provide information about political issues, their impact is targeted outwards, at others, and not inwards, at the protesting subject itself, which according to anti-authoritarians was the real locus of political change. They were interested, therefore, in the ways in which unconventional, challenging actions, perhaps like the Gruppe 47 demonstration, could bring about subjective change. Such change could lead to – and be fostered by – playfulness and pleasure. As Ulrich Enzensberger put it, referring to a film comedy of 1965 by Louis Malle, which was much admired by anti-authoritarians: 'seit VIVA MARIA [weiß] man, daß Revolution Spaß macht' [since VIVA MARIA we've known that revolution is fun].[32] Such ludic dimensions of protest are reflected in this SDS demonstration too, with its balloons, accordion and drama.

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undertaking a heroic effort to revolutionize West Germany's institutions from within.

30 This slogan is most familiar from May 1968 in Paris as 'L'imagination au pouvoir'; see, for example, Alain Ayache, *Paris Mai 1968: Hier spricht die Revolution*, trans. by Friedrich Hagen (Munich: Kurt Desch, 1968). Simultaneously, this is a demand for a new symbolic, linguistic and psychological order in which 'die Phantasie' [imagination] would receive its due. See also *123 Sprechchor-Reime. Straßenzustandsberichte. Verhaltensregeln für Demonstranten*, ed. by Dieter Lenz (Berlin: total-hirsch, 1969); and *Ein guter Spruch zur rechten Zeit: Demosprüche von den Sechzigern bis heute*, ed. by Burkhard Scherer and others (Giessen: Focus, 1981).

31 Rudi Dutschke, 'Vom Antisemitismus zum Antikommunismus', in *Rebellion der Studenten oder die neue Opposition. Eine Analyse von Uwe Bergmann, Rudi Dutschke, Wolfgang Lefèvre, Bernd Rabehl* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), 58–85 (83).

32 Ulrich Enzensberger, 'aus der SDS-Korrespondenz Nr. 2, Juni 1966', no pag. Some West Berlin anti-authoritarians were so taken with *Viva Maria!* that they named their influential 'Dritte-Welt-Arbeitskreis' [Third-World study group] after it. See Bernd Rabehl, 'Karl Marx und der SDS', *Der Spiegel*, 29 April 1968, 86. Dutschke, otherwise not an avid cinema-goer, saw the film at least four times (Gretchen Dutschke, *Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben: Rudi Dutschke. Eine Biographie* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1996), 78–79).

The goal in such cases was a transformative experience of immediacy, as described by the writer and former activist (and contributor to *Kursbuch* in 1968) Michael Buselmeier. Looking back in 1979, he wrote of being moved in 1967 by calls for:

> Revolution in Permanenz, Vernichtung aller tradierten Normen, es klang berauschend: die Menschen aus ihrer Starre lösen, das Verbrauchte abstoßen, unsere eigene Karikatur; ein Leben aus zweiter Hand, das schien jetzt vorbei. […] Ich nahm überall eine Bewegung nach vorn wahr. [...] Keine andere Welt mehr: diese.
>
> [Permanent revolution, the destruction of all the familiar norms, it sounded intoxicating: freeing people from their paralysis, rejecting what was worn out, caricatures of ourselves; a hand-me-down life, that seemed now to be over. […] I sensed forward movement everywhere. […] No more other worlds: this world.][33]

Crucially, in the SDS demonstration, this utopian desire for immediacy is reflected in its shift from contemplation, as represented by Gruppe 47's formal discussion of carefully honed literary texts, to emphatic political action, another central anti-authoritarian value.

'Belesenheit': Textual Politics

But most crucially of all for this study, the SDS demonstration against Gruppe 47 underlines the extraordinary importance of text to anti-authoritarianism. These protesters were not rejecting writing, but calling for it to be renewed in revolutionary ways, as shown by their banner which praised the work of the investigative journalist Günter Wallraff in contrast to the high literature of Gruppe 47. This protest shows that anti-authoritarians aspired to read avidly, in line with the demand of the Marxist playwright Peter Weiss, who was more closely aligned with anti-authoritarianism than most of his peers, for a revolutionary 'Belesenheit' [state of being well-read] amongst protesters.[34]

As befits a movement which was intensely, if sporadically, intellectual, anti-authoritarianism also produced text in huge quantities. Part of this output consisted of books, articles or other

33 Michael Buselmeier, 'Leben in Heidelberg', in *Nach dem Protest: Literatur im Umbruch*, ed. by W. Martin Lüdke (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979), 42–84 (74–75). The emphasis on permanent revolution evokes anti-authoritarianism's anarchist antecedents.

34 Quoted in Hermann Glaser, *Die Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 3 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1990), III: 53.

conventional genres which were at times highly theoretical and arcane. But due to the anti-authoritarians' desire to overthrow convention of all kinds and their interest in popular forms, they valorized other kinds of writing too. At a key anti-authoritarian event, the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß [International Vietnam Congress] of February 1968 in West Berlin, Dutschke called not only for revolutionary action in the metropolis, but also for an explicitly textual political culture: an '*eigene[s] revolutionäre[s] Informationsnetz*' [*our own revolutionary information network*] supported by '*taktische Zentralen*' [*tactical centres*], a '*Dokumentationszentrale*' [*documentation centre*], 'revolutionär-wissenschaftlich[e] Institut[e] der revolutionären Jugendorganisationen, die die imperialistische Zusammenarbeit untersuchen und publizistisch verbreiten und damit helfen, antiimperialistische Aktionen vorzubereiten' [institutes of studies for revolutionary youth movements which will examine imperial collaboration and disseminate their findings through journalism, and help to set up anti-imperialist actions] and 'Aktions- und Diskussionskonferenzen' [conferences for action and discussion].[35] In the same speech, and more unexpectedly, Dutschke also identified an urgent need for a new, revolutionary culture, quoting the US journalist A.[ndrew] Kopkind as follows:

> 'Es ist keine Zeit nüchterner Reflexion, sondern eine Zeit der Beschwörung. Die *Aufgabe des Intellektuellen* ist mit der des Organisators der Straße, mit der des Wehrdienstverweigerers, des *Diggers* identisch: *mit dem Volke zu sprechen und nicht über das Volk.* Die prägende Literatur jetzt ist die Underground-Literatur, sind die Reden von Malcolm X, die Schriften Fanons, die Songs der Rolling Stones und von Aretha Franklin. Alles übrige klingt wie der Moynihan-Report oder ein *Time*-Essay, die alles erklären, nichts verstehen und niemanden verändern.' (122)
>
> ['This is no time for sober reflection, but rather a time for conjuration. The intellectual's task is the same as that of the organizer on the street, of the conscientious objector to military service, of the Digger: *to speak to the people, not about the people*. Today's definitive literature is underground literature, the speeches of Malcolm X, the writings of Fanon, the songs of the Rolling Stones and Aretha Franklin. Anything

35 Rudi Dutschke, 'Die geschichtlichen Bedingungen für den internationalen Befreiungskampf', in *Der Kampf des vietnamesischen Volkes und die Globalstrategie der Imperialismus – Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß 17./18. Februar 1968 Westberlin*, ed. by Sybille Plogstedt (Berlin: INFI, 1968), 107–24 (116). This speech also appears, with changes, in *Rebellion der Studenten oder die neue Opposition*, 85–93; the passage quoted here is not included in this latter publication. Reference here is to the former publication.

> else sounds like the Moynihan Report or an essay in *Time* magazine, which explain everything, understand nothing and change no-one.']36

It is telling that in such a major speech on the key political (rather than cultural) issue of the day, Vietnam, Dutschke should emphasize textual forms like 'Dialog' [dialogue], 'Underground-Literatur' [underground literature], 'Schriften' [writings], 'Reden' [speeches] and 'Songs'.

Anti-authoritarian interest in text therefore ranges from the academic theorizing of the Frankfurt School to marginal, demotic, unconventional or ephemeral forms of all kinds. Such texts could be deployed powerfully in action and form an integral part of it, such as the slogans and banners used at the SDS protest. Moreover, as the example of the SDS demonstration shows, text could trigger and be itself the object of protest. Indeed, many of anti-authoritarianism's most important and spectacular actions centred on text in these ways. Such actions can be seen, too, as texts in a wider sense, not only because words are essential to them; but in addition, because above and beyond their written and verbal components, they themselves constitute wider systems of signs which demand to be read.

'Dichter, Dichter': Protest and Literature

In the Gruppe 47 demonstration, anti-authoritarian interest in writing was reflected clearly in the choice to demonstrate against a group of authors, rather than politicians, for example, or industrialists. In addition, this action drew attention to a more specific theme in protest culture, namely a preoccupation with the high literature which the protest movements are commonly believed to have rejected.[37] This apparently negative anti-authoritarian attitude towards literature was due to (at least) six reasons.

36 The use of quotation marks is in the source text, to denote Kopkind's words, referenced as A. Kopkind, *Von der Gewaltlosigkeit zum Guerilla-Kampf, in Voltaire-Flugschriften*, 14, 24–25. In the 1960s, the Diggers were a community-based, radical group in the USA, who drew their name from the seventeenth-century English rebels, the Levellers, who were also known as the Diggers. The 'Moynihan Report' was a controversial official report from 1965 by the sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan on supposed causes of poverty amongst African-Americans. Dutschke's words, like other statements of his of this time, show his admiration for and wish to identify with US popular culture, notably that of African-American movements, and post-colonial writings.

37 These currents are explored extensively in *Kursbuch*, 15. See also, for example, Lüdke (ed.), *Nach dem Protest*; *Über Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, ed. by Joachim Schickel (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970).

First, protesters became critical of the hierarchical structures of literary and critical institutions, such as universities, maintained as they were by extremely powerful professors and critics. Second, they argued that the literary industry served the needs of capitalism. This point was made forcefully by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, for instance, in his influential anti-authoritarian essay of November 1968, published in *Kursbuch*, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' [Commonplaces On Our Most Recent Literature], which is often held to have declared the death of literature.[38] Third, and more pragmatically, politicized writers or would-be writers may have felt that the pre-eminent demands of political action left no time for the luxury of writing literature.

Fourth, it could be argued that fine writing was in itself, at best, an ineffectual political tool. A telling instance is provided by the important (if now quite forgotten) anti-authoritarian poetry anthology *gegen den krieg in vietnam* [*against the war in vietnam*] (1968), published on the occasion of the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß. It closes with a programmatic poem, Karlhans Frank's 'MAN SOLLTE IHNEN DIE FRESSEN…' [THEIR GOBS NEED...] which ends as follows:

> Wortesteller als Wortesteller
> können kommende Kriege verhindern
> bestehende aber nicht ändern also:
>
> Keine Gedichte gegen den Krieg in Vietnam!
> AKTIONEN!![39]
>
> [Arrangers of words as arrangers of words
> can prevent wars to come
> but can't change existing ones so:
>
> No poems against the war in Vietnam!
> ACTIONS!!]

To conclude the anthology in this confrontational way is to make its readers question critically the time anyone chooses to devote to writing or even reading the poems, and to spur them to take a

38 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Gemeinplätze, die neueste Literatur betreffend', *Kursbuch*, 15 (1968), 187–97. Further references appear in the main body of the text. For a full discussion, see Chapter 1 of the present study.

39 Karlhans Frank, 'MAN SOLLTE IHNEN DIE FRESSEN…', in *gegen den krieg in vietnam. eine anthologie*, ed. by riewert qu. tode (Berlin: amBEATion, 1968), 84–85 (85).

different approach to opposing the war. It may also imply that the true value of this collection of poetry lies not in its content at all, but, paradoxically, in its status as a commodity, since it was sold to raise funds for medical aid for North Vietnam and the NLF.

Fifth, and worse, it was thought that traditional literature was by its very nature inimical to liberation. According to the leftist critic Peter Hamm in 1968, who cited such revered anti-authoritarian *maîtres à penser* as Sigmund Freud and Marcuse: 'Kultur ist Kompensation. Kunst ein Mittel, mit dem man die Provokation durch die Realität eben ausweicht. Wer nicht handeln kann, macht Kunst. Kunst ist Ersatzbefriedigung. Kunst versöhnt mit der unversöhnlichsten Realität. Kunst verträgt sich mit jeglicher Barbarei bestens' [Culture has a compensatory function. Art is a means by which one can just avoid being provoked by reality. Those who can't act, make art. Art is ersatz gratification. Art reconciles us with the most irreconcilable of realities. Art is perfectly compatible with every kind of barbarism].[40] Hamm therefore enthusiastically praised Hans Magnus Enzensberger for giving up 'die Produktion von Rauschmitteln' [the production of intoxicants] (254), that is, poetry, the opium of the reading masses which deadens them to the need for action. The distinctive echo in Hamm's words of the closing passages of the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno's celebrated essay 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft' [Cultural Criticism and Society] (1951), which suggest that to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric, is probably no coincidence.[41] Rather, Hamm is implying, to a readership likely to be familiar with Adorno's formulation, that there are powerful links between the production of literature in the present and atrocity in the Nazi mould. Sixth, therefore, only two decades on from the end of the Second World War protesters were suspicious of a literary canon which had been enthusiastically deployed by Nazism and literary, critical and academic establishments which had an ongoing interest in covering up the links between literature, its study and the Nazi past.

40 Peter Hamm, 'Opposition – am Beispiel H.M. Enzensberger', kürbiskern, 3 (1968), 583–90; also in Schickel (ed.), *Über Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 252–62 (252). Further references to Hamm's essay are to the latter publication. Seemingly in corroboration of Hamm's claim in 1968, Hans Magnus Enzensberger's latest volume of poems, *blindenschrift*, had been published as far back as 1964. However, as the first and last chapters of this study will show, Hans Magnus Enzensberger's responses to literature at this time are in fact more complex.

41 Theodor W. Adorno, 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft', in Theodor W. Adorno, *Prismen: Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1963), 7–26; translated as 'Cultural Criticism and Society', in Theodor W. Adorno, *Prisms*, trans. by Samuel and Shierry Weber (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1981), 17–34.

Literature, then, seemed deeply incompatible with the revolutionary times. Just a month after the shooting of Ohnesorg and the ensuing outpouring of shock, grief and anger, Adorno himself spoke at West Berlin's Freie Universität (FU) [Free University]. This event was keenly anticipated, for Adorno had been until recently a major influence and figurehead for many politicized students. His subject on this occasion was 'Zum Klassizismus von Goethes *Iphigenie*' [On the Classicism of Goethe's *Iphigenia*], and this choice, albeit one which had been decided upon in advance of 2 June, in preference to discussion on recent traumatic events, provoked and disappointed many.[42] According to Kraushaar, a reception somewhere between a 'Happening' and genuinely angry protest resulted.[43]

Many other anti-authoritarian actions focused on literary issues. Protests took place at the prestigious Frankfurt am Main book fairs in both 1967 and 1968, and at the Germanistentag [Conference of Germanists] in West Berlin in October 1968.[44] There was also a whole sequence of controversies in 1968 regarding the teaching of German literature at West German universities, including protests against the allegedly authoritarian and apolitical lectures of Professor Martin Stern on Expressionism in Frankfurt am Main; and the occupation by activists from KI, among others, of the Institut für Germanistik [German Department] at the FU.[45] This occupation was the best-publicized of all those taking place around that time, and renamed the department the Rosa Luxemburg-Institut – a telling move, for Luxemburg herself did not, of course, write literature in a conventional sense, but about politics.[46]

42 See Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, I: 264–65 and II: 265–67.

43 Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, I: 265.

44 On protest at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1967 and 1968, see Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, I: 273 and 357–58 respectively. Protest at the Germanistentag of 1968 was reported in the *Berliner Morgenpost*, 9 October 1968, 7; *Nachtdepesche*, 9 October 1968, 5; *BZ*, 9 October 1968, 3; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 9 October 1968, 33; *Die Welt*, 9 October 1968, 9; *FAZ*, 9 October 1968, 24; *Der Spiegel*, 14 October 1968, 200–02; *Die Zeit*, 25 October 1968, 22, 23–24.

45 The university study of German literature came under searching critique, for example, Georg Fulberth, 'Politische Inhalte der deutschen Philologie', *neue kritik*, 25–26 (1964), 30–34. On protest against Stern, see Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, I: 312, 348.

46 The occupation of the Institut für Germanistik was reported extensively, for example in *Der Abend*, 27 May 1968, 1; *FU Spiegel*, 65 (June-July 1968), 8–10; *Berliner Morgenpost*, 28 May 1968, 6; *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 28 May 1968, 5; *Die Welt*, 28 May 1968, 1; *Der Tagesspiegel*, 28 May 1968, 10; *Der Abend*, 27 May 1968,

Theatres saw disruptions too, for example during performances of Rolf Hochhuth's play *Soldaten* [*Soldiers*] at the Schauspielhaus in Frankfurt am Main (1968).[47] Peter Weiss's anti-war play *Diskurs über die Vorgeschichte und den Verlauf des lang andauernden Befreiungskrieges in Viet Nam als Beispiel für die Notwendigkeit des bewaffneten Kampfes der Unterdrückten gegen ihre Unterdrücker sowie über die Versuche der Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika die Grundlagen der Revolution zu vernichten* [*Discourse on the Progress of the Prolonged War of Liberation in Viet Nam and the Events Leading up to it as Illustration of the Necessity for Armed Resistance against Oppression and on the Attempts of the United States of America to Destroy the Foundations of Revolution*] (1967), usually known as *Viet Nam Diskurs* [*Discourse on Vietnam*], was notable also for events at its stage premiere in 1968. As one critic wrote:

> Die Premiere in Frankfurt war keine übliche Premiere. [...] Nach dem Ende der Vorstellung demonstrierten Mitglieder des SDS und der Unabhängigen Schülergemeinschaft zusammen mit Gruppen der außerparlamentarischen Opposition im Zuschauerraum für eine aktive Unterstützung der Vietcong. [...] An diesem Abend wurde der übliche Betrieb des bürgerlichen Theaters für gut zwei Stunden gesprengt.
>
> [The premiere in Frankfurt was no ordinary premiere. [...] After the end of the performance members of the SDS and the Independent Association of School Students demonstrated alongside groups from the extra-parliamentary opposition in favour of active support for the Vietcong. [...] On that evening, the usual business of bourgeois theatre was disrupted for a good two hours].[48]

1; *BZ*, 30 May 1968, 8. Later in 1968, in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', and perhaps not coincidentally, Enzensberger too was to hold up Luxemburg's work as an alternative model for politicized authors. See Chapter 1 of this study.

47 Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, I: 336–37.

48 André Müller, 'Neuartiges Politisches Theater', *Deutsche Volkszeitung*, 5 April 1968, 11; quoted in Hahn, *Literatur in der Aktion*, 49–50. Müller goes on to note: 'So war es kein Zufall, sondern nur eine logische Folge, daß sich Peter Weiss offen auf der Bühne mit den Demonstranten solidarisierte' [Thus it was no coincidence, but rather a logical consequence, that Peter Weiss openly expressed solidarity with the demonstrators from the stage] (Hahn, *Literatur in der Aktion*, 50). Walter Hinck noted that the play became 'reines Agitationstheater […] in dem die Bühnenaktion die Rampe überspringt' [a theatre of pure political agitation [...] in which the action on stage leaps over the footlights] and said of performances in Munich: 'Die Aufforderung ans Publikum für den Vietcong zu spenden, wird buchstäblich genommen; der Schauspieler geht ins Publikum, um Geld für Waffen zu sammeln' [The demand on the audience to donate to the Vietcong is taken literally; the actor goes into the audience to collect money

Changing attitudes towards literature were reflected also in the editorial policy of some periodicals of the era. The anthology *gegen den krieg in vietnam* mentioned above, for instance, was a number of a little literary journal called *amBEATion* which had appeared irregularly from the early 1960s onwards. Earlier issues of the SDS's own journal, *neue kritik* [*new critique*], launched in 1960, contain many literature-related contributions. And *konkret* [*concrete*], by the end of the 1960s the most influential left-wing political magazine, was launched in the 1950s, originally under the title *Studentenkurier* [*Student Courier*], as a 'Magazin für Kultur und Politik' [Magazine for Culture and Politics].[49] While *konkret*'s focus shifted increasingly to politics in the 1960s, it retained the claim to include culture with its sub-title 'unabhängige zeitung für kultur und politik' [independent paper for culture and politics], and in 1966 published important poems protesting against the Vietnam War.[50] However, some of these periodicals changed as the 1960s went on. *amBEATion*, formerly emphatically literary in tone, was closed by its editorship after *gegen den krieg in vietnam* appeared, in favour of what it held to be more meaningful political actions, presumably as advocated by Frank's poem quoted above. *neue kritik* stopped including contributions on literature altogether by the late 1960s; and by then, *konkret* no longer carried poems either.

Simultaneously, from around 1967, a new, very different periodical culture developed alongside more conventional publications, namely that of multiple, short-lived underground magazines like *linkeck* [*leftangle*] (1968–69), *Charlie kaputt* (1968–69) and *Agit 883* (1968–72).[51] While such publications reached at least some of the same audience

for weapons] (Walter Hinck, 'Von der Parabel zum Straßentheater. Notizen zum Drama der Gegenwart', in *Gestaltungsgeschichte und Gesellschaftsgeschichte (Festschrift Fritz Martini)*, ed. by Helmut Kreuzer (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1969), 583–603; quoted in Hahn, *Literatur in der Aktion*, 201).

49 The writer Arno Schmidt wrote to *konkret* around 1957, 'Ihr seid die beste deutsche Kulturzeitung' [You are the best German cultural paper] (quoted in Stefan Aust, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, enlarged edition (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1997), 36).

50 See poems by Erasmus Schöfer and Peter Schütt, *konkret*, 2 (1966), 40–41; poems by Schöfer, Schütt, Uwe Herms, Kurt Sigel and Reimar Lenz, *konkret*, 4 (1966), 38–39; a poem by Fried in *konkret*, 7 (1966), 41; and one more by Herms in *konkret*, 10 (1966), 48–49.

51 See, for example, Bernd Drücke, *Zwischen Schreibtisch und Straßenschlacht? Anarchismus und libertäre Presse in Ost- und Westdeutschland* (Ulm: Klemm und Oelschäger, 1998), 149–64; Holger Jenrich, *Anarchistische Presse in Deutschland 1945–1985* (Grafenau-Döffingen: Trotzdem, 1988), 81–88.

as the era's more traditional periodicals, they demonstrated quite different approaches. Visually, they privileged pop-inspired, DIY aesthetics and montage rather than a more traditional, formal layout, and they replaced lengthy theoretical, academic or artistic contributions with short, simple pieces, news, satire, cartoons and polemic. Increasingly, too, in the case of the longest-lived of these publications, for instance *agit 883*, much space came to be devoted to highly practical content aimed at sustaining a new sub-culture: small ads, calls to demonstrations, or requests for household items or lovers. In this much changed textual environment, literature and debate about it seemed to fall by the wayside entirely.

This cultural context, in which conventional literature became the object of much suspicion, helps make sense of a comment reportedly made by Dutschke early in 1969: 'Die politische Bekämpfung von Günter Grass ist wichtiger als alles andere' [The political fight against Günter Grass is more important than anything else].[52] This statement alludes not only to the political and personal antagonism between anti-authoritarians and the ardent Social Democrat author Grass. It also encapsulates the era's profound unease about literature itself and its dangers. So predominant was this mood that it could even affect writers who are less commonly associated with protest culture, like the established Swiss author Max Frisch, who refused permission around this time for his earlier stage works to be performed.[53] Consequently, as the anti-authoritarian satirist Wolfgang Neuss put it, looking back in 1974 at the summer of 1968: 'Kunst war bei der Linken ein verbotenes Wort' [On the Left, art was a banned word].[54]

52 J.K., 'Den Grass wachsen hören', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 14 February 1969, 12. This statement is reported anecdotally, and since it dates from Dutschke's long convalescence after the assassination attempt of 1968 it does not form part of his canonical output as an anti-authoritarian thinker up to early 1968. Nonetheless, the fact that it is often quoted clearly suggests that it resonates with the era's literary debates and later suppositions about them. See, for example, Rebecca Braun, *Constructing Authorship in the Work of Günter Grass* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2008), 47; Julian Preece, *The Life and Work of Günter Grass: Literature, History, Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 93. Preece names the author of the piece which reported the statement as Joachim Kaiser.

53 Jörg Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger: Ein öffentliches Leben* (Berlin: Alexander Fest, 1999), 274.

54 Gaston Salvatore, *Wolfgang Neuss – ein faltenreiches Kind. Biographie* (Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1995 [1974]), 407.

However, Neuss's totalizing view covers over important contradictions. For one thing, many of the apparently anti-literary comments discussed above, made as they were in 1968, date from a comparatively late point in the protest movements. Klaus Briegleb has observed the emergence, by late 1968, of an extensive, politically stabilizing, mainstream debate about the future of literature. While this debate was originally triggered by left-wing debate about the purpose of literature, according to Briegleb it served, as time went on, to draw attention away from and neutralize earlier, grass-roots and more genuinely subversive aspects of protest culture.[55] And in any case, not all left-wing writers agreed with Hamm's wholesale rejection of literature quoted above. The poet Yaak Karsunke took issue directly with both Hamm's interpretation of Freud and his view of literature, thus indicating that the latter marks an extreme point in contemporary discourse on literature and politics.[56] By contrast, Erich Fried and Weiss, among other left-wing writers, for example, continued to write and publish engaged literature in the 1960s. As Briegleb notes too, anti-authoritarian debate at the time was notable for the involvement of writers such as Weiss, Enzensberger, Fried and Reinhard Lettau, and debate about it amongst literati.[57] Indeed, even Grass's disapproval of the protest movements, as well as the anger the anti-authoritarians expressed against him, contributed to the ways in which the movements were surrounded by, and suffused with, literary culture.

In view of such diversity of opinion, protesters' apparently total rejection of literature demands a more searching reading. The very fact that students considered that Gruppe 47, as well as lectures on German literature, stage plays and the Frankfurt am Main book fair, merited so much of their attention is telling. Such protest about literature illustrates the significant, though paradoxical value that many protesters, especially students, placed upon it; rather ironically, even the Gruppe 47 protest itself was later to feature in a counter-cultural poem.[58] Likewise, Frank's demand, quoted above, 'Keine

55 Briegleb, *1968*, 248–49.

56 Yaak Karsunke, 'Vom Singen in finsteren Zeiten', *kürbiskern*, 3 (1968), 591–96; also in Schickel (ed.), *Über Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 263–70. Further references are to the latter publication.

57 See Briegleb, *1968*, 53–56.

58 Manfred Bosch, 'Episode', *Edelgammler*, 4 (May 1969), 21. Other protest actions also made their way quickly into poems, e.g, Friedrich Christian Delius, 'Vier Gedichte', *Kursbuch*, 15 (1968), 144–47.

Gedichte gegen den Krieg in Vietnam' [No poems against the war in Vietnam] is made within a poem, itself part of a large contemporary culture of anti-war poetry, and explicitly recognizes that poems can stop 'kommende Kriege' [wars to come], if not the present one in Vietnam. And in the quotation above about 'Revolution in Permanenz' [permanent revolution], Buselmeier is referring not to insight drawn from political experience in any conventional sense, but from his engagement with contemporary letters.

This paradoxical attitude towards literature has roots in many protesters' socialization in a German culture which was deeply reverential of literature. It is this context which was making itself felt in the early literary interests of journals like *neue kritik*, the ongoing literary engagement in *Kursbuch*, or even the literary aspects in *konkret*. The life-writing of many activists stresses the formative influence of literature for their development, for example Inga Buhmann's memoir *Ich habe mir eine Geschichte geschrieben* [*I Wrote Myself a Story*] (1977), Bernward Vesper's quasi-autobiographical 'Romanessay' [novel-essay] *Die Reise* [*The Trip*] (1977), or the recollections of Dutschke's widow, Gretchen Dutschke-Klotz (1996), who records that Dutschke himself wrote poetry.[59] After the zenith of the revolt, many of its protagonists turned, or turned back, to literary writing. A few examples among many are Elisabeth Plessen; Thorwald Proll, who was convicted of arson in Frankfurt am Main in 1968 alongside Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin, who was herself a former student of German literature and a literary editor, and Horst Söhnlein, an actor who ran a Munich theatre company; Dutschke's collaborator Gaston Salvatore; the erstwhile SDS activist Peter Schneider; Karin Struck; KI member Fritz Teufel and Uwe Timm.[60]

This affinity with literature is reflected vividly in fictional works too. In Timm's novel *Heißer Sommer* [*Hot Summer*] (1974), a *Bildungsroman* for the protest era, the student protagonist Ullrich's

59 Inga Buhmann, *Ich habe mir eine Geschichte geschrieben* (Frankfurt a.M.: Zweitausendeins, 1998 [1977]); Bernward Vesper, *Die Reise* (Frankfurt a.M.: März, 1977; Frankfurt a.M.: Zweitausendeins, 1981); Gretchen Dutschke, *Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben*, 38–39.

60 Salvatore's first major literary publication was *Büchners Tod: Stück* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1972); Teufel stated during his trial for incitement to arson that he had aspired to be 'eine Art humoristischer Schriftsteller' [a kind of comic author] (Rainer Langhans and Fritz Teufel, *Klau mich: StPO der Kommune 1* (1968; facsimile reprint: Munich: Trikont, 1977) [no pag.]). On that trial, see Chapter 3 of this study. Teufel later wrote more conventional stories, for example, Fritz Teufel and Robert Jarowoy, *Märchen aus der Spaßgerilja* (Hamburg and Bremen: Libertäre Assoziation, verlag roter funke, 1980).

revolt is sparked partly by his love of Friedrich Hölderlin's poetry and by the way it is traduced, in his view, by university teaching. Ullrich spends a long period exploring alternative politics and associated textual experiments, like graffiti and the study of Weimar-era *Arbeiterliteratur* [workers' literature]. But at the end of his story, he hopes to find a sustainable way forward, both personally and politically, as a teacher of working-class children. It is no coincidence that it is at this point of potential resolution that Ullrich's early love of Hölderlin is rekindled. Likewise, in Margarethe von Trotta's film *Die bleierne Zeit* [*The German Sisters*] (1981), which traces the development of the protest generation, a key moment in the protagonists' teenage education hinges on poetry.

Thus, contrary to widespread belief, derived from actions like that of the SDS at the Gruppe 47 meeting, many in the protest movements were in fact deeply attached to literature, albeit in conflicted ways. The very revolt on the part of some activists against conventional literature shows just how deeply influenced they were by the German humanist tradition which had taught them to value artistic writing as an expression of individual worth, an ethical forum and a vehicle for social change. Thus, in apparently rejecting literature, such protesters in fact perpetuated precisely that high cultural tradition which they sought to criticize, for that repudiation preserved the special status of literature as a moral touchstone.

'Unsere Demonstrationen werden immer schöner': Aesthetics and the Protest Movements

Thus, as Briegleb has pointed out, there is a rich, if paradoxical substratum of literary sensibility in the protest movements, which combines with other important impulses to form their distinctive textuality. The aesthetic, in a broad sense, was important for the New Left, and not only in the Federal Republic. Marcuse's *Essay on Liberation* (1969), for instance, observed US protest movements, and insisted that:

> The aesthetic as the possible Form of a free society appears at that stage of development where the intellectual and material resources for the conquest of scarcity are available, where previously progressive repression turns into regressive suppression, where the higher culture in which the aesthetic values (and the aesthetic truth) had been monopolised and segregated from the reality collapses and dissolves in desublimated, "lower," and destructive forms, where

> the hatred of the young bursts into laughter and song, mixing the barricade and the dance floor, love play and heroism.[61]

Marcuse not only emphasizes popular culture, as Dutschke did at the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß, but even insists that the aesthetic is a key to liberation. Some West German activists too held that every aspect of political practice, and of life more broadly, was to be aestheticized. As another prominent SDS member, K.D. Wolff, reportedly said in August 1968, alluding to a dramatic demonstration on the French-German border alongside his comrade Daniel Cohn-Bendit: 'Unsere Demonstrationen werden immer schöner. Sie hätten uns sehen sollen wie wir mit Dany nach Forbach zogen, mit großen gelben Ginstersträußen und vielen roten Fahnen...' [Our demonstrations are getting more and more beautiful. You should have seen us when we marched on Forbach with Dany, with great yellow sheaves of gorse and many red flags…].[62]

Moreover, anti-authoritarianism was significantly influenced by avant-garde traditions, partly mediated through the influence of a group called Subversive Aktion [Subversive Action], which was based in Munich and West Berlin.[63] Both philosophically and biographically, Subversive Aktion traced a line of descent through Dada, Surrealism, the Situationist International (SI) and the Munich

61 Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (London: Penguin, 1969), 25–26. In this essay Marcuse uses examples from African-American culture as a revolutionary template.

62 Quoted in Karl Markus Michel, 'Ein Kranz für die Literatur. Fünf Variationen über eine These', *Kursbuch*, 15 (1968), 169–86 (179). While Michel does not specify a context for this quotation, it seems to refer to a demonstration held on 24 May 1968 at the French-German border in protest at the French authorities' refusal to allow Cohn-Bendit, then a German national resident in France, to re-enter the country. See Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, 1: 331–32.

63 See *Subversive Aktion: Der Sinn der Aktion ist ihr Scheitern*, ed. by Frank Böckelmann and Herbert Nagel (Frankfurt a.M.: Neue Kritik, 1976); *Nilpferd des höllischen Urwalds – Spuren in eine unbekannte Stadt – Situationisten Gruppe SPUR Kommune I*, ed. by Wolfgang Dreßen and others (Gießen: Anabas Verlag, 1991); Sara Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel: Flugblätter der Kommune I, Erklärungen von Ensslin/Baader und der frühen RAF* (Bochum: Posth, 2008); Alexander Holmig, 'Die aktionistischen Wurzeln der Studentenbewegung: Subversive Aktion, Kommune I und die Neudefinition des Politischen', in *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*, ed. by Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth (Stuttgart and Weimar: Metzler, 2007), 107–18; Ingo Juchler, 'Die Avantgardegruppe "Subversive Aktion" im Kontext der sich entwickelnden Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre', *Weimarer Beiträge*, 40 (1994), 72–88; Dieter Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand! Bilder aus meinem Leben* (Berlin: :Transit, 1998).

art group SPUR. It originated partially also in two explicitly literary magazines, the Munich-based *ludus* (1961) and *flöte & schafott* [*flute and gallows*] (1962–63), re-named *texturen* [*textures*] (1963–64).[64] Inspired by these avant-gardist contexts, from the early 1960s Subversive Aktion specialized in highly provocative acts fusing political and symbolic action.

Two of this group's key figures were Dutschke and his associate Bernd Rabehl, both significant voices in West Berlin's SDS. Initially, they had joined the SDS in the mid-1960s as part of a larger, unpublicized Subversive Aktion project of instrumentalizing that more established, conventional organization and its infrastructure for subversive ends. As a consequence, some very unorthodox methods came into play in student politics. Other activists linked to Subversive Aktion, Dieter Kunzelmann and Dagmar Seehuber, went on to co-found KI in West Berlin, and this group, too, was highly influential in the city. Thus, anti-authoritarianism was heir to the avant-garde idea of a 'Literarisierung aller Lebensverhältnisse' [the literarization of the conditions of living], as Walter Benjamin put it in 1934; that is, a transformation of everyday life into a revolutionary and aesthetic experience.[65] As such, it harked back to the culture of the pre-Nazi Weimar Republic with which activists were keen to re-connect. It is very much in this spirit that the protesters of the mid- to late 1960s called for the immediate, gratifying integration of the subject into the plenitude of experience and into new, unthought-of, fantastic states ('berauschend' [intoxicating] in Buselmeier's description quoted above) which are denied by the alienation of life under capitalism.

It is for all these reasons that, as Briegleb highlights, looking back in 1990 the commentator Reinhard Baumgart, himself a contemporary of the extra-parliamentary opposition, could remark that it was, despite itself, 'literarisch fast bis auf die Knochen' [literary almost to the bone], albeit in often unexpected ways.[66] This aspect of protest

64 On Subversive Aktion and *texturen*, and the broader, aesthetic and explicitly literary background to Subversive Aktion, see Buhmann, *Ich habe mir eine Geschichte geschrieben*, 84–88.

65 Walter Benjamin, 'Der Autor als Produzent' (1934), in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 7 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), II.2: 683–701 (694); translated as 'The Author as Producer', in Walter Benjamin, *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, ed. by Peter Demetz, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1986), 220–38 (225).

66 'Ausgerechnet die APO, selbst literarisch fast bis auf die Knochen, sagte die Literatur tot' [Of all things, it was the extra-parliamentary opposition, itself literary almost to the bone, which declared the death of literature] (Reinhard

thinking merges with others, like the documentary impulse, reverence for theory, interest in popular culture and demands for factual and practical texts in opposition to literature, to form a broad and complex textual culture.[67] Its predominantly short genres include (but are not limited to) flyers, posters, stickers, cabaret, performance, graffiti, street theatre, indoor theatre, happenings, demonstrations, self-criticisms, 'Third-World' writings, periodicals, drawings, cartoons, photomontages, prison writing, anthologies, documentaries, slogans and chants (often rhyming), underground magazines, song, graphic literature or comics, pornography, film, speeches, leaflets, personal diaries, collective diaries, transcripts and records of group activities, psychoanalytical transcripts and reflections, small ads, alternative address books, press digest and analysis, masquerade, exhibitions, pamphlets, essays, books, discussions, interviews and self-stylizations in and for the mainstream press, texts relating to drug use, the subversion of court proceedings and legal texts, little red books (not only Chairman Mao's), polemic, pirate editions of classic texts, satire, translations of iconic left-wing writings, letters (both open and personal), press dossiers, poems and memoir.

This culture often shares with literary Modernism a desire to invent writing anew. In late 1968, Hans Magnus Enzensberger remarked in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend': 'Eine revolutionäre Literatur existiert nicht, es wäre denn in einem völlig phrasenhaften Sinn des Wortes' [A revolutionary literature does not exist, other than in a completely hollow sense of the term]; and concluded that '[a]ndere [...] Möglichkeiten müssen erdacht und erprobt werden' [[o]ther […] possibilities must be devised and put to the test].[68] Anti-authoritarian writing is, then, as much as anything, a Modernism in constant search of a novel, ideal expression. And like other examples of Modernism, too, this culture is strikingly diverse, contradictory and paradoxical – for example, in the ways in which it pulls both towards and away from literary traditions.

Baumgart, 'Boulevard – was sonst?', *Die Zeit*, 6 April 1990; quoted in Briegleb, *1968*, 22). Briegleb does not provide a page reference.

67 See Klaus Briegleb, 'Literatur in der Revolte – Revolte in der Literatur', in *Gegenwartsliteratur seit 1968*, ed. by Klaus Briegleb and Sigrid Weigel (Munich: dtv, 1992), 19–72 (22–25).

68 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Gemeinplätze, die neueste Literatur betreffend', 197.

'wortreiche Sprachlosigkeit': Reading Anti-Authoritarian Writing

Thus, the West German anti-authoritarian movement valued text as a tool, a battlefield, and as a utopian horizon in astonishingly powerful ways. Correspondingly, for an understanding of the movement it is crucial to understand its textual practices, for these were far more than ancillary or merely decorative. Traditionally, however, much criticism has overlooked its writing, and focused instead on the idea, derived from the debates around 1968 about the future of literature, that the protest movements rejected, or even destroyed, literature. As the literary journalist and popular critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki noted polemically in 1968: 'Die Versuche der raschen und radikalen Politisierung der Literatur Ende der sechziger Jahre sind nicht ohne Folgen geblieben. Aber dieser Prozeß hat nicht die Politik verändert, sondern die Literatur ruiniert' [The attempts made at the end of the Sixties to politicize literature did not lack consequences. But this process didn't change politics. Rather, it ruined literature].[69] This view was upheld even as late as 1995, when another highly established critic, Heinz Ludwig Arnold, asserted that: 'Auf Kunst und Literatur [...] hat diese kulturrevolutionäre Phase unmittelbarer gewirkt als auf Staat und Gesellschaft, und zwar kunstfeindlich und ent-literarisierend' [This phase of cultural revolution had a more immediate effect on art and literature […] than on the state and society, and it did so in a manner which was hostile to art and eroded literature].[70]

Such views are vastly overstated, not least because in any case conventional literature and its institutions to a great extent maintained business as usual during the period in question. Nonetheless, according to such thinking, literature was put to death by the protest movements in 1968 and resurrected only in the 1970s with the publication of apparently more conventionally literary works like Peter Schneider's novella *Lenz* (1973), which looks back at the protest movements. *Lenz* seemed different from other protest writing in that it used the frame of German literary history, most obviously

69 Marcel Reich-Ranicki, 'Die Literatur des kritischen Psychologismus', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 January 1977; quoted in Martin Huber, *Politisierung der Literatur – Ästhetisierung der Politik: Eine Studie zur Literaturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der 68er-Bewegung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Frankfurt a.M. etc: Peter Lang, 1992), 14. Huber does not provide a page reference.

70 Heinz Ludwig Arnold, *Die westdeutsche Literatur 1945 bis 1990. Ein kritischer Überblick* (Munich: dtv, 1995), 88.

Georg Büchner's novella *Lenz* (1836). Schneider's *Lenz* refers also to Büchner's historical model, the *Sturm und Drang* [Storm and Stress] playwright J.M.R. Lenz. These references, as well as Schneider's use of the novella form and the classic German narrative of a young man learning about his place in the world through relationships and travel in Italy, mean that his book seemed to return to a legible, unthreatening, cultural norm. It was hence a welcome milestone for traditionalist critics, as were other novels, like Timm's *Heißer Sommer*, which, from the mid-1970s onwards, gave accounts of the protest movements. Such novels were among the first writings relating to the protest movements to be taken up by criticism, for they too correspond to a reassuringly identifiable genre, the *Bildungsroman*.

This development was summed up by Buselmeier in 1977 as follows:

> Mit der triumphierenden Parole 'Jetzt dichten sie wieder!' glaubte die Illustrierte *Stern* im Oktober 1974 den resignierenden Rückzug der Schriftsteller aus der Politik trendmäßig festschreiben zu können. […] Großkritiker und Literaturprofessoren haben, nicht ohne innere Befriedigung, in eindimensionalen Einschätzungen die Illustriertenschreiber noch übertroffen. Das Politische gegen das Poetische ausspielend, konstatiert Marcel Reich-Ranicki anläßlich der Frankfurter Buchmesse 1975 eine 'Abwendung von Theorie, Ideologie und Politik einerseits und Hinwendung zum Künstlerischen in der Literatur' andererseits. Die 'Rückkehr zur schönen Literatur', das Interesse 'für Privates und Individuelles' sei nur 'die Folge einer einseitigen Politisierung der Literatur.'[71]
>
> [With the triumphant slogan 'Now they're writing poetry again!' the illustrated magazine *Stern* thought itself able to confirm in writing a clear trend amongst authors to withdraw, resigned, from politics. [...] The head critics and literature professors, not without inner satisfaction, went even further than the authors of the illustrated papers in their mono-dimensional verdicts. Playing off politics against poetry, on the occasion of the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1975 Marcel Reich-Ranicki confirmed his observation of 'a turn away from theory, ideology and politics on one hand, and a turn towards the artistic aspects in literature' on the other. The 'return to fine writing', interest 'in personal and individual matters' was, in his view, simply 'the result of a one-sided politicization of literature.']

Buselmeier also quotes a contemporary essay in the prestigious weekly *Die Zeit* [*The Times*] by the distinguished Germanist Eberhard

71 Michael Buselmeier, 'Nach der Revolte. Die literarische Verarbeitung der Studentenbewegung', in Lüdke (ed.), *Nach dem Protest*, 158–85 (158).

Lämmert entitled 'Die Erde hat sie wieder' [Earth Claims Them Again]. This title is a short, partially amended quotation from a celebrated speech by the eponymous protagonist in the first part of Goethe's epic drama *Faust* (1829). After becoming frustrated with a lonely life dedicated only to thought and theory, Faust considers various apparent solutions, including suicide, before being won over to life at the start of the Easter festival, when he declares triumphantly 'Die Erde hat mich wieder!' [Earth claims me again!].[72] Faust is thus resurrected, just as Christ was at Easter.

According to this headline, then, the ex-anti-authoritarian writing subject, like Faust, has submitted to the deadening temptation of putting unappealing theory before life. Ultimately, however, he comes to himself, starts to relate to real life and resumes writing proper literature. In this conceptualization, the anti-authoritarian subject, like Faust, is changed and resurrected – or, put another way, he falls back into line in an apparently unshakeable cultural order. This narrative, cemented by reference to the authority of the most canonical text in German literature, serves to re-establish a highly conservative (and expressly patriarchal, in various senses) view of literature. Within it, the intriguing possibilities that politics may have enriched literature, that literature may have changed politics, or even that politics and literature are not necessarily separate at all, are not considered. Rather, the eternal triumph of literature over politics is affirmed. (It is, however, noticeable that this choice of headline to Lämmert's essay also refers, with apparently unintentional irony, to a moment in Goethe's play when Faust is about to become recklessly, destructively vulnerable to the murderous temptations of the demonic Mephistopheles, and so may not quite strike the intended restorative note after all.)

The widespread, if faulty, belief that the protest movements produced nothing but a 'wortreiche Sprachlosigkeit' [verbose speechlessness] is drawn from traditional German perceptions of the relationship between literature and politics.[73] In such perceptions, Art, or 'Geist' [intellect], exists entirely separately from the lower sphere of politics, or 'Macht' [power]. On this argument, literature and politics are mutually exclusive, and hence political writings are

72 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust. Eine Tragödie*, Part I, 'Nacht', in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke*, 6 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1966), III: 6–341 (28). The translation used here is: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust. A Tragedy. Part One*, 'Night', trans. by Martin Greenberg (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 12–26 (25).

73 Arnold, *Die westdeutsche Literatur*, 86.

aesthetically inferior and symbolically uninteresting. So influential is this kind of thinking about writing and politics that it was accepted by many, including on the left, around 1968. Arguably, it even gave rise to the protest movements' explicit, if partial and contradictory, anti-literary argument outlined above, for such discourse seems equally to espouse the view that literature and politics are mutually exclusive. Seen in this light, emphatic anti-authoritarian rejections of art, like Hamm's quoted above, come to appear very conservative. And it is precisely because of the supposed incompatibility of literature and politics that the protest movements' pronouncements on the 'death of literature' have been simply taken as read, and not subjected to critical or symptomatic readings. As political statements, it was believed that they could not be complex or ambiguous, and so must be taken at face value. In addition, the idea that the protest movements had no meaningful culture can also be seen as a neutralizing strategy which seeks to deflect attention away from their potentially genuinely subversive work.

Thus, the rich textual culture of anti-authoritarianism, shot through as it sometimes is with aesthetic ideas, has been illegible to literary or cultural history, and even protesters themselves, because it rarely takes conventionally literary form. Even Dutschke, who would have had extensive knowledge of protest writing in West Berlin in the 1960s, reflected in his speech at the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß quoted above: 'Wir haben noch keine breite kontinuierliche Untergrundliteratur, es fehlen noch die Dialoge der Intellektuellen mit dem Volk' [We still don't have an extensive, continuous underground literature, we still lack dialogue between intellectuals and the people] (122). What he meant by 'Untergrundliteratur' [underground literature] was a genuinely demotic culture which seemed to speak to everyone, as Malcolm X's speeches or Aretha Franklin's music did for instance in the US. It is true that West German protest culture offered nothing quite comparable. Nonetheless, Dutschke seems also unable to recognize the significance of the anti-authoritarian writing all around him, perhaps precisely because it failed to meet any conventional literary – or even pop-cultural – benchmarks.

Towards an Analysis of Anti-Authoritarian Texts

Consequently, critical studies of anti-authoritarian texts which fall outside conventional norms have been few and far between. However, the notion that the protest movements were not at all literary is profoundly challenged by some perceptive scholarship,

especially the work of Briegleb which has been formative for the reflections in this introduction.[74] Such work focuses on writing in and of the protest movements themselves, and at times too on the background and underpinning of some protest discourse and practice in literary and aesthetic thinking. It therefore provides important context for the chapters which follow. The present study also builds on the important re-evaluation of anti-authoritarian culture which has been taking place in scholarship since around 1998 to uncover the still under-researched textual culture of anti-authoritarianism. It aims to explore texts in a narrower sense, as well as events or actions which can be read as texts in a wider sense, and to which the use of writing and words is central. The examples selected do not speak, of course, of any unified anti-authoritarian vision, since such a thing did not exist. Nonetheless, in one way or another, each is in some

74 See, for example, *Protest! Literatur um 1968*, ed. by Ralf Bentz and others (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 1998); Karl Heinz Bohrer, *Die gefährdete Phantasie, oder Surrealismus und Terror* (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1970) and '1968: Die Phantasie an die Macht? Studentenbewegung – Walter Benjamin – Surrealismus', *Merkur*, 51 (1997), 1069–80; Briegleb, *1968* and 'Literatur in der Revolte – Revolte in der Literatur'; further contributions in Briegleb and Weigel (eds), *Gegenwartsliteratur seit 1968*; Keith Bullivant, '1968: was danach geschah und was davon geblieben ist', in *1945–1995: Fünfzig Jahre deutschsprachige Literatur in Aspekten*, ed. by Gerhard P. Knapp and Gerd Labroisse (*Amsterdamer Beiträge zur neueren Germanistik*, 38–39 [1995]), 339–52, and *Realism Today: Aspects of the Contemporary West German Novel* (Oxford: Berg, 1987); contributions in *After the Death of Literature: West German Writing of the 1970s*, ed. by Keith Bullivant (Oxford: Berg, 1989); Hahn, *Literatur in der Aktion*; Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*; Huber, *Politisierung der Literatur*; R. Hinton Thomas and Keith Bullivant, *Literature in Upheaval: West German Writers and the Challenge of the 1960s* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press & Barnes and Noble: 1974), published also in German as *Westdeutsche Literatur der sechziger Jahre* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1974); Klimke and Scharloth (eds), *1968*; Susanne Komfort-Hein, '"1968": Text-Alltage, auf den Spuren einer Revolte', *Zeitschrift für Germanistik*, n.s., 9 (1999), 674–90 and '*Flaschenposten und kein Ende des Endes'. 1968: Kritische Korrespondenzen um den Nullpunkt von Geschichte und Literatur* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Rombach, 2001); Werner Leise, *Die Literatur und Ästhetik der Studentenbewegung (1967–73)* (Berlin: Papyrus-Druck, 1979); Roman Luckscheiter, *Der postmoderne Impuls: Die Krise der Literatur um 1968 und ihre Überwindung* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001); contributions in Lüdke (ed.), *Nach dem Protest*; Richard W. McCormick, *Politics of the Self: Feminism and the Postmodern in West German Literature and Film* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991); Andrew Plowman, *The Radical Subject: Social Change and the Self in Recent German Autobiography* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998); Ursula Reinhold, *Literatur und Klassenkampf: Entwicklungsprobleme der demokratischen und sozialistischen Literatur in der BRD (1965–1974)* (Berlin: Dietz, 1976).

way representative, if sometimes in extreme or startling ways, of aspects of the textual culture of the protest movements.

Each chapter of this work focuses on a different example, or group of related examples, of such textual politics. These chapters are intended, to a great extent, to stand alone as individual studies of some emblematic texts. This conceptualization reflects the heterogeneity and complexity of these individual cases; and it aims, also, to leave space for an awareness of their fissures and contradictions. Nonetheless, this book argues that the works in question are linked not only by their common origins in protest culture, but also by important shared formal and thematic features. Such common features range from challenges to conventional notions of authorship, genre and even text itself, to gender politics and the Nazi past, and will be explored more fully in the concluding chapter. This sequence of studies also sketches out a somewhat bleak negative teleology developing from around 1966 to late 1968, from the more optimistic politics of the earlier examples discussed to a greater sense of despair in the later works. That sense parallels the ways in which activists became increasingly disillusioned by their inability to effect quick and decisive change in the world, and dystopian changes in protest culture itself. By contrast, the book's final two chapters begin to consider what might follow that development two decades on.

The first chapter of this book offers a new reading of Hans Magnus Enzensberger's 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', which provides a crucial starting-point for a discussion of writing and revolt. On one hand, this essay exemplifies the savage criticism to which traditional literature was exposed by the protest movements; yet on the other, if more implicitly, this complex, intertexual and ironic text demonstrates the continued importance of supposed high literary tradition for anti-authoritarian writing. Against this ambiguous background, Enzensberger theorizes the prospects for writing in a revolutionary culture and provides a new, expanded definition of literature which can take account of the wide sweep of textuality outlined here, and which forms a basis for the individual case studies which follow.

The second chapter analyses a key genre of protest writing, the agit-prop poem. In the 1960s and 1970s, West Germany saw the publication of hundreds of poems protesting against the Vietnam War. Here, one particularly eloquent trope in this poetry, its representation of fighting women, is analysed, with cross-references to related writing about Vietnam in such other genres as journalism and memoir. This exploration is revealing of contemporary

perceptions of Vietnam and its conflicts on one hand, and on the other of women as political subjects and agents, a theme which was by 1968 becoming acute and divisive in the protest movements. However, at a deeper level, this discussion also suggests something further: namely that contemporary writing about Vietnam can also be read symptomatically as a covert way of expressing fears and fantasies about Germany itself, and a (presumably involuntary) re-articulation of some dominant discourses from the 1940s and 1950s about the nation and its past.

Chapter 3 explores the work of KI, which, according to Hans Magnus Enzensberger, was the era's most thoroughgoing example of revolutionary literature. KI was best-known for producing a notorious set of flyers in May 1967 protesting against the Vietnam War. These flyers triggered the unsuccessful prosecution of some KI members for alleged incitement to arson; and this trial and events around it formed one of the most spectacular protest events of 1967–68. This chapter focuses on these flyers and the trial of their purported authors as they appeared in a book authored by the communards themselves, *Klau mich: StPO der Kommune I* [*Nick Me: Kommune I's Code of Criminal Procedure*] (1968), and explores the poetic strategies the communards used in court to undermine its authority. It looks, too, at the ways in which they draw their power from ambiguity, not least in evoking disturbing discourses from the Nazi years.

Chapter 4 focuses on the astonishing oeuvre of the graffiti practitioner Peter Ernst Eiffe. In May 1968, Eiffe covered much of the city of Hamburg in distinctive, enigmatic graffiti. Little is preserved of this work, but the traces which remain for posterity show that it can be read as an emblematic anti-authoritarian text. This chapter analyses examples of Eiffe's work in the light of the writings of the SI, showing how he uses its classic methods of *dérive* and *détournement* to produce a striking critique of advertising, consumerism, urban life and parliamentary politics. And less evidently, this graffiti is permeated with a preoccupation with patriarchal authority in ways which are also characteristic of anti-authoritarian culture.

Chapter 5 analyses an extraordinary case from September 1968 in which a young man, Karl-Heinz Pawla, defecated in a West Berlin courtroom. This act was an unprecedented scandal in German legal history, and horrified witnesses and the general public alike. It becomes less baffling on realizing that the offender was a member of KI and that this event, and its accompanying texts like flyers and slogans, formed part of that group's ongoing campaign to ridicule the judicial system. However, this chapter also shows that Pawla's

act can be read in a number of other aesthetic and theoretical contexts. It is related to the avant-garde performance art projects of Vienna Actionists like Günter Brus, who made use of the body and its functions to challenge authority in outrageous ways. It is also legible in light of the sociologist Norbert Elias's ideas about the process of civilization, which help explain why the late 1960s knew a powerful contemporary discourse on dirt. Furthermore, Pawla's action expresses an anti-authoritarian, Reichian critique of the role of child-rearing and hygiene in Fascist thinking. But while the use of bodily issues and dirt in protest might seem at first sight a challenging strategy, on closer reading it is striking how conservative aspects of Pawla's protest are, in particular in relation to ideas about dirt and gender. In this respect, his protest, like the poems discussed in Chapter 2, provides *inter alia* a window onto the fraught question of sexism in the protest movements.

The sixth chapter focuses on an example of canonical literature, W.G. Sebald's prose narrative *Schwindel. Gefühle.* [*Vertigo*] (1990). This choice of text may seem to be a surprising leap, both temporally and politically, from the texts of 1967–68. *Schwindel. Gefühle.* was published more than twenty years after the heyday of the West German protest movements, Sebald himself was never associated personally with them, and they do not feature in his work. Rather, he is considered to be a classically literary writer, and in the German context this often means an apolitical writer too. However, as a contemporary of many West German protesters, Sebald grew up amidst the same environment and influences. This chapter argues that not only does his work share many of their interests, but can itself be seen as a late manifestation of anti-authoritarian writing. This case is made by means of a comparison between *Vertigo* and Vesper's *Die Reise* [*The Trip*] written in 1969–70 and first published posthumously in 1977. Some remarkable thematic and formal similarities between Sebald's and Vesper's work are considered, and these suggest that anti-authoritarian writing was not purely a transient phenomenon of the 1960s or 1970s. Rather, the example of *Schwindel. Gefühle.* demonstrates that it is the expression of a certain historical and cultural mood which continued (or continues) over decades, and suggests that the crises from which it emerged, rooted in the National Socialist era and the Second World War, remain unresolved. Read in this way, Sebald's writing can be described as a manifestation of repressed topoi and concerns of anti-authoritarianism, which seem both unchanged and yet transformed by their uncanny return in his oeuvre.

Finally, the book's conclusion returns to Hans Magnus Enzensberger's 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' and reflects on the ways in which the texts featured in this study embody its poetics of revolt. This discussion identifies characteristic features of anti-authoritarian textuality, as well as omissions and blind spots in Enzensberger's account. The chapter also reconsiders what Enzensberger may mean by 'neueste Literatur', 'most recent' or contemporary writing, suggesting that the quality of contemporaneity may be defined in ways other than simply with reference to specific dates of publication. To support this argument, the study concludes that Sebald's *Schwindel. Gefühle.* is also contemporary in Enzensberger's alternative definition, an idea supported by a reading of that work's closing pages. That reading will return to the question of the negative teleology outlined above, and what followed it. It also examines very consciously the presence of the past in (West) Germany, a spectre which haunts all the texts under examination here in complex, contradictory and often more latent ways – including the SDS demonstration described at the outset of this chapter, with its disturbingly evocative burning of Springer newspapers.

1. Of Mice and Mao: Hans Magnus Enzensberger's Revolutionary Poetics, 1968

Introduction

In the 1960s, the poet, author, critic, editor and activist Hans Magnus Enzensberger was one of West Germany's most influential literary and political voices, for example as editor of the era's most prominent left-wing intellectual journal, *Kursbuch* [*Railway Timetable*]. His work, biography and personal contacts placed him extraordinarily well to observe both the established and oppositional cultures of the time, and his writings display a remarkable sensitivity towards them. Moreover, Enzensberger played a major role in setting the intellectual tone for the protest movements and, later, their posterity too. Thus, this study opens its account of anti-authoritarian writing with an analysis of Enzensberger's contemporary ideas about literature and revolt. It does so with reference to his seminal essay of late 1968 on literature and politics, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. This piece forms a powerful starting-point for exploring anti-authoritarian writing. It provides on the one hand an emblematic anti-authoritarian critique of culture and literature. On the other, it points to alternative textual forms for revolutionaries and sketches future prospects for their writing.

Enzensberger was already known as a leftist writer in the earlier 1960s, but as the decade progressed, his political positions became radicalized. In 1965, like a number of his peers in the era's pre-eminent literary forum, Gruppe 47, he signed a controversial public statement protesting about the Vietnam War.[1] However, in being, by

1 Inge Aicher-Scholl and others, 'Erklärung über den Krieg in Vietnam', in *Die Gruppe 47. Bericht Kritik Polemik. Ein Handbuch*, ed. by Reinhard Lettau (Neuwied and Berlin: Luchterhand, 1967), 459–62. This declaration first appeared in *konkret* in 1965. See also Gerhard Schoenberner, 'Der Krieg in Vietnam und die Schriftsteller', *werkhefte: zeitschrift für probleme der gesellschaft und katholizismus*, 20

then, unwilling to support the moderate SPD he was also moving further to the left than many in Gruppe 47.[2] Rather, he came to be associated with the nascent protest culture and played a formative role in establishing its most characteristic themes. In 1965, for instance, *Kursbuch*'s second number foregrounded anti-colonial theory and practice, showcasing the work of Fidel Castro and Frantz Fanon.[3] Here, Enzensberger identified the 'internationale[n] Klassenkampf' [international class struggle] between the poor and rich countries of the world as the decade's most important political division.[4] The argument and texts of *Kursbuch* 2 were hugely important for the student movement. Above all, it influenced its increasingly vocal anti-authoritarian strand, which united a search for new approaches to political theory and practice with an internationalist sensibility. Indeed, the left-wing poet and critic Peter Hamm went so far as to claim that *Kursbuch* 2 instigated the West German New Left itself.[5]

In *Kursbuch* 6 in 1966, the prominent Marxist dramatist Peter Weiss asserted that engaged writers must take an incontrovertible political stand, expressing solidarity with colonized or post-colonial subjects.[6] In a rejoinder in the same issue, Enzensberger dismissed what he considered to be Weiss's naïve attitude, advocating instead a position which allowed for scepticism, irony and doubt.[7] However, by 1967, he was calling in print (and in no less a publication than the *Times Literary Supplement*) for revolution;[8] and in 1968, Enzensberger was even, in his biographer Jörg Lau's view, committing himself

(1966), 41–46. While many writers linked to Gruppe 47 did sign the statement, since that group did not have a formal constitution, it is not possible to speak of this document as representing its official position.

2 Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 216.

3 *Kursbuch*, 2 (August 1965).

4 Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger,* 218–19. Lau refers here to Enzensberger's important essay 'Europäische Peripherie' (*Kursbuch*, 2 (1965), 154–71).

5 Hamm, 'Opposition', 255.

6 Peter Weiss, 'Enzensbergers Illusionen', *Kursbuch*, 6 (1966), 165–70.

7 Hans Magnus Enzensberger, 'Peter Weiss und andere', *Kursbuch*, 6 (1966), 171–76. See also Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 232, 246–47; Rüdiger Sareika, *Die dritte Welt in der westdeutschen Literatur der sechziger Jahre* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1980), 131–234; Arlene A. Teraoka, *East, West and Others: The Third World in Postwar German Literature* (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1996), 27–78.

8 See Kraushaar, 'Vexierbild'. The piece from the *Times Literary Supplement* also appears as 'Klare Entscheidungen und trübe Aussichten', in Schickel (ed.), *Über Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 225–32.

to a position akin to Weiss's.[9] Early in the year he resigned from a visiting fellowship at Wesleyan University in Connecticut in protest at US foreign policy in Vietnam and publicly declared his intention to live and work for an extended period in the anti-authoritarians' idealized locus of revolution, Cuba.[10] This step was followed by a period in 1968 in which Enzensberger played a prominent role in anti-authoritarian events and campaigns in the Federal Republic before leaving for Cuba, although that experiment ended in disillusion after only a few months. Thus, Enzensberger was more closely linked to anti-authoritarianism than almost any other contemporary writer.

'Gemeinplätze, die neueste Literatur betreffend', published as it was in late 1968, emerges from the very heart of Enzensberger's most active period of political engagement and in the 1990s Klaus Briegleb called it 'de[n] bis heute berühmteste[n] "68er" Text' [the best-known text from "68", right up to today].[11] This essay's canonical status is due to a number of elements, not least its stylistic brilliance, audacious arguments and memorable expression of ideas central to contemporary debate. But contextual factors have also contributed to its celebrity, including Enzensberger's own prominence and *Kursbuch*'s reputation as a 'bellwether for the vanguard of the intellectual movement' both in the FRG and internationally.[12] The date of the essay's publication, 1968, the year most popularly (if in the West German case, problematically) associated with the revolts, seems to guarantee its authenticity too.[13]

Moreover, Enzensberger diagnoses in 'Gemeinplätze, die neueste Literatur betreffend' a malaise about literature and politics in the face of the contemporary political mood. Writers and readers are feeling 'Unbehagen, Ungeduld und Unlust' [unease, impatience and reluctance] (188) as they realize that even literature is subject to the laws of the market. Consequently, he says, young intellectuals are rejecting conventional literature and looking to engage more meaningfully with (political) experience. In addition, since it is no longer possible to ascribe a social function to literary artworks, '[d]araus folgt, daß sich auch keine brauchbaren Kriterien zu ihrer Beurteilung finden lassen. […] [E]s [gibt] keinen Schiedsspruch über die Literatur' [[i]t follows, too, that no viable criteria are available for

9 See Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 232, 246–47.

10 Kraushaar, 'Vexierbild'; Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 227–65.

11 Briegleb, *1968*, 248.

12 Vibeke Rützow-Petersen, *Kursbuch 1965–1975. Social and Literary Perspectives of West Germany* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), 189.

13 See, for example, Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*, 257–59.

evaluating them either. […] [T]here is no verdict on literature] (195): that is, the traditional standards of literary criticism no longer obtain. In this climate of artistic and critical uncertainty, Enzensberger notes, with irony: 'Nach Gewißheit verlangt es die meisten' [Most people are in need of certainty] (187). Such unsettled readers may well look for a reassuringly clear programme for radical literature. At first sight, at least, Enzensberger's essay seems to provide one and this sense seems to have added to its appeal. However, as Briegleb points out in an important, unusual reading which identifies and highlights the essay's subversive literary mission, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is 'ein ironisches Teufelswerk […] mißverstanden bis aufs Skelett' [an ironic work of the devil […] misunderstood to the core].[14] On closer reading, it provides no easy prescriptions for writing and offers more challenges than answers.

This chapter's objective is therefore to provide a new interpretation of Enzensberger's poetics of 1968 as a way into identifying and understanding the textuality of revolt more broadly. It does so, first, by presenting 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' and arguing that it is thoroughly anti-authoritarian. Second, it explores the essay's critique of traditional literature which epitomizes much of the movement's thinking about the arts. Third, this chapter considers Enzensberger's recommendations for revolutionary literature. Scholarship on 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' often concentrates on identifying what type or genre of writing it advocates for engaged writers. However, it will be argued that while Enzensberger may seem at first sight to recommend operative, expressly political texts, in fact he rejects any insistence on particular genres in favour of a new image of political literature as multi-generic, mobile and heteroglossic. As Briegleb stresses, Enzensberger's essay also makes frequent reference to traditional literature, especially Modernist, avant-garde antecedents. However, Enzensberger provides no explicit arguments as to how different types of writing might relate to one another in his anti-authoritarian poetics, and so their possible connections will be discussed here. Fourth, this chapter considers the roles of uncertainty, contradiction and irony in the essay, all of which render its messages challenging, equivocal, even illegible. Fifth, the essay is challenging, too, because of its proximity to controversial political praxis. Changed images will emerge from this discussion: of Enzensberger's ideas about literature and protest on one hand; and of anti-authoritarian writing on the other, which proves to be far more prolific, and more poetic too, than has generally

14 Briegleb, *1968*, 248.

been believed. Thus, this chapter fleshes out the contemporary critic Reinhard Baumgart's perceptive, but to-date much under-explored contention that the protest movements themselves were 'literarisch fast bis auf die Knochen' [literary almost to the bone].[15]

'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'

'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' consists of some eleven pages, starting with an epigraph from Franz Kafka's last published story, 'Josefine die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse' [Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk] (1924). Like Enzensberger's essay, this text thematizes the problematic relationship of the artist to society. Kafka's story is set in the world of mice, a complex society with established rules and customs. An anonymous mouse narrator describes Josefine, the community's star singer. While her performances are powerful, he recognizes too that they seem to be no more than the everyday 'Pfeifen' [whistling] of all mice. The narrator debates Josefine's puzzling success and concomitant diva-like behaviour, which culminates in a demand to be freed from all other work in order to dedicate herself to her art. When the community refuses that request, Josefine disappears, in a move which the narrator says will be the end of her. He reflects on the meaning and posterity of art, and predicts that Josefine will soon be forgotten.[16]

The main body of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is divided into eight loosely-linked, discursive sections with allusive, humorous or ironic titles. The first, '*Pompes funèbres*' [*Undertakers*], provides a satirical description of the contemporary, sensational public debate about the supposed death of literature. The common belief that Enzensberger is declaring the death of literature originates in part with this passage. But Enzensberger's choice of title for this section, like others in this essay too, is curious, even disconcerting. Here, the French term 'pompes funèbres', not commonly used in German, is an early warning that this essay will deal in the unexpected. In fact, this part of the essay is making fun of the endless contemporary debates on that very question, which were in Enzensberger's eyes a symptom of the defective political life of West

15 Quoted in Briegleb, *1968*, 22, where the important case is made that anti-authoritarianism had a deeply literary sensibility.

16 Enzensberger's ongoing fascination with this story may be reflected in his recent novella *Josefine und ich* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2006), which features an ageing, vain (human) singer who also disappears mysteriously.

Germany.[17] He proposes in his essay to look meaningfully instead at the more significant issues that underpin those debates. The essay's second section, entitled '*Bedenkfrist*' [*A Period for Reflection*], traces the cultural history of the metaphor of the death of literature, which belongs to literary Modernism and dates back at least a hundred years. It also notes with approval the apparent unwillingness of young intellectuals to engage with traditional literature and their preference for factual writing. The third section, '*Lokalblatt*' [*Local Paper*], addresses critically the role of literature in the post-war Federal Republic; while the fourth, '*Die alten Fragen, die alten Antworten*' [*The Old Questions, The Old Answers*] reflects on the longstanding problem and apparent impossibility of trying to reconcile literature and politics. Sections 5 and 6, '*Allesfresser*' [*Omnivore*] and '*Für Garderobe wird nicht gehaftet*' [*We Accept No Responsibility for Your Cloaks*], comment on the consciousness industry (that is, the media and publishing) and reasons why literature today can have no proven value for revolution. However, the seventh section, '*Ja das Schreiben und das Lesen*' [*Yes Reading and Writing*] gives an indication of what, in Enzensberger's view, revolutionary writers may still be able to produce which is of political value and cites some contemporary instances of such writing. It also describes some characteristics of what Enzensberger envisages as a future, more revolutionary textuality. The eighth and final section is cryptically entitled '*Kalenderspruch*' [*Calendar Motto*], and consists of just a short, unattributed quotation, 'In Türangeln gibt es keine Holzwürmer' [There is no woodworm in the hinges of a door]. This quotation seems mysterious, but as the following section will show, it is in fact highly eloquent about the anti-authoritarian essence of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', as well as its ironies and ambiguities.

An Anti-Authoritarian Text

'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' resonates deeply with anti-authoritarian thinking. For example, just as anti-authoritarians were interested in revolution rather than reform, Enzensberger promotes not the comparatively moderate idea of protest writing, but the far-reaching notion of the revolutionary text. In anti-authoritarian style, his critique and terminology often echo the Frankfurt School and Critical Theory, as in his use of the characteristic term 'Bewußtseinsindustrie' [consciousness

17 See Franz Dietschreit and Barbara Heinze-Dietschreit, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986), 69; Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 270.

industry]. This term suggests that the media and publishing industries produce not only books and other printed commodities, but the very consciousness and thoughts which readers are tricked into believing are their own.[18] Therefore, Enzensberger's essay is interested in culture as a key political battleground. Consequently, his challenge to the consciousness industry does not consist in such traditional political methods as analysing its economic structures or organizing its workforce politically.[19] Rather, like contemporary anti-authoritarians, he is interested in symbolic and psychological forms of opposition as well as non-institutional measures: here, using writing itself to undercut the consciousness industry's power.

Enzensberger dismisses the art of the Soviet Union and says it is in no way revolutionary. This disinterest in Eastern Bloc Communism (or in this case, more specifically, its culture) is characteristic of West German anti-authoritarians. Instead, they were intensely interested in anti-colonial and anti-capitalist revolutions in the so-called Third World as models for praxis in Europe.[20] This theme is not worked out on a manifest level in the essay, but three factors demonstrate its importance. First, the general context of *Kursbuch*, strongly identified as it was with writing about international liberation struggles, evokes this dimension.[21] *Kursbuch* 15 itself includes not only literary writing and criticism, but non-literary texts from revolutionary Cuba and China. Second, four of the five specific West German examples Enzensberger provides of politically meaningful contemporary writing address anti-colonial revolution, either partially or fully. Third, internationalist thinking is present in two explicit allusions to

18 See, for example, Marcuse, 'Repressive Tolerance'. Ingrid Eggers comments on the relevance of Marcuse's ideas for this concept in Enzensberger's essay (Ingrid Eggers, *Veränderungen des Literaturbegriffs im Werk von Hans Magnus Enzensberger* (Frankfurt a.M. etc: Peter Lang, 1981), 96–97). Komfort-Hein relates Enzensberger's ideas to those of Adorno and Critical Theory on culture and the consciousness industry in *'Flaschenposten'*, 138–51.

19 Nonetheless, Enzensberger was also interested in democratizing, institutional changes to the publishing industry at this time (see Kraushaar, 'Vexierbild', 54).

20 See Ingo Juchler, *Die Studentenbewegungen in den Vereinigten Staaten und der Bundesrepublik Deutschland der sechziger Jahre* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1996) and *Rebellische Subjektivität und Internationalismus* (Marburg: Verlag Arbeiterbewegung und Geschichtswissenschaft, 1989).

21 As well as the celebrated *Kursbuch* 2, other issues, for example 9 (June 1967), with its focus on Vietnam, featured international, anti-colonial and anti-capitalist struggle. *Kursbuch* 9 included contributions by such prominent authors as Noam Chomsky, Martin Walser and Uwe Johnson.

writing directly from 'Third-World' revolutionary locations. In the essay's fourth section, Enzensberger asserts that a genuine agit-prop literature cannot be produced in Europe but he also quotes a letter from the French philosopher and author Régis Debray which seems to hold out hope for such writing when it originates elsewhere. Debray describes an ideal textuality which conveys '"Fetzen und Schreie, […] die Summe aller Aktionen, von denen solche Werke Nachricht geben […] unentbehrliche und einfache Berichte, Lieder für den Marsch, Hilferufe und Losungen für den Tag"' ["Scraps and screams [...] the sum total of all actions reported by such works [...] indispensible and simple reports, songs for the march, cries for help and slogans for the day"] (192).[22] This kind of work is characterized by its sheer immediacy and inseparability from the political context which produced it – which, Enzensberger implies, is attainable only in the revolutionary, decolonizing world.

While Enzensberger says only that Debray's letter was sent from Bolivia, well-informed contemporary readers would have known that in 1968 Debray was in prison in Bolivia for having been part of the Latin American revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara's failed revolutionary force in that country. This context therefore creates an association with the glamour of the iconic figure of Guevara, the anti-authoritarians' hero, himself. Since Debray's comment is said to have been made in a letter (a characteristically anti-authoritarian form, in its non-commercial, highly subjective nature), and no further details are supplied, the impression arises that this is a personal communication to Enzensberger himself. Thus, it seems that Enzensberger is in direct, personal communication with Latin American revolutionaries. The reader is hence reminded, indirectly, of Enzensberger's own, well-publicized contemporary aim of taking action in Guevara's Cuba in 1968, a context which boosts his anti-authoritarian credibility.

The essay's closing '*Kalenderspruch*', 'In Türangeln gibt es keine Holzwürmer' also emerges from a revolution beyond Europe. The term 'Kalenderspruch' denotes a traditional motto of the day in a calendar, implying a proverbial familiarity. Readers unfamiliar with anti-authoritarian theory will be unable to read much into this saying, which is not part of German tradition, and may be mystified by it. However, initiated readers will know that this 'Spruch' [motto] is not originally German. Rather, it is taken from Mao Zedong's Little Red Book, or *Worte des Vorsitzenden Mao Tse-Tung* [*Quotations from Chairman Mao Tse-tung*], a collection of extracts from Mao's writings which was a cult text for anti-authoritarians who idealized

22 Enzensberger provides no date or place for the letter.

the Chinese Revolution.[23] Mao identifies this axiom as a Chinese proverb meaning that staying mobile prevents decay. In so doing, he attributes it to the non-individuated wisdom of the people, which is often viewed as bearing more authority than any individual writer (as evidenced in the privileged status German cultural tradition ascribes, for example, to supposed folk tales). Here, Mao uses the saying as an analogy to the permanent processes of criticism and self-criticism which will keep the Communist party vital.

So, for the reader who knows Mao's writings, this citation highlights important, implicit parallels between 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' and ideas from the Little Red Book. For example, both Mao and Enzensberger on the one hand identify all aesthetic criteria as being primarily ideological, but on the other they reject art created purely for agit-prop purposes. And Enzensberger's citation of Mao, like his reference to Debray, forms an aesthetic variation on anti-authoritarian fantasies about exemplary 'Third-World' revolution. These fantasies correlate with a belief in non-alienated, genuinely demotic communication, like the forms enumerated in Debray's letter, or the oral wisdom of the Chinese people. The allusions to Debray and Mao resonate with anti-authoritarianism in other ways too. As a philosopher, fighter and political prisoner, the figure of Debray not only links Enzensberger's essay to the anti-authoritarians' increasing insistence on action. He also embodies their ideal of the revolutionary subject who merges intellect, theory and practice.

And in a formal sense, the citation of the Little Red Book mimics anti-authoritarian political strategies. Readers who recognize the anonymous quotation will be drawn into a select audience which, once aware of the allusion to Mao, will be able to identify the clear, yet implicit, anti-authoritarian cast of the essay as a whole and other echoes of Mao's thinking within it. But by contrast, readers who cannot identify the quotation will be mystified by it and excluded from all the associations it invokes. So, to end the essay with this quotation is, in symbolic terms, as divisive as anti-authoritarian adherence to extreme and controversial 'Chinese' political thought. The essay's use of a Maoist precept in order to appeal to a limited in-group of readers thus chimes with anti-authoritarian thinking, which had little interest in coalitions and inclusiveness and was committed

23 For example, Mao Tse-Tung, *Worte des Vorsitzenden Mao Tse-Tung* (Peking: Verlag für fremdsprachige Literatur, 1967), 307. This particular edition gives a different translation of Mao's dictum.

instead to the idea of a small vanguard group driving political practice forward through provocative conflict.

A Critique of Literature

Given these characteristics, it is unsurprising that 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' provides a characteristically anti-authoritarian critique of literature. It identifies six interrelated reasons why fine writing in a traditional sense has no proven value for revolutionary politics. First, Enzensberger argues that despite the nineteenth-century revolutionary origins of modern literature, today, at least in Europe, it is inherently bourgeois, even where it strives not to be, as in the cases of Soviet literature, avant-gardist art in the Surrealist mould or agit-prop writing which seeks unconvincingly to speak directly to the masses. Second, in the capitalist world literature is always a commodity. It boosts the profits of the consciousness industry, which serves only its own interests and those of capitalism more broadly. Third, the consciousness industry, an 'Allesfresser' [omnivore], seamlessly assimilates and recuperates any challenging or critical potential in art, for example through advertising. Enzensberger underlines this point by quoting, apparently verbatim and in full, an advertisement presumably taken from the contemporary press, headed 'Revolutionär – was gehört eigentlich dazu?' [What does it really take to be revolutionary?]. While this headline seems to evoke the contemporary furore about the protest movements, the body of the advertisement reveals itself to be recruiting for a financial enterprise, the 'Chase-Gruppe' [Chase Group].[24] The 'Chase-Gruppe', Enzensberger implies, is merely and cynically using the lexis of revolution to attract attention for its own capitalist ends.

Fourth, Enzensberger is critical of the way conventional literature relies on the ideas of the individual author and the book. While he does not spell out the reasons for this objection, anti-authoritarianism would see such thinking as elitist and anti-democratic. It would also argue that it fosters the fetishization of the writer and the monolithic work as culturally prestigious artefacts and figures, rather than interrogating them critically. Thus, emphasis on the author and the book maintains traditions of symbolic authority, and hence the cultural and political status quo. Therefore, it distracts writers and readers from more important, political issues, both in writing and

24 This organization was, presumably, the US bank known in the 1960s as the Chase Manhattan Bank and today as J.P. Morgan Chase Bank.

the wider world. Fifth, traditional literature enforces a division between theory and practice which was, again, anathema to anti-authoritarians who were motivated to bring them together.

Sixth, Enzensberger adds a commentary on the particular role of literature in the post-war Federal Republic. In West Germany, he says, literature has played a restorative role in covering over the National Socialist past and its problematic aftermath, in which he believed far too little had changed. The production of high-profile literature like Günter Grass's novel *Die Blechtrommel* [*The Tin Drum*] (1959) suggests, misleadingly, that West Germany has moved on from its Fascist past, and serves as a substitute for a genuine political life. As a result, literature has developed a grossly inflated, unsustainable (self-)image as the most meaningful political forum of the day, and mainstream authors are accorded a public status which far exceeds their real, and negligible, political influence. This argument seems to explain the relevance to Enzensberger's essay of its epigraph from Kafka's story 'Josefine die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse'. Josefine, with her limited talents, disproportionate celebrity and corresponding delusions about her own importance seems to offer a parallel to over-valued West German literati, whose status masks the real repressive tolerance of their society.

'ein Moment, und wärs das winzigste, von Zukunft': Prospects for Writing

This critique of literature and publishing is so comprehensive that it seems to allow little or no space for writing to change anything at all. It is for this reason too that 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is commonly associated with the idea of a wholesale rejection of literature. This view indeed tallies with a certain strand in anti-authoritarian thinking which did claim to reject all literature, and with perceptions of Enzensberger's own work at the time too. In 1968, Hamm praised him enthusiastically for giving up 'die Produktion von Rauschmitteln' [the production of intoxicants], that is to say, poetry.[25] Seemingly in corroboration of this view, when 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' was published, Enzensberger's latest volume of poems, *blindenschrift* [*braille*] had been published as far back as 1964.

But while thinking like Hamm's does constitute an important position in the anti-authoritarian approach to writing, it is by no

25 Hamm, 'Opposition', 254.

means its only response to literature. And Enzensberger's thinking about writing around 1968, too, was far more complex than Hamm's judgement suggests. In fact, Enzensberger did not stop writing and publishing poetry at all in the 1960s.[26] Neither does 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' call for the end of literature. Enzensberger later remarked of his essay and its less perceptive critics: 'Die Armen können mir richtig leid tun, wie sie davor erschrocken sind. Im übrigen konnten die Leute, die sich da betroffen fühlten, nicht einmal richtig lesen. Was ich damals behauptet habe, war etwas ganz anderes' [I feel really sorry for those poor people and how it frightened them. Incidentally, as for those who felt that I was addressing them, they couldn't even read properly. What I was saying back then was something else altogether].[27] And he has noted elsewhere:

> In Wirklichkeit handelte der Aufsatz von einer ganz anderen Frage, nämlich davon, daß die meisten Schriftsteller, wie andere Leute auch, das Bedürfnis haben, gesellschaftlich sinnvolle Sachen zu produzieren, daß aber für rein literarische Produktionen ein solcher gesellschaftlicher Sinn sich nicht mehr nachweisen läßt.
>
> [In reality, the essay dealt with a completely different issue, namely that most writers, like other people too, feel a need to produce socially meaningful things, but that in the case of purely literary productions, such social meaning can no longer be proven].[28]

Thus, as Lau points out, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is not a rejection of literature at all, but rather an assertion of its problematic nature. In supposedly revolutionary times, its purpose has become elusive, and its ability to support real social change equivocal. Enzensberger argues that literature exists 'nur noch auf Verdacht hin, […] es [ist] prinzipiell nicht auszumachen, ob im Schreiben noch ein Moment, und wärs das winzigste, von Zukunft steckt' [only on spec, [...] there is basically no way of telling whether writing still harbours any moment, even the tiniest, of future] (195). So, for the engaged writer to produce literature is to take a risk, for there is no guarantee that such work will be politically meaningful. With the publication of such a complex and ambiguous work as 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', Enzensberger was

26 Charlotte Ann Melin, *Poetic Maneuvers: Hans Magnus Enzensberger and the Lyric Genre* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2003), 84.

27 Quoted in Dietschreit and Heinze-Dietschreit, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 71.

28 Quoted in Ralf Schnell, *Die Literatur der Bundesrepublik: Autoren, Geschichte, Literaturbetrieb* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986), 248.

taking just such a risk himself – and one which suggests that he had not written literature off altogether.

A Documentary Manifesto?

Enzensberger's critique of literature fills most of his essay, and he devotes only a page of manifest argument to the prospects for writers who are dissatisfied with the knowledge that to write literature in a conventional sense is to risk political irrelevance. The brevity of this discussion seems to reflect the limited scope Enzensberger allows for such a truly radical literature. All the same, he invites contemporary engaged writers to model their work on that of the radical journalist and critic [Ludwig] Börne (1786–1837) and Rosa Luxemburg (1871–1919), who was *inter alia* a writer of political theory and other texts. Contemporary examples of politically valuable writing in Enzensberger's view include the undercover reports of Günter Wallraff on conditions in West German factories.[29] Another instance is the Iranian author Bahman Nirumand's *Persien – Modell eines Entwicklungslandes oder Die Diktatur der Freien Welt* [*Iran: The New Imperialism in Action*] (1967), to which Enzensberger himself contributed an afterword.[30] Enzensberger also cites the campaigning journalism of [Ulrike] Meinhoff [*sic*] and 'Georg Alsheimers Bericht aus Vietnam' [Georg Alsheimer's report from Vietnam].[31] This latter reference is to a memoir called *Vietnamesische Lehrjahre: Sechs Jahre als deutscher Arzt in Vietnam* [*My Apprentice Years in Vietnam: Six Years as a German Doctor in Vietnam*] (1968) written under a pseudonym, Georg W. Alsheimer, by Erich Wulff, later to become a prominent reformer of psychiatry.[32] Thus, Enzensberger advocates non-fiction writing

29 E.g. H. Günter Wallraff, '*Wir brauchen Dich*': *Als Arbeiter in deutschen Industriebetrieben* (Munich: Rütten + Loenig, 1966). Wallraff also published extensively in journalistic form.

30 Bahman Nirumand, *Persien: Modell eines Entwicklungslandes oder Die Diktatur der Freien Welt* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1967). This book was later criticized for factual inaccuracies. See, for example, anon., 'Gewalt auf dem Campus. Das Persien-Bild des Bahman Nirumand', *Der Spiegel*, 23 October 1967, 132.

31 Most prominently, Meinhof published regular columns in the left-wing news magazine *konkret*, collected, for example, in Ulrike Marie Meinhof, *Die Würde des Menschen ist antastbar: Aufsätze und Polemiken* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1980); *Deutschland Deutschland unter anderem: Aufsätze und Polemiken* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 1995).

32 Georg W. Alsheimer, *Vietnamesische Lehrjahre: Sechs Jahre als deutscher Arzt in Vietnam* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1968).

which reflects and analyses social reality, although none of the texts he mentions sets out to be politically neutral. Rather, they all express strong anti-authoritarian positions.

The short passage in '*Ja das Schreiben und das Lesen*' which praises the work of Börne, Luxemburg, Wallraff, Nirumand, Meinhof and Alsheimer has been definitive for the posterity of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. It is here that another prevalent critical idea about this essay, namely that it is advocating only documentary writing, originates. Generally, the term documentary is used in scholarship with regard to the literature of the 1960s and 1970s to mean primarily supposedly factual, if not necessarily impersonal or objective writing which draws, often verbatim, on non-literary textual and other sources. It aims to appeal to a wide audience and to overcome problems inherent in more traditional literary forms, such as the aestheticization of suffering or the mystification of historical truth. Documentary writing was coming strongly into vogue by 1968 and remained so into the 1970s. It is therefore indelibly associated with the protest movements, becoming, as Keith Bullivant puts it, 'the outstanding literary form at the turn of the decade'.[33]

This description, applied very flexibly, could cover the work of Wallraff, Nirumand, Meinhof and Alsheimer, and even Börne and Luxemburg. However, the simple idea that 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' recommends only documentary literature is reductive in not recognizing either the significant differences between these texts to which it refers, or the essay's more complex arguments. Such views risk underestimating the richness and sophistication of some documentary writing, including Enzensberger's own, for example, his slightly later account of the Spanish Civil War, *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* [*The Short Summer of Anarchy*] (1972). Furthermore, this interpretation is in itself a politically and culturally domesticating one. Documentary writing, especially where it is politically motivated, is often thought to lack the aesthetic and philosophical complexity which, historically, German culture likes to associate with valuable art. Therefore, an emphasis on documentary as the dominant feature of protest writing fosters the conservative belief that the movements did not produce work of any importance. Nonetheless, documentary literature does constitute a familiar, established genre, with a history and a canon of sorts. To identify Enzensberger's essay with documentary alone is therefore

33 Bullivant, *Realism Today*, 44. On documentary literature, see also Gundel Mattenklott, 'Literatur von unten – die andere Kultur', in Briegleb and Weigel (eds), *Gegenwartsliteratur seit 1968*, 152–81.

to present an unthreatening image of protest writing which on the one hand belongs to a clearly identifiable and hence culturally stable genre, but on the other has nothing particularly valuable to say.

Enzensberger points out in '*Ja das Schreiben und das Lesen*' that the revolutionary potential even of such works is severely limited by the constraints of the consciousness industry and the conventions of bourgeois culture. Therefore, he says, writers who seek clear political commitment in their work need to find other, new and fundamentally different concepts of textual form, authorship and readership. An example of such an alternative form, according to Enzensberger, is 'die Arbeit Fritz Teufels' [the work of Fritz Teufel]. Teufel was a founder member of the notorious, anarchic West Berlin collective KI, which from 1967 on fused shocking public statements with home-produced, provocative written texts and action, culminating in a series of scandalous trials. The utterances of KI fall well beyond the traditional documentary genre, for they lack the narrative and reasoning components usually associated with it. Instead, they combine text with non-narrative moments like fancy dress, mockery and theatricality, and make challenging use of performance and humour. And they are less interested in conveying information than in provoking powerful emotional and political reactions, which they often achieved with spectacular public effect. Here, then, Enzensberger is alluding to a tradition of dangerous ephemera which was definitive for anti-authoritarian culture, and holds it up as a model for future works.

'*Ja das Schreiben und das Lesen*' therefore references a far wider range of writing than contemporary documentary alone. This spectrum extends from historical texts (Börne and Luxemburg) to Meinhof's polemic and KI's *bons mots*, disposable flyers and complexes of word and action which defy any conventional generic classification. Rather, what Enzensberger's examples of revolutionary writing share above all is a commitment to communicative impact. Thus, a more apposite term than documentary for the kinds of writing promoted by this section of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' could be operative literature, for all its examples share a desire to intervene in political life. Enzensberger makes clear, too, that he considers the kind of collective, anarchic text associated with Teufel's name to be a more important challenge to traditional writing than that represented by the more familiar, culturally legible and hence more easily neutralized work of Wallraff et al. Thus, such texts as KI's, which are paradoxically under-illuminated, indeed barely mentioned, in

'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' may, on that essay's arguments, hold the real key to a future revolutionary writing.

The Return of Literature and the End of Genre

Yet unexpectedly, given the extensive critique in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' of traditional literature, and its endorsement of operative texts, it also engages with more conventionally aesthetic writing and its devices, by means of context, style and allusion. In 1967–68, *Kursbuch* contained many literary texts, and number 15, in addition to 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' and texts about Cuba and China, featured such work prominently. It includes literary essays, prose by Samuel Beckett and poetry by Ingeborg Bachmann, Arnfrid Astel and Friedrich Christian Delius. Thus, Enzensberger's essay is deeply and knowingly embedded in an explicitly literary setting. The essay itself displays copious irony, comedy, playfulness, extravagant imagery, self-conscious erudition, contradiction and rhetorical flourishes; or, in other words, traditional attributes of literary style.[34] It is (in part) for this reason that Briegleb describes it compellingly as both a secret refuge and a discreet means of expression for 'Poesie' [poetry] around 1968.[35] Indeed, on this account, to use a favourite anti-authoritarian analogy which resonates powerfully with the imagery of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', the way literature operates covertly within it can be likened to the way the guerrilla fighter operates undercover, and highly effectively, unseen amongst the general population.

Crucially, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is rich in intertextual allusion, from its very title onwards. This title echoes that of a democratizing, polemical, Enlightenment-era journal about emerging German literature, namely *Briefe, die neueste Literatur betreffend* [*Letters on Contemporary Literature*] (1759–65), edited by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, Friedrich Nicolai and Moses Mendelssohn. This reference connects with an Enlightenment literary tradition which brings together literacy, education and morality. It resonates

34 On the essay's rhetorical devices and the related notion of the 'commonplace', see Walter Hinderer, '*Ecce poeta rhetor*: Vorgreifliche Bemerkungen in Hans Magnus Enzensbergers Poesie und Prosa', in *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, ed. by Reinhold Grimm (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1984), 189–203 (196–97); on its comedy and irony, see Dietschreit and Heinze-Dietschreit, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 69; Lau, *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*, 272–73.

35 Briegleb, *1968*, 162.

powerfully in the present, too, with Enzensberger's aspirations for what he calls, in the seventh section of his essay, 'die politische Alphabetisierung Deutschlands' [the process of making Germany politically literate], a turn of phrase which apparently references a Kantian educative process led by reasoning individuals.[36] But the literature Enzensberger evokes most frequently of all is Modernist, beginning with his epigraph from Kafka and continuing through his discussion of Surrealism. According to Briegleb, Enzensberger is showing, by means of such references, that a subversive aesthetic persists in some of the era's most experimental literature and is recognizing it in, and reclaiming it for new, revolutionary writing.

However, nowhere in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' does Enzensberger make such arguments explicit. Rather, the essay's manifest recommendations for revolutionary writing focus only on operative literature. Therefore, the significance of its references to more traditionally literary writing and, importantly, the relationship in anti-authoritarian textuality of such works to operative writing remain unexplained. Reading between the lines, one might conclude that for Enzensberger revolutionary textual practice exists in a counterpoint or dialectic between these poles of writing, as exhibited for example in the generic diversity of *Kursbuch* itself. Announcing this approach, the journal's very title, understood programmatically, references operative texts with a practical purpose, railway timetables, and incorporates them into the literary and intellectual world. In line with this project, *Kursbuch* 15 could be said to present a mix of experimental and operative literature in which texts are suddenly placed in new contexts and so speak in new ways.

But it is perhaps nearer to the mark to suggest that 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is above all interested in eroding distinctions between such supposedly different kinds of writing. At least three arguments support this idea. First, the characteristics of the operative texts mentioned in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', and others which can reasonably be associated with them, like those on the pages of Meinhof's magazine *konkret* [*concrete*], such as contemporary anti-colonial polemic or anti-authoritarian ephemera, for instance, are formally extremely diverse. They display, among other features, arresting formats and graphic design, illustration, photography, insights from psychoanalysis, deeply personal narrative, dialogue, historiography, humour and comedy,

36 See, for example, Immanuel Kant's influential essay 'Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?' (1784).

sexual fantasy, myth, literary citation, political theory, parody, textual and visual montage, documentary, allegory, philosophy and satire. These features are generally deployed in order to underline the texts' thematic and communicative impact. But they also generate a strikingly heterogeneous, vibrant, articulate and complex field of discourse, with attributes commonly linked with supposedly more artistic texts. Thus, making clear formal distinctions between them becomes problematic.

Second, Enzensberger's ideal poetics, set out in '*Ja das Schreiben und das Lesen*', significantly downplays the significance of genre. He writes that:

> Die politische Alphabetisierung Deutschlands [...] hätte selbstverständlich [...] mit der Alphabetisierung der Alphabetisierer zu beginnen. Schon dies ist ein langwieriger und mühseliger Prozeß. Ferner beruht jedes solche Vorhaben auf dem Prinzip der Gegenseitigkeit. Es eignet sich dafür nur, wer fortwährend von jenen lernt, die von ihm lernen. Statt blöder Rezensionen [...] erfährt er nun Korrekturen, Widerstände, Beschimpfungen, Gegenbeweise, mit einem Wort: Folgen. (197)
>
> [The process of making Germany politically literate [...] would have to start of course [...] with making the teachers of literacy literate. Even this is a drawn-out and arduous process. Furthermore, any such undertaking depends on the principle of reciprocity. Only a person who learns continuously from those who learn from him is suited to it. Instead of silly reviews [...] he is now presented with corrections, resistance, insults, counter-evidence – in a word: consequences.]

On this account, the most important quality of revolutionary writing is dialogue between texts, readers and writers. Such writing is democratic and fluid, and draws in opposing as well as sympathetic voices. Within it, writers and readers learn from collective, self-reflexive and potentially unending processes of writing, reading, debate and re-writing, as for example in *Kursbuch* with its culture of debate amongst its contributors, like that between Weiss and Enzensberger in 1966. These processes recall the rejuvenating self-criticism propagated by Mao and to which Enzensberger indirectly refers at the end of his essay. They can even take place within one text: for example, the way 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is framed between quotations from Kafka and Mao begins an unprecedented conversation between them. In this exchange, Mao's statement serves as a corrective to Josefine's elitist, apparently self-destructive ideas about art. And in another example, where Enzensberger incorporates the Chase Group's advertisement,

the idiom of revolt is, to an extent, reclaimed from the consciousness industry. This move exemplifies the 'Korrekturen' [corrections] and 'Widerstände' [resistance] he demands.

This notion of an interactive 'Gegenseitigkeit' [reciprocity] fulfils Enzensberger's aim of decentring the author and the book, breaking down as it does traditional barriers between writers and works by bringing them into debate with each other. Likewise, it undermines the importance of genre as a way of separating different works off from one another, for it pays no attention to the formal differences between them. Therefore, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is less interested in specifying (a) suitable genre/s for revolutionary writing than it is in prioritizing a poetics based on communicative impact and critical dialogue, potentially between all sorts of texts.

Third, this kind of writing has a strongly dialogical or heteroglossic character, to use terms coined by Mikhail Bakhtin, who saw writing in modernity as being characterized by the interplay in one text of many voices.[37] On this account, anti-authoritarian writing, whatever its genre, resonates powerfully with the techniques of modern literature in a narrower sense. Furthermore, Enzensberger's emphasis in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' on earlier literary traditions serves as an implicit reminder that documentary writing is itself a partially forgotten Modernist style, evoking as it does the experiments of Erwin Piscator or Ernst Toller.[38] Indeed, one is subtly alerted here to the fact that even some of the apparently most anti-literary writing emerging around 1968 can be understood as having aesthetic features or roots. So too can anti-authoritarian political practices: Briegleb refers to the events of the time, at least up to the watershed date of 2 June 1967, when a peaceful demonstrator called Benno Ohnesorg was shot dead in West Berlin by a plain-clothes police officer, as a 'weithin surrealistisch praktizierend[e] Revolte' [revolt which was largely Surrealist in its practice].[39] This formulation draws attention to the ways in which the West German anti-authoritarian movement, especially in its earlier phases before Marxist orthodoxies set in, was in part a late perpetuation of Surrealist and other Modernist projects. This aspect of anti-authoritarianism is vividly illustrated by the case of KI, which stands in a direct line of descent from Dada and

37 See, for example, Sue Vice, *Introducing Bakhtin* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 18–148.

38 Bullivant, *Realism Today*, 17–64; Hinton Thomas and Bullivant, *Literature in Upheaval*, 92.

39 Briegleb, *1968*, 40.

Surrealism, via its more immediate forerunner groups Subversive Aktion and the Situationist International (SI), and deploys aspects of their thinking and practice.[40] On this account, in the 1960s, the vital aesthetic and political impulses of Surrealism survive underground and largely unrecognized, in marginalized, experimental artistic forms, in unconventional political activism like KI's or even in Enzensberger's supposedly anti-aesthetic essay itself.

The idea of the covert survival of the poetic avant-garde in the 1960s points towards a further, and different, possible reading of the epigraph from 'Josefine die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse'. In Kafka's story, the judgmental narrator fails to understand Josefine's work. The same can be said of the reception of much Modernist art in the twentieth century, especially in its most challenging manifestations such as Dada; and certainly of the practical, creative aesthetics of anti-authoritarianism which its contemporaries failed to grasp. By the end of Kafka's tale, Josefine seems to have been driven out by the demands of mouse society, represented by the unsympathetic narrator, which does not recognize her true genius. However, the unspoken possibility remains open that she continues to practise her art elsewhere, invisibly but powerfully, away from the gaze of society. Perhaps, Enzensberger may be suggesting, the same can be said in the present day of some of the avant-garde impulses his essay channels.

In 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', therefore, Enzensberger is decisively moving away from the customary perception that operative and literary writing are separate genres. He highlights instead their commonalities and common origins; and draws special attention to modes of writing like KI's in which supposedly political and artistic modes of writing meet. Thus, he hints that avant-garde aesthetics permeate anti-authoritarianism's most distinctive works. Implicitly, therefore, Enzensberger is putting forward a deceptively ambitious, vastly expanded re-definition of literature which proves to include all kinds of supposedly non-artistic anti-authoritarian texts. Seen in this way, the protest movements are anything but the cultural void they are traditionally supposed to be.

Commonplace and Irony

However, any conclusions one may draw from 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' are at best equivocal. This essay is an essentially ironic piece of writing in which important arguments are

40 See, for example, Juchler, 'Die Avantgardegruppe'.

not spelled out and apparent certainties constantly undermined. Such disorientation begins with the essay's very title. On the one hand, it references Enlightenment aspirations about literature and progress by evoking *Briefe, die Neueste Literatur betreffend*. But on the other, it replaces the idea of the meaningful, communicative, persuasive (and potentially anti-authoritarian) letter with that of the worn-out, ineffectual 'Gemeinplatz' or commonplace. The implication is that Enzensberger's own thoughts are mere clichés, or even already obsolete by the time they reach his readers. He may be suggesting, in anti-authoritarian style, that traditional media like *Kursbuch* move too slowly for the era's most urgent ideas. These flourish not in established journals, but in other, more transient fora, such as the street or, indeed, letters from the front line of anti-colonial revolution, like Debray's. As a result, before the essay even gets started, the sense of intellectual confidence which its title's Enlightenment allusion might seem to promise is called into question. That confidence is rendered problematic, too, by the well-read audience's recollection that many Enlightenment thinkers would not have shared Enzensberger's enthusiasm of 1968 for revolution. Thus, the dissonances of his title set the tone for a reading experience which is characterized by provocation and doubt.

Enzensberger's closing description of Mao's words as a '*Kalenderspruch*' has a similar effect. It evokes, like the commonplace, a banal received idea. At first sight it implies that the utterances of revolutionary leaders (as well as of writers like Enzensberger) must be subjected to ongoing criticism and self-criticism if they are not to become oppressive themselves. In doing so, it is implicitly echoing Peter Szondi's words when he introduced the ill-fated lecture by Theodor W. Adorno on Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* [*Iphigenia in Tauris*] (1786) in West Berlin in July 1967. Adorno had been a revered mentor for many in the student movement, and his lecture had been much anticipated, especially since it took place just a few weeks after the tragic shooting of Ohnesorg. Adorno's decision to speak not on the current, fraught politics of the divided city but on a highlight of Weimar Classicism caused consternation and anger, and led to a significant rift with West German protest. Szondi criticized protesters 'die heute Mao-Sprüche nicht anders zitieren, als es einst ihre Großväter mit den Sprüchen der Weimarer Dichterfürsten taten' [who cite Mao's sayings today just as their grandfathers cited those of Weimar's literary royalty];[41] that is, he identifies the fetishization of

41 Peter Szondi, 'Adornos Vortrag "Zum Klassizismus von Goethes *Iphigenie*"', in Kraushaar (ed.), *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, II: 266–67 (267).

Mao's words by protesters as not only meaningless, but authoritarian too; there is some echo of this idea in Enzensberger's evocation of the '*Kalenderspruch*'.

This implicit critique is amplified by another oblique contemporary intertext, Peter Handke's experimental play *Kaspar* (1967), which was premiered in spring 1968 and so likely to have been familiar to Enzensberger and at least some of his readership.[42] Handke's eponymous protagonist, a version of the traditional Kaspar Hauser figure, is violently exposed to hackneyed sayings and *dicta*. These familiar phrases include this particular precept of Mao's, showing how well-known it was at the time. The Handke intertext resonates with the Modernist literary influences in Enzensberger's essay; but also has other, dark implications. Handke's Kaspar is a victim and has little in common with his other, more anarchic clowning namesakes, and the play identifies Mao's words as downright dictatorial rather than liberating. So, seen in the context of *Kaspar*, the inclusion of Mao's words at the end of Enzensberger's essay seems less inspiring than sinister.

Moreover, Enzensberger's citation of Mao does not only warn ironically of the authoritarian potential of language, even when deployed by left-wing icons, like Enzensberger himself, for instance. It contributes to the essay's ambiguities in further ways, too. Initially, the anonymity of Mao's words seems to impute particular power to them (compared with Kafka's at the start of the essay, say, which are attributed to their author), for they can appear as the product of folk wisdom. Yet in reality they lack the clarity which is commonly, if questionably, associated with such utterances, for their insight is significantly complicated by the fact that they seem to demand their own critical interrogation rather than compliant acceptance. Moreover, for readers who do not recognize the '*Kalenderspruch*', and so see it simply as a cryptic puzzle, the possibility of different, potentially non-anti-authoritarian and more imaginative readings is held open. The way this quotation, structurally, mirrors Kafka's epigraph opens up ambiguity, too, for 'Josefine die Sängerin oder Das Volk der Mäuse' suggests, among other things, that nothing in art or life is as it seems. Thus, Mao's words in conclusion are undermined by Kafka's more ironic text. So, ultimately, the ending of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' seems to match the open ending of Kafka's tale, in keeping with the essay's insistence on uncertainty in the realm of letters.

42 Peter Handke, *Kaspar* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1968 [1967]), 40 (scene 25).

In many respects, therefore, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' consistently refuses to give univocal messages. Its arguments – for instance as to the continued importance of avant-garde writing – often remain, at best, elliptical. There are ostentatious contradictions, too, between its manifest and latent content, for instance between its outspoken critique of literature on the one hand and its repeated, rich allusions to it on the other. Indeed, the essay's literary references seem to constitute an alternative, latent, discursive thread running through it, shadowing and competing with its seemingly very different manifest arguments. These apparent contradictions may be in part reconciled by the idea that Enzensberger's text is arguing implicitly for a wider re-definition of literature involving both operative and aesthetic writing. Nonetheless, such contradictions are noticeably never elucidated, let alone fully resolved; and the essay's persistent use of irony means that any apparently clear statement within it – or conclusion about it – is always undermined by another.

The possibility that Enzensberger is deliberately being opaque or misleading about his subject matter is intriguing. For instance, he could be deploying implicit argument, contradiction and irony in view of the rapacious desire of the consciousness industry to commodify and recuperate everything in its path. By not being fully explicit or consequential about the nature of the revolutionary writing he imagines, Enzensberger may be seeking to protect it from exposure to and being subsumed by mainstream criticism and culture, while nonetheless still laying down clues about it for the sensitive reader. This kind of non-manifest communication may mirror the workings of a sub-cultural, anti-authoritarian textuality which itself survives (to an extent) in the manner of Josefine, away from the public gaze, and that of the consciousness industry too. Enzensberger could also be emulating the Parisian Surrealists, whom he describes as vainly and heroically insisting on two mutually exclusive things, namely the aesthetic autonomy of art, and its ethical duty to support revolution; and even celebrating the impossibility of his dilemma.

What is more certain is that, in formal terms, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is not only describing the era's intellectual confusion, but thematizing it formally as well. In doing so, it invites a 'Gegenseitigkeit' [reciprocity] in which readers can challenge it critically at every turn. The essay is thus as fissured, and as dialogical, as anti-authoritarianism itself. In the last analysis, it is asserting that while conventional literature may be on the one hand unattractive to revolutionaries because of its inability to express

univocal political positions, on the other its very ambiguity could contribute to its true political value: that is, the real power of literature in its broadest sense, seen from a revolutionary point of view, lies in its contradictions, which constantly exceed and play havoc with any neat argument or theory.

'Praxis werden': Writing and Action

'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is challenging, too, due to its powerful political dimensions. Enzensberger is in search of texts which can intervene effectively in the political world, and writes of the author engaged in a critical 'Gegenseitigkeit':

> Was er sagt und was ihm gesagt wird, ist anwendbar, kann Praxis werden, sogar eine gemeinsame Praxis. [...] Vielleicht erreicht der Alphabetisierer eines Tages sogar, was ihm versagt bleiben mußte, solang er auf Kunst aus war: daß der Gebrauchswert seiner Arbeit ihrem Marktwert über dem Kopf wächst.
>
> [What he says and what's said to him can be made useful, it can become praxis, even collective praxis. [...] Perhaps the teacher of literacy can even, one day, achieve what was always denied him as long as he was aiming to produce art: the overtaking of his work's market value by its use value] (197).

Political practice was central to anti-authoritarianism, and throughout the mid- to late 1960s it was associated with actions which increasingly tested the boundaries of legality. Spring and early summer 1967 in West Berlin provide a good example of texts giving rise to edgy political practice. The city was in a state of excitement and tension due to escalating protest and the arrest of members of KI for scandalous writings which mocked the authorities and raised the profile of anti-authoritarianism significantly. Nirumand's *Persien. Modell eines Entwicklungslandes* was published in spring 1967, followed by a text by Meinhof about Iran and its rulers which appeared in *konkret* in June 1967. This piece, 'Offener Brief an Farah Diba' [Open Letter to Fara Dibah], is ostensibly addressed to the Iranian Empress.[43] It draws extensively on Nirumand's book and combines some of its content satirically with comments made by the Empress in a recent interview in a popular magazine idealizing her privileged lifestyle. This lifestyle, Meinhof contends, is available to her at the expense of ordinary Iranian people.

43 Ulrike Meinhof, 'Offener Brief an Farah Diba', *konkret*, 6 (1967), 21–22; also in Meinhof, *Deutschland Deutschland unter anderem*, 116–21.

These high-profile publications preceded a state visit to West Berlin by Iran's imperial couple in late May. Thus, as the writer Peter Rühmkorf, who was instrumental in ensuring the early distribution of Nirumand's book in anticipation of that visit, wrote in the historic present, 'als am 30.05.67 Persiens Gewaltherrscher Berliner Boden betritt, trifft er statt auf Analphabeten auf vorbereitete Entschlossene' [when the Persian dictator steps onto Berlin soil on 30.05.67, he encounters not illiterates but prepared, determined people].[44] A number of demonstrations against the visit ensued. These demonstrations involved texts of many kinds, like slogans and flyers, including those of KI (and, in a broad sense, can themselves be understood as texts). They form part of the background to the protest movements' defining tragedy, the shooting of Ohnesorg at a protest against the Shah's presence on 2 June. In turn, the terrible events of 2 June gave rise to countless further writings, including *Kursbuch* 12 (April 1968), which provides an extensive analysis of the day and its aftermath; and a poem contained in *Kursbuch* 15, Arnfrid Astel's satirical epigram 'Radio Teheran'.[45] Similarly, in Uwe Timm's *Heißer Sommer* [*Hot Summer*] (1974), an early example of the post-anti-authoritarian student *Bildungsroman*, the protagonist is politicized as a very direct consequence of reading Nirumand's book and simultaneously hearing a radio report of Ohnesorg's death.[46] Thus, the sequence of texts initiated by the publication of Nirumand's *Persien. Modell eines Entwicklungslandes* provides a remarkable, if disturbing and painful, example of the 'Gegenseitigkeit' between texts and political practice advocated by 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'.

From the mid-1960s on, anti-authoritarianism had stood largely beyond the pale of political and cultural respectability. By late 1968, and the publication of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', parts of that movement had become increasingly focused on illegal actions and, sometimes and increasingly, on violence. So this literary essay, through its unmistakably anti-authoritarian features and allusions to texts like Nirumand's and Meinhof's which were centrally connected to edgy, dangerous praxis and

44 Peter Rühmkorf, *Die Jahre, die Ihr kennt. Anfälle und Erinnerungen* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1992), 216. Rühmkorf's term 'Analphabeten' [illiterates] for politically uninformed people, a cognate of which is used centrally by Enzensberger in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', suggests that he may have had Enzensberger's thinking in mind when writing his account.

45 Arnfrid Astel, 'Radio Teheran', *Kursbuch*, 15 (1968), 143.

46 Uwe Timm, *Heißer Sommer* (Munich: dtv, 1998 [1974]), 56–57.

awful events, is implicitly linked with shocking current affairs. Enzensberger does not discuss such current affairs here, or advocate direct or illegal political action, let alone violence. Nonetheless, for initiated readers his essay calls to mind the proximity of such practice and harsh, even frightening public and official responses to it. This context is very far removed from the stagnant, culturally stabilizing 'Podiumsdiskussionen' [panel discussions] on literary theory which Enzensberger mocks. In 1968, this association must have seemed unsettling indeed to many contemporary readers and led them to overlook some of its most challenging facets.

More broadly, too, Enzensberger's arguments fly in the face of German cultural tradition, with its careful preservation of the divisions between 'Macht' [power] and 'Geist' [intellect]. This tradition re-emerges powerfully in a certain strand of anti-authoritarian thinking, represented for example by Hamm in the essay quoted above, which claimed to reject art altogether in the name of a revolutionary agenda. By contrast, Enzensberger abandons the idea that literature, like all forms of high art, is exclusive, timeless and above historical or political concerns. He argues instead for a writing which brings art and politics together – despite the fact that some lines of argument in his essay suggest simultaneously that to do so is impossible. At best, he says, attempts at revolutionary writing in the present remain 'bruchstückhaft' [fragmentary], 'vorläufig' [temporary] and 'vereinzelt' [isolated] (197).[47] But in such fleeting moments, like those of May and June 1967, divisions between theory and practice are broken down. To do so was a central aim of anti-authoritarianism, and here, too, politics meets the earlier European avant-garde, whose aim was what Walter Benjamin called in 1934 a 'Literarisierung aller Lebensverhältnisse' [literarization of the conditions of living], the abolition of all separation between art and life.[48] Such thinking is, both for traditional criticism and no doubt many protesters, radical to the point of being culturally illegible.

47 Briegleb considers that the revolutionary potential of writing around 1968 remained blocked by a culture which failed to come to terms with its own past. He argues that it is for this reason that Enzensberger can evoke the prospects for revolutionary writing only in a bleak, conditional tense (Briegleb, *1968*, 45). This major idea is explored in Chapter 7 of this study.

48 Benjamin, 'Der Autor als Produzent', 694; 'The Author as Producer', 225.

'Mitteilungen […], hier und jetzt, an uns und alle…'

Enzensberger's vision in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' maps in important ways not only with anti-authoritarian politics, but also its poetics, at least as practised up to 1968. Thus, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' casts a vital light on the textuality of protest around 1967–68. It makes a vast, complex and diverse range of anti-authoritarian writing, from the cheeky or offensive one-liner to the lengthy memoir to the avant-garde text, identifiable and legible as literature.

But simultaneously, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' resonates powerfully with a conceptualization of writing expressed by Enzensberger as early as 1957 in a leaflet accompanying his first volume of poetry, *verteidigung der wölfe* [*defence of the wolves*]. This text states:

> Hans Magnus Enzensberger will seine Gedichte verstanden wissen als Inschriften, Plakate, Flugblätter, in eine Mauer geritzt, auf eine Mauer geklebt, vor einer Mauer verteilt; nicht im Raum sollen sie verklingen, in den Ohren des einen, geduldigen Lesers, sondern vor den Augen vieler, und gerade der Ungeduldigen, sollen sie stehen und leben, sollen auf sie wirken wie das Inserat in der Zeitung, das Plakat auf der Litfaßsäule, die Schrift am Himmel. Sie sollen Mitteilungen sein, hier und jetzt, an uns und alle ….[49]
>
> [Hans Magnus Enzensberger wants his poems to be understood as inscriptions, posters, flyers, scratched into a wall, posted onto a wall, handed out in front of a wall; they should not fade away in space, in the ears of one patient reader; they should, rather, stand and live in the eyes of many, in particular the impatient, they should affect them like a small ad in the paper, like a poster on an advertising pillar in the street, like sky-writing. They should be communications, here and now, to us and to everyone ....]

The association made here between Modernist poetry and demotic, modern and dissident forms of communication like graffiti and flyers, available to all and up for debate, prefigures clearly the ideas in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. Enzensberger's contemporary, the poet Yaak Karsunke, rightly points out that as a comment on a small first edition of a poetry volume, such ideas were 'natürlich eine Fiktion' [a fiction, obviously], for the poems within it

49 Quoted in Karsunke, 'Vom Singen in finsteren Zeiten', 267. Karsunke gives no information on his source.

could hardly attain the massive public impact this leaflet imagines.[50] But in 1967–68, they did seem to have found a brief, fragmentary and partial realization in anti-authoritarian textuality. This comparison shows on the one hand the consistency of Enzensberger's poetic visions over a decade. On the other, it exemplifies just how profoundly the 1960s revolts and their culture resonated not only with politics, but with Modernist poetic thinking too, in all its complexity and contradictions, as the following chapters will now explore.

50 Karsunke, 'Vom Singen in finsteren Zeiten', 267.

2. Poetry, War and Women, 1966–70*

Introduction

The importance of the Vietnam War for the history and development of the West German protest movements around 1967–68 can barely be overstated.[1] The Vietnam War was the most significant of all the international conflicts in which protesters took an interest, and most of the era's most emblematic and spectacular events are, at least nominally, about Vietnam.[2] As one well-informed contemporary, the journalist Kai Hermann, put it in 1967: 'Nichts hat diese Generation so geprägt wie der Vietnam-Krieg' [Nothing was as influential for this generation as the Vietnam War].[3] Thus, the history of anti-Vietnam protest in the Federal Republic goes hand-in-hand with a history of the West German protest movements themselves, catalysed as they

* A version of this chapter was previously published as 'West German Representations of Women and Resistance in Vietnam 1966–1973', in *Warlike Women and Death: Women Warriors in the German Imagination since 1500*, ed. by Sarah Colvin and Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2009), 229–49.

1 See Juchler, *Die Studentenbewegungen*; Wilfried Mausbach, 'Auschwitz and Vietnam: West German Protest Against America's War During the 1960s', in *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives*, ed. by Andreas W. Daum and others (Washington, DC and Cambridge: German Historical Institute and Cambridge University Press, 2003), 279–98; Thomas, *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany*.

2 As one protagonist wrote at the time, too: 'Kein politisches Ereignis hat in den Diskussionen und bei der Politisierung der Studenten eine so entscheidende Rolle gespielt wie der Vietnam-Krieg' [No political event played as decisive a role as the Vietnam War in student discussions and politicization] (Uwe Bergmann, 'Das Vietnam-Semester', in *Rebellion der Studenten oder die neue Opposition*, 18–20 (18).

3 Kai Hermann, *Die Revolte der Studenten* (Hamburg: Wegner, 1967), p. 95; quoted in Bauß, *Die Studentenbewegung der sechziger Jahre in der Bundesrepublik und Westberlin*, 167.

were above all by outrage over the US intervention in Vietnam's civil war.

A number of reasons may be adduced for the importance of the Vietnam conflict for West German protest. It was a catalyst for protest internationally, and allowed West Germans to participate in a transnational anti-war movement. The anti-war movement was, in its earlier years, from around 1965, an important conduit for many young people's deeply felt pacifism. But by around 1968, as Vietnam's civil war escalated, it began to mean something else for anti-authoritarians in particular. For this strand of the protest movements, the war became a model example of an anti-capitalist, post-colonial liberation struggle. Indeed, the prominent student leader Rudi Dutschke called the conflict 'diese originäre Revolution' [this originary revolution].[4] This formulation suggests that he sees it not only as an instance of one group of Communist rebels defying the might of the US. It was for Dutschke a beacon of revolutionary practice for West Germans too, in an echo of the title of a text by the Latin American revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, as it was translated by Dutschke and his fellow activist Gaston Salvatore in 1967, 'Schaffen wir zwei, drei, viele Vietnam!' [Let's make two, three, many Vietnams!].[5] This statement became an emblematic slogan of the times, asserting that nations across the world should seek to create a resistance like that in Vietnam, for a whole series of such conflicts worldwide would undermine even US power. It is in part for this reason that Dutschke also argued that West Berliners must realize 'daß doch hier auch ein Vietnam under ganz anderen Bedingungen ist' [that there is a Vietnam, here, too, under quite different conditions].[6]

Thus, the Vietnam conflict took on vital (if shifting) value for activists in the mid- to late 1960s and early 1970s. The philosopher Herbert Marcuse, in many senses an anti-authoritarian figurehead, commented in 1966 that 'Vietnam [...] zum Symbol geworden [ist] für die Zukunft der ökonomischen und politischen Repression, zum Symbol geworden für die Zukunft der Herrschaft der Menschen

4 Rudi Dutschke, *Jeder hat sein Leben ganz zu leben: Die Tagebücher 1963–1977* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003), 234.

5 [Ernesto] Che Guevara, *Brief an das Exekutivsekretariat von OSPAAL* [*sic*]*: Schaffen wir zwei, drei, viele Vietnam! Das Wesen des Partisanenkampfes. Eingeleitet und übersetzt von Gaston Salvatore und Rudi Dutschke* (1967), 2nd, rev. edn (Berlin: Oberbaumpresse, n.d.); extract in *Oberbaum Blatt* 3 (26 June 1967), no pag. [1].

6 In documentary footage included in Helke Sander's film *Brecht die Macht der Manipulateure* (1967–68).

über den Menschen' [Vietnam has become a symbol for the future of economic and political oppression, a symbol for the future of human domination over other humans].[7] Hermann, too, concluded that the conflict achieved an existential status and 'schließlich zum Kriterium politisch-moralischer Entscheidung [wurde]' [ultimately became a criterion for political and moral decisions].[8] That is to say, for protesters in the mid- to late 1960s, Vietnam became an absolute ethical touchstone. But in addition to such manifest concerns, the Vietnam War had important latent significance. The historian Wilfried Mausbach has argued that in addition to providing scope for identifying with the Vietnamese people in various ways, West German anti-war discourse was, in the last analysis, a means for West Germans to protest against their parents' National Socialist past.[9] Such arguments make clear that West German anti-war discourse is potentially highly revealing of West German self-images, notably in relation to the recent past, in a symptomatic way; and this chapter will provide just such readings.

In the context of this study, anti-war protest is of especial interest because it triggered the production of an astonishing wealth of writing. This extensive body of work gives the lie to the widespread idea, discussed in the Introduction to this study, that the Federal Republic's protest movements were devoid of literary culture. For one thing, this Vietnam writing corresponds compellingly with Hans Magnus Enzensberger's re-definition of revolutionary writing in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', as discussed in Chapter 1. In that vision, operative writing, like Georg W. Alsheimer's memoir *Vietnamesische Lehrjahre. Sechs Jahre als deutscher Arzt in Vietnam* (1968) combines with aesthetic or avant-garde impulses, like those in KI's purportedly anti-war flyers of 1967, in an open, dialogical textuality. But in addition, the anti-war movement gave rise to a body of more conventionally literary writing, for over two hundred poems and song lyrics protesting against the war in Vietnam were published in West Germany from around 1966 onwards. These works demonstrate just how committed parts, at least, of the protest movements remained, too, to more orthodox notions of literature; and therefore constitute an important, to-date neglected point of reference for an analysis of protest culture and literature.

The thematic focus of the present exploration is these poems' representation of women. This choice has been made for (at least) two

7 Herbert Marcuse, 'Die Analyse eines Exempels', *neue kritik*, 36–37 (1966), 33.

8 Quoted in Bauß, *Die Studentenbewegung*, 67.

9 Mausbach, 'Auschwitz and Vietnam'.

reasons. First, as this chapter will show, it was precisely in the context of the anti-war movement that the nascent Neue Frauenbewegung [New Women's Movement] began to part company with such movements as anti-authoritarianism, and thus cast into sharp relief the movements' acute and unresolved gender issues, which were a defining feature of their culture. Aspects of these issues may be read quite spectacularly off contemporary poems involving images of women. Second, images of women are often symbolically powerful, suggestive and over-determined and so are revealing, too, of some fraught issues in the movements' relationship to national identity and the German past.

This chapter will start by elucidating details about the kind of poems to be read here. It then goes on to discuss the two main images of femininity present in the poems, namely the mourning mother and the sexually exploited woman. By way of contrast, the chapter then goes on to examine a far more unusual representation of femininity in the poems, namely the Vietnamese woman fighting or resisting. Such images are also compared and contrasted with another even more extraordinary, and deeply disturbing, one, namely the American fighting woman. All these figures prove to be complex and ambiguous. Therefore, with additional reference to other contemporary writings about Vietnam, notably memoirs, possible reasons why this may be so will be explored. This discussion will consider how the Vietnam poems' images of women relate to a conservative discourse about women in 1940s and 1950s West Germany, and hence how the discourse of the anti-war movement more broadly may relate, albeit no doubt largely unconsciously, to that recent past. This chapter concludes by addressing explicit, critical reference to one of the anti-war movement's most important events, the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß of February 1968 in West Berlin, and the anti-war movement's images of women, too, in the feminist film *Der subjektive Faktor* [*The Subjective Factor*] (1981) by Helke Sander. This work uses both dramatic and documentary footage to describe the anti-authoritarian milieu around 1968 and show how the Neue Frauenbewegung began to take issue with it, by foregrounding the generally obscured women activists of the time.

gegen den krieg in vietnam: A West German Anti-War Poetry

With its focus on operative and avant-garde literatures, Enzensberger's argument in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' overlooks a profound, if sometimes problematic commitment in some strands of the protest culture to a traditional literary form, namely poetry. This commitment crystallizes most spectacularly in the production of a large body of poems protesting against the Vietnam War, a series of publications which began in 1966.[10] In the mid-1960s, the poet Erich Fried proposed to members of the era's foremost literary grouping, Gruppe 47, that they compose an anthology of anti-war poems, but this plan did not come to fruition due to the other writers' lack of interest.[11] Instead, Fried eventually published *und VIETNAM und* [*and VIETNAM and*] (1966), a volume of his own short poems devoted entirely to the Vietnam conflict. In 1966, too, the left-wing magazine *konkret* published some anti-war poems by Fried and others.[12] From then on, awareness of the Vietnam conflict triggered the publication in the Federal Republic of hundreds of original, German-language poems and song lyrics too.[13]

10 This interest in poetry is reflected in the publication of translations of Vietnamese poems from 1967 onwards, too: three poems by Ho Chi Minh, trans. by Martin Jürgens, *konkret*, 3 (1967), 48; Ho Chi Minh, *Gefängnistagebuch: 102 Gedichte. Als Sonderdruck der Lyrischen Hefte herausgegeben von Arnfrid Astel*, trans. from English by Annegret Kirchhoff and others (Saarbrücken: Lyrische Hefte, 1968); Do Quy Toan, 'Bewein ich den Tod', no translator, in *es darf ... literaische jugendzeitschrift*, 15 (1968), no pag.; Te Hanh, 'ZWISCHEN MEINEN TÖCHTERN SITZEND' and 'HANOI 1966', trans. by Paul Wiens, in tode (ed.), *gegen den krieg in vietnam*, 14, 15 respectively. Likewise, the importance of anti-war poetry is underlined by *Wo ist Vietnam? 89 Amerikanische Dichter gegen den Krieg* (1967), ed. by Walter Lowenfels, trans. by Renate Sami and Horst Tomayer (Darmstadt: Melzer, 1968).

11 Gerhard Lampe, *'Ich will mich erinnern | an alles was man vergißt': Erich Fried. Biographie und Werk* (Cologne: Bund, 1989), 117–8; Stephen W. Lawrie, *Erich Fried: A Writer Without a Country* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 284.

12 See the Introduction to this study, note 50; and Fried's volume *und VIETNAM und*.

13 For the purposes of this survey, the poems counted involve substantive engagement with a topic explicitly related to the Vietnam conflict; and were published in or distinctly identified as being from the Federal Republic, although their authors were not in all cases FRG citizens. For studies which refer to West German anti-war poems, see Gregory Divers, *The Image and Influence of America in German Poetry since 1945* (Rochester, NY and Woodbridge: Camden House, 2002); Hahn, *Literatur in der Aktion*; Ruth Lorbe, 'America in Contemporary

und VIETNAM und and the early anti-war poems in *konkret* were no doubt highly influential for this development; in formal terms, for example, this body of work is generally quite consistent with the key features of *und VIETNAM und*. Like many of Fried's, the poems are most commonly short, linguistically simple, written in free verse and realist. They are almost never based on first-hand experience of Vietnam, but often make use of documentary features, for instance often citing news media explicitly. So prominent was this type of poem that it triggered theoretical debates in the era's most important intellectual and political journals about Vietnam and poetry.[14] More lightheartedly, too, the genre of the Vietnam poem even spawned its own parody.[15] And yet, with the exception of Fried's poems, this body of work has been comprehensively forgotten today, in part no doubt due to the way it flies in the face of received ideas about the protest movements' supposed anti-literary stance. Nonetheless, it is a very important expression of protest sensibility, and a rich field of enquiry for understanding some of its concerns.

The poems explored in this chapter are all, in various ways, representative of this type of poetry. First, they share its common formal features, described above. Second, they are in many cases the work of emerging or largely unknown poets, rather than canonical writers or members of Gruppe 47. This demographic suggests that the drive to create poetry about the Vietnam War was very widespread and highly demotic, rather than associated with an elite literary culture.[16] Third, two of the poets are from the GDR, although the

German Poetry', in *Amerika! New Images in German Literature*, ed. by Heinz D. Osterle (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), 243–75; Sareika, *Die dritte Welt*.

14 1967 saw an extensive debate about the Vietnam poetry among literati and critics. See Erich Fried, 'Ist "Ausgefragt" fragwürdig? Erich Fried über die neuen Gedichte von Günter Grass', *konkret*, 7 (1967), 44–45 and 'Hans Mayer, oder der nachhinkende Schweinskopf', *konkret*, 9 (1967), 34–37; Harald Hartung, 'Poesie und Vietnam: Eine Entgegnung', *Der Monat*, 19, no. 226 (July 1967), 76–79; Peter Härtling, 'Gegen rhetorische Ohnmacht: Kann man über Vietnam Gedichte schreiben?', *Der Monat*, 19, no 224 (May 1967), 57–61, also in *Erich Fried: Gespräche und Kritiken*, ed. by Rudolf Wolf (Bonn: Bouvier, 1986), 151–59 and *Lyrik nach Auschwitz? Adorno und die Dichter*, ed. by Petra Kiedaisch (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1995), 102–06; Peter Rühmkorf, 'Haben wir zu viele Vietnam-Gedichte?', *konkret*, 5 (1967), 34–36. For a very critical account of this debate and its wider repercussions see Briegleb, *1968*, 206–21.

15 Klaus Pätzmann, 'Vietnam-Gedichte', *konkret*, 7 (1966), 4.

16 The contemporary GDR anthology *Vietnam in dieser Stunde: Künstlerische Dokumentation*, ed. by Werner Bräunig, Fritz Cremer, Paul Dessau, Peter Gosse, Stefan Hermlin, Günter Jacobi, Sarah and Rainer Kirsch, Georg Maurer, Gabriele Mucchi, Otto Nagel, Ursula Sczeponik, Anna Seghers, Willi Sitte, Jeanne and

poems in question appeared in West German publications, showing how anti-war discourse could circulate between the two Germanys. Fourth, these poems appeared in contexts which are characteristic of the Vietnam poems as a whole. One is taken from the important early groups of anti-war poems included in *konkret* in 1966. Others appeared in small, short-lived literary magazines which offered opportunities for non-established, often counter-cultural or younger poets to present their work.[17] And three of them are taken from the anthology *gegen den krieg in vietnam* [*against the war in vietnam*] (1968), which is a particularly important publication.[18] This was the first anthology of anti-war poems (mostly) written in German to be published in the Federal Republic. It is significant, too, in that it was produced to coincide with the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß. This context means that *gegen den krieg in vietnam* is an especially striking illustration of the close, if strained, relationship between the protest movements and literature.[19] And, fifth, the poems have been selected for the ways in which they foreground the poetry's most typical figures of women; or for the striking ways they seem to vary or challenge those images.

Representing Women in Vietnam Poetry

While only a minority of the large body of anti-war poems which appeared in the Federal Republic represents women of any nationality, these works nonetheless constitute the largest single group of writings

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Kurt Stern and Dieter Strützel (Halle an der Saale: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 1968), is an interesting point of comparison with West German publications. As the list of editors suggests, this large, international anthology, which included much poetry, was in part the work of major literary names. By contrast, apart from Fried, few established poets in the FRG participated in the culture of anti-war poetry.

17 As well as in better-known periodicals like *konkret* and *kürbiskern*, Vietnam poetry appeared in small literary magazines like *Edelgammler: Poesie Satire Prosa* (1968–70); *exitus* (1968–71) and *phoenix: lyrik aus amerika kanada england schweiz rumänien jugoslawien deutschland dokumente texte* (1968–70).

18 The only other West German anthology of this type is *Frieden für Vietnam: Sprechtexte Agitation Lieder*, ed. by Annemarie Stern (Oberhausen: Arbeitskreis für Amateurkunst, 1970).

19 The anthology closes with the rejection (in poetry) of poetry in favour of a call to political action, in an ambiguity quite typical of the protest movements' approach to literature; see the Introduction to the present study.

about Vietnam originating in the Federal Republic to do so.[20] Most frequently, the poets represent the Vietnamese people as targets of US or US-sponsored aggression; and most poems featuring Vietnamese women in particular show them as victims of two predominant types. The first is the mother, for example in Helfried Schreiter's 'Flugblatt' [Flyer] (1968), likely to have been inspired by a news item, which describes a bombed Catholic church in the North Vietnamese city Viet Tri. A flyer warning civilians to avoid target areas lies at the feet of a statue of the Madonna; but 'Die Madonna konnte | nicht lesen. | Sie war kopflos' [The Madonna could | not read. | She'd lost her head] (ll. 19–21).[21] The frequently used image of the passive, suffering mother is taken to an extreme here, in that she has been replaced by a statue with no agency, decapitated in a further, emphatic image of disempowerment.

The second, and complementary, common representation of Vietnamese women is as victims of sexualized exploitation, for instance in Kurt Sigel's 'Pilotengespräch' [Pilot Talk] (1966), supposedly reporting the words of one relieved pilot to another as they return unscathed from a successful air-raid. Here the speaker expresses his sense of achievement and exhilaration in destroying an enemy target, while also remembering a young woman or girl, Nho, whom he and his colleague know from a bar. He reports hearing that Nho has taken her own life after the death of her thirteen siblings in a bomb attack. He relates this circumstance with regret as Nho was a 'netter Käfer' [babe] (l. 15).[22]

In the Republic of Vietnam (RVN, that is, South Vietnam, a capitalist state supported by the US), the massive influx during the war years of US personnel, goods and money precipitated a rise in various kinds of sex work amongst Vietnamese women. There was also an increase in sexualized work done by women, and sexual or romantic relationships of other kinds which displayed power imbalances between Vietnamese women and non-Vietnamese

20 The only other German-language texts about Vietnam to represent women to any significant extent are memoirs: Alsheimer, *Vietnamesische Lehrjahre*; Peter Schütt, *Vietnam 30 Tage danach* (Dortmund: Weltkreis, 1973); Peter Weiss, *Notizen zum kulturellen Leben der Demokratischen Republik Viet Nam* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1968).

21 Helfried Schreiter, 'Flugblatt', *exitus*, 1, 2 (December 1968) [no pag.]. The poem may ironize the South Vietnamese government's claim to protect Vietnam's Catholic minority.

22 Kurt Sigel, 'Pilotengespräch', *konkret*, 4 (1966), 39, also in *Denkzettel: Politische Lyrik aus der BRD und Westberlin*, ed. by Annie Voigtländer and Herbert Witt (Leipzig: Reclam, 1974), 432–33.

men.[23] Nonetheless, the poems' persistent emphasis on such images indicates they involve something other, or more, than a straightforward mirroring of historical reality. In 'Pilotengespräch', the figure of Nho, who works or spends time in a bar with US servicemen, recalls European narratives about tragic, powerless, East Asian women sexually exploited by European or American men, for instance Giacomo Puccini's opera *Madama Butterfly* [*Madam Butterfly*] (1904), whose heroine, like Nho, commits suicide.[24] 'Pilotengespräch' merges such plots with contemporary discourse about the perceived sexual subtext of warfare derived from the Marxist psychoanalysis of Wilhelm Reich, enthusiastically rediscovered in the 1960s.[25] On this view, capitalism thrives by repressing its subjects' sexuality, producing aggression which correlates with perverse pleasure and so is easily mobilized for war. Significantly, it is when dropping the bombs (euphemistically described as 'den Teppich [werfen]' [laying the carpet] (l. 7)) that the speaker had thought of Nho. In other words, the exhilarating act of bombing ('Was für'n Gefühl' [What a feeling] (l. 6)) reminds him of a Vietnamese woman, possibly or potentially a sexual object.

23 See Alsheimer; Arlene Eisen, *Women and Revolution in Viet Nam* (London: Zed Books, 1984), 45; Neil L. Jamieson, *Understanding Vietnam* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 332–34; Pierre Noir, 'Augenzeuge in Saigon', *konkret*, 6 (1968), 32–33.

24 *Madama Butterfly* is set in Japan, probably inspired by Pierre Loti's novel *Madame Chrysanthème* (1887) and John Luther Long's story *Madam Butterfly* (1898). See Jean-Pierre Lehmann, 'Images of the Orient', in *Madam Butterfly – Madama Butterfly. Puccini*, ed. by Nicholas John (London and New York: John Calder and Riverrun, 1984), 7–14. See also Gina Marchetti, *Romance and the Yellow Peril: Race, Sex and Discursive Strategies in Hollywood Fiction* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1993), 78–108; Kalí Tal, 'The Mind at War: Images of Women in Vietnam Novels by Combat Veterans', *Contemporary Literature*, 31 (1990), 76–96. Claude-Michel Schönberg's and Alain Boublil's popular musical *Miss Saigon* (1989) is a more recent version of this plot. See Edward Behr and Mark Steyn, *The Story of Miss Saigon* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991).

25 Wilhelm Reich, *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus: Zur Sexualökonomie der politischen Reaktion und zur proletarischen Sexualpolitik*, 2nd edn (no pl., no publ., no d. [1933]), trans. by Vincent R. Carfagno as *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983). Compare Frank Böckelmann, *Die schlechte Aufhebung der autoritären Persönlichkeit* (Frankfurt a.M.: Makol, 1971 [1966]); Ulrich Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke. Eine Biographie*, 2nd edn (Munich: Pendo, 1993), 137; *Marxismus Psychoanalyse Sexpol*, ed. by Hans Peter Gente, 2 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1970); Kommune 2, *Versuch der Revolutionierung des bürgerlichen Individuums. Kollektives Leben mit politischer Arbeit verbinden!* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1971 [1969]), 63.

Thus, 'Pilotengespräch' makes an intimate link between sex and extreme, phallic aggression.

Carrying Bombs in Shopping Bags: Vietnamese Women Resisting

Given the predominance of such images of victimhood in the Vietnam poems, the very few examples which take a different approach to representing Vietnamese women and show them fighting or resisting become very striking. These poems are important, too, in that they address a key motif in the anti-authoritarian imagination, that of the 'Third-World' guerrilla fighter who defies the capitalist might of the West. That power was embodied especially powerfully in the West German protest imagination by the US as it intervened in Vietnam's civil war, which could be imagined in simple terms as a battle between capitalism and an unorthodox, autonomous Marxist liberation. The image of the anti-colonial guerrilla fighter was an increasingly important influence on anti-authoritarian thinking as it seemed to offer a template for resistance in West Germany too. For this reason, West German images of Vietnamese fighters may be revealing not only of West German notions of Vietnam, but of West German self-images too.[26]

Historical reality saw women in both the Communist Democratic Republic of Vietnam (DRV) in North Vietnam and the RVN extensively involved in all aspects of politics and the conflict, including as partisans, soldiers, and commanders.[27] Reflecting this situation, visual images of Vietnamese women resisting or fighting were well-known in West Germany.[28] Yet West German protest writing about Vietnam barely contains any such depictions, suggesting that while

26 See, for example, Mererid Puw Davies, '*Zwei, drei, viele West Berlin?* West German Anti-authoritarianism and the Vietnam Conflict', in *Local/Global Narratives*, ed. by Renate Rechtien and Karoline von Oppen (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2007), 143–62.

27 Eisen, *Women and Revolution*, 94–118; Ashley Pettus, *Between Sacrifice and Desire: National Identity and the Governing of Femininity in Vietnam* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003); Mary Ann Tétreault, 'Women and Revolution in Vietnam', in *Vietnam's Women in Transition*, ed. by Kathleen Barry (Basingstoke and London: Macmillan, 1996), 38–57, especially 43, 47.

28 For example, many such images appeared in *konkret*. They feature, too, in Sander's film *Der subjektive Faktor*, to be discussed below. For a feminist analysis of such images see Cynthia Enloe, 'Women after Wars: Puzzles and Warnings', in Barry (ed.), *Vietnam's Women in Transition*, 299–315, especially 302. On the iconic nature of images like this worldwide, see also Eisen, *Women and Revolution*, 3.

fighting women in Vietnam could be looked at, to write about them was near-impossible. Likewise, while it seems that the image of the armed, anti-colonial partisan was an important one at the time, the protest imagination gendered it powerfully as masculine.

None of the many poems about Vietnam surveyed for this chapter shows a Vietnamese woman soldier; and only three show Vietnamese women resisting in any way at all. Ingo Cesaro's 'IN EINKAUFSNETZEN' [IN SHOPPING BAGS] (1968) describes women, probably operating clandestinely for the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front (NLF; also known, originally more pejoratively, as the Viet Cong). The women are characterized as 'halbnackte | mädchen' [half-naked | girls] (ll. 1–2) who carry bombs in shopping bags and are prepared to die, if necessary, along with cinema-goers and passers-by. But before their deaths, the poem's speaker reflects that 'wie wir' [like us] (l. 9), these women love 'heiße musik' [hot music] (l. 10), admire film stars and smoke in secret. But the poem closes with a reminder that, differently from the speaker and his or her implied readership, these young women also carry bombs in their shopping bags, wrapped in newspaper.[29] This poem thus works with an identificatory, sympathetic focus on the brave, youthful women of the resistance and so sets up a positive, alternative image of femininity. Nonetheless, it draws attention too to the possibility of its protagonists' presumably accidental deaths if the bombs go off unplanned, rather than to a positive outcome to their missions: that is, it foretells the women's strategic failure and violent deaths, along with those of other Vietnamese people.

Karl Mickel's poem 'BERICHT NACH BURCHETT' [REPORT AFTER BURCHETT] describes soldiers from the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), 'im Sold der Yankees' [in the pay of the Yankees] (l. 3), preparing to attack a village.[30] The village's women and children come out, as a mother explains, for safety, and talk to the soldiers. An old woman shows them a photograph of her own soldier son, saying that if he burned down someone's home, she would reject him. A narrative break follows and the poem concludes by saying that while eight women were killed, three mercenaries (that is, South Vietnamese soldiers) changed sides and the village was rebuilt. Apparently, then, an ineffable assault is committed on the women and the village destroyed, and it seems the soldiers defect

29 Ingo Cesaro, 'IN EINKAUFSNETZEN', in tode (ed.), *gegen den krieg in vietnam*, 22.

30 Karl Mickel, 'BERICHT NACH BURCHETT', in tode (ed.), *gegen den krieg in vietnam*, 80–81.

as a consequence of this experience. On the one hand, this poem breaks the mould of most Vietnam poems in ascribing language to Vietnamese women, for elsewhere in the poems considered here they are almost never accorded direct speech, a traditional literary index of agency. Moreover, the soldiers' defection and the reconstruction of the village represent the Vietnamese people's resilience and ultimate triumph. But on the other hand, this ending is hardly positive, for it follows destruction and atrocity perpetrated on women.

'BERICHT NACH BURCHETT' draws on the work of the controversial Australian Marxist journalist Wilfred G. Burchett, who spent months with the NLF and celebrated it in reports which appeared in West Germany, amongst other countries, for example in the mainstream magazines *Quick* and *Der Spiegel*.[31] A book by Burchett about his experience, translated as *Partisanen contra Generale: Südvietnam 1964* (1966), describes a particular form of NLF resistance in which women tactically apply peaceful pressure to dissuade South Vietnamese officials and soldiers from attack. According to Burchett, villages have groups of women called 'Geschützvernaglerinnen' [cannon-spikers] who come out with their children to meet advancing ARVN forces and dissuade them from attacking by reminding them of their own families.[32] The women's appeals appear spontaneous, emotive and individual, but in fact are carefully prepared and coordinated by the NLF. Thus, Burchett presents extensive evidence of successful, organized resistance by groups of women.

Mickel's poem presents an almost verbatim amalgam of Burchett's accounts. However, while Burchett presents his examples alongside an explanation that the women are an established resistance and of how they operate, Mickel omits this context altogether. He rewrites his source to remove the strategic background to the women's actions and replaces Burchett's peaceful, successful endings with violence

31 Dustjacket notes for Wilfred G. Burchett, *Partisanen contra Generale: Südvietnam 1964*, trans. by Gerhard Böttcher and others (Berlin: Volk und Welt, 1965). While this book was published in the GDR, it was read in West Germany too. It is referenced explicitly, for example, in the standard anti-authoritarian work on the Vietnam conflict, Peter Gäng and Jürgen Horlemann, *Vietnam: Genesis eines Konflikts* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1968), 206, and in Jürgen Ploog's poem 'VIETNAM-MONTAGE', in tode (ed.), *gegen den krieg in vietnam*, 32. *Partisanen contra Generale* identifies itself as a translation of a book by Burchett called *Special War, Special Defence*; and contains much material also included in Wilfred G. Burchett, *Vietnam: Inside Story of the Guerilla War* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), which is the source of the translation used here.

32 Burchett, *Partisanen contra Generale*, 288; *Vietnam: Inside Story of the Guerilla War*, 68.

and partial failure. Crucially, too, while in Burchett's account the soldiers change their allegiance due to the women's influence alone, their motives in Mickel's poem are less clear-cut. There, the soldiers appear to defect only after witnessing or even committing violence on the women who had spoken to them kindly, suggesting that for Mickel the defection requires a sacrifice. So the resisting women's agency is heavily circumscribed, for here too they meet violent deaths, apparently the consequence of or punishment for their resistance, or even the necessary price for the soldiers' defection.

Thus, these two unusual poems by Cesaro and Mickel suggest a complex relationship between resistance and powerlessness, for while they present women as agents on the one hand, on the other these figures are disempowered by the prospect of a violent death. Therefore, the idea of a woman partisan seems to present complex challenges to the poetic imagination. There are possible clues as to why this pattern exists in a third poem which shows Vietnamese women resisting, and the only one amongst the works surveyed for this chapter which shows them in direct, armed confrontation. Franz Josef Degenhardt's song lyric 'Das Ereignis am Mondfalterfluß im Mai 1968' [The Incident at Luna Moth River in May 1968] describes NLF fighters, one man and three 'Mädchen' [girls], whose route across a river one moonlit night is blocked by a US tank.[33] However, 'Ho-Chi-Minhs Partisanen kennen den Feind, | und wissen wovon der Soldat meistens träumt' [Ho Chi Minh's partisans know the enemy | and they know what soldiers usually dream about] (ll. 9–10) so the women undress and bathe: 'und das sah sehr schön aus: | drei nackte Mädchen im Mondfalterfluß' [And it was a very beautiful sight, | three naked girls in Luna Moth River] (ll. 15–16) (99). The women wave invitingly to the six soldiers in the tank who come to join them, and then the NLF man shoots the soldiers dead with a machine gun. Degenhardt concludes with an ambiguous exhortation to West German listeners to consider what they might learn from the four Vietnamese fighters.[34]

This lyric recalls Romantic literature which imagines beautiful females like Heinrich Heine's 'Loreley' (1824) luring unsuspecting

33 Franz Josef Degenhardt, 'Das Ereignis am Mondfalterfluß im Mai 1968', in Franz Josef Degenhardt, *Im Jahr der Schweine: 27 Lieder mit Noten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1973 [1970]), 99–101.

34 Sareika quotes the song's original final stanza, which is not included in later publications (*Die dritte Welt*, 273). This stanza imagines FRG women activists stripping to distract the right-wing Springer media group's van drivers. This suggestion is resonant of contemporary protest's gender politics and its trivialization of women's political agency.

men to watery graves and which therefore demonizes feminine attraction.[35] Water is also traditionally associated with dangerous sexuality, desire and the Unconscious, which are embodied in figures like Loreley. These implicit references compound the women's threat in Degenhardt's lyric, which in its reference to soldiers' dreams alludes explicitly, too, to the power of the Unconscious. And the fact that there are three women makes them especially menacing, for, like other examples in German literature, they recall terrifying triads of women from the classics, such as the Three Fates. Finally, because the soldiers are enticed sexually, the lyric can be read as a castration scenario. Some of these ideas are echoed faintly in 'IN EINKAUFSNETZEN' also, in which the half-naked women love audacious, sometimes taboo pleasures like 'hot' music, smoking in secret and the cinema and thus are also associated with sensuous temptation. Furthermore, these women, by carrying bombs instead of groceries, refuse the conventional feminine roles of consumers and nurturers and thus seem both fascinating and dangerous. Put another way, the links these poems make or imply between fighting or resisting women, sensuous gratification, feminine attraction, and possibly emasculating violence, seem acute and threatening.

It may be for this reason that the poetry includes no images of women using weapons themselves. In 'BERICHT NACH BURCHETT', when the unarmed women approach the soldiers and hence come close to their weapons, the ensuing violence suggests that they may have moved into highly threatening realms. In 'IN EINKAUFSNETZEN', the women carry bombs but it is not clear when or whether they intend to deploy them. Even in 'Das Ereignis am Mondfalterfluß im Mai 1968', the women do not use weapons or engage directly in violence. Read in this light, 'Pilotengespräch', in which the woman character's potential for threat would seem to be erased by her death, hints nonetheless at danger linked to feminine sexuality and armed resistance. The pilot expresses relief after the raid: 'Nichts abgekriegt, kein Kratzer. | Noch mal Glück gehabt, Junge' [No damage, not a scratch. | Been in luck again, man] (ll. 3–4). Because this mission recalls sex with a Vietnamese woman, an ambiguous figure, both enemy and companion, the relief at avoiding a wound ('Kratzer' [scratch]) may condense fear of anti-aircraft fire from the dark jungle with that of a suspect, sexual woman who can draw blood even from beyond the grave.

Such fears are corroborated in other Vietnam texts, such as the West German Georg W. Alsheimer's memoir of his life in South Vietnam,

35 Sareika, *Die dritte Welt*, 273.

Vietnamesische Lehrjahre, which Enzensberger identified in 1968 as a key political work for its time. In this book, the narrator describes a sex worker with whom he has a number of sexual encounters as resembling:

> eines der Frauen-Phantome der vietnamesischen Legende, deren Liebhaber nicht wissen, wen sie wirklich in ihren Armen halten – bis es eines Tages klar wird: es ist gar kein menschliches Wesen, sondern die 'Frau Füchsin' oder ein anderer, manchmal freundlicher, manchmal zerstörerischer Geist.
>
> [one of the female phantoms of Vietnamese legend, whose lovers do not know whom they truly hold in their arms – until one day it becomes clear that she is not human at all, but the 'female fox spirit' or some other being who is sometimes benevolent and sometimes destructive] (111).

Crucially, Alsheimer describes this woman's sexuality as having 'revolutionäre Züge' [revolutionary characteristics] (110): that is, she is associated semantically, if not politically, with the Vietnamese revolution. In context, then, it is unsurprising that she also appears in the description quoted here as unreliable, mysterious, sexually alluring, potentially destructive, and even possibly inhuman. In sum, then, it seems that where women can be imagined as political, resisting agents, they may also come to be associated with intense sexual threat.

'Yes – I love him': The American Fighting Woman

The most extraordinary representation of a fighting woman in all these poems is their only representation of a US woman soldier, K. Werner's 'Yes – I love him' (1970). This poem is a three-page, fractured monologue in a mix of German and supposed US English, subtitled, in a mode reminiscent of Bertolt Brecht, 'Das ist der Song | des Sergeant | Marylouisa Miller | aus Cataplasma | Connecticut in | einem Hotelzimmer | zu Saigon gesungen' [This is the Song | of Sergeant | Marylouisa Miller | of Cataplasma | Connecticut | Sung in a Hotel Room | in Saigon].[36] The poem praises rhapsodically the sexual pleasure provided by the speaker's 'freund' [boyfriend] (l. 11),

36 K. Werner, 'Yes – I love him', in *phoenix. lyrik aus amerika kanada england schweiz rumänien jugoslawien deutschland texte*, 3–4 (1970), 6–8 (6). US servicewomen in Vietnam were mostly nurses; some held clerical or administrative posts. See Edwin E. Moïse, *Historical Dictionary of the Vietnam War* (Lanham and London: Scarecrow Press, 2001), 432–33.

comparing him favourably as a lover with her 'pale dull fiancé' (l. 43), a 'West-Point-Affe' [West Point monkey] (l. 39), as well as General Westmoreland, who commanded US forces in the RVN from 1964 to 1968, President Johnson, and all Texans put together (7). Initially this lover seems to be a Vietnamese man; subsequently a description of him as 'this yellow | president | of love' (ll. 64–66) (7) recalls leaders like Ho Chi Minh or Chairman Mao. But the poem finally reveals that he is a personification of the war itself, offering superhuman sexual excitement. This poem therefore reiterates explicitly what some other poems only imply, namely that there is an essential link between aggressive warfare and sexual desire under capitalism. The perverse nature of that desire is exemplified by the grotesque invention 'Cataplasma | Connecticut'. A 'Kataplasma' [cataplasm] is a poultice, so in addition to its implausible, comic effect, this name evokes illness deep in the flesh of the social body.

In established literary tradition, a common topos, here the familiar image of masculine sexual aggression as a driving force in war, is inverted and substituted with that of feminine sexual aggression. This gender-role reversal suggests the topsy-turvy world of a war like that in Vietnam in which, for instance, a US officer could notoriously comment of the destruction of a South Vietnamese village: 'We had to destroy the town to save it'.[37] Moreover, 'Yes – I love him' is a comparatively late contribution to the Vietnam poetry, so its inversion of gender stereotypes helps to refresh the notion of war as an expression of sexual aggression and to restore the originally scandalous quality of that topos. However, this inversion also implies that by 1970 the US war effort itself has become so excessive and inhuman, achieving such unprecedented levels of horror, that its more customary, masculine representation is no longer adequate. To fully apprehend the war's horror, it must be allocated a more extreme symbol, the even more nightmarish, pathologically sexual, fighting woman.

'Nichts abgekriegt, kein Kratzer': Averting Gender Trouble

'Yes – I love him' goes further than any of the other poems considered here in expressing anxiety around femininity, sexuality, and armed agency. As a consequence, it highlights an attendant issue, namely gender trouble. In 1966, Alsheimer argued that US collective

37 George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975*, 3rd edn (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996 [1979]), 210.

psychology and foreign policy were driven by a need to maintain a self-image as a benevolent, patriarchal authority ordering the world.[38] With the US's failure to impose its will in Vietnam and elsewhere, he maintains that this self-image is beset by unacknowledged fears that it is faulty, which in turn provoke violence. While any assessment of the reliability of Alsheimer's analysis falls far beyond the scope of this chapter, it does confirm a contemporary receptivity in some FRG discourses to the idea that US involvement in Vietnam stemmed from a need to alleviate an increasing crisis in its masculinity.[39] In this light, the abandoned 'Panzer' in 'Das Ereignis am Mondfalterfluß im Mai 1968', for instance, could be the now empty husk of masculine identity, since the image recalls representations of the implicitly masculine, Western, civilized subject imagined by Reich as 'armoured'.[40] Therefore, the writings may be simultaneously suppressing and expressing anxiety not only around sexuality, but also masculine identity itself.

These anxieties therefore go hand-in-hand with an insistent desexualization of politically active or resisting women in the Vietnam writing. For example, Alsheimer's memoir contains only one description of an NLF woman, recounted by South Vietnamese men students from the city of Hué who describe their first encounter with the rebels when helping out in a rural area after a flood. At the entrance to a village the students flirt with 'ein sehr hübsches junges Mädchen' [a very pretty young girl] (294) washing clothes in a river. When they meet her again later, she is carrying a machine gun, and they realize that she, like other villagers, is affiliated to the NLF, explaining why this village is better organized than others in dealing with its problems. The students fear that the woman will retaliate for their earlier disrespectful behaviour, but she sees them off kindly:

> Jeder wird dies Bild im Gedächtnis behalten [...] wie sie dastand [...] mit dem langen, offenen Haar, am Wasser vor dem Bambusgehölz, die Hand zum Abschied erhoben, als ob sie die Schwester von uns allen wäre. [...] sie war herzlich, ja sogar ein bisschen zärtlich, und

38 Georg Alsheimer, 'Amerikaner in Hué', *Das Argument: Berliner Hefte für Probleme der Gesellschaft*, 36.8, 1 (February 1966), 2–43

39 Compare the principal thesis in Susan Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America: Gender and the Vietnam War* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989) that Vietnam writing from the US aims to restore American masculine identity (for example on pages 51–53).

40 Wilhelm Reich, *Charakteranalyse* (Vienna: Selbstverlag des Verfassers, 1933); *Character Analysis*, 3rd, enlarged edn, trans. by Vincent R. Carfagno (New York: Touchstone, 1972 [1945]), 48.

> offenbar traurig darüber, daß wir schon weg mußten. Und sie zeigte das auch ganz offen, anders als unsere Mädchen in Hué es tun, die in der Öffentlichkeit immer die Unbeteiligten und Unberührbaren spielen. (295)
>
> [Each one of us will remember that scene for ever […] the way she stood there […] with her hair long and loose by the water in front of the bamboo thicket, with her hand raised to wave goodbye as though she were a sister to all of us. […] she was warm, even a little loving, and clearly sad that we had to go so soon. And she showed it too, quite openly, differently from our girls in Hué, who always act like indifferent, unattainable ladies in public.]

Like the women in Degenhardt's lyric, this woman is associated with a machine gun and with water. Like Degenhardt's protagonists, too, she has a dual aspect, in this case appearing both as a simple village girl charmingly carrying out domestic tasks and as an armed partisan. Likewise, her symbolic correlative, the water, is both a bucolic setting for romantic meetings and partings, and potentially a destructive flood. That is, the woman's attraction remains ambiguous. Her beauty and manner fascinate the speaker, who is attracted by her frankness in comparison with the women he knows in Hué (an attribute which suggests, in a Reichian way, that her political liberation correlates with a subjective liberation). But in the same breath, the speaker stresses that she is a sister figure, implying that the troubling idea of her as sexual woman with the dangerous attributes of water and weaponry needs to be erased.

In a memoir of a journey to the DRV, *Vietnam 30 Tage danach* [Vietnam 30 Days On], the then Communist writer Peter Schütt describes his interpreter Phuong, in her late twenties, as a model of revolutionary youth. On the one hand, Phuong's beauty is emphasized, but on the other, so is her lack of visible sexuality: 'Eigentlich sieht sie noch ganz wie ein Kind aus' [Actually, she still looks just like a child] (113). Asked why she does not have a boyfriend, Phuong explains:

> 'Erst müssen wir unser Land wiederaufbauen!' [...] Für Phuong und ihre zwanzig-, fünfundzwanzigjährigen Altersgenossen gibt es offensichtlich nur Arbeit und Kampf. Sie haben den Verdacht, daß persönliches Glück ihre bedingungslose Einsatzbereitschaft schmälern könnte. 'Unter dreißig Jahren,' erfahre ich, 'sollte sich kein Kämpfer verlieben. Wenn der Friede gesichert ist [...], dann gibt es die Liebe vielleicht schon für Zwanzigjährige.' Das sind Elemente einer revolutionären Askese, wie wir sie aus den frühen sowjetischen Romanen kennen. [...] Im heutigen Vietnam leben und

> arbeiten Männer und Frauen gemeinsam [...] ohne daß die sexuelle Versuchung zum Problem wird. (105)
>
> ['First we have to rebuild our country!' […] for Phuong and her twenty- to twenty-five-year-old peers it is clear that only work and the struggle matter. They suspect that personal happiness could reduce their unconditional commitment to their cause. 'Under the age of thirty', she tells me, 'no fighter ought to fall in love. When peace is secured […] maybe even twenty-year-olds can love'. This evokes the revolutionary asceticism of the early Soviet novel. […] In Vietnam today, men and women live and work together […] without sexual temptation becoming a problem.]

Echoing Biblical ideas of temptation, Schütt imagines sexual attraction as 'Versuchung' [temptation] and a 'Problem' [problem]. Therefore, it is stressed that young, revolutionary women like Phuong in North Vietnam are celibate. These words may reflect the DRV's contemporary 'patriotic code of heroic female selflessness – in which [...] young girls forfeited marriage prospects for the greater good of the nation', as well as Leninist discourse praising revolutionary celibacy, which was known in West Germany.[41] It links also to the longstanding notion in German culture of the chaste warrior woman.[42] But in addition, this description resonates with the writing's tendency to desexualize powerful or politicized women. Even in 'Pilotengespräch', the image of Nho appears split in the same way as these examples from the memoirs. Her mourning for her presumably younger siblings recalls the image of the bereaved mother prevalent in the poetry; but because she is the children's sister, rather than their mother, she can

41 Pettus, *Between Sacrifice and Desire*, 5; cf. Burchett, *Partisanen contra Generale*, 82; Eisen, *Women and Revolution*, 191–93. On ideas about revolutionary celibacy in the FRG, see e.g. Gretchen Dutschke, *Wir hatten ein barbarisches, schönes Leben*, 56–57; Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke*, 60. Curiously, Susan Sontag, in her memoir *Trip to Hanoi: Journey to a City at War* (1968) (London: Panther, 1969), translated by Anne Uhde as *Reise nach Hanoi* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968), makes precisely the same association between revolutionary activity and the theme of sexual restraint in North Vietnam, down to a near-identical sentence, at least as it appears in German, to that by Schütt quoted above: 'Im heutigen Vietnam leben und arbeiten Männer und Frauen gemeinsam, sie essen, kämpfen und schlafen nebeneinander, ohne daß die Frage sexueller Versuchung zum Problem wird' (*Reise nach Hanoi*, 50) [In present-day Vietnam, women and men work, eat, fight and sleep together without raising any issue of sexual temptation (*Trip to Hanoi*, 65)]. One possible explanation for this consonance may be that both writers are reflecting very precisely information given to them by their North Vietnamese guides.

42 Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, 'The Woman Warrior as Cross-Dresser in German Literature', in Colvin and Watanabe-O'Kelly (eds), *Women and Death 2*, 28–44.

be imagined as a non-sexual maternal figure, thus helping to defuse the implicit threat of sexual wounding.

Such threats are countered, too, by other strategies in the writing, those which, despite the frequent, manifest critique of war as masculine aggression, nonetheless reinforce masculinity. Alsheimer's memoir, for instance, asserts a traditional European, masculine role in the way he unselfconsciously sexualizes and silences Vietnamese women and idealizes his transactions with sex workers, for example the unnamed woman described above whose breasts are said to be 'Schalen aus Porzellan' [porcelain bowls] and 'elfenbeinerne Rundungen' [ivory curves] (108). These descriptions make the woman seem like an assemblage of commodities from the exotic East, not far removed from the fantasies of *Madama Butterfly* and similar narratives. Alsheimer glosses over the financial aspects of his encounters with this woman in favour of emphasizing her great sexual pleasure, thus affirming his self-image as a good lover and drawing attention away from the possibility that his behaviour is exploitative. This narrative is also in line with *Madama Butterfly*, in which the heroine, although treated like a commodity by her lover, is motivated solely by her love for him, thus making the sordid, material realities of her situation more palatable and romantic for the audience.

In 'Pilotengespräch', Nho is a topic of casual talk between men who know her 'aus der Bar' [from the bar]. She thus becomes a kind of common property and an object of conversational exchange between men in a linguistic replication of the ways in which in patriarchal, homosocial societies, bonds between men may be forged by exchange of insignificant women. As Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes: 'In the presence of a woman who can be seen as pitiable or contemptible, men are able to exchange power and to confirm each other's value'.[43] So on one level, the poem compares bombing to aggressive sex with a woman from a victimized people, which itself serves to boost masculine identity. And on another, it is also a moment of shared danger and hence intimacy between the two pilots, one of whom uses Nho's name to facilitate superficial conversation. Therefore, as suggested by the constant, reassuring repetition in the poem of 'Junge' [man], the raid, conversation and shared relationship with Nho, with whom these are associated, all articulate the shoring-up of a masculine identity by creating a bond between the two men.

43 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 160; quoted in Jeffords, *The Remasculinization of America*, 60.

However, that bond too proves to be ambiguous, for its existence points to an unspeakable sense of the men's mutual dependence which could be experienced as an index of individual weakness or a flaw in the 'armour' of the self, a factor which may also contribute to the neurosis fuelling military aggression.[44]

A 'Moral Disaster Area': Vietnam and Germany

While some Vietnam poems from West Germany apparently stage an anxious drama between Vietnamese and US subjects in which US masculine identity is at stake, the strength of this anxiety may reflect the fact that, while such poems ostensibly target the US, their troubling implications unsettle sensibilities closer to home too. Surprisingly, the Vietnam writing resonates with some popular discourses of a culture which many activists sought to reject, namely that of the West German late 1940s and 1950s. It is striking how closely the poems parallel certain representations of women from the earlier post-war period; and it is in this respect that they appear both most ambiguous and most revealing as to their latent meanings. In the emergent FRG, the catastrophic end of the war and National Socialism, the loss or wounding of many German men and concomitant growth in autonomy for women helped provoke uncertainties about both masculine and national identities.[45] Many of these insecurities were displaced onto women's behaviour, creating, for instance, the stereotype of the single, fraternizing and potentially uncontrolled woman who seemingly 'epitomised a threat to the national cultural order' as Mariatte C. Denman puts it.[46]

44 See Jeffords on ways in which US representations of the war can both expose and cover up homoerotic desire (*The Remasculinization of America*, 13–15).

45 See Frank Biess, 'Survivors of Totalitarianism: Returning POWs and the Reconstruction of Masculine Citizenship in West Germany, 1945–1955', in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*, ed. by Hanna Schissler (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), 57–82; Elizabeth Heinemann, 'The Hour of the Woman: Memories of Germany's "Crisis Years" and West German National Identity', in Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years*, 21–56.

46 Mariatte C. Denman, 'Visualising the Nation: Madonnas and Mourning Mothers in Postwar Germany', in *Gender and Germanness: Cultural Productions of Nation*, ed. by Patricia Herminghouse and Magda Mueller (Providence and Oxford: Berghahn, 1997), 189–201, especially 194.

This stereotype is most spectacularly evident in some perceptions of women who associated with GIs in the 1950s.[47] According to Maria Höhn, such relationships led to concern in parts of West German society that the US presence in the FRG had created a 'moral disaster area' (3) in which German decency and identity were supposedly being corroded in an 'apocalyptic' (120) way. Disapproval was expressed of US-style bars where West German women met GIs and listened to supposedly uncivilized music which encouraged dancing said to be barely distinguishable from sex (206–08). These bars provoked outrage, too, because they attracted German children who begged from US soldiers, and 'it was feared that children might be seduced into acting as procurers for love-starved GIs' (133). So while in practice relationships between West German women and US men took on many forms, there was a powerful tendency in conservative quarters to suspect, even criminalize, all of them, labelling the women as sex workers (177–97). In other words, phenomena like bar culture seem to have made a connection between foreign men, German women, children, money, poverty, pleasure, consumption, control and gendered social change which triggered a massive sense of crisis.

The Vietnam poetry, too, refers repeatedly to the way the US presence in the RVN corrupts its society and makes women into sex workers. For instance, Hans Gutke's 'QUI NHON' (1968) describes the destruction of an older, idyllic Vietnam and its replacement by a filthy shanty town constructed from US rubbish. A woman is described who works in a bar where the music is so loud that 'man […] nicht zu denken [braucht]' [you don't need to think] (l. 24) (that is, music which excludes the valorized German dimensions of intellect and *Bildung* [education]). Her little sister, a child beggar, already understands prostitution in that she sells her smiles.[48] Such images are evoked, too, by a photograph illustrating an article in *konkret* (1967) on US corruption in South Vietnam and showing a ragged child smoking, that is, both consuming and being consumed by US-led social degeneration. This picture is captioned 'Schwarzmarkt, Hunger und Prostitution. 10–jähriges bettelndes Kind in Saigon' [Black market, starvation and prostitution. A ten-year-old child

47 Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Further references appear in the main body of the text.

48 Hans Gutke, 'QHI NHON', set in 'Viet Nam – 11. Dezember 1966', is perhaps the only poem in this corpus inspired by a visit to Vietnam (tode (ed.), *gegen den krieg in vietnam*, 16). Interestingly, Gutke is described as a 'Deutsch-Amerikaner'.

begging in Saigon].[49] So some of the West German texts about Vietnam appear to reiterate, right down to specific detail, precisely those discourses about moral disaster areas in US-controlled parts of the FRG with which their authors would have grown up. They do so in order to condemn the US presence in the RVN and, by extension, all they could associate with it, such as the rampage of global capitalism or the irresistible, destructive forces of technological modernity itself. This argument suggests among other things that some of the authors do not only evoke images of women and social degeneration from the 1940s and 1950s to describe a new context, Vietnam. It seems also that they implicitly apply older perceptions of the US presence in the FRG in the 1940s and 1950s to present-day Germany; for analogies between the RVN and the FRG could easily be, and were, drawn.[50] In other words, poetry expressing concern about the state of South Vietnam might also be expressing concern about the current state of West Germany.

Moreover, the allusion in some of these texts to images from earlier decades demonstrates their sometimes ambiguous positions regarding the recent German past. For instance, as Mausbach has argued, condemning the Vietnam War allows authors to condemn National Socialism too, for a persistent identification was made as the 1960s wore on between the US action in Vietnam and Nazi atrocities. However, this condemnation, albeit deeply felt, has complex undertones. In the 1940s and 1950s the West German popular imagination's pendant image to that of the immoral, fraternizing woman was of the mourning mother or Madonna, which, Denman argues, was socially stabilizing in affirming a traditional, submissive image of suffering, national innocence. Such images helped to 'circumvent confrontation with the memories of Germany's specific National Socialist past' by obscuring it with images which did not challenge individuals or society with knowledge of NS atrocities, issues of responsibility, or consequent fissures in national and other forms of identity.[51] Therefore, some Vietnam writers' replication of images like that of the mourning mother may replicate also some earlier strategies for occluding painful questions about the German past.

This occlusion of the past has its parallels in the way the likening of events in Vietnam to Nazi atrocities may have the effect of marginalizing those earlier atrocities and their victims, and effacing

49 Anon., 'Schwarzmarkt: Whisky für den Vietkong', *konkret* (1967), 1, 7–9 (9).

50 See Davies, '*Zwei, drei, viele West Berlin?*', 150–52.

51 Denman, 'Visualising the Nation', 199.

the culpability of German perpetrators as focus shifts to US actions in Vietnam. Moreover, the multi-layered analogies which suggest simultaneously that the Vietnamese people's fate is like that of the victims of Nazism, and that West Germans are in the same position as the South Vietnamese, may also allow West Germans obliquely to see themselves too as victims of both the US and, by analogy, Nazism. Again, this possibility replicates the immediate post-war discourse which put non-Jewish German suffering centre stage.[52] Thus, the Vietnam poetry, while claiming to recall the Holocaust, may also be read compellingly as a complex discourse which simultaneously reveals and denies the German past in unstable ways.

This replication of earlier discourses, some themselves of course not new in the 1940s and 1950s, but in turn harking back to the nineteenth century and before, demonstrates that in a number of ways the 1960s protest movements by no means marked a caesura in Germany's cultural and political history, as their protagonists often cared to believe.[53] Rather, writing emanating from these protest movements was at times more committed to maintaining, preserving and perpetuating the older generation's self-images, and more profoundly attached to them than might be expected, or than its authors themselves were aware. In other words, protesters' contradictory replication of precisely those past discourses which they claimed to reject shows how they were caught up in and liable to repeat a complex series of narratives from past and present, possibly suggesting a compulsion to repeat uncomprehended past trauma or disturbance.[54]

In sum, an important aspect of what the Vietnam writing shows is contemporary insecurity about historical and national identity. As in the 1940s and 1950s (and, indeed, in many other contexts) this crisis can be projected onto images of women from a nostalgic symbolic world: here, a Vietnam which can be imagined as simpler and purer in its contours. Indeed, these feminine figures can themselves appear as battlegrounds of competing meanings, and at times seem literally explosive, even apocalyptic, as in 'IN EINKAUFSNETZEN' where women may not only destroy themselves, but everyone and everything around them.

52 See Davies, '*Zwei, drei, viele West Berlin?*'.

53 See Gerd Koenen, 'Wahn und Zeit: Rudi Dutschke am Kairós der Weltrevolution 1967/68', in Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt*, 35–65.

54 See Davies, '*Zwei, drei, viele West Berlin?*'.

Moving Images: Vietnam and the Neue Frauenbewegung

The Vietnam poems as a whole, despite some interesting exceptions, thus project some highly traditional images of femininity and make traditional symbolic use of them too, for example to encode ambiguous ideas about the past. Another striking feature of this poetry is its comparative dearth of women poets, for among the poems surveyed only a handful are by women.[55] Reflections about the relevance of the authors' gender to the writing's gender politics must remain inconclusive due to such limited evidence. It can be noted, however, that their representations of women do not differ significantly from those in other poems. Intriguingly, the most unconventional poet in this respect, K. Werner, who wrote 'Yes – I love him' in the voice of 'Sergeant | Marylouisa Miller | aus Cataplasma | Connecticut' conceals his or her gender by use of an initial.

But such imagery may have very contemporary meanings beyond its possible allusions to a fraught German past, and some of these may be explored through the work of a feminist activist and former anti-authoritarian, Helke Sander, as it looks back at the late 1960s. Sander's film *Der subjektive Faktor* (1981), about a mother's experience in the West Berlin anti-authoritarian movement, focuses extensively on anti-war protest as it is experienced by the protagonist Anni. In one scene in the film, in dramatic (rather than documentary) footage, Anni speaks at length on the phone to a melancholy, male acquaintance. As she does so, she contemplates a large placard, presumably for use at demonstrations, which is currently propped up in the corner of her room. This placard shows a Vietnamese woman holding a baby and a gun. The woman in the picture, like those in *konkret*, is a contemporary icon and in this context represents *inter alia* the ideal anti-authoritarian integration of the personal (parenting the child) and the militantly political (the gun). It may be for this reason that during the call Anni, wearing a kimono-style dressing gown which evokes images of the imagined East, attempts to copy the Vietnamese woman's stance, holding a teddy bear and mop in place of the child and rifle.

55 Compare Linda Herold, 'gestern', *es darf: literarische jugendzeitschrift*, 2 (1968), 6, no pag. [15]; Ulla Hahn, 'Nixon in Moskau' (1972) and Fasia Jansen, 'Mutter, gib deinen Jungen nicht her' (song lyric) (1967), both in Voigtländer and Witt (eds), *Denkzettel*, 439–40 and 435–36 respectively; Heike Doutiné, 'Überlegungen beim Lesen einer Zeitungsnotiz', in *agitprop: Lyrik, Thesen, Berichte*, ed. by Joachim Fuhrmann and others (Hamburg: Quer-Verlag, no d. [1970?]), 158.

Anni's choice of domestic objects as props points to the way in which her battles are fought on the home as well as the internationalist front due to the sexist atmosphere of the anti-authoritarian movement in which the politics of women's everyday lives are excluded from serious debate, and women literally relegated to the kitchen.[56] The fact that in this scene Anni soon gives up her attempt to emulate the Vietnamese woman's position suggests that her identification with that image fails. Hence the Vietnamese woman remains a two-dimensional, silent, motionless, and impossible picture which is, according to Sander, itself merely a male fantasy.[57] When the camera moves in on the placard of the Vietnamese woman, the man on the phone is saying, 'Ich habe doch auch meine Gedanken und Sehnsüchte' [But I have my thoughts and longings too], longings which it seems he may wish Anni to fulfil. So while Anni's own 'Gedanken and Sehnsüchte' [thoughts and longings] may temporarily be with the image of the Vietnamese woman, they are overlaid aurally and in other ways too with the man's.

This dynamic between the man, the image and Anni suggests that she is caught between various competing, masculine demands projected onto her. *Der subjektive Faktor* is an account of Anni's search for political expression, partly catalysed by such canonical images as that of the Vietnamese woman, but also by their ultimate inadequacy for the nascent West German feminist subject. The placard of the Vietnamese woman reappears in the film in various contexts and it is perhaps unsurprising that in one scene, again in Anni's home, it has been placed upside-down, suggesting its uselessness for Anni, or perhaps a desire to turn on their heads the era's fraught images of fighting women.

But later Sanders's film puts this image literally into motion. *Der subjektive Faktor* shows, too, in part by means of documentary footage, that it was precisely around Vietnam protests that women's dissatisfaction with the movements' sexism first crystallized. The

56 See Helke Sander, 'Der SDS – ein aufgeblasener konterrevolutionärer Hefeteig', *konkret*, 12 (1968), 6 and 'Nicht Opfer sein, sondern Macht haben', in Kätzel (ed.), *Die 68erinnen*, 160–79; *Wie weit flog die Tomate? Eine 68erinnen Gala der Reflexion*, ed. by Heinrich Böll-Stiftung and Feministisches Institut (Berlin: Heinrich Böll-Stiftung, 1999); Kristina Schulz, 'Macht und Mythos von "1968": Zur Bedeutung der 68er Protestbewegungen für die Formierung der neuen Frauenbewegung in Frankreich und Deutschland', in Gilcher-Holtey (ed.), *1968 – Vom Ereignis zur Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, 256–72 and 'Frauen in Bewegung: Mit der Neuen Linken über die Linke(n) hinaus', in Klimke and Scharloth (eds), *1968*, 247–58.

57 Helke Sander, personal correspondence with the author, 20 June 2008.

film represents the way Sander and others arranged, for the first time at such an event, childcare at the Internationaler Vietnamkongress.[58] That project gave rise to the *Kinderläden* [community nurseries] movement, another important origin of the Neue Frauenbewegung. *Der subjektive Faktor* also shows events at the last conference of the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund, the main student organization associated with protest, in November 1968. In a formative, now celebrated feminist action, some women members, exasperated by male comrades' dismissal of their concerns, circulated a flyer showing a naked, Medusa-like, castrating woman who has collected as trophies phalloi taken from eminent male figures in the SDS and beyond.[59] This flyer, according to its authors intended as an ironic invitation to debate, may make explicit and mock what they thought were contemporary fears of women's political critique. Its images dovetail interestingly with precisely those fears about politically active, resistant or armed, and castrating women at which the poems discussed above hint. This document and the SDS meeting's virulent, aggressive responses to it thus show that around 1968 gender politics in the protest movements were causing acute anxiety; and that women activists were challenging the roles allotted to them.

In this sense, too, the film makes telling use of the image of the Vietnamese woman. In a later scene which uses apparently documentary footage this placard reappears. At this point in the film, the childcare movement has gained momentum, and Anni and her fellow activists are finding a voice. It is therefore telling that in this scene the placard is now held the right way up again and carried in a demonstration by women who are beginning to organize independently. Thus, they are literally moving on from the restrictions of the anti-war discourse; and yet upholding its tenets of personal and political liberation.

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has demonstrated some crucial points about aspects of anti-authoritarian textuality, as anticipated by the previous chapter and its discussion of Enzensberger's essay 'Gemeinplätze,

58 Sander, 'Nicht Opfer sein, sondern Macht haben'.

59 Compare Kraushaar, *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, I: 371–72, with a reproduction of the flyer; transcript in *Studentenbewegung 1967–69: Protokolle und Materialien*, ed. by Eberhard Windaus and Frank Wolff (Frankfurt a.M.: Roter Stern, 1977), 219–32.

die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. While Enzensberger does not discuss agit-prop poems in that work, the texts discussed in this chapter nonetheless resonate with it both formally and thematically in ways which will be discussed further in Chapter 7 of this study. Likewise, Sanders's film *Der subjektive Faktor* espouses aspects of anti-authoritarian textuality as set out by Enzensberger, even though it was produced some years after the zenith of the protest movements. For instance, this work combines different kinds of footage and narrative and sets up powerful dialogues between them. In this respect, it combines Enzensbergerian features with a strong critical edge with regard to gender and the roles of women, and highlights the importance of those themes for the West German protest movements around 1968. In doing so, Sander's film challenges the apparent absence of women in the most high-profile cultural production of anti-authoritarianism, as represented, for example, by the mostly male-authored poems debated in the present chapter. *Der subjektive Faktor* thus suggests that at that time women's creativity was as vital as it was marginalized, and reminds viewers of the importance of women's texts, in a broad sense, in the protest movements.

Subtly, the film features from the start the work of women artists. Early on, Anni and a male friend put up a poster which looks like the distinctive work of Elke Regehr and Helga Reidemeister, who were, as Regehr commented later, known as a 'Team für revolutionäre Graphik' [revolutionary graphics team] within the West Berlin SDS.[60] Their work features in the film's images of the International Vietnam Congress, too, for they were responsible for the conference's massive, visually innovative backdrop inspired by the NLF flag, which became a key part of the anti-war movement's iconography. Regehr has noted that this highly influential piece of visual art was not valued by the event's male protagonists who spoke in front of it, and that she and Reidemeister are not known today as contributors to the conference.[61] Nonetheless, the presence of this distinctive artwork in Sanders's film forms part of its discourse about women's creativity playing out covertly yet influentially behind the scenes.

As a result, more generally too, *Der subjektive Faktor* is suggesting that there may be complex sub-texts and omissions in the productions

60 Elke Regehr, 'Zerreißprobe zwischen Kunst und Politik', in Kätzel (ed.), *Die 68erinnen*, 81–99.

61 Sarah Haffner has made a similar comment with regard to her unacknowledged work on English-language communications behind the scenes of the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß (Sarah Haffner, 'Die Frauen war der revolutionärste Teil dieser etwas revolutionären Bewegung', in Kätzel (ed.), *Die 68erinnen*, 141–59 (149–50)).

of the protest movements. While Sander is interested in women's hidden creativity, on the evidence of the present chapter another important example of such an occluded sub-text as evidenced by the anti-war poetry is the era's complex relationship to the German past, a fraught connection which is masked with the traditional images of women deployed in its poetry. Amongst other things, then, this study's next chapter will explore further this theme of the submerged, yet present past.

3. Playing with Fire: Kommune I, 1967–68

Introduction

As the first chapter of this study has shown, Hans Magnus Enzensberger's essay 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' (1968) can be read as a manifesto for anti-authoritarian writing. This kind of textuality valorizes the heteroglossic, avant-gardist and iconoclastic, and insists on breaking down the traditional division of theory and practice. In the course of his discussion, Enzensberger hints that the era's most compelling exponent of such work is one Fritz Teufel. But in line with his essay's often disorienting tone, Enzensberger's reference is frustrating, for it contains no further detail as to Teufel's identity or his creations. It is misleading, too, because while Teufel was a household name in West Germany in 1968, he was not an individual author in a conventional sense. Rather, he wrote as part of a collective which came, more than any other agent, to represent anti-authoritarianism's self-reflexive and highly provocative poetics. This group was West Berlin's celebrated – or notorious – Kommune I.[1]

KI was founded in early 1967 and survived, with different combinations of members, into 1969, when it broke apart painfully under the pressures of interpersonal tensions, political differences and the disintegrating protest movements.[2] In its heyday, it caused

1 Kommune I generally abbreviated its own name as KI. See Alexander Holmig, '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…": Wirken und Wirkung der Kommune I (1967–1969)' (unpublished master's thesis, Humboldt University Berlin, 2004), 5.

2 Historical accounts of KI are given in Lönnendonker and others (eds), *Die antiautoritäre Revolte*, I: 304–30 & 400–60; Holmig, '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…"'; and 'Die aktionistischen Wurzeln der Studentenbewegung: Subversive Aktion, Kommune I und die Neudefinition des Politischen', in Klimke and Scharloth (eds), *1968*, 107–18. Biographies of KI's protagonists also tell its history, for example, Marco Carini, *Fritz Teufel: Wenn's der Wahrheitsfindung*

public outrage with its controversial protest about such topics as the Vietnam War, the continued influence of former Nazis in West Germany and the repressive nature of contemporary life. At the same time, KI expressed an overriding commitment to subjective change and very public experiments with lifestyle, and had a remarkable gift for self-publicity.[3] So in KI's early months its (bad) reputation was greater than that of all other activists and groups.[4] The shock KI generated by its actions was hugely influential for perceptions of protest in West Germany, especially in the pivotal year 1967, as Enzensberger's essay recognizes. KI's work is characteristic of anti-authoritarianism, too, because it relies very centrally on the extensive production and subversive use of writing in many forms. Therefore, an exploration of its extraordinary work is indispensable for a cultural and textual history of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition.

KI achieved its effects in part through sheer audacity, and the offensive and contradictory nature of its self-stylizations and actions, which caused immediate shock and horror. But such features alone do not account for their impact. Crucially, KI employed a distinctive, complex poetics of cultural disturbance, the effect of which was sustained as well as profoundly unsettling, and which owes much to the group's avant-garde heritage. This chapter explores and analyses this poetics by investigating some of its distinctive, Surrealist

dient (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur, 2003); Aribert Reimann, *Dieter Kunzelmann: Avantgardist, Protestler, Radikaler* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009). See also the autobiographical accounts referenced below.

3 See such sensational reporting as Wilfried Ahrens and Sepp Ebelseder, 'Pack die Sahnetörtchen ein', *Stern*, 23 April 1967, 20–22. Some such coverage is collected, too, in KI's own numerous compendia of their writings and actions and responses to them, for example, *Gesammelte Werke gegen uns* (Berlin: KI, June 1967); a later edition of the same text called *Zerschmettert den Moabiter Pleitegeier!* (Berlin: KI, September 1967); *Bunte Kommune Illustrierte No 1* (the title of this idiosyncratic compilation is identified as such by Holmig in '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…"'), dated 17/18 February 1968; *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung* (Berlin: KI, 1968); Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*; and a brochure with the heading *Der Würger von Wedding erhängte sich* (Berlin: KI, no d.). With the exception of the more widely-available facsimile of *Klau mich*, these publications, now rare, fetch high prices on the antiquarian market.

4 April 1967, for example, saw the publication of over fifty newspaper reports on KI. By contrast, Rudi Dutschke, for example, today seen as the most prominent 1960s activist, only became known in the press late in 1967 and above all in early 1968. On coverage of Dutschke, see Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke*, 184–85, 193, 195, 202–03, 221–22. KI attracted a considerable mailbag from fans, admirers, enemies and others as a result of its notoriety (See the Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, Sammlung 'Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin', files 03.02 and 03.03 (Kommune I Korrespondenz)).

strategies. This enquiry refers above all to the consequences of KI's best-known blend of text and action, its distribution of some provocative flyers in May 1967 which claimed to protest against the Vietnam War and triggered a trial for incitement to arson.[5] KI published an extensive record of this trial and related texts in a book, *Klau mich: StPO der Kommune I* (1968), on which the following analysis focuses.[6] This chapter outlines, first, KI's thinking and the historical background to the flyers and trial. Second, it discusses the communards' attempts to challenge and offend their readers, and their ambivalence about their own posterity. Third, it explores three strategies used by KI to undermine its trial, namely its uses of clothing, defamiliarization effects and theatrical imagery. Fourth, the chapter considers the relationship between these scandalous strategies and KI's avant-garde influences. Finally, it returns to the complex relationship between anti-authoritarianism and the recent German past broached by the second chapter of this study.

'der Mensch des 21. Jahrhunderts': Kommune I

KI was a loosely constituted group of activists, some of whom had been linked with Subversive Aktion, an aesthetic and political underground grouping based *inter alia* in Munich and West Berlin.[7] Subversive Aktion had its origins partly in two highbrow, literary journals, the Munich-based *ludus* (1961) and *flöte & schafott* (1962–63), later re-named *texturen* (1963–64).[8] It had also grown in part out of the Munich art group SPUR, which in turn had links with the Situationist International, a radical European avant-garde group partly inspired by Dada and Surrealism.[9] In the mid-1960s, Subversive Aktion sought

5 See Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 52–53; Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I: Berlin 1967–1969* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2004), 135–45; Holmig, '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…"', 71–75 and 'Die aktionistischen Wurzeln der Studentenbewegung', 115–17; Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 78–81; Rainer Langhans, *Ich bin's. Die ersten 68 Jahre* (Munich: Blumenbar, 2008), 65–68; Lönnendonker and others, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte*, I: 329–30, 458–61; Reimann, *Dieter Kunzelmann*, 144–60.

6 Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*. This work is cited here throughout without page references for it is unpaginated.

7 See, for example, Böckelmann and Nagel (eds), *Subversive Aktion*.

8 On Subversive Aktion and *texturen*, see Buhmann, *Ich habe mir eine Geschichte geschrieben*, 84–88.

9 On the SI, see e.g. Andrew Hussey, *The Game of War: The Life and Death of Guy Debord* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2001); *Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. by Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1995); Sadie

to infiltrate the West Berlin branch of the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund, a well-established, left-wing student organization, in order to mobilize its structures for its own, less conventional ends. And in a reverse move, other communards came from the SDS itself, having become dissatisfied with what they saw as the conventional, overly theoretical nature of its politics. All KI members chose to live and work together in ways considered scandalous, not only outside the protest movements, but within them too.[10] Therefore, KI stands for the confluence of avant-garde, aesthetic and more traditional left-wing ideas, theories and structures which came together so strikingly in West German anti-authoritarianism.[11]

The term 'Kommune' reflected the group's ambitions, as described in 2004 by Ulrich Enzensberger, another of its founders:

> Im Wort 'Kommune' floß vieles zusammen. Zunächst sollte die 'Kommune' als revolutionäre Organisationsform die verbotene Kommunistische Partei ersetzen. In [*sic*] Wort selbst hallte noch die geballte Verachtung des preußischen Kasinos, der Mörder von Rosa Luxemburg und Karl Liebknecht, für Spartakus, für den 'roten Mob', die Weddinger 'Flintenweiber' nach. Das Wort beschwor die 'Pariser Commune'. Es rührte auch an Unbewußtes. Mindestens genauso wichtig wie all das zusammen aber war die 'Große Proletarische Kulturrevolution', waren die chinesischen 'Volkskommunen'.[12]
>
> [Many things came together in the word 'commune'. To begin with, the 'commune', as a revolutionary form of organization, was supposed to replace the banned Communist Party. The word itself carried echoes of the contempt in the Prussian officers' mess, of the

Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992). KI's links with these avant-gardes are well-documented. See Dreßen and others (eds), *Nilpferd des höllischen Urwalds*; Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*; Thomas Hecken, *Gegenkultur und Avantgarde 1950–1970: Situationisten, Beatniks, 68er* (Tübingen: Francke, 2006); Holmig, 'Die aktionistischen Wurzeln der Studentenbewegung'; Juchler, 'Die Avantgardegruppe "Subversive Aktion"'; Mia Lee, 'Umherschweifen und Spektakel: Die situationistische Tradition' in Klimke and Scharloth (eds), *1968*, 101–06.

10 The West Berlin SDS excluded members of KI in May 1967, following their composition and distribution of controversial flyers on university matters which they had misleadingly signed SDS (Lönnendonker and others, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte*, I: 454–61).

11 On the wider student movement and earlier avant-gardes and Modernist movements, notably Dada and Surrealism, see, for example, McCormick, *Politics of the Self*, 7–18, 44–46.

12 Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 77. On the term 'commune', see Holmig, '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…"', 6.

> murderers of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, for Spartakus, for the 'red mob', for the 'shotgun women' of Wedding. The word evoked the 'Paris Commune'. It also touched on the Unconscious. But at least as important as all this put together were the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' and the Chinese 'People's Communes'.]

The allusion to the Paris Commune and the idea that KI could replace a formally constituted Communist party demonstrate an emblematic desire to identify with a less orthodox leftist politics. Reference to Luxemburg and Liebknecht reflects the Commune's perception of its roots in a German tradition of revolt. The mention of 'die chinesischen "Volkskommunen"' [the Chinese 'People's Communes'] is emphatically of its time and place, pointing up the era's characteristic internationalist interests in general, as well as anti-authoritarian fascination with Chinese-style Communism in particular.[13] As Enzensberger indicates here with the term 'Unbewußtes' [Unconscious], KI was also deeply influenced by ideas drawn from psychoanalysis, and the so-called subjective factor of politics.

This characteristic synthesis of diverse theoretical interests is reflected also in the group's idealizing adoption of the programmatic words of the Latin American revolutionary Ernesto 'Che' Guevara: 'Es ist der Mensch des 21. Jahrhunderts, den wir schaffen müssen…' [It is twenty-first century man whom we must create…].[14] KI claimed that it sought to push the boundaries of subjective political action, as advocated by Guevara, as far as it could. The group was supposed to be an experiment with communal living which would be deeply political, in the sense that it was intended to dismantle the repressive individual and family psychological structures which upheld the

13 The author and former leading SDS member Peter Schneider described himself critically in 1988 as 'eines der ersten Lektüreopfer des Roten Buches' [one of the first victims of reading the Red Book], meaning Mao Zedong's Little Red Book, a collection which had both ideological and cult status (Lönnendonker and others, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte*, I: 300–01). See also, for example, Rudi Dutschke, *Jeder hat sein Leben ganz zu leben*, 20–21; Juchler, *Die Studentenbewegungen*, 81–93. Mao's China also inspired partly flippant self-stylizations, and even provided a modest source of income for KI, which sold on to other interested parties publications provided by the Chinese state (Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 54–56). Ulrich Enzensberger describes Mao Zedong as the anti-authoritarians' 'Popstar' (*Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 234).

14 Kunzelmann, 'Notizen zur Gründung revolutionärer Kommunen in den Metropolen' (November 1966), frequently reproduced, for example, in KI, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, no pag., or in *Das Leben ändern, die Welt verändern! 1968. Dokumente und Berichte*, ed. by Lutz Schulenburg (Hamburg: Nautilus, 1998), 24–28.

bourgeois state. At the same time, the ground-breaking subjective processes produced by commune life would allow a new kind of activism to emerge.[15] That activism would wrong-foot antagonists, attract media coverage, inspire sympathetic others to follow suit and generate ever more audacious modes of protest. Moreover, KI aimed to demolish alienating boundaries between theory and practice, subject and object, self and world which, as it believed, were entrenched in life under capitalism. In other words, it was an especially eye-catching exponent of what the philosopher and contemporary of the movement Jürgen Habermas described as the aim of the 1960s movements more generally, namely to 'force a reconciliation of art and life'.[16] This aim, of course, is also precisely that of the twentieth-century avant-gardes from which KI in part emerged.

KI saw little point in conventional protest. As the authorities of West Berlin's Freie Universität (FU) noted in a disciplinary enquiry against those members of KI who were also students, the group's own records of its early period in 1967 showed that its idea of protest did not involve 'Demonstrationen gegen den Krieg in Vietnam […], sondern schlechthin […] Störungen der rechtsstaatlichen Ordnung' [demonstrations against the war in Vietnam […], but simply […] disruptions to law and order].[17] This comment recognizes, rightly, that KI aimed in its protests above all to provoke the West German state and its institutions. Such actions intended to highlight what the philosopher Herbert Marcuse had in 1965 most influentially termed 'repressive tolerance'.[18] Repressive tolerance is said to be the double standard of a society which disingenuously claims to grant freedom of speech and action, but is in fact absolutely intolerant, sometimes violently so, of any genuinely critical or subversive speech or action. It is partly for this reason that KI's writings and communications of 1967 emphasize the group's role as demonstrating the repercussions they believed all demonstrators and dissidents could expect in future. It states, for instance, in an

15 KI, 'Zirkular über unsere bisherige Entwicklung', January 1967, in *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung* [no pag.].

16 Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity – An Incomplete Project', trans. by Seyla Ben-Habib (1983), in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), 3–15 (11).

17 Disziplinar-Untersuchungsführer der Freien Universität Berlin, 'Anschuldigungsschrift', in KI, *Zerschmettert den Moabiter Pleitegeier!*, 2–7 (5). Student members of KI were eventually excluded from the FU.

18 See Marcuse, 'Repressive Tolerance', in Wolff and others, *A Critique of Pure Tolerance*, 95–137.

address to readers of its texts: 'Wir wollten uns da als Exempel hinstellen, für Euch, nur früher und grotesker. [...] [W]ir [konnten] uns nur wehren, indem wir Euch zeigten, was man mit uns machen wollte, und daß Ihr schließlich auch damit gemeint seid' [We wanted to make an example of ourselves for you, just earlier and more grotesque. […] [W]e could only defend ourselves by showing you what they wanted to do to us, and that in the end that means you too].[19] On this account, in making a punitive example of KI, the state would reveal to all its true, repressive nature, as well as boosting KI members' self-stylization as heroes and martyrs.

'Warum brennst du, Konsument?':[20] The May Flyers

In April 1967, shortly before the US Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey was to visit West Berlin, members of KI were arrested on suspicion of planning his assassination.[21] They were detained before they could carry out their alleged plan, but the tabloid media made a furore over what it described as a bomb plot backed by Red Beijing. As one sensational headline, very much in tune with the stridently anti-protest tenor of much of the West Berlin press and mainstream public opinion, put it: 'Maos Botschaft in Ost-Berlin lieferte die Bomben gegen Vizepräsident Humphrey' [Mao's East Berlin Embassy Supplied the Bombs to Hit Vice-President Humphrey].[22] But in fact, what KI had had in mind was a protest against the Vietnam War in the form of a slapstick attack on Humphrey's motorcade as he travelled through the city. They planned to set off smoke bombs and to throw pudding and other, similar edible substances coloured red for maximum, gory

19 KI, 'Anfang September', *Zerschmettert den Moabiter Pleitegeier!* [no pag.].

20 'Consumer, Why Are You On Fire?'.

21 See, for example, Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 107–23; Holmig, '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…"', 61–63; Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 63–64; Langhans, *Ich bin's*, 5–54; Lönnendonker and others, *Die antiautoritäre Revolte*, I: 319–24. See also related images in Kathrin Fahlenbrach, 'Protestinszenierungen: Die Studentenbewegung im Spannungsfeld von Kulturrevolution und Medien-Evolution', in Klimke and Scharloth (eds), *1968*, 11–21, 18–19.

22 *Der Abend*, 6 April 1967, 1. A digest of press reports appeared in *Der Spiegel*, 17 April 1967, 61; further examples are included e.g. in KI, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*; Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*.

visual impact.[23] For this reason, this planned action came to be known as KI's 'Pudding-Aktion' [Operation Custard Pie].

To KI, this action successfully confirmed its diagnosis of repressive tolerance in West Berlin. By successfully attracting such negative attention from the newspapers, KI was driving forward decisively the protest movements' sustained, profound suspicion and critiques of the media, especially the West Berlin press, dominated as it was by the highly conservative, anti-protest Springer media group. Instead of offering a purely reactive critique, however, KI aimed to use the press for its own ends, that is, to attract publicity by exploiting its supposed horror of protesters. As another KI founder, Dieter Kunzelmann, later noted of the decision to found KI in West Berlin (albeit no doubt with a degree of retrospective idealization):

> Die Medienresonanz war exzellent, die Springerpresse nahm die geringste linke Aktivität zum Anlaß für eine reißerische Berichterstattung und Hetze. […] Die Erfahrung […] hatte mich gelehrt, wie man Medien so benutzen kann, daß sie trotz ihrer negativ gefärbten Berichterstattung gerade die Ideen verbreiten und bekannt machen, die sie eigentlich unterdrücken oder verschweigen wollen. […] Berlin war reif für ein Spektakel.[24]
>
> [The media response was excellent, the Springer press took even the tiniest amount of left-wing activity as an opportunity for sensational reporting and aggressive propaganda. […] I had learned from experience […] how to use the media in such a way that, despite the negative tone of their reports, they nonetheless disseminated and publicised precisely that which they actually meant to repress or silence. […] Berlin was ready for a spectacle.]

23 The idea seems to have been inspired by the Provos, a contemporary subversive group in the Netherlands, then well-known in the FRG. Provos set off smoke bombs during the wedding of Crown Princess Beatrix in 1966. See Holmig, '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…"', 34. Holmig also refers in this context to Konrad Boehmer and Ton Regtien, 'Provo – Modell oder Anekdote?' (*Kursbuch*, 19 (December 1969), 129–50). On the Provos' smoke bombing, see also Hans Tuynmann, *Ich bin ein Provo: Das permanente Happening*, trans. by Helmut Homeyer (Darmstadt: Melzer, 1967 [1966]). This book points up further links between the Provos and West Berlin's anti-authoritarians, featuring as it does, for example, a chicken called Viva Maria, presumably named after the film of that title by Louis Malle (1965) which inspired West Berliners like Dutschke, too (Chaussy, *Die drei Leben des Rudi Dutschke*, 151–56; see also Roel van Duyn, *Provo! Einleitung ins provozierende Denken*, trans. by Cornelia Krasser and Jochen Schmück (Berlin: Libertad, 1983); Margarete Kosel, *Gammler, Beatniks, Provos: Die schleichende Revolution* (Frankfurt a.M.: Bärmeier & Nikel, 1967); Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 47).

24 Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 49.

This attempted instrumentalization of the hostile press to disseminate KI's ideas may be read as an updating and radicalization of the Dadaists' practice of building newspaper cuttings into their visual artwork with critical effect.[25]

As a result of the 'Pudding-Attentat' and its press coverage, KI's profile was high by 22 May 1967, when a major fire broke out during opening hours at a department store in Brussels.[26] Over 200 people died in this tragedy and the West German press described it in sensational terms, accompanied by dramatic photographs of people falling from the burning building.[27] Initally, too, press reports suggested that the fire might have been started by Communists or anti-war protesters. While this idea later proved to be unfounded, it was rendered more plausible by the fact that the store was running a promotion of US products at the time. In response to both the fire and the ways in which it was reported, KI produced four different flyers, often called the 'Maiflugblätter' [May flyers], and distributed them at the FU on 24 May.[28]

The May flyers formed part of a longer sequence of provocative texts issued by KI in 1967–68. All these texts were numbered

25 On this practice in Dada, see Richard Sheppard, *Modernism – Dada – Postmodernism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 181.

26 The flyers refer to the name of the store as 'À l'Innovation'; other accounts give it as 'L'Innovation'.

27 For example, 'Das schwarze Todeshaus verschlang 303 Menschen', *Bild*, 24 May 1967, 1; 'Rund 300 Tote durch SABOTAGE!'; 'Wie in einem Leichenschauhaus', *BZ*, 24 May 1967, 1 and 10 respectively. Both *Bild*'s and *BZ*'s reports are accompanied by enormous photographs of people jumping and climbing out of the burning building. There is a review of press coverage in Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 137–44. In a more recent, historical account, Reimann gives the number of deaths as about 250 (*Dieter Kunzelmann*, 149).

28 Exceptionally for anti-authoritarian ephemera, the May flyers have been subject to a number of critical analyses, almost from the moment of their dissemination. The first wave of these analyses is constituted by the texts described in note 37, followed soon after by Karl Heinz Bohrer's important and perceptive essays which make the case that the flyers represent an unprecedented, genuinely Surrealist renaissance in Germany: 'Zuschauen beim Salto mortale: Ideologieverdacht gegen die Literatur' and 'Surrealismus und Terror oder die Aporien des Juste-milieu', in Bohrer, *Die gefährdete Phantasie*, 9–31 and 32–61 respectively. Subsequently, critical readings have been sparse, and often part of doctoral theses rather than mainstream academic works, reflecting the ongoing unpalatability of these texts to the (critical) establishment. Critical analyses of the flyers include: Briegleb, *1968*, 61–112; Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*; Huber, *Politisierung der Literatur*, 137–55; Komfort-Hein, *'Flaschenposten'*, 265–71; Leise, *Die Literatur und Ästhetik der Studentenbewegung*, 138–44.

chronologically, so that the May flyers can be referred to by their numbers in that sequence, namely 6, 7, 8 and 9.[29] All except flyer 9 are explicitly dated '24.5.67', and all four use the image of the burning department store as a starting point for responses in various discursive modes to the Vietnam conflict. Flyer 6, while being entirely fictional, purports to be a newspaper report about and interview with an anti-US protester who set the fire in Brussels. Flyer 7 uses the diction of advertising to describe both the Brussels fire and the Vietnam War itself as exciting American products which West Berliners are burning to experience. Flyer 8 is apparently direct and confrontational in its call for fires to be started in West Berlin department stores in protest at the war. Finally, flyer 9 is a rhapsodic, euphoric account of the sheer excitement of a fire in a department store in which everyone can participate and loot luxury items.

These writings provoked outrage in many quarters. The tabloid *Berliner Zeitung* [*Berlin Newspaper*] called anyone who seemed, like KI, not to take the Brussels tragedy appropriately seriously 'gemeingefährlich' [a danger to the public] and wrote: 'Wer diese Katastrophe, die möglicherweise auf linke Brandstiftung zurückgeht, verherrlicht und zur Nachahmung empfiehlt, gehört hinter Schloß und Riegel!' [Anyone who glorifies this catastrophe, which is possibly the result of left-wing arson, and calls for copycat actions, belongs under lock and key!].[30] And indeed one student who had received, read or heard about the flyers did report KI to the police on the

29 The KI flyers 1–26, and others which are unnumbered, are reproduced in KI, *Quellen zur Kommune-Forschung* [no pag.]. All four May flyers are frequently reproduced in facsimile, e.g., in Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*. Other reproductions of the flyers, such as those held in HIS, Sammlung 'Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin', file 03.12 (Kommune I IIa Brandstiftung Diverses), 4–6 (without flyer 9), and later publications, e.g., flyer 8 in Kunzelmann, *Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!* (79) are slightly different in layout from those in *Quellen zur Kommune-Forschung* and Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*, suggesting that, as the flyers became celebrated, KI issued later editions. The reproduction of flyer 7 in *Provokationen: Die Studenten- und Jugendrevolte in ihren Flugblättern 1965–1971*, ed. by Jürgen Miermeister and Jochen Staadt (Darmstadt and Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1980), is marked '2. Auflage' (27). There are also non-facsimile reproductions of the text, e.g., in Schulenburg (ed.), *Das Leben ändern*, 39–43, and 'Flugblätter, Gutachten, Epiloge oder Wie weit sind Stilprobleme – Stilprobleme?', *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter*, 27 (1968), 316–43 (318–20).

30 Inspektor, '400 Tote – für sie ein Happening', *Berliner Zeitung*, 26 May 1967, 2; also quoted in Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2005), 270.

same day as the texts were distributed.[31] Two communards, Rainer Langhans and Fritz Teufel, were then prosecuted for incitement to arson liable to endanger life.[32] These events constituted one of most spectacular moments of the anti-authoritarian movement in the FRG, attracting both outraged popular press attention and serious reporting in unprecedented measure. They also contributed to the rise in political temperature which led up to the protest movements' defining tragedy fewer than two weeks later, the shooting by a police officer of a peaceful protester, Benno Ohnesorg, on 2 June 1967. KI's trial began with unaccustomed speed, prompting suspicions that it was politically motivated and aimed at stamping out free speech, on 6 July 1967. Langhans and Teufel were defended by the lawyer Horst Mahler, then an important protagonist of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition and later a member of the Rote Armee Fraktion. After a break during which psychiatric reports were to be prepared on the defendants, the trial resumed on 4 March 1968.

The trial hinged on the question whether the May flyers were consciously intended as an incitement to arson in West Berlin department stores. However, the attempt to identify authorial intention so unequivocally proved to be vexed, not least because the flyers are at best difficult to interpret due to their stylistic diversity and discursive complexity. The court noted also that it was difficult to ascribe definite intentions to the flyers because, as it discovered from reading the commune's private documents, at the time of the flyers' production KI itself was in a formative phase, characterized by a sense of 'Suchen' [searching]. This description is very much in tune with the aspirations of ephemeral anti-authoritarian culture. The question of authorial intention is complicated, too, by the fact that Langhans and Teufel were not alone responsible for the flyers, for all KI members claimed joint responsibility for them and yet were

31 The student who reported the flyers later stated in court that he now saw them merely as satire (Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 101).

32 'Aufforderung zur menschengefährdenden Brandstiftung' [incitement to arson liable to endanger life]. The indictment and other relevant papers are reproduced in KI, *Gesammelte Werke gegen uns*, 26–30. Extensive but incomplete extracts from the trial and related documents are also collected in Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*. Transcripts of parts of the trial were also published in *konkret*: 'Deutsche Justizkomödie: Die Moabiter Seifen-Oper I. Teil', *konkret*, 11 (1968), 32–37 and 'Deutsche Justizkomödie: Die Moabiter Seifen-Oper II. Teil', *konkret*, 12 (1968), 30–35. Full copies of the *Anklageschrift* and the court's findings are held in HIS, Sammlung 'Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin', file 03.12 (Kommune I IIa Brandstiftung Diverses).

not tried.[33] This circumstance reflects how unconventional their key idea of group authorship seemed to be to mainstream culture.[34]

During the trial the defendants gave a variety of accounts of their own motives in writing the texts in question. For example, Langhans simply said: 'Mir hat es Spaß gemacht, sie zu schreiben und zu verteilen' [I had fun writing and distributing them]. This statement frustrates any earnest questions about broader political or possibly criminal intentions altogether, as well as promoting KI's notion of subjective transformation through transgressive play. Moreover, all statements made in court by the defendants and Mahler can be interpreted as being primarily strategic, rather than necessarily historically accurate, in their purpose.[35]

Nonetheless, the communards did explain that the ideas for the flyers emerged from their discussions of newspaper reports of the Brussels fire and the claim that it could have been an anti-war protest. When the judge asked whether they believed that the deaths in Brussels would change anything directly in Vietnam, Langhans and Teufel answered that they did not. Instead, Teufel commented: 'Es hat uns gereizt, die moralische Empörung der Leute hervorzurufen, die sich niemals entrüsten, wenn sie in ihrer Frühstückzeitung über Vietnam oder über andere schlimme Dinge lesen' [We really wanted to trigger moral indignation in those people who are never outraged

33 Langhans and Teufel, and the rest of KI who claimed collective responsibility for the flyers, protested against the failure to try the flyers' other authors too (Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*).

34 Harking back to the arguments of the previous chapter in this study, this view of the court that only Langhans and Teufel could be seen as authors also contributed to the erasure of women as agents from the public image of KI. While KI at this point had women members who were fully involved in its activities, in the press, and in the court's eyes, they could be supporting characters only. But in addition, this exclusion of women from the trial reflects the way the dominant male activists in KI marginalized them. See Buhmann, *Ich habe mir eine Geschichte geschrieben*; Birgit Daiber's and Sabine Goede's commentaries in Böckelmann and Nagel (eds), *Subversive Aktion*, 460–63 and 465–73 respectively; Kommune 2, *Versuch der Revolutionierung*, 129–32 and 140–55, for example; Dagmar Przytulla, 'Wir waren ein ziemlich verklemmter Haufen', in Kätzel (ed.), *Die 68erinnen*, 201–19.

35 Such difficulties are compounded by the fact that records of the trial available in print today are not full. The transcripts in Langhans and Teufel's *Klau mich* are based on notes made in court by a couple called Frohner who made radio programmes about contemporary trials, and are held in the APO-Archiv, FU Berlin. However, those transcripts are only partially reproduced in Langhans and Teufel. While there is no reason to doubt the transcripts' general accuracy, passages cited in Langhans and Teufel often vary from versions of the same exchanges reported in the papers at the time.

when they read about Vietnam or other bad things in their morning paper].[36] Above all, then, the communards argued that the flyers were a satirical attempt to expose the double standards of the media and public opinion which glossed over the horrors of Vietnam, or reduced them to a sentimental side-show, while simultaneously expressing sensationalized horror at the deaths in Brussels. As satire, the flyers could and would not be taken literally. Indeed, when Teufel was asked by the prosecutor what he would have thought if some member of the public had really set fire to a West Berlin department store after reading the flyers, he said: '[E]s ist keiner auf den Gedanken gekommen, daß man das tun könnte – bis auf den Herrn Staatsanwalt. Der hat es aber auch nicht getan, sondern eine Anklageschrift verfaßt' [[I]t didn't occur to anyone to do that – except the state prosecutor. But he didn't do it either, he wrote an indictment instead]. On this view, the prosecutor, in taking the flyers at face value, had misunderstood them in a most fundamental, obtuse way, unlike the more sophisticated general reader imagined by Teufel. And even then, the state prosecutor had not been truly motivated to act as he believed the flyers instructed, thus discrediting his own point.

Mahler argued in court that as primarily satirical texts, the flyers were to be understood as 'Ausdrucksformen moderner Kunst und Literatur' [expressions of modern art and literature]. As such, not only were the flyers resistant to the kind of reductive reading proposed by the prosecution, but they deserved the protection afforded by ideas about aesthetic licence and freedom of speech. To support this argument, Mahler commissioned a series of reports from nineteen experts on culture, philosophy, literature, linguistics and criticism.[37]

36 In 2004, Ulrich Enzensberger wrote that any claim that the then staunchly pacifist anti-war movement could commit such an arson attack could only be an attempt to demonize the left: 'Die Brüsseler Toten hatten als Menschenmaterial für Greuelpropaganda herhalten müssen' [The dead of Brussels were turned into human fodder for horrific propaganda] (*Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 143). The flyers were intended to expose these newspaper claims: 'Wir waren uns so sicher, daß sich die Beschuldigungen als haltlos herausstellen würden, daß wir beschlossen, aus der Sache einen Skandal zu machen' [We were so certain that these accusations would prove to be baseless that we decided to make the matter into a scandal] (*Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 138–39). Kunzelmann's memoir notes more ambiguously only that the communards were 'fasziniert' [fascinated] by press reports on the fire (*Leisten Sie keinen Widerstand!*, 78).

37 These experts were writers, academics, a film-maker and a publisher, and included well-known figures like Reinhard Baumgart, Günter Grass, Walter Jens, Alexander Kluge, Eberhard Lämmert, Hans-Werner Richter, Peter Szondi, Jacob Taubes, Peter Wapnewski and Gerhard Zwerenz. The reports by Professors

The specialists in question varied in their assessments of the flyers, but in the main there was consensus that, while the texts were of no real intellectual or artistic value, they could not be regarded as appropriate objects of criminal investigation either.[38]

In its judgement, the court found that the flyers were 'wenn schon nicht eindeutig bestimmt, so doch mit Sicherheit geeignet [...], von einer unbestimmten Vielzahl unbefangener Leser als Aufforderung zur Brandstiftung in Kaufhäusern während der üblichen Verkaufszeiten aufgefasst zu werden' [certain, even if not unequivocally so intended, to be read by an indefinite number of impartial readers as incitement to arson in department stores during opening hours]. As such, the defendants' writings did constitute 'den objektiven Tatbestand der erfolglosen Aufforderung zu strafbaren Handlungen' [in objective terms an unsuccessful incitement to criminal acts]. However, the court concluded, too, with regard to the defendants: 'Daß sie jedoch auch wollten oder nur billigend in Kauf nahmen, daß Leser der – hierzu geeigneten – Flugblätter einen Entschluß zur Begehung von Brandstiftungen faßten, war den Angeklagten nicht mit der für eine Verurteilung erforderlichen Sicherheit nachzuweisen' [It could not, however, be proven with a level of certainty adequate for a conviction that the defendants wished, or knowingly took the risk, that readers of these flyers would decide to commit arson, despite the fact that the

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Szondi, Eberhard, Wapnewski and Taubes were eventually used in court, and the state prosecutor stated that he had taken account of them 'mit Interesse […] aber auch mit Verwunderung, denn (sie) seien nicht sachgemäß gewesen' [with interest [...] but with amazement too, for (they) were not appropriate for the context] (quoted in Peter Szondi, 'Aufforderung zur Brandstiftung? Ein Gutachten im Prozeß Langhans/Teufel', *Der Monat*, 19 (August 1967), 24–29 (29). Szondi provides only the following details for his source: *F.A.Z.*, 10 July). Some of these reports were published at the time, reflecting strong public interest in the case, e.g., the dossier in *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter*, 27 (note 28), which included the reports by Lämmert, Szondi and Wapnewski cited above; Szondi, 'Aufforderung zur Brandstiftung?'; Jacob Taubes, 'Surrealistische Provokation. Ein Gutachten zur Anklageschrift im Prozeß Langhans-Teufel über die Flugblätter der "Kommune I"', *Merkur*, 21 (November 1967), 1069–79. Kraushaar provides a brief review of these reports (*Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, 269–76); another critical account is to be found in Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*, 59–64.

38 This body of work was augmented by another interested expert, the poet, critic and editor Hilde Domin, in a letter of 7 August, 1967 to Mahler identifying a 'Vietnam-Stück US' [US Vietnam play] written and performed in London by the 'Theater Companie von Peter Brook' [Peter Brook's theatre company] as an important parallel to and context for KI's Vietnam protest. Mahler subsequently wrote to the theatre asking for more detail (HIS, Sammlung Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin, file 03.12, Kommune I, IIa Brandstiftung – Diverses).

flyers were likely to incite them to do so]. Since it could not be proven with certainty that Langhans and Teufel had genuinely intended to incite others to commit arson, they were acquitted on 22 March 1968. For sympathetic readers at the time, the communards' achievement in West Berlin was not to have started real fires, but to have made a mockery of the West Berlin authorities. On such a reading, it is not only the trial which is laughable, but all the other discursive events triggered by the flyers too, such as outraged newspaper reports about them. As such, all these responses to the flyers become advertisements for KI's own programme of ludic subversion.

Nick Me: Reading KI

It could be argued that to read KI's work retrospectively and closely is profoundly to misunderstand it, for the commune did not want to be seen as the object of history, but as its subject. KI expressly distanced itself from all kinds of academic and contemplative activity. As one of the handwritten remarks made by the authors in the margins of *Klau mich* puts it, with reference to Mahler's expert readers: 'Die Gutachter zermürben | nicht nur das Gericht – | die Universität holt | einen selbst im Gerichts- | saal ein. Nirgends ist | man | sicher' [It's not only the court | that gets worn out by the experts – | university catches | up with you even | in the courtroom. You're | not safe | anywhere]. Even as communards and would-be radical subjects, it seems that the former students Langhans and Teufel did not feel they had escaped the clutches of their bourgeois pasts, in an echo of the celebrated graffito from Paris in May 1968, 'COURS CAMARADE, LE VIEUX MONDE EST DERRIERE TOI' [RUN COMRADE, THE OLD WORLD IS BEHIND YOU].[39]

Moreover, KI argues that for its readers to analyse its work is a mistake too. As another marginal note in *Klau mich* states: 'Wer jetzt noch sowas | studiert, | hat immer noch nichts | kapiert!' [Anyone who's still | studying this | still hasn't | got it!]. This stance foregrounds among other things the importance of action over contemplation. KI's mission is to act in the present and future, and so any backward glance at the flyers and related documents cannot be part of that project; once their moment has passed they are nothing but irrelevant detritus. Indeed, to archive and contemplate what once were living

39 Photograph in Walter Lewino, *L'Imagination au pouvoir. Photographies de Jo Schnapp* (Paris: Le Terrain vague, 1968) [no pag.]. An image of the same slogan inscribed in a different location appears in *Paroles de mai*, ed. by Michel Piquemal (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998) [no pag.].

processes does not only miss KI's point, but even works against it. To reduce its work to an object of study opens up the possibility of its commodification and hence co-option into the capitalism that it set out to challenge. In other ways, too, making the texts into dead, historical documents for academic (or other) purposes stabilizes and neutralizes their sometime threat to bourgeois culture and society.

In another, slightly earlier KI publication, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung* [*Sources for Commune Research*] (1968), a compendium of its writings and related material, KI even compared the later consideration of its past work to looking at faeces in a toilet bowl.[40] Most evidently, this overtly shocking statement maintains KI's image as a *Bürgerschreck* [the solid citizen's bogeyman], as unpalatable to the bourgeois mind as possible. But this offensive remark also adds a psychological dimension to KI's arguments against posterity, suggesting as it does that there is a neurotic aspect to the retrospective contemplation of once-revolutionary texts. The genuine challenge to readers, then, is to break out of the pathological contemplation and consumption of the work of others and discover true liberation for him- or herself.

And yet, all these remarks are made in KI's own works. KI produced and sold, for high prices, a number of its own publications – not only flyers, but also much larger compilations of its work. The best-known of these, *Klau mich*, unlike the others, was not even produced at home, in comparatively non-alienated ways, by the commune, but by an established left-wing publisher, Voltaire Verlag. In this context, KI's decrying of the study of its work is complex. Given that contradiction was KI's watchword, it could hardly be expected to be consistent in any way, apart from by being inconsistent. Material motivations were involved here too: since the commodification of protest was inevitable, KI may have decided to turn that inevitability to its own advantage before anyone else did.[41] But in the last analysis, these publications testify to KI's own highly developed and typically anti-authoritarian sense of its own historical significance. They can be read as a paradoxical, but insistent, invitation to re-read its work, while enveloping that reading from the start in a characteristic atmosphere of offence, uncertainty and ambiguity.

Reflecting that ambivalence, *Klau mich* is not an unbroken account of the trial. Rather, it is constructed on a montage principle. The left-hand pages contain documents related to the trial, including

40 KI, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung* [no pag.].

41 Eventually, the question of whether and to what extent the commune should commodify itself contributed to its demise. See Langhans, *Ich bin's.*

extensive (but incomplete) transcripts. The right-hand pages contain press cuttings about KI, the trial and related matters, other KI texts, photographs, a crossword, cartoons, extracts from comics, self-reflexive commentary and all sorts of other heterogeneous material. Both left- and right-hand pages, especially the latter, are also littered with printed marginalia, captions, scribbles and comments by the communards who put the books together, like those quoted above. This presentation means that *Klau mich* is a complex text which, like the May flyers, resists any single, clear interpretation. Its polyphony also has an impact on any reading of the trial documents. For example, by making them part of a mass of ephemeral, pop-cultural material, they are made to seem trivial by association. But by the same token, this disruptive presentation undercuts the commune's own utterances too and, arguably, disrupts their fetishization by readers. Such an approach chimes fully with KI's ambivalence with regard to its own posterity, and its claim to refuse to become an established leader of protest. Moreover, by sprinkling its products with barbed or offensive comments, and using the provocative title *Klau mich*, a reference to the widespread anti-authoritarian practice of stealing from bookshops, KI could at least aspire to irritate or demystify the seamless integration of once-subversive documents into capitalism.

Reading the Trial

KI's trial for incitement to arson made media stars of Langhans and Teufel, and from the commune's point of view it was, like the 'Pudding-Attentat', a triumph.[42] In the opinion of KI, its supporters, and others too, the defendants' resistance to the court's conventions and their eventual acquittal made the judicial system appear heavy-handed and ludicrous. During a separate trial in 1967, when asked to stand in deference to the court's rules, Teufel famously remarked: 'Wenn's der Wahrheitsfindung dient' [If that'll help to reveal the truth].[43] The humour here derives from the incongruity Teufel points out between the apparent superficiality of the court's rituals and its supposedly profound purpose of establishing the truth. This comment by Teufel quickly became fabled, and he and Langhans achieved similar effects in their trial for incitement to arson, for

42 While records of the trial, in the form of KI publications like *Klau mich* and press reports, have been in the public domain for decades, these have only recently begun to be exposed to close critical scrutiny. See Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*, 64–73.

43 See, for example, Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 84.

example reversing the usual question-answer relationship between court and defendants by constantly asking questions themselves.[44] They used numerous other subversive strategies too, three of which form the focus of the discussion which follows.

The Emperor's New Clothes

The communards arrived at court in outlandish, colourful outfits, and on the first day of proceedings Langhans was initially refused access by an official on the grounds that 'Gammler haben keinen Zutritt' [Drop-outs aren't allowed in].[45] This official was no doubt unable to imagine that a defendant would ignore the courts' usual sober dress code. Langhans's choice of clothes seems, therefore, to show that not only does the court need everyone to play their allotted roles obediently in order to operate properly, as Teufel hinted in the comment about getting to his feet quoted above; all parties need even to look a certain way for justice (supposedly) to be done. This interlude, like the horrified press coverage of both men's dress, reveals the suspicion conservative West Berlin displayed towards sartorial, and other, non-conformists. It also implies that certain classes of people are not considered worthy to observe or monitor the law in action, or to be given a (supposedly fair) trial. It is suspected, therefore, that such people are beneath the rights and privileges of the law as they apply to other, apparently more solid citizens. So while the law claims to apply to everyone, in fact it only does so to those who are in any case not apparently likely to challenge it.[46]

Clothing also features centrally in the psychological report on the communards ordered by the court. That report, by a Dr Spengler, concludes that neither defendant is mentally ill or severely disordered; but that both are 'geltungsbedürftig bis geltungssüchtig' [desperate for admiration, perhaps addicted to it] and hence 'als abnorme Persönlichkeiten anzusehen' [may be considered to be abnormal personalities]. Langhans and Teufel refused to undergo any psychiatric testing, so Spengler was reliant on his observations

44 See Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*, 71, 169.

45 In a perpetuation of this game with the authorities, at a later hearing in Moabit on another matter, Teufel arrived clean-shaven and dressed in bourgeois style, and hence was again not recognized by the court. See, for example, 'Ziemlich zahmer Teufel', *Telegraf*, 7 July 1967, 3. See also Michael Ruetz's iconic images of the communards and their extravagant dress sense, for example, in Michael Ruetz, *1968. Ein Zeitalter wird besichtigt* (Frankfurt a.M.: Zweitausendeins, 1997).

46 Carini, *Fritz Teufel*, 78.

of them at the trial, taking in their physical appearance and clothing, and he used these details as evidence for his conclusions. To base a psychological report on such extraneous details as clothing seemed unconvincing, as the defence pointed out. So here, the defendants' choice of clothing contributed to making the court look ridiculous and revealing its bias. However, Langhans and Teufel were not the only participants in the trial to dress up, for of course the judges and lawyers wore elaborate gowns and, in some cases, caps, which normally spell out their status and authority. But by eclipsing such dress with their own, the communards appropriated and parodied it, and so eroded its official aura. Moreover, given the way everything in the trial soon began to appear topsy-turvy, Spengler's comment could seem to apply to its most senior figures, too: the judges and state prosecutor, with their unusual robes. Thus, Langhans's and Teufel's oufits destabilized the court's discourse by turning it against itself.

Poetic Language

Langhans made a closing statement to the court which sums up his perception of the trial. He says: 'Ich möchte das Gericht und die anderen Umstände hier mal beschreiben, damit auch das Gericht […] sieht, wie wir das so sehen, was hier gespielt wird' [I'd like to describe the court and all the fuss here, so the court too can see how we see what's being played out here]. Langhans goes on to describe the court's physical features in sometimes critical ways, noting for example that its imposing, fin-de-siècle architecture is 'aus einer anderen Rechtsepoche […] man fühlt richtig, wie das gemacht wurde, um die armen Schweine einzuschüchtern, die hier verhandelt wurden. Sie sollten sich ganz klein und wie vor Gott fühlen' [from a different legal era [...] you can really feel how they did it to intimidate the poor sods whose cases were heard here. They were meant to feel really small and like they were facing God]. Langhans notes that the public gallery is small and intimidating to those seated in it. Likewise, only limited space is allowed to the defence and journalists, the very participants in the trial whose presence is supposed to guarantee its fairness and transparency. So by pointing out these spatial arrangements, Langhans implicitly highlights the court's normally unspoken lack of respect for those values, and confirms the anti-authoritarian suspicion of repressive tolerance.

At other points in his speech, Langhans uses much less analytical description. In the courtroom itself, 'das Hohe Gericht' [my Lords], that is, the judges:

> sitzen alle höher, und da sitzt auch der Staatsanwalt. Das ist doch eigenartig, daß er so hoch wie das Gericht neben ihm sitzt und der Verteidiger weit unten. Er muß immer aufschauen. Sie haben auch einen ordentlichen Tisch vor sich und Platz und an den Tischen vorne einen Rand, damit man nicht sieht, was sie da machen. Die Beine sieht man natürlich auch nicht.
>
> [all sit higher up, and that's where the state prosecutor sits too. But it's pretty strange that he sits up as high as the judges next to him and the counsel for the defence is really far down. He always has to look up. They have a proper table in front of them too and space and the tables are enclosed at the front so you can't see what they're doing up there. Of course you can't see their legs either].

In Langhans's view, this arrangement shows how the court privileges the representatives of the state, the judges, and prosecutor, over those of the citizen. More amusingly, his observation that the legs of the judges and state prosecutor are hidden exposes the way in which the court's design subliminally emphasizes their authority. By making it seem as though they have no legs, it implies that they do not walk in and out of court like the other participants. Rather, they seem to be physically part of it; or to have arrived there by some greater power. This seating thus cements a dramatic impression of monolithic power. But at the same time, Langhans's remark injects comedy into his description, along with a scurrilous hint that these august persons may be up to no good under the table. These elements in his commentary thus undermine their status.

Langhans approaches the judges' and prosecutor's clothing in similar ways, describing them as follows: 'so mit vollem Ornat, Mütze, Brille, irgendwelche dicke Bücher unter dem Arm, der Richter hat Goldborten am Talar, der Staatsanwalt silberne [...], dann meint man, sie seien ziemlich groß und bedeutend' [like, totally decorated and with caps and spectacles, some thick old books under their arms, the judge has got gold braid on his gown and the state prosecutor's is silver [...], that makes you think they're pretty big and important]. While the judges' and lawyers' elaborate clothing is supposed to represent their authority, Langhans's account, like his fancy dress described above, makes it seem absurd. He also contrasts the judges' and state prosecutor's appearance in and out of court:

> Aber wenn man sie dann auf dem Flur sieht, ohne all das Zeugs, dann sehen sie sehr normal aus. Sie sind dann aus der neutralen im-Namen-des-Volkes-Kleidung wieder herausgschlüpft und Feierabendleute, die nichts mehr wissen von dem Zeremoniell da drinnen. Sie möchten daraufhin auch nicht unbedingt angesprochen werden. Der Herr Schwerdtner [the judge] zum Beispiel, der hier doch ganz eindrucksvoll aussieht, als ich ihn das erste Mal auf dem Flur draußen sah, war er nur noch ein kleiner Mann mit großen Ohren und er war sehr schreckhaft. Man kommt sich getäuscht vor.
>
> [But then when you see them in the corridor, without all that stuff, then they look very normal. Then they've slipped off their neutral in-the-name-of-the-people-clothes and they're people who've finished work for the day, who don't have anything to do with all the ceremony in there. They don't much want anyone talking to them about it either. Mr Schwerdtner [the judge] for example, who does look quite impressive in here, the first time I saw him outside in the corridor, he was nothing but a little man with big ears and he was easily startled. You feel you've been had.]

Here too, there is use of comic, bodily detail to deflate the initially impressive appearance of the judge.

This technique of detailed description which takes nothing for granted resonates powerfully with the notion of *ostranenie*, or defamiliarization, developed by the literary theorist Viktor Shklovsky (1917).[47] Shklovsky writes that the effect of everyday life on perception is a devastating habitualization which 'devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war'. In this state of perceptual and emotional numbness, life itself 'is reckoned as nothing'.[48] While KI would no doubt have put its own analysis of what it saw as the murderous complacency of contemporary society differently, it nonetheless echoes profoundly with Shklovsky's. KI's analysis would include the way in which the trial and its customs are normalized, that is, accepted as embodying the natural order of things, rather than subjected to the vigilant criticism they deserve. Shklovsky writes too that the way literature can describe things as though seen for the first time challenges this habitualization, makes perception difficult and 'recover[s] the sensation of life'.[49] He calls this effect 'defamiliarization', and considers it to be the essence of poetic language. Langhans's use of highly detailed, apparently naïve

47 Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique' (1917), in *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, ed. by David Lodge (London and New York: Longman, 1988), 15–29.

48 Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', 20.

49 Shklovsky, 'Art as Technique', 20.

description to demystify the court's conventions has a strikingly similar effect to Shklovsky's defamiliarization. As such, it comes close to Shklovsky's idea of poetic language, too, revitalizing perceptions of reality; and hence, Langhans's speech changes from a legal formality into what Shklovsky would call an artistic 'difficult form'.

The Epic Trial

KI made important use of dramatic imagery in and around the trial. In a characteristic reference to popular culture, it often described the proceedings as a 'Moabiter Seifenoper' [Moabit soap opera], suggesting gripping yet banal melodrama. But crucially, in his closing statement, Langhans also says that his trial is an avant-garde play, commenting: 'Wir bekommen nicht oft solch ein Stück zu sehen, besser könnte es kein Autor eines absurden Theaterstückes erdenken' [We don't often get to see a play like this one, no dramatist of the absurd could think up anything better]. The public, he says, 'schaut einem Spektakel zu' [is watching a spectacle].

Such imagery evokes the idea of a political show trial. It also undermines the court's status as arbiter of truth, because drama is by definition artifice and fiction, and almost always replayed and repeated. As such, it is open to inevitable variation, and hence inconsistency and even error, for no two performances can be identical. Moreover, the idea of the trial as a play which can be endlessly repeated challenges any idea that the court's verdict will be final. The communards were interested in undoing this sense of conclusion, for *Klau mich* is full of suggestions that they saw the trial not as a one-off event, but as one of the first in a long series of confrontations with the law which would, increasingly, unravel its credibility, in part through sheer force of repetition. Langhans notes for instance that whatever the verdict, the end of the spectacle will be an open one. On one hand, if he and Teufel are not convicted, '[wird] [man] einige Mühe haben, das dem Steuerzahler zu erklären, den ganzen Aufwand und das ganze Theater, wo er nicht einmal mitgeniessen konnte' [it'll be quite hard to explain it to the taxpayer, all this effort and drama which he didn't even get to enjoy]. On the other hand, if Langhans and Teufel are convicted: 'Das wäre mindestens ebenso absurd und vor allem nicht zu Ende' [That would be at least as absurd, and above all, it wouldn't be over]. A conviction would catalyse a further series of subversive activities, on the parts of the two communards in prison and of their comrades outside. In

either case, the court's aim of establishing the closure necessary for a credible legal verdict is suspended indefinitely.

Of the communards' own part in the play-trial, Langhans comments: 'Mitspieler waren wir meist nicht, weil es nicht unser Spiel war, wir wären gar nicht auf den Gedanken gekommen, daß man solche Stücke machen kann. Wir wurden es erst und dann mehr als Regisseure' [We mostly didn't join in as players, because it wasn't our show, it would never have occurred to us that shows like that can be put on at all. We only gradually came to play a part, and even then it was more as directors]. And like a Brechtian director, Langhans draws the audience's gaze away from the trial's superficial, sensational or emotive effects, and towards the ways in which these are created so that they are called into question. An example is his account of Mahler's role in the proceedings:

> Unser Rechtsanwalt Mahler war ja notgedrungen auch eine Figur in dem Spiel. Er mußte Rücksicht nehmen auf seinen Stand und vielerlei andere Dinge, die für uns nicht gelten. Und doch hat er viel versucht, oft bis an die Grenze des Juristischen und so konsequent, das [*sic*] der Vorsitzende ihn oftmals so zu behandeln versucht hat, wie uns, also autoritär und unstandesgemäß. Uns hat das erstaunt, da wir das nicht erwartet hatten. Er wurde behindert, wo es nur ging. Er hatte es in gewisser Weise am allerschwersten, weil er zwei Rollen spielen mußte, wo sich jede behinderte.
>
> [Our lawyer Mahler was also of necessity a character in the show. He had to be mindful of his status and of many other things which don't apply to us. And yet he tried a lot, and often took the law as far as he could, and he did that so consistently that the judge often tried to treat him the same as us, that is, in an authoritarian way, unbefitting to his status. That surprised us, since we hadn't expected it. They obstructed him whenever they could. In a sense, it was hardest for him, since he had to play two parts and each one got the way of the other.]

On this account, as soon as a lawyer represents challenging defendants, and tests the dominant interpretation of the supposedly objective law and its procedures, their biased nature becomes apparent. And from a theatrical point of view, on Langhans's analysis, Mahler's treatment by the judge makes him seem like a figure in epic theatre, like Shen Te/Shui Ta in Brecht's play *Der gute Mensch von Sezuan* [*The Good Person of Sezuan*] (1943), for instance, who is simultaneously and obviously playing two roles (and in which play three Gods, acting as judges, leave the courtroom not on foot, but on a pink cloud, reminiscent of

Langhans's comment above on the invisibility of the judges' legs in Moabit). These conflicting roles unsettle the impression of seamless order customarily presented by the court and necessary to cement its power.

While the resonance of KI's trial with Brecht's dramatic interest in court scenes is of great importance here, Langhans also refers to a different kind of theatre when he reflects: 'Mir kommt das Ganze hier wie ein Puppenspiel vor, wo die einzelnen Darsteller wie an Fäden gezogen agieren' [All this seems like a puppet show to me, where the individual players act as though they were on strings]. Again in the epic manner, strings and wires make the spectacle's mechanics very visible. Langhans also refers to some of the trial's individual participants, or actors, as 'Puppen' [puppets]. Such descriptions deprive them of agency, and hence of authority. They also point to the anti-authoritarian critique of subjectivity which believed the supposedly unique and sovereign self, a key support of bourgeois society, to be an illusion created by false consciousness. In this respect, Langhans's description tallies with an important trope of broader anti-authoritarian discourse, which cast bourgeois individuals and representatives of the Establishment as the mere masks and marionettes of the real, more anonymous and super-personal driving forces in society, namely capitalist interests.[50]

Langhans's image of the 'Puppenspiel' [puppet show] echoes, too, a demotic performance tradition, that of the puppet theatre, like Franz von Pocci's nineteenth-century *Kasperlkomödien* [Kasperl comedies] starring the clown Kasperl. This intertext has subversive potential, for such puppet plays draw on elements of the grotesque and carnivalesque. Like puppets, clowns or fools are, as Richard Sheppard writes:

> offensive to bourgeois culture because, far from being characters in the individual sense, they were masks, types, insolent reminders of the illusory nature of the individualised bourgeois ego and its claim to exercise control, and conversely, pointers to the raw power of the primitive, pre-individualised roots of the human personality.[51]

Langhans and Teufel certainly fit the role of impudent, grotesque clowns whose costume evokes the motley of fools and who expose

50 Compare, for example, Rudi Dutschke, 'Vom Antisemitismus zum Antikommunismus'.

51 Richard Sheppard, 'Upstairs – Downstairs – Some Reflections on German Literature in the Light of Bakhtin's Theory of Carnival', in *New Ways in Germanistik*, ed. by Richard Sheppard (Oxford: Berg, 1990), 278–315 (303).

society's failings through ridicule and laughter. Even though Langhans says that he and Teufel are 'Regisseure' [directors] in this puppet play, they are also inevitably 'Darsteller' [actors] and hence puppets themselves. This self-stylization suggests that they are the interchangeable objects of the legal process, and potentially the first of many. Paradoxically however, and in a way which distantly and curiously recalls Heinrich von Kleist's celebrated essay 'Über das Marionettentheater' ['The Puppet Theatre'] (1810) (and in turn, the complex literary resonances of anti-authoritarianism), it is precisely by accepting their roles as marionettes, rather than by believing in the myth that they are fully autonomous citizens and subjects, that Langhans and Teufel begin to be more empowered and to direct the show: that is, once they start to see through repressive tolerance, its mask of bourgeois habitus and to perceive the trial as a mere play, they are increasingly able to understand, analyse and participate in it. Eventually, Langhans says, they can even control it, for example by manipulating its dress codes or its discourse, so that symbolic power shifts significantly away from the judges and lawyers and towards themelves.

Langhans's and Teufel's treatment of the trial as a play is amplified powerfully in *Klau mich*. The largest document in this book is an extensive, verbatim (albeit edited and incomplete) transcript of the trial, which is broken down into sections suggesting theatrical scenes. Context is set out like stage directions, individual scenes are sometimes given such evocative headings as 'Vorspiel' [Dramatic Prologue] or 'Zwischenspiel' [Dramatic Interlude], and marginal comments on them such as 'Vorhang auf – das Stück beginnt' [Curtain up – the play's starting] also allude to the theatre. Other scenes in the transcript are given titles which summarize their content, for instance 'Befragung zur Person Langhans' [Court Examination of Langhans's Personal Details]. These pre-emptive summaries are reminiscent of epic theatre with its use of captions, signs and other verbal guidance to the audience, which allow it to anticipate critically what it is about to see. In the case of *Klau mich*, of course, this aspect is strengthened by the fact that readers in 1968 were likely to know the history and outcome of the trial already.

Significantly, Langhans's and Teufel's re-imagining of their trial as a play is mirrored in the way theatrical imagery is used by other contemporary discourses around it. In 1968, for example, the left-wing news magazine *konkret* published advance extracts from *Klau mich* entitled 'Deutsche Justizkomödie' [A German Comedy

of Justice].[52] Similarly, the respected liberal newspaper *Die Zeit* ran an article about the trial under the headline 'Die Verfolgung und Ermordung der Strafjustiz durch die Herren Langhans und Teufel' [The Persecution and Assassination of Criminal Justice by Messrs Langhans and Teufel].[53] This headline alludes to the then recent, scandalous play *Die Verfolgung und Ermordung Jean Paul Marats dargestellt durch die Schauspielgruppe des Hospizes zu Charenton unter Anleitung des Herrn de Sade* [*The Persecution and Assassination of Jean Paul Marat as Performed by the Inmates of the Asylum of Charenton under the Direction of the Marquis de Sade*], often known as *Marat/Sade* for short, by Peter Weiss (1964). The headline identifies parallels between Weiss's play and KI's trial, highlighting, for example, their shared themes of institutions, mental disturbance, anarchy and conflicting political ideals. It is no coincidence that, just a few years after writing *Marat/Sade*, Weiss was to became closer to the anti-authoritarians than almost any of his established colleagues. But above all, in picking up on Langhans's and Teufel's theatrical approach to the trial this headline confirms the success of KI's re-purposing of the court to resemble an absurdist or epic play. As a consequence of KI's triumph here, the idea of the trial as a play became crucial for other anti-authoritarian court proceedings too.[54] Even forty years later, in his autobiography of 2008, *Ich bin's. Die ersten 68 Jahre*, Langhans still made assertive use of this image, noting: 'Der Prozeß war ein fantastisches und absurdes Theaterstück' [The trial was a fantastic drama of the absurd] (66).

'Nehmt diese Wirklichkeit nicht an': Surrealist Readings

The communards' emphasis on their trial as a play tallies with the SI's analysis of modern society as a spectacle, that is to say, an impoverished, alienated and alienating state in which people were reduced to being mere onlookers of their own lives, even in the midst of apparent material prosperity.[55] By making its trial into a blatant

52 See note 32.

53 Reprinted in Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*.

54 See, for example, Andreas Baader and others, *Vor einer solchen Justiz verteidigen wir uns nicht: Schlußwort im Kaufhausbrandprozeß* (Frankfurt a.M. and Berlin: Voltaire, n.d.).

55 See, for example, Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 1–37; Guy Debord, *La Société du spectacle* (Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 1967), trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith as *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1994).

spectacle, KI was showing everyone what it really was. But at the same time, by taking control of it, KI was making it into what Situationists might call a 'human situation', that is, a point of resistance against the spectacular world.[56] The re-imagining of its trial as a play is, also, a classic example of what the SI knew as *détournement*, that is, an appropriation of conventional discourse for more subversive ends.[57] It draws significantly also on KI's (and the SI's) heritage of Surrealism, which, in avant-garde tradition, sought to break down conventional boundaries of all kinds. One of Mahler's expert readers, the philosopher Jacob Taubes, quoted a Surrealist manifesto of 1925 which asserted: 'Der Surrealismus ist keine dichterische Form' [Surrealism is not an artistic form].[58] That is, Surrealism is not limited to art alone but, by definition, draws in other dimensions of life too. As a consequence of this incursion of artistic method into other realms of experience, art in a traditional sense no longer exists. Instead, all reality is destabilized and aestheticized: that is, it becomes surreal.

Precisely such destabilizing and aestheticizing effects are achieved by the communards' subversive strategies in court. Their clothes make the trial into a bright and comic spectacle; and Langhans's transformation of it into absurd theatre subtly echoes both the literary theme which runs through the proceedings and the avant-garde origins of KI's work. Seen through a non-legal lens, his defamiliarizing language, as argued above, even becomes poetic. It thus enacts an unsettling generic shift, for *ostranenie* is more commonly associated with Modernist literature than demotic, political commentary like that of KI. This shift is characteristic of what KI did to its trial by constantly infiltrating the language of the law with the language of art.

The court found itself considering not conventional legal or criminal matters, but points in literary theory. Furthermore, legal documents came to be treated like literature, for by challenging the court's utterances on the law and judicial procedure, the communards subjected them to interpretation and doubt in the same way as their works had been. More explicitly, in his expert report on the flyers, which was unusual amongst the reports commissioned by Mahler in its relatively supportive approach to the communards, the left-

56 Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 20–22 (20).

57 On *détournement*, see, for example, Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 86–87.

58 Taubes, 'Surrealistische Provokation', 1078. Taubes describes the manifesto as '[die] Erklärung der Surrealisten vom 27 Januar 1925, die damals als Programmschrift herauskam' [The Surrealist declaration of 27 January 1925, which came out at that time as a manifesto], but provides no further details.

wing author Gerhard Zwerenz noted that the court's *Anklageschrift* [indictment] itself, supposed to be a highly serious and authoritative document, read like satire.[59] Langhans and Teufel too declared that the *Anklageschrift* was a work of satire, reproduced it and offered to sell it for 2 Deutschmarks – and so this legal document came to resemble an artwork and a commodity. Simultaneously, once used as evidence in the trial, literature and texts which dealt with literary history and criticism became legal documents; and so the apparent differences between different genres of writing, so meticulously separated in German intellectual tradition, began to crumble.

Such processes played havoc with the court's aim and *raison d'être* of establishing certainty. It had sought to assert its authority by ascribing intentions and meanings to the flyers, but ultimately discovered that to do so was impossible. Indeed, if KI's trial succeeded in clarifying anything at all, it was the fact that the intentions behind the flyers were unknowable. By extension, it called into question the common belief that any writer's intentions may be read clearly off a text, as well as the idea that language can contain unequivocally identifiable meaning. Thus, the court seemed inadvertently to have undermined its own status as a source of incontrovertible conclusions based on written and spoken testimony. Worse, its findings undermined the very philosophical basis on which such conclusions must rely, namely faith in the transparency and reliability of language itself, and in the stability of its relationship to its author and to action. Such ideas belong more conventionally in a linguistic or literary seminar (a discussion on Kleist's reading of Immanuel Kant would be of course a very pertinent example) than in a court of law. Therefore, the trial stands squarely in the aesthetic, yet simultaneously anti-aesthetic tradition identified by Taubes, and works powerfully against the custom of pigeonholing cultural artefacts and relegating them to the ineffectual realm of art. In doing so, it embodies powerfully the dismantling of generic boundaries, and of the limits between art and life advocated by Enzensberger in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', and hence may explain that essay's positive, if extremely oblique reference to Teufel's work.

Such Surrealist strategies aimed at dissolving conventional boundaries operate even at a fundamental stylistic level in KI's work, as evidenced by Langhans's description of his trial as 'Theater' [drama]. Here, he is taking a conventional figurative expression (the use of 'Theater' to mean a drama, in the sense of an exaggerated

59 Gerhard Zwerenz, unpublished report, HIS, Sammlung 'Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin' 03.13 (Kommune I IIb Brandstiftung Gutachten), 1.

fuss) and using it literally, with satirical effect. This literalization of figurative meaning often lies at the very heart of KI's complexes of text and action, and is the source of much of their disturbance, for example in the May flyers which triggered the prosecution discussed here.

Flyer 7, in praise of the Brussels fire as a 'neue[r] gag in der vielseitigen Geschichte amerikanischer Werbemethoden' [a new gimmick in the multi-faceted history of American advertising methods], says it created a 'knisterndes Vietnamgefühl (dabeizusein und mitzubrennen)' [crackling Vietnam feeling (of being there and burning too)]. This imagery parodies and exposes what anti-authoritarians saw as the cynicism of the advertising industry, which will subsume and commodify anything, even a tragedy or brutal war, for sensational effect, using precisely the kind of habitualized language which Shklovsky considers to cheapen life. It also exposes the larger, deadly economic system behind the advertising, for the same capitalist interest drives the war in Vietnam in order to spur its continued growth. The flyer's use of the verbs 'knistern' [to crackle] and 'brennen' [to burn] plays on their conventional metaphorical use, for example in the language of advertising, to suggest anticipation and excitement. It makes such usage literal, for these shoppers do not (only) burn with excitement, but they burn in reality too. Thus, the flyer defamiliarizes a figurative expression by taking it horribly and startlingly at face value. The reader is thus challenged to reconsider, first, the cynicism of the language of advertising; and, second, the real meaning of destruction by fire, which in daily news reports from Vietnam had become trivialized. In this sense, this defamiliarization of the habitual shares the ethical impact which Shklovsky claims for poetic language. Furthermore, the reader is left with a lingering sense of uncertainty as to which kind of usage – literal or figurative – is really at work here and how these usages relate to one another. Thus, reassuring semantic boundaries are lost.

Such Surrealist undoing of the conventional distinctions between the different uses of words begins to unhinge the familiar world altogether. As the contemporary critic Karl Heinz Bohrer put it with regard to the May flyers, they declare to their readers: '[D]as, was ihr seht, stimmt nicht. Ihr legt das Geschehene falsch aus. Ihr müßt neue Auslegungstechniken erlernen und andere Beziehungen knüpfen. Nehmt diese Wirklichkeit nicht an' [[W]hat you're seeing isn't true. Your interpretation of events is wrong. You need to learn new modes of interpretation and to make new connections. Do not

accept this reality].[60] The same can be said of the trial which followed and the way it literally becomes 'Theater' [drama]. Its discourses are destabilized and seem to lose their legal and authoritative identity in ways which seemed to prove, for the Surrealist clowns Langhans and Teufel, profoundly liberating.

The Flyers and the Past

The May flyers and their trial produced disturbing effects in other ways too. For example, they resonated with the Nazi and wartime past in complex ways. With their profuse imagery of burning buildings, the flyers recall on one level the events of the Second World War and the extensive damage by fire caused by Allied aerial bombing of German cities. Klaus Briegleb argues that flyer 8's parting shot 'burn, warehouse, burn' evokes the children's rhyme 'Maikäfer flieg' [Fly, cockchafer].[61] This little poem features in Achim von Arnim's and Clemens Brentano's canonical Romantic folk-song compilation *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder* [*The Boy's Magic Horn: Old German Songs*] (1805–1808), as follows: 'Maykäfer flieg, | Der Vater ist im Krieg, | Die Mutter ist im Pulverland, | Und Pulverland ist abgebrannt' [Fly cockchafer, | Your father has gone to war, | Your mother is in Pulverland | And Pulverland has burned down].[62] Arnim and Brentano note that in Lower Saxony, the word 'Pulverland' (not a real place, but literally, a 'land of powder') is replaced by 'Pommerland' [Pomerania], a variant which is more familiar today. Read as an intertext for KI's flyers, this rhyme reinforces their themes of war and destruction by fire. Especially in the post-war German context, the rhyme's evocation of the burning of Pomerania (east of the current borders of Germany) would have brought to mind recent historic events. More specifically, it might constitute a reminder of German wartime scorched-earth policies in the East, as it does, for

60 Bohrer, 'Surrealismus und Terror oder die Aporien des Juste-milieu', 42.

61 Briegleb, *1968*, 71.

62 Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn: Alte deutsche Lieder gesammelt von Achim von Arnim und Clemens Brentano* ed. by Heinz Rölleke, 3 vols (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987 [Heidelberg: Mohr & Zimmer, 1805–08]), I: 208. Briegleb appears to suggest that the children's rhyme offers escape from the seamless spectacle of war and advertising, in an affirmation of a non-commercial folk culture. But, in fact, the texts in *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, like many other Romantic publications claiming to present folk art, were subject to the more sophisticated intervention of their editors. Therefore, this hybrid intertext resonates with KI's own practice of citing culture from many different registers, both popular and high.

instance, in Helma Sanders-Brahms's film *Deutschland, bleiche Mutter* [*Germany, Pale Mother*] (1980), which shows the protagonist marking the end of the Second World War in May 1945 by singing this rhyme. The imaginary 'Pulverland' could also be a description of a country mired in war, for 'Pulver' [powder] among other things recalls gunpowder.[63]

Alluding to this kind of reading, during KI's trial the state prosecutor criticized the May flyers because: 'Wir Älteren haben noch brennende Häuser erlebt' [Those of us who are older have seen burning houses], presumably referring to the bombing of German towns and cities in the Second World War. The prosecutor's argument is that the apparently light-hearted, satirical way in which the flyers indirectly recall that destructive past is offensive.[64] Langhans replied, presumably also referring to the wartime bombings: 'Sie haben es aber vergessen' [But you've forgotten]. This exchange encapsulates much of the anti-authoritarian critique of the older generation, embodied here for Langhans by the prosecutor. Langhans is implying critically that the older generation has conveniently forgotten the wartime and Nazi pasts. He may also be suggesting that the older generation had, at best, learnt nothing from the war; or, at worst, could forget the burning houses because they were only incidental to other, possibly more welcome aspects of National Socialism and the War.[65] On this

63 This line also evokes the violent events in and around the Watts district of Los Angeles in summer 1965, known as the Watts uprising, rebellion or riots, during which rioters, arsonists and looters cheered burning shops with the call 'Burn, baby, burn'. Flyer 8's parting shot 'Burn, warehouse, burn!' (in which 'warehouse' would be a clumsy translation of 'Warenhaus' or 'department store') could allude to these shouts. Thus, 'Burn, warehouse, burn!' may recall the increasingly important anti-authoritarian intertext of popular and radical African-American culture. Importantly, in context, the burning of Watts was of great interest to the Situationist thinker Guy Debord, a formative influence on KI (See Guy Debord, 'The Decline and Fall of the Spectacle-Commodity Economy' (1965), in Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 153–60 (153)). In one of the expert reports commissioned by Mahler for the court, Irmela Reimers-Tovote and Klaus Reimers refer to a quotation from the 1933 *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'If it be my own true love, burn, cheek, burn', without elaborating further (5). See HIS, Sammlung 'Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin' (03.13 (Kommune I IIb Brandstiftung Gutachten)).

64 See Professor Fritz Eberhard's report (HIS, Sammlung 'Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin' (03.13 (Kommune I IIb Brandstiftung Gutachten), 3).

65 While the NS past was an important theme at the trial, it was manifested principally in the defendants' critique of the judicial system's compromised past. In the documents collected in *Klau mich*, links are not made between the past and the content of the flyers, apart from in the prosecutor's comment quoted here.

kind of argument, the role of the anti-authoritarians would be to bring the past back to mind in disturbing, dissenting ways, as in the May flyers, and to indict the older generation for the way they normally repress it. However, this reading is by no means straightforward, for in the flyers fire does not only represent destruction. Simultaneously, it is highly valorized, associated as it is in flyer 9, for example, with unmediated, non-alienated action and experience, revolt, the overthrow of capitalist economy and euphoria. Such celebrations of fire could appear deeply disturbing or offensive to anyone who was touched by the recent deadly fire in Brussels, or to Germans who saw themselves as victims of wartime bombings.

The flyers may also present a disturbing replication of past discourse about fire and shopping. Before 1933, Jews were prominent in modern forms of commerce and retail in Germany. As Avraham Barkai points out, in 1933, three-quarters of department stores in Germany belonged to Jews, and in 1932 62% of all sales of ready-to-wear clothing were made in Jewish-owned shops.[66] Jewish retailers also made a high proportion of sales in such areas as household goods and luxury items. In time, this association between Jewish-owned businesses and shopping gave rise to a toxic discourse, for while there is no reason to believe that Jewish retailers in fact operated differently from others, during the depression of the late Weimar era, according to Barkai, 'the Jewish merchants and traders furnished the crisis-prone population, buffeted by economic hardship and prejudiced by deeply ingrained antisemitic stereotypes, with concrete or imaginary reasons to believe they had been taken'.[67] Such anti-Semitic prejudices, according to which Jewish traders were especially avaricious and worthy of punishment, were enthusiastically exploited by the Nazis

66 Avraham Barkai, 'Population Decline and Economic Stagnation', trans. by William Templer, in Avraham Barkai and Paul Mendes-Flohr, *Destruction and Renewal 1918–1945*, in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. by Michael A. Meyer with Michael Brenner, 4 vols, IV: 30–44 (41).

67 Barkai, 'Population Decline', 40. Such disapproval went hand in hand with disapproval of modernity more generally, for the forms some Jewish retail businesses took in the earlier twentieth century, like the urban department store's stocking of ready-to-wear clothes and luxury items, were distinctively modern (Paul Lerner, 'Circulation and Representation: Jews, Department Stores and Cosmopolitan Consumption in Germany, ca. 1880s-1930s', in *Das Berliner Warenhaus. The Berlin Department Store: Geschichte und Diskurs. History and Discourse*, ed. by Godela Weiss-Sussex and Ulrike Zitzlsperger (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2013), 93–115). Decades later, anti-authoritarianism, too, was sometimes uncomfortable with such modern forms of consumption, as the protests of August 1967 against longer Saturday opening described above may suggest.

and others in a process which led to arson attacks on Jewish retail property.

In other words, the idea of burning down the supposedly immoral department store was not new in 1967. On one reading, therefore, the May flyers implicitly recall an earlier disapproval of retail institutions which was specifically anti-Semitic. This interpretation is especially acute because some of the department stores highlighted as potential targets in flyer 8, KaDeWe (Kaufhaus des Westens), Hertie and Neckermann, have a complex history regarding Jewish ownership.[68] In 1967, KaDeWe, West Berlin's most prestigious department store, belonged to the Hertie chain of stores, which, like the Neckermann group, were empires which had grown out of the forced, so-called Aryanization of Jewish-owned businesses under National Socialism. Hertie, for example, took over the Wertheim stores in Berlin in 1937 when its Jewish owners were dispossessed. Therefore, some of the stores mentioned in flyer 8 would have occupied the same premises as their Jewish-owned precedessors.

Even more disturbingly, the flyers may also recall other imagery associated with the Nazi past, namely that of death by fire, which recalls images of the Holocaust, for example, flyer 6's description of people who '[schreiend] erstickten' [suffocated while screaming] and burn; and in flyer 9's repeated invocations of gas, albeit of a domestic kind. The anti-war discourse of the time frequently made more explicit analogies between the Vietnam conflict and the Second World War or the Holocaust than those in the May flyers, and often used the imagery of death by fire to do so. But that anti-war discourse was forthright in its condemnation of both past and present abuses and the horrible notion of death by fire.[69] By contrast, the May flyers are more ambiguous in their use of imagery, given their ostentatious celebration of fire. However, no narrative in the highly dialogical May flyers is completely straightforward.[70] For example, since the stores mentioned in flyer 8 were by 1967 owned by companies which had profited from the persecution of Jewish store owners, this flyer might also possibly be a call for a kind of anti-Nazi retribution.

Not all KI's explicit pronouncements on ideas about Jews, Jewishness or Jewish issues in *Klau mich*, some of which also seem to replicate older discourses and are shocking in their crudity and

68 See, for example, Christoph Kreutzmüller, *Ausverkauft: Die Vernichtung der jüdischen Gewerbetätigkeit in Berlin 1930–1945* (Berlin: Metropol, 2012).

69 Mausbach, 'Auschwitz and Vietnam', 286–90.

70 See Szondi for a close reading of what might be termed the dialogical language of flyer 8 in particular ('Aufforderung zur Brandstiftung?', 27–28).

offensiveness, seem as equivocal.[71] Read in this larger context, the profusion and confusion of meanings in the May flyers are complicated even further, as their troubling potential comes even further to the fore. It may be in part for this reason that these flyers were perceived to be so very provocative in 1967 and 1968. Yet this particular reading of the flyers was barely articulated in court or in discourse around the trial, apart from, briefly, in Günter Grass's expert report for Mahler. Here, Grass does identify what he calls 'postfaschistische Züge' [post-Fascist attributes] in the flyers. However, this comment does not relate to the flyers' themes as much as to their diction, which glorifies unmediated action and hence, according to Grass, has much in common with the more dangerous language of advertising, also 'post-Fascist'. On a manifest level, at least, the idea that the protest movements replicated aspects of past discourse was culturally and politically intolerable for the New Left, as evidenced for example by the notorious dispute in 1967 between Habermas and the prominent anti-authoritarian Rudi Dutschke on what the former had called the anti-authoritarians' 'linker Faschismus' [leftwing Fascism].[72] Such accusations disturbed protesters deeply and constituted a significant taboo. Thus, with the exception of Grass, the silence about the flyers' evocations of the past in the otherwise vociferous contemporary responses to KI's work speaks volumes about its disturbing potential, for both the Establishment and anti-authoritarians themselves.

71 Elsewhere in *Klau mich*, there is negatively stereotypical reference to Jews, for example a caricature of a bearded, bespectacled man, captioned 'Mandelstamm, unser Hausjude', who may be the Russian-Jewish poet Ossip Mandelstam. The possible neologism 'Hausjude' recalls the established expression 'Hofjude' and so would seem to evoke the notion of a token Jew who is tolerated or favoured in a predominantly non-Jewish, potentially anti-Jewish context. A clue to a crossword puzzle in *Klau mich* (the answer is not given) runs 'Ort, wo Kinder geschächtet werden' [Place where children are slaughtered according to religious rites]. That evocation of a method of slaughtering animals associated with Judaism appears to recall anti-Semitic myths of blood libel (Rainer Erb, 'Ritualmord', in *Antisemitismus: Vorurteile und Mythen*, ed. by Julius H. Schoeps and Joachim Schlör (Munich: Piper, 1995), 74–79). In *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, Kraushaar highlights anti-Semitic traits in sections of the anti-authoritarian movement, especially on the part of KI founder member Kunzelmann. Indeed, Kraushaar argues that the later formation of a West German 'Stadtguerilla' by Kunzelmann and others was a specifically anti-Semitic act (for example, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, 282–94).

72 See Kraushaar (ed.), *Frankfurter Schule und Studentenbewegung*, I: 258–59.

4. 'Eiffe for President': Graffiti, May 1968*

Introduction

The fifteenth issue of the influential review *Kursbuch*, published in November 1968, has become emblematic of the era's preoccupation with literature and protest.[1] Alongside Hans Magnus Enzensberger's celebrated essay on anti-authoritarian textuality 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', already discussed in this study, it contains other, lesser-known meditations on literature and protest, including another essay by Enzensberger's co-editor Karl Markus Michel entitled 'Ein Kranz für die Literatur. Fünf Variationen über eine These' [A Wreath for Literature. Five Variations on a Thesis]. Michel's essay is an unusual, important work in that it recognizes the aesthetics (as well as the politics) of anti-authoritarian protest. And 'Ein Kranz für die Literatur' is unparalleled among contemporary writings in devoting serious consideration to graffiti, in particular the celebrated graffiti of May 1968 on Paris's Left Bank.[2] Importantly, Michel suggests that graffiti can be understood as a key anti-authoritarian textual form, a view which is shared by this chapter.

Michel notes three features in graffiti which are of special interest to a study of anti-authoritarian writing. First, he argues that the Parisian graffiti express a profound ambivalence about art. They appear to be

* A version of this chapter was previously published as '"Eiffe verbessert die Welt": Graffiti und der umstrittene öffentliche Raum', in Klimke and Scharloth (eds), *1968*, 63–78.

1 Michel, 'Ein Kranz für die Literatur'. Further references to this work appear in the main body of the text.

2 On the Parisian graffiti, see, for example, *Les Murs ont la Parole. Journal Mural Mai 68. Sorbonne Odéon Nanterre etc…*, ed. by Julien Besançon (Paris: Tchou, 1968); Margaret Atack, *May 68 in French Fiction and Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Lewino, *L'Imagination au pouvoir*; *Paroles de mai*, ed. by Michel Piquemal (Paris: Albin Michel, 1998). The Parisian graffiti became known quickly in the Federal Republic, through such publications as Ayache, *Paris Mai 1968*.

characterized by a vehement rejection of conventional art, whether Communist or bourgeois, as summed up in the inscriptions 'Plus jamais Claudel' [Claudel – Never Again] or 'L'art est mort, Godard n'y pourra rien' [Art is dead and Godard can't change that] (169). Such graffiti give the impression that their authors were rebelling not against a repressive university or state, or against capitalism, but, above all, against art. But according to Michel, in doing so, the Parisian graffiti preserve the spirit of precisely that Western artistic tradition from which they ostensibly seek to distance themselves. On one hand they reference icons of protest like Chairman Mao and Che Guevara, and movements which they seek to honour like Dada and Surrealism. But they also cite Heraclitus, Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus and Arthur Rimbaud. In doing so, if perhaps inadvertently, they are a mere reiteration of one of High Modernism's key topoi, that of the supposed death of art or literature. Thus, as Michel puts it, 'Die Pariser "Kulturrevolution" […] hat der bestehenden Kultur […] nur neues Blut zugeführt…' [The Parisian "cultural revolution" […] simply […] brought new blood to established culture…] (170).

Second, Michel identifies great symbolic power in graffiti and argues that their form is significantly more radical than their apparently conventional content. Rather, the power of the graffito lies in its ubiquity, and its tendency to proliferate, for once one wall has been written on, others seem to call out for graffiti, too. Therefore, graffiti are a symbolic occupation of space, like the walls of the Sorbonne (which are in themselves symbolic of other spaces); and a visual expression of a proliferating revolutionary situation. And, third, Michel asserts that painting on the wall releases and satisfies real desires, however infantile and taboo these may be. Thus, in graffiti, desire breaks out of the realm of psychology and into the political.[3]

These features Michel identifies in the Sorbonne graffiti align them persuasively with West German anti-authoritarianism, which shared both their ambivalence with regard to artistic writing and their commitment to a symbolic intervention in the public space. In addition, Michel's idea of graffiti as an expression of prohibited desire is very much in line with the anti-authoritarian interest in the importance of political practice in accessing a radical subjectivity and the power of the unconscious. Other arguments, too, may be put forward for a powerful resonance between graffiti and anti-authoritarianism, for example the way in which this form seems,

3 However, Michel stresses that the act of producing graffiti is not liberation in itself, or liberated expression, but rather an expression of a need for liberation.

perhaps uniquely, to achieve the ideal of uniting theory (writing) and practice (intervention in the public space). As Michel puts it, graffiti are 'ein Beispiel für McLuhans These "The medium is the message" oder, vornehm strukturalistisch gesagt, für das Zusammenfallen von Signifikant und Signifikat' [an example of McLuhan's theory that "the medium is the message", or, to put it in elegant Structuralist terms, of the coincidence of signifier and signified] (171).

Graffiti are also a resonant form for anti-authoritarianism in that they are, classically, an urban phenomenon, and anti-authoritarianism, too, identified itself profoundly with the metropolitan environment. This identification is expressed strikingly, for instance, in two speeches given at the era's most significant anti-war protest, the Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß in West Berlin in early 1968. There, the era's most prominent activist, Rudi Dutschke, noted of protesters: 'Wir beherrschen auch schon die Straßen der großen Städte, finden uns im "Dickicht der Großstädte" (Brecht) schon ganz gut zurecht' [And we have already mastered the streets of the big cities, we find our way about pretty well in the "jungle of the cities" (Brecht)].[4] Similarly, the Marxist dramatist Peter Weiss gave the Kongreß an account of anti-authoritarianism's essentially urban nature:

> Die Stadt ist ein Produktionsmittel. Wir kämpfen um das Recht der Mitbestimmung im Betrieb Stadt, doch verhehlen wir nicht, daß wir der Ansicht sind, die Stadt soll gelangen in den Besitz der Produzierenden. Die herrschenden Gruppen [...] wollen uns die Straßen unserer Städte verschließen. Sie können unseren Anblick in den Metropolen nicht ertragen. Sie möchten uns vom Erdboden vertilgen. [...] Die Straßen und Plätze der Städte sind unser legitimes Massenmedium.[5]
>
> [The city is a means of production. We are fighting for the right to a say in the works of the city, although we do not deny our view that the city should come under the ownership of those who produce. The ruling groups [...] want to close the streets of our cities to us. They cannot bear the sight of us in our cities. They would like to erase us from the face of the earth. [...] The streets and squares are legitimately our mass media.]

Dutschke's conscious allusion to Bertolt Brecht's early play *Im Dickicht der Städte* [*In the Jungle of the Cities*] (1923), as well as Weiss's

4 Rudi Dutschke, 'Die geschichtlichen Bedingungen für den internationalen Emanzipationskampf', in *Rebellion der Studenten oder die neue Opposition*, 85–93 (90).

5 Peter Weiss, untitled speech, in Plogstedt (ed.), *Der Kampf des vietnamesischen Volkes*, 89–90.

very presence at the Kongreß highlight *in nuce* the important, if often subterranean connections between literature, the urban world and anti-authoritarianism.[6] These connections are central, also, to a spectacular contemporary example of West German graffiti, namely the remarkable work of Eiffe in Hamburg in 1968, which forms the focus of this chapter. This chapter will, first, outline Eiffe's background and biography. Second, it considers some theoretical ideas through which Eiffe's work can be read, both his own and those of the Situationist International (SI), a group which is closely associated with the Paris *évènements* and their modes of expression, as well as West German protest. Third, the chapter provides close readings of some examples of Eiffe's work in light of such ideas, before reflecting in conclusion on its flawed posterity and what it means for our understanding of Eiffe's extraordinary *oeuvre* on the one hand and, on the other, of anti-authoritarian textuality more broadly.

'Das Eiffe-Zeitalter beginnt':[7] Eiffe's Biography and Background

Peter Ernst Eiffe was born in 1941, the illegitimate child of a young woman from the Hamburg bourgeoisie.[8] He was adopted by an older couple from a patrician Hamburg family, whose influence is commemorated today in a street name in the city. Eiffe was named Peter Ernst after his adoptive father, who had had a distinguished

6 The significance of Dutschke's allusion, whether consciously intended or not, is intriguing. The problematic play he references focuses on a complex relationship played out in the city of Chicago between a worker and a business owner in which they are violent enemies and yet simultaneously experience mutual dependence, perhaps even love. The fact that this play is not one of Brecht's well-known later works, clearly identifiable with Marxism, but an early piece with a more opaque message, may evoke the anti-authoritarians' rejection of any orthodox Marxism; the idea of a violent urban conflict between one poorer and one richer man may also have seemed resonant.

7 'The Eiffean Era is Beginning' (Peter Ernst Eiffe, in *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa. Surrealismen zum Mai 1968*, ed. by Uwe Wandrey (Hamburg: Quer-Verlag, 1968), 52). Further references to this work appear in the main body of the text.

8 Most biographical information about Eiffe given here is from the film *Eiffe for President. Alle Ampeln auf gelb*, dir. Christian Bau, 1995. Other details are taken from *Eiffe für President* and <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter-Ernst_Eiffe> [accessed 4 July 2014].

naval career as well as having been a prominent National Socialist. On his father's death, the young Eiffe wrote:

> Träger eines Namens zu sein, der eine so ungeheure Wertschätzung durch meinen Vater erlangt hat, ist eine große Verpflichtung. Ich weiß, daß ich meinem Vater nicht gleichen kann, da mir die Kraft dazu fehlt und die persönliche Größe, doch möchte ich diesem Namen Ehre machen, wenn auch nur in bescheidenen Dimensionen.
>
> [To bear a name which has earned such immeasurable recognition thanks to my father is to bear a great obligation. I know that I cannot equal my father, since I lack the strength and personal greatness to do so, yet I should like to do this name honour, albeit in a modest way].[9]

This letter suggests that Eiffe was deeply influenced by his father and the latter's reputation. His awareness of himself in relation to his father is underlined, too, by his letterhead, which reads 'Peter Ernst Eiffe Jr'. Eiffe was successful in sport as a boy, and on graduating from high school in 1961 joined the *Bundeswehr* [German Armed Forces], later becoming an officer of the reserve. Subsequently, he studied economics in Munich and Hamburg, but did not take a degree. Eiffe married and had one child. According to his daughter, he was an authoritarian, sometimes violent husband, and was divorced in March 1968 when she was one year old. He took a post at the Statistisches Landesamt [State Office for Statistics] in Hamburg, but was soon dismissed for erratic behaviour.

It was at this time that Eiffe gravitated towards Hamburg's extra-parliamentary opposition, while preserving a distance towards it. As Karl Heinz Roth, then an activist in the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund, puts it in an interview included in Christian Bau's documentary film *Eiffe for President. Alle Ampeln auf gelb* [*Eiffe for President. All Traffic Lights to Amber*] (1995):

> [Eiffe] gehörte […] zu einem Umfeld, das wir akzeptiert haben, von Menschen die mitgemacht haben, die aber auf irgendeine Art und Weise von der Rolle waren, das heißt, die selbst, so wie wir, nur wir waren es auf andere [...] Ebene, desintegriert waren, die sich also selbst ausgegrenzt hatten und die in diesen [...] Freiräumen zu agieren angefangen haben. Und in diesen Situationen sind wir dann immer so aneinandergeraten und mußten dann miteinander klarkommen.
>
> [Eiffe was part [...] of a scene around [the SDS] which we accepted, people who joined in, but in one way or another had been kind of left behind; that is, people who themselves, like us, weren't socially

9 Quoted in Bau, *Eiffe for President*.

> integrated, but in a different way, who had excluded themselves from society and then began to take action in that [...] space. And in such situations we kept running into each other and we then had to deal with that.]

It was in this way that Eiffe began to intervene in events linked to the extra-parliamentary opposition, for example disrupting a student *Vollversammlung* [general meeting] in Hamburg by spraying participants with water from a toy machine gun, or seizing the microphone from the prominent Kommune I (KI) activist Fritz Teufel at a May Day rally in West Berlin in 1968.

Above all, Eiffe came to public attention over some ten days and nights in May 1968 in Hamburg. As his contemporary Uwe Wandrey noted:

> Die größte Aufmerksamkeit erregte er mit seinen zahllosen Filzschreiber-Sprüchen. Er brachte sie überall und in jeder Lage an. Er beschriftete Plakate, Hauswände, Verkehrsschilder, Denkmäler, Briefkästen, Schaufensterscheiben, Tiefgaragen, Zebrastreifen, Bürgersteige, Rathaustor, sein Auto, seine Wohnung und vieles mehr. Er war in fast allen Hamburger Stadtteilen tätig. Viele Inschriften waren mit voller Adresse und mit Telefonnummer versehen. Eiffe hatte den telefonischen Anrufbeantworter beauftragt. Die Anrufer wurden gebeten, Name, Beruf und Rufnummer zu hinterlassen. Er würde zurückrufen. Zeitweilig erhielten sie die Mitteilung, daß der heutige Tag der soundsovielte Tag nach der Eiffeschen Zeitrechnung sei. Er war physisch überbeansprucht: innerhalb einer Woche war er Nacht für Nacht ausgezogen um zu schreiben.[10]

> [Most of all, he attracted attention with his innumerable slogans in marker pen. He wrote them everywhere and in all possible situations. He wrote on posters, house walls, road signs, monuments, letter boxes, shop windows, underground garages, zebra crossings, pavements, the gateway to City Hall, his car, his home and in many other locations too. He was active in almost every area of Hamburg. Many of his inscriptions were furnished with his full address and telephone number. Eiffe had subscribed to the telephone answering service. Callers were kindly requested to leave their name, occupation and telephone number. He would call back. For a time, they would receive the message that the day in question was such-and-such a date of the Eiffean Era. He overdid it physically: in the space of a week he had gone out every night to write.]

Eiffe also became known for such acts as leaping up onto the stage to write his slogans on Hamburg's newly-crowned *Miß Universitas*

10 Uwe Wandrey, 'Informationen', in Eiffe, *Eiffe für President*, 5–8 (6).

[Miss University]. Much of this activity was linked to his much-emphasized, but unfounded claim to be campaigning to be elected Mayor of Hamburg. Within ten days, the Hamburg Hochbahn [elevated railway] and public transport advertising authority had reported him to the police, the latter for damaging property and causing a public nuisance; the cost of damage he caused was estimated at nine hundred Deutschmarks.[11]

According to Schütt, writing in 1968, the Parisian graffiti of May 1968 were an inspiration to Eiffe. And echoing Michel's reflections on graffiti, desire and the unconscious, he noted in Bau's film: '[Eiffe] hat sich freigeschrieben, er hat dann eine solche Schreiblust und Schreibwut gehabt, daß er das richtig aus ihm hat herausfließen lassen' [[Eiffe] wrote his way to freedom, he had such a desire and rage to write then that he just let it all out]. However, Schütt observed too that Eiffe was so driven to write his graffiti that he failed to sleep and eat, lost weight and damaged his health. On 30 May 1968, Eiffe drove his Fiat car, covered in writing, onto the shopping concourse of Hamburg's main railway station and declared both car and station to be a Freie Eiffe-Republik [Free Republic of Eiffe]. As he began to draw on the fabric of the station, Eiffe was arrested, and he later appeared handcuffed in court, before being sectioned in a psychiatric clinic.

A kind of 'Eiffe-Untergrund' [Eiffe underground] was established in which people sought to imitate and perpetuate his work, to correspond with him and to set up an (unsuccessful) committee for his release. Eiffe was discharged later in 1968 and worked for an advertising agency in Düsseldorf. However in 1970 he returned to psychiatric treatment, during which he was severely affected by his medication, and his last years were a history of deterioration. Nonetheless, in Bau's film, former carers recall his attempts to perpetuate his projects. He continued, for a time at least, to create work in public places, and to press his campaign to become mayor of Hamburg, at one point inciting some fifty or sixty fellow patients to leave of a clinic with him, travel to Hamburg and write graffiti on the underground transport network. In later years, Eiffe remained concerned with the idea of political and philosophical leadership, imagining for example the founding of a greater German Empire underpinned by a philosophy he called 'Epunktnismus' [E-stop-ism].[12] Relations with his family were never re-established, and in his later years, Eiffe lived in obscurity at a psychiatric clinic in Schleswig-

11 Eiffe, *Eiffe für President*, 7.

12 According to Bau's film, which shows some of Eiffe's notes and writings from this time, the term *Epunktnismus* was derived from his middle initial, 'E.'.

Holstein, and often spoke of suicide. On Christmas Eve, 1982, he quietly left the premises, and his body was found out on the nearby moors in March 1983.

According to Schütt in 1995, before Eiffe anyone wishing to write on walls had to use paint pots and brushes, a slow and inefficient process. As a result, there was no contemporary culture of political graffiti like that in Germany today; indeed, Schütt claims 'es gab ja vorher keine beschriebenen Wände' [before that, walls weren't covered in writing].[13] This account confirms descriptions of Eiffe as the first German graffiti artist, at least in the sense in which that term is recognized today.[14] Schütt argues that Eiffe made such an impact because he identified new technologies for graffiti, namely the marker pen and the aerosol spray, which were then just coming onto the market. These tools constituted in Schütt's words a 'technische Revolution' [technical revolution]. They allowed a lightning-quick, easy production of hundreds of texts anywhere and at any time by just one person without the cumbersome paraphernalia or need for logistical backup which were formerly needed (a place to store paint pots and brushes, someone to keep a lookout, and so on).[15]

Eiffe used other cutting-edge media too, such as the recorded telephone message which readers heard if they rang the phone number he included in some of the graffiti. This use of a recorded message exemplifies Michel's argument that graffiti, by their very

13 While the Parisian graffiti of 1968 were quickly collected and commodified, there are no comparable publications featuring West German graffiti. Photographs of the anti-authoritarian milieu from 1967 and 1968 reveal few texts which could be described as graffiti, in the sense of an illicit inscription, often in the public or semi-public domain. See, for example, Ruetz, *1968. Ein Zeitalter wird besichtigt*, which compiles 323 photographs of both East and West Germany. Of these, some ten, all from the FRG, include images of what might be described as graffiti, but even these few examples are in or on spaces which are in one way or another sanctioned: for example, on blackboards, paper pinned onto walls to protect them, or in the private space of the authors, such as their homes, or the SDS headquarters in West Berlin. These examples date generally from 1968 or later. A non-exhaustive inspection of other collections of photographic evidence confirms these tendencies; studies and collections of political graffiti from German-speaking areas do not include any material from before the 1970s either.

14 See, for example, Wikipedia; or the text on the case of the VHS tape of Bau's film.

15 The idea, put forward by Schütt, that 1968 represents a moment of transition from one technology of graffiti to another is suggested also by contemporary photographs of the Paris graffiti, which uses a variety of media, namely brush and paint, marker pen or aerosol spray. See Lewino, *L'Imagination au pouvoir*; Piquemal (ed.), *Paroles de mai*.

nature, proliferate potentially endlessly, for by ringing his number and leaving messages, readers became participants in his work themselves. According to Schütt, Eiffe's use of such new technologies was a 'Kulturrevolution' [cultural revolution] because they permitted him to develop a completely new means of expression. These media, the marker pen, aerosol spray and telephone-answering service, are essentially modern, such that, while graffiti are, of course, an ancient form, as practised by Eiffe they had, too, the hallmarks of the modernity and Modernism which are inseparable from anti-authoritarianism.

'Eiffe für alle':[16] Some Theoretical Ideas

In his most influential period of activity in May 1968, Eiffe produced thousands of texts, many of which were identical or near-identical in content. Partly as a result, no comprehensive record of all his works could be made, and they can be traced today through very limited sources only. First, some evidence is available from contemporary documentation, notably though newspaper reports and photographs, as featured in Bau's film. Second, Eiffe's work features in the near-contemporary novel *Heißer Sommer* by Uwe Timm (1974). While this account of the student revolt in Hamburg is fictional, it is saturated with period and historical detail and hence it is likely that its use of quotations from Eiffe's work captures something of the original. Timm also explores something of Eiffe's legacy in his later novel *Rot* [*Red*] (2001).[17] And, third, a small book, *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa. Surrealismen zum Mai 1968* [*Eiffe for President. Springtime for Europe. Surrealisms on the Occasion of May 1968*], edited by Uwe Wandrey, was published by the small, left-wing Quer-Verlag in Hamburg in November 1968. In a number of senses, Wandrey's representation of Eiffe's work is partial. For example, the book reproduces Eiffe's graffiti mainly as type, rather than in facsimile. Thus, while the line breaks given in the examples quoted here here follow those in the book, it is not possible to ascertain whether these line breaks are Eiffe's, or created by the book's designer.

The Quer-Verlag booklet is not contemporaneous with Eiffe's major period of activity in May 1968, having been produced some time later, and thus the commentary it includes by Eiffe himself on his work is retrospective. And in line with Quer-Verlag's general programme, *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa* is slanted towards

16 'Eiffe for All', in Eiffe, *Eiffe für President*, 59.

17 Timm, *Heißer Sommer* and *Rot* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2001).

counter-cultural, political interpretations. Therefore, there may be an interest here, conscious or unconscious, on the part of Eiffe and the book's other contributors, in making sense of his work in anti-authoritarian terms. In fact, as the close readings to be presented later in this chaper show, Eiffe's graffiti, originally presented as they were to the public without such theoretical underpinnings, are potentially far more open in their implications. Nonetheless, the examples of his graffiti to be explored here are taken from this publication, and a reading of Eiffe's commentary does help illustrate how his work resonates with contemporary anti-authoritarian strategies.

Eiffe notes here that:

> Wenn man sich die Freiheit nimmt, sein Unbewußtes unzensiert in Spruchform auf die Wirklichkeit wirken zu lassen, so kann das nur in der Hoffnung geschehen, daß dies als Protest gegen die als absurd erscheinende Welt des manipulierten Verstandes nachempfunden werden kann. (59)
>
> [When you take the liberty of letting your unconscious work on reality in the form of aphorisms, you can only do so in the hope that that can be taken as a protest against this absurd world of manipulated consciousness].

He also writes: 'Ich bin gegen politische Aktionen als bloße literarische Ereignisse. Deshalb die lakonische und lächerlich machende Form' [I am opposed to political actions as mere literary events. Hence the laconic, mocking form]; states 'Man kann statt wissenschaftlicher Analysen nur noch in resignierenden Wortsurrealismen seinem Unmut Ausdruck verleihen' [Nowadays, you can only express your discontent in resigned verbal Surrealisms, rather than in academic analyses]; and observes 'Was Maler mit abstrakten Bildern machen, versuche ich mit Wortspielen zu machen' [I aim to do with wordplay what painters aim to do with abstract pictures] (69–70). These comments express a theoretical analysis of society which maps with that put forward by Enzensberger around the same time in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. They give voice, also, to a classically anti-authoritarian rejection of conventional political actions. This judgement was due to a diagnosis of an extreme alienation of life under capitalism which makes it impossible, or at least near-impossible, to take up or imagine any position outside it. This is why Eiffe describes his position as 'resignierend' [resigned], and his scope for action as merely expressing 'Unmut' [discontent]. Nonetheless, such an approach does hold out the possibility of a communication between writer, graffiti and reader in ways which

are, again, reminiscent of Enzensberger's arguments as discussed in the first chapter of this work. Moreover, Eiffe's comments, like Michel's, point to the political potential of the Unconscious to reveal that which is repressed by rational, everyday life, a potentially disruptive or even explosive revelation. This potential was also mined for its ability to shock by the Surrealists, as Eiffe hints with his term 'Wortsurrealismen' [verbal Surrealisms] and reference to (possibly Surrealist) 'abstrakte Bilder' [abstract pictures]. Finally, Eiffe turns to the disruptive potential of laughter, surprise and play to reveal the absurdity of modern capitalist society.

The SI and the City

These ideas of Eiffe's resonate in interesting ways with those of the SI. That European avant-garde group was itself influenced by Surrealism and generally associated with Paris in the 1960s, in particular, with the events of May 1968.[18] The SI influenced anti-authoritarianism in the Federal Republic, too, for example through the involvement of Dieter Kunzelmann, formerly of the SI, in KI, whose actions and ideas are likely to have been known to Eiffe in 1968.[19] It is no coincidence therefore that concepts drawn from Situationist thinking help to illuminate Eiffe's work, and there is a focus here on four of them: the city, and the notions of *dérive*, the gift and *détournement*.

The urban environment was a key issue for Situationists.[20] On one hand, they were highly critical of the modern city and its seemingly immutable authority of stone and streets, arranged as they are in ways which, they argued, embody capitalist power and which cement alienation. The major Situationist thinker Guy Debord devoted a chapter of his central theoretical work *La Société du spectacle* (1967) to environmental planning and argued that modern cities are built to control the workers and the poor.[21] On this analysis, cities are also designed to accommodate the inhuman circulation of motorized

18 See Pascal Dumontier, *Les Situationnistes et Mai 68: Théorie et Pratique de la Révolution (1966–1972)* (Paris: Gérard Lebovici, 1990); Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 53–55. Further references appear in the main body of the text.

19 See, for example, *Nilpferd des höllischen Urwalds*.

20 See Simon Sadler, *The Situationist City* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1998).

21 Debord, 'L'Aménagement du territoire', in *La Société du spectacle*, 135–45; 'Territorial Domination', in *The Society of the Spectacle*, 93–99.

traffic, and hence to discourage real, interpersonal encounters.[22] Moreover, as Debord and his collaborator Attila Kotányi put it in 1961:

> 'town-planning' is on much the same level as the barrage of advertising surrounding Coca-Cola – pure spectacular ideology. Modern capitalism, organizing the reduction of all social life to a spectacle, cannot offer any other spectacle than that of our own alienation. Its vision of the city is its masterpiece.[23]

As this quotation suggests, modern cities are adorned with the alienating language and imagery of advertising. Ivan Chtcheglov, a spiritual predecessor of the Situationists, wrote under the pseudonym Gilles Ivain in 1953, in another programmatic, influential text about the city: 'We are bored in the town; you really do have to be pretty bored to be still looking for mystery on the hoardings and in the streets'.[24] Yet it was Debord's view also that it was only in cities that history could be made; and Situationists imagined and theorized utopian cities too. Thus, they saw the city as a place of potential for play and subversion. As Debord and Kotányi wrote: 'All space is occupied by the enemy. We are living under a permanent curfew. Not just the cops – the geometry. True urbanism will start by causing the occupying forces to disappear from a small number of places'.[25]

Dérive

To this end, Situationists theorized the importance of finding creative ways of moving through the city, in an activity to which they referred as *dérive*, sometimes known in English as drift, and defined in 1958 in a list of Situationist terms as a 'mode of experimental behaviour linked to the conditions of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances. Also used to designate a specific

22 Guy Debord, 'Traffic' (1959), and Guy Debord and Attila Kotányi, 'Unitary Urbanism' (1961), in *The Incomplete Work of the Situationist International*, ed. and trans. by Christopher Gray (London: Free Fall, 1974), 22–23 and 28–30 respectively.

23 Debord and Kotányi, 'Unitary Urbanism', 28.

24 Gilles Ivain (Ivan Chtcheglov), 'Formula for a New City' (1953), in Gray (ed.), *The Incomplete Work of the Situationist International*, 17–20 and Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 1–8.

25 Debord and Kotányi, 'Unitary Urbanism', 30.

period of continuous deriving'.[26] The critic Sadie Plant describes *dérive* as follows:

> Long a favourite practice of the Dadaists, who organized a variety of expeditions, and the surrealists, for whom the geographical form of automatism was an instructive pleasure, the *dérive*, or drift, was defined by the situationists as the 'technique of locomotion without a goal', in which 'one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there.' The *dérive* acted as something of a model for the 'playful creation' of all human relationships. (58–59)[27]

Thus, *dérive* was a way of experiencing the city which disrupted its alienation and hinted at the pleasures of the city of the future. Or, as Simon Sadler writes: 'Drift therefore became a transgression of the alienated world. […] Drift had to alert people to their imprisonment by routine. [...] Cutting freely across urban space, drifters would gain a revolutionary perception of the city'.[28] Importantly, too, Sadler identifies *dérive* not only as an urban form, but as a specifically textual one as well, that is, as a re-reading and re-writing of the city. Urban graffiti can be understood as a part of that project, whether they are discovered during *dérive*, as part of a city's illicit, imaginative life; or practised as part of it, as an active contestation of the city's oppressive meanings. They were therefore treasured by Situationists and related avant-garde groups.[29] As Raoul Vaneigem, another Situationist, wrote: 'What sign should one recognize as our own? Certain graffiti, words of refusal or forbidden gestures inscribed with haste'.[30]

26 Anon., 'Definitions', in Knabb (ed.), *Situationist International Anthology*, 45–46 (45).

27 Plant is quoting, respectively, Jacques Fillon and Debord.

28 Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 94.

29 Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 96–97. Sadler draws attention here to the Lettrists, whose numbers included Chtcheglov and who were avant-garde predecessors of the Situationists. Lettrists favoured the use of inscriptions both on the city and the individual body and its clothing.

30 Raoul Vaneigem, 'Commentaires contre l'urbanisme', *Internationale situationniste*, 6 (Paris, 1961), 33–37; quoted in Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 97, n. 113. See also Piquemal, who brings together examples of graffiti and excerpts from Situationist texts (Piquemal (ed.), *Paroles de mai*). *Inter alia*, this affinity is also reflected in the frequent emphasis on graffiti in the illustrations or design of publications relating to Situationism, e.g., Gray, in *The Incomplete Work of the Situationist International*; Sadler, *The Situationist City*; Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1989).

Such thinking illuminates Eiffe's work powerfully. His physical, political and intellectual environments and contexts, the city of Hamburg and anti-authoritarianism, are distinctively urban. Moreover, his exhausting, ultimately criminalized odyssey through Hamburg in May 1968 is akin to the Situationist drift, which for some was an activity to be taken to the very edges of bearability.[31] Thus, Eiffe's graffiti are the trace of his *dérive*. Just as *dérive* could model more meaningful relationships between those undertaking it together, Eiffe's texts map out a creative, playful path for others, 'showing the concealed potential of experimentation, pleasure, and play in everyday life' as Situationists had it.[32] Eiffe's drift has a particular, personal significance as well, for his great-grandfather, after whom Hamburg's Eiffestraße was named, was a *Bausenator* (a senator with responsibility for construction) in the city. He was therefore an author of its oppressive form, presumably interested in maximizing its logistical and material efficiency above all else. By contrast, Eiffe's traversal of the city was trangressive, not only in failing to be productive in any economic or other conventional sense, but in viewing it against the grain as a medium for illicit writing. And while his august forefather's name was literally as well as figuratively inscribed in the city's fabric, Eiffe repeats and parodies this inscription.

The Gift

Alongside their critique of capitalism, Situationists were also interested in challenging private property, for instance by valorizing gifts over more conventional ideas of economic value and exchange, and hence as vehicles of play and subversion. As Vaneigem wrote:

> [N]ew human relationships must be built on the principle of pure giving. We must rediscover the pleasure of giving: giving because you have so much. What beautiful potlatches the affluent society will see – whether it likes it or no – when the exuberance of the younger generation discovers the pure gift. The growing passion for stealing books, clothes, food, weapons or jewellery simply for the pleasure of

31 Chtcheglov claimed to have undertaken *dérive* for three or four months at a time, but concluded that a week was a more appropriate duration. Sadler, *The Situationist City*, 93.

32 Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 60.

> giving them away, gives us a glimpse of what the will to live has in store for consumer society.[33]

Graffiti, too, disrupt the conventions of private property, for they seem to belong neither to their author nor to the owner of the surface on which they are written, but simultaneously to everyone and no-one. Therefore they fail to conform neatly to an urban world defined by the ownership of property. Eiffe also mobilizes the idea of the subversive gift in his response to a demand from the Hamburger Hochbahn for nine hundred Deutschmarks to cover damage he had caused to its property. In turn, Eiffe presented the railway with an invoice for nine hundred Deutschmarks for his artworks. This gesture suggests that the graffiti Eiffe presented to the railway were a valuable gift, which the philistines who ran it had failed to recognize. Imagining graffiti, traditionally considered to diminish the value of property, as a free gift on the part of their author thus forms part of the complex ways in which Eiffe's graffiti disrupt the ownership of the city.

Détournement

Situationists might also have termed Eiffe's interventions in the public space as *détournement*. *Détournement* is the subversive appropriation and redeployment of the images, texts, or meanings of alienated life, and Plant describes its effects as:

> a turning around and a reclamation of lost meaning: a way of putting the stasis of the spectacle in motion. It is plagiaristic, because its materials are those which already appear within the spectacle, and subversive, since its tactics are those of the 'reversal of perspective', a challenge to meaning aimed at the context in which it arises. […] Set free by their *détournement*, commodified meanings reveal a totality of possible social and discursive relations which exceeds the spectacle's constraints. (86–87)

As the following detailed analyses will show, this description corresponds strikingly to Eiffe's ostentatious work with specific texts he finds in his urban environment, such as advertising posters and road signs, as well as his re-purposing of wider contemporary discourses, such as the parliamentary election campaign or the anti-authoritarian slogan.

33 Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Left Bank Books and Rebel Press, 1983 [1967]), 59.

'Eiffe bitte': Graffiti and *détournement*

Eiffe commented in *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa*: 'Durch Plakate wird das Zeit- und Lebensgefühl der Menge bestimmt und zum Ausdruck gebracht. Man muß sich mit Plakaten unterhalten' [Posters define the masses' awareness of time and life. We have to converse with posters]. He went on to remark that: 'Ich habe mich selbst autorisiert, Plakate zu beschreiben, da sie sonst niemand richtig liest' [I've authorized myself to write on posters, because otherwise no-one will read them properly] (69). Thus, Eiffe's interventions in advertisements intend to make readers look at them more closely and critically as they walk through the false consciousness, mystifications and boredom of the city.

One instance is on a poster advertising milk, showing a handsome man drinking it, to which Eiffe adds the words 'Eiffe trinkt auch Milch' [Eiffe drinks milk too] and 'Das ist Eiffe' [This is Eiffe] (60). The advertisement aims to persuade people to drink milk by suggesting that it may make a man (either oneself, in the case of a male reader/shopper, or, for a woman reader/shopper, perhaps the man or men for whom she is shopping) attractive. The initial impression is that Eiffe supports the message to drink milk. However, on closer consideration, the advertisement's intention is derailed, for instead of advertising milk, the poster is now advertising Eiffe, because it is suggested that as a milk drinker, Eiffe too is attractive.

Eiffe's comment satirizes the implicit claim that drinking a particular product, even one as wholesome as milk, will make anyone good-looking and fulfilled – for whoever Eiffe may have been in the conjectures of the reader in the street, he was unlikely to be the conformist embodied by the model in the advert. Indeed, by adding 'Das ist Eiffe', he is drawing attention to the illusory nature of such advertisments. Of course, readers can guess for themselves that the man on the poster is not Eiffe. But at the same time, they may be reminded, too, that the man in the poster is not whoever he is purported to be (an attractive man of laudable habits), but only a model about whom they know nothing. Thus, the consumer lifestyle idealized in advertising is revealed as a fiction. More broadly, the hint may even be that any identity is staged, an idea which resonates strongly with anti-authoritarian critiques of subjectivity as outlined above, for example in the third chapter of this study.

On an advertisement for Juno cigarettes, the original slogan 'Juno bitte' [Juno, please] is crossed out and replaced by 'Eiffe bitte' [Eiffe, please] (58). Here, Eiffe substitutes the name of a product with his own, apparently urging consumers to want and demand him. Part

of the humour here derives from the impossibility of this scenario, for as an individual person Eiffe cannot be sold in large quantities in shops. Furthermore, the way the supposed slogan treats Eiffe as a commodity seems incongruous in a society where it is ostensibly a matter of human dignity not to be bought, sold or treated like an object. But in advertising Eiffe himself, more implicitly, the graffito makes a satirical point about the ways in which, under capitalism, subjects can be bought and sold in less obvious ways. It also draws attention to the anti-authoritarian analysis according to which people are treated in a paradoxically dehumanizing way by the rhetoric of individualism and free choice which dominates advertising. Thus, in such instances of *détournement* as the two examples given here, the (presumably expensive) advertising campaigns and hence, symbolically, the efficient circulation of the economy are disrupted for a brief, but striking second as passers-by laugh at Eiffe's re-workings of them.

Eiffe also wrote some of his messages on road signs. Official signs expressing rigid instructions and prohibitions for pedestrians and motorists on the one hand and advertisements apparently celebrating the possibility of endless and pleasurable choice on the other might appear at first sight to be very different. However, the fact that Eiffe treats both in the same irreverent way allows the perception of possible connections between them, part of the 'richtig[es] Lesen' [read[ing] properly] described in his comment quoted above. Eiffe may be implying that in reality, advertising, like the road sign, is a discourse of authority, dictating consumption rather than facilitating choice. Alternatively, he may be suggesting that the official signs, far from ruling where people can walk or drive, are, as advertisements claim to be, merely friendly recommendations within a broad range of choices and in no way binding. In this sense, both advertisements and road signs are undermined in a way which is, again, reminiscent of thoughts in Enzensberger's 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this study, that essay proposes an anti-canonical, dialogical relationship between different sorts of writing and authors which so becomes more democratic and collapses generic boundaries. Precisely the same may be said of Eiffe's work here.

One road sign inscribed by Eiffe in a multi-storey car park reads 'Einfahrt verboten' [No Entry]. To this, Eiffe adds the warning 'Eiffe schimpft sonst' [Or Eiffe'll tell you off] (64). By advising that he will tick motorists off for disobeying the sign, Eiffe is apparently affirming its prohibition and aligning himself with its authority. But

since authority cannot speak in multiple, demotic and comic voices, by adding his voice to the sign and making it polyphonic, Eiffe diminishes its power and makes multiple readings of it possible. If the sanction for driving the wrong way is only a reprimand from Eiffe, who constructed a persona of benevolence and playfulness through his graffiti, this is hardly a punishment to be feared. So by parodying the voice of authority on the sign, in a manner reminiscent of a warning to a naughty child, Eiffe is making it laughable. And by making motorists (who are collectively identified by the sign as potential offenders) laugh, he is making himself complicit with them, at the expense of the authority which set up the sign in the first place. Alternatively, if this graffito is read by pedestrians, they may become amused spectators to the (possibly imagined) bafflement of the motorist. In this respect, Eiffe's text could be an entertaining gift for the have-nots of Hamburg who cannot afford to drive around in private cars. Then again, in a cityscape which normally separates motorists and pedestrians comprehensively (and oppressively), the remark may create a new connection between them, in allowing both parties to laugh at it. In all cases, however, the rituals and systems of motoring are mocked. Since the car was a key symbol of West German post-war prosperity, Eiffe is intervening subversively in an important discourse associated with social stability and conformism.

Another type of text featured in *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa* plays with contemporary political discourse. One distinctive feature of such writing is Eiffe's apparent campaign for political office, most commonly as Mayor of Hamburg. Examples include: 'Der nächste Bürgermeister von | Hamburg muß heißen | Peter Ernst Eiffe | Hamburg 22 | Wandsbeker Chaussee 305 | 20 77 10' [The next Mayor of | Hamburg has to be | Peter Ernst Eiffe | Hamburg 22 | Wandsbeker Chaussee 305 | 20 77 10] (24); or, more poetically, 'Eiffe for President | Frühling für Europa' [Eiffe for President | Springtime for Europe] (35). The possible seriousness of Eiffe's electoral slogans could not be discounted altogether, for such a counter-cultural campaign, even if unprecedented in West Germany, was not completely unthinkable. Certainly an acquaintance of Eiffe speaking in Bau's film believed Eiffe's claim to be standing for mayor.[34]

34 In 1970 in the Netherlands, the Kabouters, successors to the Provos, a well-known, anarchic political group, stood in an election and gained, by all accounts to their surprise, several seats (Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 91–93). The Provo movement was a source of inspiration to the FRG's anti-authoritarians. See, for example, Peter Knorr and Wolfgang Beck, 'Europas jüngste Nation: Ein Führer durch den Oranje-Freistaat', *Pardon*, 9 (July 1970), 32–36; Werner G. Brackert, 'Die Rebellen von Amsterdam', *Deutsches Panorama* (1966), no 7, 78–79;

Nonetheless, that claim stands in stark contrast to the climate of post-war West Germany, in which any political activity outside the large parties was seen as highly suspect, even demonized.[35] Schütt has argued, therefore, that these graffiti unmask through their very absurdity the myth that contemporary democracy would permit any individual, however insignificant, to stand for office, for in reality Eiffe would have had no chance of electoral success.[36] Thus, the effect of Eiffe's lone campaign may be to show readers the need to conceive of political engagement in completely different ways.[37]

Eiffe's mayoral campaign mottos are hallmarked by other kinds of contradiction, too, for they express conventional political intentions on the one hand, but on the other are highly counter-cultural in their form. Thus, Eiffe's campaign blends two normally opposed political approaches in a highly disconcerting manner, and such blending is an important feature of his explicitly political texts. A characteristic example is the curious formulation 'Soldaten, Polizisten | Studenten und Arbeiter | Beamte und Journalisten etc. | "solidarisiert" euch' [Soldiers, policemen | students and workers | civil servants and journalists etc. | show "solidarity"] (19). This text appears at first glance not only to use an anti-authoritarian form, the graffito, but also to mobilize the rhetoric of contemporary extra-parliamentary politics, with the verb 'solidarisieren' and the call for a link between students and workers.

However, on closer inspection this graffito does not invite the straightforward approval of the anti-authoritarian community any more than that of Hamburg's majority of sensible SPD voters. Rather, its call for solidarity extends to the perceived opponents of the extra-parliamentary opposition, too, namely soldiers, police officers, state officials and journalists.[38] In view of the highly aggressive, confrontational relationship between police and demonstrators at this time (exemplified by the police shooting of Benno Ohnesorg on 2

Kosel, *Gammler, Beatniks, Provos*; and early German translations of Provo texts: Tuynmann, *Ich bin ein Provo*; and van Duyn, *PROVO. Einführung ins provozierende Denken*, which was first published in German in 1966. See also Roel van Duyn, *Provo! Einleitung ins provozierende Denken*, trans. by Cornelia Krasser and Jochen Schmück (Berlin: Libertad, 1983), 2.

35 Burns and van der Will, *Protest and Democracy*, for example, 5.

36 Eiffe, *Eiffe for President*, 36.

37 Eiffe, *Eiffe for President*, 37.

38 For example, a contemporary slogan used on demonstrations, 'Gegen Demokraten helfen nur Soldaten', criticized state responses to democratic protest (quoted from Lenz, *123 Sprechchor-Reime Straßenzustandsberichte*, 10).

June 1967), this call for solidarity between students and police would have seemed provocative to all parties.[39] Likewise, if the journalists in question work for the anti-protest Springer media group, they are not attractive comrades to anti-authoritarians either. For the anti-authoritarian left, therefore, Eiffe's excessively inclusive formulation seems to mock Marxist notions of class solidarity by ironing out the class struggle itself, as the bathetic 'etc.' and the distancing use of quotation marks around "solidarisiert" suggest, too. Instead, this vision apparently echoes (and mocks) the Establishment idea of a 'formierte Gesellschaft' [aligned society] in the Federal Republic in the 1950s and 1960s, which downplayed social divisions in the interest of social stability – precisely the kind of ideology against which anti-authoritarians were revolting.

Another slogan which brings together normally incompatible political discourses is 'Dutschke zeigt die Wunden | Eiffe heilt | Aus der Opposition in die | Veranwortung' [Dutschke shows the wounds | Eiffe heals | Out of opposition into | responsibility] (21). Here, anti-authoritarianism, Christianity and parliamentary democracy are evoked simultaneously. In May 1968, the reference to Dutschke was both acutely contemporary and painful, since he had just been seriously injured in an assassination attempt on Maundy Thursday in April. That assault was thought by anti-authoritarians to have been prompted by the vehemently anti-protest stance of the Springer press. Thus, reference to Dutschke's injuries brings to mind the contemporary critique of West Germany as a state which fosters murderous violence against non-conformists. But by terming Dutschke's injuries 'die Wunden' [the wounds] rather than the more personal 'seine Wunden' [his wounds], Eiffe is emphasizing their universal significance. These symbolic wounds may exemplify the sufferings of contemporary society, such as the oppression of the poor, the violent suppression of democracy, as represented by Dutschke's shooting, or even the wound of the division of Germany.[40] Thus,

39 For anti-authoritarians, calls for solidarity with the police could only be seen as ironic. For example, during an unauthorized demonstration in West Berlin on 17 December 1966 against US involvement in Vietnam, flyers signed by a (fictional) 'Ausschuß "Rettet die Polizei"' ["Save the Police" Committee] were distributed. These flyers called satirically for better working conditions and more leisure for the police and thus also picked up anti-authoritarian ideas about subjective liberation as a way to defuse aggression: here, on the part of the police (reproduced in Kommune I, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*, no pag.).

40 Elsewhere, Eiffe claims 'Eiffe will ein vereinigtes Deutschland | vereinigtes Europa, vereinigte Welt' [Eiffe wants a unified Germany | a unified Europe, a unified world] (Eiffe, *Eiffe for President*, 26).

the wounded Dutschke (formerly of the GDR, before he moved to West Berlin) embodies a bloodied Germany which only the presence of Eiffe can heal. This is hardly a conventional anti-authoritarian sentiment.

Instead, the imagery and language used here have above all religious overtones. Dutschke's iconic status and his suffering over the Easter festival might make him seem a Christ-like figure suffering for the sins of a corrupt world. But in this scenario of Eiffe, the redeemer is not Dutschke but the messianic Eiffe himself, and Dutschke appears as his herald or forerunner. Thus, read against the Christian narrative, Dutschke appears more like John the Baptist, who announced the arrival of Christ and was punished for it through decapitation, just as Dutschke was wounded in the head.[41] The saying then takes an abrupt turn into the language of conventional parliamentary democracy, with its lines 'Aus der Opposition in die | Veranwortung' [Out of opposition into | responsibility]. This phrase may allude indirectly to Eiffe's purported mayoral campaign, suggesting that the extra-parliamentary opposition is irresponsible and that the only way forward from the conflict of the present is for Eiffe to take office.

The political graffiti discussed here thus make ostentatious use of existing contemporary political discourse, both mainstream and anti-authoritarian, and re-purpose it in unpredictable, provocative ways. Furthermore, the ways in which they combine mainstream and oppositional allusions and forms create an unsettling sense of discursive interference in which the reader's political compass is disabled. Situationists would have recognized this strategy as a *détournement*, disturbing all certainties in the political world, even those of the anti-authoritarians who would have been especially suspicious of the language of authority deployed here.

'Sokrates | Eiffe | Goethe': Eiffe and Posterity

Eiffe achieved remarkable celebrity – or notoriety – in May 1968. As Wandrey remarked at the time: 'In wenigen Tagen hat er Hamburg von sich reden gemacht. Durch überregionale Presse gelangte sein Ruf in die übrige BRD und ins Ausland. Die Wände der Aborte von London und Paris sprachen von Eiffe' [Within just a few days, he

41 Compare Eiffe's creation of an 'Eiffesche Zeitrechnung' [Eiffean Era], dating from 10 May 1968 and implicitly replacing the Christian era as a basis for ordering history (Eiffe, *Eiffe for President*, 50). Here, even the advent of Christ is overshadowed by the arrival of Eiffe.

got Hamburg talking about him. Thanks to the national press his reputation spread to the rest of the FRG and abroad. The toilet walls of London and Paris talked of Eiffe] (6). This recognition makes Eiffe's subsequent occlusion from cultural history all the more astonishing. His work has barely been preserved, other than in *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa*. And while, as observed above, his work in many ways corresponds to the kind of writing recommended by Enzensberger in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' in that it resists commodification, challenges the literary canon and formal conventions, enters into subversive dialogue with texts around it and yet recalls earlier, aesthetic avant-garde practices, it is not mentioned in that work. Not even the perceptive Michel, who published 'Ein Kranz für die Literatur' alongside Enzensberger's essay in November 1968, mentions him. Later academic studies of both anti-authoritarian culture and graffiti omit Eiffe too.[42] Rather, his most significant posterity is in non-academic contexts, namely the counter-cultural booklet *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa*, Timm's novels, and Bau's film.[43]

To put this observation in Situationist terms, Eiffe's work has resisted recuperation, at least partially.[44] Situationists saw the alienation of life under capitalism as being so pervasive that any supposedly radical political or artistic action can easily be neutralized and marketed, or recuperated, by it, thus reinforcing, as Plant puts it, 'the existing networks of power' (76). Therefore, Situationists

42 See, for example, *Anarchie und Aerosol: Wandsprüche und Graffiti 1980–1995*, ed. by Dusan Brozman and others (Wettingen: Beluga, 1995); Claus Günther, '"Die Mauer" als Wand zwischen Welten: Eine späte Replik zu Gunther [*sic*] Waibls Aufsatz "Die Wand als Massenmedium"', *Maske und Kothurn*, 32 (1986), 129–33; Renate Neumann, *Das wilde Schreiben: Graffiti, Sprüche und Zeichen am Rand der Straßen* (Essen: Die blaue Eule, 1991 [1986]); Johannes Stahl, *Graffiti: Zwischen Alltag und Ästhetik* (Munich: scaneg, 1990); Beat Suter, *Graffiti – Rebellion der Zeichen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1992); Bernhard van Treeck, *Graffiti-Lexikon. Legale und illegale Malerei im Stadtbild* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1998); Günter Waibl, 'Die Wand als Massenmedium: Kulturhistorischer Abriß einer unmittelbaren und unzensurierbaren Kommunikationsform', *Maske und Kothurn*, 25 (1979), 181–201. It is only recently that the first short scholarly article devoted to Eiffe has appeared (Davies, '"Eiffe verbessert die Welt"').

43 Bau's film consists largely of interviews with Eiffe's friends, acquaintances and his adult daughter, stills taken at the time of his major productivity and brief reconstructions of Eiffe's actions. Bau compensates for the dearth of original material available by juxtaposing a very few contemporary still photographs with black and white reconstructions of Eiffe at work and intertitles bearing his texts.

44 Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 75–81.

were motivated to develop forms of critique and action which could withstand such recuperation. Eiffe's graffiti have been more successful in this respect than any other example of anti-authoritarian textuality discussed in this study. As such, its remarkable, if imperfect, resistance to posterity can be seen as a triumph rather than a failure and in this respect puts the much more effectively commodified and preserved work of KI in the shade. A number of reasons may be put forward for this success on Eiffe's part, and by way of a conclusion and a final approach to the significance of his work, this chapter now focuses on three of these arguments.

First, Eiffe's lack of posterity has, of course, to do with the conventions of German criticism, which traditionally values a limited notion of high culture and overlooks demotic, counter-cultural or ephemeral textual forms. Michel's treatment of the Sorbonne graffiti in *Kursbuch* 15 seems to contradict this view; but it could be argued, too, that it is only their exceptional, persistent referencing of high culture which makes them visible to him. By contrast, Eiffe's texts draw by and large on everyday life and popular culture; and as such seem to fall beyond even this acute reader's cultural lens.

Second, graffiti are exceptionally resistant to preservation, even compared with other ephemera. Unlike a flyer, a letter or a booklet, a graffito has minimal physical substance, consisting as it does of script alone, written on a surface without being fully part of it. It is thus vulnerable to being removed or covered over at any time, especially since it is normally considered a blight, and few people, if any, feel a sense of proprietorial responsibility for it. Moreover, even where an attempt is made to preserve graffiti, such records are at best deeply partial and flawed. To use Michel's idea from 'Ein Kranz für die Literatur', while its semantic content survives, its genuinely revolutionary formal aspects are to a great extent lost.

The book *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa* demonstrates some of the difficulties in preserving graffiti in particularly interesting detail. Paradoxically, its very format has worked against any broad posterity. It is likely that in 1968 only a small, alternative publisher like Quer-Verlag would have been interested in work like Eiffe's, and this provenance must be one reason why this curious publication was not collected by libraries or other institutions. Such a small publisher would probably have had limited material resources at its disposal, too, which would explain both the scant provision of photographs in *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa*, for they are expensive to print,

and the work's production in a very small edition only.[45] This book has an unconventional format, being very small, measuring about thirteen by fifteen centimetres, covered in corrugated cardboard and stapled together rather than bound.[46] Consequently, it is extremely fragile, and seems almost designed to disintegrate and so to fail posterity. Interestingly, the physical form of the book seems to reflect its producers' perception of its subject matter as artistic; and so there are inextricable links between the book's political non-conformism, consequent lack of mass-market appeal and avant-gardist aspects on one hand, and its resistance to preservation on the other.

Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa contains just a few photographs of Eiffe's works, alongside some background information and analysis and transcripts of some of Eiffe's works set in conventional type. This presentation changes fundamentally the character of Eiffe's work from its original form in the street. Graffiti are normally available for any number of passers-by to view, and hence exposed to a potentially infinite number of readings. Therefore, their meanings can multiply exponentially, demonstrating more ostentatiously than is usual something fundamental about all language and texts: that meanings cannot be originary, fully known, or identified with the author's intention. Therefore, they cannot ever be truly authoritative. By contrast, making graffiti into a book not only commodifies and privatizes them, but also shuts down their potential for generating multiple, subversive meanings. Including graffiti in a book undoes, too, their essentially ephemeral character and their potential to be amended by other writers.

Furthermore, this kind of reproduction erases the original context of the work, which not even a photograph, with its limited sensory range, can capture. Its individual appearance is lost, too, for Eiffe's graffiti originally carried that ultimate index of individuality, personal handwriting. Their reproduction as type in *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa* effaces their evocation of an urgently personal expression. Furthermore, while an original graffito is unique, in the terms coined by the critic Walter Benjamin, its mechanical reproduction in a book destroys its aura.[47] And while graffiti are a striking intervention in

45 According to Timm's novel *Rot*, the book sold 500 copies; according to Wikipedia, 3,000.

46 See http://www.zvab.com/Eiffe-President-Fr%C3%BChling-Europa-Surrealismen-Mai/18796173580/bd [accessed 7 July 2016].

47 Walter Benjamin, 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit (Erste Fassung)' (1936), in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. by Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser, 7 vols

the urban environment, their real drama lies in the moment of their production, a performative interaction between an individual body, mind, text and space. Michel notes of graffiti that: 'Ihr Kontext ist [...] weniger die Summe der einzelnen Sprüche als vielmehr die Situation, in der es zum Akt des Schreibens kam. Und ihr "Sinn" liegt mindestens ebensosehr in diesem Akt wie in dem Bedeutungsgehalt der einzelnen Zitate und Parolen' [Their context is much less the sum of all the individual graffiti than the situation in which the act of writing originated. And their 'meaning' is to be found at least as much in that act as it is in the semantic content of the individual quotations and writings] (171). Developing this insight of Michel's, it might be said that graffiti have something of the classical drama about them, in that their most sensational moment takes place out of sight. This view gives a new twist to the familiar link between graffiti and obscenity. But by contrast, such drama is of course absent from a printed book. Thus, the reader of *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa* is left with a deeply impoverished version of Eiffe's vision.

Third, one particular thematic aspect of Eiffe's work may contribute to its limited posterity. Some anti-authoritarians, for example Ullrich, the student protagonist of Timm's *Heißer Sommer*, could identify powerfully with Eiffe's voice. But Eiffe's work also presented serious challenges to anti-authoritarians, just as much as it did to the cultural mainstream. These challenges have been discussed above in relation to some of Eiffe's political mottos; but they are exemplified especially vividly by a further group of sayings included in *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa* which address patriarchal power and authority, and traditional German reverence towards supposedly great men. This is an issue about which anti-authoritarianism was eloquent, firmly rejecting the patriarchs of the past. Yet, as Chapter 2 of this study has shown, protest discourses could often perpetuate very traditional notions about gender. Thus, comments like Eiffe's about this topic, in pointing up so openly a deep attachment to masculine authority, may show how ambivalent protest culture was, in reality, about it. Such comments may therefore go very close to the bone.

In such texts, Eiffe adds his own name to lists of prominent men, for example 'Sokrates | Eiffe | Goethe' (38). By writing his name between those of the two supposedly greatest ancient and modern writers, Eiffe stylizes himself as their equal. Given German culture's extraordinarily high regard for the classics, this claim

(Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1991), 1.2: 431–69; *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,* trans. by J.A. Underwood (London: Penguin, 2008), 1–50.

is audacious and provocative. It is, moreover, shot through with ambiguity, because its linking of Socrates, Eiffe and Goethe might simultaneously imply something even more outrageous, namely that if Eiffe is a mere scribbler and vandal, as many think, then so are Socrates and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Considered in this way, the graffito recalls the much-loved story of the origin of one of Goethe's best-known poems, 'Wandrers Nachtlied II' [A Wanderer's Night Song II] (1780), which he is said to have scribbled down in a moment of inspiration on the wall of the building in which he was staying.[48] Traditionally, that story is treated reverently as evidence of Goethe's spontaneous, natural genius, so Eiffe's graffito may be uncovering a double standard whereby respectable people admire Goethe's graffiti, but condemn Eiffe's.

Thus, Eiffe's short phrase is an act of vandalism in more than one sense, for in discrediting Goethe it vandalizes the monument of German culture itself as well as the surface on which it is written. Such an irreverent reading would no doubt have appealed to a reader like Timm's Ullrich, who comments at one point, in defence of Eiffe and with reference to Goethe's famous classical drama *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (1786): 'Ein Eiffespruch liefert mehr als die ganze Iphigenie' [One aphorism by Eiffe does more than all of Iphigenia] (158). Ullrich's reference to Goethe's *Iphigenie* is loaded. This play traditionally stands for an affirmation of reason and humanism, so that Ullrich's unfavourable comparison of it to Eiffe amounts to a critique of that liberal view, showing its limits and historical contingency. This view is very much in tune with the anti-authoritarian analysis according to which contemporary society, for all its supposed admiration of the classics and their values, tolerated no dissidence in reality – differently from Goethe's supposedly barbarian but genuinely thoughtful ruler. The allusion is pointed, too, in the way it evokes the traumatic events of June 1967, soon after which the philosopher Theodor W. Adorno lectured at the Freie Universität Berlin 'Zum Klassizismus von Goethes *Iphigenie*' and disregarded the recent police killing of Ohnesorg.[49] This omission seemed to confirm the belief of many that the traditional appreciation and study of literature were nothing but a fig-leaf for the murderous *status quo*. This comment by Ullrich thus expresses anti-authoritarian ambivalence towards literature very

48 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 'Wandrers Nachtlied II', in Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Selected Poetry*, trans. and ed. by David Luke (London: Libris, 1999), 34–35. See van Treeck, *Graffiti-Lexikon*, 100; Nicholas Boyle, *Goethe: The Poet and the Age*, 3 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991–), I (1992): 266.

49 See Chapter 1, n. 41.

succinctly, in that it both rejects the classical canon – and yet, in line with Michel's reading of the Parisian graffiti discussed in the opening of this chapter, in so doing, preserves it, and augments it too.

Other Eiffean texts of this kind are potentially more disturbing to the anti-authoritarian psyche, for instance, the graffito 'Eiffe als positive Synthese | solcher Herren wie Marx, Hitler | Dutschke, Lübke' [Eiffe as a positive synthesis | of such gentlemen as Marx, Hitler | Dutschke, Lübke] (41). Read as part of Eiffe's mayoral campaign, this statement could be satirizing the preferred self-image of the Federal Republic's Establishment as a fully inclusive, undivided society, or the delusions of politicians who claim to be all things to all people.[50] The text may also refer to the bitter contemporary debate about the National Socialist links of many prominent figures in West German public life, for example, the then Federal President Heinrich Lübke, who was involved in the organization of slave labour during the Nazi period. As Ullrich soon learns during his politicization in the SDS in *Heißer Sommer*, this theme was a staple of anti-authoritarian discourse, which often linked it critically to wider German traditions of submission to patriarchal authority.

But this graffito goes much further than pointing out the scandalous Nazi past of prominent men. By linking the left-wing icons Dutschke and Marx with Hitler and Lübke, and suggesting that the author himself is partially inhabited by the Nazi legacy, it seems to claim that Nazism survives within the counter-cultural psyche too. In itself, this idea may not have seemed especially shocking to anti-authoritarians at the time. Many of them had a profound interest in work like that of Wilhelm Reich, which explores the supposed roots of Fascism in the nuclear family and the ordinary, so-called authoritarian personality, including the protesting subject brought up under the shadow of Nazism.

However, Eiffe's assertion about his inner Hitler and Lübke is different from most other anti-authoritarian discourse on this topic in that it is not unmistakeably critical about the past's baleful influence on the present. Rather, it even has the potential to be read as an affirmation of Nazism and traditions of patriarchal authority in the present. Thus, like some of KI's work discussed in the previous chapter, this slogan highlights the protest movements' fraught and contradictory relationship to the German past and authoritarian tradition. Put another way, it holds open the possibility that the anti-authoritarian psyche was permeated by, and in some senses still profoundly attached to, that past and its beliefs and its faith

50 Eiffe, *Eiffe für President*, 36.

in patriarchal authority figures. Read in this way, Eiffe's work constitutes a *détournement* not only of the language and ideas of mainstream society, but of anti-authoritarianism too. Thus, while in many ways it exemplifies the textuality of protest, its hallmark ambiguity also exceeds and unsettles it in powerful and distressing ways by potentially exposing latent, normally silenced aspects and fears in anti-authoritarianism with regard to the German past.

5. Bodily Issues:[1] Dirt, Text and Protest, 1968*

'ein noch nie dagewesener Skandal': Introduction

On 4 September 1968, twenty-four-year-old Karl-Heinz Pawla appeared before a criminal court in Moabit, West Berlin, charged with 'Richterbeleidigung, Hausfriedensbruch, grober Unfug und Widerstand gegen die Staatsgewalt' [insulting a judge, trespassing, causing a public nuisance and resisting law enforcement officials].[2] The charge of insulting a judge had been brought against Pawla for distributing an offensive flyer at the court buildings in Moabit on 23 January 1968.[3] According to a sympathetic contemporary account, this was 'ein Flugblatt […] in dem er nachwies, daß eine Richterin unter den Richtertisch gepißt hatte' [a flyer […] in which he proved that

*A version of this chapter was previously published as 'Bodily Issues: The West German Anti-authoritarian Movement and the Semiotics of Dirt', in *Un-civilising Processes? Excess and Transgression in German Society and Culture. Perspectives Debating with Norbert Elias*, ed. by Mary Fulbrook (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 225–53.

1 This formulation comes from Mary Douglas's study, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London etc.: Ark, 1984 [1966]).

2 'Kommunarde verrichtete sein "großes Geschäft" vor dem Richtertisch' (*Bild*, 5 September 1968, 4). The charge of trespass was due to the fact that Pawla had already been banned from the premises following an earlier action (Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 302–06). Details of the case and trials are quoted from the *Bild* report and 'Zehn Monate Gefängnis wegen Beschmutzung des Gerichtssaales' (*Telegraf*, 7 September 1968, 12); district judge Köppen's summary of his reasons for the sentence he meted out to Pawla at the second trial, 'Die Tat zielstrebig vorbereitet' (*Der Spiegel*, 21 October 1968, 24); Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*; and Kraushaar, *1968: Das Jahr, das alles verändert hat*, 239. Newspaper cuttings on the case are also reproduced in Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*, no pag..

3 Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 303.

a woman judge had pissed under the bench in court].[4] This offence was considered so grave that it was to go to trial in an expedited procedure in February 1968. However, because Pawla did not attend court then, the arrangements for the trial reverted to the customary ones.[5] During his trial, Pawla refused to take his place in the dock, and sat on the floor. After the start of proceedings, he got up and walked around the back of the bench to see 'wie die Richter sitzen' [how the judges sit].[6] After throwing one of his sandals at the public prosecutor, at around 10.25am Pawla announced that he wished to make a declaration, and, as a judge later put it:

> drehte sich mit dem Rücken zum Gericht, zog seine Hose herunter und kotete vor den Zeugentisch in den Gerichtssaal. Sodann drehte sich der Angeklagte um, ging zum Richtertisch, griff zu den auf diesem liegenden Gerichtsakten 272–103/68, riß aus diesen acht Seiten heraus und wischte sich damit das Gesäß ab, wodurch diese Aktenblätter mit Kot beschmutzt wurden.
>
> [turned his back on the bench, pulled his trousers down and defecated in the courtroom in front of the witness box. Thereupon the accused turned around, went to the table before the judges' bench, reached for court files 272–103/68 which were lying upon it, tore eight pages from those files and wiped his rear with them, whereby these pages from the files were soiled with excrement].[7]

Pawla was sentenced to three days' custody for contempt of court, and the rest of his trial was conducted in his absence, while, on his account, he was beaten so badly by officers that he resembled a 'Monster' by the time he was allowed back into court to hear his sentence.[8] He was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of one hundred Deutschmarks for his initial offences.

Pawla was then prosecuted a second time at a non-public hearing in a summary court, and without a defence lawyer, for his acts at his first trial, namely 'Richterbeleidigung und Sachbeschädigung'

4 'Moabit Berliner Scheißhaus', *linkeck* [5] [1968] [no pag.]. Quoted from the reprint of *linkeck*'s full run (1968–69) (Berlin: Karin Kramer, 1987) [no pag]. The offending flyer 'HAUT DER JUSTIZ IN DIE FRESSE!' is included in KI, *Quellen zur Kommuneforschung*.

5 Ulrich Enzensberger quotes newspaper reports of Pawla's lawyer, Horst Mahler, explaining that Pawla did not attend due to concussion recently sustained at a demonstration (*Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 304).

6 Kraushaar, *1968: Das Jahr, das alles verändert hat*, 239.

7 Köppen, summary of reasons for sentence, as reported in 'Die Tat zielstrebig vorbereitet' (*Der Spiegel*, 21 October 1968, 24).

8 Quoted in Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 304.

[insulting a judge and damaging property].[9] In court, Pawla declared himself delighted at his action's success and to regret only his failure to get hold of the presiding judge's comical headgear rather than his papers to wipe his bottom with. The judge in the second trial considered Pawla's offence to have been so severe because: '[D]er Angeklagte [hat] durch die Tat eine Mißachtung gegenüber den Grundregeln jeglichen menschlichen Zusammenlebens und eine derart niedere Gesinnung gezeigt, die einem Menschen an sich nicht zuzutrauen ist' [[B]y this act the accused has shown contempt for the fundamental rules of man's very social existence and a cast of mind so base that one cannot believe that any person could in fact be capable of it].[10] And the offence was aggravated further because it was committed deliberately, so 'zur Sühne und Abschreckung' [to make him atone and as a deterrent], Pawla was sentenced to ten months' imprisonment.[11] In addition, the step was taken of publishing the sentence in five daily and weekly newspapers at Pawla's own expense, as part of the court's explicit intention to make an example of him.

Even a contemporary commentator in the mainstream press who disapproved of Pawla's action in the strongest terms pointed out that this sentence was harsher than those given around the same time to individuals convicted of causing multiple deaths by dangerous or negligent driving, grievous bodily harm resulting in the death of the victim and death by culpable negligence.[12] Moreover, that

9 *Bild*, 5 September 1968, 4.

10 Köppen, summary of reasons for sentence, as reported in 'Die Tat zielstrebig vorbereitet' (*Der Spiegel*, 21 October 1968, 24).

11 Köppen, summary of reasons for sentence, as reported in 'Die Tat zielstrebig vorbereitet' (*Der Spiegel*, 21 October 1968, 24).

12 Anon., 'Zweierlei Maß', a clipping reproduced from an unidentified newspaper (presumably *Telegraf*), in *linkeck*, no pag.. The sentence was suspect to anti-authoritarians, too, because at least according to the memoir of one former anti-authoritarian, the judge was 'ein alter SS-Obersturmbannführer' [an old SS *Obersturmbannführer*] (Michael 'Bommi' Baumann, *Wie alles anfing* (Frankfurt am Main: multiple publishers, 1977 [1975]), 70). However, this statement need not necessarily be taken at face value because of the trend among anti-authoritarians of dismissing many Establishment figures as 'Fascist', whatever their individual political past may have been. Nonetheless, there was certainly a very high proportion of former National Socialists in the FRG's judiciary (70% in 1964, according to Ulrich Enzensberger (*Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 305)). See, for example, A.J. Nicholls, *The Bonn Republic: West German Democracy 1945–1990* (Harlow: Addison Wesley Longman, 1997), 26–27. Indeed, Pawla had been banned from the court buildings in Moabit in the first place for distributing leaflets protesting about the early release from prison of Hans-Joachim Rehse, a

commentator went on to state that the lack of access to a defence lawyer constituted a breach of West Germany's Basic Law and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

The state prosecutor described Pawla's scandalous behaviour in court in September 1968 as 'ein[en] noch nie dagewesene[n] Skandal' [an unprecedented scandal], and the judge called it an 'einmalige[n] Fall in der deutschen Kriminalgeschichte' [a unique case in German criminal history].[13] This case certainly seems to merit those descriptions. Today, it may also seem baffling, as might the trial by summary court and questionable attention to the defendant's civil rights, conveying an urgent need to punish; the illegal physical aggression allegedly displayed towards him; the substantial prison sentence; and the attempt to humiliate him publicly through the the wide publicizing of that sentence. However, the Pawla case starts to become more legible in light of the knowledge that he was a member of the notorious West Berlin anti-authoritarian group Kommune I (KI) discussed in Chapter 3 of this study. The original offensive flyer which Pawla distributed is a later publication in the same series as the 'May flyers' analysed in Chapter 3. And like other KI trials, Pawla's was designed to attract media coverage due to his courtroom antics and formed part of KI's plan to prompt a profusion of subversive acts and trials in order to paralyse courts and prisons and to ridicule the law. Both Pawla's claim that a judge urinated under the bench and his investigative walk around the back of the bench recall, for example, Rainer Langhans's comments during his own trial of 1967–68 on the suspect privacy accorded to judges by the physical form of the bench. However, Pawla's actions in court also mark an escalation in such attempts late in the life of KI, as seemingly less extreme (for example, more purely verbal) methods, like those adopted by Langhans and Fritz Teufel in their trial for incitement to arson, perhaps became familiar and began to lose their ability to shock.

More broadly, Pawla's action links to a heightened, contemporary sensitivity to the political power of bodily issues and dirt, which at that time came to acquire particular symbolic and political meanings for

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former Nazi judge convicted of having acted as an accessory to murder during the National Socialist period in some 251 cases. Such factors contributed to the anti-authoritarian case that the judicial system was not only biased against protesters, but also discredited because of the National Socialist past of so many members of the judiciary. Such criticism led to the establishment of a major *Justizkampagne* [Campaign on Criminal Justice]. See, for example, Uwe Wesel, 'Klassenjustiz', in Landgrebe and Plath (eds), *'68 und die Folgen*, 55–60.

13 *Telegraf*, 7 September 1968, 12.

both anti-authoritarianism and the social mainstream. It also joins an aesthetic avant-garde more commonly associated with performance art to form a wider, transnational text. This chapter therefore explores the Pawla case in the light of contemporary ideas about hygiene, dirt, social deviancy and liberation. It debates how Pawla's act tallies with some anti-authoritarian challenges, drawn from the work of Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse, to contemporary ideals of cleanliness and order. This chapter also relates Pawla's action in court to the textuality of KI, and the equally scandalous work of the Vienna Actionist Günter Brus.

This chapter also observes a development associated with the later stages of the protest movements away from the more optimistic, subversive outlook of 1967 or even early 1968 and towards a sense of increasing political despair. Here, reading Pawla's action through the ideas of the sociologist Norbert Elias and what he calls the 'process of civilization' illustrates how quickly the heyday of anti-authoritarian culture passed: that is, while earlier anti-authoritarian actions like those of KI in 1967 seemed to have more subversive reach, an Eliasian reading of the Pawla case and others in 1968 suggests just how effectively and quickly anti-authoritarian actions could be recuperated by the social status quo. In this sense, this chapter resonates in more than one way with the poetics of anti-authoritarianism sketched out by Hans Magnus Enzensberger in his essay 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' (1968) and discussed in Chapter 1. On one hand, Pawla's action and associated texts correspond to the kinds of writing advocated by Enzensberger in their dialogism, demotic appeal and echoes of earlier avant-garde activities (195). But on the other, the present reading of the Pawla case, which occurred in September 1968, also tallies with the bleak sense one gains from reading Enzensberger's essay, published just two months later, that it is already in mourning for a lost, more utopian textuality.

The Anal Character and the Radical Subject

One consequence of KI's actions was horrified, fascinated press and popular interest in its lifestyle. That KI and its ilk lived in squalor was a well-known cliché evident from a sudden explosion from spring 1967 of a new type of cartoon in the popular press, especially in West Berlin, thematizing cleanliness and dirt. In such images, solid West Berliners are associated with cleanliness, orderliness, respectability, native wit, common sense and the moral and political high ground. Conversely,

in caricatures of students and communards, consistent connections are made between dirt, intellectualism and, paradoxically, stupidity. These images can also connote aggression, thuggishness, madness or a pathological inability to recognize things for what they are (tellingly, psychoanalytic theory suggests that a consistent tendency to mistake one thing for another indicates neurosis, a charge frequently levelled at the communards in more explicit terms too).[14]

Such images of unwashed hippies survive today, and it is interesting to explore how this stereotype should have caught the popular imagination. On one hand, vilification of the communards' hygiene was rhetorical, in that to depict them as dirty was to exclude them from right-minded society. But, on the other, as the Pawla case shows, there was also some substance to the association made between anti-authoritarianism and dirt. First, the anti-authoritarian lifestyle often did take a different approach to cleanliness from that seen in more traditional lifestyles.[15] And, second, there existed a significant political discourse around dirt at the time, and it is in this discourse that Pawla is participating.

Ideas about dirt and cleanliness evoke order. As the anthropologist Mary Douglas put it in her classic and tellingly, near-contemporary study of 1966 *Purity and Danger*, 'Where there is dirt, there is system'.[16] In other words, the very process of distinguishing between what is clean and what is dirty is underpinned by ideas about proper order, and at a very fundamental level anti-authoritarians were suspicious of system, order, and the authority and control they could impose. Furthermore, the anti-authoritarian movement saw a profound interdependence between political and psychological structures. For instance, in *An Essay on Liberation* (1969), which sums up many key anti-authoritarian thoughts, the philosopher Marcuse considers the emergence of the liberated radical subject, as well as a liberated

14 Jacques Lacan, 'Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l'inconscient freudien', in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), 793–827; Jacques Lacan, 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious', in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits. A Selection*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), 292–325. Some critical comments on the case at the time make ironic capital from the idea that Pawla was wrong-headedly confused rather than being deliberately provocative, for example, the public prosecutor's words to which 'Zehn Monate Gefängnis' refers: '[E]s werde teuer, wenn man einen Gerichtssaal mit einer öffentlichen Bedürfnisanstalt verwechsele' [[I]t can be costly to confuse a courtroom with a public convenience].

15 See, for example, Kommune 2, *Versuch der Revolutionierung des bürgerlichen Individuums*, 63. Further references follow in the body of the text.

16 Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 35.

society. In this essay, he sets off two images of dirt against one another. On one hand, Marcuse describes critically the products of capitalism so desirable to many law-abiding West Berlin consumers: 'This society is obscene in producing and indecently exposing a stifling abundance of wares […]; obscene in stuffing itself and its garbage cans while poisoning and burning the scarce foodstuffs in the fields of its aggression' (7–8). This linking of a critique of US aggression in Vietnam to other environmental and ethical issues illustrates the global, associative nature of anti-authoritarian theory. And on the other hand, Marcuse reclassifies what West Berlin's burghers would have recognized as dirt, in describing the aesthetics of the 'new sensibility', based as they are on 'the reversal of meaning, driven to the point of open contradiction: giving flowers to the police, "flower power" – the redefinition and very negation of the sense of "power"; the erotic belligerency in the songs of protest; the sensuousness of long hair, of the body unsoiled by plastic cleanliness' (36). Put another way, Marcuse is exposing a social double standard with regard to dirt, whereby the healthy body is considered dirty, but not the pollution of Vietnam and the waste which consumer society generates. Thus, social norms of cleanliness 'soil' the body and alienate it from its natural beauty. Such norms serve partly to legitimize the commercial need to sell haircuts, toiletries and so on; and partly to alienate individuals from their own bodies and their nature. That alienation contributes to the sublimation of drives which holds people in thrall to state and market. Thus, to use the body in an aesthetic way means a departure from normal, artificial and oppressive cleanliness. So to become 'der Mensch des 21. Jahrhunderts' [twenty-first century man], as KI, quoting Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, put it, the putative radical subject's body and its natural processes had to be liberated.[17]

Such psychoanalytically inspired aspects of the anti-authoritarian understanding of dirt are evident, too, in writings by KI's contemporary, Kommune 2 (K2), which had set out to pursue a less ludic, more intellectual and theoretical agenda than KI, and so produced denser accounts of its thinking and practice. K2 writes: 'Der Erziehung zur Sauberkeit kommt in unserer Gesellschaft eine zentrale Bedeutung zu bei der Herausbildung autoritätshöriger, Ich-schwacher Individuen' [In our society an upbringing which emphasizes cleanliness plays a central role in the creation of individuals who are obedient to authority and whose egos are

17 'Es ist der Mensch des 21. Jahrhunderts, den wir schaffen müssen... ' [It is twenty-first century man whom we must create…] (Kunzelmann, 'Notizen zur Gründung revolutionärer Kommunen', 24–28.

weak] (81). Within this broader discussion of the psychology of the body, there is a particular strand of interest in the bodily functions, ultimately derived from Sigmund Freud's view that anal functions are the source of physical and erotic, sadistic pleasure.[18] According to such counter-cultural accounts, training a child to control bodily functions therefore involves also the repression of such pleasure, an index of a society fundamentally hostile to the body. Because the anal stage is central to character formation, how a child learns to deal with it is central to his or her ensuing subjectivity: repressive attitudes to the body and its issues enforced during the anal stage will damage an individual for life.

K2 identifies as 'anal character' the psychological structure formed by repressive socialization and emphasis on cleanliness during a child's anal phase, and quotes the anti-authoritarian psychoanalytic theorist Reimut Reiche as follows:

> Nirgends spürten wohl die sauberen, gewissenhaften und sozial eingeschüchterten Eltern die Unsozialisiertheit und Triebhaftigkeit ihres Kindes so stark wie an dessen analen Freuden, an der Hartnäckigkeit, mit der es auf den Produkten dieser Körperzonen als geliebten Objekten beharrt. In der Weise, wie dem Kind diese Freuden ausgetrieben werden, werden auch seine Ich-Fähigkeiten auf eine bestimmte, nämlich verstümmelte Art ausgebildet. Diese erscheinen beim Analcharakter in seiner Pünktlichkeit, Gewissenhaftigkeit, in der verkümmerten Art, sexuellen Objekten zu begegnen, und in der Starrheit, von der alle seine Handlungen regiert werden. (81)
>
> [Probably nowhere have clean, conscientious and socially intimidated parents experienced their child's unsocialized nature and his domination by physical urges as acutely as in relation to his anal pleasures, to the stubborness with which he insists on the products of those zones of his body as beloved objects. As these joys are driven out of the child, the capacities of his ego too are formed in a particular, that is to say a mutilated way. Those capacities are evident in the anal character's punctuality, its conscientiousness, in its crippled manner of encountering sexual objects, and in the rigidity which governs all its actions.]

Such theorizing explains, for example, the derogatory comment of one character in Bernward Vesper's fragmentary anti-authoritarian 'Romanessay' [novel-essay] *Die Reise*, which was '"Der Mensch ist das Tier, das hinter Türen scheißt"' ["Man is the animal which shits

18 See Oliver Jahraus, *Die Aktion des Wiener Aktionismus: Subversion der Kultur und Dispositionierung des Bewußtseins* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2001), 227. Further references follow in the main body of the text.

behind closed doors"].[19] On this logic, dismantling the repressive anal character by undermining learned attitudes to the body and its issues would go some way towards subjective liberation. This liberation would consist in reactivating the anal stage, that is, in taking the subject back to a state in which its relationship to the body and dirt is not yet restricted and alienated. This idea forms one theoretical foundation of the anecdotally reported custom in some communes of keeping lavatory doors open, or even removing them. As one former inhabitant of a Munich commune reported of her fellow communards, who included the former KI member Teufel: '[S]ie [mochten] nicht, […] daß ich beim Kacken die Tür abschloß' [[T]hey didn't like the fact […] that I locked the door to crap].[20]

According to K2, to challenge social norms of cleanliness is therefore to challenge an array of neurotic, supposed social virtues as listed by Reiche; but also one's own parents, generally responsible for training a child to control bodily functions. And as Reiche suggests, if parental training inculcates the social repression of the body, such generational conflict may be political. However, for West German anti-authoritarians, such ideas about character formation had further, highly specific ramifications. Another political and psychoanalytic theorist who was hugely influential for the movement was Reich, who had held the capitalist socialization of individuals with regard to the body to be at the very root of fascism.[21] While Reich's notions of the fascist personality tend to the universal, this aspect of his critique of society's control of the body could have appealed to West German anti-authoritarians in particular. The issue of generational conflict was exceptionally acute for the rebels of the 1960s, due not only to fears of fascism in general, but also to the more specific context of the Nazi past. This context explains remarks like that of *Die Reise*'s narrator on a hotel in (the politically-charged location of) South Tirol:

> 'Deutsches Haus' hieß das Ding und war irrsinnig sauber, und die Leute sahen uns genau mit *dem* Blick an. Wenn Sie kein Deutscher sind, werden Sie das nie begreifen, Sie halten mich für einen Hypochonder, wenn ich zwischen dem 'gepflegten' Vorgarten und dem dienstfertigen Schweigen des Portiers […] eine direkte Verbindung zu Auschwitz herstelle.

19 Vesper, *Die Reise*, 24.

20 Rosemarie Heinikel, *Rosy Rosy* (Frankfurt am Main: März, 1971), 64. See also Wolfgang Kraushaar, *'Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?' München 1970: Über die antisemitischen Wurzeln des deutschen Terrorismus* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2013), 790.

21 Reich, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*.

> [The thing was called 'The German House' and it was insanely clean, and the people looked at us in *that* way. If you're not a German, you'll never understand this, you'll take me for a hypochondriac if I make a direct connection between the 'beautifully tended' garden and the porter's assiduous silence […] and Auschwitz.] (31).

While this assertion is problematic in many ways, it does make clear that for Vesper the critique of hygiene is anything but a universal issue, but rather one deeply rooted in the specifically German context.[22]

So Pawla and his comrades turned not only against the authoritarianism, even the alleged (latent) fascism of parents in general. They rebelled very specifically, too, against parents who had been adults and possibly complicit or even criminally active during the Nazi regime, which had emphasized such 'secondary', supposedly anal virtues as cleanliness as being of national(ist) value. Thus, Pawla's public defecation may be seen, first, as a social critique in highlighting in an exemplary way the suppression of the body under capitalism, by provoking its renewed, public suppression by the authorities. This act was also seen to highlight continuity between the past and the present, because the anti-authoritarian magazine *linkeck* [*leftangle*] (questionably) considered the supposedly new procedures used in Pawla's conviction (the summary court, the lack of a proper defence) to be evidence of the continuation of National Socialism in the Federal Republic: '[D]ies alles ist Tadition [*sic*] [...] Wieder "säubert" man Berlin' [[T]his is all traditional […] Berlin is being 'cleansed' again]. The double meaning of 'cleansing', referring both to the removal of a source of material filth, Pawla, and to fascist persecutions, makes the link between personal hygiene and state control in the anti-authoritarian analysis clear. Second, Pawla's act forms part of what Marcuse called 'The Great Refusal', for Pawla is refusing to perform a fundamental proof of maturity and thereby refusing the role of responsible adult in a society in which that position means complicity in its wrongs. In addition, the training of Pawla's bodily functions would have occurred around 1945, that is, under the shadow of Nazi socialization. Therefore, his rejection of

22 For example, the narrator's insistence that only a German could fully understand the connection between domestic cleanliness and genocide suggests that only like-minded Germans are in a position to interpret German history and psychology properly, thus preserving the (presumably non-Jewish) German subject's position at centre stage when discussing the Holocaust. To dismiss any criticism of that viewpoint as a mere pathologization, rather than a sound political argument, shores up that questionable assertion further.

what he had been taught as an infant in or around 1945 meant to refuse not only potentially fascist, in a Reichian sense, but also, more specifically, Nazi personality formation.

Reading the Text

Pawla is being true to the central anti-authoritarian commitment to the symbolic and textual as crucial battlegrounds for political action, as discussed in the Introduction to this work. As text, Pawla's case can be understood in a series of ways. His original offending flyer of January 1968, which claimed that a judge urinated under the bench and so triggered the trial at which he defecated, protests against a court's recent punishment of another anti-authoritarian, Willi Pressmar. Pressmar had been arrested during a demonstration and, according to the account he subsequently gave to the court while on trial for his actions at the demonstration, he was treated aggressively by police while in custody after his arrest, when he had asked for toilet paper.[23] During that account to the court, he insisted on using the verb 'scheißen' [to shit]. For this vulgarity, Pressmar was given a three-day sentence by a woman judge called Piglosewicz, and it is this sentence and its circumstances which the KI flyer distributed by Pawla attacks. At one point, the flyer describes Piglosewicz as a 'Glofrau', punning on the word 'Klofrau' [woman lavatory attendant]. This is one of two insults in the text reliant on the similarity between the word 'Klo' [loo] and its near-homonym in the middle of the name Piglosewicz. And at the end, the flyer says 'DIE ALTE PIGLOSEWICZ PISST IMMER UNTERN RICHTERTISCH!' [THE OLD PIGLOSEWICZ WOMAN ALWAYS PISSES UNDER THE BENCH!]**.** This statement is one of a list of aggressive slogans aimed at the judiciary, and possibly intended to be taken up and chanted by demonstrators at court proceedings. In a manner typical of the time, all these slogans rhyme, presumably in order to make them catchy and memorable.

In the first instance, the implausible statement about Piglosewicz is a conventional, if crude insult. Yet according to *An Essay on Liberation*, such insults had their place in the Great Refusal, for 'if the [obscenity] involves the sexual [or the bodily – MPD] sphere, it falls in line with the great design of the desublimation of culture, which,

23 There are brief summaries of Pressmar's case in the anti-authoritarian pamphlet *1. Berliner Landfriedensbruchbuch*, ed. by Dagmar v. Doetinchem et al., 2nd, rev. edn (Berlin: Oberbaumpresse, n. d. [1968]), 26; and Ulrich Enzensberger, *Die Jahre der Kommune I*, 303.

to the radicals, is a vital aspect of liberation' (35). The flyer could be described as an approach towards just such a 'desublimation of culture' in that it points to the ways in which polite culture suppresses real drives and needs.[24] By saying this about the judge, the flyer may be offering a satirical critique of social norms whereby respectable people pretend not to have bodily functions, or, analogously, other physical or affective needs, at all. But in fact, even judges must urinate; and in relation to Pawla's action in court, *linkeck* writes: 'Karl hat getan, was jedermanns Bedürfnis ist, er hat ins Gericht geschissen' [Karl did what everybody needs to do, he shat in the court]. This statement means, first, that Pawla is hinting at a desublimation of culture by exposing the normally suppressed fact that to shit is 'jedermanns Bedürfnis' [what everybody needs to do]. Second, it is implied that there is a deep need, as fundamental and vital as basic bodily functions, in everyone to dismantle the kind of authoritarian society which silences speech about the body; and that to do so is in everyone's interest.

Marcuse goes on to argue that obscenity resists and breaks down the language of authority: '"Obscenities" are not officially co-opted and sanctioned by the […] powers that be; their usage thus breaks the false ideological language and invalidates its definitions' (35). Moreover, he argues that obscenity can reverse, and hence subvert, the meanings of official language:

> [T]he rupture with the linguistic universe of the Establishment […] amounts to a methodical reversal of meaning. […] Here is a systematic linguistic rebellion, which smashes the ideological context in which the words are employed and defined, and places them in the opposite context – negation of the established one. […] The methodical use of 'obscenities' in the political language of the radicals is the elemental act of giving a new name to men and things, obliterating the false and hypocritical name which the renamed figures proudly bear in and for the system. (35)

This kind of subversion even has a certain utopian tinge, for the promise of 'the elemental act of giving a new name to men and things' suggests a self-determined, radical new creation of the world, a key theme for anti-authoritarianism.

24 The way in which the double standards of the Establishment hinge on a disingenuous division between the private and the political were a common KI theme, for example, as Langhans remarked to the judge in his trial in 1967: 'Sie sind hier Richter, und abends nett zu Ihrer Frau' [In here you're a judge, and in the evenings you're nice to your wife] (Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*).

This theme of the reversal of meaning provides an insight into further ways in which the flyer may be read. Not only does it turn the conventions of official language on their heads but it is also typical of KI's adventures in the symbolic in mobilizing confusions between the figurative and the literal. There are many clues in the flyer that it is governed by principles other than literal meaning. For instance, the ostentatious use of rhyme indicates that here it is the sound of the judge's name which generates scatological associations. Therefore, attention is drawn to the fact that the substance of the accusation seems prompted not by any real event, but by free association between the sound of the judge's name and Pressmar's verbal misdemeanour in court.

Thus, some of the flyer's figurative meanings may be read as follows. The suggestion is that the judge is given to disgusting behaviour. But non-physical, rather than physical behaviour could also be meant here, for instance, complicity in a corrupt system. The coinage 'Glofrau' describes Piglosewicz as the lavatory attendant of justice. That image implies that she is working as the despised servant of others in the courts; and that those courts are where the West Berlin authorities purge themselves of the waste which they themselves both produce and attempt, with the help of minions like Piglosewicz, to flush away discreetly. On this description, the court is no longer the respectable, public arena of justice, but a disgusting place associated with shame and secrecy. So here, a material act (urination) appears as a metaphor for a non-material act (complicity) in what may be an instance of the reversal of meaning in counter-cultural obscenity as described in *An Essay on Liberation*.

Moreover, the intention of the accusation is less seriously to convince the reader that such an event really took place than to provoke other responses, such as a prosecution. In this sense, the flyer's figurative meaning has nothing to do with the judge at all, but is simply a demand to be prosecuted. This double meaning places the authorities in a double-bind. On one hand, if they overlook the insult, that is, if they read the flyer figuratively for what it really is, a provocation aimed at triggering prosecution, and if they ignore it as a result, then their dignity is damaged in the eyes of the public. On the other hand, for the authorities to prosecute the author by taking his flyer literally as an insult to a judge is to grant his wish to be allowed into court. To the anti-authoritarians, the authorities' taking the flyer literally in this way showed them to be dim readers incapable of figurative, that is to say imaginative, interpretations.

Thus, the offending flyer and Pawla's later behaviour in court recall KI's most celebrated action, the production and defence in 1967–68 of its May flyers.[25] Pawla could have adopted the same defence as Langhans and Teufel at their trial, arguing that his satirical flyer should not be taken literally. This case could have been strongly backed up with allusions to the evident linguistic patterning of the flyer. Consequently, it could have been argued that readers would quickly understand that the flyer's statement about Piglosewicz was produced as a result of the exigencies of punning and rhyme, and not any real event. However, Pawla does not take that option. Rather, his physical, rather than verbal, statement in court adds another twist to the reversals between literal and figurative. While the flyer used bodily functions figuratively, Pawla re-literalizes its statement. As the judge's report puts it: '[Pawla] habe die "Scheiße" konkret machen wollen' [[Pawla] claimed he wanted to give the 'shit' concrete form].[26] If, in a figurative sense, judges and courts produce nothing but shit, Pawla confronts them with a description of courtroom proceedings more adequate than any verbal description. And simultaneously, the defendant is expressing his contempt for the court in a drastic way by literalizing the figurative expression 'auf etwas scheißen', meaning literally 'to shit on something' and figuratively, 'not to give a shit'. Thus, there is a progression here from the purely figurative imagery of the flyer to the literalization of the figurative in court, a reversal of the way in which legal proceedings are usually perceived to develop, from a material act or fact to non-material verbalization.

This complex interplay between meanings could be read at more length. But what matters, as with the May flyers, is the sustained wrong-footing of the relation between literal and figurative. This constant slipping between literal and figurative meanings echoes anti-authoritarian interest in the psychological underpinnings of politics, for one is again reminded here of the *quid pro quo* as a marker of neurosis. An action which highlights such confusion between literal and figurative meanings of socially important language could, therefore, highlight the neurosis of a society as a whole. Moreover, this process highlights the precarity of the language of authority, in the case of law, the key source of its power. When familiar metaphors are taken literally, or *vice versa*, familiar language is alienated – or becomes poetic, as the third chapter of this study argues with regard to the work of KI.

25 Documented in Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*.

26 Köppen, summary of reasons for sentence, as reported in 'Die Tat zielstrebig vorbereitet' (*Der Spiegel*, 21 October 1968, 24).

Arguments can be made here, too, using the ideas of Mikhail Bakhtin, about the carnivalization of language.[27] The flyer not only substitutes obscenity for legal argument, but also replaces logical patterns of signification with other, more sensuous and (apparently) nonsensical ways of structuring language, for example rhyme and rhythm. Thus, the rhyming and punning of the flyer threaten to make nonsense, for example, of one of the foundations of social order and hierarchy, the patronymic surname. The very form of the flyer, too, could be argued to be carnivalesque in ways in which the court files soiled by Pawla, for example, are not. While court documents constitute a privileged textual form limited in access and application, the flyer and the slogan are more open and demotic in their uses. They are not confidential or unique, but public, and they can be endlessly reproduced; they can be taken and used by anyone anywhere, and not for one prescribed purpose only. Also, they involve the body as well as the mind, for they are to be distributed, carried, handled and shouted, rather than read in splendid isolation. So in Bakhtin's words, such counter-cultural linguistic processes and textual forms, unlike the court, '[do] not know footlights'.[28] As a result, they reveal that language is more open, contingent and arbitrary than the social institutions which depend on it assume. As a result, the language of authority, supposedly transparent and immutable, comes to seem contradictory and ambiguous.

Reading the Performance: Vienna Actionism

The importance of the symbolic for a group like KI lies in its origins not only in traditional politics, but also in such predecessor avant-garde groups as Subversive Aktion, Gruppe SPUR and the Situationist International, which had drawn in turn on Dada and Surrealism. Thus, Pawla's protest, as part both of a textual and a radical performance tradition, fits into the same, longer European avant-garde tradition as that referenced by Enzensberger in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', and in KI's defence in court of the May flyers. In line with the arguments in Chapter 3 about KI's epic theatricality in court, Pawla's act, too, may be considered a performance of dissent. That effect would be heightened by the inherently theatrical nature of court proceedings, and especially accentuated in the Moabit law courts by that building's grandiose nineteenth-century architecture,

27 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, trans. by Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984 [1965]).

28 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 7.

as observed by Langhans at his trial. Likewise, Situationists might well have understood Pawla's act as a subversive, spectacular situation, a *détournement*, or subversive re-purposing of the conventional as seen in the graffiti of Eiffe, discussed in Chapter 4.[29]

In addition, Pawla's action can be linked to a contemporary artistic movement not usually brought into connection with the West Berlin anti-authoritarians, namely Vienna Actionism.[30] Like KI, Vienna Actionism had its roots in earlier avant-garde movements such as Dada, and it shared KI's radical critique of society, psychology and language as well as its desire to break down the barriers between the aesthetic and life itself. Furthermore, like KI, Vienna Actionism was a source of much controversy across the whole political spectrum, including the Left.[31] In the course of the 1960s, Vienna Actionism developed extreme performances, many featuring the use of living human bodies, dirt, animal blood, food or bodily substances.

An example is Günter Brus's series 'Körperanalysen' [Body Analyses]. These performances, which became increasingly radical over time, showed Brus using violence against himself and so represented his body's repression by society, enforced by sadism and aggression. As Oliver Jahraus puts it, quoting from a text issued by Brus as part of one of his actions:

> [D]iese staatliche Gewalt [wird identifiziert] unter anderem mit der Herrschaft über die vital und sexual funktionaliserten Öffnungen des Innen-Außen-Grenzen des Körpers: '[…] Der Staat kennt keinen Betriebschluß für meine Drüsen. Er presst meinen After zu reisst meine Narben auf.' Staatliche Gewalt ist demnach immer Gewalt über den Körper: 'Der Staat will mich essen, rösten, schlecken, vögeln, einfrieren, auftauen, erfinden. (235)

> [[T]he authority of the state [is identified] *inter alia* with power over the vital, sexually functionalized orifices of the body's limits to the

29 See Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture*, 89.

30 With the exception of a reference in Karl-Heinz Bohrer's contemporary essay 'Surrealismus und Terror oder die Aporien des Juste-milieu' (1969), in Bohrer, *Die gefährdete Phantasie*, 32–61 (39); a brief entry in Kraushaar, *1968: Das Jahr, das alles verändert hat* (182–83); and Davies, 'Bodily Issues', to my knowledge no scholarship on West German anti-authoritarianism connects it with Vienna Actionism. This omission is a consequence of the ways in which much criticism in this field until recently was unable to overcome perceptions of the division of *Geist* and *Macht*: that is, because the actions of KI and other anti-authoritarians were seen as political, their aesthetic aspects remained invisible.

31 See Jahraus, *Die Aktion des Wiener Aktionismus*, 114–15. On left-wing responses to Vienna Actionism, see anon., 'Fleisch und Farbe', *Pardon*, 9 (January 1970), 1, 30–37 (32).

> in- and outside: '[…] the state does not recognize any end of business hours for my glands. It forces my anus shut tears open my scars.' According to this view, the state's authority is always authority over the body: 'The state wants to eat, roast, lick, screw, freeze, thaw, invent me.']

Strikingly, Brus's use of the image of the state forcing his anus shut as the epitome of repression or oppression echoes the imagery of Pawla's protest, though Brus's formulation makes even clearer that society's control of human bodily functions is active, aggressive, painful and dangerous. Simultaneously, according to Jahraus, Brus's body analysis was auto-therapy to alleviate the effects of that repression.[32]

One shocking Actionist event was entitled 'Kunst und Revolution' [Art and Revolution] and held on 7 June 1968 in Lecture Hall I of the University of Vienna, co-organized with the Sozialistischer Österreichischer Studentenverband (SÖS) [Austrian Socialist Federation of Students].[33] This event marked the closest collaboration between the Austrian student movement and the Vienna Actionists, and the culmination of Actionist collaboration altogether. After an introductory speech, various actions were performed simultaneously. These included a defamatory speech on Robert Kennedy, who had been murdered three days previously; the whipping of a masked masochist; a urinating competition; an 'Aktionsvortrag' [action lecture] symbolizing 'Kommunkationstörungen' [disturbances in communication] in parliament; and another involving a hand in a burning asbestos glove. But the most spectacular was Brus's 'Körperanalyse No 33' [Body Analysis No. 33] in which:

> er schnitt sich mit einer Rasierklinge in Brust und Oberschenkel, er defäkierte auf den Boden und strich seinen Körper mit Kot ein, er urinierte in ein Glas und trank den Urin, er würgte sich, erbrach, onanierte und sang dabei die Nationalhymne. […] Peter Weibel und Valie Export schreiben […] von Augenblicken 'der Panik und Vernichtung, wo das Bewußtsein zu kollabieren drohte, weil das

32 *Brus Muehl* [*sic*] *Nitsch Schwarzkogler. Writings of the Vienna Actionists*, ed. by Malcolm Green (London: Atlas Press, 1999), 20.

33 Justin Hoffmann, *Destruktionskunst: Der Mythos der Zerstörung in der Kunst der frühen sechziger Jahre* (Munich: Silke Schreiber, 1995), 177–79; compare with *Wiener Aktionismus / Viennese Aktionism* [*sic*] *Wien / Vienna 1960–1971*, ed. by Hubert Klocker with the Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Wien and Museum Ludwig Köln, 2 vols (Klagenfurt: Ritter, 1989), II, *Der zertrümmerte Spiegel / The Shattered Mirror. Günter Brus Otto Mühl Hermann Nitsch Rudolf Schwarzkogler*: 140; Green (ed.), *Brus Muehl Nitsch, Schwarzkogler*, 57–67.

> Gehirn die Verarbeitung der ihm zugetragenen Informationen verweigerte'.[34]
>
> [he cut his chest and thigh with a razor blade, he defecated on the floor and spread excrement over his body, he urinated into a glass and drank the urine, he retched, vomited, masturbated while singing the national anthem. […] Peter Weibel and Valie Export write […] of moments of 'panic and destruction, when one's consciousness threatened to collapse, because the brain refused to process the information relayed to it'.]

A massive public scandal ensued. Various participants in 'Kunst und Revolution' were arrested and convicted, but Brus was the most severely punished. After two months in custody awaiting trial, he was given the maximum possible sentence, six months' close arrest for having 'die Ordnung an einem öffentlichen Ort gestört' [disturbed public order] and 'den öffentlichen Anstand verletzt' [offended against public decency]. This offence was exacerbated by 'der Umstand, daß die Übertretungen vor ca 400 Personen beiderlei Geschlechtes, auf akademischem Boden unter Vorgabe einer Kulturveranstaltung begangen wurden' [the circumstance that the misdemeanours were committed in front of some 400 persons of both sexes, on academic premises under the pretence of being a cultural event].[35] Interestingly, then, the usual defence of the avant-garde, that art's special status allows it to push the boundaries of what is normally socially acceptable (indeed, the defence used by KI in relation to its May flyers in 1967–68), is reversed here by the court. In this case, the court sees Brus's claim to be participating in culture as making his act particularly reprehensible.

Such views back up the critic Malcolm Green's observation of 'total consternation in the law courts. The legal machinery lacked the articles to deal with the actionists' deeds, and in several cases its rulings resorted to serious distortions of the observed facts […] in order to obtain a conviction'.[36] Brus's appeal against his original sentence failed. Although the sentence was reduced to five months, it was made more severe by the addition of two days on a hard bed and two days' fasting each month. In order to avoid the sentence and a severe fine, Brus left Austria and remained abroad for years. Further consequences of 'Kunst und Revolution' were that Brus

34 Hoffmann, *Destruktionskunst*, 178.

35 Green (ed.), *Brus Muehl* [*sic*] *Nitsch Schwarzkogler*, 66.

36 Malcolm Green, 'Introduction', in Green (ed.), *Brus Muehl* [*sic*] *Nitsch Schwarzkogler*, 9–20 (15).

concluded his series of 'Körperanalysen'; such Actionist events were discontinued; and the SÖS disbanded.

In many respects, Brus's action was significantly different from Pawla's. Brus's performance serves both to to present himself as a victim and to victimize himself, suggesting the ways in which the state's and society's standards are enforced by internalization and inflicted, ultimately, by the individual upon him- or herself. By contrast, Pawla's action seems to be an insult and challenge not to the self but to the agents of the state. Nonetheless, some associations may be made between 'Körperanalyse No. 33' and the Pawla case. After leaving Austria, Brus went to West Berlin, where he was initially involved in radical politics and artistic actions and met KI in 1969.[37] While this personal contact took place after Pawla's trial, it demonstrates that KI and Brus were aware of, and interested in, one another. Given the scandal triggered by 'Kunst und Revolution', and the fact that it would have been reported in West Germany, it seems possible that Pawla's action was inspired by Brus; certainly it can be said to be its close parallel, derived from similar responses to contemporary society.[38] Thus, some of the theoretical and political implications outlined with regard to Brus's action may also be pertinent to Pawla's, and both actions may be seen as a continuation of a European tradition which had long sought the ultimate scandal. While Marcel Duchamp (under the name R. Mutt) in 1917 had unsuccessfully tried to exhibit a urinal as a 'Fountain', and the Dadaists had once caused outrage by imitating defection on stage, Brus turned that pantomime into reality.[39] And Pawla took that provocation further still by changing the location, so that his action did not take place even nominally under the aegis of art or culture, but in an even more provocative environment.

Like a performance artist, Pawla involves his audience, for example in forcing court officials to intervene; but also in provoking everyone's horror. As Jahraus remarks on Vienna Actionism:

> Was immer auch geschieht […] wird integraler Bestandteil dessen, was die Aktion ausmacht. Entsteht Tumult, greift die Polizei ein, sind die Anwesenden von der Destruktionsenergie des Aktionisten irritiert, empfinden sie angesichts verschmutzter Körper und Fäkalien Ekel, werden sie in der Einschätzung dessen, was sie in der

37 Klocker, *Wiener Aktionismus / Viennese Aktionism*, 141.

38 The brief description of Pawla's action in Kraushaar, *1968*, does not make any connection with 'Kunst und Revolution' described some pages previously.

39 Sheppard, *Modernism – Dada – Postmodernism*, 2; Jahraus, *Die Aktion des Wiener Aktionismus*, 118–19.

> Aktionssituation mitzuerleben haben, verunsichert – all dies ist Teil [...] der Aktion. (19)
>
> [Whatever happens […] becomes an integral part of the action's constitution. If tumult arises, if the police intervene, if those present are confused by the actionist's destructive energy, if the sight of soiled bodies and faeces causes them digust, if they are made to feel insecure as to how they are supposed to experience the action – all this is part [...] of the action].

Therefore this act does not only transgress traditionally stable boundaries between public and private, but also between performer/performance and audience. Similarly, in line with KI's house style, the outraged newspaper reports on Pawla, for instance, also become part of the very complex of events they decry. As such, an anti-authoritarian counter-manipulation of the popular press, vilified as manipulative by protesters, may be taking place. Moreover, if Pawla's action has broken through the usual threshold of disgust which surrounds bodily acts, and forced all parties beyond their usual limits of tolerance, the customary limits of consciousness themselves may have been breached too.[40] Thus, true to anti-authoritarian belief in the primacy of the individual radical subject, Pawla's action can be read as his own challenge, at least, to his personality structure.

It might be argued that Pawla's act may be pointing towards more utopian possibilities, for it involves the transgression of the body's boundaries, conventionally imagined as sealed and immutable. Ostentatious defecation points to an understanding of the body which is more anarchic and potentially pleasurable than bourgeois sensibility allows. That understanding does evoke Bakhtin's description of the grotesque body which:

> is not separated from the rest of the world. It is not a closed, completed unit; it is unfinished, outgrows itself, transgresses its own limits. The stress is laid on those parts of the body that are open to the outside world, that is, the parts through which the world enters the body or emerges from it, or through which the body itself goes out to meet the world. This means that the emphasis is on the apertures or the convexities, or on various ramifications and offshoots: […]. The body discloses its essence as a principle of growth which exceeds its own limits only in copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation. This is the ever unfinished, ever creating body.[41]

40 See Jahraus, *Die Aktion des Wiener Aktionismus*, 227.

41 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World*, 26.

Pawla creates a topsy-turvy situation whereby the traditionally private act becomes public; and introduces the grotesque body into a location which relies on the discipline and order of bodies. That location in court is of particular significance, because the court's power resides in its performance of ritual, in its iterative speech and acts. Nonetheless, Pawla's act destabilizes the usual operations of the courtroom, for the court's responses to him indicate uncertainty in dealing with such an extraordinary action. Thus, legal mechanisms, supposed to be the smooth and natural(ized) mechanisms whereby a society regulates itself, are shown to be subject to shakiness, improvization and misjudgments when the script is not followed, as the disproportionately harsh sentence and disregard for civil rights shows. In other words, just as Langhans and Teufel had done in their earlier trial, Pawla shows up the court as artifice, theatre or circus. Moreover, his act also suggests that disciplined, mature subjectivity itself is something which exists through being constantly performed and re-performed. To perform a different kind of unruly subjectivity in a location where, traditionally, the subject should appear at its most conformist, is to show up the conforming subject, too, as being open to change.

Some Conclusions: Dirt and the 'Civilizing Process'

Pawla's action demonstrates that the later 1960s were highly sensitive to the cultural and political meanings of dirt. One body of theory which goes some way to explaining this theme's explosivity at that time is that of Norbert Elias in his key study *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* [*The Civilising Process*] (1939). This work analyses the ways in which the social control of individuals has developed through history, arguing that as time passes, methods of external physical control have come to be replaced, in the modern period, by an internalized self-control. Elias uses the specific example of 'Einstellung zu den natürlichen Bedürfnissen' [Attitudes Towards the Natural Functions] as his most scandalous example to illustrate his observations on the development of 'civilization'.[42] He shows

42 Norbert Elias, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*, 2 vols, 2nd edn (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1969), I: 174–94; *The Civilising Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott, rev. edn ed. by Eric Dunning *et al.* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000 [1994]), 109–21. Further references to both original and translation follow in the main body of the text.

how rigorous guidelines are applied to the natural functions, from a comparatively relaxed approach in both adults and children in the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, when, with regard to the bodily functions, even '[d]ie Kinder […] in verhältnismäßig wenig Jahren den vorgerückten Stand der Scham und Peinlichkeitsgefühlen erreichen [müssen], der sich in vielen Jahrhunderten herausgebildet hat' (I: 190) [children have in the space of a few years to attain the advanced level of shame and revulsion that has developed over many centuries] (119).

Herein lies one explanation for the severity of Pawla's sentence, for in court he transgressed a crucial social taboo. The sentence seems fully to confirm Elias's description of the casting of persons with supposedly disturbed attitudes to hygiene as mad, bad, neurotic or dangerous, and certainly beyond normal society. Since Pawla did not seem to be mad, his behaviour almost instantly, and literally, made him a criminal. Pawla's case also appears to support Elias's observation that such taboos involve hierarchy, for Pawla compounded his offence by defecating in front of those in explicit authority over him (as opposed to his peers, which would be less outrageous). Moreover, he did so before women in authority. While Elias makes no observations regarding gendered aspects of attitudes towards the bodily functions, it seems to have been an especially shocking aspect of both the Brus and Pawla cases that the usual gendered segregation of bodily functions in public buildings was transgressed. Reporting on Pawla, the tabloid paper *Bild* [*Picture*] points out particularly indignantly that 'zwei weibliche Schöffen' [two women jurors] were present.

Elias argues also that such civilized standards as those policing the bodily functions developed hand in hand with the nation state and its power, both physical and symbolic, over its subjects. In other words, the highly developed nation-state and highly developed individual civilization are inseparable and mutually dependent. Therefore, in challenging standards of civilized, individual personal restraint, Pawla also challenges one of the guarantees of the nation state. This political aspect is highlighted especially clearly by the fact that Pawla's action takes place in a state institution, the court. Similarly, Brus, who had sung the national anthem during his performance, was particularly criticized at his trial for '[defaming] one of the symbols of the Republic of Austria' in an act 'likely to damage the esteem of the Republic of Austria abroad'.[43] Thus, both men are punished not only for insulting their states' premises, symbols or representatives

43 Green (ed.), *Brus Muehl Nitsch, Schwarzkogler*, 67.

but also, perhaps more obliquely, for challenging the standards of civilized behaviour which are supposed to uphold those states.

At first sight, the emergence of a dirty counter-culture in the 1960s might seem to contradict the idea of a civilizing process which becomes ever more vigilant as regards dirt. However, *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation* also offers an explanation which accounts for the modern apparent relaxation of standards of self-control, in a description which could be applied to regulations governing the bodily functions and cleanliness:

> [D]er Stand der Gewohnheiten, der technisch-institutionell verfestigten Selbstzwänge, das Maß der Zurückhaltung des eigenen Trieblebens und des Verhaltens selbst entsprechend dem vorgerückten Peinlichkeitsgefühl [ist] zunächst im großen und ganzen gesichert. Es ist eine Lockerung im Rahmen des einmal erreichten Standards. (1: 190)

> [[Today] a certain relaxation […] is only possible because the level of habitual, technically and institutionally consolidated self-control, the individual capacity to restrain one's urges and behaviour in correspondence with the more advanced feelings for what has become offensive, has been on the whole secured. It is a relaxation within the framework of an already established standard] (119).

In other words, a relaxation of standards is not a lapse in civilization, but, on the contrary, an index of just how firmly established such standards are. Thus, this remark suggests that informalization, too, becomes part of *habitus*, the second nature of civilization, and remains unexceptional and unexceptionable. Seen in this light, the supposed radicalism of Pawla's dirty protest is undermined. Another of Elias's works develops these arguments further. *Studien über die Deutschen* [*The Germans*] (1989) examines student life in the latter half of the twentieth century, notably informalization, generational conflict and the turn to radicalism. With specific regard to the informalization of sexual relationships, Elias states:

> [D]ie Emanzipation vom Fremdzwang eines vorgeschiebenen Rituals stellt höhere Ansprüche an die Selbstzwangapparatur der einzelnen Beteiligten. Er verlangt, daß die Partner einander und sich selbst im Verkehr miteinander erproben, und sie können sich dabei auf nichts und niemanden verlassen als auf sich selbst, auf ihr eigenes Urteil und ihr eigenes Gefühl. […] Die Informalisierung bringt also eine stärkere Beanspruchung der Selbstzwangapparaturen mit sich.[44]

44 Norbert Elias, *Studien über die Deutschen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 53; trans. by Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell as *The Germans: Power*

> [[E]mancipation from the external constraint of a preordained social ritual makes higher demands on the self-constraint apparatus of each individual participant. It requires the partners to test themselves and each other in their dealings with each other, and in so doing they can rely on nothing and nobody except themselves, their own judgement and their own feelings. […] Thus informalization brings with it stronger demands on apparatuses of self-constraint.]

Here, Elias suggests that the informalization of sexual relationships is more than mere proof of the security of civilization. It also drives civilization forward and refines it, because whereas previously people in relationships had submitted to the control of externally applied social standards, informalization demands that they now regulate themselves. Thus, if the hallmark of a civilizing process is a development from external to internal control, the informalization of the 1960s is in fact anything but the desublimation of culture anti-authoritarians envisaged. Rather, informalization serves, paradoxically, to subject individuals to ever more constraints, all the more effective for being internalized.

Elias's notion of the civilizing process seems to map with the processes of socialization and the thorough enforcement of behavioural standards so criticized by the counter-culture. The difference between the anti-authoritarians' and Elias's perceptions of those processes lies above all in the way they perceive them. To Elias, the civilizing process appears ultimately benign. From an anti-authoritarian point of view, however, it is oppressive. So if Elias's ideas are taken as a way of theorizing the issues and processes against which the anti-authoritarians sought to rebel, the prognosis for any successful dissident action is gloomy. Indeed, Elias's views on the informalization of the 1960s as proof of the power of civilization seem to neutralize any anti-authoritarian intention of mobilizing the politics of bodily issues to derail the process of civilization.

Indeed, on such an argument it could even be suggested that Pawla's flyer and action support the notion of an inexorable process of civilization, by arguing that they replicate, rather than undermine, civilized social standards. For example, the flyer does not propose new ways of considering the bodily functions, but maintains the cultured view that they are a source of disgust. Furthermore, the flyer's image of the woman judge urinating in court plays into traditional, misogynistic stereotypes about uncontrollable, especially older, female bodies; and the flyer also casts the cleaning up of filth

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Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), 37.

as a menial, feminine role ('Glofrau'). In Pawla's defecation in court, too, the relationship between the dirt produced and the protagonist is conventional. Pawla maintains a clear separation between dirt and his own person, and even a very civilized distaste for faeces by using them as the medium of an insult, and in wiping his bottom afterwards. And again in a quite traditional, sexist manner, he does not thematize the fact that the dirt will be left for someone else, presumably a poorly paid woman cleaner, to dispose of. In other words, on an Eliasian argument, it seems that in the later twentieth century the grip of social control, or civilization, is such that no new perspective is genuinely available. Rather, even extreme acts of protest like Pawla's are liable to be trapped within the process of civilization in that they merely reproduce repressive social practice. That practice includes a sexism which widely hallmarks the anti-authoritarian movement, but was, by 1968, beginning to be questioned critically by feminists, as Chapter 2 of this study shows.

In these respects, Brus's action is very different from Pawla's, and more radical in its approach to bodily functions. Here, the artist victimizes himself rather than attacking others and gets himself dirty as a way of describing the state's abuse of the individual. Therefore, he himself will need to be deeply involved in any cleaning-up process afterwards. Nonetheless, in both Pawla's and Brus's cases, the state responds with further repression. *linkeck* takes the view that, while Pawla's sentence seems ostensibly to be aimed at intimidating KI in particular, it is in fact also a pretext for a broader, more insidious process of social control: 'Wieder "säubert" man Berlin' [Berlin is being 'cleansed' again].[45] This drive aims to rid West Berlin of 'kleinkriminelle Gammler' [petty-criminal drop-outs], demonstrators and other marginal groups. This development goes hand-in-hand with the disintegration of the student and protest movements under the pressure of crushing political disppointment.

One conclusion may be, then, that the dirty, subversive activities of the late 1960s did not only fail to liberate, but that they provoked a backlash which, in turn, provoked more violent resistance and subsequent, symbiotic escalation on both sides. Thus, *linkeck*'s analysis would back up Elias's views that first, in the process of civilization, the individual and the state are inextricably linked; and, second, that civilization is an ongoing, ever more effective process of control. Therefore, it seems that disruptive, symbolic, artistic or avant-garde acts like Pawla's or Brus's cannot ultimately be of any significance in, and may inadvertently even support, the inexorable,

45 'Moabit Berliner Scheißhaus', *linkeck* [5] [1968], no pag..

homogeneous forces of civilization which carry all before them. Certainly for Elias, art is only a substitute for the excitement that is increasingly excluded from real life as civilization develops. The possible subversive implications of these actions as discussed in this chapter, then, must remain mere fantasy.

Such ineffectuality of subversive activities might explain how quickly they become lifeless, or lost altogether in cultural memory. Indeed, the Pawla case is quite forgotten today. In the cultural memory of anti-authoritarianism, even the Viennese event 'Kunst und Revolution' is reduced to one vague reference in a novel which is itself now forgotten, Peter Henisch's *Der Mai ist vorbei* [*May Is Over*] (1978). In that novel, the protagonist, a former student activist, revisiting his old student haunts in Vienna ten years on, recalls only: '([…] die spektakuläre Verunreinigung eines Hörsaals, die das Image der Wiener Studenten bis heute trübte: in die Hörsäle scheißen, gell ja, das könnt ihr…)' [([…] the spectacular soiling of a lecture hall, which tarnished the image of Vienna's students up to the present day: shitting in the lecture halls, oh yeah, that's what you can do…)].[46] It is significant that even this vague cultural memory is inserted into the protagonist's train of thought, and into the novel itself, in brackets, making it nothing but an unspecific, mental parenthesis. Thus, the protagonist's disinterest mirrors that of cultural memory at large. Significantly, but suprisingly, given the event's drama, the emphasis is on dismissive public response, not the action itself or what it might have meant. Thus, the former activist's cultural memory comes to be taken over by that of civilized society.

In many ways, Pawla's action, read as a text in an expansive sense, corresponds with the ideals of Enzensberger's 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. It certainly constitutes a definitive move away from bourgeois textual form, and bourgeois concepts of the closed work and authorship. It also resists commodification, and categorization by genre; is an example of dialogism; and is powerfully, if at first sight invisibly, linked to the European avant-garde. It also addresses important political themes and, like other examples discussed in the present study, touches, albeit implicitly, on the legacy of the National Socialist past.

Interestingly, Pawla's action of September 1968 comes close to coinciding in temporal terms with Enzensberger's 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' which appeared in November 1968. It is therefore striking that the communard whom Enzensberger chooses to mention in his essay is not Pawla, but Teufel, who by late

46 Peter Henisch, *Der Mai ist vorbei* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1978), 22.

1968 was about to leave KI. Of course, in 1968 Teufel was a household name in West Germany, while Pawla was not, and Teufel's actions were undoubtedly more successful in terms of attracting attention. However, Enzensberger's choice of example also harks back to an earlier, less dystopian phase of protest and textuality, before it was overtaken by the bleaker atmosphere of later writings and actions, like those discussed in this chapter. It may be the case that Enzensberger's omission of the more contemporary Pawla case in favour of memories of KI's earlier works associated with Teufel means that by November 1968 he considered the era of significant and effective textual subversion, like the era of meaningful anti-authoritarian protest, to be over.

6. Uncanny Journeys: Bernward Vesper and W.G. Sebald, 1969–90*

Introduction

As the previous chapter observed, by late 1968 the main phase of anti-authoritarian revolt in West Germany was coming to an end. Its former participants turned in a variety of different directions, ranging from more orthodox Marxism to feminism to illegal violence, among other interests, and these new directions came to dominate the political culture of the turn of the decade and the 1970s. Thus, towards the end of 1968, there was a concomitant dwindling away of the aspects of anti-authoritarian textuality discussed in this study so far. It is not the case, however, that no more writing came out of the protest movements as they developed and changed during what Gerd Koenen has called West Germany's red decade, which extends forward to the mid-1970s.[1] For example, the production of poetry about the Vietnam War continued into the 1970s, documentary writing in various forms flourished, feminist and women's writing and film-making emerged ever more strongly and new genres developed. One of these genres might be termed the student *Bildungsroman*, which looks back at the events of the mid- to late 1960s, like Peter Schneider's *Lenz* (1973) or Uwe Timm's novel *Heißer Sommer* (1974), which was discussed briefly in previous chapters of this study. Another type of text strongly associated with this period and the generation of the protest movements is the writing known as *Väterliteratur* [literature of the fathers]. Such works explore the German protagonists' relationships with their fathers or parents, sometimes Nazis or Nazi fellow-travellers, in the Nazi or post-war eras.

* A version of this chapter was previously published as 'An Uncanny Journey: W.G. Sebald and the Literature of Protest', *Journal of European Studies*, 41 (2011), 285–303.

1 Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt*.

However, this chapter takes an even longer view of the textual afterlife of anti-authoritarianism. It explores on one hand a work which is often linked with the writing of the protest movements, the anti-authoritarian author Bernward Vesper's provocative 'novel-essay' *Die Reise*, written in 1969–71 and first published posthumously in 1977.[2] The influential West German news magazine *Der Spiegel* famously dubbed this work a 'Kultbuch der Linken' [cult book of the Left].[3] While entirely distinctive, it does share some crucial features with the slightly earlier protest writing analysed in this study, as well as the student *Bildungsroman* and *Väterliteratur*. On the other hand, in what might seem to be an unlikely step, this chapter also discusses the work of the late writer W.G. Sebald. To link Sebald, as this chapter proposes to do, with anti-authoritarian textuality may appear extraordinary. Sebald's major literary oeuvre began to appear only in 1988, with the publication of his long poem *Nach der Natur* [*After Nature*]. As such, it is temporally quite discontinuous with the years 1966–68, on which this book has mainly focused, and even with the broader scope of the 'red decade'. Moreover, Sebald's literary works seem, in style and content, to be worlds away from those of the protest movements.

This view has been reflected and promoted in Sebald's popular reception. As Beatrice von Matt wrote, for example, in her review of the prose narrative *Die Ausgewanderten* [*The Emigrants*] in 1992, alluding to the theme of exile which links that work's protagonists: 'W.G. Sebalds Figuren treiben die Flucht so weit, daß sie der Dimension der Zeit überhaupt die Gefolgschaft aufkündigen. [...] [in *Die Ausgewanderten*] tun sie das so hartnäckig, daß man den Kunstwert dieses Bandes kaum hoch genug veranschlagen kann' [W.G. Sebald's characters flee so far that they renounce their allegiance to time itself. [...] [in *The Emigrants*] they do this so persistently that this volume's artistic value can barely be overstated].[4] This quotation not only confirms the reception of Sebald as a modern classic, but

2 Vesper, *Die Reise. Romanessay* (1977). A more comprehensive edition of *Die Reise* appeared in 1979 (Frankfurt a.M.: Zweitausendeins, 1981). Further references appear in the main body of the text.

3 The description 'Kultbuch der Linken' is quoted on the cover of the 1981 edition of *Die Reise* used here, and also in Michael Kapellen, *Doppelt leben: Bernward Vesper und Gudrun Ensslin. Die Tübinger Jahre* (Tübingen: Klöpfer & Meyer, 2005), 11.

4 Beatrice von Matt, 'Die ausgelagerten Paradiese in "Die Ausgewanderten", W.G. Sebalds "Vier lange Erzählungen"', *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 13 December 1992; also included in *W.G. Sebald*, ed. by Franz Loquai (Eggingen: Edition Isele, 1997), 91–95 (91).

very explicitly also the traditionally German cultural perception that this status necessarily excludes any contemporary character. Or, as Heinrich Detering wrote with reference to two of the protagonists of *Die Ausgewanderten*:

> Sebald ist ein eminent kultivierter Erzähler, höflich und diskret, ein ernster Gentleman. Er pflegt, was er an Henry Selwyn bewundert: den 'großen Stil', kompromißlos altmeisterlich und gediegen, exakt und elegant. [...] Und er erzählt so ganz und gar im Tonfall jener großen Zeit, in der Ambros Adelwarth die Welt bereiste, daß man über die Jahreszahl 1991 stolpert wie über einen Fremdkörper.[5]
>
> [Sebald is an eminently cultivated narrator, courteous and discreet, an earnest gentleman. He cultivates what he admires in Henry Selwyn: 'great style', uncompromisingly oldmasterly and tasteful, precise and elegant. [...] And he tells his story so absolutely in the tone of that great time when Ambros Adelwarth travelled the world that to come across the date 1991 is to feel one is stumbling over some foreign body.]

On this kind of argument, Sebald's commitment to the style of past times seems to mean that any idea of his possible contemporaneity is most alien. Such perceptions correspond with much German high cultural tradition with its perception that great art is timeless and separate from history.

Interestingly, Detering goes on to comment: 'Obwohl [Sebald] sich durchweg auf Dokumente beruft, dokumentiert er nicht, sondern erzählt' [Although [Sebald] makes use of documents without exception, he doesn't document, he narrates].[6] What is especially striking here is the care Detering takes to distance Sebald from any association with documentary writing which, he implies, is absolutely distinct from 'Erzählung' [[literary] narrative]. Documentary literature was, in the 1990s, still closely associated in the German cultural imagination with political writing, especially that of the 1960s and 1970s protest movements, which referenced in turn the radical experiments of the Weimar Era. Thus, with this comment, despite Sebald's evident commitment to documentary writing, the reviewer may be seeking to protect his work very specifically from any suspected link to the politicized writing culture

5 Heinrich Detering, 'Große Literatur für kleine Zeiten', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17 November 1992; also included in Loquai (ed.), *W.G. Sebald*, 82–87 (85–86).

6 Detering, 'Große Literatur für kleine Zeiten', 85.

of the 'red decade'.[7] Doing so amplifies its prestige as high literature in a way which mapped with some Germans' literary aspirations in the 1990s to move away from the political concerns of the past.

Yet this very attempt to claim Sebald for high, and hence explicitly non-documentary, literature seems to hint at an unarticulated awareness that Sebald's writing may indeed have some concealed relationship with the notorious textual culture of the 1960s and 1970s. It is this relationship which this chapter seeks to decipher. It begins this process by explaining in more detail how the impression could arise that Sebald's writing could have nothing to do with the 1960s protest movements, and how his critical reception by and large reflects and supports that impression. However, as the chapter goes on to show, more recent critical approaches do open up the possibility of reading Sebald as a contemporary of the protest movements, and these approaches are used to revisit common perceptions of Sebald's life and works. This revisiting will show that in fact Sebald's work and thought show a deep, if complex, affinity with protest culture. This affinity is explored in more detail through a close comparison of Sebald's first major publication in literary prose, *Schwindel. Gefühle.* (1990), and Vesper's apparently very different *Die Reise*.[8] This comparison will expose startling, profound resonances between these two works, focused above all on their engagement with childhood in the shadow of National Socialism and the themes of secrets and violence. This reading on one hand suggests that Sebald's work needs to be interpreted in new ways, as a belated, often contradictory and perhaps uncanny contribution to the textuality of protest. On the other hand, it supports powerfully the thesis put forward in this study that the protest movements had a vital, if conflicted, relationship to literature; and spells out that there is more to their duration and legacy than is popularly supposed.

7 On Sebald's use of documents and his links to political documentary writing, see Mark M. Anderson, 'Documents, Photography, Postmemory: Alexander Kluge, W.G. Sebald and the German Family', *Poetics Today*, 29 (2008), 129–51. Sebald remarked in interview: 'There was a vogue of documentary writing in the 70s which opened my eyes' (Maya Jaggi, 'Recovered Memories', *The Guardian* (*Saturday Review*), 22 September 2001, 6–7 (6)). The documentary writing of Peter Weiss was important for Sebald too. See Uwe Pralle, 'Mit einem kleinen Strandspaten Abschied von Deutschland nehmen', *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (Literatur), 22–23 December 2001, 16.

8 W.G. Sebald, *Schwindel. Gefühle.* (Frankfurt a.M.: Eichborn, 1990). The English translation cited here is *Vertigo*, trans. by Michael Hulse (London: Vintage, 2002). Further references to both the original and the translation follow in the main body of the text.

Sebald and the Revolts of the 1960s

In April 2001, when an interviewer drew Sebald's attention to the fact that, born as he was in 1944, he was of an age with the protest generation of the 1960s, he stated categorically: '[I]ch empfinde mich nicht als 68er' [I don't feel I am a 68'er].[9] Asked whether he had, like many of his student peers, been attracted to one of the theoretical and practical centres of the revolt in Frankfurt am Main, Sebald commented that he had at the time read widely in the work of one of the movement's key, if reluctant, influences, Theodor W. Adorno, then a professor at the University of Frankfurt am Main. However, he observed also: '[I]ch [habe] […] bewusst den Schritt in die andere Richtung gemacht. Ich hatte genug von dem ideologischen Kram. In Deutschland musste man auf irgend eine Weise orthodox sein' [I consciously [...] took a step in the other direction. I'd had enough of the ideological stuff. In Germany you had to be orthodox one way or another].[10]

Instead, in 1965, just as the impulses which were to lead to the wider protest movements were gathering momentum, Sebald left the West German university of Freiburg im Breisgau for the completely untroubled University of Fribourg in Switzerland. A year later, he moved to work at the University of Manchester, where 'linke und rechte Professoren an der gleichen Universität sein konnten, ohne sich gegenseitig zu denunzieren' [left-wing and right-wing professors could be at the same university without denouncing one another].[11] In another interview of 2001, Sebald commented of academic life in England:

> Ideology didn't matter […]. You had colleagues who were extreme trade unionists and others who were Church of England […], and they all worked together […]. But in Germany after the students' rebellion in the late sixties, early seventies, well, if you had leftish tendencies you could do a PhD only in Frankfurt, Berlin, or Bremen.

9 Hans-Peter Kunisch, 'Die Melancholie des Widerstands', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5 April 2001, 20.

10 See Ben Hutchinson, 'The Shadow of Resistance: W.G. Sebald and the Frankfurt School', *Journal of European Studies*, 41 (2011), 267–84; Richard Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years: W.G. Sebald's Apprenticeship and Theatrical Mission 1963–1970', in *Saturn's Moons: W.G. Sebald – A Handbook*, ed. by Jo Catling and Richard Hibbitt (Oxford: Legenda, 2011), 42–106.

11 Kunisch, 'Die Melancholie des Widerstands'.

> If you had liberal tendencies, you could do it pretty much anywhere. But this was it. You had to choose the train you wanted to be on.[12]

Here, Sebald is expressing a rejection of both an academy and a social movement which, in different yet seemingly equally intolerable ways, demanded a clear, irrevocable *parti pris*. So, while both he and his protesting contemporaries voted with their feet against what was experienced as the stultifying atmosphere of the time, they did so in very different ways. While Sebald's contemporaries took to the streets of the Federal Republic's towns and cities, and sought to bring about a new academic era by taking over the universities, he himself sought a new world by means of a new start overseas and the new approaches to intellectual life which it might offer.

While Sebald's young adulthood coincided with increasing protest and activism in universities in the Federal Republic, accounts of his life record no personal involvement in such affairs.[13] Marcel Atze and Sven Meyer suggest that Sebald seems to have paid little attention to the events of the movements' most turbulent years. Sebald wrote to Adorno from Switzerland in December 1968 asking for an academic reference, precisely at the time in which politicized students had occupied his Soziologisches Seminar [Department of Sociology] in Frankfurt, and antagonism between activists and the master was coming to a head. Sebald's letter, according to Atze and Meyer, makes no reference to this crisis, 'als habe Sebald in jenen ereignisreichen Tagen jede Zeitungslektüre verweigert. [...] Jedenfalls dürfte er sich für die Vorgänge, die sich seinerzeit an deutschen Universitäten abspielten, kaum interessiert haben. Denn an eine Reaktion von Adorno war gar nicht zu denken' [as though Sebald had resisted reading any newspapers during those eventful days. [...] At any rate he can hardly have been taking an interest in the processes which were playing out at German universities at that time. For a response from Adorno was quite out of the question].[14] And once he became an assistant lecturer at the University of East Anglia (UEA)

12 Joseph Cuomo, 'A Conversation with W.G. Sebald' (2001), in *the emergence of memory: Conversations with W.G. Sebald*, ed. by Lynne Sharon Schwartz (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2007), 93–117 (107).

13 For example, Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years'.

14 Marcel Atze and Sven Meyer, '"Unsere Korrespondenz": Zum Briefwechsel zwischen W.G. Sebald und Theodor W. Adorno', in *Sebald. Lektüren*, ed. by Marcel Atze and Frank Loquai (Eggingen: Edition Isele, 2005), 17–38 (32). Atze and Meyer do concede that Sebald's later omission to send Adorno other material relating to the reference he requested may have resulted from his learning of the upheavals in Frankfurt.

in October 1970, Sebald maintained a benevolently neutral distance from the belated, small-scale protests which took place there.[15] Correspondingly, neither Sebald's critical writing nor his literary texts seem to engage with the protest movements. Rather, while his deep concern with history is beyond question, his work appears at first sight either to exclude the turmoils of the very recent past or to occlude them under master-narratives like that of Modernity or the rise of Fascism.

Although an essay by Sebald from 1983 on Günter Grass and Wolfgang Hildesheimer refers, exceptionally, to the West German political situation that led up to the elections of September 1969, it makes no mention of the significant impact at that time of the Extra-Parliamentary Opposition, with which Grass had often stood in direct debate.[16] Moreover, when specific years that are popularly associated with the student revolts do feature in Sebald's work, they contextualize apparently unrelated matters. For example, his second essay of 1992 on the schizophrenic Austrian poet Ernst Herbeck/Alexander Herbrich (1920–91) opens with recollections of 1966, the year when protest started to escalate in West Germany.[17] But these recollections focus on an inner world of writing, not the outer realm of nascent revolt, since of 1966 it is said only that the author was working on Carl Sternheim in Manchester's John Ryland's Library. He writes that from time to time he sought relief from this work by dipping into a paperback entitled *Schizophrenie und Sprache* [*Schizophrenia and Language*] and marvelling at 'den Glanz, der ausging von den offenbar aufs Geratewohl zusammengefügten Wort- und Rätselbildern dieses ärmsten Poeten' [the brilliance of the riddling verbal images conjured up, evidently at random, by this most unfortunate of poets], that is, Herbeck (171). And in June 1967, the month when the West German protest movements turned into a mass phenomenon after the police shooting of Benno Ohnesorg, the narrator of Sebald's novel *Austerlitz* (2001) is exploring Belgium, where he shows no concern with the tragic events that were to be so decisive for post-war West Germany. Likewise, the Vietnam War,

15 Michael Sanderson, *The History of the University of East Anglia, Norwich* (London: Hambledon, 2002), 187–222; Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years', 106, n. 135.

16 W.G. Sebald, 'Konstruktionen der Trauer: Günter Grass und Wolfgang Hildesheimer' (1983), in Sebald, *Campo Santo*, ed. by Sven Meyer (Munich: Carl Hanser, 2003), 101–27 (115–17).

17 W.G. Sebald, 'Des Häschens Kind, der kleine Has: Über das Totemtier des Lyrikers Ernst Herbeck' (1992), in *Campo Santo*, 171–78. Further references appear in the main body of the text.

a key catalyst of international protest, appears only marginally in Sebald's work, when the narrator of a fragment of an unfinished work that was written around 1995–96 notices, while visiting Corsica, the grave of a soldier who was wounded at the battle of Dien Bien Puh [*sic*] in 1954. That battle ended France's colonial history in the region and helped set the scene for the now better-known conflict involving the USA.[18]

Sebald and the Culture of Protest: Critical Reception

Given the lack of explicit reference to the concerns of the West German protest movements in Sebald's writings, and the fact that his major literary works appeared so many years after their zenith, it is not surprising that relatively few critics have linked Sebald's work with the events or thinking of that time.[19] This situation may, of course, also be partly due to such features of contemporary criticism as the traditional German view that Sebald's literary works, belonging as they seem to do to the realm of high art, are thus separated from the lower realms of history and politics. This impression may have been fostered, too, by Sebald's extensive and unconcealed resonance with his literary forebears and highly literary, archaizing style.[20] Moreover, in the mid-1980s Sebald shifted his focus from critical to literary

18 Sebald, 'Campo Santo', in *Campo Santo*, 19–38 (23).

19 But see, by contrast, Mark M. Anderson, 'The Edge of Darkness: On W.G. Sebald', *October,* 106 (2003), 102–21 and 'Documents, Photography, Postmemory'; Atze and Loquai (eds), *Sebald. Lektüren*; PJ.J. Long, 'W.G. Sebald: A Bibliographical Essay on Current Research', in *W.G. Sebald and the Writing of History*, ed. by Anne Fuchs and J.J. Long (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007), 12–29 and 'W.G. Sebald: The Ambulatory Narrative and the Poetics of Digression', in *W.G. Sebald: Schreiben Ex Patria/Expatriate Writing*, ed. by Gerhard Fischer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), 61–71; eter Morgan, 'The Sign of Saturn: Melancholy, Homelessness and Apocalypse in W.G. Sebald's Prose Narratives', *German Life and Letters,* 58 (2005), 75–92, further references to which appear in the main body of the text; Richard Sheppard, 'W.G. Sebald's Reception of Alfred Döblin', in *Alfred Döblin: Paradigms of Modernism*, ed. by Steffan Davies and Ernest Schonfield (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009), 350–76 and 'The Sternheim Years'; Lynn Wolff, '"Das metaphysische Unterfutter der Realität": Recent Publications and Trends in W.G. Sebald Research', *Monatshefte*, 99 (2007), 78–101; Markus Zisselsberger, 'A Persistent Fascination: Recent Publications on the Work of W.G. Sebald', *Monatshefte*, 101 (2009), 88–105.

20 See the reviews collected in Loquai (ed.), *W.G. Sebald*; Sheppard, '"Woods, Trees and the Spaces in Between": A Report on Work Published on W.G. Sebald 2005–2008', *Journal of European Studies*, 39 (2009), 79–128 (83).

writing. During this process, the earlier, polemical tone evident in his literary criticism, which could potentially be more easily linked to the preoccupations of the 1960s, was increasingly superseded by the more reflective voice that would characterize his volume of critical essays *Logis in einem Landhaus* [*A Place in the Country*] (1998). Sebald's early criticism was not readily accessible, especially outside the German-speaking world, so that when he emerged as a writer of literature in the 1980s and 1990s, it was easy for many readers to assume that his literary *oeuvre* was appearing 'fully formed, as if out of nowhere', as the critic Lynne Sharon Schwartz recently put it.[21]

So, Sebald's writing is commonly identified with literary developments more recent than the 1960s.[22] In addition, particular conceptualizations of memory and history which critics have identified in Sebald's work may also play a role in the tendency to disregard its legibility *inter alia* as part of a cultural complex of two or three decades previously.[23] And others of Sebald's literary themes, too, for instance those identified by Peter Morgan as 'melancholy', 'apocalyptic negativity' and an 'all-encompassing myth of destruction', along with especially the later writing's very long view of history, suggest that its concerns transcend any local, historical specificities (75). Finally, the view, both critical and popular, outlined in the introduction to the present study, that the protest movements were hostile to literature has also probably contributed to the general failure to connect them with Sebald's eminently literary work.

However, such recent critics as Richard Sheppard, Mark M. Anderson, Peter Morgan and Uwe Schütte see clear, albeit subterranean connections between Sebald's work and the preoccupations of 'the entire generation of German writers and artists born near the end of the war who came of age during the period of student protest and social unrest in the 1960s', as Anderson puts it.[24] Sheppard, for example, has argued that Sebald shared important experiences

21 Lynne Sharon Schwartz, 'Introduction', in Schwartz (ed.), *the emergence of memory*, 9–22 (18).

22 See, for example, Anne Fuchs, *Die Schmerzensspuren der Geschichte: Zur Poetik der Erinnerung in W.G. Sebalds Prosa* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2004); Ernestine Schlant, *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust* (London: Routledge, 1999), 209–34; Wolff, '"Das metaphysische Unterfutter der Realität"', 79.

23 Long, 'W.G. Sebald: A Bibliographical Essay', 168–69; compare, for example, Mary Cosgrove, 'Melancholy Competitions: W.G. Sebald Reads Günter Grass and Wolfgang Hildesheimer', *German Life and Letters*, 59 (2006), 217–32.

24 Anderson, 'The Edge of Darkness', 105. See Sebald's own remarks in Volker Hage, untitled interview, *Akzente*, 50 (2003), 35–50 (40–41).

and influences with his activist contemporaries, such as an interest, even during his schooldays, in experimental American literature and the US counter-culture of the 1960s.[25] According to Sheppard, too, the political past of some West German academics contributed significantly to Sebald's critical thinking, and in numerous interviews he rejected what he saw as the hypocrisy of West German society with its limited denazification and silence about the past.[26] For Morgan, this critique aligns Sebald indisputably with the generation of 1968: he writes that Sebald's accents 'may be less strident than those of his contemporaries', but 'they carry the same message' (92). In a similar vein, Anderson argues that Sebald's controversial series of lectures on the aerial bombardment of Germany during the Second World War, *Luftkrieg und Literatur* [*On the Natural History of Destruction*] (1990), shares its political analysis with that of 1960s protesters. Anderson notes: 'Sebald's chief argument about the Germans' failure to come to terms with their own experience of suffering and violence is the continuation, not the reverse, of the 1968 student protests'.[27] Elsewhere, he concludes that Sebald's writing expresses the 'legacy of [his] politicisation during the 1960s and a generational rift with his parents he never overcame'.[28]

Sheppard maintains that Sebald's positive reception of the Frankfurt School, Walter Benjamin and Adorno in the 1960s and 1970s made his thinking cognate with that of the protest movements.[29] In this sense, Sheppard singles out several common concerns which were shared by Sebald and student protesters. These include an anti-capitalist stance, an apocalyptic sense of history, acceptance of the central thesis of Max Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) and a critique of contemporary *Germanistik* [German Studies], with its emphasis on a dehistoricizing 'werkimmanente Kritik' [exclusively text-based criticism] which, in the name of close reading, isolated text from context.

Sheppard's enumeration of Sebald's and the protest movements' shared concerns may be augmented by others, such as an ambivalent

25 Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years', 44, n. 9.

26 Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years', 7–10. See Rob Burns and Wilfried van der Will, 'The Calamitous Perspective of Modernity: Sebald's Negative Ontology', *Journal of European Studies*, 4 (2011), 341–58.

27 Anderson, 'The Edge of Darkness', 113–14.

28 Anderson, 'Documents, Photography, Postmemory', 151.

29 Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years', 1–13; on Sebald and Critical Theory see Atze and Meyer, '"Unsere Korrespondenz"', 17–38; Hutchinson, 'The Shadow of Resistance'.

attitude towards Modernity and a profound dissatisfaction with what Sebald considered its increasingly oppressive technological rationality. As a result, by the mid-1970s Sebald was engaging in intellectually significant ways with left-wing radicalism and the kinds of literary works to which it had given rise during the Weimar Republic.[30] Such interest in both literature as a forum for revolt and pre-Nazi radical traditions was characteristic of the protest movements. And although Herbert Marcuse was much less influential for Sebald than his colleague Adorno,[31] Sebald's unwillingness to have to choose which ideological 'train' to board within an academy that claimed to be tolerant of liberal thinkers resonates with Marcuse's notion of 'repressive tolerance' in his essay of that title (1965), which was a major influence on the West German protest movements.[32] In Marcuse's view, the supposedly liberal, democratic state's claim to allow free speech masked a desire to enforce more self-serving ideologies. Moreover, the idea of leaving the country, taken literally by Sebald, was also characteristic of the broader culture of the 'red decade', manifested more figuratively, for example, in the urgent internationalism which formed part of the fascination with Vietnam, or the *topos*, common in later prose narratives and films reflecting the time, like Schneider's *Lenz* or Vesper's *Die Reise*, of gaining respite abroad from the difficult West German present, once the height of protest in 1967–68 had passed.

Given these considerations, Sheppard concludes that Sebald's conceptual world was so close to that of the student protesters that his early criticism can be understood as part of 1960s protest culture.[33] In particular, he argues that Sebald's early book on the

30 Sheppard, 'Woods, Trees and the Spaces in Between', 88–89. Sheppard refers here to Walter Fähnders and Martin Rector, *Linksradikalismus und Literatur: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der sozialistischen Literatur in der Weimarer Republik* (1974), of which Sebald acquired a copy soon after its publication. See also Uwe Schütte, 'Ein Porträt des Germanisten als junger Mann: Zu W.G. Sebalds dissidenter Haltung gegenüber der Literaturwissenschaft in seinen akademischen Rezensionen', *Sprachkunst*, 34 (2008), 309–32 and 'Against *Germanistik*: W.G. Sebald's Critical Essays', in Catling and Hibbitt (eds), *Saturn's Moons*, 161–83.

31 See Richard Sheppard, 'Dexter – Sinister: Some Observations on Decrypting the Mors Code in the Work of W.G. Sebald', *Journal of European Studies*, 35 (2005), 419–63 (432); '"Woods, Trees and the Spaces in Between"', 88 and 'The Sternheim Years', 48, n. 90.

32 Marcuse's phrase can be heard, too, in the title of W. G. Sebald, 'Die Zweideutigkeit der Toleranz: Anmerkungen zum Interesse der Aufklärung an der Emanzipation der Juden', *Der Deutschunterricht*, 36 (1984), 27–47.

33 Sheppard, '"Woods, Trees and the Spaces in Between"', 87–88.

dramatist Carl Sternheim (1969) 'can […] be seen as a long-distance contribution to [the student revolts of the late 1960s]'.[34] Sheppard argues, too, that Sebald's PhD thesis (1974) and subsequent book (1980) on Alfred Döblin carry distinct, if less evident, traces of the impact of the protest movements.[35] On this account, Sebald's criticism of Döblin's 'political shortcomings' echoes 'his own bad conscience' at not having responded to those movements politically himself. And finally, Sheppard views Sebald's slightly later essays on the drama of another non-canonical author, Herbert Achternbusch, as manifestations of his sympathy with 1960s protest.[36] So whilst by the time that the second of these two essays was published Sebald's work was taking a 'new direction' into literature, Sheppard denies that there is an 'abrupt hiatus' between the old and the new phases of his work. Rather, he argues that they are aspects of a process of evolution which had been accelerated by the era's Conservative rise to power in the UK and during which Sebald's 'voice of protest mingled with a newly found voice of mourning'.[37]

Schütte's accounts of Sebald's theory and practice of literary criticism also highlight features which map clearly with the political and symbolic aspirations of the student revolts.[38] Following Ulrich Simon,[39] Schütte identifies such characteristic features of Sebald's criticism as 'kalkulierte Provokation' [calculated provocation], the perception of literature as an 'Akt der Grenzüberschreitung' [a transgressive act], polemical critique of the normative institutions and

34 Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years', 105, n. 121. Certainly this is how Sternheim's widow read Sebald's book. See Atze and Meyer, '"Unsere Korrespondenz"', 33.

35 Sheppard, 'W.G. Sebald's Reception of Alfred Döblin', 373.

36 W. G. Sebald, 'Die weiße Adlerfeder am Kopf – Versuch über Herbert Achternbusch', in *Subjektivität, Innerlichkeit, Abkehr vom Politischen? Tendenzen der deutschsprachigen Literatur der 70er Jahre*, ed. by Keith Bullivant and Hans Joachim Althof (Bonn: DAAD, 1986), 175–88; 'Die Kunst der Verwandlung: Herbert Achternbuschs theatralische Sendung' (1987), in *A Radical Stage: Theatre in Germany in the 1970s and 1980s*, ed. by W. G. Sebald (Oxford: Berg, 1988), 174–84.

37 Sheppard, '"Woods, Trees and the Spaces in Between"', 89.

38 Uwe Schütte, '"In einer wildfremden Gegend" – W.G. Sebalds Essays über die österreichische Literatur', in *The Anatomist of Melancholy: Essays in Memory of W.G. Sebald*, ed. by Rüdiger Görner (Munich: iudicium, 2003), 63–74; 'Für eine "mindere" Literaturwissenschaft: W.G. Sebald und die "kleine" Literatur aus der österreichischen Peripherie, und von anderswo', *Modern Austrian Literature*, 40 (2007), 93–107; and 'Against *Germanistik*'.

39 Ulrich Simon, 'Der Provokateur als Literaturhistoriker: Anmerkungen zu Literaturbegriff und Argumentationsverfahren in W.G. Sebalds essayistischen Schriften', in Atze and Loquai (eds), *Sebald. Lektüren*, 78–104.

conventions of literary study, focus on sub-canonical, extra-canonical or marginalized writers, affirmation of a marginal intellectual position outside the German academy, and the possibility of personal liberation through literature.[40] Moreover, some critics have made more explicit links between Sebald's literary writing and 1960s protest. Anderson perceives parallels between the writing associated with the protest movements and Sebald's literary methods, singling out the use of documentary materials in particular.[41] Morgan, too, while maintaining that Sebald is an apolitical writer, nonetheless discerns in Sebald's writing a 'late manifestation' of the characteristic 'left-wing melancholy' of his generation of intellectuals.[42]

Such remarks help to provide a new perspective on aspects of Sebald's life, work and statements about it. Significantly, Sebald himself stressed his generational identity in a number of interviews, as he does also in *Luftkrieg und Literatur*.[43] And in particular, he emphasized the impact which the first Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt (23 December 1963 – 19 August 1965) had on him and his peers at Freiburg University.[44] These trials were a formative influence for the rising political generation of the time. Sebald was sensitive also to works associated with the generational shift of the 1960s and 1970s, for example those of Peter Handke or Wim Wenders.[45] And the focus on generational experience re-emerges in Sebald's literary writing, too, for the first-person speaker of 'Die dunckle Nacht fahrt aus' [Dark Night Sallies Forth] in *Nach der Natur*, a work which, according

40 Schütte, 'Für eine "mindere" Literaturwissenschaft', 94, 101.

41 See n. 7 above.

42 Morgan, 'The Sign of Saturn', 77.

43 See, for example, the interviews collected in Loquai (ed.), *W.G. Sebald* and Schwartz (ed.), *the emergence of memory*.

44 See Eleanor Wachtel, 'Ghost Hunter', in Schwartz (ed.), *the emergence of memory*, 37–61 (48); Christopher Bigsby, 'In Conversation with W.G. Sebald', in *Writers in Conversation with Christopher Bigsby*, ed. by Christopher Bigsby, 2 vols (Norwich: Arthur Miller Centre for American Studies and University of East Anglia: EAS Publishing/Pen & Inc., 2001), II: 139–65 (147); Cuomo, 'A Conversation with W.G. Sebald', 104–06; Jaggi, 'Recovered Memories', 6.

45 W.G. Sebald, 'Fremdheit, Integration und Krise: Über Peter Handkes Stück *Kaspar*' (1975), in Sebald, *Campo Santo*, 57–68; 'Unterm Spiegel des Wassers – Peter Handkes Erzählung von der Angst des Tormanns' (1983), in *Die Beschreibung des Unglücks* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1995 [1985]), 115–30. Sebald opens his essay 'Kafka im Kino', first published in a shortened version in 1997, with recollections of Wim Wenders's film *Im Lauf der Zeit* (*Campo Santo*, 193–209).

to Anderson, embodies the concerns of later works too, also stresses his generational position.[46]

Because of these strong, albeit perhaps not immediately evident, connections with the critical consciousness of the student movement, Sebald developed a far-reaching understanding of the way in which hegemonic authority controls human consciousness, charges its artefacts with occluded ideological messages, and so links apparently disparate phenomena, a sense that would become particularly evident in his travelogue *Die Ringe des Saturn* [*The Rings of Saturn*] (1995).[47] And by December 2001 Sebald had also come to see the melancholy that marked his work as a sign of 'Widerstand' [resistance], an idea which recalls a conceptual touchstone of the student movement, especially after its radicalization around 1968.[48] There is a clear similarity between the sporadic 'sites of resistance' that J.J. Long identifies in Sebald's literary work and the ways in which anti-authoritarianism focussed less on monolithic or institutional forms of dissent than on scattered, autonomous oppositional moments.[49] And Sebald's critical stress on subjective judgment and disregard of the more formal concerns of the act of criticism echo many writings characteristic of the protest generation in which its protagonists sought to valorize subjective experience as a prime intellectual or political criterion.[50] An example is the prominent activist Rudi Dutschke's assertion in a programmatic text that the real value of protest lies not in the message it gives to others, but in the effect it has on the subjectivity of protesters themselves: 'Weil uns diese Aktionen innerlich verändern, sind sie politisch' [These actions are political because they change us internally].[51]

46 W. G. Sebald, 'Die dunckle Nacht fahrt aus', in *Nach der Natur: Ein Elementargedicht* (Nördlingen: Greno, 1988), 67–99 (71–75); the translation used here is W.G. Sebald, *After Nature*, trans. by Michael Hamburger (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2002). See also Anderson, 'The Edge of Darkness', 116.

47 See J.J. Long, '"Disziplin und Geständnis": Ansätze zu einer Foucaultschen Sebald-Lektüre', in *W.G. Sebald: Politische Archäologie und melancholische Bastelei*, ed. by Michael Niehaus and Claudia Öhlschläger (Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2006), 219–29 and *W.G. Sebald: Image, Archive, Modernity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007).

48 Kunisch, 'Die Melancholie des Widerstands', 20.

49 See Long, '"Disziplin und Geständnis"'; *W.G. Sebald: Image, Archive, Modernity*, 67.

50 See Burns and van der Will, 'The Calamitous Perspective of Modernity'; W. G. Sebald, 'Sebalds Dissertation, University of Fribourg' (1966), *Journal of European Studies*, 41 (2011), 209–42, especially Sheppard's introductory remarks.

51 Rudi Dutschke, 'Vom Antisemitismus zum Antikommunismus', 77.

In this context, the three examples from Sebald's writing that were singled out above because they appeared to ignore or marginalize typical preoccupations of the 1960s appear in an astonishingly different light. His preoccupation with Herbeck goes to the heart of the protest movements' interest in the eccentric and sub-canonical, and involves also the significant anti-authoritarian belief that psychological disturbance was both the index of societal oppression and a potential point of resistance against it. The Corsican grave evokes the colonialism and war which, according to the protest movements, accompany the exploitative ideology that governs modern Europe. And in June 1967, while the narrator of *Austerlitz* is exploring Antwerp, he also first meets the text's eponymous protagonist, a former Jewish child refugee from occupied Prague. After this encounter, the whole text resonates with a sense that the Nazi past is still banefully impacting on the present, a conviction that dovetails precisely with the analysis offered by many in the protest movements of the shooting of Ohnesorg in exactly the same month and year, namely that it constituted compelling evidence of the FRG's supposed latent fascism. And so, this perspective suggests that re-evaluation of the oblique relationship between Sebald, his generation and the history of the protest movements as a whole offers new ways of understanding Sebald's work, as well as the literary culture of the protesters. In this work, as Morgan puts it, 'the dates of history and the dates of consciousness are connected but not congruent' (92).

Bernward Vesper, *Die Reise*: 'Nachlaß einer Generation'

Consequently, the fact that *Schwindel. Gefühle.* was first published in the Eichborn Verlag's series 'Die Andere Bibliothek', edited by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, who was so influential in debating anti-authoritarian culture around 1968, becomes intriguing. While by 1990 Enzensberger had long since put his anti-authoritarian phase behind him, this circumstance nonetheless hints at deep, if not manifestly visible affinities between his intellectual and aesthetic interests and Sebald's. But a more evident expression of Sebald's relationship to the culture of protest is to be found in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, especially its final section, 'Il ritorno in patria', which describes the narrator's first visit after some thirty years to the village of W. where he was born and spent his early childhood (210). This narrative displays some remarkable homologies with Vesper's *Die Reise*, a fragmentary text of some 600 pages. *Die Reise* has many links with the important

genre of *Väterliteratur* in which, from the early 1970s, members of the protest generation took critical issue with their upbringing, their parents, and their parents' role under National Socialism.[52] For one reviewer, *Die Reise* was the 'Nachlaß einer Generation' [legacy of a generation]. For Peter Weiss, considerably more familiar with anti-authoritarian culture than most of his fellow writers, and whose narrative *Abschied von den Eltern* [*Leavetaking*] (1961) in some senses prefigured *Väterliteratur*, it was the 'intellektueller Höhepunkt des Jahres 1968' [intellectual high-point of 1968].[53] As a result, Vesper's book has been widely held to be paradigmatic of the protest generation's literary and political sensibilities. Similarities between *Die Reise* and 'Il ritorno in patria' may be due in part to inevitable parallels between the rural, wartime and post-war West German childhoods they describe. Yet a closer comparison of the two texts reveals an even greater consonance between Sebald's writing and that of the protest movements than has been recognized to date, either by scholars of Sebald's work or students of the literature of protest.

Despite a six-year age gap, Sebald and Vesper shared generational experience also as students of *Germanistik* in the early to mid-1960s at traditional universities in small, south-western German cities.[54] In contrast to Sebald's conscious self-distancing from political trends

52 *Die Reise* has attracted interest for apparently providing background on West German terrorism, for Vesper was in a relationship and had a child with Gudrun Ensslin. Ensslin left Vesper for Andreas Baader, and with him was one of the later founders of the Rote Armee Fraktion. Although *Die Reise* refers extensively to leading figures in West German anti-authoritarian and terrorist groups, the narrator, despite his claim to be writing a 'schonungslose Autobiographie' [no-holds-barred autobiography] (24), is also highly aware of his own work's unreliability (18). See Georg Guntermann, 'Tagebuch einer Reise in das Innere des Autors: Versuch zu Bernward Vespers "Romanessay" *Die Reise*', *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, 100 (1981), 232–53 (234); Gerd Koenen, *Vesper, Ensslin, Baader: Urszenen des deutschen Terrorismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003), 25. *Die Reise* is best regarded as a highly stylized construction, rather than a historically accurate document.

53 Koenen, *Vesper, Ensslin, Baader*, 11. On the reception of *Die Reise*, see 10–13. While Koenen rightly questions how typical or accurate the depictions contained in *Die Reise* genuinely are for Vesper and his generation (311–12), it is significant that they are so commonly considered as such. Sebald particularly admired Weiss's *Abschied von den Eltern* (Pralle, 'Mit einem kleinen Strandspaten', 16).

54 For an account of Sebald's alienating experiences at Freiburg University, see Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years', an account that tallies in various ways with Kapellen's description of Vesper's experiences at Tübingen (*Doppelt leben*, 19). Such experiences were at odds with the idealism of the German *Bildungsideal* on which the 1960s generation had been raised, and so contributed to its politicization, and using Critical Theory could easily be theorized as examples

and labels, according to Vesper's biographer Michael Kapellen the latter had, as a younger man, been much influenced by his parents' nationalist politics. He wrote for far-right publications and sought to rehabilitate the work of his father, the Nazi poet Will Vesper (1882–1962). Nor did the younger Vesper find the Nazi pasts of other members of the older generation as distasteful as Sebald did.[55] But while, in his earlier student years, he remained committed to his father's world, over time he also sought engagement with contemporary ideas and literature and had, by 1965, become an SPD supporter.[56] By the later 1960s, while seeking to make his way as an author and in publishing, he took far more anti-authoritarian views and was regarded as 'einer der wichtigesten Köpfe der außerparlamentarischen Opposition' [one of the most important minds of the extra-parliamentary opposition].[57]

Vesper worked on *Die Reise* from 1969 until his suicide in 1971. The book's title refers in the first instance to a trip which the narrator, accompanied by an American-Jewish hitchhiker, takes by car via Italy and Austria from Dubrovnik in Yugoslavia to West Germany. In Munich he and his passenger take LSD, another one of the 'Reisen' [trips] suggested by the work's title. They subsequently part company with no love lost, and the narrator continues into Swabia to be reunited with his young son. This narrative is interspersed with the account of a third journey, this time into memory, which recalls the narrator's early years on a North German country estate ruled by his despotic father who, even after 1945, remained loyal to his Nazi beliefs. Interestingly, this strand is entitled 'Einfacher Bericht' [Simple Report], and as such echoes verbatim one of Enzensberger's descriptions of an ideal revolutionary textual form in his celebrated essay of 1968 on revolutionary writing, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'.[58] In other narrative strands of *Die Reise*, the protagonist comments on his writing process in the present and on events which take place after his journey across Europe. The text also includes a wealth of other, heterogeneous material, including hand-drawn illustrations, reflections on politics, writing and popular

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of modern life's domination by a depersonalized, bureaucratic, technological rationality.

55 Kapellen, *Doppelt leben*, 39–44.

56 Koenen, in *Vesper, Ensslin, Baader*, identifies ambiguity and contradiction in Vesper's later years, too; see also Sven Glawion, 'Aufbruch in die Vergangenheit: Bernward Vespers *Die Reise* (1977/79)', in *NachBilder der RAF*, ed. by Inge Stephan and Alexandra Tacke (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau, 2008), 24–38 (25).

57 Kapellen, *Doppelt leben*, 11.

58 Enzensberger, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', 192.

culture, plus poems, newspaper cuttings and other documents that are apparently cited verbatim. This kind of dialogism, too, is highly reminiscent of Enzensberger's poetics of revolt.

Die Reise's narrative technique is highly fissured, and in the present-day sections its diction is informal, often colloquial, polemical or aggressive. In contrast, the 'Einfacher Bericht' is written in a more polished style. These evocative passages recall such aspects of childhood as the dominance of the father; authority in the family and other institutions, such as school; adult hypocrisy; the post-war persistence of Nazi or fascist thought; the discipline and punishment of deviant behaviour and anxiety surrounding the body and sexuality. This account seems to highlight the anti-authoritarian thesis that there is no division between the personal and the political, and hence that the bourgeois family is a microcosm of the repressive, latently fascist state, an idea ultimately derived from the Marxist psychoanalyst Wilhelm Reich. This view forms the rationale for the text's exploration of various strategies of supposed subjective liberation, notably drug use as an escape from bourgeois consciousness, or the Marcusean desublimation of language through obscenity and a Reichian emphasis on sexuality.

Unexpected Affinities: *Die Reise* and *Schwindel. Gefühle.*

Vesper's mode of writing is at times expressly political and assertively, if also ambiguously anti-literary, and so seems very distinct from Sebald's style and preferred reading.[59] And yet, at first sight most surprisingly, *Die Reise* also has features which would have resonated with Sebald, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, eccentricity in respect of the canon, explicit rejection of authoritarian German discourse, especially if it involves the influence of the Nazi past on the present, and an interest in psychology, anarchic play and disorder. Additionally, the critic Martin Swales observes that Sebald is interested in the ways in which literary writing can reveal the ambiguous legacy of European civilization (28). Something similar applies to Vesper's enterprise, for *Die Reise* and the *Väterliteratur* of which it is emblematic anticipate what Sebald said before his death of his current work in progress, that it was to be an investigation of 'das realitätsblinde, glückliche Alltagsleben im Faschismus' [happy

59 Martin Swales, 'Theoretical Reflections on the Work of W.G. Sebald', in *W.G. Sebald: A Critical Companion*, ed. by J.J. Long and Anne Whitehead (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 23–28 (26).

everyday life that was blind to reality under Fascism][60] and the 'way in which ordinary people became imbued with the values of the fascist system'.[61]

Formally, too, *Die Reise*'s incorporation of disparate materials recalls the politically committed documentary literature that influenced Sebald, and both texts involve inserted documents such as facsimiles of bills or invoices. The two texts are narratologically similar, for in both there is, at least at times, a first-person narrator whom it is tempting to identify with the author, even though this assumption is simultaneously problematized, and both books avoid closure or resolution. Thus, both evince a scepticism about traditional, linear and chronological narrative and its solidity. In Sebald's case such doubts are manifested structurally, in his division of his text into four seemingly discrete, but intimately, if enigmatically, related narratives, and in Vesper's by the erratic montage of narrative levels.

Strikingly, important strands in both texts' plots are primarily defined by the vicissitudes of journeys in, to and from the South, including problematic visits to Venice and Verona, difficult, sometimes traumatic Alpine crossings and an unpleasant experience of Austria. In addition, these journeys are undertaken in one sense or another with a Jewish companion. However, Vesper's narrator's increasing resentment of his passenger, which he comes to relate to the latter's Jewish identity, differs from the valorized presence of the author Franz Kafka and perhaps also other figures in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, for instance the Italian Malachio who leaves Sebald's narrator with a version of the traditional *Pesach* greeting '*Ci vediamo a Gerusalemme*' (75 and 79) and so may evoke a Jewish identity. Even so, the German narrators' shared preoccupation with a Jewish presence in the contemporary world is significant.

These journeys are undertaken for love, pleasure or other supposedly beneficial or therapeutic purposes. But they are in reality variously aimless, emotionally and mentally painful, logistically awkward, and physically uncomfortable, too, as the protagonists move from one unsatisfactory location to another, driven by aims and motives which they themselves at best grasp only imperfectly. Both narrators are interested in unusual states of mind and afflicted by memory; and their journeys fail to emancipate them from the past, or, possibly in a related way, from constricting national identity, for both are repelled by the behaviour of Germans abroad. Their journeys are intertextual, too, not only in their ironic use of

60 Kunisch, 'Die Melancholie des Widerstands', 20.

61 Sheppard, 'The Sternheim Years', 99, n. 49.

the literary tradition of the supposedly liberating 'italienische Reise' [Italian journey] like the ones made, famously, by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1786–88 and, infamously, by Thomas Mann's Gustav von Aschenbach in 1911 in *Der Tod in Venedig* [*Death in Venice*] (1912).[62] Both texts are permeated, too, with allusions to numerous texts and authors, sharing, for example, references to Kafka and Ingeborg Bachmann.[63] And while many of Vesper's intertextual references are from popular rather than high culture, they nonetheless have equivalents in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*'s deployment of newspapers, popular entertainments and graffiti.[64]

'Il ritorno in patria'/'Einfacher Bericht'

Thus, *Die Reise* and *Schwindel. Gefühle.* involve rich, extensive parallels, which include, too, the shared focus on a post-war, West German country childhood in both Vesper's 'Einfacher Bericht' and the final section of *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, 'Il ritorno in patria'. This part of Sebald's text not only mirrors the physical and emotionally laden journey from the South back to Germany that takes place in *Die Reise*. It is also a journey in memory back to boyhood and so, as its title suggests, in several senses, a journey back into the fatherland and a return, like Vesper's, to the world of the child's fraught relationship with his father, as well as with other kinds of father or father figures.[65]

62 Beyle's happy Alpine holiday with Mme Gerhardi (27–35) in the first narrative in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, 'Beyle oder das merckwürdige Faktum der Liebe' [Beyle, or Love is a Madness Most Discreet], seems at first sight to be the exception proving the rule, but the narrator twice explains that Mme Gerhardi may have never existed at all.

63 In the third story in S*chwindel. Gefühle.*, 'Dr K.s Badereise nach Riva' [Dr K. Takes the Waters at Riva], the protagonist calls a woman whom he briefly loves Undine, presumably after the celebrated water-sprite of German literature, and thinks of her as a 'Wasserfrau' [mermaid] (182–83). The narrative also refers sub-textually to Bachmann's short work 'Undine geht' [Undine goes] from her volume of short stories *Das dreißigste Jahr* [*The Thirtieth Year*] (1961). Exactly like Bachmann's eponymous watery protagonist on parting from her lover, this girl makes with her hand 'das Zeichen für Ende' [a sign in the air which betokened the end] (182). Vesper's narrator refers to Bachmann's story 'Das dreißigste Jahr' (also from the collection of that title) as well as an encounter with Bachmann herself (31–32).

64 On Sebald's ambivalence towards pop culture in comparison with literature, see Sheppard, '"Woods, Trees and the Spaces in Between"', 94–95.

65 This theme in 'Il ritorno in patria' is anticipated elsewhere in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, for example, in the many allusions to Kafka, whose life and works are often associated with oppressive fathers; or in the narrative 'All'estero', where it is

Notable too is both texts' suggestion that the childhoods they recall are the sources of all later concerns and perceptions.

In Vesper's 'Einfacher Bericht', the almost ubiquitous biological father is shadowed by avatars like Adolf Hitler, with whom he appears in a photograph, authoritarian schoolteachers or a patriarchal God. At times, Will Vesper appears in a responsible or educating role, especially when his son is very young; certainly he is the object of the child's frustrated love. But this representation is countered by passages in which the father punishes and belittles his son, withholding his own love and prohibiting that of others. In contrast, in 'Il ritorno in patria' the child's father appears to be largely absent. Nonetheless, in a rare allusion, the narrator recalls enforced visits to the local barber's shop:

> Vor nichts fürchtete ich mich mehr, als wenn der Köpf, bei dem ich mir, seit der Vater wieder zu Haus war, jeden Monat einmal die Haare schneiden lassen mußte, mir mit diesem an dem Lederriemen frisch abgezogenen Messer den Nacken ausrasierte. (276)
>
> [Since father had returned home from the war, I was sent once a month to have my hair cut, and nothing frightened me more than old Köpf setting about shaving the fuzz from my neck with that freshly stropped knife (243)].

Although this recollection is not accorded the same quantity of attention as are the father's demands in *Die Reise*, there are parallels. The paternal discipline of the monthly haircut suggests that the time the narrator's father spent in the army has left its mark and recalls the regimented ideals of Vesper's childhood. In both cases, discipline is closely associated with lasting fear of physical damage with a (phallic) implement, here the razor, while Will Vesper favoured the 'Siebenstriem' [many-tailed whip] (333).[66]

'Il ritorno in patria' contains no suggestion that the narrator, when a child, was ever physically chastized by his father. But Vesper's narrator remarks that it is psychological punishment, not the relatively rare physical discipline which marked him the most, in the form of 'hinterhältig[e], langsam aber entsetzlich wirkend[e] Methoden' [underhand methods, which work slowly but terribly] (340). So in both cases, the boys' real fear was of a more subliminal form of punishment. In 'Il ritorno in patria', the frightening

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said of Herbeck that family life, especially his father's influence, was detrimental to his nerves.

66 The German word 'Riemen' [strap], which occurs in 'Il ritorno in patria' in the compound noun 'Lederriemen' [strop], is a vulgarism for 'penis'.

implement is a blade, and because it is used on the young boy's neck by a barber whose very name recalls heads and beheading ('köpfen' [to behead]), it is associated with the act of decapitation, a memory which the narrator, when an adult, recalls in connection with a picture of Salome bearing the severed head of St John the Baptist. In *Die Reise*, too, the locus of punishment is the head, where psychological torment is experienced.

In both cases, such discipline can be administered by women as well as fathers. In *Die Reise* the mother supports the father's authority, and in 'Il ritorno in patria' a neighbour, Mathild, controls the child with stories about a bogeyman whom she calls the 'graue[n] Jäger' (253) [grey *chasseur* (222)]. Tellingly, the boy imagines this figure to be armed with a short, curved 'Säbel' (258–59) [sabre (228)] that is not unlike Köpf's cut-throat razor. Nonetheless, both women's discipline is underwritten by masculine authority, that of the father in the former case, and in the latter, that of the 'graue[n] Jäger' who, as a military figure, also connects with the narrator's father and his army past.[67]

Fears associated with the individual fathers are amplified by others that derive from more abstract forms of patriarchal authority, too, for example religion. The child in *Die Reise* is terrified by a film about the martyrdom of Joan of Arc, and the idea of a punitive God, especially in relation to his developing sexuality, leads him to punish himself severely, both physically and psychologically. Likewise, Sebald's adult narrator recalls, at a tellingly early stage in his return home, religious imagery from his childhood, when he visits the chapel at Krummenbach and sees once more its images of 'schmerz- und wutverzerrte[n] Gesichter[n], verrenkte[n] Körperteile[n], ein[em] zum Schlag ausholende[n] Arm' (204) [faces distorted in pain and anger, dislocated limbs, an arm raised to strike (179)]. These images come from the Stations of the Cross, a narrative which could be read as depicting a protagonist subjected to violent, excruciating punishment by a cruel Father-God as an act of atonement for the

67 As the adult narrator discovers on his visit to W., Mathild's 'grauer Jäger' [grey *chasseur*] apparently turns out to have been a tailor's dummy in her attic dressed in military uniform. The description of the uniform is, according to Sheppard, 'a fairly accurate picture of a soldier of the Tiroler-Feld-Jäger-Regiment, the only regimental-sized light infantry unit in the Austrian Army during the Napoleonic wars. […] The primary meaning of "chasseur" is, like that of "Jäger", "huntsman", and "chasseurs à pied" are French light infantrymen' (personal correspondence with the author, 24 January 2011).

flaws in Creation for which He, as an all-powerful and all-knowing Being, must ultimately be held responsible.[68]

Both fathers are associated with National Socialism. In *Die Reise*, the father continues to support Nazi ideals, even after 1945. In 'Il ritorno in patria', more subtly, the narrator first mentions his father in connection with a memory of the gypsies who used to camp outside W. each summer. The narrator associates this recollection with a photograph in an album that his father had given to his mother when he was stationed in Slovakia early in the War, showing a gypsy woman behind barbed wire holding a baby. The implication is that, as an adult, the narrator is fully aware of the Nazi persecution of gypsies, and wonders about the possible complicity of the villagers and his parents, especially his father, in those events. And as Long observes, ownership of the album is 'designed to reproduce Nazi racial ideology inside the family', a reading which echoes Vesper's Reichian theses about fascism beginning at home.[69]

In 'Einfacher Bericht', the child's earliest memories involve the profound impact of the war years. Likewise, in 'Il ritorno in patria' the adult narrator's visit to the chapel is followed by the sight, in a symbolically dark, oppressive and apparently endless stretch of the track down to W., of a memorial to four German soldiers killed in April 1945. Maintaining Nazi rhetoric into the present, it declares that these soldiers 'für das Vaterland […] gefallen sind' (207–08) [had died […] for their Fatherland (181)].[70] The narrator recalls hearing about this event as a child, which suggests that while little is said explicitly in the text about the war years, they were near at hand in his childhood. In sum, then, Sebald's 'ritorno in patria' evokes a return in memory not only to the nuclear family, in which the father, albeit mainly implicitly, takes an important role, but also to National Socialism and its subsequent shadow. In this sense, both texts are

68 However, the narrator also associates the chapel with his beloved maternal grandfather, and expresses nostalgia for the stillness of the chapels around W. These statements exemplify the deep ambivalence he feels towards his childhood. See also Glawion on the (partially ironic) self-stylization of Vesper's narrator in *Die Reise* as an atheist Jesus who has been abandoned by His heavenly father ('Aufbruch in die Vergangenheit', 34–35).

69 Long, *W.G. Sebald: Image, Archive, Modernity*, 60.

70 According to Sheppard, 'the real chapel is only 2–3 miles from the centre of Wertach and the memorial is not up in the mountains, but down in the churchyard next to the parish church' (personal correspondence with the author, 24 January 2011). The difference between Sebald's literary representation of the approach to W. and its features on one hand and the real topography of Wertach on the other indicates the symbolic importance of such representations in the text.

strikingly cognate reckonings with the Nazi past and its aftermath, and, more importantly, the ways in which they were experienced by a small boy, and survive into and inform the present.

Both texts also depict the way in which children observe adult secrets. In Vesper's text the child secretly watches the graphically-described slaughter of animals (314–21). He feels that in so doing he has discovered a truth that his father had sought to hide from him, not in order to spare him, but because of his own terror of death which must be kept from his son (320). In another instance, the child spies on the mating of a bull and cow, which seems to him violent (380). And in a long narrative sequence largely devoted to sexuality, the body, and associated fear and shame, the boy sees his father's genitals and compares them to those of a boar, that is, a wild, male beast (405). The child, who is meant to be sleeping, then closes his eyes, thereby implying fear or disturbance. This scene is closely followed by another in which, having discovered masturbation, he immediately makes an association with 'das schaumige Blut in der Wanne' [the foaming blood in the tub] (409) that he had seen being collected during the slaughter of animals. These scenes are linked not only by the theme of covert observation, but also by a concern with the animal, sexuality, violence and death, and, most consistently, by a fascination with secrets that are kept from the narrator and repressed as far as possible from social or conscious life.

In Sebald's text, the young boy accidentally observes, unnoticed, a night-time sexual encounter between the barmaid Romana and the huntsman Schlag, a patron of the inn where the boy lives. This scene is closely followed by the unexplained destruction of the inn's interior by its landlord Sallaba (270–72). The child understands neither event fully, though the reader is drawn to speculate that Sallaba's violence is somehow linked to Romana's encounter with Schlag, perhaps a manifestation of jealousy, or of frustration or anger, for there is no certainty in the description of the scene between Romana and Schlag whether Romana's participation in it is consensual. Furthermore, Schlag's equally unexplained death in the forest occurs very soon afterwards and the child unexpectedly sees his corpse as it is returned to the village. Consequently, the reader cannot dismiss the possibility that Schlag's death is somehow linked to the other recent, unexplained events at the inn. Unsurprisingly, the confusing scene between Romana and Schlag with its dark, adult secrets and possible violent consequences may precipitate the boy's subsequent, near-fatal illness which follows soon after in the text.

Parallels with the scenes cited here from *Die Reise* include the fact that, as in those, an animal, in this case Schlag's dog, is present in the scene secretly observed by the child, and both at, and after, Schlag's death. The threatening father is arguably subliminally present in this scene, too, in that it is in the course of an errand on his behalf that the boy is outside and sees Romana and Schlag. Moreover, that subtextual allusion to masculine or patriarchal authority is underscored by the scene's mythological references, for here the narrator sees the constellation of Orion in the night sky. Though he does not refer to this idea, it is traditionally said that Orion, a giant huntsman, was placed in the sky after his death by the supreme god Zeus.

Moreover, just as the scenes from *Die Reise* involve violence, it may be heralded, too, in the scene between Romana and Schlag. On the day following the dramatic events at the inn, the child-narrator learns at school about the 'Unglückschronik von W.' (273) [chronicle of calamities that had befallen W. over the ages (240)], that is, a history of the village that catalogued all its adversities and tragedies. The context suggests that the story of Romana and Schlag, too, could be added to this often violent sequence of events. In particular, the theme of violence seems to crystallize around the figure of Schlag, whose name in German is synonymous with a blow. Like Orion, Schlag is a hunter, and the link between them is also implicitly underlined by the fact that just as Schlag always appears accompanied by his dog, even in death, the constellation of the dead huntsman Orion is associated with the constellation Canis Major. This group of stars is thought to represent Orion's dog, and contains the so-called Dog Star, Sirius. Orion, through his calling as a huntsman, recalls Mathild's 'graue[n] Jäger', for while in a military context the term 'Jäger' can be rendered as '*chasseur*', more literally, it means 'hunter'. Hence, Orion, Schlag and the bogeyman are all linked by the term 'Jäger'. And just as the 'grauer Jäger' is imagined as having a short sabre, the narrator here explicitly mentions the starry Orion's short sword (270), a detail which anticipates, too, Köpf's razor, the anecdote about which is, significantly, interpolated in precisely this part of the narrative. Through these connections, Schlag comes also to be linked indirectly to a blade and potential threat.

However, in this passage Orion is described as 'der kopflose Riese' (270) [the headless giant (238)], an image which not only foreshadows the child's fear of beheading by Köpf, but also perhaps Schlag's own death. Therefore, the huntsman of W. appears both as an apparent herald of violence, and as its victim, a curious position which may be further illuminated by a closer examination of this

scene's mythological sub-texts. There are numerous versions of classical myths about Orion's death in which he is, variously, killed in retribution for his threat to the animals of the earth; accidentally by his lover Artemis who is tricked into shooting him by her jealous brother Apollo; or by Artemis herself who, like the other gods, is jealous of his relationship with the goddess of Dawn. Despite the important differences between these narratives, they all make associations between revenge, jealousy and violent death. Thus, Orion's dual role as both hunter and hunted parallels Schlag's ambiguous position in that as a huntsman, as well as through his name, he is associated with violence, and yet is also prey himself to sudden death. These mythological references may also imply that when the child-narrator observed Romana and Schlag he was witnessing a primal scene which triggered sexual jealousy, including possibly, at an unconscious level, the boy's own, for he too loves Romana; murderous lust; and gratuitous destruction and revenge which, because it mirrors the behaviour of the gods, is paradoxically both sanctioned by and offensive to them.

Thus, both Vesper's and Sebald's texts depict a childhood that is full of contradictions. At one level, it is a rural and, to the upwardly-mobile parents, socially highly desirable idyll, yet at another, both the child protagonists and adult narrators are acutely aware that it is suffused with mysterious menace, hidden violence, and dark, possibly animal secrets. And to the extent that the narratives involve the adult narrators' awareness of the atrocities of the recent historical past, they hint that these events, too, were a bloody secret that was imperfectly hidden from society; but perhaps expressed metonymically in the disturbing scenes that they had covertly observed as children.

A Poetics of the Uncanny?

It is not at all likely that Vesper knew Sebald's work, for the latter's first critical publication appeared in 1969, long after Vesper had renounced conventional study.[71] Conversely, while *Die Reise* attracted considerable attention on its appearance, Sebald never mentions it either in his published critical writings or his interviews. Nor does it feature in UEA's extensive library collection, of which Sebald made frequent use, in his personal library as it is now preserved at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach am Neckar,[72] or in

71 Kapellen, *Doppelt leben*, 167; Koenen, *Vesper, Ensslin, Baader*, 115.

72 I am grateful to Jo Catling for this information.

his surviving reading lists for courses at UEA.[73] So the resonances between these two works suggest a connection that is based not on direct influence, but on some deeply rooted, shared preoccupations which seem to emerge from a childhood lived in the shadow of Nazism and a threatening father figure and so was full of dark secrets. Such preoccupations allow these two works to be aligned, however partially, with *Väterliteratur*.

The re-emergence of the concerns of *Väterliteratur* in a much later literary work of considerable standing indicates that the culture of protest is not as antagonistic to literary quality as has often been thought. Moreover, these conclusions suggest that the literary concerns of the protest generation were anything but transient, limited to a clearly delineated space of time like '1968' or even the more generously imagined 'red decade'. Rather, on the evidence of this discussion, those concerns marked the German culture of the late twentieth century far more broadly, confirming Morgan's suggestion that the West German revolts are best associated not with specific dates but with a cultural mood of significant duration. Conversely, the startling resonances between the two texts discussed here allow us to understand Sebald not (only) as a timeless old master. He appears, too, as a contemporary writer who was acutely sensitive to and in some ways, albeit paradoxically and ambiguously, highly representative of the symbolic, philosophical and representational world of the 'red decade'. This question of Sebald's contemporaneity and, indeed, that of other anti-authoritarian texts, will be discussed further in the conclusion to this study.

However, despite the links of 'Il ritorno in patria' to anti-authoritarian textuality, Sebald wrote of course from a different time and place. It can be argued that this difference makes his writing appear less as a simple perpetuation than as an uncanny revisiting of the writing of protest. This idea can be illuminated by considering the presence in 'Il ritorno in patria' of a mysterious figure who haunts *Schwindel. Gefühle* in its entirety, namely 'der Jäger Gracchus' [the hunter Gracchus], the protagonist of fragmentary texts by Kafka.[74] Kafka's Gracchus has died, but failed to reach the afterlife as he should and is condemned instead to eternal journeying around the

73 I am grateful to Richard Hibbett and Richard Sheppard for this information.

74 Franz Kafka, 'Der Jäger Gracchus', in Franz Kafka, *Beschreibung eines Kampfes: Novellen, Skizzen, Aphorismen aus dem Nachlaß*, ed. by Max Brod (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1983), 75–79; 'The Hunter Gracchus', trans. by Willa and Edwin Muir, in Franz Kafka, *Description of a Struggle and The Great Wall of China*, trans. by Willa and Edwin Muir and Tania and James Stern (London: Secker & Warburg, 1960), 104–10.

earth after death. Subtle intertextual references to this character and his fate permeate all the texts in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, suggesting that he continues his posthumous wanderings in Sebald's text too and means something very significant, if oblique, within it. In 'Il ritorno in patria', his occupation prefigures Schlag's, whose presence is, conversely, cryptically anticipated in the second section of *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, 'All'estero' (103). In Homer's *Odyssey*, Orion is seen chasing the ghosts of the animals that he has slain with his bronze (phallic) club for all eternity in the Underworld (Book 11: l. 572). Thus, there may also be a homology between the story of Orion and that of Gracchus since neither hunter can rest after death; and in 'Il ritorno in patria', Schlag, too, is associated with Orion.

This strange re-emergence of a hunter (or hunters) in 'Il ritorno in patria' reflects ways in which *Schwindel. Gefühle.* is vividly concerned with such phenomena as doubling and recurrence, which recall the Uncanny as it is described in Sigmund Freud's essay 'Das Unheimliche' [The Uncanny] of 1919, an important text for Sebald.[75] For Freud, the Uncanny is a form in which the repressed returns, and it originates in the child's illicit observation of adult secrets and fear of the father. These themes are key to 'Il ritorno in patria' and *Die Reise*, as the present discussion has shown. Seen in this context, Sebald's text may narrate the belated, uncanny return not only of Gracchus (and others) to the present, but also of an unresolved psychological, cultural and symbolic complex which haunted the 1960s generation.[76] This complex may have seemed all the more disturbing for its re-appearance in 1990, that is to say at a time when, in the wake of German reunification, the legacy both of the 1930s and 1940s, and the traumatic 1960s and 1970s, could have been thought to have been laid to rest. Put another way, it might be said that the 'red decade' and its fears seem themselves to have become in a sense culturally repressed and to have re-emerged uncannily in Sebald's work, which thus offers a poetics of the uncanny for the late twentieth century.

75 Sheppard, 'Dexter – Sinister', 431–32.

76 See Long, *W.G. Sebald: Image, Archive, Modernity*, 61.

7. On Contemporary Writing, 1307–1990: A Conclusion

Introduction

As the first chapter of this study shows, Hans Magnus Enzensberger's seminal text of November 1968, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', sets out influential, if much-misunderstood, ideas about what a contemporary revolutionary literature could be. In so doing, this essay provides an ambitious re-definition of literature itself and illuminates a wealth of protest texts which to date have often remained illegible to critical scrutiny. Taking Enzensberger's ideas as its starting-point, this study has analysed examples of such writings. Now, in conclusion, it aims to re-read Enzensberger's essay against them. This re-reading permits a new evaluation of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' which reflects, on one hand, on its blind spots and omissions. But on the other hand, this second reading shows also how the texts discussed in the chapters above dovetail strikingly with Enzensberger's anti-authoritarian poetics. It leads also to a re-assessment of the meaning of Enzensberger's term 'neueste Literatur' [most recent literature], which does not rely on dates of publication or historical synchronicity. Rather, Enzensberger seems to be defining the literary quality of being 'contemporary' in a new way. This chapter then goes on to reconsider the relationship of his essay to 1960s writing, and its place in the fading of anti-authoritarianism by late 1968, by linking it to the protest literature's ambivalent relationship to the German past.

However, this final chapter then moves on to make the case, consciously against the grain, that in fact there is no end in sight for anti-authoritarian textuality. This insight is explored with reference to the open ending of the apparent odd-one-out amongst the texts included in this study, W.G. Sebald's long narrative *Schwindel. Gefühle.* This work matches Enzensberger's description of

a revolutionary literature in many ways, suggesting that after 1968 anti-authoritarian writing was far from exhausted. Rather, it may simply have withdrawn temporarily from public view, like Franz Kafka's controversial mouse singer Josefine, whose portrait opens 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. In time then, such writing expressed itself in new forms, like Sebald's literary prose, itself deeply interested in Kafka, which appeared over two decades on from 1968. As this conclusion will show, *Schwindel. Gefühle.* is highly ambivalent about ending. Hence, it is eloquent not only about the German past and its ongoing impact on the present, but also about the refusal of anti-authoritarian writing simply to disappear for good.

Enzensberger's Blind Spots

In terms of their content, the texts of the West German anti-authoritarian movement are highly diverse, as well as complex and contradictory. Despite their claims sometimes to be radical, their content can be (partially) traditional, even conservative or reactionary. Neither did they necessarily always go hand in hand with liberating praxis. A vivid example is the role of women, in anti-authoritarian life and in its representations of gender roles, as Chapter 2 of this study demonstrates in particular. However, other chapters in this study support this contention too. In Chapter 1, for example, Enzensberger's essay refers to two women writers and intellectuals, Rosa Luxemburg and Ulrike Meinhof, and makes Kafka's image of Josefine, a female singer, into a key topos. However, Luxemburg and Meinhof are used only fleetingly as examples of certain kinds of writing (reference to Luxemburg may also be a subtle allusion, for those in the know, to the then recent anti-authoritarian occupation and re-naming of the German Department at West Berlin's FU as the 'Rosa Luxemburg-Institut').[1] Josefine here is a figurehead rather than a character through whom feminine creativity may fully be discussed. Thus, the essay makes little space for any feminist critique of conventional culture or discussion of feminine creativity along the lines then being developed by women activists and artists.

Likewise, the analyses of the work of Kommune I in Chapters 3 and 5 shows that women, although important members of the commune, were marginalized in KI's productivity and public image. Pawla's dirty protest, in particular, can be seen as replicating gender roles under patriarchy in its mockery of the ageing female body and

1 See the Introduction to this study, n. 45.

assumption that men may make mess, but leave clearing it up to others (probably women). In Chapter 4, the self-image of the graffiti artist seems to be very much predicated on masculine models; and the narrators' points of view in the works discussed in Chapter 6 are also exclusively masculine. It seems, then, on the basis of the examples considered here, that what might be thought of as classic anti-authoritarian creativity is largely gendered as masculine. Its reception, too, foregrounds the male individual, and the masculine voice and agency, as the authorities' response to KI's actions, prosecuting only male communards for instance, makes clear. The same could be said of Enzensberger's reduction of KI's complex activity on the part of both women and men to a simplifying allusion to one male communard, Fritz Teufel. Thus, as Helke Sander's work, for example, shows, there were particular obstacles in the way of feminine agency and creativity in anti-authoritarianism, and its posterity.[2] However, her work shows also that women were important anti-authoritarian agents and producers of culture, and future research in this field will need to develop a fuller account of their work and re-assess ideas about anti-authoritarian culture very comprehensively in that light.

In formal terms, the textuality of anti-authoritarian writing is highly distinctive. This study has shown that the West German protest movements of the 1960s were deeply interested in writing of many kinds, and anything but anti-literary. Enzensberger argues that it makes little sense to seek to categorize revolutionary writing into genres; nonetheless, various commonalities may be recognized within this textual culture. First, as is quite often recognized, the protest movements were interested in operative texts, which could be, for example, factual, journalistic, documentary or polemical. Second, and more startlingly, Enzensberger's essay hints not only at the ongoing, if problematic, significance for the protest movements of certain non-classical, Modernist strands in literary tradition, like Surrealism or the voice of Kafka. It also draws implicit attention to the manner in which the movements generated highly distinctive, ephemeral textual forms, like graffiti, slogans and flyers, which draw simultaneously on operative writing and anti-authoritarianism's avant-garde heritage. Once this avant-garde aspect in anti-authoritarian culture is recognized, then all its products can appear in a new light: for example, its documentary and agit-prop aspects can be restored to their place in longer artistic traditions.

However, there are some important omissions in Enzensberger's account, beyond feminist debate as outlined above. For example,

2 See also, and importantly, Kätzel (ed.), *Die 68erinnen*.

protest was strongly, if controversially, influenced by popular as well as avant-garde culture. Yet 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' omits pop culture altogether, other than possibly in its one allusion to advertising, its Maoist sub-text (a cult reference for many anti-authoritarians), and its brief, indirect reference to the work of KI, which deployed elements of popular culture enthusiastically. This lacuna seems all the more surprising given the affirmation of modern, urban and popular textual forms like the advertising column, small ads and sky-writing in the poetic manifesto for Enzensberger's first volume of poems, *verteidigung der wölfe* (*defence of the wolves*) (1957), which has important parallels with the more explicitly political reflections of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' just over a decade later. Likewise, it is only Enzensberger's fleeting mention of the humorously inclined communard Fritz Teufel which hints at anti-authoritarianism's important, earlier emphasis on comedy and humour.

Given Enzensberger's interests, a particularly striking absence in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is that of contemporary literary writing in a more traditional sense. Enzensberger claims, approvingly: '[D]ie intelligentesten Köpfe zwischen zwanzig und dreißig [geben] mehr auf ein Agitationsmodell als auf einen "experimentellen Text"; […] [benutzen] lieber Faktographien als Schelmenromane; […] [pfeifen darauf], Belletristik zu machen und zu kaufen' [The brightest twenty- to thirty-year-olds set more store by a model for agitation than by an 'experimental text'; […] prefer to use faction to picaresque novels; […] couldn't care less about writing or buying fiction] (189). This claim by Enzensberger that protest culture is uninterested in traditional literary forms may be responsible for the absence in the essay of any reference to prominent contemporary publications by writers linked to the anti-authoritarian movement, such as Erich Fried's landmark volume of anti-war poems, *und VIETNAM und* (1966), or the works of Peter Weiss. The fact that Enzensberger does not discuss such publications here at all seems to indicate that for him they fall beyond serious consideration, mired as they must be in the bourgeois modes of thought, production and distribution which he condemns. But he also omits from his account less celebrated literary writings, which are not hung about with tokens of social or cultural prestige, like the era's extensive body of anti-war poetry. The existence of that work shows that literature in a comparatively conventional form was indeed written at a grass-roots level throughout the years of protest. Around 1968, numerous anti-war poems do thematize a sense of unease or even crisis about

their own political value and, presumably for related reasons, their publication becomes more sparing after 1968. All the same, such publications continued into the 1970s. Indeed, even in 1972, at the height of the orthodox Marxist phase of the 'red decade', far less commonly associated with aesthetics and creativity than its earlier, anti-authoritarian mood up to around 1967–68, the Marxist academic Wolfgang Fritz Haug, when discussing writing about Vietnam, called not for the publication of more factual texts about it, but for more imaginative, artistic voices recalling those of Bertolt Brecht or Karl Kraus to be heard.[3]

This omission of agit-prop poetry from 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' is remarkable given that in various ways the Vietnam poems seem to meet at least some of its criteria for revolutionary writing. The poems reflect, for instance, a demotic impulse among young poets ('[d]ie intelligentesten Köpfe zwischen zwanzig und dreißig' [[t]he brightest twenty- to thirty-year-olds]) to express themselves about the war, whereas by and large established poets, with the exception of Fried, chose not to do so, or at least not as directly.

Thus, Enzensberger's own reception of the culture of protest is selective.[4] Curiously enough, just as many observers have failed to recognize the deeply aesthetic character of the protest movements, in this respect, Enzensberger shares some of their thinking: that is, while he is sensitive to the high cultural legacies of anti-authoritarianism, however apparently innovative their manifestations around 1967–68, he seems unreceptive to more applied, less highbrow literary traditions of the time, like clowning, popular culture and agit-prop poems, in addition to a growing feminist culture, as discussed above. In a sense, then, Enzensberger echoes the expectations of traditional criticism which dismisses play, pop culture and feminist

3 Wolfgang Fritz Haug, 'Vorwort zur zweiten Auflage', in Georg W. Alsheimer, *Vietnamesische Lehrjahre: Bericht eines Arztes aus Vietnam. Vorwort von Wolfgang Fritz Haug. Zweite verbesserte Auflage mit einem Nachbericht von 1972* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1972), 7–13 (9).

4 There may be a complex personal motivation at work here. Enzensberger had published poems on a distant war, likely to be in Vietnam, e.g., 'abendnachrichten', in *blindenschrift* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1964), 11. See Charlotte A. Melin, 'Celan and Enzensberger on an Asian Conflict', *Germanic Notes*, 18 (1987), 4–5. However, his production of poetry reduced during the years of the protest movements and was consigned to discreet, marginal contexts (Melin, *Poetic Maneuvers*, 84). This apparent partial distancing from poetry around 1968 may be mirrored in the way Enzensberger later distanced himself from his past activism (Kraushaar, 'Vexierbild', 45–63).

input for their lack of seriousness, and dismisses explicitly political literature altogether. It seems that the idea of a protest movement which celebrates fun and pop, yet remains attached to poetry, too, is incompatible with Enzensberger's iconoclastic vision of a non-bourgeois literature, just as it was invisible to those observers of the movements who failed to see their literary dimensions at all. Likewise, Enzensberger does little to trouble the patriarchal canon. In these respects, Enzensberger's account, too, may be (surprisingly) non-radical. Nonetheless, this aspect of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' confirms the fact that the essay is not a comprehensive, fully accurate description of contemporary left-wing writing, but, rather, a highly strategic text. More crucially still, Enzensberger's arguably conservative omissions form part of his essay's web of ironies and contradictions, and its provocative refusal to offer up any clear or consistent line of argument.

'Die Neueste Literatur'

Still, Enzensberger's outline of the characteristics of revolutionary writing does resonate strikingly, albeit variously and to varying degrees, with many of the works explored in this study. According to Enzensberger, a genuinely revolutionary writing must eschew bourgeois convention, undermine the capitalist consciousness industry and break away from the monolithic book and individual author. While such writing can encompass operative, expressly political texts as well as powerful avant-garde features and impulses, most essentially it transcends genre altogether by becoming profoundly dialogical, which is in itself a modern, and Modernist, textual characteristic as defined by the Russian theorist Mikhail Bakhtin. The key principle in such writing is what Enzensberger calls 'Gegenseitigkeit' [reciprocity] (197), in which texts become a new, exciting kind of common, rather than private, intellectual property, and may even break down the troubling traditional division of theory and practice.

Even the anti-war poems, in formal terms the most traditional among the texts considered here, distance themselves from established literariness, since almost none uses rhyme and metre or conventional poetic diction. In fact, Enzensberger's (knowingly, disingenuously modest) description of political writerly activities as 'nutzbringende Beschäftigungen' [beneficial ways of occupying oneself] (196), suggesting a transient, applied literature devoted to specific functions and aims in the present, is especially apt for these agit-prop poems.

In this sense, they move well away from the realm of pure or auratic art as defined by Walter Benjamin in his essay 'Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit' (1936). These anti-war poems do not seem to seek a cultic status, derived from their uniqueness and historical longevity, but, on the contrary, emphasize immediacy. They are distinctive also for their ephemerality, in the senses that they most often appeared in culturally marginal contexts and were closely tied to specific historical situations, and hence were vulnerable to being forgotten. Indeed, they may be largely forgotten today due not only to the passing of the immediate historical contexts to which they refer. This obscurity in the present may be a consequence, also, of the poems' apparent, and related, lack of aura in a Benjaminian sense. As such, their limited posterity reflects their very modernity rather than their (supposed) aesthetic weakness.

Certain examples of the writing aim to avoid contributing to the profits of the 'Bewußtseinsindustrie' [consciousness industry] and, by extension, the capitalist economy itself, just as Enzensberger recommends. Because of their perceived political importance, some of these works, while brought out by conventional publishers, were no doubt circulated also in non-commercial ways, as described, for example, in the case of Bahman Nirumand's important book, *Persien: Modell eines Entwicklungslandes* (1967), in May and June 1967 by Peter Rühmkorf, and later in Uwe Timm's novel *Heißer Sommer* (1974).[5] Such writings were also likely to have been stolen, as KI recommends with the title of its commercial book *Klau mich. StPO der Kommune I* (1968). Other works came out with counter-cultural publishers, like *Eiffe for President. Frühling für Europa* (1968) in Hamburg's small, left-wing Quer-Verlag. In a different example, the important poetry anthology *gegen den krieg in vietnam* (1968), published independently as a number of a little magazine, proposed to devote its proceeds to South Vietnam's National Liberation Front (that is, the Viet Cong). In doing so, its producers may have argued that they not only avoided complicity in the mainstream publishing industry, but actively undermined it by contributing to the worldwide anti-capitalist struggle. KI used its work to fund that struggle more evidently close to home, for it sold its own productions as a source of income. And a further group of texts, notably many by Eiffe (but also some KI products like statements, slogans or, to an extent, flyers), circulated for free, apparently without becoming commodities at all. These types of circulation could constitute, in aspiration at least, what 'Gemeinplätze, die neueste Literatur betreffend' imagines as a

5 Rühmkorf, *Die Jahre, die Ihr kennt*, 216.

writing whose 'Gebrauchswert […] ihrem Marktwert über den Kopf wächst' [use value [...] overtakes its market value] (197).

Many anti-authoritarian texts take a critical approach to individual authorship, mapping with Enzensberger's advocacy of 'andere, weniger an die Person gebundene Möglichkeiten' [other possibilities which are less closely bound to the person] (196). Even Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise* (1977), while being a single-authored novel (or at least something not completely unrelated to it), challenges the concept of the author, both thematically, in the critical discussion of authorship within the text, and formally, by means of a fragmented, self-reflexive narrative technique. For example, in its constant citation of other texts and voices, *Die Reise* also hints at the collective authorship which Enzensberger endorses.

Other texts examined in this study go further in de-individualizing authorial identity. A key example is the work of KI, which insisted on a principle of collective authorship, since one of its aims was to break down the boundaries of traditional selfhood in favour of new models of interpersonal relationships, subjectivity and creativity (in this respect, too, Enzensberger's reference in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' to KI's Teufel as an individual author is an interestingly significant misrepresentation).[6] While the May flyers of 1967 were collectively authored by KI, the origin of some of its other texts is even more diffuse. For example, in 1967 the provocative statement 'was geht mich Vietnam an - ich habe Orgasmusschwierigkeiten' [what do I care about Vietnam, I'm having problems getting an orgasm] was attributed to the communard Dieter Kunzelmann. This well-publicized remark was offensive to a wide spectrum of opinion, from the respectable mainstream which did not care at all to discuss the sexuality of anarchists, to anti-war protesters for whom Vietnam was a serious ethical concern. Thus, it epitomized all that society at large, and significant sections of the protest movements too, found unacceptable about KI. But the statement characterizes KI's textual practices in less obvious ways too. According to the historian Alexander Holmig, despite its brevity, it was not the work of one individual, Kunzelmann, but the

6 At their trial, Langhans and Teufel protested against the court's failure to try all of KI as the flyers' collective authors. Communards at times refused individual invitations to political events, e.g., Teufel wrote to an unnamed recipient rejecting such a request: 'Wir sind eine Kommune und wenn wir was machen, dann machen wir es zusammen' [We are a commune and if we do something, we do it together], letter dated 25 December 1967, HIS, 'Sammlung Sozialistisches Anwaltskollektiv Berlin', file 03.03 (Kommune I Korrespondenz).

collective creation of various speakers and discourses around him.[7] By contrast, Rainer Langhans, in his recent autobiography, claims authorship of the statement himself; and comments on how it was later re-attributed to Kunzelmann.[8] Either way, the manner in which the comment could take on a discursive life of its own without being clearly traceable back to one author in the traditional sense shows just how far the issue of authorship could at times be loosened in anti-authoritarian textuality.

By contrast, the works of Eiffe and Günter Brus, closely identified as they were with a specific individual, seem to diverge markedly from Enzensberger's ideal of multiple or collective authorship. Eiffe, for example, did not make use of the scope which graffiti offer for anonymity. Instead, he personalized his work avidly, to the extent that his authorship itself and his person become an insistent theme within it. Tellingly, in one of the very few near-contemporary (if in this case fictionalized) records of Eiffe's work, Timm's novel *Heißer Sommer*, the anti-authoritarian protagonist is a great admirer of Eiffe and his methods, but unable to emulate his work effectively. This failure may be due to the emphatically personal character of Eiffe's work, which is by definition inimitable. Yet Eiffe's very over-emphasis on individual authorship pushes it to a parodic, fragile extreme, thus supporting, albeit in an unexpected way, Enzensberger's critique of the individual author. And while Brus is unmistakeably identifiable as the creator of his own 'Körperanalyse' (Body Analysis), the aggression which this work turns onto its own maker undermines the classical ideal of the serene, élite author. In both cases, too, the effects of these authors' texts or performances are very much dependent on their audiences, who in turn contribute to their meaning/s.

Enzensberger criticizes the culture industry's emphasis on the book, a substantial, unified work, as well as a prestigious material artefact which betokens social and cultural capital. The texts explored here too travel outside such limits, and are very often, and importantly, characterized by brevity. Even the lengthy and ambitious *Die Reise* discusses the idea of the book critically, and resists it too in its fragmentary form. More noticeably, texts like the Vietnam poems, which appeared in diverse contexts, do not valorize the book as a form of publication at all. Rather, they, and other works considered here, not least 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' itself, taken as it is from *Kursbuch*, often point to the major importance of the periodical or magazine as an anti-authoritarian medium. This

7 Holmig, '"Wenn's der Wahrheits(er)findung dient…"', 63–65.

8 Langhans, *Ich bin's*, 64.

kind of publication had particular value for contemporary writing due to its comparatively few overheads, low cost and the speed with which it can be finished and circulated – and left behind, too, and replaced, as the political context changes. And most obviously, this study discusses texts which are not conventionally publishable at all, like graffiti or the flyer. Such works are at best only imperfectly preservable and commodifiable and so destined to fade away from the cityscape with little or no trace. In all these cases, too, ephemerality proves to be essential to the anti-authoritarian text.

The texts in question here often thematize or even transcend genre and register. *Die Reise* mixes different genres and high and popular culture, from the conventional literary autobiography to polemic. The anti-war poems do the same, for many of them cite or mimic documentary material which seems to correspond to the 'einfache Berichte' [simple reports] emphasized in Enzensberger's essay. But the most spectacular example discussed here may be the work of KI, which unites *inter alia* press discourse, the languages of protest and advertising and avant-garde writing like the Surrealism it quoted at its trial. In their original forms, Eiffe's graffiti and KI's May flyers break down textual boundaries in further ways too. Their initial public circulation as texts dotted about the city, or as individual sheets of paper, meant that their readers would have encountered them piecemeal, and not necessarily in any kind of prescribed order or completeness. Thus, such writings could have been read in any permutation, generating a multiplicity of different possible texts and narratives. In other words, texts like this start to proliferate in remarkable ways. Typically, too, the writings cross-reference others in a manner which echoes Enzensberger's ideal 'Gegenseitigkeit' [reciprocity] between authors, texts and readers. For example, the way in which many of the poems in *gegen den krieg in vietnam* draw on documentary sources allows that material to circulate in new forms. At the same time, since this anthology was published on the occasion of the 1968 Internationaler Vietnam-Kongreß in West Berlin, it makes its way into, and expands, the wider complex of political discourse which that event generated, exemplifying Enzensberger's notion of feedback between texts which opens them up to one another and to new contexts.

Such reciprocity can be observed also in texts from outside the protest movements which are drawn into their dialogical fabric, for example press or legal reports about them, as the case of KI's May flyers illustrates. The circulation of the flyers did not only generate extensive responses in the press, but within the judicial system

too, once they had been reported to the police. They thus triggered KI's trial and the production of many legal and related texts which continues even today (and includes, of course, the present study). Indeed, in a sense it was the flyers' most resistant readers who were drawn into their orbit most effectively of all by providing KI with the public platform of a trial. That is, by responding to the flyers and taking them into new realms like the court, those who objected to them become part of their project, and even hostile criticism of KI and its productions forms part of a complex intertextuality of dissent recognizable as an Enzensbergerian 'Gegenseitigkeit' [reciprocity]. This process effects change, too, in the texts in question. For example, the May flyers turn into criminal evidence and legal documents. Conversely, the documents produced by the court are transformed. For example, the author Gerhard Zwerenz, when called upon by the communards' defence to assess the flyers, remarked that the prosecutions' documents read just like the satire they sought to convict.[9] In such ways, too, anti-authoritarian textuality could proliferate rapidly and subversively.

Finally, in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', Enzensberger argues for a literature which can break down the traditional division between theory and practice. Many of the texts considered in this book intend to take part in a larger struggle. For example, *gegen den krieg in vietnam* aims to contribute meaningfully to the anti-war movement not only discursively, but also financially, in supporting the NLF. Other texts seem to maintain a greater distance between contemplation and action, not least 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' itself. On the face of it, this essay seems to confine itself to reflecting, mostly highly critically, on supposedly revolutionary writing. Yet in line with this essay's many puzzles and contradictions, and written as it was at the height of Enzensberger's own phase of anti-authoritarian activity, it may nonetheless be drawing its reader's attention, subtly, to the counter-intuitive idea of writing itself as a form of praxis. That idea is embodied especially clearly in work like that of Eiffe, KI or Brus, for their texts do not invite, describe or comment on political action, but constitute action in themselves. The very production of graffiti is a criminal act, as is, potentially, the dissemination of flyers which seem to call for arson, or offence against public decency. Furthermore, in generating these transgressive texts, the authors or artists are taking transformative action on a subjective level too. To do so is, according to anti-authoritarian thinking, a political action in itself. These texts' potential

9 Zwerenz, unpublished report.

for challenging divisions between theory and practice is paralleled by a performative merging of mind and body. Their production was a highly material, physical process for their authors. For readers, too, responding to these texts was a physical experience. Reading a graffito in a public space, or accepting and reading a flyer involves the body in ways which draw attention to the usually ignored sensual and material dimensions of reading. For example, the text of KI's flyer 9 is set out in a spiral form. This flyer is thus likely to have been constantly turned around in order to be deciphered, in what one might call a textual, and a literal, physical revolution.

In sum, 'Gemeinplätze, die neueste Literatur betreffend' helps to identify distinctive characteristics across the texts in question. These works tend, at least partially, to undercut ideas of market value; try out alternative models of authorship and textual production; appear in marginal, periodical and ephemeral contexts and forms; value brevity, contemporary relevance and ephemerality over posterity; and disregard genre and other traditional ways of categorizing or organizing texts. They often enter public contexts and praxis, such as the auditorium, the street, the courtroom or the press; and can involve the body in important ways. Partly as a consequence, they can also be associated with genuine, sometimes spectacular, illegal or even violent 'Folgen' [consequences] in the political and social world. Many of the texts in question are striking, too, in undermining expectations of art which remains in the realm of *Geist* [intellect] and ignores popular culture and politics. They therefore expose such conventions as naturalized supports of bourgeois culture. However, they are contradictory, too, for instance in the ways in which they mix the anti-economic with the commercial, or high and popular culture.

Perhaps most importantly of all, these texts are frequently, noticeably and profoundly dialogical, often foregrounding reference to and citation from other sources and montage as they seek to incorporate many voices. This feature is linked in important ways to (although not always identical with) the appropriative, plagiaristic and transformative technique known to the Situationist International as *détournement*, and which is also a hallmark of anti-authoritarian textuality. In a related way, such texts are characteristic of the ways in which they often provoke the production of more (and equally dialogical) texts, whether sympathetic or hostile. The textuality of 1960s protest was thus mobile, moving through different authorships, texts and genres, wrong-footing the expectation that a text will stay still, attributable to one writer, within one genre, and closed-off to process. For all these reasons, anti-authoritarian texts are subject to

change, and effect change too on the texts around them. This insight invites a re-assessment of the ironically prosaic title of Enzensberger's essay, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend'. At first sight, the term 'Neueste Literatur' [Our Most Recent Literature] seems to refer to writing produced very recently, that is to say, contemporary writing. However, it could mean, too, that the kind of writing Enzensberger has in mind can be contemporary, regardless of when it was produced, because of its openness to change and process. In all these ways, such texts unsettle many of the usual distinctions and boundaries which are so reassuring and fundamental to German tradition.

While such features have been discussed here in relation to the specific texts presented in this study, they are abundantly present too in any number of other works and actions associated with anti-authoritarianism, from the riotous performances of Peter Weiss's plays around 1968, to the cabarets of Wolfgang Neuss, to engaged film like Helke Sander's *Brecht die Macht der Manipulateure [Break the Power of the Manipulators]* (1967), which merges dramatic footage with documentary, extensive citation from the press with avant-garde forms, and theoretical with practical experiment. Enzensberger's observations, made at a time when many readers could see little or no meaning or value in such work, suggest that despite some symptomatically telling blind spots, his sensitivity to the textuality of protest was acute. Indeed, the extraordinarily close consonance between his essay of November 1968 and anti-authoritarian texts which slightly predate it suggests that, rather than being primarily a manifesto for a future revolutionary literature, this work comes to life as a retrospective analysis of the anti-authoritarian movement's most striking textual practices up to late 1968. For instance, Enzensberger's explicit, positive reference to Teufel implies that in formulating his anti-authoritarian poetics, he may have had the practices of KI in particular in mind – which makes his circumlocutory approach to naming and going into detail about it all the more striking.

Thus, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' looks backwards, not forwards in time. As Klaus Briegleb points out, 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' appeared comparatively late in the development of anti-authoritarian protest, when an earlier, playful aesthetic was being replaced by a more melancholy, socially stabilizing mood and politically deadening debates about literature and politics.[10] By this time, Eiffe's main period of productivity had ended and KI was disintegrating; and the works

10 Briegleb, *1968*, for example 89, 249.

of both had been domesticated and commercialized by appearing in books. Brus and Pawla had been convicted, and even the prolific anti-war poetry was thematizing poetic crisis. Likewise, *Die Reise*, begun in 1969, soon after the publication of Enzensberger's essay, represents in part a savage critique of anti-authoritarian subjectivity and a retreat from action to contemplation. An Eliasian reading, as put forward by Chapter 5 of this study, presents a bleak scenario indeed from the point of view of a movement which had no less an aim than to use spectacular, symbolic texts and actions to change the world. It seems that, as the 1960s progressed and attitudes to protest escalated on both sides, the more positive perspectives of 1967, early 1968, or even summer 1968, when Brus's more radical action took place, and September of that year when Pawla defecated in court, are lost.

Therefore, while wishing to avoid generalization, this study traces something of a development from an optimism, in its earlier chapters, that subversive texts could effect change, to a sense of despair. This narrative correlates with another, related development which was taking place at the time. In response to a growing feeling of political defeat, an important shift was taking place among some anti-authoritarians, namely from a commitment to symbolic action to an interest in physical action, as two different events, which may both be read as responses to KI's May flyers, show. First, on 26 August, 1967, during protests at West Berlin's department stores against new, extended opening hours, some activists smoked inside the fabrics department of the luxury department store KaDeWe.[11] This event recalls KI's flyer 8 and its suggestion that newspaper readers can put an end to their ineffectual, self-absorbed compassion for the victims of the Vietnam War by lighting a cigarette in 'KaDeWe, Hertie, Woolworth, Bilka oder Neckermann' and hence, it is implied, start a fire like the one in Brussels. At KI's trial, the prosecution claimed that this incident at KaDeWe was proof that the May flyers incited arson. The protesters in question may in fact have been merely thoughtless, deliberately aiming to flout the KaDeWe's house rules or provocatively referencing the May flyers, or any combination of those possibilities. They may even have been hoping to start a real fire, although this interpretation seems more unlikely given the ostentatiously public nature of this action. But there is no evident record now, at any rate, of what the activists at KeDeWe had in mind when they lit up, and in any case the KI trial makes clear that interpreting protesters' intentions is at best an unreliable business.

11 Langhans and Teufel, *Klau mich*.

However, like the May flyers, their gesture can be read as a symbolic, provocative representation of arson rather than the real thing. Thus, this action preserves the same incendiary play between symbolic and literal meanings as the May flyers themselves.

Second, soon after KI's acquittal in 1968, anti-authoritarians including Andreas Baader and Gudrun Ensslin planted fire bombs in two department stores in Frankfurt am Main. This act of arson was even more divisive for the student movement than the actions of KI. Although none of the Frankfurt arsonists was a member either of the SDS or KI, they had close philosophical and personal links with both groups. The SDS expressly distanced itself from their act. But KI issued a characteristically more equivocal statement, on one hand distancing itself from it, but on the other asserting: 'Wir haben Verständnis für die psychische Situation, die einzelne jetzt schon zu diesem Mittel greifen läßt' [We have understanding for the psychological situation which is even now driving individuals to such methods].[12] This action can be seen as a founding act of West German left-wing terrorism, for Baader and Ensslin were, of course, soon to become notorious as founders of the group later known as the Rote Armee Fraktion.[13]

The Frankfurt arson attack seems to allude to the motif of the burning department store as Vietnam protest which had prompted the charge of incitement to arson against KI. In a TV interview shortly afterwards, Ensslin linked her critique of the Vietnam war with a critique of consumerism, arguing that capitalism enforced consumption in order to distract people from the horrors it was committing, for example in Vietnam.[14] These words seem to echo KI's views, and Ensslin's rejection of 'Reden ohne Handeln' [talk without action] recalls, too, KI's celebration of radical, unmediated action as the only meaningful form of protest. When the Frankfurt arson attack came to court, the defendants' satirical handling of their trial was in the KI tradition also.[15] The exact relationship and causality between

12 'Stellungnahme der Berliner Kommune I für den Spiegel', *Der Spiegel*, 8 April 1968, 34; quoted in Koenen, *Vesper, Ensslin, Baader*, 149.

13 Koenen, *Vesper, Ensslin, Baader*, 133–49; Aust, *Der Baader-Meinhof-Komplex*, 64–68.

14 4 November 1968, transcript in Siegfried Zielinski, 'Die Ferne der Nähe und die Nähe der Ferne: Bilder und Kommentare zum TV-Alltag der Sechziger', in *CheSchahShit: Die sechziger Jahre zwischen Cocktail und Molotow*, ed. by Eckhard Siepmann and others (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1984), 91–109 (107); compare Koenen, *Vesper, Ensslin, Baader*, 176.

15 This trial produced a closing speech by one of the defendants, Thorwald Proll, which was later published as Baader and others, *Vor einer solchen Justiz*

KI's May flyers and its trial on one hand and the Frankfurt arson attacks on the other must ultimately remain uncertain.[16] Nonetheless, it is indisputable that they form part of a complex fabric of protest which is intertextual in a wide sense. Therefore, KI's May flyers stand at an important juncture in the development of the protest movements and the shift undertaken by some activists from symbolic to violent, illegal protest.[17] Importantly, too, they are positioned at a crossroads between figurative and less powerful and more literal readings of political language.

Differently from the KaDeWe protesters of August 1968, in taking the idea of the burning department store so literally, the Frankfurt arsonists move away from KI's ambiguous critique of the language and meanings of politics, and its powerful evocation of potential, rather than actual risk. In doing so, they arguably disregard KI's major *modus operandi* of undoing boundaries between literal and figurative meanings.[18] In symbolic terms, too, compared to KI's flyers, the scope of the Frankfurt attack was limited, lacking the flyers'

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verteidigen wir uns nicht. This text makes use of theatrical and other features presumably modelled on KI's antics in court (Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*, 117–19).

16 Despite the ambiguous statement KI made following the attack, there is evidence that, when made aware in advance that the Frankfurt group was planning something on these lines, it rejected such ideas (Reimann, *Dieter Kunzelmann*, 186–87). Reimann suggests that this rejection may have been strategic, given that Langhans's and Teufel's trial was ongoing and that they would not want their potential acquittal jeopardized. Moreover, this action stands very early in the APO's partial slide towards violence, and would have seemed anathema to many activists, even those who did, later, turn to illegal activity. For an extensive discussion of the links between KI's works, the Frankfurt arson attack and the nascent RAF, see Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*, 103–30. See also Sara Hakemi, 'Das terroristische Manifest: Die RAF im Kontext avantgardistischer und neo-avantgardistischer Diskurse', in Klimke and Scharloth (eds), *1968*, 278–84; Kraushaar, *Die Bombe im Jüdischen Gemeindehaus*, 271–75.

17 See Hakemi, *Anschlag und Spektakel*, 153.

18 Holmig comments: 'Innerhalb des antiautoritären Teils der APO hatte sich eine Trennung zwischen der ästhetischen und der ethischen Sphäre vollzogen' [Within the APO's anti-authoritarian wing a division had arisen between the aesthetic and the ethical], in which primarily symbolic actions were replaced with violent ones ('Die aktionistischen Wurzeln der Studentenbewegung', 117). Hakemi argues in *Anschlag und Spektakel* that the difference between KI's actions and those of the Frankfurt group lies in the fact that the former challenges and confuses the authorities so effectively because it can never be proven to have carried out an illegal act. The latter, by contrast, does so, and so challenges the system far less, losing its literary character and any potential for subversion, wit and ambiguity.

grandiose, apocalyptic visions of many deaths by fire, and even in practical terms, the Frankfurt attack was unsophisticated, in that the perpetrators failed in their aim of setting off bombs while there was no-one in the building.

Similarly, after Pawla's trial later in 1968, the anti-authoritarian magazine *linkeck* called for an escalation of confrontation, ending its piece on this topic as follows: 'Gegen das legal bürokratisierte Terrorurteil muß uns was einfallen. Zur Anregung siehe die Adressen der Richterschweine von Berlin' [We need to think of something in response to this legally bureaucratized judgement of terror. For ideas, see the addresses of West Berlin's judge-pigs]. This implicit threat to the West Berlin judiciary points towards the possibility of a more violent, personal engagement with the Establishment. In this context, the graphics of *linkeck* are striking. The text on Pawla sports an illustration of a defecating bottom and a decorative border of faeces. That border flows across the page and joins up with a pool of blood flowing from a photograph of a street scene in which a person lies bleeding on the ground. There is no caption, but the photograph appears alongside a report on the US Black Panthers, who, it is said, may be about to launch guerrilla war; and an unrelated, gleeful report on a misunderstanding between US police officers which led to two of them being shot dead. Such items are typical of anti-authoritarian publications from later 1968, which focus increasingly on militancy, especially in the US, and violence as a means of opposing the state. Therefore, the proximity of all these items and the visual linking of the graphics in *linkeck* indicate that this point in 1968 saw shifts from symbolic action, to thinking about non-figurative, quite literal violence.

The mood expressed by *linkeck*'s call to action was seemingly followed by some anti-authoritarians. One of them, Michael 'Bommi' Baumann wrote in 1975 that Pawla's case motivated him and others who eventually formed the violent, underground group Bewegung 2. Juni [Movement of 2 June], to become involved in the contemporary *Justizkampagne* [Justice Campaign]:

> Da hat gerade K. Pawla gesessen, der hat 10 Monate Knast gekriegt, weil er vor dem Richtertisch sich ausgeschissen hat und die Akten genommen und sich den Arsch damit abgewischt hat. Dafür haben sie ihm 10 Monate gegeben, und der Richter war ein alter SS-Obersturmbannführer, da sind wir denn eingestiegen, daß wir dem dann auch eine Bombe vor die Tür gepackt haben. Die ist denn hoch und hat die ganze Tür kaputt gemacht. Das waren denn die Anfänge. (70)

> [K. Pawla had just been inside, he was given ten months because he had a good shit in front of the bench and took the files and wiped his arse with them. They gave him ten months for that and the judge was an old SS *Obersturmbannführer*, so then we got involved by sticking a bomb on his doorstep. And then it went off and trashed the whole door. So that was the beginning.]

Baumann identifies this action as an origin of the urban terrorism which was to become such a traumatic successor to the anti-authoritarianism of 1967–68. Thus, by late 1968, earlier, more utopian anti-authoritarian strategies seemed to be overshadowed by a new kind of practice, emerging from growing despondence, which moved away from the figurative and ambiguous.

'ein Moment, und wärs das winzigste, von Zukunft': Past and Present in Anti-Authoritarian Texts

Briegleb considers that the non-utopian tone of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', and the inability of a truly radical literature as imagined by Enzensberger to flourish more fully around 1968 are due to the shadow of the German past, which remained by and large unaddressed and unresolved in and around the protest movements.[19] Indeed, this theme is barely mentioned in Enzensberger's essay, which harks back instead, in classic anti-authoritarian manner, to the pre-Nazi era and seeks to link it directly to the present. Supporting Briegleb's argument, this omission in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend' of significant discussion of the past could be counted as another of the essay's blind spots. It is for this reason, Briegleb argues, that the prospects for any revolutionary writing, in late 1968, can be only 'bruchstückhaft' [fragmentary], 'vorläufig' [temporary] and 'vereinzelt' [isolated] as Enzensberger puts it (197). Thus, the prospects for 'ein Moment, und wärs das winzigste, von Zukunft' [a moment, even the tiniest, of future] in literature can be evoked only in a bleak conditional tense.

The contention that anti-authoritarian writing is trapped in a fraught relationship with the past is borne out in this study. Read symptomatically, some of the Vietnam poems replicate conservative topoi of the 1940s and 1950s around the themes of femininity, conflict and occupation. Even as they give voice to a sense of generational conflict, some also seem to repeat tropes in post-war discourse whose effect was to erase the historical victims of the Nazi past and

19 Briegleb, 'Literatur in der Revolte', 45.

replace them with an unchallenging, gratifying image of German victimhood which serves to protect a benevolent image of the older generation. The work of KI is more immediately disturbing in the open (if ambiguous and perhaps ironic) manner in which it deploys the topos of the burning department store so vehemently used in National Socialist discourse. Eiffe's insistent use of powerful masculine images, from the Mayor of Hamburg to Jesus, Adolf Hitler and Heinrich Lübke, plays with an implicit, unsettling endorsement of patriarchal images and traditions. And in *Die Reise*, the narrator's relationship to the Nazi past as represented by his father is an important theme: on one hand he bears a (sometimes murderous) hatred towards his father, but on the other he loves him, too, and his attitude and behaviour towards his Jewish companion on his journey is suffused with suspicion and prejudice. Of course, Vesper himself did not necessarily share his narrator's stance uncritically; but the acuity with which *Die Reise* pinpoints an unresolved attitude towards the past in the anti-authoritarian psyche is striking.

Therefore, many of the works discussed in this study indicate that the supposedly revolutionary literature of the 1960s was troubled at a profound level by conflicts over the Nazi and post-Nazi past and their discourses to which their authors would have been exposed at a formative age, and which they would, as adults and on a conscious level, no doubt fully reject. At a very deep level, however, anti-authoritarian texts express the persistent influence of, or even an attachment to, such discourses. While this theme tends, with exceptions, to find latent rather than manifest expression, its presence is haunting and insistent. As such, it may have contributed to the circumlocutions and silences in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', for example its mysteriously indirect approach to KI. It has been argued above that this approach is part of a strategy to shield the authors of genuinely subversive anti-authoritarian practice from an appropriative public gaze. But equally, Enzensberger's near-silence about them may also express unease at their troubling use of the Nazi past. An apprehension at some level of this conflict and contradiction may help to account for the limited understanding and posterity of anti-authoritarian works more broadly, too, both at the time and later. That theme of an unresolved past features strongly in the present study too.

'um uns der Widerschein': Ending with/in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*

As the sixth chapter of this study has argued, the first of Sebald's major literary prose works to be published, *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, can be read, despite its temporal discontinuity with and apparent formal and thematic differences from other anti-authoritarian writings, as a belated, uncanny manifestation of the poetics of protest. Correspondingly (if paradoxically), *Schwindel. Gefühle.* can be seen, too, as an example of Enzensberger's 'Neueste Literatur' [Most Recent Literature]. Initially, *Schwindel. Gefühle.* seems far removed from Enzensberger's idea of revolutionary textuality, in that it is indisputably a commercially published, single-authored book, and indisputably high literature to boot. Nonetheless, this work shares Enzensberger's critique of capitalist West Germany and problematizes the idea of the Olympian author in its complex play with narrators and narrative technique. It brings heterogeneous texts and text types together, from the richly documentary to the sub-canonical and historically marginal to the avant-garde and highly literary; and, perhaps not coincidentally, the voice of Kafka is powerful in both Enzensberger's essay and Sebald's book. Most strikingly, *Schwindel. Gefühle.* presents an example of 'Gegenseitigkeit' [reciprocity] in that it is hallmarked by a remarkably powerful and ostentatious intertextuality which allows many voices to speak through and beyond the narrator's, while also being transformed by it in a literary *détournement*. This kind of intertextual and allusive play makes Sebald and his intertexts powerfully contemporary, in Enzensberger's novel sense of 1968. *Schwindel. Gefühle.* cannot be characterized as a revitalization of the anti-authoritarian project, or as a way out of its aporia. Yet it can, with more certainty, be said to offer a critical account of the way in which the past permeated the anti-authoritarian present, and it is for this reason that the present study concludes with an account of this work's final pages.

The final pages of *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, like the closing section of 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', resist closure. As such, this work seems to echo the sense of incomplete resolution associated with anti-authoritarian texts in the discussion above. The last of the book's four discrete sections, entitled 'Il ritorno in patria', describes the latter stages of a journey undertaken by the narrator in summer and autumn 1987 from Vienna through various destinations in Northern Italy, Austria and Germany. Most of this journey is described in the second narrative of *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, 'All'estero',

and might be described as a *dérive*, or drift, in a Situationist sense, in an allusion to the practice of wandering apparently aimlessly in search of insight and experience.[20] 'Il ritorno in patria' focuses on the last extended stop on this itinerary, a visit to the narrator's childhood home in the Alpine village of W. in South Germany. Eventually, the narrator leaves W. for the 'meist grau überwolkte Grafschaft' (41) [county which was almost always under grey skies (33)] where he lives in England.

The narrator travels by train through a Germany which is alien and repellent to him, and then by rail (and presumably ferry, though that part of the journey is not mentioned) to Liverpool Street station in London. From Liverpool Street, he visits the National Gallery before walking back to the station to start the final leg of his journey home. Exhausted from a two-day journey, he dozes off in the train from Liverpool Street and dreams that he is crossing the Alps on foot, finding himself in a terrible, stony landscape from which all natural life is expunged. His path is bordered on one side by 'eine wahrhaft schwindelerregende Tiefe' (298) [truly vertiginous depths (262)]; he comments: '[E]s war mir bewußt, daß ich überhaupt noch nie in eine solche Tiefe hinabgeschaut habe' (298) [I knew that I had never gazed down into such chasms before (262)]. The narrator is also aware that another mountain range looms beyond the one in which he finds himself, and that he will never be able to cross it.

The words of Samuel Pepys, a copy of whose diary the narrator has just bought in London, and begun to read, then begin to echo through his dream – specifically, Pepys's descriptions of the Great Fire of London in September 1666.[21] This account describes horrific events and unnatural crimes taking place during the fire, and having to escape its 'grausig blutig böses Lohen' (298) [gruesome, evil, bloody flame (262)] in a boat on the Thames. Sebald's last lines read as follows and appear to cite Pepys's diary: 'Wir fliehen auf das Wasser. Um uns der Widerschein, und vor dem tiefen Himmelsdunkel in einem Bogen hügelan die ausgezackte Feuerwand bald eine Meile breit. Und andern Tags ein stiller Aschenregen – westwärts, bis über Windsor Park hinaus' (299) [We flee onto the water. The glare around us everywhere, and yonder, before the darkened skies, in one great

20 I am grateful to the students in my final-year seminar on W.G. Sebald at UCL in 2013–14 for their insightful discussion of this text.

21 While Pepys is known to posterity as a Londoner, he had family roots in East Anglia and so takes his place among the East Anglian writers who interested Sebald (Samuel Pepys, *The Diaries of Samuel Pepys: A Selection*, ed. by Robert Latham (London: Penguin, 2003), 1044–45).

arc the jagged wall of fire. And, the day after, a silent rain of ashes, westward, as far as Windsor Park (263)].[22] At this point the narrative peters out altogether. Therefore, the travels of Sebald's narrator do not culminate in the kind of triumphant homecoming apparently promised by the narrative's title, 'Il ritorno in patria', which echoes that of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* (1639–40). Rather, the narrator's long journey remains incomplete, and ends enigmatically with an attempted escape onto water from the Great Fire of London, the destination and outcome of which are uncertain.

Other unfinished journeys feature in these pages, too. For example, the narrator considers the commuters with whom he shares the afternoon train, 'die am frühen Morgen alle frisch geputzt und gestriegelt aufgebrochen waren, jetzt aber gleich einer geschlagenen Armee in ihren Sitzen hingen und, ehe sie ihren Zeitungen sich zuwandten, mit blind bewegungslosen Augen auf die Vorhöfe der Metropole hinausstarrten' (296) [who had all set off early that morning neatly turned out and spruced up, but were now slumped in their seats like a defeated army and, before they turned to their newspapers, were staring out at the desolate forecourts of the metropolis with fixed unseeing eyes (260)]. This description hints (albeit with wry Sebaldian irony) at an endlessly recurring, Sisyphean journey, since these commuters must travel to work in the City every day. Given that *Schwindel. Gefühle.*'s opening narrative, 'Beyle oder das merckwürdige Faktum der Liebe' [Beyle, or Love is a Madness Most Discreet] treats the horrors of the Napoleonic War in the Alps, this description of the City workers as a defeated army, condemned to return again and again to the site of their defeat, has an ominous edge. And the narrator's dream of failing to cross the dead Alps reiterates not only the theme of Napoleon's horrific Alpine crossing in 'Beyle oder das merckwürdige Faktum der Liebe', but also the topos of the inconclusive Alpine journey which recurs in each of the four narratives in *Schwindel. Gefühle.*

22 In the diary passage which comes closest to Sebald's account, Pepys writes of the 2 September 1666 that he, his wife and others went to observe the fire, first from the river and then from an alehouse on Bankside. Thence they saw 'the fire grow; and as it grow [*sic*] darker, [the fire] appeared more and more and in Corners and upon steeples and between churches and houses, as far as we could see up the hill of the City, in a most horrid malicious bloody flame, not like the fine flame of an ordinary fire'. When it is almost dark they see 'the fire as only one entire arch of fire from this to the other side of the bridge, and in a bow up the hill, for an arch of above a mile long. It made me weep to see it. The churches, houses, and all on fire and flaming at once, and a horrid noise the flames made, and the cracking of houses at their ruine' (Pepys, *The Diaries*, 662).

Sebald makes important intertextual reference in *Schwindel. Gefühle.* to a character from fragmentary writings by Kafka, namely Gracchus the hunter, who, after his death, is unable to enter the afterlife and so is condemned to travel the world in a boat. This experience of Gracchus is neatly thematized by the unfinished texts in which he appears. It may be for this reason that Sebald's concluding pages, with their preoccupation with the unfinished journey, reference Gracchus's endless journey. Before falling asleep, the narrator notices buddleia plants growing out of the walls of Liverpool Street station, and is reminded that during the previous summer, when he first set off on his Continental journey, he may have observed 'einen Zitronenfalter' (296) [a yellow brimstone butterfly] fluttering between them, 'bald oben, bald unten, bald links, immer in Bewegung' [first at the top, then at the bottom, now on the left, constantly moving (260)].[23] This remark cites Gracchus's own description of his posthumous situation and inability to reach the other world in Kafka's story: 'Ich bin […] immer auf der großen Treppe, die hinaufführt. Auf dieser unendlichen weiten Freitreppe treibe ich mich herum, bald oben, bald unten, bald rechts, bald links, immer in Bewegung. Aus dem Jäger ist ein Schmetterling geworden' (77) [I am for ever […] on the great stair that leads up to it. On that infinitely wide and spacious stair I clamber about, sometimes up, sometimes down, sometimes on the right, sometimes on the left, always in motion. The hunter has been turned into a butterfly].[24]

The butterfly seems to stand, here, for Gracchus's restless spirit, and so both Sebald and Kafka play on the traditional significance of the butterfly or moth as a symbol of the soul which here cannot find a home.[25] In another parallel between Kafka's texts on Gracchus and *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, according to Sebald's dreaming narrator, one detail seen during the Great Fire is: 'Zu Hunderten die toten Tauben auf dem Pflaster, das Federkleid versengt' (298) [Pigeons lay destroyed upon the pavements, in hundreds, their feathers singed

23 I am grateful to Antonia Tietze for bringing this allusion to my attention.

24 Kafka, 'Der Jäger Gracchus', 77; 'The Hunter Gracchus', 107.

25 Other revenants in *Schwindel. Gefühle.* include villagers from W. and the poet Dante Alighieri, whom the narrator spots on the street in Vienna in 'All'estero' (43). Later, on the Heidelberg-Bonn train he sees Elizabeth, daughter of James VI of Scotland and I of England, who was Electress Palatine in Heidelberg in the seventeenth century and Queen of Bohemia for one winter, and hence known as the 'Winterkönigin' [Winter Queen] (289–91). While these figures, too, may be condemned, like Gracchus, to wander the world after death, their trajectories, unlike his, touch the narrator's more tangentially.

and burned (262)].[26] In Kafka's tale, Gracchus's arrival is heralded by magical pigeons.

Thus, as on previous stages of the narrator's journey, he is accompanied by Gracchus, and indeed identified with him. Both Gracchus and Sebald's narrator want to climb an insurmountable height, in the former case, the 'große Treppe, die hinaufführt' [the great stair that leads up] and in the latter, the mountain ranges in the dream. In addition, on his way back to Liverpool Street from the National Gallery, Sebald's narrator considers taking the Underground to shorten his walk. He enters an unnamed station on the western edge of the City, where he has never seen anyone get on or off a train. He notes that in order to travel:

> ich […] brauchte […] bloß einzutreten in die dunkle Vorhalle, in der außer einer sehr schwarzen, in einer Art Schalterhäuschen sitzenden Negerfrau nicht ein lebendiges Wesen zu sehen war. Vielleicht erübrigt sich die Festellung, daß ich letztlich doch nicht in diese Untergrundstation hineingegangen bin. Zwar stand ich eine beträchtliche Zeit sozusagen auf der Schwelle, wechselte auch einige Blicke mit der dunklen Frau, aber den entscheidenden Schritt wagte ich nicht zu tun. (295)
>
> [I had only to enter the dark ticket hall where, apart from a black woman sitting in her inspector's box, there was no sign of life. Although I stood there for a considerable time, on the very brink so to speak, and even exchanged a few glances with the black inspector, I did not dare to take the final step. (259)]

The forbidding entrance to this eerie Underground station is reminiscent of the entrance to the underworld as described in Dante Alghieri's *Divine Comedy* (c. 1307–21).[27] Yet the fact that the narrator

26 Pepys writes: '[T]he poor pigeons […] were loath to leave their houses, but hovered about the windows and balconies till they were some of them burned, their wings, and fell down' (*The Diaries*, 660).

27 This parallel is strengthened, for example, by the earlier allusion to Dante in 'All'estero', the fact that both the narrator and the historical Dante find refuge in Verona during difficult times, and the narrator's dream in 'Il ritorno in patria'. In the opening of the *Inferno*, the poet is prevented by wild animals from scaling a mountain to reach light and salvation, and so must travel to his destination through Hell. In Sebald's narrator's dream, there is also an unattainable goal over a mountain, which he does not reach, perhaps because he cannot face taking a frightening alternative path like Dante's poet. Dante's wild animals include a lion, recalling the lion of Venice and the fact that in 'All'estero', Sebald's narrator was driven from that city by fear of violence. There is no obvious equivalent in Dante to Sebald's loaded description of a silent, 'dark' woman (rendered, less strikingly, in Hulse's translation as 'black'), except perhaps the apparently

declines to enter the station in favour of continuing his earthly journey aligns him with Gracchus, who never reaches the underworld either. Thus, the last pages of *Schwindel. Gefühle.* are, like the text as a whole, full of images of compulsive, recurrent or unfinished journeys which parallel and amplify the text's own open ending.

These journeys suggest unfinished psychological business for the narrator.[28] For instance, his aim in W. is to seek clarity about his childhood. He discusses his memories with his old acquaintance, Lukas Ambroser:

> [I]ch sagte, daß sich mir im Kopf mit der Zeit vieles zusammengereimt habe, daß die Dinge aber dadurch nicht klarer, sondern rätselhafter geworden seien. Je mehr Bilder aus der Vergangenheit ich versammle, sagte ich, desto unwahrscheinlicher wird es mir, daß die Vergangenheit auf diese Weise sich abgespielt haben soll, denn nichts an ihr sei normal zu nennen, sondern es sei das allermeiste lächerlich, und wenn es nicht lächerlich sei, dann sei es zum Entsetzen. (214)
>
> [I said that over the years I had puzzled out a good deal in my own mind, but in spite of that, far from becoming clearer, things now appeared to me more incomprehensible than ever. The more images I gathered from the past, I said, the more unlikely it seemed to me that the past had actually happened in this or that way, for nothing about it could be called normal: most of it was absurd, and if not absurd, then appalling. (212)]

But this journey into memory remains inconclusive, for after a few weeks in W. the narrator reaches a point in the recording of his childhood at which 'ich entweder immerfort weitermachen oder aber abbrechen mußte' (287) [I either had to continue forever or break off (252)], and so decides to leave. Hence, this process has produced no closure for him either.[29] The image of gazing into shocking depths on an impossible journey therefore represents the still unplumbed

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dissimilar, vociferous Charon, who ferries souls into the Underworld. The 'Zitronenfalter' [yellow brimstone butterfly] which the narrator may or may not have seen at Liverpool Street also evokes the afterlife, for brimstone is associated with a Christian Hell.

28 The narrator's journey of 1987 begins as an attempt to retrace and make sense of an earlier journey of October 1980, also described in 'All'estero', during which he increasingly experienced feelings of anxiety and persecution. The open ending of the narrative about the 1987 journey suggests that it did not allow him fully to come to terms with that of 1980.

29 This departure takes place 'Anfang Dezember' (286) [the beginning of December (252)], that is, on the anniversary of the fateful encounter the narrator witnesses between Schlag and Romana, implying that he is still in flight from it.

depths of memory.[30] And the fact that this image occurs in a dream is itself significant for, as Sigmund Freud asserted, dreams are the royal road to the Unconscious, where forbidden material dwells, and so the narrator's dreamed journey therefore is associated with repression.[31]

The apparently unconnected allusions to Pepys's diary at the end of *Schwindel. Gefühle.* illuminate this interpretation further. The book's final passage consists of fragmentary, loosely associated recollections of the diary's contents. While it is unexceptional that a dreamer should recall her or his reading in an idiosyncratic way, the particular changes Sebald makes to Pepys's record are telling. In general, Pepys's account, while immediate and emotive, is more detailed and complex and less dramatic and apocalyptic than Sebald's. Sebald's text is also more conventionally literary, and indeed takes its place in German poetic tradition, echoing as it does very precisely images and formulations from canonical poems like Andreas Gryphius's sonnet on the horrors of the Thirty Years War, 'Tränen des Vaterlands Anno 1636' [Tears of the Fatherland 1636] (1636) and Johann Wolfgang Goethe's 'Auf dem See' [On the Lake] (1775).[32] In his diary, Pepys writes of taking a boat on the river several times during the Great

30 See my argument in Chapter 6 that Kafka's Gracchus stands in *Schwindel. Gefühle.* for the uncanny return of a repressed past.

31 '*Die Traumdeutung aber ist die Via regia zur Kenntnis des Unbewußten im Seelenleben*' [*The interpretation of dreams is the royal road to a knowledge of the unconscious activities of the mind*] (Sigmund Freud, *Die Traumdeutung* (1899), in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. by Marie Bonaparte and others, 18 vols (London: Imago, 1942), II/III: 613). The translation used here is Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. by James Strachey (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), 608.

32 Sebald's Great Fire echoes Gryphius's apocalyptic war scenario, which uses similar images of fiery urban destruction and ungodly acts during the Thirty Years War. In the context of *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, it is perhaps no coincidence that that war was triggered by the coronation in Prague of the Winter King and Queen, the latter of whom the narrator has already met on his journey to England. See note 25. Goethe's poem describes a peaceful boat trip on a lake, but his account shares much with Sebald's description of the Great Fire. For example, Goethe's lines 'Und Berge, wolkig himmelan, | begegnen unserm Lauf' [And mountains meet our onward course, | cloud-clad into the sky] are recalled in the view from Sebald's boat: 'vor dem tiefen Himmelsdunkel in einem Bogen hügelan die ausgezackte Feuerwand' [before the darkened skies, in one great arc the jagged wall of fire]. While the English translations used here do not make the consonance between the imagery and lexis of the two texts by Goethe and Sebald very visible, they are striking in the original, for instance in the vision of moving towards an obstacle in the boat, and the parallels between the curious words 'himmelan' (Goethe) and 'hügelan' (Sebald). Goethe's poem ends with mist covering up the distant view, while Sebald's closes with the similar, yet more malign visual effect of a rain of ashes reaching into the distance (Johann

Fire, either in order to see the fire better or to transport his possessions to safety. So unlike in *Schwindel. Gefühle*., these forays onto water are not undertaken in order to escape, and Pepys and those around him never seem to be in physical danger themselves. Furthermore, most of the shocking events Sebald's narrator describes, such as looting in Lincoln's Inn, evergreen trees burning in a churchyard, the opening of Bishop Braybrooke's grave, the explosion in the powder store and the silent rain of ashes reaching as far as Windsor Park are absent from Pepys's account.[33]

Thus, these specific changes which Sebald makes to Pepys's account point towards a particular interpretation of the unfinished journeys in *Schwindel. Gefühle*. Given Sebald's well-known concern with the Nazi era, the Second World War and the Holocaust, and their meanings for post-war West German culture, it is difficult not to relate his descriptions of a burning city, looting and a rain of ashes to the destruction of the War and to Nazi atrocities. In context, Sebald's expression 'Um uns der Widerschein' [The [reflected] glare around us everywhere], which has no equivalent in Pepys's diary and is used to describe light from the Great Fire reflecting all around, is interesting, drawing attention as it does to the idea of one thing casting light onto another.[34] Here, the calamities of the Nazi years are reflected, or projected, onto the Great Fire, in a *chiaroscuro* which is 'grausig blutig' [gruesomely bloody] and 'böse' [evil]: not the light of clarity and understanding, but of nightmare. So in Sebald, just as in the 1960s writing, we find a complex oscillation between different levels of figurative meaning.

In the setting of *Schwindel. Gefühle.*, the final, desperate attempt to flee the Great Fire on a boat seems doomed to fail in part because a fiery past rages within the narrator himself. A few pages previously, he describes his childhood diphtheria, possibly a reaction to traumatic events he has witnessed, and of its causing 'offene Brandflächen in Innern meines Halses' (284) [scorched patches inside my throat (250)]. While the child recovers, it seems that symbolically there is a psychosomatic, life-threatening conflagration within him in his

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Wolfgang von Goethe, *Selected Poetry*, ed. and trans. by David Luke (London: Libris, 1999), 26–27).

33 A Lord Braybrooke was Pepys's first editor (Pepys, *The Diaries*, xi). The rain of ashes links the two parts of the narrator's dream, for the way it coats the earth in dead, mineral substance echoes the previous image of the lifeless, stony mountain.

34 Sebald, *Vertigo*, 263. Hulse's translation of 'Widerschein' as 'glare' does not capture the specific meaning of the German term, which is 'reflected light'.

earliest years, and the recurrence of fire imagery at the end of the text suggests that it can never be put out. Moreover, Sebald's allusions to conflicts and tragedies reaching as far back as 1510, when the 'Unglückschronik von W.' (273) [chronicle of the calamities which had befallen W. over the ages (240)], which the narrator studies at school, begins, insert his preoccupations into a historical continuum of destruction, with no foreseeable end. Thus, the narrator's unfinished journeys in *Schwindel. Gefühle.* can be read as failed attempts to flee the past. In the last analysis, then, *Schwindel. Gefühle.* reiterates not only some formal characteristics of anti-authoritarian textuality, but – albeit far more knowingly – its ambiguous relationship to German history, in that it is both haunted by the past, and yet unable to come to terms with it. Remarkably, key topoi used in this respect both in the 1960s texts and by Sebald are identical. Both project a 'Widerschein' [[reflected] glare] of the 1930s and 1940s onto images of burning cities in other times – the burning of contemporary Vietnam or Brussels or Berlin in the former case, and of a past London in the latter.

Schwindel. Gefühle. demonstrates that the sensibility normally associated with the protest movements of the 1960s was far from extinguished in 1990.[35] Among other things, this insight highlights the inadequacy of associating the West German student revolts with one year, such as '1968', or any other limited range of dates, such as 1966–69 and so on. To do so cuts them off from the historical continuity emphasized by Sebald, and to a great extent neutralizes their complex meanings, for these are on one hand rooted in the past, and on the other reach (far) into the future. *Schwindel. Gefühle.* is therefore an unsettling document because its open ending and unfinished journeys hint that '1968' and what it represents, including its inequities, contradictions, prejudices and incomplete, highly ambiguous reckoning with the shades of the Nazi years, were by no means laid to rest by the end of the 1960s or the 1970s. This text disturbs the supposed peace of the post-revolt era, represented in its closing pages by the images, so distressing to the narrator, of 'das mir von jeher unbegreifliche, bis in den letzten Winkel aufgeräumte und begradigte deutsche Land' (287) [the German countryside, which has always been alien to me, straightened out and tidied up as it is to the last square inch and corner (253)], and in which everything is '[auf] eine ungute Art befriedet und betäubt' [appeased and numbed in some sinister way]. The narrator goes on to note 'das Gefühl der Betäubung erfaßte bald auch mich' (288) [this sense of numbness soon

35 See Morgan, 'The Sign of Saturn'.

came over me also (253)], in a way which underlines his debilitating failure to escape or come to terms with the country's past.

In literary terms too, *Schwindel. Gefühle.* is disturbing, because it undermines the traditional, and culturally and politically stabilizing, belief in the separation of art and politics. That belief was, as Enzensberger points out in 'Gemeinplätze, die Neuste Literatur betreffend', central to the repression of the Nazi past in the post-war years and the perpetuation of the political *status quo*. Since then it has been highly influential (and detrimental) for the reception of anti-authoritarian textual culture. Thus, read alongside 'Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend', *Schwindel. Gefühle.* is, in part, such an important – and contemporary – text because it shows that the disreputable years of protest are part and parcel of German high culture. Or, put another way, it shows that anti-authoritarian politics persist in supposedly high art; and that conversely, high art is quite at home in revolt.

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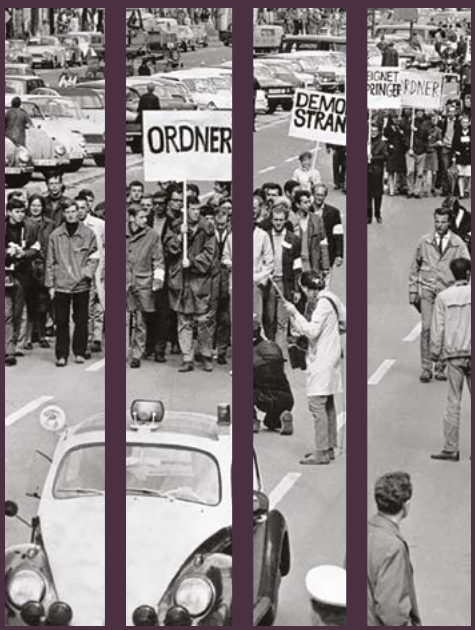
The 1960s protest movements marked an astonishing moment for West Germany. They developed a political critique, but are above all distinctive for their overwhelming emphasis on culture and the symbolic. In particular, reading and writing had unique prestige for protesters, who produced an extraordinary textual culture which was by turns polemical, witty, provocative, reflective and offensive. The avant-garde roots of anti-authoritarianism are often as palpable within it as a debt to high literature; but due to its sometimes (apparently) vehemently anti-literary tone, it is frequently overlooked by traditional criticism.

This volume outlines an anti-authoritarian poetics by presenting close readings of some emblematic texts, many of them forgotten, others better known. The study embeds its analyses in historical, cultural, political and aesthetic contexts, in order to illuminate some representative moments and preoccupations in protest writing, and it argues that this prolific textual culture exists in a complex tension between utopian impulses and the shadows of the past.



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