FROM THE 'DEATH OF LITERATURE' TO THE 'NEW SUBJECTIVITY':

EXAMINING THE INTERACTION OF UTOPIA AND NOSTALGIA IN PETER SCHNEIDER'S *LENZ*, HANS MAGNUS ENZENSBERGER'S *DER KURZE SOMMER DER ANARCHIE*, AND BERNWARD VESPER'S *DIE REISE*

Thomas J.A. Krüger

Department of German Studies
McGill University, Montreal
August, 2008

A thesis submitted to McGill University in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This project seeks to clarify the complex interrelation of utopia and nostalgia in post World War II German literature, as the nineteen sixties student protest movement develops into what has become known as the 'New Subjectivity' of the nineteen seventies. The introductory chapter frames the historical context of this development, problematizing the idea of '1968' as its climax or turning point, while establishing the interrelationship of the concepts of utopia and nostalgia as the principal methodological and interpretative foil for the literary readings that follow. In three subsequent chapters I propose close readings of this theme in Peter Schneider's *Lenz* (1973), Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* (1972), and Berward Vesper's *Die Reise* (1977). These, I argue, texts demonstrate a trajectory of utopian thinking toward nostalgic reflection that exposes a dialectical tension between utopia and nostalgia. Through their literary texts as well as their essays in one another's periodical publications, such as the *Voltaire Flugschriften* and *Kursbuch*, the three authors address this tension as a common experience of the transitional period between the sixties student protest movement and the dawn of the 'New Subjectivity' of the seventies. I read *Lenz* as road narrative that mobilizes the metaphor of the road as the locus of the utopia-nostalgia dynamic; the road is a transitional space that embodies the uncertainty of the post-revolutionary moment when reflective nostalgia seems to replace the disillusioned utopia. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* engages the literary

discourses of utopia and nostalgia via the documentary form, after its pre-1968 heyday, confronting nostalgia as a return to and a yearning for the forgotten history of the utopian revolutionary movement of the Spanish Civil War. In my final chapter, a reading of *Die Reise*, I argue that Vesper's vast, autobiographically inspired 'novel-essay' testifies to a profoundly nostalgic impulse always-already present in the utopian project of the left, thus begetting a new form of 'subjective' rebellion that informs his text as a constant process of (literary) resistance. This model of rebellion resonates with my more general theoretical framing of the dynamic of utopia and nostalgia as a 'dialectical' process wherein neither notion supplants the other, but rather – as with Adorno and Horkheimer's dialectic of enlightenment – ceaselessly engender one another.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce travail se propose de clarifier l'interrelation complexe entre utopie et nostalgie dans la littérature allemande d'après-guerre, lorsque le mouvement estudiantin de protestation des années soixante se transmue en ce qu'on nommera la 'nouvelle subjectivité' des années soixante-dix. Notre introduction reconstruit le contexte historique de ce développement, contestant la notion que '1968' en constitue le sommet ou la péripétie, et présente l'interrelation des concepts d'utopie et de nostalgie comme cadre à la fois méthodologique et interprétatif des lectures littéraires qui suivent. Au cours des trois chapitres suivants, nous proposons des lectures détaillées de ce thème chez Peter Schneider (*Lenz*, 1973), Hans Magnus Enzensberger (*Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, 1972) et Bernward Vesper (*Die Reise*, 1977). Ces trois textes dessinent une trajectoire de la pensée utopiste vers une réflexion nostalgique, exposant ainsi la tension dialectique entre utopie et nostalgie. A travers leur production littéraire ainsi que les essais publiés dans leurs revues respectives, telles *Voltaire Flugschriften* et *Kursbuch*, les trois auteurs en question traitent et thématisent cette tension en tant qu'expérience collective de la période transitoire entre le mouvement contestataire des années soixante et l'aube de la 'nouvelle subjectivité' des années soixante-dix. Nous proposons d'abord une lecture de *Lenz* en termes de récit de la 'grande route' (*road narrative*), mobilisant la métaphore de la route comme lieu de la dynamique utopie-nostalgie ; la route est un espace transitoire incarnant l'incertitude de la

période postrévolutionnaire où la réflexion nostalgique semble remplacer l'utopie désabusée. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* déploie à son tour des discours utopiques et nostalgiques à travers le genre documentaire, bien après sa grande période d'avant '68, et aborde la nostalgie en tant que retour ou aspiration à l'histoire oubliée du mouvement révolutionnaire utopique de la guerre civile espagnole. Notre dernier chapitre, une lecture de *Die Reise*, propose que le grand roman-essai d'inspiration autobiographique de Vesper témoigne d'une pulsion profondément nostalgique toujours-déjà présente au sein du projet utopique de la gauche allemande, engendrant ainsi une nouvelle forme de révolte 'subjective', laquelle travaille son texte sous forme de procès constant de résistance (littéraire). Ce modèle de la révolte renforce nos propos théoriques plus généraux, selon lesquels la dynamique entre utopie et nostalgie se réinscrit comme processus 'dialectique' où aucune des deux ne subvertit l'autre, mais où – suivant la dialectique des 'Lumières' chez Adorno et Horkheimer – elles s'engendrent perpétuellement l'une l'autre.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like, first, to thank the department of German Studies at McGill University. The support I have received from faculty members and my graduate student colleagues has been a great motivator for the critical reflection on and execution of this project. Secondly, I must express my deep appreciation to the German Foreign Academic Exchange Service, the DAAD, who granted me their doctoral research fellowship, held in Berlin in 2006. Without this support I would not have been able to conduct the archival research so key to my study. Moreover, the experience of working in several different archives and interacting with scholars in Germany working in the same field was invaluable. Next, my thanks to the Faculty of Arts at McGill University for granting me the Arts Insights dissertation completion award, which provided me with the means and motivation to complete my thesis project in a timely fashion. I must also thank my parents, siblings and friends outside McGill for their constant and unwaivering support; they heard much about this project and often compelled me to think more constructively about it. Finally, my greatest and sincerest thanks to Karin Bauer, my supervisor. Her patience, critical eye and formidable intellect were indispensable as we forged this project.

INTRODUCTION

Framing a Historical and Methodological Context

This project eplores the interrelation utopia and nostalgia during the transitional period in post World War II German literature, which saw the nineteen sixties student protest movement develop into what became known as the 'New Subjectivity' of the nineteen seventies. At the heart of this study are close readings of Peter Schneider's *Lenz* (1973), Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* (1972), and Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise* (1977), for these text elicit a new understanding of the development, demonstrating that utopia and nostalgia have always been in constant 'dialectical' tension. It is the task of this introduction to frame the historical and methodological context within which this dialectic becomes apparent, questioning the accepted readings of literary history that cast '1968' as a narrative climax followed by a period of pure disillusionment. While there was clearly a progressive political movement that drove utopian yearning during the sixties, and was sobered by the failure of the anticipated revolution, closer examination of literary production from the transitional period shows how putatively subjective – and thus anti-utopian – nostalgia has always been present in the utopian concept. Moreover, nostalgia has itself always had a strong utopian component. It is this tension and the stakes in literature which this project attempts to clarify.

The focus in the present chapter is on the years roughly spanning from the Grand Coalition government of 1966-69 to the mid nineteen seventies, the pre-dawn of the 'German Autumn' (*Deutscher Herbst*) of 1977, i.e., the peak of left-wing terrorism and the deaths of Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin and Jan-Carl Raspe in the Stuttgart-Stammheim prison. While a discussion of terrorism and the 'German Autumn' falls outside the scope of this project, this chapter discusses some of the same key issues of the time that drove the West German left-wing terrorists. The passage of the very controversial Emergency Laws (*Notstandsgesetze*) in May 1968, and the passage of the criminal code (*StGB*) paragraph 88a (the so-called *Maulkorbgesetz* or muzzling law) of May 1976,[1] represent bookends, of sorts, to a set of issues around the state and oppositional movements that did not necessarily lead to terror but more broadly to a discourse of protest, rebellion, reflection, and disillusionment. The Emergency Laws inspired political resistance, some of which took violent form, and the *Maulkorbgesetz* – a law that criminalized written support of violent opposition to the state – represents the juridical and political response to the support of violent resistance and a notably ambiguous legal phrasing with direct consequences for literary production.[2] The climate of protest and punishment that emerges in the

---

[1]In his paper, "88a StGB in Aktion. Über Leben, Geburt und Sterben eines Maulkorb-Paragraphen" (2007), found at: www.opus-bayern.de/bib-info/volltexte/2007/374/pdf/feest.pdf, Johannes Feest-Hilgenreiner gives a highly informative background to the history of this change in the Criminal Code (*Strafgesetzbuch*) of the Federal Republic in the context of the evolution and passage of the emergency laws. He also notes that 88a was repealed by 1981.

[2]It was under 88a that Michael "Bommi" Baumann's autobiographical account of life as an urban guerilla, *Wie alles anfing*, 1976, was seized in the course of a search of the Trikont publishing

wake of the student movement casts art and politics into an increasingly tense dynamic as the seventies begin. The aforementioned dates and events are intended to serve as marker buoys that acknowledge the difficulty and potential arbitrariness in demarcating a period of literary production.[3]

It is my aim here to trace the construction of a utopian perspective in the literature of the late sixties and early seventies. This chapter seeks to introduce and argue my project's broader thesis that utopia has always been in tension with a dialectically interrelated nostalgic component, and that in the late sixties and early seventies, the nostalgic aspect begins to assert itself and come to the fore. The concept of utopia appears to move from an activistic model of progressive societal change to a more self-reflexive form of nostalgia.[4] In effect, the idea of utopia becomes increasingly inscribed with nostalgia, and the two manifest themselves in a dialectical interrelationship that is open-ended and non-teleological. I propose that, while the utopian dimension of protest in the sixties has been an established mode of reading that period and the seventies are understood as in some way nostalgic and subjectivist, the dynamic interaction of utopia and nostalgia has not received proper critical attention. In other words, I

---

house, and the author was jailed. Heinrich Böll criticized this police action in his article, "Stimme aus dem Untergrund," *konkret* 2/76.

[3]It should be noted that Peter Schneider's *Lenz* was written in 1972, published in 1973, Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* was written 1971-72 and published in 1972, and finally that Berward Vesper's *Die Reise* was written 1969-71, though not published until 1977.

[4] Utopia is here understood in the spirit of Thomas More's definition of the good place which is no place (*Utopia*, 1516). I use the term, interrelationship of utopia and nostalgia, as a thematic foil and conceit to the end of better understand literary artistic production. This is not a project that seeks to redefine and theorize utopia and nostalgia from first principles.

aim to challenge the view that there was a sequential process from protest to subjectivity, illustrating rather that there was a shift in which the forward-looking idea of utopia was pushed to a point where nostalgia emerges as a new cultural emphasis. I argue that the interrelationship of utopia and nostalgia means there is no mutually exclusive division between utopian protest and nostalgic subjectivity, and what occurs in our particular historical period here is the emergence of the subjective dimension and the realization of the role it had played all along.

The experience of 1968 and the failure of any actual revolution to come about as a result of the protest movement, anger over the Vietnam War, the visit to Berlin by the Shah of Iran, the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg, and the lack of an effective parliamentary opposition all trigger historical anxieties around the perception of arbitrary government power and police brutality in Germany and are crucial as the concrete historical background for our endeavour. On the political level, the post-1968 period also represents a benchmark in the postwar process of nation (re)building in West Germany, when the government becomes more assertive in the face of popular dissent. It is a historical context in which literature was faced with a changing sense of its utopian function. Where the cultural production – a concept I view as integrally linked with literary production – of the early and mid sixties sought change through the actions of groups such as *Subversive Aktion*, the Situationists and other urban cultural movements that brought theatre and art to the streets and factories in the name of social progress, the post-1968 period saw a turn back to the German literary tradition and its

conventions.[5] This so-called *Tendenzwende* or *Nostalgiewelle*, exhibits a return to literary forms and tropes that appear to revert to those of the past. For instance autobiography, subjective narratives of the novella, re-writing of older stories in a contemporary context, setting a narrative outside Germany and in the past as a mode of critique of the present context. Enzensberger's novel employs this tactic – which stands in the tradition of Schiller – as we will see in our third chapter; Schneider's and Vesper's narratives re-appropriate the more personal narrative forms, such as autobiography. However, this literary turn to the past does not represent a mere repetition of the cultural tradition, nor does it forfeit a concept of the utopian, rather it constructs it in reference to the past and the literary tradition. In other words, the literature of the post-1968 period embodies the shift in the concept of utopia toward nostalgia, and this occurs in and is owing to a very real historical context that puts literary and cultural production in a tense relationship with the political establishment, as represented by the government. The peculiar circumstances of the period precipitate a shift in emphasis from the forward-looking utopia (that suppresses nostalgic impulses), toward the rise of nostalgia, in so far as major literary figures begin exploring the dissolution of the ostensibly unified New Left after 1968. It is the first incarnation of an afterlife of the student protest movement which takes place in literature, a medium that is subjective and nostalgic, yet understands its utopian function. While there were certainly many

[5]The volume, *Subversive Aktion. Der Sinn der Organisation ist ihr Scheitern* (2002) provides much documentary evidence about the activist cultural groups of the early and mid sixties. There are also insightful reflections a posteriori on the relationship of these groups to the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund* (*SDS*) and the student (political) protest movement.

writers on the Left in the sixties who moved to suppress their nostalgic and subjective impulses, the experience of disillusionment after the failure of the protest movement to revolutionize society forces the reflection on utopian ideas and, in the process, wakes that nostalgic impulse.

In this approximate decade, 1966-77, West Germany saw its student protest movement climax in the extra-parliamentary opposition (*APO*), then fragment into groups of varying revolutionary vigour. It is the Grand Coalition around which much political resistance coalesces and continues, as I argue, in the form of protest against a legal agenda and legacy that extends well into the seventies (and even eighties and beyond).[6] These laws were implemented to limit severely the forms of political opposition and protest deemed radical, whether in the streets or in print, and thus represent a very tangible link between literary or cultural production and its political consequences – the "Bommi" Baumann case is a particularly striking example. The question is, against the backdrop of such contentious debates about government authority and power, how does the relationship between art and political power – *Geist* and *Macht*, to use a nostalgic categorization – continue to manifest its dynamic and fraught interaction after the putative 'Death of Literature' and the climax of student protest movement of the late nineteen sixties? What is the historical valence of the inward turn and how is it associated with the (reborn?) literature of the 'New Subjectivity' in the post-1968 phase – is this literature apolitical? How do these historical markers

[6]In addition of *StGB* 88a, the *Berufsverbote* are another example of the state responding to political resistance from the New Left.

demonstrate the trajectory of utopia toward nostalgia?

The transitional period between the sixties and seventies was not, as Michael Schneider argues,[7] a period of de-politicization, rather an intensification of the personal response to the politics outside the individual. This is to say, the inward turn that began in the early seventies represents a memory project that refocuses the understanding of the political as primarily forward-looking activism that seeks a rupture with the traditional narrative of progress from the past to the present. In 1977 the RotbuchVerlag (the publisher of Peter Schneider's *Lenz*) published a collection of first-hand reports and interviews from former members of New Left groups, the so-called *K-Gruppen*, under the title, *Wir warn die stärkste der Parteien....*[8] As a literary-historical document, the book serves as a good point of departure for our discussion of the post-1968 phase, a way into the material, because it is an example of a cultural documentary project produced in the wake of the legal and political tensions mentioned above. The editors of the volume make the following qualification: "Um die Identifizierung von Personen zu verhindern, wurden bestimmte Details bewußt unscharf gehalten oder verändert" (*Wir warn...* 7). They go on to presume the "Spitzel der politischen Polizei" (same page) are already informed about the inner workings of the *K-Gruppen*. What this says about the project of this book is that it must engage

---

[7]In *Kursbuch* 49 (1977), Schneider took the position that the retreat into the private sphere was a retreat from politics. He argues that the intelligentsia believed the move was political, while in fact they were deluding themselves. I disagree with this position because, as I will argue in this chapter, the sixties helped politicize the private sphere, making a retreat from a political ideological standpoint more or less impossible in any sphere.

[8]This book will be referred to as '*Wir warn...*' in the context of this chapter.

techniques we know from literature and the literary tradition to circumvent legal constraints.[9]

The introduction begins: "Nach dem Scheitern der kurzatmigen APO-Strategien entsprang aus der revolutionären Ungeduld der Studentenbewegung die trügersische Hoffnung, eine revolutionäre Arbeiterbewegung sozusagen von außen entfachen zu können" (*Wir warn...* 5). This statement establishes the narrative arc from the idealistic student movement of the late nineteen sixties to its dissolution into various factions in the course of the nineteen seventies. Acknowledging the good intentions of the *APO*, the introduction points to the now familiar story of the post-student-movement era: "Die anfängliche Euphorie, nun endlich 'das todsichere Rezept' zur Gesellschaftsveränderung gefunden zu haben, erwies sich als frommer Wunsch und der hektische Aufbruch der vielen endete oft im Katzenjammer der einzelnen" (*Wir warn...* 5). This sentence echoes, as we will see in the next chapter, the sentiment of Schneider's *Lenz*, for it traces the path of characters such as the fictional, yet symbolic and paradigmatic Lenz from euphoric political engagement and steadfast belief, to personal disillusionment. This is the disillusionment of the progressivist utopia which finds expression in literary memory projects such as those at the centre of this study, but even the *Erfahrungsberichte* of *Wir warn die stärkste der Parteien...*

[9] It would appear that the editors are concerned they may be subject to repressive police action based on the *Maulkorbgesetze*, 88a and 130a.

constitute literary memory projects.[10] The editors of the volume admit this and state: "Wir wollen mit unseren Beiträgen über unsere politische Vergangenheit aus subjektiver Sicht berichten, [...]" (*Wir warn...* 6).

One particular chapter of that text is a first-person narrative account of a young worker's recent personal past, from 1968 to the narrative present – approximately the mid seventies; here we have an example of a confessional tale that employs the trope of personal historical recollection in an informal style that seeks to shed an authentic light on the experience of a worker. The report represents a process of personal disillusionment and demonstrates the intensification of the personal response to public politics. In this case, the term 'politics' refers to the union and Communist Party activity of a young worker in the 'public' context of a factory. Entitled, "Die Interessen der Arbeiterklasse sind keine anderen als die Interessen der Partei" this is the subjective account of a worker who, inspired by the events of 1968, becomes involved in the Communist Party in his factory, rises through the ranks, and is ultimately expelled from the organization due to insubordination. As his report commences, he explains how his apprenticeship years destroyed his sense of self-worth, then he writes: "Bis zu dem Zeitpunkt war ich nicht organisiert, aber dann bin ich – 1968 – ganz bewußt in die Gewerkschaft eingetreten mit der Vorstellung: das ist was, die machen was für uns" (*Wir warn...* 108). The young worker is of the generation of Schneider's

---

[10]The book is authored by an editorial collective who remain committed to the ideals of social change, this progressivist ideal as I call it, even in the late seventies – the proceeds from the book would be donated to political causes, specifically the *Aktionskomitee gegen Berufsverbote an der FU Berlin* (*Wir warn...* 7).

Lenz, or Bernward Vesper's autobiographical narrator, i.e. the generation of '68, who believed early on in the efficacy of the unions (not to mention, solidarity between the workers and the students) and the concrete activism of left wing political groups. The worker's narrative also represents the manifestation of an ideal: a politically committed, intellectually interested socialist worker.

This narrative is particularly relevant as a shoehorn into the historical and literary material of our project, because the worker-narrator embodies the sentiments of Schneider's protagonist, disillusionment but not total resignation; his report also contains experiential and confessional forms we will encounter in Vesper's *Reise*, and the documentary first-person narration echoes many of the reports that comprise Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*. The young worker-narrator also expresses the discontentment of the post-war generation with the authoritarian social and educational systems in pre-1968 West Germany. In his book, *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform* (1969),[11] Jürgen Habermas remarks on a shifting attitude toward conflicts such as the one which appears to be seminal for our young worker's entry into the realm of political activism. Habermas writes:

> Heute können Schwierigkeiten auf politische Bedeutung Anspruch erheben und in politischen Begriffen gerechtfertigt werden, die noch vor zwei oder drei Jahren als Privatsache, als Konflikte zwischen Schüler und Lehrer, zwischen Mitarbeiter und Chef, zwischen Eheleuten, eben als ein Konflikt zwischen einzelnen Personen gegolten hätten. (Habermas *PH* 31)

The shift to which Habermas refers is the shift of conflicts from a private or

[11]Henceforth cited as 'Habermas *PH*.'

personal sphere into a public and thus political one. The young worker's report manifests precisely this shift and, in fact, cites the conflict between apprentice and master as the instigating moment for the narrative that follows.

The report is the worker's memory project about the intersection of political activism in the factory and the toll it takes on his personal life, as he becomes more and more disillusioned, and physically sickened – "[i]rgendwann war ich dann mit meiner Gesundheit am Ende" (*Wir warn...* 118) – with the Party idea of 'die richtige Linie.' Adherence to the Party line raises the conflict of theory and practice: "wir sind für eine Mark mehr in der Stunde und für die Weltrevolution! Wir hatte damals in unserem Betrieb relativ viele konkrete Problem, so daß wir nicht immer nur propagieren mußten: das Scheißhaus ist dreckig, deswegen Revolution!" (*Wir warn...* 116-17). The humorous mock-slogan at the beginning of this passage illustrates the nature of the chasm between the factory worker and the revolutionary project of the Left; the former is interested in his particular working environment and the latter demands altruism and a broader view of history and politics. The quotation mixes literary playfulness – the humour of exaggeration and contrast – with a critique of the reality of the situation: every practical detail, for instance cleaning the toilet, must be refracted through the Revolution. The conflict is one of an intellectual, yet pragmatic worker and the abstract revolutionary ideals imposed from without by the student Left: "Es gab in unserer Zelle die Situation, daß noch einer und ich den 'rechten Block' gebildet haben und so zwei Intellektuelle immer linksradikale

Positionen eingenommen haben – das waren Leute, die mit dem Betrieb gar nichts zu tun hatten, außer ab und zu Flugblätter verteilen" (*Wir warn...* 118). The increasing alienation resulting from these contradictions between the abstract, altruistic World Revolution and basic improvements in working conditions, begins to affect the worker's personal life – "Erst später habe ich gemerkt, daß die Organisation für mein persönliches Leben nichts gebracht hat" (*Wir warn...* 122). This crisis is reminiscent of that portrayed in Schneider's *Lenz*, even though the protagonist there is a student, as we will see, but the worker here has similar problems, and they intersect ultimately with those of Lenz and even Vesper's narrator, on the question, for instance, of romantic relationships: "Eine Beziehung zu einer Frau konnt ich mir z.B. nur innerhalb einer gemeinsam politischen Aufgabe vorstellen, das hatte ich im Kopf und fand das auch positiv" (*Wir warn...* 122). All three men, Lenz, Vesper and the young worker, experience failure in their relationships to women.[12]

The importance of the worker's report resides largely in its formal aspect, namely, the *Erfahrungsbericht*, a space for subjective reflection on, for instance, the failure of romantic relationships or the utopian political project, not to mention the complex intermingling of these personal experiences with the political ones. The report ends not with resignation and a turn away from political work, but with a definite sense that the progressive project, the utopia, of the

[12]I am referring here to the fact that all three men have been rejected by their female romantic partners. A rigorous discussion of gender construction and identity in the student movement and 'New Subjectivity' is outside the scope of this project, but would none the less be a fascinating avenue of inquiry.

Communist Party, Marxist-Leninist groups and other splinter groups was missing the point and succumbing to sectarianism. He remarks that the constant background question of the 'Organisation,' "Sind wir der Revolution einen Schritt näher gekommen?" (*Wir warn...* 125) and others concerning the numbers of flyers and pamphlets distributed at protest rallies, new members recruited, were symbolic of failure:

> Hinter diesen Fragen verschwanden dann die Bemühungen, konkrete Veränderungen zu erreichen, Reformen zu erzwingen, eben eine reale sozialistische Politik zu machen.
>
> Ich für meinen Teil bin jedenfalls zu der Ansicht gelangt, daß wir von dem „richtige-Linie-Trip" runterkommen müssen. An die Stelle der richtigen Parolen hat die rebellische Kleinarbeit, das Sammeln von Erfahrungen und der Kampf gegen die Sektiererei (und zwar jeglicher Couleur) zu treten. [...]
>
> Es wird wohl noch eine Weile dauern, bis eine tatsächliche sozialistische Bewegung entsteht und bis sich in der Linken die Ansicht durchgesetzt hat, daß der revolutionäre Schwätzer nur ein Papiertiger ist. (*Wir warn...* 125-26)

This passage stems from the *Nachbemerkung* to the report and lends it a reflective, literary character. Indeed, the text contains the confessional elements of personal essays and experiential reports,[13] for example, the detailed portrayal of a subjective response to politics, the challenge to Party dogma, and as the just cited passage illustrates, concrete demands for the continuation of the socialist project. The narrating worker keeps an idealistic space open, in which political action is necessary and favourable over abstract theory and the "Parolen" of the 'proper line.' The text of the report itself represents a *Nachbemerkung* to the

[13] Something Michael Rutschky reflects upon in his book length essay on the nineteen seventies, entitled, *Erfahrungshunger* (1980).

worker's experience between circa 1968 and the mid nineteen seventies; it is a documentary work of historical re-construction, a return to the past that, as we see in the last sentence above, expresses a willingness to wait for a new progressive movement.[14] The worker-narrator remains motivated by the praxis of "rebellische Kleinarbeit" and patience, rebellion over revolution, bulwarked by the utopian impulse that had inspired his initial political engagement; the question is, what characterizes this impulse from those climactic years of the student protest movement?

The primarily important features of the young worker's report are doubtlessly its first-person narration of experience and the confessional style. However, what makes such a text attractive to a publisher such as Rotbuch, is likely also the fact of its proletarian author. This is appealing to the theorizing left-wing intellectual who is removed from the reality of the working class, for it means there actually had been some workers with an intellectual and political interest! This report on the experience of events from almost a decade earlier becomes a paradigmatic example of how nostalgic and subjective impulse that had always already existed, finds a delayed outlet in the post-1968 phase. The key to this *Erfahrungsbericht* is its refusal to declare the utopian project of the left dead because of the subjective turn, choosing instead to adapt its ends to more viable means. As a reading of the post-1968 period, this is an important consideration, since much of the historiography seeks the rupture and break, the

[14] As we will see in the third chapter of this project, a similar sentiment emanates from Enzensberger's larger and perspectivally more complex documentary novel.

calamitous end to the student movement and the utter failure of the New Left's project for the singular reason that a wave of nostalgia forced the culture into introspection and thus reaction. Such simplifications make for good story-telling, but need reviewing.

At this juncture, we begin our look at the concept of utopia as it evolves through the post 1968 phase toward its nostalgic turn. To this end, two particular texts should be helpful in anchoring our discussion of the concept of utopia in the mid to late nineteen sixties: Ernst Bloch's speech upon his acceptance of the *Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels* in 1967, entitled, "Widerstand und Friede," and Herbert Marcuse's paper, "Das Ende der Utopie," also 1967, given while the latter was on a speaking tour of German universities.[15] These speeches are emblematic of the utopian concept that informs the pre-1968 student protest movement, for while Bloch wants to disabuse the public of the dismissive concept of a 'bad' utopia (Bloch *WF* 107), Marcuse wants to end utopia by way of real technical possibilities. Both thinkers' notions rely on practical action in the service of social progress, inevitably raising the issue of how this progressive action and the people who carry it out relate to the past. The function of history in

---

[15]The printed text of Marcuse's speech is printed in, *Das Ende der Utopie. Vorträge und Diskussionen in Berlin 1967*, (1980) and will henceforth be referred to as 'Marcuse *EU*.' Bloch's speech was delivered in Frankfurt on Main at that city's annual book fair and is reprinted in *Widerstand und Friede. Aufsätze zur Politik*, (1968), and will be cited as 'Bloch *WF*.' My discussion of these speeches is not intended to be an exhaustive one, and the selection of these particular texts is based upon their value as historical documents that represent Marcuse's and Bloch's ideas about utopia, as presented to a broader audience of leftist intellectuals and activists. It is precisely not a systematic philosophical analysis because, in our stated historical context, the interest in such ideas was programmatic and pragmatic, attuned to the political and social realities of the day.

these particular utopian discourses deserves careful attention, for it will raise the most problematic questions about a break with the past, a move that exposes the ambivalence of the forward trajectory that seeks to unburden itself of the impossibility and unrealizability historically associated with utopia. As Marcuse states: "Utopie ist ein historischer Begriff; er bezieht sich auf Projekte gesellschaftlicher Umgestaltung, die für unmöglich gehalten werden" (Marcuse *EU* 10). The problem for the German student activists is the necessity and rebellious desire to confront the past of their parents' generation and the history that appears to have led to the calamity of Nazism. So the question is, how to confront the past while engaging in a utopian project that seeks to rid itself of the mistakes of that past by breaking with it; how can this be reconciled with the project of historical remembering in the face of constant forgetting? Let us first look at Marcuse's ideas.

For Marcuse, the end of utopia signals the end of the impossibility of improving social and political circumstances the world over. Technological and intellectual forces in modern capitalism contain the potential for complete change, the break with what he calls the continuum of history (Marcuse *EU* 9).[16] In fact, this idea is premised upon an "end of history," an end of the notion that progress

---

[16]As Jürgen Habermas points out in his article, "Herbert Marcuse über Kunst und Revolution," from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of June 9, 1973: "Er setzt sich mit den seinerzeit im *Kursbuch* verbreiteten Thesen vom Ende der Kunst auseinander; auch im Sozialismus müßte die Kunst ihre Transzendenz behalten" (cited from, J. Habermas *Kultur und Kritik; verstreute Aufsätze*, 1973, 347). The end of utopia should thus not be seen as the end of art, in Marcuse's terms. In the article, Habermas suggests an anit-moderntendency in Marcuse – "ein Stück unaufgelösten Antimodernismus" (same page) – and links this to his rootedness in the traditions of Romanticism.

inheres in the historical process, a flaw Marcuse sees in Marx: "ich glaube, daß Marx noch zu sehr dem Begriff des Kontinuums des Fortschritts verhaftet war, daß auch seine Idee des Sozialismus vielleicht noch nicht oder nicht mehr jene bestimmte Negation des Kapitalismus darstellt, die sie darstellen sollte" (Marcuse *EU* 9). The end of utopia is the determinate negation of capitalism, not a progressive move away from that system along the traditional path of history. The determinate negation would occur through a reorganization of society, which contains the potential for all necessary change. The end of utopia means an end to the historical relationship with that concept; moreover, as Marcuse opines, most people agree the abolition of poverty and suffering is possible, only they are not willing to take the radical step necessary to undo what has historically been considered 'utopian.' He states: "diese geschichtlichen Möglichkeiten [müssen] in Formen gedacht werden, die in der Tat den Bruch eher als die Kontinuität mit der bisherigen Geschichte, die Negation eher als das Positive, die Differenz eher als den Fortschritt anzeigen" (Marcuse *EU* 12). The end of the historical relationship with the notion of the utopian and the break with the continuum of history, advocate the possibility of what had been considered impossible; transforming the term 'utopia' into a negation, thereby bringing about the goals of abolishing poverty, inequality, suffering, etc.

What is relevant for our project here, is that the relationship to the past must be re-formed, or even reconceived, in order to abolish the concept of utopia as abstract and unattainable, and therefore ideologically corruptible. Marcuse

differentiates his view of utopia quite clearly, illustrating his view that utopia, in the strict sense, is meta-historical but that this 'meta-historical' dimension still has a historical boundary. What he argues briefly, but does not expand much on, is the nostalgic dimension of utopia and its relationship to the unrealizability of utopia: "Das Projekt einer gesellschaftlichen Umwandlung kann aber auch für unverwirklichbar gehalten werden, weil es bestimmten wissenschaftlich festgestellten Gesetzen widerspricht, [...]; zum Beispiel die uralte Idee einer ewigen Jugend des Menschen oder die Idee einer Rückkehr zu einem angeblich goldenen Zeitalter" (Marcuse *EU* 11). Although he does not mention the term nostalgia, Marcuse is arguing that concrete scientific laws block nostalgia and thus utopia. He has recognized this tendency from Romantic utopias, the backward-looking idealizations of Novalis, for instance, as the reference to the 'golden age' implies. What is truly utopian about Marcuse's ideas, though, is the belief in the possibility of rendering the concept of utopia redundant. The imagination was the tool for creating utopia, and now it is necessary to supplant that imagination of utopia with the realization of it, challenging the student imperative, *die Phantasie an die Macht!* – itself an imperative borrowed from Novalis.[17]

Marcuse is not advocating historical forgetting, rather he is pointing out that utopia has been used historically in the 'bad sense,' a manner which Bloch recognizes, as we shall see momentarily. Marcuse does not want to rehabilitate

---

[17]According to Richard Faber in, *Novalis: Die Phantasie an die Macht!* (1970).

the term 'utopia,' but instead begin with concrete reform and change. In the inspired and clearly impassioned closing of his presentation Marcuse states:

> Und gerade weil die sogenannten utopischen Möglichkeiten gar nicht utopisch sind, sondern die bestimmte geschichtlich-gesellschaftliche Negation des Bestehenden darstellen, verlangt die Bewußtmachung dieser Möglichkeiten und die Bewußtmachung der sie verhindernden und der sie verleugnenden Kräfte von uns eine sehr realistische, eine sehr pragmatische Opposition. Eine Opposition, die frei ist von allen Illusionen, aber auch frei von allem Defätismus, der schon durch seine bloße Existenz die Möglichkeit der Freiheit an das Bestehende verrät. (Marcuse *EU* 17-18)

What Marcuse is pointing out here is the issue of possibility and impossibility, two categories that represent, on one hand, positive social progress, and on the other, an undermining negation of the status quo. He is responding to the ensnarement in the trap of impossibility, which distorts the possibility of changing society; this is the defeatism to which he refers. In fact, his point is that the objective condition of society offers to negate the status quo, rectify social ills and bring about the state of affairs that is not extant – that is to say the instant conditions are created in reality that are currently only represented in utopian terms, utopia vanishes because it has become reality. I would suggest that this remains a utopian idea, because what should be possible – solving many of the world's material ills such as poverty and hunger – is actually utopian. Now, Marcuse may argue that the present system is at fault and hence a revolutionary moment is needed to overcome the fragmentation. Nevertheless, Marcuse's end of utopia ends on a utopian premise. The problem leads back into the paradoxical entwinement of possibility and impossibility. Marcuse's argument comes down

much more heavily in favour of consciousness of possibility, demanding opposition (resistance) to forces that deny and undermine progressive opportunities. This clear call for action is so significant because of its performative context: the audience that receives Marcuse's message, the student activists, are those who seek to overcome defeatism and generate the hope cited by the young worker above as the reason to get involved in political activity.[18]

Ernst Bloch's 1967 speech,[19] "Widerstand und Friede," represents another performative document of the time that advocates a pragmatic form of utopian thinking and promotes the idea of a struggle: "Der Kampf ging ja zu einem großen Teil gegen die Kriegsmittel und Machtmittel des Krieges, die gegen die Armen und Unterdrückten aufgerufen worden sind. So also muß zwischen Kampf und Krieg zweifellos unterschieden werden, und das hat ja eine alte Resonanz" (Bloch *WF* 102). History and a relationship to the past is central to Bloch's argument in his speech, for the narratives it provides allow us to recognize distinctions such as the one between struggle and war, the former being the path to freedom and peace, the latter the negation thereof. In contrast to Marcuse, Bloch *appears* interested in maintaining a concept of the utopian, albeit not the utopia Marcuse wants to negate, rather a utopia that comprises a dialectic of long-term goals (*Fernziele*) and near-term goals (*Nahziele*). Bloch poses the question:

---

[18]The worker-narrator points to a triangular relationship between him and his generation, the union, and the student movement, where the union was uncomfortable with young workers becoming involved with the students – "die Studenten wollen euch nur vor ihren Karren spannen" (*Wir warn*... 108). The narrator, however, describes his initial sympathies with the students and the solidarity their movement promised.

[19]The speech was held on 15 October, 1967, in other words after the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg.

"Wohin und wozu, und was ist das Ende, worauf gehts? Herausführung aus der bisherigen Geschichte als einer Vorgeschichte, Vollzug der Träume der Vergangenheit, der Zukunft in der Vergangenheit, die uns anspricht, die auf uns vorgreift, indem wir uns ihrer erinnern" (Bloch *WF* 107). Here, I would submit, there is some common ground with Marcuse, in as much as Bloch proposes an end-goal that would lead away from the traditional relationship to history, what Marcuse calls the break with the continuum of history. There is again evidence that history has a nostalgic effect on the present and thus the future, and Bloch tries to overcome this 'bad history' with emphasis on the pragmatism of near-term and long-term goals; in other words, a utopian concept focussed on progress through history toward what he calls the better life.

Bloch continues: "Fernziel heißt nicht Utopie im schlechten Sinn, Utopie, wie sie heruntergewirtschaftet wurde, also 'bloß eine Utopie,' ein kleinkaufmännischer Ausdruck" (Bloch *WF* 107); this is the utopia Marcuse is dismissing as the impossible, in favour of the realizable goals that transform defeatist 'bad utopian' thinking into reality, thus negating the term 'utopia.' Bloch still argues for a long-term goal based upon fantasy: "[d]as Fernziel ist tänzerisch, greift in die Phantasie" (Bloch *WF* 107), an idea that resonates with the aforementioned slogan, *die Phantasie an die Macht!*, and the student protest movement.[20] The emphasis on the interrelationship of *Nahziel* and *Fernziel* is

[20]Bloch developed a close intellectual friendship with Rudi Dutschke, leader of the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*, perhaps the most iconic figure of 1968 in West Germany. Consult Jürgen Miermeister's *Rudi Dutschke/Ernst Bloch* (1996) for discussion of their relationship.

central: “Wir müssen wissen, was herauskommt bei den Nahzielen. Wir müssen vor allen Dingen wissen, daß sie conditio sine qua non sind, für den Tanz, für das Beste, für das Endziel, für den Traum vom besseren Leben” (Bloch *WF* 107). Moreover, the struggle (*Kampf*) must always maintain a historical awareness of the possibility it will become barbaric, ideological war, if the following relation is not ever-present: “das Fernziel muß in seinem [*the struggle's*] Inhalt präsent sein, auch in jedem Nahziel. Kein Sprung zwischen beiden darf bestehen und nicht ein vollkommen anderer Inhalt herauskommen, sondern Erwärmung eines kämpfenden Lebens durch das experimentierte und sich hie und da bestätigende Vorschein-Licht eines Ziels, Verlebendigung statt Wolkenkuckucksheim” (Bloch *WF* 108-09). Perhaps it is this kind of utopian thinking that the young worker-narrator of the aforementioned report best represents; the almost messianic deference to the future is tempered by real praxis in the short- or near-term. Bloch and Marcuse appear to be advocating opposite utopian ideas, while advocating similar practical means of social change (*Umwälzung*). The opposition lies in the fact that Marcuse wants to end the idea of utopia, in favour of the real possibility for equality and social justice offered by modern society's (technological) advancements; whereas Bloch believes in maintaining the concept of utopia, differentiating between good and bad uses of the term, which for him means that a good use of the term ‘utopia’ is the pragmatic application of technological advancement in order to solve immediate problems. In other words, both Marcuse and Bloch advocate a practical and progressive – a socially fair and

egalitarian – understanding of *Umwälzung*, where the former seeks to overcome the impossibilities encapsulated by the concept of utopia (itself a utopian idea, perhaps!) and the latter will not relinquish the potential of utopia. The burning question for our project is twofold: is the 'Death of Literature' the literary consequence of this conception of utopia in the pre-1968 phase; and how does utopia become transposed into a nostalgic mode through changing relationships to the past?

By now famously, Karl Markus Michel's article, "Ein Kranz für die Literatur," (*Kursbuch* 15, 1968)[21] and Hans Magnus Enzensberger's article, "Gemeinplätze. Die neueste Literatur betreffend," ostensibly proclaim the 'death' of art. What in fact these authors do, is borrow from a rich tradition of lamenting art's demise; Enzensberger points out the many funerary celebrations, saying, "[d]er Leichenzug hinterläßt eine Staubwolke von Theorien, an denen wenig Neues ist" ("Gemeinplätze" 41).[22] By comparison, Michel writes: "[...] selbst das Wort vom Tod der Kunst gehört, seit mindestens 150 Jahren, zum Bestand eben jener Kultur, gegen die es ausgespielt wird" (Michel *Kursbuch* 170). In other words, the 'death' of art is not new, not radical; what is however new is the argument that bourgeois art is dead, or at least a zombie of sorts: "denn in

---

[21]Michel's article – which I cite as 'Michel *Kursbuch*' – addresses the student movement in France, specifically Paris. I would direct my readers to Kristin Ross' *May '68 and its Afterlives* (2002) for an eloboration of the historiography of the French student protest movement.

[22]I am citing this essay from the collection, *Palaver. Politische Überlegungen (1967-73)*, (1974) and will refer to the essay as, "Gemeinplätze." The third chapter of this dissertation is dedicated to discussion of Enzensberger, and hence I will not go into great detail on his essay in this introductory chapter.

Wahrheit ist sie [die Kunst] ja nicht tot, sie lebt geschäftig fort, wenn auch als Leiche, als Ware, als Fetisch, und gaukelt weiter eine Zone der Freiheit, der Autonomie, des Sinnes vor, die es zu entlarven gilt als Schwindel" (Michel *Kursbuch* 170). The idea of unmasking (*entlarven*) of bourgeois art's swindle of autonomy echoes none other than Marcuse and his idea of affirmative art, put forth in the essay, "Über den affirmativen Charakter der Kultur" (1934-38).[23] Marcuse states: "Unter affirmativer Kultur sei jene der bürgerlichen Epoche angehörigen Kultur verstanden, welche im Laufe ihrer eigenen Entwicklung dazu geführt hat, die geistig-seelische Welt als selbständiges Wertreich von der Zivilisation abzulösen und über sie zu erhöhen" (Marcuse *KG* 63). Art (or culture – again, terms we can use interchangeably here), when it makes claims to autonomy and the sublime, is seeking a realm which is utopian, in the sense we saw Marcuse describe it above, namely a realm of the 'golden age,' a nostalgic realm, a 'bad' utopia in the sense of Bloch. Michel comes down on the Marcusean side by situating himself in a discourse of the 'death' of art that understands the cultural tradition, yet seeks a rupture with its bourgeois history – a fundamentally modernist stance.[24] Enzensberger and Michel are mostly calling attention to art's or literature's fraught relationship to its past – the former even reminds us: "Auch gibt es zu denken, daß der 'Tod der Literatur' selber eine literarische Metapher ist, und zwar die jüngste nicht" ("Gemeinplätze" 42) – and

---

[23]Found in H. Marcuse, *Kultur und Gesellschaft I*, (1965), cited hereafter as, 'Marcuse *KG*.'

[24]Michel Foucault refers to this idea of the rupture with the past as a central theme of modernity in his essay "What is Enlightenment" (1978).

advocating the sort of praxis through art, for which Marcuse and Bloch make the case; taking the utopian out of the sublime realm and either negating its definition or rehabilitating it toward the same end.

An example of this praxis stems from a young, pre-*Reise* Bernward Vesper and his partner, Gudrun Ensslin, edited and published an activistic collection of texts bearing the utterly utopian title, *Gegen den Tod. Stimmen deutscher Schriftsteller gegen die Atombombe* (1964).[25] The relevance of this text to our current project is twofold. First, it establishes a link between Vesper and Enzensberger, for the latter is one of authors whose work (in this case a poem) is published in the volume, and this situates these two figures in the constellation of writers at the heart of our endeavour.[26] Second, *Gegen den Tod* represents precisely the sort of activistic literary project that motivates, or is motivated by, the utopian concept of the early to mid sixties.[27] In a provocative opening to his preface to the volume, Vesper writes: "Politik ist der Kampf der Mächte. Die Macht liegt nirgends in Händen der Schriftsteller" (Vesper/Ensslin 7). *Macht* is

---

[25]I am citing from the *edition cordeliers* edition, reprinted in December, 1981. I will refer to the text as 'Vesper/Ensslin.' The preface is signed, "Bernward Vesper-Triangel," and dated, "Tübingen, März 1964."

[26]This publishing relationship continued; in 1968, number 11 of the *Voltaire Flugschrift*, edited by Vesper, would carry the title *H.M. Enzensberger Staatsgefährdende Umtriebe*. The volume includes Enzensberger's speech, "Die Rede vom Heizer Hieronymus," accepting a literary prize from the city of Nuremberg. Enzensberger stirred up controversy by donating the 6000.00 Mark prize to a fund he was starting in defence of those prosecuted in West Germany for their political views.

[27]Peter Handke's essay, "Die Literatur ist romantisch" (1966), advocates such politically engaged literary projects, stating that seek a concrete re-ordering of the world: "Das Weltbild ist noch nicht verwirklicht, wirklich ist das andere, das falsche Weltbild. Das Weltbild dessen, der sich engagiert, ist ein utopisches, es ist das Bild von einer künftigen Welt" (Handke *Ich bin ein Bewohner des Elfenbeinturms* 38).

political, governmental power, and the writer has an obligation to counteract that power, as representative of real people (*Menschen*). Vesper is casting the *Macht* versus *Geist* tension as one between the violent potential of political powers and humanity, for whom the writer advocates. The political commitment is concrete and focussed on the anti-nuclear arms movement, the activistic forerunner of the student protest movement;[28] its utopia is a political world free of power struggles based on the trump-value of massively destructive weapons. Vesper's preface is concerned with the present; the future and the past are unreal in the face of the atomic threat. He ends his preface with the statement: "Die Gegenwart wird dem Schriftsteller, in dessen Welt die Atombombe keinen Ort hat, vielleicht noch einige Zeit gehören. Die Zukunft nie" (Vesper/Ensslin 10). This is a perfectly non-utopian statement, and yet, its language betrays a utopian dimension by referring to the present in the future tense, evoking a belief in the immediate future as the vague "einige Zeit." The statement that the future will never belong to the author is begging the question, for the future does not exist, cannot be possessed, rather it can only be surmised and prefigured, whether by ideology or artistic production (or the interaction of both). Such a statement functions as an indicator of a changing trajectory in utopia, an awareness that utopia is about a

---

[28]This volume was published at a time in Vesper's career when he was not yet firmly ensconced in the left-wing scene. Almost contrariwise, as Sven Glawion points out in his essay, "Aufbruch in die Vergangenheit. Bernward Vespers *Die Reise* (1977/79)" (2008), Vesper had a reactionary, opportunistic side, exposing someone, "der bis weit in seine Studentenzeit hinein in rechtsradikalen Zeitungen publizierte" (Glawion 25). While the latter fact is indisputable, I will argue in my chapter on Vesper's novel, perhaps more charitably, that his work is driven by a concept of rebellion, which can at times manifest itself as or be mistaken for reaction and/or opportunism.

relationship to the past, and by implication the future. As a matter of fact, the relationship to the past, whether it is to be broken with, embraced or ignored, is inscribed in the idea of utopia and on the concrete historical background of the decline of the student protest movement, the nostalgic impulse becomes increasingly pronounced.

Cultural Shift

One of the twentieth century's most significant shifts in culture – the emergence of the postmodern – seems to occur in the period we are discussing in the present chapter.[29] As we proceed along our historical trajectory of utopia toward its nostalgic turn, we cannot ignore the question of the postmodern impulse's influence on the utopian perspective. The affinity for designating periods of history as "transitional" or "a turning point" is strong in historiography; it tends to be more interesting to present a given period about which one is writing as transitional, setting it apart from other ostensibly stable, and therefore arguably less exciting periods. When, though, is society, and by extension culture, not in a transitional phase? Presumably, there is always some argument to be made for the constant transition of society and culture; perhaps transition should be seen as a mode of interpretation, as a way of reading history and story. In the representative text that is our worker-narrator's report, discussed above, we are

[29]In his article, "Der postmoderne Impuls" (in *Handbuch 1968*, 2008), Roman Lukscheiter, points to the various theorists who make this claim, Linda Hutcheon, Fredric Jameson, Agnes Heller, for instance. Luckscheiter bases his own argument on Leslie A. Fiedler's claim that modern bourgeois literature was over, made in a 1968 speech in Freiburg (Luckscheiter 152-54).

confronted with something akin to a conversion narrative – the young man finds the revolution, engages in political activity, becomes disillusioned, but not entirely resigned – that reflects the transitions of the post-1968 phase, and most importantly to us, a changed relationship to the (in this case recent) past. Although this text does not appear to be a particularly conscious fictional literary endeavour[30] in the manner of Schneider's, Enzensberger's or Vesper's texts, it none the less falls back on a venerable tradition of confessional and personal narration. His text is symptomatic of what Marianne DeKoven calls a shift between "what in modernity is generally called individualism, and in postmodernity is called subjectivity" (DeKoven 17).[31] His utopian idea(l) also shifts through the post-1968 phase, and significantly, it is not extinguished. This is a key element of the shift of cultural emphasis or paradigm[32] in the idea of utopia, namely, that it is not simply disillusioned, rather it is nuanced by the inscription of nostalgia, which, according to Svetlana Boym, has a utopian

---

[30]I say this because the text is not sub-titled 'novel' or 'short story,' rather it is labelled an *Efahrungsbericht* in the context of the volume in which it appears. Having said that, I do believe there *is* absolutely a literary quality to the writing and the genre, in general.

[31]In her book, *Utopia limited* (2004) – cited as 'DeKoven' –, DeKoven dedicates a chapter to "Modern to Postmodern in Herbert Marcuse" (DeKoven 26-54), in which she argues: "[a]s a characteristic and profoundly influential sixties text, *One Dimensional Man*, though it does not use the word 'revolution,' is committed to total utopian political-social-cultural-psychic transformation" (DeKoven 27). Ultimately, she concludes, Marcuse became pessimistic about the potential for true transformation, and in her view, the societal change that occurred in place of his utopian ideal – we saw reiterated as the 'end of utopia' above – was postmodernism (DeKoven 54).

[32]I use the term 'paradigm' as *an* exemplary model, not *the* authoritative, dogmatic model of what culture or art ought to be. In this sense, I relate it to what I call '(cultural) emphasis.'

dimension.[33] The central question here is, what makes the post-1968 phase a unique or significant transitional period, with respect to cultural production, and what role does the postmodern impulse play, especially with respect to our texts?

In the present chapter we are interested in the transitional phase, between the late sixties and early seventies, as it relates to a trajectory of the utopian concept toward nostalgia, and the first post-war generation's confrontation with the past, and this involves situating the cultural discussion in its historical context. This transitional period was about the confrontation with history and the attempt to revolutionize its course and radically negate the fascism many intellectuals and student activists viewed as latent in capitalism, in general, and West German capitalism, in particular, hence the notion that the Federal Republic was a product of U.S. imperialism. One of the signal political events for this is the passage of the Emergency Laws, as mentioned above, in 1968, which forces West German intellectuals to contemplate an uncomfortable historical parallel: Hitler's abuse of the emergency law provisions of the Weimar constitution (Article 48) in 1933.[34] The failure of the radical revolutionary project and the fragmentation of the student movement indicate another failure, namely, the ability to master and "deal with" the past – the German concept of *Geschichtsbewältigung* is the salient one

---

[33]In the discussion of her book, *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001). Cited as 'Boym.'

[34]The so-called Frankfurt Auschwitz trial of 1965, in which former guards of the Nazi death camps were put on trial (and for the most part exonerated), had already begun to force the confrontation with history into the public sphere, as Paul Berman writes in his book, *Power and the Idealists* (2005). He describes the generation of young Europeans, whose parents had, in their eyes, failed to resist fascism and whose mind set was one of 'roll up your sleeves, get to work and don't think too hard about life.'

here. There is a fundamental problem in the (re)construction of post-war Germany, namely, how nostalgia for the nation's history determines its *re*construction;[35] Boym distinguishes between restorative and reflective nostalgia, and this distinction proves useful in liberating the term nostalgia from its more negative connotation, which includes shedding light on its utopian dimension.

In the transitional period of the sixties and seventies, the confrontation with recent history is marked by questions of the Federal Republic's status as a fully independent nation, i.e. free of provisions set out in the unconditional surrender in 1945 that allowed the Western Allies to re-assert political control over Germany, if it strayed from the western, democratic ideological path. Clearly, West Germany was a willing and reliable ally to the United States and the other western powers, and there was likely little concern on their part that the Federal Republic would slip back into National Socialism (by this time the fear of communism was greater, anyway). From the perspective of the Left, though, where the idea of a latent fascist structure subtending the new German state was widespread, we can see how handing people like chancellor Kurt G. Kiesinger or minister Franz Josef Strauss[36] the political power to declare an 'emergency' and

---

[35]Construction and re-construction refer here to a broad scope of things, from the physical to the cultural topographies of Germany.

[36]Kiesinger had been a member of Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party from 1933-45, although he claimed his membership was motivated by political opportunism rather than ideological persuasion. Strauss too had a dubious nationalist reputation, and Ulrike Meinhof points this out in her controversial 1961 column in *konkret*, "Hitler Within You," which she concludes with the sentence, "[o]ne day we will be asked about Herr Strauss in the same way we now ask our parents about Hitler" (Meinhof 142; cited from L.von Flotow's translation printed in, *Everbody talks about the weather... we don't*," 2008).

suspend constitutional rights might elicit the parallel to Weimar mentioned above. In short, the Left was faced with the problem of nationalism and national sovereignty – one was linked to the historical atrocities of the Nazis, the other to the being a satellite state of the capitalist, imperialist superpower of the postwar period. The latter option was precisely what the Left wanted to negate, but the new West German democracy was coming of age under this western system. The question for the Left became, could a fully independent – i.e. with no provisions set out for the western allies to re-assert control over the country – German state function under a socialist democracy without slipping back into nationalism? From the perspective of the Left, the emergency legislation, as it was passed, challenges the notion that a fair and just social democracy in Germany was actually evolving.[37]

The issues raised by this coming of age are characterized primarily by anxiety, not least because, on one hand, the Federal Republic would be a fully sovereign nation, and on the other, history had shown the potential for abuse of such emergency legislation in the Weimar period. Amongst left-leaning intellectuals and artists of the first postwar generation, the historical awareness of the Weimar calamity is at the heart of the criticism members of this young generation levelled at their parents; the apparent remaking of those constitutional

[37]While the current project is not seeking to write an authoritative history of the period, I would like to suggest that this is formative for the first post-war generation, who had, for better of for worse, grown up with the stability, however chimeric it had been, of allied control over their country. I would also refer my reader back to Meinhof's column "Hitler Within You," along with others, which relay this sentiment of being caught between Nazism and Western imperialism.

powers in the Federal Republic under the auspices of national sovereignty and inner security are deeply suspicious. The latter notion gained particular currency and urgency in the wake of the shooting death of Benno Ohnesorg on June 2, 1967, at the hands of a police officer.[38]

The historical and political circumstances of this particular period were marked by upheavals not experienced in over a generation, and the death of a peaceful protester at the hands of an officer of the law was deeply disturbing to the broad student population, the vast majority of whom were of solidly middle class backgrounds. For them, the political paradigm appeared to be shifting, toward a violent form, where protest and rebellion were met with police brutality. It is the concept of the shifting paradigms as they manifest themselves in cultural production, specifically literature, with which this project concerns itself, and it must be clear that the cultural shifts in West Germany occurred against the backdrop of some of the greatest political tumult since before World War II. The question of the shift centres on the move from modernity to post-modernity, in the cultural responses to the relationship to history. We do not want to get entirely caught up in discussion of the terms 'modern' and 'post-modern,' yet some definition or delineation of the terms is necessary in order to further cement our historical and historiographical framework. The understanding of the postmodern

---

[38]The feeling that Germany could slip back into Nazism in the wake of upheaval, and state violence, is driven by an anxious historical model; in the first half of the nineteen seventies, as the *Maulkorbgesetz* was being proposed, a student political pamphlet shows the text of paragraph 88a next to analogous passages in the constitution of the National Socialist regime and that of the German Democratic Republic. The similarities are striking.

under which the current project operates is informed largely, although not exclusively, by Linda Hutcheon, as defined in her book, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989).[39] She acknowledges the constructed and sometimes contradictory nature of the term, and her definition of the postmodern is almost a confession that hers is a "paradoxical postmodernism of complicity and critique, of reflexivity and historicity, that at once inscribes and subverts the conventions and ideologies of the dominant cultural and social forces of the twentieth-century western world" (Hutcheon 11). What we take away from this definition is the paradoxical, contradictory or perhaps ambivalent tension with which Hutcheon infuses her terminology, and the distinctly narrative ideas about reflection, history, inscription and subversion which underline postmodernism's changing relationship to the past.[40] In terms of this project, we are tracing a construction of the generally forward-looking utopian perspective of the pre-1968 phase, which seems inevitably to turn to the past. The postmodern impulse appears to be a catalyst in this process.

Let it be said that the intellectual and cultural project of the student movement, along with its post-1968 incarnations, was still largely a modernist project,[41] for there was an oppositional style of thinking that was premised upon a

---

[39]Cited hereafter as 'Hutcheon.'

[40]In her 1988 book, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Hutcheon points out that the sixties represent the crucial phase of intellectual development for many post-modern thinkers of later years.

[41]Understood in terms of Jürgen Habermas's idea of a reason-based project that seeks to counter myth and mythologization, achieving a progressive, rational state of enlightenment.

binary model of the people versus the institutional power structure.[42] In his essay, "Modernity—An Incomplete Project" (1981),[43] Habermas writes: "[m]odernity revolts against the normalizing functions of tradition; modernity lives on the experience of rebelling against all that is normative" (Habermas "Modernity" 5). What is problematic about this claim is the notion of 'tradition,' which appears to be linked to the canon; I would suggest that our authors recast the relationship to a "normalizing tradition," in so far as they provide alternative, perhaps even rebellious interpretations of the concept, 'tradition.' More on that below. It is, however, true that the cultural endeavours of the nineteen sixties broke a normalizing mould – as Hauke Brunkhorst argues, "[t]he postwar generation of activists of 1967 and 1968 succeeded in disrupting the 'communicative silence' of the Nazi past on a broad scale and in calling up the repressed memory of Auschwitz in the collective consciousness" (Brunkhorst 131).[44] In other words, the project of breaking the silence is tantamount to a project of enlightenment, of shedding light on the past as a way of progressive learning, to paraphrase a Habermasian idea.[45]

---

[42]DeKoven's book rests on this very premise, as she states unequivocally from the outset of her study (DeKoven 4-5), and a few pages later adds, "because postmodernity is now so well established as a cultural dominant, we are so entirely defined by it, it has become invisible. We no longer 'see' it as a phenomenon" (9).

[43]I am quoting this essay here from Hal Foster (ed.) *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (1983), and I will cite Habermas's essay as 'Habermas "Modernity."'

[44]In her article, "The Tenacity of Utopia: The Role of Intellectuals in Cultural Shifts within the Federal Republic of Germany," which I cite as 'Brunkhorst.'

[45]I am referring here to Habermas' article, "Der Eintritt in die Postmoderne" in which he states: "Der Aufklärung ist die Irreversibilität von Lernprozessen eigen, die darin begründet ist, daß

The binary or dualistic model of the students and the workers opposing the ossified governing generation – a kind of basic 'us versus them' model of youthful rebellion as represented, for example, by our young worker in his initial move into political action – was a necessary model for establishing a beach-head for radical social change. With the progression of the student movement beyond 1968, the category of oppositionality itself begins to show its fractious nature, especially with the emergence of the Red Army Faction (RAF). The splintering of the homogeneous and male-dominated student movement of the late 1960s into the women's movement, environmentalist groups, gay rights activism, *Sponti*-movement etc. is well documented.[46] The shifting definitions of categories such as opposition, rebellion, revolution or even utopia relate to the crumbling myth of the collective, in this case the students as collective whole.

Let us examine two foundational quotations that shed some light on the inscription of nostalgia on utopia, and vice versa, then proceed with our examination. While DeKoven's book situates the utopian discourse in the evolution of postmodernism, Boym ascribes a utopian value to nostalgia and approaches the concept as a historical endpoint of the twentieth century. She

---

Einsichten nicht nach Belieben vergessen, sondern nur verdrängt oder durch bessere Einsichten korrigiert werden können" (Habermas "Eintritt" 752).

[46]It must be said that the student movement emerges from diverse groups such as anti-nuclear weapons activists, adherents of groups such as *Subversive Aktion*, and then coalesced around the *Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*, the SDS. By the later sixties and early seventies, political flyers and posters illustrate the tensions amongst various left-wing student groups and the SDS, between each other, liberal and conservative groups; there seems to be a general discord and the unity of the late sixties was in all likelihood chimeric or fleeting, at best. See also Sabine von Dirke's *All Power to the Imagination* (1997), especially chapter 3, "Post-1968 Blues: Spontis, Violence, and New Subjectivity.

writes:

> The twentieth century began with a futuristic utopia and ended with nostalgia. Optimistic belief in the future was discarded like an outmoded spaceship sometime in the 1960s. Nostalgia itself has a utopian dimension, only it is no longer directed toward the future. Sometimes nostalgia is not directed toward the past either, but rather sideways. The nostalgic feels stifled within the conventional confines of time and space. (Boym xiv)

In the latter two sentences, Boym captures the essence of the utopia-nostalgia dialectic, as it pertains to the concerns of this project, namely, as integrally linked concepts that do not move through history in a linear fashion. Whether Boym's generalization about the historical trajectory of the twentieth century is entirely accurate is a debate for another time, however, here we will hold on to the location of nostalgia's emergence in the sixties, in order to compare DeKoven's argument about utopia and the postmodern. She writes:

> Where modernism represented fragmentation but yearned, in the light of its master narratives, for unity, wholeness, and synthesis, postmodernism, in its decentering and diffusion of dualistic structures of domination, generally embraces fragmentation. Where modernism was lodged in a powerful desire for utopian transcendence, postmodernism is suspicious of the failed, oppressive utopias of modernity, and represents its persistent utopian desire in displaced, limited, post-utopian or anti-utopian terms. (DeKoven 16)

I would not disagree entirely with this argument, yet I would like to suggest that postmodernism's "persistent utopian desire," as DeKoven labels it, drives utopia toward the nostalgic turn Boym identifies above. Both DeKoven and Boym recognize a change in the utopian perspective, it is a disillusioning of a modernist vision of a better future; our young worker's narrative epitomizes the nostalgic view on utopia, as represented in literary form. His report presents a suspicious

view of the failed socialist revolutionary utopia, as the reference above to the "revolutionäre Schwätzer" as "Papiertiger" suggests. But such a memory project is necessarily a return, a *nostos*, to a utopian space it (re)constructs, and this (re)construction is where literary endeavours become the interstice of utopia and nostalgia.

Utopia and Nostalgia have been misunderstood as purely temporal categories, looking forward and backward in time, respectively.[47] As Hayden White points out in his 2005 lecture,[48] "The Future of Utopia," Thomas More's ideal nation state was contemporaneous with his own context; it was outside the known system, geographically and politically, and therefore it is assumed that it must be temporally removed, into the future as a not-yet-being. Nostalgia functions similarly, in my view; it is about the return to an idealized home which is presumed to exist or have existed in some past time. This is the apparently utopian moment of nostalgia, namely, the arrival at the moment of reconstitution of this past in the *future*. There is however a problem, for as I have just argued, utopia is actually not primarily a temporal category; in fact, this *future* is the space outside current reality, plausible but impossible, just like More's island of Utopia. The actually utopian moment of nostalgia is its extemporaneousness, what Boym calls its sideways orientation.

---

[47]In fact, in *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Frederic Jameson considers temporality a category of modernity, whereas postmodernity has tended more toward spatiality, specifically in the chapter, "Utopianism at the end of Utopia."

[48]http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/media/05/342_future_utopia_history/index.html

The three literary texts under the microscope in this study contain, to varying degrees, nascent characteristics of the shift toward the postmodern, which is not to say they negate modernity. Thinking back to Habermas's idea of the rebellious aspect of modernity and the tradition, Foucault's, "What is Enlightenment?" (1978), amends the notion somewhat, stating: "[m]odernity is often characterized in terms of consciousness of the discontinuity of time: a break with tradition, a feeling of novelty, of vertigo in the face of the passing moment" (1984, 39). Perhaps 1968 represents such a passing moment, and the shift of the post-1968 phase is the passing of novelty, but our authors create a literary space that seeks to represent rupture with or revolt against the tradition, in a re-appropriation of that tradition's terms. Postmodern spatiality is the realm, modern temporality is the object of representation. Utopia is a spatial ideal and nostalgia is the return that occurs in that idealized space, calling attention to the modernist trouble with temporality and tradition. Our authors engage this idea through their specific dialogue with the literary tradition – Schneider's rewriting of a nineteenth century narrative, Enzensberger's challenge to the documentary form and its ideals, and Vesper's crisis of subjectivity and personal connection to the dystopia of the National Socialist history. Again, it should be noted that the postmodern impulse is functioning here as a catalyst as the entwinement of utopia and nostalgia becomes increasingly visible and readable.

So how, then, is the idea of nostalgia constituted as such a crucial element in the shifting utopian perspective, as understood in the current project? Well, as

mentioned above, Boym identifies two tendencies in the kinds of nostalgia that exist, and these serve as a useful starting point for our understanding of the approach. She writes:

> Restorative nostalgia puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance. The first category of nostalgics do not think of themselves as nostalgic; they believe that their project is about truth. This kind of nostalgia characterizes national and nationalist revivals all over the world, which engage in the antimodern myth-making of history by means of a return to national symbols and myths and, occasionally, through swapping conspiracy theories. Restorative nostalgia manifests itself in total reconstructions of monuments of the past, while reflective nostalgia lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in dreams of another place and another time. (Boym 41)

The latter form of nostalgia, the reflective, recalls the Romantic mindset; one need only think of Caspar David Friedrich paintings of apparently medieval ruins, or Novalis's Heinrich von Ofterdingen who lingers on the traces of an exotic poetic past. The documentary form we will encounter in Enzensberger's novel and the documentary elements in Vesper's and Schneider's texts, resonate with Boym's category of restorative nostalgia; its fragmentary, multi-perspectival and ultimately contradictory representations of the past only highlight how restorative nostalgia exposes its reflective nostalgic character. What becomes clear is that restorative and reflective nostalgia constantly revert and convert into one another, and anywhere there is a project seeking some form of final and totalizing truth, the fractiousness and fragmentary emerge and colour the endeavour – another instance of the influence of the postmodern impulse. I would suggest this exposition of the dynamic and dialectical tendencies Boym identifies in nostalgia

is particularly well suited for treatment by the documentary form. The more subjective narratives that comprise Schneider's and Vesper's texts fall more clearly into the category of reflective nostalgia and thus into the yearning beyond the present. Schneider's text quite literally represents the ruins of history, while Vesper's is trying to build a narrative out of various historical ruins. In any case, ruins form the linking mnemonic moment between Boym's kinds of nostalgia and also between nostalgia and its utopian elements.

The dynamic interaction of utopia and nostalgia calls attention to the function of 'tradition' in the cultural shift. Boym links 'tradition' to 'revolution:' "The modern opposition between tradition and revolution is treacherous. *Tradition* means both delivery—handing down or passing on a doctrine—and surrender or betrayal. *Traduttore*, *traditore*, translator, traitor. The word *revolution*, similarly, means both cyclical repetition and the radical break. Hence tradition and revolution incorporate each other and rely on their opposition" (Boym 19).[49] In the German post-1968 context, the writing of history, the representation of the past, however recent, became caught in this inter-dependent opposition, and the literature of the time is particularly implicated, because it had been the primary vehicle of the cultural tradition, yet often sought to undermine it, for example, during the phase of the putative death of literature. However, as the latter appears more and more as myth in the course of the post-1968 phase, the

[49]Boym makes a point similar to Albert Camus on the definition of *revolution*, for in *The Rebel*, Camus says today's revolutionaries are tomorrow's policemen; he sees the cyclical nature of revolution as its central problem. We will revisit some of Camus's ideas in our last chapter.

literary texts at the centre of this project exhibit a more critical relationship to the cultural representations and re-workings of the past, revolutionary moments – at least attempts at them – included. Importantly, though, our authors, including the young worker-narrator, rely on tropes and genres generated from the tradition and the contradictions inherent within it; for instance, the documentary form, the subjective narrative perspective, the confession and autobiographical currents.

Peter Uwe Hohendahl sees the transitional phase between the late sixties and early seventies as a period of inventory and assessment of the tradition:[50] "Es geht nicht mehr wie bei Lukacs und Adorno um die Struktur des Kunstwerkes unter den Bedingungen des fortschreitenden Kapitalismus, es handelt sich um eine Bestandsaufnahme der zerbröckelnden oder schon verlorenen kulturellen Traditionen, an der die Erzeugung von Kunst überhaupt gebunden war" (Hohendahl 296).[51] What is referred to as the 'radical loss of tradition' constitutes the heart of this crisis, but is this not nostalgic thinking? Certainly, Hohendahl's imagery of crumbling traditions recalls Boym's dual categorization of nostalgia. Schneider's, Enzensberger's and Vesper's texts are, in their respective ways, intensely engaged in a dialogue with tradition, history and cultural production,

---

[50] In his article "Politisierung der Kunsttheorie: Zur ästhetischen Diskussion nach 1965"(1980), from *Deutsche Literatur in der Bundesrepublik*, referred to hereafter as 'Hohendahl.'

[51] Here Hohendahl is referring to the cultural thinking and mood of the nineteen seventies and he situates the origin of this thinking in 1972 with Habermas's essay on Benjamin, "Bewußtmachende oder rettende Kritik – Die Aktualität Walter Benjamins," which is found in Habermas's *Kultur und Kritik*, 1973.

and not merely accounting for its crumbling loss.[52]

Part of the task of the present chapter is to illustrate connections between our main three authors, in so far as they exist, in the continuing process of framing the chapters that follow in a cultural discourse struggling with tradition. An essay celebrating the sixtieth birthday of Enzensberger, entitled, "Bildnis eines melancholischen Entdeckers,"[53] by Peter Schneider, provides a particularly interesting example of how the latter viewed the former in terms of the literary past. Schneider recasts the image he held of his writer colleague in the sixties as a key strand in the connective tissue between a lost or forgotten German cultural tradition.

> Ich versuche, mir das Bild in Erinnerung zu rufen, das ich mir in den sechziger Jahren von ihm machte. Vom Inbild des deutschen Dichters, auf die man damals in germanistischen Seminaren trainiert wurde, schien keiner weiter entfernt zu sein als Hans Magnus Enzensberger. Der Dichter als Schmerzensmann, dem Wahnsinn und dem Selbstmord gleichermaßen nahe – mit diesem Muster war die Ein-Mann-Firma HME nicht recht kompatibel. Seine rebellischen Verse und glitzernden Essays waren ein Gegengift gegen das faustische Suchen, das Kleistische Verzweifeln, das Georgeische Raunen und Gründeln. Er knüpfte an literarische Traditionen an, die seit der Vertreibung und Ermordung der Juden als etwas Fremdes, irgendwie Undeutsches erschien: an das luftige Erbe von Heine und Tucholsky, an die Kunst der leichten Hand, der Respektlosigkeit, der pointenfrohen Zuspitzung und Übertreibung. (Schneider "Bildnis" 138)

---

[52] As Habermas notes in his essay on Benjamin, the latter sees the cultural tradition as follows: "Nicht unter dem historischen Gesichtspunkt der aufgespeicherten Kulturgüter betrachtet Benjamin die Dokumente der Kultur, die zugleich solche der Barbarei sind, sondern unter dem kritischen Gesichtspunkt, wie er sich steif ausdrückt, des Zerfalls der Kultur 'in Güter, die der Menschheit ein Objekt des Besitzes' werden können" (Habermas *Kultur und Kritik* 305). Tradition, then, demands constant critical evaluation, and not simply lamenting a lost culture or an attempt to save and amass it.

[53] In Rainer Wieland's (ed.), *Der Zorn altert, die Ironie ist unsterblich* (1999). To be cited henceforth as 'Schneider "Bildnis."'

This quotation from the late nineteen nineties is a prime example of nostalgic idealization, in as much as it is a laudatory, celebratory reflection, yet Schneider raises the issue of the perception of the tradition. A phrase such as, "das luftige Erbe," (that is, in effect, also utopian), strikes one, in particular because Schneider presents Enzensberger's work as precisely the antidote to the literary "Muff von tausend Jahren." Schneider situates Enzensberger in an apparently un-German German tradition, which, despite appearing "irgendwie Undeutsch," represents a significant and forgotten aspect of the cultural tradition.[54] Re-connecting with the literary tradition does not necessarily mean engaging an academic nostalgia for the 'classical' German literary figures studied in the decades following the war – Enzensberger represents a challenge to the dogmatic and canonical view of literary history, in the eyes of Schneider, the one-man company that could perhaps actually lay claim to a real attempt to 'kill' the academic study of German literature, as it had been known.[55] The notion that the tradition could be rebellious (if not revolutionary), is vital to the utopian impulse of the authors of the student movement, and the fact that someone over the age of thirty could embody this rebelliousness seems radical enough in a youth revolt. What is more, the authors of this rebellious "other" tradition – an idea that should be problematized elsewhere – especially Heine, experienced post-activistic or post-

[54]The comparison to Heine is apt, as Enzensberger's work consisted largely of poetry and essayistic writing, similar to Heine, and moreover, Enzensberger was something of an outsider, like Heine, as he was roughly fifteen years older than the average age of Schneider's (and Vesper's) generation of student activists.

[55]I am referring here to the slogan from the student protesters, "*schlagt die Germanistik tod, macht die blaue Blume rot!*" which I discuss in chapter 4.

revolutionary disillusionment and represented it poetically.[56] This would be what Schneider himself would do with his *Lenz*, although in prose. The main idea here, in terms of the current project, is that Schneider presents a sense of the literary tradition that had been lost, and figures such as Enzensberger, bring about a re-connection, a renewed relationship to the literary past, which would prove to be indispensable in the post-1968 phase.

'New Subjectivity' (...new Romanticism?)

We must approach the idea of the post-1968 context with a critical eye toward historicizations that rely on a narrative of disillusionment to characterize the early nineteen seventies and in doing so, ask ourselves the questions, how do scholars define and delineate this period that came to be known as the 'New Subjectivity?' How does the entwinement of utopia and nostalgia interact with or even constitute such a paradigm? And, how do our literary texts engage this concept; are they inscribed with a new subjectivity? They are certainly characterized by a relationship to the past which Schneider and Vesper thematize subjective, and reflective narratives of personal history, while Enzensberger problematizes the objectivity of the documentary, by presenting the subjective construction of historical narrative. The 'New Subjectivity' is first and foremost another cultural

[56] I am thinking here in particular of Heine's *Romanzero* (1851) which thematizes the failure of the revolutions of 1848, especially in the collection's first book, the *Historien*. It should also be noted that Heine did most definitely engage the theme of suffering, being the "Dichter als Schmerzensmann" whom Schneider derides, so the latter's assessment of this playfully ironic Heine really only comprises one aspect of this complex literary figure.

paradigm, not a dominant or determining one, rather a strain of culture that goes hand in hand with the postmodern impulse or at least the early markers thereof, and the nostalgic inscription of utopia.[57] Our young worker narrator's report, his memory project that describes his political activity by way of the subjective first-person narrative account (yet the narrator remains anonymous), provides an example of the tension between the individual and the political collective, and how the turn to a subjective narration represents the attempt to confront the interaction with that broader collective. The text demonstrates the subjective reflection on a narrative of personal history, and thus exhibits tendencies we will discuss as part of the nineteen seventies literature. We also remember that this narrator figure represents an uncommon and idealized type, namely, the intellectual worker. In the report, there is a particular confessional moment at which the narrator appears to believe he is betraying the values of the communist party, when he wins an election to the workers' council (*Betriebsrat*). Seeing this as a victory against rightist forces amongst the workers in the factory, he states: "Ich habe diese Erfolge in erster Linie als Erfolg der Partei empfunden, aufgrund der ‚Anleitung' durch die Betriebszelle usw. Ich hatte natürlich auch selbstsüchtige Dünkel, etwa: ich bin ja vielleicht doch besser als die anderen, in

[57]Habermas comments on the post-1968 cultural shift in his article, "Herbert Marcuse über Kunst und Revolution," in which cites the example of Marcuse's impact on the protest generation. He links the latter to a Romantic sensibility and argues that a significant number of Marcuse's adherents are forming cultures, "deren schon wieder kommerzialisierte Stimmung mit dem Modewort Nostalgie belegt wird" (Habermas *Kultur und Kritik* 348). Habermas's criticism is interesting in so far as it illustrates a perception of the negative value of nostalgia, which appears almost as a consequence of the 'end of utopia.' This does not represent my position here, and a detailed discussion of Marcuse-Habermas dialogue is a topic for another project.

den anderen Betrieben klappt es nicht so gut" (*Wir warn...* 116). The language is that of guilt – "selbstsüchtige Dünkel" is the telling phrase, and the narrator spends time convincing himself that it is the Party, not he, who has had success, while entertaining (the very real) possibility that he is just better, perhaps smarter, than his competition. He is, of course, allergic to the idea of competition, in the capitalistic sense. His reflections portray the inscription of doubt in the process, expressed here as feelings of guilt at personal success, using the personal pronoun, *ich*, repeatedly, especially in reference to his subjective perception of the events through the verb, *empfinden*.

Historically speaking, the young worker's text could be placed squarely in the period referred to as *Neue Empfindsamkeit* or *Neue Subjektivität*, which some scholars[58] consider a literary epoch or movement, implying some kind of programmatic coherence. There does seem to have been a sense that a broader cultural inward turn was occurring in the first half of the nineteen seventies. The equation is made between subjectivity (or sensibility/sensitivity) and nostalgia, and seems tantamount to resignation and escapist yearning – a position we will challenge. *Der Spiegel* of January 29, 1973, identifies this turn as nostalgia, and in the front page article, titled "Nostalgie: Das Geschäft mit der Sehnsucht," presents what it sees as the nostalgic mood of the early 1970s, in the wake of the

---

[58]For instance, Karen Ruoff-Kramer in her 1994 book, *The Politics of Discourse: Third Thoughts on 'New Subjectivity'*, in which she discusses the problematics surrounding the various binary oppositions created in the discourse of New Subjectivity versus the *littérature engagé* of the sixties, concluding that the ostensible paradigms are completely shiftable and malleable. This may seem fairly obvious now, but Ruoff-Kramer's book represents a detailed semantic study of categories such as the 'personal' and the 'political' in the German intellectual discourse of the nineteen seventies.

highly politicized 1960s. "Daß Nostalgie häufig Weltflucht, fast immer jedenfalls Abkehr von der gegenwärtigen Tagespolitik ist, mutmaßt auch der linke Schriftsteller Gerhard Zwerenz: 'Es hat den Anschein,' so formulierte er in einem melancholischen Abgesang auf die politisch bewegten endsechziger Jahre, 'als sei die Nostalgie das Erbe einer jeden Welle von Aktivismus. Wahrscheinlich beruht sie auf Enttäuschungen, die aus der Bahn werfen'" (*Der Spiegel* January 29, 1973, 99). The present project seeks precisely to demonstrate the inaccuracy of this generalization. There is undeniable disillusionment, represented in all three of the literary texts discussed in later chapters. Nostalgia is most definitely a response, if not the necessary inheritance of activism, to this disillusionment; yet what should be clear is that nostalgia does not negate the old utopian impulse, rather it nuances and challenges its parameters, in so far as it recalls and reconfigures a relationship to the past. The young worker's narrative does exactly this, and does not simply seek to abscond from reality with the baggage of disillusionment. In his closing sentence he states: "Im übrigen zeigt mir meine jetzige politische Arbeit, daß der glatte Rückzug aus jeglicher Politik nicht die einzige Alternative ist zum realitätsfernen Bewußtsein oder zum schlechten Gewissen, wie es die ML-Bewegung erzeugt hatte" (*Wir warn...* 126). This sort of statement seeks to overcome the language of guilt mentioned above, but more importantly for us, it reflects on the one hand, the sentiment expressed at the end of Schneider's *Lenz*, when as we will see, the protagonist resolves simply to say where he is, without giving in to utter resignation. On the other hand, there is a sense of a political

movement having run its course, something expressed at the end of Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, but here too the feeling is not one of resignation or defeat, rather there is an impulse of rescuing the past.[59]

A scholarly view similar to the one cited in *Der Spiegel*, and one I argue against, can be found in the article "Neue Subjektivität: Zur Literatur der siebziger Jahre in der Bundesrepublik," by Helmut Kreuzer.[60] He speaks of a 1970s literature distinct from the 1960s. "Die heranwachsende Intellektuellengeneration in der Bundesrepublik wich, soweit sie sich nicht anzupassen bereit war, zu einem beträchtlichen Teil in eine unpolitisch-mystische, teilweise auch anarchistisch beeinflußte 'Gegenkultur' aus" (Kreuzer 93). Kreuzer also points out that insanity played a renewed role and furthermore he states that, "[d]as literarische Feuilleton spricht vom 'Aufzug der neuen Romantiker.'[61] Der Rückbezug auf die Zeit um 1800 (und immer wieder auch auf Georg Büchner) wird in der Tat bewußt vollzogen" (Kreuzer 95). Our texts are to some extent forerunners and forebears of this tendency, for they contain these tendencies but make visible that the paradigm has to be revised.

Sabine von Dirke presents another view of the issue, stating: "Literary critics coined the label New Subjectivity, which is today often used to designate

---

[59]Given that Vesper's novel is a fragment, i.e. that he committed suicide before completing it, there cannot really be much of a comparison with its ending. The other two texts exist as completed works and hence I ascribe particular significance to their closing sentences.

[60]In: Manfred Durzak (ed.), *Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Ausgangspositionen und aktuelle Entwicklungen* (1981). Cited as 'Kreuzer.'

[59]Kreuzer is quoting Hannelore Schlaffer's article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* from May19, 1979.

the 1970s as a coherent literary epoch" (von Dirke 69),[62] but she goes on to argue that this is a problematic generalization that does not actually pay tribute to the complexity of the literature of the time, seeing it as a direct response to the 'failed' student movement of the late nineteen sixties. Von Dirke advocates the reasonable position that, "[a]lthough a single epithet such as New Subjectivity does not suffice to capture the complexity of the literature of the time, it nevertheless articulates the dominant paradigm" (von Dirke 70).[63] This sense of a new paradigm basically works for our current project, although I would like to limit it further, identifying the 'New Subjectivity' as *an* important paradigm – opting for the indefinite over the definite article – and furthermore, I am not arguing for a clear and decisive paradigm shift, but rather a shifting cultural emphasis. Identifying a paradigm is unsatisfying as a definition, and while the boundaries of the 'New Subjectivity' are murky and we are not labelling it a literary epoch (in the sense of Romanticism, for example), there is a distinct sense that the literary texts at the heart of this project contain some of the stuff of a feasible definition of the post-1968 literature. I am thinking here of the nostalgia-utopia dynamic, specifically, as it relates to literary discourse returning to places

---

[62] In *All Power to the Imagination* (1997), cited as 'von Dirke.'

[63] One of the texts von Dirke identifies as a key reflection on this paradigm is Michael Rutschky's *Erfahrungshunger: ein Essay über die Siebziger Jahre* (1980). He argues that the seventies brought forth a dichotomy between the inner-world and the outside-world, evolved from the utopia of the sixties we saw illustrated in the first section of this chapter. The new utopia is a utopia of uncertainty, Rutschky claims. "Diese Utopie, die Sehnsucht nach einem ganz Anderen, das in jeder Fixierung verraten scheint, tritt in den siebziger Jahren besonders kraß zutage in Manifestationen der Subkultur, die mit dem Zerfall, der Auflösung, der Zerstörung der Protestbewegung entstanden ist" (Rutschky 58).

forgotten or ignored in Adenauer era *Germanistik* – Schneider's article on Enzensberger, cited at the end of the last section, bespeaks this return, challenging the tired stereotypes of the German literary tradition. This 'New Subjectivity' is reviving *Germanistik* and, with its appropriation of the 'inappropriate' tradition: Büchner, Heine and maybe even Novalis, simultaneously 'killing' the academic discipline, i.e. breaking the conservatism of fifties and sixties *Germanistik* by turning back to the nineteenth century but focussing on an alternative set of authors, whose works offer a more progressive view of Romanticism and the literature around it.

Kreuzer alluded to this important point about the post-1968 phase, namely, the echo of Romanticism. There is reasonable justification for using the Romantic sensibility as a sounding board, if not a point of reference, for the intellectuals and cultural producers of the post-student movement era. The preoccupation with the theory-praxis tension, the transposition and retelling of stories (*Lenz*), narrating history, the problem of the self – which is related to the theory-praxis problematic. To be more specific, Vesper's work on Novalis establishes an intimate knowledge and a certain engagement in that narrative of the German literary tradition. As we will see, Novalis's influence is also verifiable in Vesper's work in his attempts to transcend reality by aestheticising it – not to mention Novalis's ruminations on narcotic intoxications as a means of attaining this transcendence.[64] Moray McGowan writes on the topic of a new

[64]I am referring here to Novalis's *Hymnen an die Nacht* which celebrate the *Rausch*, the high of

Romantic sensibility that, "[t]his 'resublimation' of the art 'desublimated' in the 1960s might seem to be a contribution to [Peter] Schneider's 'Mobilisierung der Wünsche gegen die Wirklichkeit,'[65] which would be yet another hidden continuity with the 1960s" (McGowan 67).[66] The thrust of McGowan's argument is that the ostensible break between the student movement of the sixties and the 'New Subjectivity' is more myth than reality and that the former was imbued with a Romantic spirit. Romanticism must itself not be seen as entirely consistent and unchanging, and it would be even more problematic to call the sixties and seventies a repetition of an ill-defined Romanticism; there is, rather, something I view as consistent with DeKoven's notion that Romanticism had experienced constantly shifting emphases, and these resonances are present in the post-1968 phase. McGowan, for instance, identifies a disillusionment and pessimism in the seventies and attributes the "neo-Romantic pessimism" of the time to the perception of another "failed Enlightenment" (McGowan 67).

In her book, *Representation and its Discontents* (1992), Azade Seyhan writes about the problem of precisely this post-Enlightenment and post-

---

opiates, alcohol and sex; similarly, Vesper's novel explores the *Rausch* of LSD. Luckscheiter writes of *Die Reise* that: "Zur ‚Dekolonisierung' des eigenen Ich und zur Erlangung der von Reimut Reiche dringend empfohlenen ‚neuen Sensibilität' boten sich Rauschmittel an, die den Größenwahn förderten und dem Ich eine geradezu göttliche Perspektive verschafften" (Luckscheiter 156).

[65]In Schneider's famous article, "Die Phantasie im Spätkapitalismus" (*Kursbuch* 16, 1969), although McGowan is citing from Schneider's *Ansprachen* (1970), 37. In an interview in *The German Quarterly* (*GQ*). Schneider reflects on his 1969 article as, "ein gut geschriebenes, aber total verblendetes Stück, an dem sich studieren lässt, wie sich jemand in diesem Wir-Gestrüpp total verirren kann" (Schneider *GQ* 12).

[66]In his article, "Neue Subjektivität," in *After the 'Death of Literature.' West German Writing of the 1970s*. Cited as 'McGowan.'

revolutionary moment in German Romanticism. Let us briefly examine a few points that may shed some comparative light on our project. Seyhan argues that Romanticism, particularly the Jena School,[67] is a response to Enlightenment thinking: "Clearly positioning themselves against the representational conceit of philosophy and the noncontradiction rules of logic, the Romantics demonstrate that the critical adventure of art and literature thrives on moments of discontinuity, rupture, and reversal" (Seyhan 3).[68] She goes on to say, "[t]he problem of representation is inherent to the never fully answered question of how philosophical or literary language can mediate and account for the world of experience and for concepts" (Seyhan 4). These two statements on the Romantics could apply in a very similar manner to the period ending the sixties protest movement and beginning the seventies 'New Subjectivity.'[69] The literary and intellectual response to Immanuel Kant's notion of the noumenal world and the representation and by extension experience thereof are the key concerns in early Romanticism, whereas it seems experience, framed as 'authenticity,' is the (perhaps somewhat clichéd) ideal underlying the post-1968 era. This is a function of the collectivization of experience in the protest movement, whose emphasis

---

[67]It is worth noting that Novalis is considered part of the Jena School, and his literary presence inhabits certain moments of our project, especially in the final chapter.

[68]This reminds us of Foucault's discussion of 'modernity,' in "What is Enlightenment," where he alludes to the break with tradition and discontinuity of time, we discussed above.

[69]In "Der Postmoderne Impuls," Luckscheiter points to Leslie Fiedler's early assessment of a Romantic sentiment in the cultural landscape: "Die Gegenwart schätzte Fiedler als apokalyptisch, antirational, betont romantisch und sentimental ein, [...]. Damit erklärte er die Marxisten, die im deutschen Literaturbetrieb den Ton anzugeben schienen, zu Epigonen eines längst überwundenen Denkens" (Luckscheiter 152-53).

was not on the individual.[70] The problem is, historical and political thinking were becoming central to experience, and with the questions the younger generation had to ask of its parents came the very personal feeling of the weight of modern German history.

The burden of tradition, or at a minimum the dictation of what constitutes the 'appropriate' tradition, is the common ground between the Romantics and the post-1968ers. More precisely, a common approach to the tradition, through nostalgia, comprises the link, nostalgia as utopian enterprise that seeks out and yearns for the non-traditional tradition; in the case of the Romantics this would have been the idealized German middle ages, in the post-1968 phase it is the reconnection with tabooized elements of the cultural and political past – again thinking of Schneider's description of Enzensberger, cited above. In the attempt to answer our question of where and how nostalgia is inscribed in utopia, and vice versa, it is worth returning to Svetlana Boym's text. The following quote connects nostalgia and Romanticism nicely:

> Nostalgia, like progress, is dependent on the modern conception of unrepeatable and irreversible time. The romantic nostalgic insisted on the otherness of his object of nostalgia from his present life and kept it at a safe distance. The object of romantic nostalgia must be beyond the present space of experience, somewhere in the twilight of the past or on the island of **utopia** [my emphasis] where time has happily stopped, as on an antique clock. At the same time, romantic nostalgia is not a mere antithesis to progress; it undermines both a linear conception of progress and a Hegelian dialectical teleology. The nostalgic directs his gaze not only backward but sideways, and expresses himself in elegiac poems and ironic fragments, not in philosophical or scientific treatises. Nostalgia remains unsystematic and unsynthesizable; it seduces rather than

[70]See note above, where Schneider refers to the "Wir-Gestrüpp."

convinces. (Boym 13)

Being careful to emphasize the comparison, and not equation, Boym's statement certainly establishes the possibility of recognizing some common ground between the post-1968 phase and Romanticism. What the quotation does not address is any sort of explicit political dimension to romantic nostalgia, although the concept of 'progress' and the image of the island of utopia allude to a political discourse. The nostalgic gaze, reflective nostalgia, is crucially literary – we view the books that represent a view backward, sideways, and even inward – and this is an important consideration for our project. However, our texts problematize the gaze more consciously, especially with respect to the experience of the present which is central to the post-1968 period, for it is no longer viable to insist on the otherness of the object of nostalgia when it is precisely the construct of the self and its present/presence that our texts explore. If we consider the utopian element in nostalgia, previously established, what we have in this quotation is, I would argue, a solid summary of the issues surrounding the entwinement of utopia and nostalgia in the post-1968 phase of the dawning 'New Subjectivity.' This passage captures the modernity of nostalgia, yet suggests the effect of the postmodern impulse, demonstrated by the last sentence. In other words, nostalgia is caught in the tension of modernity expressed by Habermas as rebellion against itself and by Foucault as rupture with the past.

As we proceed with this project and the concerns outlined above, chapter one

presents a close reading of Schneider's *Lenz*; considered a seminal text of the 'New Subjectivity,' nostalgia and utopia express their entanglement through the central metaphor of the road. The insistence on otherness, to paraphrase Boym, becomes a yearning for removal from the present, both temporally and spatially. The protagonist, Lenz, leaves post-1968 Berlin for Italy, evoking the long tradition of the German southward gaze. It is in Trento that Lenz finds the place Boym describes as, "somewhere in the twilight of the past or on the island of utopia where time has happily stopped" (Boym 13), in the form of a factory with politically active and intellectually interested workers – not unlike our worker narrator we have been discussing in this chapter. The key idea in this text will be the final note of ambivalence – summed up as "dableiben" after the experience of the road – which is not to be confused with resignation or disillusionment, again the parallel to the young worker's final thoughts in his report is appropriate.

Chapter two approaches Enzensberger's documentary project, *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, as a return to the literary strategy of setting a politically sensitive or critical narrative outside Germany, while constantly eliciting parallels to the contemporary situation in that country. Of course, Enzensberger did not have the same board of censorship to circumvent, but the legal and political climate we have discussed in this chapter generated an atmosphere approaching censorship. More importantly, though, the particular historical narrative of the Spanish anarchist leader, Buenaventura Durruti, remained relatively unknown, and as some of his aging contemporaries could still be interviewed, Enzensberger

creates a narrative from first-hand accounts and other source material, that simultaneously gives us a sense of unmediated access[71] to that narrative, while problematizing precisely the objective ideal of the documentary form. Nostalgia emerges through a return to a narrative of a utopian project, and is presented in the novel through a variety of often conflicting lenses. Here too an ambiguous ending exhibits disillusionment after the failed revolutionary project, but offers something leading away from simple resignation.

The final chapter of this dissertation project focuses on Vesper's novel fragment, *Die Reise*. Here, I examine the manifestation of the utopia-nostalgia tension as it is refracted through a concept of rebellion, specifically understood in terms of Albert Camus. Vesper's autobiographically inspired novel also combines tropes from the road narrative, the documentary, the experiential report (*Erfahrungsbericht*), in order to face a personal history that appears to be the metonymy for Germany in the mid twentieth century; the protagonist's father is unrepentant *Blut und Boden* author Will Vesper, the overt symbol for the otherwise latent fascism in the parental generation of the student activists of 1968. The generational tension amounts to a conflict of utopian (and nostalgic) visions, expressed by the literary rebellious turn toward the inner, subjective realm. On the journey inward, where an ambivalence in the experience of personal and public history also emerges, the influence of the young Romantic poet, Novalis is evident – Vesper wrote a lengthy university seminar paper on Novalis, which we

---

[71] This is a term I am borrowing from Hutcheon, which she uses in *The Politics of Postmodernism*, in the context of her discussion on postmodern representation (Hutcheon 33).

have as a fragment. The text mixes three horizons of narration – an autobiographical memory project, an attempt to portray the experience and 'revelations' of an LSD trip, and a contemporary narrative plane – which interweave to form a large fragment, the indicator of the impossibility of completing a totalizing account of experience. On this front, Vesper's project exhibits more signs of Novalis's influence, the latter having attempted a similarly grand project with *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Vesper's nostalgia turns to literary tradition and to personal and national history, in order to reflect on his present.

CHAPTER ONE

Peter Schneider's *Lenz* and the Narrative of the Road as Utopian-Nostalgic Space

It is the aim of this chapter, and the two that follow, to offer suggestions of why and how works produced in this particular historical context treat questions of utopia and its relation to the problems of history and historiography. I begin with Peter Schneider's immensely popular and iconic *Lenz* (1973)[72] which is pertinent to this project because it represents a return to the literary tradition by alluding to Georg Büchner's early nineteenth century narrative, adapting some of its central concerns to the context of the early nineteen seventies. In my attempt to shed new light on this text, some crucial questions arise: can utopian ideas function as an erasure of historical barbarism and then lay the foundation for what we could call a comfortable co-existence with the past? Why, in the seventies, does Peter Schneider rework Georg Büchner's *Lenz* (which is perhaps the latter's least political text) into a narrative that thematizes political action? What is at stake in Schneider's re-working of this story? In *Phantasie und Kritik* (2005), Paul Michael Lützeler points out: "Büchner wurde mit seiner sozialistischen Kampfschrift *Der Hessische Landbote* und seinem Revolutionsdrama *Dantons*

[72] I am citing from the Rotbuch edition of 1973, and parenthetical references with numbers only, in this chapter, refer to this edition.

Tod von der studentisch bewegten Germanistik der 1960er und 1970er Jahre wiederentdeckt, und seine Erzählung 'Lenz' war in der Krisenphase der Studentenrevolte eine Art Kulttext."[73]

What follows is a chapter comprised of five sections, focusing on close readings of relevant textual passages. In the first section, I take a sample of some the relevant critical reception and scholarship on Schneider's text, reading it in dialogue with the central concerns of my project. I examine representative contemporary reviews of the story and trace in fairly brief fashion the scholarly interpretations generated from the late seventies through to the early twenty first century, as the discourse of the New Subjectivity dawned and gained currency as a legitimate post-1968 category of periodization. The second section seeks to delineate an interpretative approach to Schneider's narrative based upon the notion that this text is ultimately a take on the narrative of the road;[74] that is, its new purchase on the original material and its contemporary context comes from a bourgeoning cinematic and literary trope of the post-World War II era, the road movie or road story, emanating from such seminal texts as Jack Kerouac's *On the*

---

[73]This is from Lützeler's lengthy introductory chapter to the Schneider *Festschrift*, hereafter cited as '2005.'

[74]The Rotbuch edition of *Lenz* features on its cover a landscape photo with a winding road, presumably a secondary highway or *Landstraße*, prominently snaking its way from the bottom left of the picture, bisecting the countryside with intermittent disappearances behind hills, at one point juxtaposed with a railway line, then trailing off into the indeterminate distance.

Road (1957) and Dennis Hopper's film *Easy Rider* (1969).[75] The image of the road functions as metaphor for the dialectical tension between utopia and nostalgia; it is the locus of departure and return, of transcending the status quo. As such, the traditionally North American subgenre typifies the emancipatory drive of youth culture; in its western German/European manifestation this drive is confronted with the burden of historical reckoning.

In the third section I turn my attention to the question of history and historiography, specifically the literary representation of the tension between public and personal history: is there a redemptive, even emancipatory moment to be found in history? The text does not give a definitively positive or negative answer to this question. Rather, it anticipates the issues that would later be at the heart of, for instance, the *Historikerstreit*, namely, whether the Holocaust was an atrocity that could only have been perpetrated in the German historical context or simply another, albeit extreme, example of human barbarism. While, Schneider's story does not raise these issues explicitly, it does force the question of the individual's relationship to a collective history, a terrifying foundation of which, for this first post-World War II generation, is the realization of the culture's culpability in the Holocaust. Lenz is a character facing the clash of his own history with that of the collective and he is trying to find a feasible coexistence

---

[75] See Jill Lynn Talbot's dissertation, *This is not an Exit: The Road Narrative in Contemporary American Literature and Film* – cited as 'Talbot.' Talbot points out, quite appropriately, that, "[r]egardless of the continued production of and experimentation with American road narratives, there remains a lack of academic study and scholarly criticism devoted to them" (Talbot 2). There is very little in the way of theoretical work on which to ground an academic project which deals with the road narrative, in whole or in part.

with it, while striving for social and political renewal.

The fourth section deals with Lenz's social context, the people with whom he interacts and whose presence in the narrative shapes his character. Looking at his intersubjective experience includes an examination of his relationship to friends, co-workers and acquaintances from the Left-scenes of Germany and Italy. By creating various parallels and oppositions in its narrative structure and character constellation, the text teases out the contradictions faced by its protagonist, which in turn manifest themselves as a broad form of ambivalence. As a concept, ambivalence refers to the coexistence of contradictory and opposing concepts in the subject and it finds expression in extreme emotion, such as hate, or the complete lack of emotions, i.e. apathy. Politically, the resolution of contradictions is a utopian goal, the practical unattainability of which works its way into the complex of contradictions Lenz confronts, as one possible representative symbol of that generation. His journey to Italy and subsequent return form the basis for that confrontation, and the final section of this chapter, which functions as my conclusion, investigates the notion of the return. There are essentially two returns: the first occurs in the narrative, for the protagonist completes a voyage, departing from one point and returning to it, and the second return emanates from the locus of the journey, namely, Italy which consciously echoes a long German literary tradition and thus represents the literary return to a cultural tradition that had been largely rejected as affirmative and bourgeois during the height of the sixties protest movement.

The post-1968 period saw a settling of revolutionary movements into various factions; oppositional forces had integrated themselves into the dynamic of society, comfortably on its periphery. Schneider's *Lenz* illustrates and problematizes the aging of the student movement and its own contradictions, by rewriting Büchner's story of an individual's loss of his sense of self and other, in a contemporary context. Fundamentally, the imperative of the sixties is centrally articulated by Herbert Marcuse's "An Essay on Liberation" (1969), in which the students were to revitalize the dormant revolutionary potential of the proletariat – Marcuse calls the students the "ferment of hope" (60). Schneider's protagonist experiences the disillusionment of failed identification and solidarity with the workers and their work in Germany, yet discovers the apparently harmonious coexistence between intellectuals and the working class in Italy. The significance of this cannot be lost on anyone who possesses a general familiarity with German literary history. Italy as the locus of liberation and emancipation from the protagonist's anxieties and disillusionment is as old as the modern German tradition itself, and we must explore what how the emancipatory potential of such narratives is represented and developed here, in Schneider's text.

The Critical Reception - A Brief Overview

The question of Schneider's stake in re-working Büchner's novella is, I think, best answered by looking at one of the most recent scholarly interpretations of *Lenz* by Gundula Sharman. She points out that Büchner's *Lenz* (1835) was based upon the

extensive diaries of the pastor Oberlin who cared for J.M.R. Lenz and is a character in Büchner's novella. Sharman devotes a lengthy chapter of her book, *Twentieth-Century Reworkings of German Literature* (2002)[76] to the interpretative comparison of Schneider's retelling of Büchner's story. What is particularly interesting to the project at hand, is the fact that there is also a documentary basis for this fictional narrative; its genealogy as documentary is perhaps more obscured by its fictionalized and updated reworking than other explicitly documentary texts, which I deal with in the next chapter, on H.M. Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*. Schneider's text has its ancestry in the reports from Oberlin which, "describing the onset and course of J.M.R. Lenz's mental illness, stood model for Büchner's *Lenz*, albeit not as *literary* model" (100).[77] Later, Sharman reiterates the idea that Schneider's text is not a simple *Neuerzählung*, but works much more from allusion. The main difference is of course that Büchner's *Lenz* suffers from a debilitating psychological illness, while "Schneider's text, on the other hand, focuses on the political convictions and revolutionary aims of his protagonist, which are proven to be unattainable and need to be modified and softened in order to allow the individual to lead a constructive life" (Sharman 114). Büchner's text deals exclusively with subjective suffering, Schneider's deals with subjective suffering which is

[76]Which will hereafter be cited as 'Sharman.'

[77]It is important to keep in mind that Georg Büchner's academic training was medical; he was a scientist and physician, meaning he had trained in the approach to empirical evidence. This creates an interesting balance between the aesthetic beauty of the literary narrativisation and the chronological reports from the Oberlin diary. Sharman discusses this point at some length in her book.

suppressed and therefore exacerbated by his own ideological leanings in the socio-political context that deferred to the collective, which is associated with the objective. The tension between the personal and the public characterizes a central shift in the early seventies, and forms one of the central conflicts of Schneider's text.[78]

The fact that there is this template for Schneider's text causes a certain anxiety in any discussion because of the question prior to any interpretation, namely, what is the nature of the *Urtext*'s influence on the writing and reading of this new version? Does the *Lenz* of 1973 have a literary dependence on its predecessor? The answer in the pertinent critical literature is generally that Schneider has used the figure more as trope than as re-incarnation; it is by way of allusion and reference to the history of politics and literature signified by the Lenz-figure that Schneider's narrative resonates Büchner's text. To determine Schneider's stake in this re-working is also to understand this, his first major literary text, in the context of a primarily essayistic writing career; *Lenz*, 1973, follows on the heels of "Die Phantasie im Spätkapitalismus,"[79] *Kursbuch* 16, 1969, "Rede an die deutschen Leser und ihre Schriftsteller," *Kursbogen zum Kursbuch* 16, 1969, "Die Massen, die Gewerkschaften und die politischen Avantgarden," *Kursbuch* 26, 1971, of which Schneider was editor. It is a turn to literature that the critical reception has often held to essayistic standards of

---

[78]I return to this conflict in the context of history/historiography in Section III of this chapter.

[79]This essay was also finished and reprinted in *Atempause. Versuch, meine Gedanken über Literatur und Kunst zu ordnen* (1977).

realism and social critique.

The detailed history of the reception of Lenz is not my purpose here, but it is my intention to trace some key critical voices, and by key, I mean central to the issues of this project, i.e., historiographical and political representation in the post-1968 context.[80] The story of the book's publication, as rendered by Friedrich Christian Delius in a speech on the occasion of Schneider's 65th birthday entitled, "Peter Schneider und der ‚Lenz' als Geburtshelfer des Rotbuch Verlags,"[81] sheds some interesting light on the utopian political project of collectivity in the production and publication of literary art. As Delius's representation of the historical circumstances illustrates, that story reflected many of the issues and taboos presented in Schneider's literary text. In a parenthetical remark toward the end of that speech, Delius reminds his audience of the transgressive nature of this text within the New Left literary scene:

> Heute wird leicht vergessen, dass „Lenz" gegen viele linke Tabus verstieß wegen des Insistierens auf Emotionen und, wie man damals sagte, gegen bürgerliche Tabus, wegen des Insistierens auf einer radikalen Politik. Der selbstkritische Grundton war ebenso gewagt wie die Adaption eines klassischen Textes. Und es war noch nicht zu ahnen, dass „Lenz" der Vorläufer der später so genannten „Neuen Subjektivität" werden sollte. (Delius *PK* 95)

Delius thanks Schneider for having stood by those editors from the Wagenbach Verlag who broke away to found Rotbuch in the spirit of collectivity in

---

[80]I would direct my reader to Markus Meik's book, *Peter Schneiders Erzählung "Lenz": zur Entstehung eines Kultbuches* (1997), in which the author details the story's editorial history.

[81]Printed in the *Festschrift* for Schneider, *Phantasie und Kritik: Peter Schneider zum 65. Geburtstag* (2005). Cited as '[author] *PK*.'

publishing; the thanks is especially great because of the immense commercial success of *Lenz*. The above quotation gives us an insider's view – granted, 32 years after the book's publication – into the intellectual mood of the day, showing its definite distance to the label 'New Subjectivity' and accordingly, the criticism of *Lenz* by those Delius identifies as the "superlinke Autoren" (Delius *PK* 96) perhaps missed the self-reflexive, ironic poignancy of Schneider's story.

Let us examine some specimens of scholarly and critical writing on *Lenz* from its publication until the end of the twentieth century. An interesting example of a polemical critical reception of *Lenz* is presented by Klaus Dautel in the Journal *Sozialistische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Gesellschaft*, under the title, "LENZ. Die geschlossene Welt der politischen Gruppen und die offene Welt der endlosen Selbstreflexion."[82] To be fair, it was published in July, 1974, and the author could have no notion of what this text would come to signify in what would come to be known as the New Subjectivity; the reviewer is none the less unrepentantly ideological in his reception. There are some telling quotes proffered by Dautel, for instance: "Durch die enge Anlehnung an Büchner dokumentiert Schneider, wie sehr er dazu neigt, lediglich die Resignation des Vorbildes zu wiederholen, anstatt die realen Möglichkeiten, die ein Intellektueller heute hat, wenn er sich politisch betätigen will, und die damit verbundenen Konflikte angemessen darzustellen" (Dautel 108).

Dautel betrays any sense of a dialectical relationship between the personal

---

[82]Cited parenthetically hereafter as 'Dautel.'

and the political which allows the personal to gain even a momentary emphasis. The individual and its bourgeois ideological underpinnings as central theme in Schneider's text is, for Dautel, a counterproductive tendency and represents a missed opportunity. He goes on to say, "Im Zentrum steht das labile Individuum – der Klassenkampf, die Arbeiterklasse erfüllen lediglich den Zweck, ihm zu seiner individuellen Konfliktbereinigung zu verhelfen." The next section of the article picks up where this sentence leaves off: "Wir werfen Scheider nicht vor, daß er den schwankenden Intellektuellen thematisiert, was ihm aber vorzuwerfen ist, das ist die penible Seelenschau, die er bis zum belanglosen treibt, dergegenüber die Kämpfe der Arbeiter, Bauern und Studenten lediglich als Katalysatoren fungieren" (Dautel 110). This analysis is not actually *wrong*; it is however deeply and unabashedly ideological/polemical, and therefore interesting as a challenge to the conventional, largely positive reception of the text. Yes, Schneider focuses on the personal struggles of an individual protagonist. Yes, the political themes and issues serve to some extent as catalysts, so indeed Dautel is not completely in error. The point he has missed, in fact, had to miss, was actually a recognition that political commitment and struggle *is* a catalyst for personal struggle, as the individual is caught in the sometimes frustrating dialectic of personal and public, personal and political, individual and society or however one wants to frame it. Utopia, from his critical perspective, is still the ideological construct of the pre-1968 phase, one that does not recognize the sometimes painful influence of nostalgia and yearning for the impossible. On the contrary,

Dautel seems to embrace what should have been an out-dated idea of the simply forward-looking utopian concept. The programmatic, functionalist imperative for literature outlined by him – leaning on a Brecht quote about realism and how the realist author should not lead the readers astray, out of their reality, as motto for his review – is relatively easy to critique and is thus more useful to our project as an illustration of the tensions the narrative is trying to display, spilling into real (intellectual) life. Without knowing it, Dautel has made himself a character in the larger narrative of the conflict between the ideologies of the protest movement and the reaction to them in the dawning New Subjectivity.

I would like to mention one other critical review of *Lenz* that also appeared in 1974,[83] written by Waltraut Schröder. This reception celebrates the reanimation of literature after *Kursbuch* 15 and its consequences; Schröder writes of Schneider: "Sein Abgesang an ‚die Kunst jener verzweifelten Einzelleistungen' humanistischer Künstler, an die ‚folgenlosen Versprechen' der Literatur war zu Ende, als er es für Sinnvoll hielt, gesellschaftliche und individuelle Erfahrungen literarisch aufzuarbeiten" (Schröder 129). Here we see the beginning of an attitude toward the 'New Subjectivity' in literature, on which F.C. Delius reflects in his speech cited above. This shift in attitude is indicative of the nostalgic influence on utopia; as the postmodern impulse gains currency in the post-1968 phase, the inward turn associated with the 'New Subjectivity' is also a nostalgic memory project that creates spaces where it remembers utopian ideas. The return

[83] In *Weimarer Beiträge* (20:12), to be referred to henceforth as 'Schröder.'

to the personal and individual is the shift in emphasis toward this nostalgic aspect of the 'New Subjectivity.'

Along these lines, Schröder identifies the love story between Lenz and L. as an element in the broader theme of refocusing on the personal. "Lenz will ‚privat' erleben, was ihm seine politische Theorie von der Sinnlichkeit des Daseins versprach. So ist die Beziehung zu L. nur eine weitere Modifikation des Themas Nähe und menschliches Aufeinanderbezogenseins" (Schröder 138). Schneider has, according to Schröder, used the love story from Büchner's literary template to the end of a confrontation and settling of accounts with the New Left's inability to deal with subjective misery; this is what Delius appears to have meant when he notes that it had been daring of Schneider to adapt Büchner's classic text. Schröder's article is of interest mostly because it exhibits a historical mentality of *Abrechnung* or more precisely, *Selbstabrechnung*, of New Left authors, as she puts it at the close of her article (Schröder 139). The notion that the 'account' could be settled suggests that this issue in West German literary history has been dealt with finally, an idea I find troubling, as it wants to shut the door on a historical discourse that is seen as less successful or 'normal.'

In the more recent critical reception of Schneider's *Lenz* there does appear to be consensus on the point of historical awareness, i.e., that this story lays to rest any notion in Germany that the literary tradition is unimportant and that there can be an ahistorical new-beginning in the wake of a *Kahlschlag*. Moreover, there appears to be a recognition of the text's role as a memory project that confronts

ideas of tradition and history, but the more recent scholarship has not viewed this as a form of nostalgia. In the following, I discuss some critical articles written with greater historical distance on the literary text, when the discourse of the 'New Subjectivity' had already become common scholarly parlance, and when the nostalgic turn had been well established.[84] What is neglected is the connection between that nostalgic turn and the utopian concepts it confronts in its memory project. I suspect that contrary to Evelyne Keitel's argument that Schneider's *Lenz* can only be understood properly by those who can identify with Peter Schneider's biographical experience,[85] the situation of the text so firmly within traditional tropes and themes of German literature serves as a shoehorn into the historical narrative of this literary text. The structure of the story is described and analysed in some detail by Gundula Sharman, Malcolm Pender and Rhys Williams, all of whom identify forty-three sections and find various affinities to Büchner's original.

Malcolm Pender's article, "Historical Awareness and Peter Schneider's *Lenz*" (1984),[86] posits the story as a response to the 'Traditionslosigkeit der

---

[84]Perhaps the most disappointing article I encountered was Manfred Beller's "Lenz in Arkadien" (*Arcadia*, Sonderheft, 1978), the title of which suggests a discussion of the arcadian, i.e. utopian, themes in the story. This is not the case. Beller's is an empirical study of the reception of *Lenz* in Italy and Germany amongst various age groups and provides essentially statistical information about how each group of readers interpreted representations of their cultures and generations.

[85]A position she espouses in her article, "Verständigungstexte – Form, Funktion, Wirkung" (1984), saying: "Für Angehörige jener Gruppe, in deren Umkreis der Text [*Lenz*, 1973] geschrieben wurde und auf die die Rezeption abzielt, bietet der Handlungsverlauf Identifikationsmöglichkeiten, denn ihre politische Sozialisation dürfte ähnlich verlaufen sein" (435).

[86]To which I will refer hereafter as 'Pender.'

deutschen Literatur,' as cited from Adolf Muschg. The thesis is, ironically, that there is a tradition of denying the tradition. Pender claims, " within the framework of the 'Erzählung', Schneider's hero achieves a liberating insight into his own past. It is worth looking at Schneider's *Lenz*, a very conscious attempt to run counter to the tendency detected by Muschg, ten years after its appearance" (Pender 151). This forms part of a response the question of Schneider's stake in re-telling Büchner's story, posed in the introduction to this chapter. Pender follows a functionalistic interpretation that sees intention everywhere, without contemplating the spontaneity and disjunction of events. He writes:

> It is significant that Lenz pays two months rent in advance before he leaves Berlin (51), for his experiences in Italy are thus conditioned by his intention to return. His departure is not one of headlong flight, nor does the period in Italy represent a total break with the problems depicted in Berlin. Critical comment on *Lenz* has tended to view Italy as too stark and uncomplicated a contrast to Berlin. It is worth highlighting some aspects of the Italian section in order that its function in the 'Erzählung' be set in proper perspective. (Pender 153)

The intention to return is not an issue addressed by the text at all, it is conceivably, even certainly there, but this is not the point. Lenz buys a one-way fare to Rome, which could mean he has no intention to return, as much as paying two months' rent could signify the intention to return. In fact, neither of these things tell us much of anything, except that he pays advance rent, then buys a one-way ticket. Lenz is acting impulsively, spontaneously, with disregard for the future and a *Bildungsweg*;[87] the narrative is playful in this respect, in part because

[87] Markus Krause's article, "Zwischen Autonomie und Solidarität. Anmerkungen zum Bildungsroman der Studentenbewegung" (1990), argues that the student movement saw the re-

of its overtly parallelistic structure.

Pender addresses the crucial problem of the representation of Italy which is in the text, "a country designed to create and sustain a vision of what might be" (Pender 155). In other words, it has a utopian quality with respect to the political goals of Lenz's generation. For Pender, Italy is the locus of Lenz's confrontation with both his past and his present; for that country was, "traditionally the land which has for Germans represented a flight into an unrelated past" (Pender 156). This is a prime example of a critic missing the possible connection between nostalgia and utopia; Italy is the iconically nostalgic utopian locus. *Lenz* thematizes precisely this problematic yearning for a "flight into an unrelated past," by weaving it into the personal complexes of a protagonist in search of utopia, or at a minimum, trying to escape the failed utopian project in Germany. Pender goes on to argue that Lenz represents a new generational attitude that believes itself to be fatherless on two counts, one, because of the fathers' association with National Socialism and the fact that they remained silent on the topic of their own past, and in a second sense the younger generation was fatherless because they wanted to break with the immediate past. Pender's very sensible, if a little overly common-sensical conclusion about the confrontation with history is: "Awareness of the past, of the factors in it which condition him, contributes to Lenz's emancipation by restoring a necessary dimension to his evaluation of the present, and by helping him look towards the future" (Pender

---

emergence of this traditional bourgeois novel genre in West Germany and Schneider's *Lenz* is a prime example.

156). I feel this analysis robs the narrative and the character of the theme of a permanently tormenting relationship between the past and the present and precisely the ambivalence this creates and fosters in Lenz, which I discuss in a later section of this chapter.

Rhys W. Williams opens his article, "'Ein gewisses Maß subjektiver Verzweifelung...': Peter Schneider's *Lenz*" (1995)[88] with the argument that the "intermingling of the personal and the public" (Williams 50) is what drives the narrative, and that moreover, this emanates from Schneider's own experience as reflected in the Afterword to his *Atempause. Versuch, meine Gedanken über Literatur und Politik zu ordnen* (1977). Williams postulates that the dream Lenz has at the outset of the story presages its narrative path: "[b]ut elements of the dream also have a structural significance: the industrial setting points forward to Lenz's encounter with the world of work, the male kiss prefigures an incident with B. in Italy, while the Fellini reference points up the significance of the cinema as a frame of reference for incidents in the story and adumbrates the Italian journey which Lenz will undertake" (Williams 51). Williams situates the text squarely in the western European tradition, focussing on Handke, Sartre and Proust as intertextual points of reference; interesting to my argument below is the Proustian notion of *mémoire involontaire* which Williams recognizes early on in Schneider's text, through the evocation of guilty memories of Lenz's childhood sexuality. Williams's interpretation, I argue, points to key elements of the

[88]This is Williams's chapter in the book *Peter Schneider* (1995), edited by Colin Riordan, to be referenced hereafter as 'Williams.'

nostalgic drive behind the text, without labelling it as such. There is, for example, an involuntariness in Lenz's later, albeit more specific, recollections of his childhood, whilst in Italy, which is the nostalgic impulse. Williams thorough structural analysis of the text and its various points of reference to its Büchnerian *Urtext*, sees a definite development and progression of the protagonist along the various stations of his journey, and this is evidenced most strongly by Williams's interpretation of the story's ending. He sees Lenz as having "now recovered from his crisis," upon his return to Berlin, but more interestingly, "Lenz's dual and simultaneous perception of stasis and change which indicates the progress he has made" (Williams 66). This is a perfectly reasonable interpretation, for which Williams makes a strong case in his article; however, it does not pay enough attention to the ambiguity and ambivalent interpretative potential of the ending and the narrative as a whole. It is conceivable that Williams, like many other interpreters of Schneider, position their reading of his text a little too closely to the author's biography – which does of course form a valid sounding board and source of inspiration for the story, in its own right, although I wish to examine other interpretative possibilities.

Approaching the Text – From Urban Wandering to Road Narrative

Lenz is a text firmly rooted in the modernist project of the mid to later twentieth century and situates itself there not only by way of references to its literary intertexts but also to the filmic tradition, as for instance Williams argues. This

story is, in fact, Schneider's first major fictional prose text after the years of political speeches and articles during the student movement, and the attempt to capture the inner conflict of the left-wing student revolutionary echoes a long tradition in German literature, namely, intellectual disillusionment and the flight to Italy as emancipatory moment. The latter, of course, comprises but the second half of the narrative and juxtaposes itself with events and episodes that take place exclusively in (what we can safely assume is) Berlin, where the episodic, non-teleological and non-linear structure harkens back to the figure of the *flaneur* described by Walter Benjamin in his *Berliner Kindheit um 1900* (1933). The brevity of most of the scenes, however, leads me to submit that, *Lenz* actually takes some important cues from film, and more specifically, the American road narrative and seeks to make them its own, in a contemporary interpretation of German intellectual disillusionment and the desire for liberation from the stifling status quo.[89] The road is, as stated above, one locus of the utopia-nostalgia dynamic; it is where the journey takes place, it is the route of departure and return, in which the drive toward transcendence inheres, although transcendence here refers to a liberating act of overcoming a rigid status quo, not attaining religious insight. The desire for transcendence is something Marianne DeKoven views as distinctly modernistic, especially in the phase of modernist writing when

---

[89]Books like Rygulla and Brinkmann's *Acid* (1967) were extraordinarily influential in Germany and helped popularize American sub- and pop-cultural forms amongst the ranks of the German New Left. Anti-American sentiment was sometimes a reaction amongst student protesters, because of the war in Vietnam. Schneider, though, was by no means anti-American, as Stefan Aust pointed out in a speech on the occasion of the author's 65th birthday, asserting that Schneider never succumbed to "reflexhaften Anti-Amerikanismus" (Delius *PK*, 81).

ideas about the postmodern began to permeate the literary discourse. We remember that she claims: "[w]here modernism was lodged in a powerful desire for utopian transcendence, postmodernism is suspicious of the failed, oppressive utopias of modernity, and represents its persistent utopian desire in displaced, limited, post-utopian or anti-utopian terms" (DeKoven 16). Lenz seeks to break with his status quo; he yearns for liberation, for utopia and his quest for it is a nostalgic journey – the text reflects this nostalgia, as it is itself a return to an older narrative source and set of literary tropes and conventions, i.e. the Italian journey and novella form.

So why then does the road narrative serve as a useful interpretative foil? How does this typically North American genre function in the peculiarly German confrontation with history and politics in literature, of which Schneider speaks? As Timothy Corrigan surmises in his book, *A Cinema without Walls* (1991), the road narrative is ill-defined, because it is a genre that questions the notion of genre (Corrigan 142), but is quite often pegged as a quintessentially American sub-genre centring on an automobile journey (Corrigan 144). Jill Lynn Talbot also states that for some critics it can only be in prose text and not in film or poetry, while for others the medium or literary mode does not distinguish the road narrative. It very rapidly becomes apparent that texts or films we consider narratives of the road diverge from any norms critics try to set out. It is not my goal to pigeonhole *Lenz* and prove beyond doubt its genre affiliation, but rather it is my aim to suggest new possibilities for reading this story and I believe the

rebellious characteristics of the road narrative sub-genre will help this project.[90] Corrigan posits a few essential characteristics of the road film – now, while these are instructive points of comparison and delineation, they are, on one hand, geared toward American film, and on the other, truly only useful as suggestions in aid of reading our text, *Lenz*, in terms of a dialogue between genres and cross-cultural influences in the discourse of utopia and nostalgia. As I cite each of Corrigan's characteristics, I will comment briefly on its merit for our reading of Schneider's story.[91]

The first characteristic typical of the road narrative is: "More and more, the family unit, that oedipal centerpiece of classical narrative, begins to break apart, preserved only as a memory or desire with less and less substance." This is certainly true of Lenz. His family plays almost no role, with two exceptions, each having to do with traumatic episodes experienced with his mother. I will return to the first these memories (66) later in this chapter in favour of a closer look at a slightly longer and very telling passage near the end of the story in which he involuntarily recalls scenes from his youth in cinematic fashion. Feeling comfortable and very much at ease in Trento, the memories return: "Es gab keinen Grund, irgendetwas von sich zu verstecken. Vielleicht erlebte er deswegen ganz unerwartet Szenen aus seiner Kindheit wieder" (84). As if to play

---

[90]I should also state here that I treat filmic and literary texts, broadly speaking, as works of narrative art and therefore subject to overlapping approaches, such as here in the application of Corrigan's characteristics to Schneider's story.

[91]I will not include parenthetical citations for each of these characteristics and state only that this discussion can be found on pages 145-46 of Corrigan's book. For other quotations from this book I shall refer to it as 'Corrigan.'

with the road motif, the narrator tells us that Lenz is woken up one morning to help push a car that will not start – the machine, on which people depend for transport, now depends on human physical strength to get moving. Most significantly, though, the physical exhaustion forces Lenz to sit down in a doorway, in fact a threshold, where the following happens: "Wie er dasaß, war wieder dieser Riß da, so Stark, daß er unmöglich nur von dieser Anstrengung herrühren konnte. Lenz fiel und fiel unaufhaltsam, durch viele Jahre zurück" (84-85). Repressed memories of a fraught relationship to his mother appear as a rapid succession of images; his mother with a strange man, and Lenz's fear of abandonment; young Lenz disappearing for days with a friend, only to be beaten by his mother for this transgression; and finally, his mother's actually departure and death. The paternal absence is of course significant in as much as it is symbolic of the first postwar generation's fatherlessness, to which Pender points above.

Lenz ties mistreatment of his girlfriend, L.,[92] to a triumph over his mother and ambivalence about his culpability in her death. "Die Nachricht von ihrem Tod hatte er gleichgültig aufgenommen. Erst viel später spürte er den Riß, den es damals gegeben hatte" (85). He then admits to having been his mother's murderer, which is not literally true, of course. He provokes L. in much the same way he provoked his mother, though, by disappearing to wander aimlessly through the woods. The *Wanderlust* is clearly deep-rooted in Lenz and may

[92] Whom Paul Michael Lützeler sees as literary allusion to Lotte from *Die Leiden des jungen Werther* (Lützeler *PK* 13).

explain his restlessness and moreover his transgressive tendencies, key elements in the road narrative. Furthermore, the fact that he is lamenting a failed relationship with L., a potential life-partner, could also be viewed in terms of a failed potential for creating a family. The inversion of the oedipal dynamic, i.e. killing the mother, not the father, subverting his relationship to L., then regretting its loss throughout the story, and the brief mnemonic returns to his childhood, are consistent with Corrigan's first characteristic. Especially the closing line of this passage highlights the waning substance of the memory or desire for the preservation of the family unit, for here Lenz distances himself from his memory by recounting it to friends, who do not find his anecdote curious or devious; the final remark is: "Er merkte, daß er das Erlebnis, das er beschrieb, dadurch hinter sich ließ, daß er es beschrieb" (86). This line has something haunting for the members of Schneider's generation, when it comes to the confrontation with history, whether public or personal, and I will turn my attention to this in the fourth section of this chapter.

Corrigan's second characteristic is as follows: "Unlike other genres, such as the detective film where characters initiate events, in the road movie [or narrative] events act upon the characters: the historical world is always too much of a context, and objects along the road are usually menacing and materially assertive." I would like to focus my suggestions here on the idea that events act upon characters. The indefinite expressions of time – for example, "am anderen Morgen," "an einem Nachmittag" – that introduce many of the typographically

separated episodes speak to the indeterminacy and unintentionality of Lenz's actions, and that experience finds him and washes over his consciousness. One episode in particular delivers a particularly instructive illustration of Lenz's response to an intensely modern urban event, namely, window-shopping that becomes focussed on, of all shops, an automobile dealership (31-33). The voyeuristic perspective on the people passing shop windows, then stopping to consume visually and excitedly the novelty of the same old, though slightly redesigned products elicits a reaction that works as a metaphor for Lenz's interpretation of the post-war Federal Republic: "Vor einem VW-Salon blieb er stehen. Er sah, daß sich an den wesentlichen Bestandteilen des VW nichts geändert hatte: er hatte immer noch die gleiche Form, vier Räder, zwei Türen, er war nicht größer und nicht kleiner geworden. Gleichzeitig hatte sich etwas verändert. Er verstand die Bedeutung der Linien nicht, die er in der Ausformung der Kotflügel und der Frontscheibe bemerkte" (32). The VW car is at least dually symbolic: on one hand, its ancestor was Hitler's car for the masses and in the post-war period it represents West Germany's economic success, and it is eerily ironic of course that Hitler's vision for a mass-produced vehicle would allow that company to form part of the backbone of the *Wirtschaftswunder*. On the other hand, because of precisely this connection, Lenz's description of the car is the central critique of his protest generation, namely, that the essential parts of the system are unchanged, while something has certainly changed, something that is hard to understand. By the nineteen sixties, the VW *Käfer* had become the car of

choice for students, as an affordable mode of transport, but important for us is the VW's function as yet another symbol of the road and the road narrative.

The most obvious critique is directed at consumer culture, although it is couched in terms of a failure to identify with the masses, which speaks much more to the disjunction between the students and broader society. The question Lenz asks himself is: "was ihn die ganze Zeit daran gehindert hatte, sich für diese Veränderungen zu interessieren, und ob umgekehrt die gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen, die von ihm und seinen Freunden als groß und einschneidend wahrgenommen wurden, von den Betrachtern als unwichtig angesehen würden" (32). The failure to understand these "observers" precipitates one of the most salient passages in which the text's conceit, with respect to Büchner's original, becomes more plausible.[93]

> Er ging weiter, es wurde ihm unbehaglich, er fühlte sich ausgeschlossen. Wie die Straßen nach und nach schattiger wurden, kam ihm alles so unwirklich, so zuwider vor. Die Häuser türmten sich vor ihm auf wie Gebirge. Eine sonderbare Angst befiel ihn, er hätte der Sonne nachlaufen mögen. Er warf die Arme um den Rücken, um sich warm zu machen. Er klammerte sich an alle Gegenstände, Gestalten zogen rasch vorbei, er drängte sich an sie. Immer wieder glaubte er den Gang oder die Haare von L. zu erkennen. Er täuschte sich jedesmal. Er fing an zu laufen. Es war ihm plötzlich, als stecke er nur noch mit den Füßen bis höchstens zum Knie in der Stadt, als liefe er auf ungeheuren Stelzen durch die Straßen und wäre mit seinem übrigen Körper über die Häuser hinausgewachsen, er schrie, er sang, er wollte sich kleiner machen. (32-33)

This is one of the few allusions to any sort of mental illness, the central theme in Büchner's *Lenz*. But my focus here, at least, remains on Lenz's urban

---

[93]I would direct my reader here to Gundula Sharman's work, mentioned in my overview of the critical reception of *Lenz*. She has done extensive comparative work on the narrative.

peregrinations; these are marked by the distinct impressions of alienation and revulsion that result in a hallucinatory reaction, a style we will encounter when discussing the LSD trip scenes in Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise*. The city, in its concreteness, becomes the event that happens to Lenz, to use Corrigan's turn of phrase, and in fact, it is an event in which the city appears to assert its control over our main character or cause him to lose control of his perceptions. This also speaks to the latter part of Corrigan's second characteristic of the road narrative, namely, that "objects along the road are usually menacing and materially assertive." Lenz's phenomenological perception of the urban topography in Berlin, the familiar streets and buildings, becomes distorted and he must hold onto something for fear of falling down. I would argue that we are dealing with echoes of the common crisis of urban modernity seen in such novels as Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* (1929) or movies like Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin. Symphonie einer Großstadt* (1927) that target the confusion and alienation in the perception of life in the metropolis.

Finally, the third distinctive characteristic of the road narrative, according to Corrigan, is: "[a]s this genre develops through the fifties, the quest motif becomes increasingly mechanized through those central vehicles in a manner far different from even the industrial quests of the nineteenth and early twentieth century." Here, he is referring to the literary heritage of the road movie in travel narratives from Homer "through Chaucer, Voltaire, Fielding, Goethe, and Hogarth to Joyce's reincarnation of that original street wanderer (Corrigan 144)."

The literary travel or road narratives are defined by a quest motif which becomes increasingly mechanized and symbolic of mapping meaning onto the territory of the quest, and thus the protagonist grows, learns, i.e. achieves *Bildung*, via the vehicle.[94] In *Lenz*, though, we have a retracing of the various modes of transportation found in literary predecessors of the road narrative; he goes from urban wandering to travelling by train, to riding in various automobiles, of which the brands are almost always named, for instance Fiat or, as we saw above, VW. The latter is an ironic symbol of the road, for it is behind glass, static, stultified, hardly changed, adored as an aesthetic object of technology, perhaps even a channel for displaced national pride. Lenz's quest is to leave this environment, to undo the *Bildung* as understood by bourgeois West German society. The spontaneity with which Lenz takes his decision to travel to Italy surprises the reader, yet raises the literary expectations associated with a German travelling to Italy, with all its Arcadian potential. Lenz has no particular, stated goal other than Italy – the not-German: "Auf dem Bahnhof löste er eine einfache Fahrkarte nach Rom. Als er im Zug saß, wunderte er sich, wie schnell alles gegangen war" (51). If he is in search of something, then it is something obscure, unknown, which Corrigan comments as: "not particularly new to art, literature, or film," and continues, "it seems to me that the mechanical agency that now moves that search is very much a modern image" (Corrigan 146). In other words, Lenz's

[94]Corrigan is actually making a broader, rather convincing argument about genre and male gender constructions, with respect to the road movie and the evolution of road or travel narratives. This is not my primary interest here, although it should be kept in mind when reading *Lenz*.

spontaneous inclination to leave Germany is in no small measure possible because of modern transportation and other infrastructure networks.

Lenz cannot be considered a *Reisebericht* in the traditional sense of a travel diary in the style of Goethe's classicistic *Italian Journey* or Heinrich Heine's late Romantic *Reisebilder*. I believe, though, that the story pays homage to this tradition, which is formative in German literature, in its episodic structure and through the protagonist's subjective perspective and reflection on the world around him. The road is not only a convenient metaphor for narrative progression, it is much more a proto-utopian space, because it contains the hope of a utopian end, however, the road itself is also heavily nostalgic space. Most importantly for *Lenz*, the notion of the road is connected to a sense of restlessness, the need to move, which Lenz himself relates back to his childhood experience of constantly being on the move because of the war. The moment of epiphany here is that he feels most at home when underway, i.e., the state of liminality is home. Here the notion of nostalgia comes into play: the return home is simultaneously the state of feeling at home while trying to experience that which is not home, that which is other. This is the utopian moment, namely, striving for the good place which is no place, is not yet home but could be.

The Topography of Ruins - Public and Personal History

In 1975, Peter Schneider gave a presentation in London under the title, "Über den Unterschied von Literatur und Politik" in which he spoke on the problem of

writing during a period of political upheaval or historical transition, saying: "Wenn große Veränderungen geschehen, kann man sie nicht beschreiben. Und wahrscheinlich ist es dann besser, sich handelnd an diesen Veränderungen zu beteiligen, als auf eine literarische Eingebung zu warten" (Schneider "Vergehen" 190).[95] In other words, literary reflection is not so much called for as political *engagement*, thus apparently delineating a kind of objectivist stand for the writer of literature, who ought to wait until the 'dust has settled' before describing and thereby evaluating historical events.[96] Literature or descriptive writing does not constitute the moment of action, in this mode of thinking. In the next paragraph of his talk, Schneider seems to acknowledge that there are not simply times of upheaval followed by periods of reflection and contemplation, rather: "Erst heute, da diese Ungleichzeitigkeit von politischer und kultureller Erneuerung nicht mehr zu übersehen ist, erkenne ich darin ohne Begeisterung eine historische Kontinuität. Und dabei fällt mir ein spezifisch deutsches Merkmal dieser Ungleichzeitigkeit auf. Den Blütezeiten der Literatur ging nämlich in Deutschland meistens eine politische Enttäuschung ihrer Dichter voraus" (Schneider "Vergehen" 190). The temporal discontinuity, or non-simultaneity, of

---

[95]The text of Schneider's presentation is printed in *Literaturmagazin 5. Das Vergehen von Hören und Sehen* (1975) and reprinted in revised form as an essay in *Atempause. Versuch, meine Gedanken über Literatur und Kunst zu ordnen* (1977). I reference the original speech which is cited parenthetically as 'Schneider "Vergehen."'

[96] Schneider himself lived this distinction between political commitment and literary production, for he gave speeches and wrote articles during the years of protest and only later wrote *Lenz*. In the later essay version of this text, he says: "Solange ich aktiv an der Revolte teilnahm, habe ich außer Flugblättern und Reden nichts Nennenswertes zustande gebracht" (Schneider *Atempause* 164).

political and cultural renewal is no longer clear, which to my mind, underscores a new sense of the *Geist* versus *Macht* tension in late modernism. The unclear ("nicht mehr zu übersehen") discontinuity has actually been made a thing, a contradiction has been posited as a historical continuity. While Schneider seems to subscribe to the idea of a historical dynamic between art and politics that is present throughout the tradition, he does appear to recognize that what had previously been understood as a progressive chronology, is actually just a constant, simultaneous state of affairs. The rigorous separation of literature and politics – where literature (or art) occupies a privileged position to comment on politics – is an ideological strategy based on anachronistic notions of dialectical historical progress. This is positivistic in so far as literature purports to enlighten and strive for the ultimate telos, namely, the Truth. Schneider also warns of the assumption that literature and politics go hand in hand (Schneider "Vergehen" 163); the two are in an unresolvable tension with one another. How, then, does *Lenz* represent the idea or ideology of progress which is further complicated by its entwinement in the historiographical discourse of the collective and the individual?

In a positivistic narrative of history, progress and growth are key ideological concepts that deny or even repress contradictions raised by historical setbacks such as a confrontation with the past. The first postwar German chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, presided over a period of German history in which the view was most certainly forward, with no little or no taste for confrontation

with the most recent past. Adenauer has long enjoyed the generally positive legacy of rebuilding a ruined country, but for the members of Peter Schneider's generation, he would come to embody the general repression of a critical historical debate. This disconnection of West German society from its recent historical context laid the groundwork for the alienation from and rebellion against the system of the Federal Republic by the so-called 68er generation. Rebellion then becomes a key concept in the age of what is often termed the Adenauer-restoration, and as Schneider points out in his speech, it was the writers of the time who became rebel-kings: "die Dichter und Künstler waren damals die einzigen, denen es erlaubt war, persönliche und gesellschaftliche Utopien auszudrücken, die über die Programme der erlaubten politischen Parteien hinausgingen. Später, als sich eine außerparlamentarische Opposition entwickelte, ging es diesen Künstlern nicht mehr so gut" (1975, 190-91). I would argue that the students from the late sixties protest movement suffered a similar fate after the climax of their rebellion; they were no longer rebel-kings and now had to come to terms with this. Schneider's eponymous protagonist is representative of a generation that sought the critical confrontation with history against the grain of a society which, in turn, sought precisely not to revive the discourse surrounding the most recent and terrifying act of barbarism.[97]

[97]Certainly, the notion of reversing past acts of barbarism is a desirable, if completely unachievable one, but the idea of erasing these acts amounts to a perversion of a narrative of history that allows only an idealized, harmless version of events through its filter. This is one way in which nostalgia affects utopia. The former constitutes a painful longing for home, as was the case with Odysseus; however, home as ideal harbour, safe from the troubles of the world is a construct that emerges with distance and absence – this is what was happening in the Federal Republic under Konrad Adenauer. This construct then becomes a utopia, a goal striven for by

A feeling of resentment arises in the late sixties, according to Ulrich Greiner, who writes in an article in *Die Zeit* from May 6, 1988, entitled "Söhne und ihre Väter," that the critical, social and psychological theory of such thinkers as Adorno, Horkheimer, H. Marcuse, Wilhelm Reich, was seen to have been kept from the younger generation – "[i]hre Lektüre kam einer Entdeckung gleich." It is a feeling of having been cheated out of a progressive intellectual tradition, one that should have been flourishing in the midst of the postwar rebuilding efforts, and importantly, one that had a distinctly German character, to reiterate Schneider's statement above. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann captures this sentiment in his novel, *Rom, Blicke* (1972): "Es ist ja viel mehr kaputtgegangen als Häuser, es ist ja viel mehr erwürgt und eingegangen als die Toten des Krieges – ein Großraum, eine intellektuelle Landschaft ist abgestorben und verwüstet worden, so paradox das klingt, mitten im wilden wütigen Aufbau ist die Zerstörung heimlich und lautlos noch einmal geschehen" (as cited in Greiner's article). Recognizing the dialectical underbelly of the *Wirtschaftswunder* as beyond even repression of the past and as, in fact, a new form of destruction, is a key moment for the young intellectual generation. The removal and repair of ruins in Germany was, on the one hand, obviously practically necessary in order to house the population and revive the economy but it betrayed, on the other hand, the destruction of an intellectual tradition that would give the students of the sixties

---

virtue of its evocation of a pleasant version of the past. Somewhere between the attempts to reverse acts of barbarism, on the one hand, and erase them on the other, lies the critical confrontation with history. If, however, this pretends to the search for an absolutizing historical narrative, it too runs the risk of succumbing to dialectical contradictions.

the tools to begin confronting history and the topography around them which seemed to be dedicated to avoiding the most recent past, creating a lacuna, the other side of which was an older, unpoliticized version of German history.

Schneider's protagonist too suffers from this syndrome outlined by Brinkmann. Lenz idealizes the Italian capacity to live amongst the ruins and monuments of the past; these, of course, do not memorialize a history which, it would appear, led to the barbaric catastrophe of modernity perpetrated by his father's generation.

> Lenz wunderte sich, daß ihm die Leute in dieser mit Denkmälern und Ruinen vollgestopften Stadt viel lebendiger vorkamen als in den geschichtslosen Städten, die er aus Deutschland kannte. Ein ähnliches Gefühl verband er mit Pierra. Obwohl sie alles, was ihr geschah, mit irgendwelchen Ereignissen aus ihrer Vergangenheit in Zusammenhang brachte, schien sie ihm stärker im Augenblick zu leben als er selber. Lenz teilte ihr diese Beobachtung mit. Er sagte, er könne sich zum ersten Mal vorstellen, daß dieses angstlose Zusammenleben mit der Vergangenheit es einem erleichtere, sich in der Gegenwart einzurichten. (69-70)

This quotation captures the anxiety, from a German perspective, associated with the tension between past and present. In *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Fredric Jameson comments on the preoccupation with history, and progress in relation to it, with a (perhaps somewhat frustrated) summary of Walter Benjamin's view on the matter: "History progresses by failure rather than by success, as Benjamin never tired of insisting" (Jameson 209). Concurrently with this anxiety and pessimism about history, Lenz's statement is bound up in a familiar German tradition of idealising the Italian

capacity for 'living,'[98] and a general ease the Italians seem to display with their own vestigial history. The notion of a comfortable co-existence of past and present is a utopian moment brought about by the social upheavals of the 1960s in Germany. But how is this possible when apparently history is a pile of ruins, in the Benjaminian sense, barbarism in the personal and the public sense?

Allow me to elaborate on the terms 'public,' as opposed to 'personal' history, an issue the above passage makes pellucid. Public history is collective and objective, i.e., pertaining to commonly understood or perceived elements, however problematic and disputable they might be, in our historical narratives. I define personal history as that of the subject implied by collectivity, and the two problematize each other in their constant dialectical tension. *Lenz* addresses the particularity of the tension between the subjective and the collective that emerged during the post-1968 era, while it is given that this problematic of the part versus the whole, the individual versus the collective is a distinct *Leitmotif* in German political and cultural history. John Pizer aptly thematizes Fredric Jameson's[99] notion of the public in this context. Pizer writes: "By 'the public,' Jameson would signify a communal totality, a cohesive group drawn together by mutual affiliations" (Pizer 177). The problem is, this public is being lost, dissolved into what Pizer calls "highly disparate micro-political interest groups" (Pizer 177),

[98]In the essay "The Rhetoric of the Image" (1964), Roland Barthes analyzes the photograph of an advertisement from Italy and develops the idea of "Italianicity" as a kind of mythologizing of an external image of that country. This is certainly connected to the idealization of Italy in Germany.

[99]In "Jameson's Adorno, or the Persistence of the Utopian" (2004), henceforth known as, 'Pizer.'

paraphrasing Jameson's *Postmodernism*. In this text, Jameson returns frequently to the idea of utopia, mostly by way of the impossibility it represents, but in the concluding section of the book, he connects the nineteen sixties with a kind of utopia based on a collective communication. He argues that there is a paradigm shift in that decade toward the communicational which represents a glimpse into a utopian collectivity, and that events like May 1968 represent the shock of a communicational explosion, "which could have no further consequences within this system but which scars the mind with the briefly glimpsed experience of radical difference, to which collective amnesia aimlessly returns in its later forgetfulness, imagining itself to be brooding over trauma where it is in fact seeking to produce a new idea of Utopia" (Jameson 355). *Lenz* is not so much about the idea of collective communication but rather the protagonist's iterative problem when it comes to his personal past, in the context of collective amnesia and the period after "the briefly glimpsed experience of radical difference," i.e., the climax of the protest movement.

The dissolution of class-based society is, on one hand, the ultimate utopian goal, but on the other, it is the ultimate undoing of utopia, because it tends toward the erasure of the individual in the name of the whole, precisely in the way the Nazis espoused the ideology of "*du bist nichts, dein Volk ist alles.*" This is the kind of thinking Lenz is trying to obviate, having tacitly recognized it in the student movement, as manifested for instance in the study group with the factory

workers.[100] The break with recent history sought by the students (as noted above by Malcolm Pender), is actually counter-productive in the attainment of social harmony between social groups, i.e. workers and students, but also in the relationship of the individual to a coherent and identifiable public, as opposed to the false telos of an amorphous singular totality. Pizer notes that Adorno is pessimistic about the results of an ideology that presupposes such a false telos, "a chimerical end point in history toward which the collective is seen, reductively, to move" (Pizer 177). Collective social memory and historical consciousness are the imperative of the truly dialectical thinker, in order to avoid naive utopian optimism which promotes the break with the past and the achievement of a unified totality that is ultimately a reified nostalgic commodity.

In Germany, of course, the ruins had been cleared away, the topography of recent history erased. "Dann fiel Lenz ein, wie in Rom die neuen Straßen und Häuser um die alten Ruinen herumgebaut wurden, in Paolos Reden erkannte er dieselbe Neigung, die Vergangenheit zu benutzen, statt sie auszumerzen" (77). Lenz recognizes the tendency to use history instead of eradicating it. Or as Sharman puts it: "The Italians teach Lenz to make use of the past instead of obliterating it" (Sharman 112). The verb *ausmerzen* suggests a conscious and thoroughly destructive process, and in post-war Germany, the term's definition as having to do with removing weeds or disease does echo the Nazi discourse of

[100]Unfortunately, this is not the forum for a detailed philosophical discussion of the dialectic of the particular and the universal in thinkers like Adorno, in texts like *Negative Dialektik*. Let it be stated though that the structure the eternal, non-teleological dialectical contradiction between individual and collective is a central presupposition of my project.

eradication. At the risk of trying to force the text to say something it is not saying, I will opine cautiously that such vocabulary resonates in the discussion surrounding the relationship to history precisely because the post-war generation of West Germans was torn by the confrontation with the past which the narrator of *Lenz* suggests has involved the Germans' conscious attempt to rid themselves of the 'illness' that is their history. But what does it actually mean to "use" history, as Paolo does, according to Lenz's laudatory remarks? Use may well refer to the ideological appropriation of a reading of history to the ends of bourgeois society or for that matter, to the ends of a communist revolution. The text suggests much more that Lenz's interest in the instrumentalization of the past is partly motivated by envy owing to the impossibility of living comfortably with the ruins of the past in Germany – both literally and metaphorically – but also in large measure because this is the intersection of public history with his personal historical consciousness, as evidenced by the last sentence of the quotation above, from pages 69-70 in the story.

It is worth remembering that Timothy Corrigan's second characteristic of the road narrative genre includes the statement, "the historical world is always too much of a context" (Corrigan 145). This somewhat elusive assertion is actually a poignant indicator that the rebellious individual, the protagonist or main character, is bound to and by his or her world and necessarily therefore, their history. We have seen the moments of alienation from his phenomenal world that proved Lenz's attachment to it – I allude here to the passage cited from page 33, in which

Lenz feels the menacing of his surroundings (also characteristic of this aspect of the road narrative). Corrigan's argument rests on the assumption that the post-war period in western culture nurtured forms like the road narrative because of the historical rupture that World War II represented for the individual from a sense of the collective. The utopian project of the student movement included a restoration of this sense, which is a nostalgic moment, but the danger in post-Nazi Germany is naturally the perverted ideology of the collective. Lenz's wanderings in Italy conjure up a return that is otherwise nostalgic, for it is a painful return, not a yearning for an idealized home. Much like the traumatic nostalgia in soldiers associated with what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder, which is brought on by the traumatic return of wartime memories,[101] one intersection of collective historical experience and Lenz's personal traumatic memory occurs in the following passage. Lenz and Pierra are on a train excursion from Rome to the Ocean at Ostia:

> Aus irgendeinem Grund mußte der Zug auf freier Strecke halten. Als die Bremsen quietschten und der Zug zum Stehen kam, erinnerte sich Lenz an einen auf freier Strecke haltenden Zug, dem sich Tiefflieger näherten, die Leute rannten über ein Feld auf ein Waldstück zu, um sich dort zu verbergen, aber jemand im Abteil riet Lenz' Mutter, im Wagen zu bleiben, der Wald sei ein besseres Ziel als der Zug, im Wald lägen schon viele Tote herum. Sie warteten bis der Angriff vorüber war, [...] der Zug fuhr weiter. Dann fiel ihm ein, daß er den ganzen Krieg über in Zügen gefahren und nirgends länger als ein halbes Jahr geblieben war. (66)

Two things strike the reader in this passage. The first pertains to a transition that occurs in the structure of the second sentence, which initially employs an

[101] Boym discusses nostalgia and wartime trauma in the first chapter of *The Future of Nostalgia*.

indefinite tone, describing a memory Lenz is not necessarily having of his own lived experience, but then evolves into a very terrifying personal memory in the sentence's sixth clause. Lenz remembers *a* train being attacked, with no reference to a personal involvement in the story, aside from observing it; it could be something he is describing from a film. By the end of this lengthy sentence, this is clearly not the case. Here we see how Lenz's subjective awakening to his past is refracted through a mnemonic image from the reservoir of collective historical memory.

Something else of note in the above passage is the last sentence which at once illustrates the transitory nature of his life and sets up the final line of the story, the "dableiben," as a tentative end to his travels. Expanding on this idea, Lenz remarks: "Vielleicht hängt es tatsächlich mit diesen frühen Fahrten, diesem ständigen Unterwegssein zusammen, daß ich mich später immer, wenn ich unterwegs war, eher zuhause fühlte, als wenn ich irgendwo blieb und mich einzurichten versuchte" (66). Here we have further evidence, in my view, that reading the text as road narrative has plausible validity.

Italy becomes the locus for only tentative bursts of enlightenment of the subject, playing with the Arcadian image of that country nurtured in the modern German tradition of *Bildung*. It is not a Cartesian recognition and positing of the thinking I, but rather it is the recognition of the self as historical subject, that is inextricably linked with the contradictions of the force of history, which had previously been considered to supersede the individual in the name of social

progress. We will remember that Malcolm Pender's view on Lenz's personal past is that the protagonist experiences what Pender calls a "liberating insight" (Pender 151); while I do not dispute this, I do wish to emphasize that I see it much more as a glimpse at the possibility of liberation, in the Jamesonian sense. His wandering outside familiar territory seems to induce the great breakthrough Lenz makes on the personal front, but this no simple transposition of a narrative of progress from the objective, socio-public realm onto the subjective, personal. These brief moments of enlightenment or realization are fleeting and they end abruptly, although they contribute to Lenz's sense of ease with himself. For Lenz, this form of enlightenment is to externalise his mnemonic experience, then leave it behind: "Er merkte, daß er das Erlebnis, das er beschrieb, dadurch hinter sich ließ, daß er es beschrieb" (86). The sensation is a moment of purest affect, because he feels a tear, related explicitly to the trauma of his childhood which was not primarily the war itself rather the rejection by his mother (85), something he acknowledges for the first time amongst his new Italian friends. What does this mean for his criticism of Pierra's friends (those in Rome), whom, as we will see in the following section, he accuses of relating everything to the personal? Is this a means of deferring a confrontation with public history?

Oppositions – Lenz and his Social Context

Schneider's text is a story of oppositions and contradictions beyond the quagmire of the individual versus the collective and the problem of history and

historiography in literature. But some specific examples of the individual, Lenz, functioning – or attempting to function – in his social context illustrate the response to the utopian project amongst his colleagues and peers. An examination of the sympathizers and *Mitstreiter* on the Left reveals how the stultification of the movement in the post-1968 phase drives the protagonist on his quest. What Lenz experiences are social interactions with people whose utopia has become nothing but a nostalgic clinging to the past; it is not dynamic and this nostalgia is expressed differently in his social contexts in Germany and Italy. The oppositions are an aesthetic feature of the text on many levels, from the narrative's structure to its thematics, to the inner workings of the characters, primarily Lenz, although we do gain some insight into characters like Wolfgang and Roberto, both workers, albeit mediated by the narration of Lenz's experience of them. *Lenz* is the story of the interpersonal, intersubjective tensions in the broader social complex, in a moment where a state of disillusionment with given structures is beginning to or has already set in, and where a desire for utopian transcendence exists within the protagonist. In general, the oppositions portrayed in and instrumentalized by the narrative hinge on the textual structure – the hinge itself being the sudden trip to Italy, exactly half way into the story. The very close mirroring of characters and events in Germany and Italy through this contrastive strategy elicits very obvious parallelizing reading. I would submit that these contrasts are interesting in terms of their triangulation through the character Lenz, not as simple binary comparisons of characters and events in one country

versus the other. What can Lenz's social interactions tell us about his quest for transcendence and transgression of the stultified status quo of post 1968 thinking and its continued attempts to reconcile theory with practice?

Two parties, one in the first half of the story, the other in the second, reflect the restlessness of Lenz's character, his uneasy relationship to the people and the physical world around him. Both Waltraut Schröder and Malcolm Pender identify the two parties as important anchoring points of the contrastive narrative structure. Schröder writes: "Diese Szenen gehören zu den Höhepunkten politischer und intellektueller Selbstkritik" (Schröder 136), while Pender asserts: "The experience of contrast [between the two countries, as symbolized by the two parties] is a pointer to where personal synthesis may lie. In that sense Lenz's sojourn in Rome has served its purpose" (Pender 153). Pender wants to functionalise the narrative, make it the story of a progression toward self-understanding, and Schröder wants to see it as a metonymical critical self-reflection on the student movement. Both cases are made convincingly in their own right, but I think they miss an important element of ambivalence[102] which accompanies the protagonist on his 'quest.' This ambivalence is characterized by the restlessness and sense of unease which is often interpreted as the impetus for Lenz's hopeful quest for relief from his suffering, but also allows moments of frustration to well up into feelings of hate. The ambivalence is mitigated by his

[102]I am not using the term ambivalence to signify a lack of affect, but rather to suggest the simultaneity and coexistence of contradictory or oppositional ideas within the protagonist's character and psychic space, as represented by the text.

experiences of subjectivity, in his personal past for instance, yet it is not transcended by the attainment of sublime enlightenment or *Bildung*. Such a state is tantamount to a synthesis in the traditional Marxist-Hegelian dialectic, and this is proving essentially impossible to achieve for Lenz, as his confrontation with the various contradictions and oppositions of social interaction show.

In Germany, Lenz moves amongst a rebellious crowd in the late 1960s student milieu but is becoming frustrated with the stiltedness of this crowd; he is not the classic outsider – *Schelm* or picaro – rather he is too much an insider, to the point where his feelings of alienation then make him feel like an outsider. Lenz does have the need to rebel against the order of his social world and this manifests itself as a need to turn inward and move, whether simply walking, riding the train, dancing or leaving Germany on a train bound for Italy. Simultaneously, his physical context is making him feel claustrophobic,[103] the city grows taller around him, the streets narrow, walls move closer and he must cling to objects. His perception has begun to deceive his sense of what ought to be normal. The protagonist lives in a state of tension with the status quo; the characters that surround him have become just that, characters, not people but representatives of an ideological movement that is actually static – Lenz realizes that his criticism reflects back on himself. This realization occurs at a party where the intellectual and basically bourgeois members of an aging student revolution gather. "Er wußte, es war die Art Fest, die es eigentlich nicht mehr

[103] As we saw in the passage cited from 32-33, above, which echoes the crisis Georg Büchner's Lenz faces.

geben konnte und immer noch gab" (37).

The people with whom he is supposed to be in solidarity are focussed on their outdated utopian notions, and have become too rigid in their ideological ambitions. Lenz, on the other hand (like the worker-narrator mentioned in my introductory chapter), is experiencing disillusionment and the temptation of resignation. He is feeling his subjectivity, while his acquaintances are caught up in the rhetoric that has led to his disappointment. For instance, Lenz engages in a frustrating dialogue with the critic Neidt, who refuses to show any interest in Lenz's personal and emotional life; the frustration Lenz feels takes the form of an attack on the contradictions within the assembled group, particularly the critic. When Neidt challenges Lenz to state the intended goal of his criticisms – a trope of rational discourse Lenz has increasingly come to despise – it becomes apparent that he has been projecting self-critique onto the others, or so Neidt claims. Then: "Er wollte sich bewegen, die Starre loswerden, die er schon wieder in seinem Körper spürte, er fing an zu tanzen" (40). This feeling of stasis and the drive to rid himself of it is evidently a recurring symptom and we have seen it before, namely, in his various spontaneous walks and little adventures, and we have read it in the episodic, sometimes seemingly random structure of the text, where one passage ends and another begins with the indefinite phrase, "An einem...", as if to ward off stasis in the narrative. For Lenz, however, this dancing is a moment of connection with the body, not merely a defensive reaction to himself and his context; the dance is very much a ritual cleansing and perhaps an attempt at

physical catharsis, "'ihr tanzt den Haß nicht heraus. Es muß weh tun, ehe ihr euren Körper spüren könnt" (41). The demand here is that one allow everything repressed by rational intellectual discourse – namely, hate – to be exorcised, or at a minimum externalised through expressive physical movement. In other words, the imperative is: enough with the mind body duality, feel your physical and intellectual subjectivity!

This party episode is mirrored in the second half of the story, where Lenz is living in the world of the (European) other, the traditional locus of German cultural exile, Italy. While the party Lenz attends in Rome reminds us of the party in Germany, it is also reminiscent of the decadent bourgeois party scene from Frederico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (1960).[104] In his article "Lenz in Arkadien," Manfred Beller posits a similar parallel to Fellini, saying: "Die Suggestivkraft der römischen Erlebnisse des Lenz beruht auf der Qualität der Satire, die auch einen deutschen Leser an die Bauformel mancher bei Fellini gesehener Filmszenen erinnert" (Beller 99). Here the tension between perception and projection in his relationships to other people of the same political persuasion comes strongly to the fore. Where Lenz had engaged Neidt in a critical, accusatory dialogue in Germany, he simply wanders around eavesdropping on various conversations and imagining the content of conversations at the party in Rome.

This passage (66-69) is much more fantastical than the first party; it is

[104]I mention this because the story's first sequence describes Lenz's dream with a Fellini metaphor (5).

cinematic.[105] The party takes place in a strange space, something Lenz discovers is typical about Rome: strange topography. The hall seems remarkably out of proportion with the building's small outward appearance, and as an improbable space, it may tentatively be considered a utopian one. However, Lenz soon realizes that this is nothing more than a constructed *locus amoenus* in which the affluent inhabitants can throw a party with all their purportedly leftist friends. As he enters the hall, Lenz notes, "[i]n ihrer Mitte standen zwei Säulen aus rotem Marmor, die offensichtlich weniger die Decke als das Weltbild des Hausherrn abstützten" (67), which speaks to this notion of constructedness. The guests are similar to the guests at the first party; although they are perhaps wealthier than the German party-goers, they are similar in so far as they too are better educated and better moneyed than the working class they fetishize – "An den Wänden sah Lenz Bilder, auf denen die Leiden und Kämpfe der arbeitenden Massen dargestellt waren. [...] Sie waren nur für Leute erschwinglich, die für die dort dargestellten Leiden mitverantwortlich waren" (68). The images literally represent socio-political struggle and their location paints another image of contradiction and bitter ironic distance between the social classes. The image-driven perspective of the protagonist speaks to the cinematic framing of this scene but also reinforces the mirroring effect. Corrigan argues that, "[f]or the children of the fifties and sixties, the world viewed is always and anxiously viewed as image, distanced, disenfranchised, and eventually possessable," (Corrigan 147) which Schneider's

[105] We recall Rhys Williams's contention that the cinematic is in fact the structural frame of reference.

text reflects and instrumentalizes in its critical portrayal of Lenz's social interactions as outsider in this particular context. The road narrative as cinematic vehicle is especially interested in contrasting the traveller's image-driven perspective with his context, and this is achieved by underscoring oppositions and movement amongst different locations.

Lenz's interaction with his friends, then Pierra's, plays a crucial role in the uneasy relationship to his social world. He makes the parallel to the frustration he had felt with his ideologically rigid German friends, for example B., whom he had accused of over-objectivity and denial of their own subjectivity. Pierra's friends are portrayed as decadent and over-indulgent in their subjectivity; they are a kind of opposite to Lenz's friends while becoming increasingly similar in his perception of them. Lenz sees the hypocrisies and contradictions these people blindly represent. "Anders als bei Pierra, die sich ihrer Analytikerin vollkommen auslieferte, erschien Lenz bei den meisten ihrer Freunde dieses ständige Zurückgehen in die eigene Vergangenheit als ein Gesellschaftsspiel, in dem die Beteiligten die Langeweile und das Desinteresse an ihrer Umwelt verdeckten"(70). Lenz's perspective on this kind of solipsistic nostalgia is biased by the very thinking he has come to abhor in his German friends, i.e., the obsession with "useful," goal-driven work, which seeks to overcome precisely the kind of societal game model of social consciousness. On the one hand, Lenz's student movement training, if one may call it that, has taught him disgust at bourgeois indulgences, such as boredom with one's social context, while on the

other hand, there is an obvious fascination with it and identification with the more subjectivist approach it entails. With a cryptic statement of preference, Lenz summarizes the two groups of friends: "[f]ührten jene [the Germans] jeden Konflikt, auch noch den privatesten, auf den Widerspruch zwischen Kapital und Arbeit zurück, so versteiften diese darauf, jeden Konflikt, auch noch den gesellschaftlichsten, aus der Familiensituation abzuleiten. Er wüßte nicht, welche von beiden Gruppen verrückter sei, nur, welche ihm lieber sei" (71). This illustrates the bidirectional refunctioning of the well-known claim that the personal is political and how, ultimately, its inherent contradictions are at the root of the intersubjective conflict.

In a comparative comment on Büchner's and Schneider's Lenz-figures, Sharman writes about that character in his social context:

> [...]Schneider's Lenz is never indifferent. He always reacts to his surroundings. He never gives up trying to communicate with the people he meets, albeit sometimes in a fairly idiosyncratic fashion. Although he is often quite self-absorbed, he does not cease his attempts to be fully integrated into the society he finds himself in. That in itself indicates that his mental crisis at no stage reaches the severity of that of his predecessor's. (Sharman 105)

Lenz's infirmity is more social and political than deeply psychological, although these are not unrelated, and his ambivalence should not be confused with indifference; Sharman is right to say that Lenz is never indifferent. He is plagued by the apparent irreconcilability of his personal disdain for the contradictory behaviour of both social groups at the two parties and his own desire for greater subjective experience. The two groups represent perversions of the ideal he

seeks, namely, socio-political revolution and self-understanding; Lenz is capable of identifying with the party-goers, and thus integrating himself into the party scenes, but not without experiencing a resistance to them, stemming from simultaneous identification and non-identification, i.e., his ambivalence.

Lenz's relationship to the characters of the workers in Schneider's text raises its own sets of contradictions, themselves brought about by the confrontation with the ambivalence of identification. The following excerpt is an example of Lenz's experience of daily life in the factory. The narrative style relies on the already mentioned modernist trope of *erlebte Rede*, for we have the third person narrative of the subjective point of view.

> Lenz spürte, wie ein neuer, unbekannter Haß in ihm hochstieg. Er schaute den Gang hinauf und hinunter, er sah die Arme und Beine der Frauen wie von unsichtbaren Fäden gezogen, darüber ihre starren, angespannten Gesichter, dann wieder den Meister, der sich umgedreht hatte und gerade einen anderen Weißkittel begrüßte. Der Weißkittel stellte sich neben eine der Frauen mit der Uhr in der Hand und maß die Zeit. Er forderte sie auf, aufzustehen, und machte ihr vor, wie sie eine Bewegung schneller ausführen könnte. Die Frau befolgte seine Anweisung, der Weißkittel schien noch nicht zu frieden. Die anderen Frauen taten, als würden sie ihn nicht bemerken, aber sie arbeiteten schneller. Die Geräusche in der Halle kamen Lenz jetzt unerträglich laut und gewalttätig vor, er glaubte zu hören, wie sich ihr Tempo ständig steigerte. (21)

Interestingly, the sentiment is one of hatred, a strong feeling typically reserved for capitalism, imperialism or fascism, yet here it appears to be directed at the factory and its workers. The observation of the supervisor and his colleague, objectified as "the white-coat," suggests an inversion of Lenz's contempt toward the plight of the working women.

Here, we are also seeing the disillusionment of the student's utopian idea

of the factory and the working class. The young worker-narrator's report I discussed in my introductory chapter represents the factory as a potentially utopian-revolutionary space, effectively presenting the inverse view from *Lenz*. The view from the factory floor, from the perspective of a revolution-minded worker is the ideal for the student activist Lenz, and is precisely the ideal he does not find in our novella. The worker-narrator describes the political atmosphere at his factory as more fraught and polarized. The revolutionary potential of the factory space is stalled by political conflict; Lenz could only wish for this kind of political activity at his factory. Instead, he faces apathy and pettiness amidst the hierarchical social structure of the production floor, between the 'white-coats' and the production line workers.

This lesson in the micro-sociology of the factory floor results in the poignantly descriptive impression in the last sentence of the above quotation; here there is an allusion to some form of mental illness, even if this is only the impression of an auditory hallucination, it is none the less evocative of this central theme in Büchner's text. The sentence ends on a poetically powerful note, with the intolerably loud and violent sounds of the factory coming to an alliterative climax with the "*st*ändig *st*eigerte" (my emphasis). The passage ends with Lenz's break time interaction with his fellow workers, when he introduces himself and is forced, somewhat reluctantly, to admit that he is a student acquainting himself with the conditions of workers. His lack of an intersubjective relationship with his new colleagues becomes painfully apparent in his conversation with them: "Er

war heftig geworden über dem Reden, alles fügte sich lückenlos ineinander, es gelang ihm, die Bedrückungen der Frauen aus einem Punkt herzuleiten, er machte Vorschläge, was zu unternehmen sei, er hatte sich ganz vergessen. Ihm war, als könne er was gut machen, eine unbekannte Schuld abtragen. Er sah die Blicke nicht, mit denen sie ihn betrachteten" (22). Lenz has "forgotten himself," a wonderful turn of phrase meaning, in the bourgeois sense, to forget one's manners or even one's societal position; in the era of the New Subjectivity, though, it could also be read as Lenz forgetting his subjectivity and going off on a theoretical tangent with vague reference to the dialectical relationships in the workplace ("alles fügte sich lückenlos ineinander") and his derivations on the plight of women, all of which is perhaps a throw-back to the thinking of the sixties. This is not to say that Lenz is wrong, but rather that his approach to the issues and the people is suspect, in so far as it is affect motivating ideological indoctrination and vice versa. The narration even takes a step back from the earlier intimacy of perspective of the preceding quotation, moving into the subjunctive mood, then shares a perspective to which he is oblivious, namely, that of the presumably unfavourable facial expressions of the women. The disconnection between Lenz and the workers is particularly clear here; he is blinded by the personal need to pay off a debt of bourgeois guilt for ignoring the working class which he is doing at that very moment.[106]

If the factory in Germany was a disillusioning experience, the industrial-

[106]We should also keep in mind that this debt of guilt owed by the bourgeoisie extends into the Nazi past, for its failure to stop the barbarism; such is the sentiment arising in the sixties.

parochial utopia of Trento is understood to be the antidote; the narrator notes that, "[a]n jeder Straßenecke lief ihnen jemand über den Weg, den sie grüßten, sie kannten den Tabakhändler, den Kellner, die Frauen, die ihre Einkaufstaschen nachhause schleppten, ständig blieben sie stehen und wechselten ein paar Worte" (87). The contrast with the urban context is palpable and verging on an ironic overstatement, for while Lenz is clearly refreshed by the apparently unimpeded, natural communication and interaction amongst the people, brief moments of alienation spoil the illusion of paradise found. The paradise found stands in stark contrast to the forced atmosphere of the socialist work and study group in Germany and its 'exercises' (*Aufgaben*), for instance, "[d]ie Gruppe habe sich die Aufgabe gestellt, diesmal gemeinsam zu verreisen, damit die privaten Beziehungen mit den politischen Schritt hielten," to which Lenz responds allergically, "'Aufgabe, Aufgabe, habt ihr denn auch Lust dazu?'" (51) as he is just about to begin his spontaneous trip to Italy. In Trento he will find what he perceives as an ideal political climate, something approaching the utopia he has sought through his revolutionary consciousness. The means to achieve this in the working group in Berlin had been the rational discussion and interpretation of theoretical texts, which was beginning to fail Lenz, who, when trying to express something objective about a Mao-Tse Tung text can come up with nothing but a subjective response: "Ich will damit sagen, daß der Text etwas bei mir auslöst, aber eben etwas, was mit seinem Sinn gar nichts zu tun hat" (30). The group cannot understand his personal reaction to this 'scientific' text and they react to

his statement with "angestrengten Blicken" (31).

The worker, Roberto, in Trento ultimately represents this utopian synthesis of the social contradiction between intellectual and worker (similar to the worker narrator from my introductory chapter). In *Lenz*, though, the figure of Roberto functions as a clear contrast to the maladjusted German worker, Wolfgang. Roberto challenges Lenz's practice of socialism as privation; he is, for example, reminded of bourgeois tendencies in the enjoyment of food: "Er hatte sich abgewöhnt, auf das Essen zu achten, weil die übertriebene Bedeutung die das Essen im Bürgertum hatte, tatsächlich eine Achtlosigkeit gegenüber anderen, wichtigeren Dingen darstellte" (87). The very particular arrangement of furniture in and the impeccable cleanliness of the apartment Roberto shares with his wife, Anna also make an impression on Lenz. Although he does not criticize them personally for the petit-bourgeois tendencies in their lifestyle – *Spießigkeit*, as the Germans would call it – he notices it and is made rather uncomfortable by it because it contravenes his notion of reconciling theory and practice. Even books become a subject of this discomfort, as Roberto shares his love of reading with Lenz, who responds that, "er habe früher zuviel gelesen." Roberto is incredulous: "Wie man denn zuviel lesen könne, fragte Roberto, das verstünde er nicht" (87). The use of reported speech with its distancing German subjunctive, the *Konjunktiv*, highlights this episode as a moment of alienation for Lenz, which is owed in part to his asceticism.

Paradise found is an illusion, a wish-projection that remains unfulfilled but

does not entirely disabuse Lenz of any and all utopian yearning. Roberto clearly differentiates between himself and Lenz, underscoring the class difference but also the necessity of the student and literate classes. In a statement reminiscent of Marcuse's argument that the students were the "ferment of hope," Roberto both reassures Lenz of his importance but warns him of the consequences of socialism as passing trend:

> 'Wir können euch brauchen: ihr könnt uns Dinge erklären, die wir nicht verstehen, ihr habt uns Kampfformen vorgemacht, die wir fast schon vergessen hatten, ihr könnt uns helfen, Flugblätter zu schreiben, die ohne eure Hilfe nicht zustande kämen. Aber wie lange werdet ihr dabei bleiben? Eure Begeisterung für unsere Sache, woher kommt die? Ihr habt nicht dieselben Probleme wie wir, weil ihr nicht dieselbe Arbeit machen müßt wie wir. [...] Worunter leidet denn ihr? Was wollt ihr für euch? [...] Ihr gefallt mir, weil ihr mutig seid. Aber ihr verbergt irgendwas.' (88)

Lenz and the student movement he represents are given legitimacy and credibility through Roberto's words. This is not the rejection Lenz faced from the German workers; however, the cautionary tone does destabilize this context, undercutting the utopian character Lenz had ascribed it. Paul Michael Lützeler reads Roberto's words much more ominously: "Natürlich vermutet Roberto nicht zu Unrecht, daß die Ideologen nach der Macht im Staate greifen wollen, und er befürchtet, daß dann eine sozialistische Diktatur etabliert werde, von der die Arbeiter nichts Gutes zu erwarten haben" (Lützeler *PK* 15). Roberto's finely balanced and wise words betray only the possibilities that accompany a revolutionary enterprise; he is keenly aware of the regressive potential inherent progress, to paraphrase Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialektik der Aufklärung*.[107] Destabilization refers to

[107] I am paraphrasing here from the first chapter, "Begriff der Aufklärung," which states: "Der

Lenz's sense of alienation and foreignness in Trento, meaning this context is no longer a conceivable end-point. In turn, this precipitates the act of taking off borrowed clothes, "'[w]as machst du bloß in all diesen fremden Sachen?' fragte sich Lenz" (89), which symbolizes his rejection of the foreign and acceptance of self-certainty, according to Sharman.[108] The recognition of his foreignness could have led him to a point similar to that in Berlin, where unease and restlessness set in, but of course his sudden deportation puts such speculation immediately to rest.

The Return – the End of the Road as Conclusion

According to Paul Michael Lützeler, "*Lenz* hat nichts mit Nostalgie zu tun, sondern lebt (ähnlich wie die Texte der stürmisch-drängerischen Altvordern) aus dem Bewußtsein notwendiger gesellschaftlicher Veränderungen," (Lützeler *PK* 16). He is, of course, using the term nostalgia in the pejorative sense, to signify a throwback to previously covered terrain, which is not consonant with the present project's aim of understanding nostalgia as an integral part of utopia. Lützeler himself argues that the text thrives, as did many before it in the German tradition, on the revolutionary consciousness of its time, but it feeds precisely on the need, the yearning for a return to the literary; the students of the early seventies hungered for literary representation (Lützeler *PK* 10, cited in the introduction to

---

Fluch des unaufhaltsamen Fortschritts ist die unaufhaltsame Regression" (Adorno, Horkheimer 42). Quoted from the Fischer edition, 1988.

[108] In fact, she constructs a convincing argument for the "well-integrated theme of clothes, which stand for Lenz's sense of self" (Sharman 113).

this chapter). This return to or rediscovery of the literary tradition in the wake of the turn away from history and focus on the future through revolutionary praxis, is entwined in the discourse of yearning, utopian or nostalgic.[109] However, this is not to say that all intertextuality or citation of the tradition is necessarily implicated in the utopia-nostalgia dynamic.[110] What becomes clear in *Lenz* is the coexistence of all sorts of yearning in a sometimes stifling, sometimes emancipating nexus. In conclusion to this chapter, I ask: how does the end of the road problematize the multi-faceted return, i.e., the literal return of the protagonist and the return to the Lenz-narrative? Could the protagonist's return to Germany be symbolic or representative of German literature's return to its tradition?

Lenz's deportation to Germany, which he greets neither with resistance nor complete acceptance – he complies because he has no choice – shows how ambivalence can express itself as apathy: "Er sah ruhig hinaus, die Berge waren ihm gleichgültig, keine Erinnerung, keine Spur von Angst" (90). This is very closely paraphrased from the final lines of Büchner's text, in which the protagonist is most definitely resigned to his fate:

> Er saß mit kalter Resignation im Wagen, wie sie das Tal hervor nach Westen fuhren. Es war ihm einerlei wohin man ihn führte. [...]
> Am folgenden Morgen, bei trübem, regnerischem Wetter, traf er in Straßburg ein. Er schien ganz vernünftig, sprach mit den Leuten. Er tat alles, wie es die andern taten; es war aber eine entsetzliche Leere in ihm, er fühlte keine Angst mehr, kein Verlangen, sein Dasein war ihm eine

[109] A return to the theoretical tradition complemented the return to the literary, as evidenced by Ulrich Greiner in his article mentioned above, "Söhne und ihre Väter."

[110] I would perhaps think here of parodic quotation or appropriation (or, for that matter, pastiche, to use Jameson's terminology) that does not function as a form of yearning in the utopian and nostalgic manner.

notwendige Last. –
So lebte er hin... (Büchner *Lenz* 84)[111]

Famously, Schneider's narrative ends with the last word of his protagonist, "dableiben," which is the answer to his friend B.'s question concerning his further plans, whereas Büchner's novella ends with "so lebte er hin." As Sharman puts it, "[Schneider's] Lenz is content and quietly confident. His stated intention for the future and the final world of the narrative is 'Dableiben.' Büchner's hollow 'So lebte er hin' is replaced by a positive decision of the later protagonist" (Sharman 118). There is not much evidence in the text to support the claim that the twentieth century Lenz is content and confident, merely that he is not resigned, like his namesake. In the final passage of Schneider's text, Lenz lists the things that have remained the same and acknowledges those that have changed; the balance is not particularly extreme, and is actually quite humorous, for example: "[d]ie Betriebsgruppe interpretierte immer noch am gleichen Text herum [...];" "immer noch gründeten Studenten neue Parteien [...];" "[d]as Paar, das seit drei Jahren in Trennung lebte, hatte sich getrennt" (90). Overall, Lenz expresses little in the way of emotion here and to my mind, the "dableiben" simply affirms the possibility that he can actually stay there, as opposed to his experience in Trento; moreover, the possibility to leave again or remain politically involved remains completely open. The return is both progression and regression; this is the heart of ambivalence, the coexistence of an inherent and permanent contradiction.

In his *Lenz*, Schneider leans consciously on the German literary tradition

[111] I am citing Büchner's story from *Werke und Briefe*.

of intertextual reference, looking to this rich source from the past to shed light on the present. This is also a form of nostalgia, but not as mere re-appropriation of the material for shallow recognition. By situating his narrative in a tradition of this kind, Schneider can count on a certain measure of legitimacy and attention in the future reception of his story, based at least initially on its literary ancestry. The question that plagues so many scholars in the comparison of the two "Lenz" texts pertains almost always to the function of this reworking and whether this can be considered a rewriting or retelling at all. The parallels function as allusion, to cite again Sharman's most thorough recent comparative work on the narratives: "Schneider's demonstrative title, and the textual and atmospheric allusions to the Büchner model, raise as expectation in the read that the text will be intimately related to the well-known model. But, as it turns out, Schneider has merely absorbed and integrated a fairly random selection of elements" (Sharman 118). The allusions to the literary tradition are akin to the mnemonic bursts Lenz experiences with respect to his childhood and relationship to L. This kind of narrative invites a literary-historical dialogue and tempts the reader to recognize other well-known narratives that exist only by way of allusion and reference or perhaps even deference.

The return to the literary tradition by way of allusion is quite radical in the wake of 1968, as F.C. Delius remarks: "Lange hielt sich das Gerücht, im 'Kursbuch 15' (1968) sei der Tod der Literatur ausgerufen worden.[112] Die

[112]Delius is referring to Karl Markus Michel's article, "Ein Kranz für die Literatur," cited and discussed in my introductory chapter.

dogmatischen Linken behaupteten, Literatur habe sowieso keine Funktion oder keinen Sinn mehr außer der Affirmation des Bestehenden" (Lützeler *PK* 91). Schneider himself wrote the *Kursbogen* accompanying *Kursbuch 15*, in which he critiques precisely this element of bourgeois literature: "die literatur, die ohne irgendein zeichen der überraschung mitten im überfluß nichts weiter artikuliert als verzicht, entsagung und verlust, die literatur, die den massen ihr elend nur zeigt, um sie daran zu gewöhnen, diese literatur ist tot und muß zu grabe getragen werden" [sic]. The parallels to Büchner's revolutionary literature add to the credibility of Schneider's new interpretation in the political climate of the early seventies; however, the obvious allusions to Goethe and Thomas Mann through the trope of the Italian journey, appear to offend the above imperative. This may or may not have been true in 1968, but regardless, by the time of *Lenz*'s publication, the references are not there in the name of burying the icons of bourgeois literature. Appropriating or merely confronting historical narratives, whether literary, personal or political, can prove useful for the undogmatic, more reflective Left's utopian project. Delius's statement above continues: "Die einsichtigeren Linken [to whom Delius counts Schneider] meinten, Literatur müsse irgendwie nützlich sein für die potentiellen Leserinnen und Leser." While this is partially the spirit of Schneider's *Lenz*, this functionalistic view does not give credit to the text's broader literary appeal.

The narrative of the road thematizes many of the historical and existential anxieties present in *Lenz* and the conditions of its post-war, post-1968 production.

"In the sixties and seventies, road movies, like all other genres, adjust their anxious relation to the sociocultural fears and complexities that threaten to make their codes and formulas at best fragmented languages and at worst the meaningless debris of history," (Corrigan 148) as Corrigan claims. The conscious return to tradition by way of intertextual allusion is the way *Lenz* situates its codes and formulas, e.g. transposing the trope of the Italian journey into the revolutionary political discourse of the student protest movement. The existential advantage beyond the specific context of its production is the text's literary heritage which will no doubt lead many scholars to do as the *Betriebsgruppe* does in the final scene of the story, namely, (and I am paraphrasing slightly) "immer noch am gleichen Text heruminterpretieren," possibly preventing the work's relegation to the category "meaningless debris of history." In the context of the early seventies, *Lenz* acquires a seminal position for the development of the New Subjectivity, at least from a literary historical perspective, and in fact, brings the legitimacy of subjective sociocultural anxiety and complexity, which I have tried to incorporate under the aegis of ambivalence, to the intellectual mainstream.

Chronologically speaking, in the context of this dissertation project, *Lenz* is the last text to have been written, although it appeared only a year after H.M. Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, yet it is by far the best known and perhaps most iconic. Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise*, written between 1969 and 1971, was also a best-seller but was not published until 1977, in other words, more distance had been gained on the sixties protest movement and the notion of

a new subjectivity in literature was established. All three of these texts invite a literary historical reading in their own way, and all represent different forms of utopian yearning. The next chapter sees the attempt to move away from the subjective toward the objective in the recollection of a historical narrative, namely, that of Buenaventura Durruti, however, this story relies on personal accounts and a return to something akin to the oral tradition of history. While Schneider's *Lenz* owes its titular recognition to the pastor Oberlin's diaries as transposed to the novella form by Büchner, Enzensberger skips the intermediary step, going straight to the sources. Vesper's text claims no documentary heritage, deferring rather to the essay form in a novelistic shroud; Enzensberger inverts this in his representation of the historiographical act. Schneider's text, though, is perhaps the most traditional fictional and conventional in its narrative form, making it interesting for that very reason but also as contrast to the other two novels.

CHAPTER TWO

Documenting History: Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*

Utopien? Gewiß, aber wo?
Wir sehen sie nicht.
Wir fühlen sie nur
Wie das Messer im Rücken.[113]

"Die Frösche von Bikini"

Hans Magnus Enzensberger's Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie. Buenaventura Durrutis Leben und Tod (1972)[114] must be read in the context of post-World War II documentary literature. In the early nineteen sixties, the tradition of presenting historical narratives through documents and reportage, as a means of generating an ostensibly objective and realistic reconstruction of events, was rehabilitated in the literary scene of West Germany.[115] The return to the documentary form began with drama based upon a forced confrontation with the Nazi past, as trials such as Adolf Eichmann's in Jerusalem in 1961 or the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials of 1963-

[113]"Utopias? Certainly, but where? / We see them not. We feel them only / As the knife in the back." [This is my translation of the stanza from Enzensberger's poem, "Die Frösche von Bikini,"/ "The Frogs of Bikini."]

[114]Where parenthetical references contain only one number, I am referring to a page in the novel.

[115]Clas Zilliacus's article, "Radical Naturalism: First-Person Documentary Literature" (1979), traces the reemergence of documentarism, "as an ism," arguing that the postwar documentary is, "the more or less organic continuance of earlier work which was forcibly interrupted" (Zilliacus 100). In other words, its heritage lies in the nineteen twenties and thirties, and in particular, the era of German *Neue Sachlichkeit*.

65 broke the postwar silence and repression of memory of the recent past.[116] The early seventies saw the waning of documentary drama[117] and the emergence of documentary prose, and it is in the framework of this transitional period – the late sixties to the early seventies – I have identified in the first chapter of the current project that we will examine Enzensberger's documentary novel. This transitional phase, in which the forward-looking utopia of the student protest movement was being increasingly inflected by nostalgia and a more subjective turn in literature, was not one that saw politics or protest disappear from literature. In fact, *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* is a novel that continues the discourse of opposition to traditional bourgeois literary forms, yet it returns to the trope of setting a politically critical narrative outside Germany, reminiscent of Enlightenment authors' strategies of circumventing censorship laws.[118] Enzensberger did not have direct censorship laws to elude, in the traditional sense, but as we have seen in our opening chapter, the context of the seventies provided some fear of government reprisal for political literature which was seen to be

[116]According to Ernestine Schlant in the chapter, "Documentary Literature," in her book, *The Language of Silence* (1999; especially pages 51-56).

[117]Paradigmatic examples of this are Hannah Arendt's *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1964) and Peter Weiss's *Die Ermittlung* (1965). See also Schlant 55-56.

[118]We think here of Friedrich Schiller's *Maria Stuart* or G.E. Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*, for example. Where Schiller transposes the political conflict between Roman Catholic and Protestant rulers to Great Britain, Lessing sets his critique of the tension between the bourgeoisie and the nobility in Italy; both texts thematize sensitive political and social issues that had very direct parallels in the various German states.

supportive of "radical" causes.[119] The documentary form appropriated by Enzensberger in *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* blends tropes from various sub-genres of the documentary, for instance, the report, the interview, the reproduction of journalistic texts. The novel represents, on the one hand, an apparent nostalgia for the oral reporting of events that lend a documentary text authenticity and immediacy, yet on the other hand, the text displays a self-aware criticism of the process, the latter being indicative of an increasingly influential self-reflexive, postmodern cultural paradigm. How is the Durruti novel representative of the utopia-nostalgia dynamic that crystallizes in that historical (historiographical) discourse?

The task of this chapter is to situate Enzensberger's text within the discourse of the utopia-nostalgia dynamic of the nineteen seventies and explore its narratives of public and personal history. The interweaving of these narratives generates a crucial tension between the two and underlines the constructedness of history through narrativization. This documentary novel refracts the entwinement of utopia and nostalgia through its self-conscious and self-reflexive collection and reconstruction of the narrative fragments of the Spanish anarchist Buenaventura Durruti's life. Documentary reconstruction amounts to a form of restorative nostalgia, to use Svetlana Boym's category; nostalgia in her sense contains a utopian component, because it seeks to construct an idealized space for the

[119]I am referring to the 'muzzling law' (88a) and other legislation such as the Emergency Laws which were being debated and passed in the wake of the protest movement, as a means of curtailing radical political opposition and intellectual support thereof.

representation of the past outside the linear progression of time – in literature, in this case. But the peculiarly utopian project of the documentary novel is its ideal of granting unmediated access[120] to history; Enzensberger's text explores and exposes the boundary between documentary fact and fiction in the narrativization of history, on a trajectory that leads into the past and out of the German context, in order to shed light on the present West German context (the post-1968 phase) and the future of utopian politics in the wake of the perceived failure of the student protest movement and the emergence of the inward turn, known as the 'New Subjectivity.'

The main tension in documentary literature bristles between the presentation of real, authentic source material and the literary, artistic representation of that material through narrative.[121] The role of authors or producers – those who collect and edit source material for publication – of documentary obscures the boundary between documents and their narrative organization; documents are extracted from their context and put into narrative form, in order to tell a coherent story. This is a process which is utterly

[120]I am referring to Linda Hutcheon's concept of 'unmediated access' (which she develops in *The Politics of Postmodernism*). In a chapter sub-section on the archive, she points out the precarious status of the document in literature, for it can offer "no *direct* access to the past" (Hutcheon 80), and in postmodern fiction, "there is a contradictory turning to the archive and yet a contesting of its authority" (Hutcheon 81). I believe this applies to *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, even though I hesitate to label it 'postmodern fiction' outright.

[121]In the introduction to their collection of scholarly essays, *Dokumentarliteratur* (1973), Heinz Ludwig Arnold and Stephan Reinhardt identify this tension and the potentially superficial realism of the documentary form. As a study contemporary with the Durruti novel, *Dokumentarliteratur* shows that the intellectual debate about the form accompanied it from early on in its postwar incarnation. Arnold and Reinhardt too see it as a continuation of a project started in the twenties; moreover, they recognize the insolubility of the questions of authenticity and realistic portrayal raised by the documentary.

manipulable, especially with narratives that make claims to historical truth, in contrast to fictional art. The rigorous distinction between documentary and fictional literature is problematised by Enzensberger in as much as he starts from the familiar documentary form and proceeds to blur the boundary to fictional literature from there; he is responding, I submit, to the tradition of documentary art that makes claims to truth and purports to be an oppositional political force. This response forms part of a discourse of transition between modernity and postmodernity, for the documentary project is a distinctly modernist one, yet Enzensberger infuses it with an impulse that could be considered postmodern, meaning the novel focuses on breaches, ruptures, inconsistencies and contradiction, while commenting on them self-reflexively. In effect, the novel mirrors the nostalgic influence on utopia in the documentary form.

Enzensberger's novel consists of documentary style passages, personal accounts about the protagonist which are threaded together in temporal succession and are punctuated by so-called *Glossen*, in which the narrative voice comments on or contextualizes the narrative. Indeed, this work is a documentary[122] but it is also clearly subtitled, 'Roman,' which places the text back in a distinctly literary tradition. Where Peter Schneider's *Lenz* was the reworking of an eighteenth century novella fragment and had, as we saw in the last chapter, a strong affinity to filmic text, Enzensberger's book is the result of a planned television documentary film which retells the story of an almost forgotten leader from the

[122]The note on the sources at the end of the book thanks the WDR for its support in the research for the project (295).

Spanish Civil War.[123]

Throughout the sixties and into the seventies, prominent authors had been turning to documentary forms, especially reportage. Enzensberger's novel finds itself in a cultural context that saw authors such as Günter Wallraff, Ulrike Meinhof, and Erika Runge rise to prominence through their realism of reporting that "professed emancipatory intent," to paraphrase Zilliacus. Wallraff's seminal work on the situation of guest workers in Germany, Meinhof's columns in *konkret*, and Runge's *Bottropper Protokolle* (1968) sought to present realities unmediated by literary reworking.[124] While there is some success in this project, there is also the inherent editorial problem of selection and organization for presentation of the material, and it is this problematic that Enzensberger addresses, to my mind, in his nexus of documents and editorial commentary in *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*.

The problem in the late sixties and early nineteen seventies, according to Enzensberger, was that literature had lost its revolutionary clout: "Heute liegt die politische Harmlosigkeit aller literarischen, ja aller künstlerischen Erzeugnisse

[123]The film is called, *Durruti: Die Biographie einer Legende*, and was shown on October 2, 1972 on the Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR) television network. See the volume, *Erinnern und Erzählen. Der spanische Bürgerkrieg in der deutschen und spanischen Literatur und in den Bildmedien* (2005; especially page 486).

[124]Zilliacus notes that Runge, "bade farewell to her transcriptive past" (Zilliacus 104), in her article, "Abschied von den Protokollen" in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of July 17, 1976. He goes on to say that she wished to remain a committed writer, "but this, for her, today, means becoming more of a writer" (Zilliacus 105). Runge claims she must turn to fictional narrative and away from documentary writing, in order to be "more of a writer," which is interesting to us in as much as this iconic figure of sixties documentary literature appears to be ceding the definition of writing to authors of traditional fiction. Zilliacus points out that she did not produce a novel during the seventies, as she claimed she would.

überhaupt offen zutage: schon der Umstand, daß sie sich als solche definieren lassen, neutralisiert sie. Ihr aufklärerischer Anspruch, ihr utopischer Überschuß, ihr kritisches Potential ist zum bloßen Schein verkümmert," ("Gemeinplätze," 49-50).[125] Literature had become merely an affirmative bourgeois form, and needed changing; this reform would be an act of political commitment in the midst of the student protest movement. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* seeks to re-form and rehabilitate political literature, and is especially significant in light of its publication in the later phase of the protest movement, because in the early seventies the narrativization of the revolt and its putative failure had commenced. In the essay, "Gemeinplätze: die neueste Literatur betreffend," Enzensberger bespeaks the necessity of the political alphabetisation of Germany, which would be a "gigantisches Projekt." However: "Sie hätte selbstverständlich, wie jedes derartige Unternehmen, mit der Alphabetisierung der Alphabetisierer zu beginnen ("Gemeinplätze," 53)." This sort of pronouncement seems to represent an attempt to change situation, by alphabetising the student and reading 'classes,' in order that they become alphabetizers themselves.

In terms of its content, Enzensberger's narrative has nothing explicitly to do with Germany in the seventies; his story is set in the Spanish Civil War. Removed geographically and historically from the context of its production, the Durruti novel wants to alphabetize its readers about the construction of historical

[125]This quotation is from the essay, "Gemeinplätze: die neueste Literatur betreffend" (1968), and I am citing from the collection of Enzensberger's essays called, *Palaver. Politische Überlegungen (1967-1973)*, (1974). I will refer henceforth to this essay as, "Gemeinplätze."

narrative about a complex conflict in which the Left did not merely battle the Right, but fought internal factional struggles. In Spain in the twenties and thirties, the political and economic conditions were so extreme and social groups so radicalized that action was the only possibility; this was not a time of reason, it was a time of desperation met with the promise of an alternative view of the future. Utopia was anything but the past; as the narrative voice of the second *Glosse* states, "[i]hre Wünsche zielten nicht in die Vergangenheit, sondern in die Zukunft" (37), speaking here of the Spanish anarchists. The novel raises questions that elicit critical comparison in the West German student movement, as well as questions about looking back on utopia and reconstructing its conditions of possibility.

In the approach to *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, Enzensberger's own thoughts on reading and interpretation which he formulates in the essay, "Ein bescheidener Vorschlag zum Schutz der Jugend vor den Erzeugnissen der Poesie" (1976),[126] serve as a valuable motto for understanding the interpretative bias in the present chapter (and in reading in general!). Enzensberger writes:

> In den Akt des Lesens gehen zahllos viele Faktoren ein, die vollkommen unkontrollierbar sind: die soziale und psychische Geschichte des Lesers, seine Erwartungen und Interessen, seine augenblickliche Verfassung, die Situation, in der er liest – Faktoren, die nicht nur absolut legitim und daher ernst zu nehmen, sondern die überhaupt die Voraussetzung dafür sind, daß so etwas wie eine Lektüre zustande kommen kann. (Enzensberger "Vorschlag" 189)

[126]In my current text I shall be quoting from a reprint of Enzensberger's essay in *Lesebuch. Deutsche Literatur der siebziger Jahre*, edited by Christoph Buchwald and Klaus Wagenbach (1984), and to which I will refer as, "Ein bescheidener Vorschlag." Referred to as 'Enzensberger "Vorschlag."

For him, reading is an anti-authoritarian activity and act that allows the reader a great deal of interpretative freedom – even the freedom to skip lines, read pages out of order and generally misconstrue the text at will. What is important is this performative aspect of reading which Enzensberger proclaims: "[d]ie Lektüre is ein anarchischer Akt" (Enzensberger "Vorschlag" 190). This, as we will see, is also a key component in the utopian moment of the novel under consideration here.

Killing the Hero and Beginning a Reading

In the other two texts under consideration in this project the narratives emanate from the subjective perspective of the protagonists and thematize the clash of public and personal history; that is to say, the inner lives of Lenz and the narrator of *Die Reise* contrast with the external historical conditions of the post-1968 phase. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* takes a very different tack, setting the novel outside the post-1968 context, and moreover, giving the reader almost no idea of the inner emotional sphere of its protagonist. The book attempts to demonstrate how ostensibly objective means of recounting history from sources ranging from eyewitness accounts to journalistic reports to statistics are deeply suspicious. In this process, the issue of nostalgia of the hero arises, and this in turn helps generate a tension between restorative and reflective nostalgia (as outlined by Boym) in Enzensberger's text. We remember that Boym differentiates theses types of nostalgia as follows: "Restorative nostalgia puts

emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps. Reflective nostalgia dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance" (Boym 41). The documentary fragments in our novel represent, I would suggest, a version of restorative nostalgia, while the *Glossen* are a kind of reflective nostalgia, although they do not exactly "dwell in *algia*" but they do continuously point out the "imperfect process of remembrance." For instance, the narrative voice of the *Glossen* contemplates the murky genealogy of the historical accounts most explicitly in the seventh *Glosse*, "Über den Helden," by examining Durruti and his construction as hero as illustrative of the tenuous foundation of historical reportage. It begins with a statement that evokes the concept of reflective nostalgia and the yearning for certainty of memory: "*Wer die Gewißheit liebt, den kann die Geschichte des spanischen Anarchismus leicht zur Verzweiflung bringen*," and continues, "*Noch mehr gerät die Faktizität ins Tanzen, wenn man sich der Figur des Helden nähert*" (257). This reflective nostalgia yearns for the certainty of facticity, which is precisely the utopia of the documentary form, i.e. to present 'pure' facts. Our text is clearly aware that facticity is a problematic category; the "*noch mehr*" is a tacit acknowledgement of the precariousness of facticity. What does the death of Durruti and the manipulation of the recollection of the death-episode demonstrate about the figure of the protagonist with respect to the tension between public and personal history? How does the nostalgic representation of the hero and his death generate a utopian moment?

The novel casts real people as characters – nothing new in historical fiction – but as documentary, the text seems to deny these figures the status of literary figure. The following quotation from the seventh *Glosse* provides a particularly good example of the text's layers of self-referentiality and its commentary on the literary construction of the hero, a figure who is supposed to transcend bourgeois categories of fiction. Durruti is portrayed as an icon; his character is about the sacrifice of individuality for the sake of his people – at least this is the idealized, utopian image of the hero presented and, I believe, problematized in this pointedly ironic passage.

> *An Durruti versagt jede Einfühlung. Gerade deshalb haben die Massen sich in ihm wiedererkannt. Seine individuelle Existenz ist ganz und gar in einem gesellschaftlichen Charakter, dem des Helden, aufgegangen. Die Geschichte eines Helden aber gehorcht Gesetzen, die der bürgerliche Entwicklungsroman nicht kennt. Ihr Stoffwechsel wird von Bedürfnissen gesteuert, die mächtiger sind als bloße Tatsachen. Die Legende sammelt Anekdoten, Abenteuer, Geheimnisse; sie holt sich, was sie braucht, und scheidet aus, womit sie nichts anfangen kann; und auf diese Weise erreicht sie eine Art von Stimmigkeit, die zäh verteidigt wird.* (259)

This is a passage about the constructedness of history and a prime example of the reflective nostalgia of the *Glossen*, for it concedes that a legend and the conditions under which it is generated – in other words, the narrativization of history – is always already obscured by editorial choice, yet will always pretend to a unity of historical reconstruction. In pointing this out, the narrator of the *Glossen* is illustrating the "imperfect process of remembrance." The quotation's first sentence is coded to raise the awareness of the German reader familiar with Brecht's criticism of sympathy and identification with dramatic characters. While

we are dealing with a novel, not a play, one can never the less argue that the word *Einfühlung* in relation to a literary character, since Brecht, evokes a discourse on bourgeois versus epic narrative. The fact that the masses recognize themselves in this character is also a fundamentally anti-bourgeois moment. There is a mystification, even an apotheosis of the hero at play that presents the figure as transcending narrative construction and being the reflective image of the 'everyman.' His legend is a utopian narrative space; it does not exist but in resonances with those who seek to fill that space with their idealized notion of the hero. There is also a sense that such figures do not exist in the present, and this is the nostalgic longing for the hero who existed in a past to which we only have access through narrative, meaning the past exists only because we construct it. The documentary tries to "patch up memory gaps" (Boym) and give an accurate impression of events, but Enzensberger's text problematizes this utopian project of filling mnemonic voids via nostalgia.

We must keep in mind that there is a certain amount of ironic reflection on the role of literary texts in shaping the narrative of the hero. By placing the legend of the hero above "*bloße Tatsachen*" and having it adhere to "*Gesetzen, die der bürgerliche Entwicklungsroman nicht kennt*," Enzensberger's narrator is questioning both the bourgeois novel and the documentary traditions. Where else but in narrative – be it in novel or report – would the legend of the hero develop? This is the obvious question raised quite consciously here, in a *Glosse* that acknowledges this text's own role in the attempt to restore the narrative of

Durruti, which is based largely on propaganda pamphlets from the time and the fading memories of his comrades. To state that the legend of the hero has an authority of its own, collecting anecdotes, adventures and secrets, to then sort them out and produce the narrative is the most ironic moment in this passage.[127] The legend does not possess agency, rather the researcher, editor and writer of the Durruti story is the one who does the collecting, sorting and publishing of the fragments that form a narrative collage. The narrator refers to a prescribed "*Dramaturgie der Heldenlegende*" (260), in other words a literary form into which Durruti's story fits well, however, it is the collector and producer of the narrative who selects and adapts what he has to fit that mould. The language of the *Glosse* does not seek to undermine the project of reconstructing Durruti's story, rather it calls attention to the process by inciting the reader to see the very text at hand as part of the utopian project of restorative nostalgia.

Enzensberger's protagonist challenges convention not only as a literary figure but as a narrative trope. According to the narrator, Buenaventura Durruti is a hero, be it as historical or literary character. The elements for a heroic epic narrative are all present: an apparently sympathetic, if not completely infallible protagonist, adventure, forces opposed to what the protagonist stands for, a love interest, comradery, and the hero's death. The latter, as this section shows, occurs under somewhat controversial circumstances, which are variously told in the

[127] Zilliacus points out that Runge's collection and selection of interviews in her *Bottropper Protokolle* "itself constitutes an authorial comment" (Zilliacus 104), and Enzensberger's text responds explicitly to this problem of authorial comment through selection and arrangement of source material via the *Glossen*.

name of bringing the hero myth to fruition. Often, it is the hero's tragic death at the hands of a traitor or enemy that is the necessary enzyme in the transformation of the narrative into a heroic epic, and although Durruti's death does not clearly conform to the trope of the tragic hero's death, precisely the controversy lays bare the mechanism by which such events are re-constructed. Regardless of the conflicting versions, his death is hugely significant, as the narrator puts it, "[*d*]*ennoch wird er erst durch seinen Tod ganz und gar zu dem, was er ist*" (260). In other words, the narrative heeds the imperative, *stirb und werde!* The problem is not only the ambiguity surrounding the protagonist's death but also the protagonist himself: "*Das eigentümliche Zwielicht, das über die Geschichte des spanischen Anarchismus liegt, verdichtet sich, je näher wir dem Gegenstand dieses Buches kommen*" (259). Durruti remains known only by what he was not, and in fact, as the Italian filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini points out in his review of the novel, "[a]uf den ersten siebzig, achtzig Seiten existiert Durruti, obwohl nur von ihm die Rede ist, nicht. Er ist ein reiner *flatus vocis* und hat die Flüchtigkeit von Nebenfiguren in Träumen" (Pasolini 147)[128] – from earlier passages in the text we also glean that there is an almost puritanical angle to Durruti's character: he does not really drink, smoke or womanize. This too would speak more to the iconography of the hero and became a model followed by most of the true

[128]In an article entitled, "Der Autor als Vermittler" (1989). Further references will be to this translation, which is by Annette Kopetzke, from 1989; I will refer to it parenthetically as 'Pasolini.'

anarchists in Spain; especially those who clung to their ideology long after it had been defeated by Franco.

The accounts shape the character of Durruti, yet fail to give the full psychological profile a reader would expect from a novel, as cited above, Enzensberger's text ironically claims, "[*d*]*ie Geschichte eines Helden aber gehorcht Gesetzen, die der bürgerliche Entwicklungsroman nicht kennt*" (259). Both *Lenz* and *Die Reise* are very overtly psychological or at least very subjective in their narrative perspective, yet they challenge the conventions of the bourgeois *Entwicklungsroman* in their own way. As protagonist Durruti is a figure defined by action, not reflection. As far as we know, he is never lost in the quagmire of psychological and intellectual paralysis. While this is a narrative of becoming, in so far as it relates Durruti's role in the Spanish Civil War and his rise to iconic status, Enzensberger does not engage the techniques that were becoming increasingly popular in the early nineteen seventies, in which the perspective is a much more subjective, reflective one. Lenz is a type of character more familiar to the German literary tradition because of his inner conflict, the tension between his ideological beliefs and his personal sentiments, between the word and the action. On this latter point, of course, Dr. Faust is the true literary icon. While Schneider's story represents the inward turn of a subject fragmented himself by contradictions and oppositions, Enzensberger's protagonist is not torn or conflicted he is decisive and driven; it is the representation and construction of his history that is fragmented.

Durruti also represents, "one of those natural leaders of the under classes whose deeds the power structure inevitably interprets as crimes, when they are actually expressing a revolutionary momentum," according to Arrigo Subiotto (Subiotto 67).[129] Again, Durruti is seen more as a literary trope, "the apotheosis", as Subiotto says, of a "hazily defined revolutionary" (Subiotto 66), the point on which Karl Heinz Bohrer's critical ire descends with statements such as, "Enzensberger läßt also nicht ab von einem absolut gesetzten Idealbild des unmanipulierten Menschen" (Bohrer 59).[130] Intriguingly, Bohrer inserts the following footnote at the end of his sentence: "Hier steckt das Motiv der Sehnsucht nach verloren gegangener Einheit, die nur noch Menschen primitiver Gesellschaften besitzen." Bohrer's critique of the mythologizing of Durruti is duly noted; he has a point about its nostalgic aspect, but as the quotation from the seventh *Glosse* cited above illustrates, the text is smarter than this fairly simplistic accusation. The yearning for a lost unity embodied in the figure of the hero is where reflective nostalgia – with its yearning – intersects with restorative nostalgia – with its reconstructive drive – to create a tension in the present. In the post-1968 transitional phase, such a nostalgic tension is actually a form of utopian escape from an encroaching postmodern paradigm in which hero figures belong to outdated ideas of historical master narratives. The irony, of course, is that

[129]In an article entitled, "Hans Magnus Enzensberger and the Anarchist Concept" (1990),to which I will refer in parentheses as 'Subiotto.'

[130]In his book entitled, *Der Lauf des Freitag. Die lädierte Utopie und die Dichter* (1973). I will refer to this text parenthetically as 'Bohrer.'

Enzensberger's novel is a cultural driver of the paradigm shift, meaning the nostalgia for the hero is not only an idealized look back but a problematized attempt to look outside.

If, at this juncture, we examine an example from the text, namely, the passage concerning Durruti's death, it provides some illuminating examples of ideological manipulation in the narrativization of a particular historical event. In the novel, the chapter is simply titled, "*Der Tod*," and within that chapter there are five subdivisions, the most interesting of which are the third and fourth sections, "*Die sieben Tode Durrutis*" and "*Der Augenzeuge*," respectively, although the second subsection provides us with an enlightening quotation from Durruti's political commissar, Ricardo Rionda Castro, who states: "Kaum war er tot, da ging es schon los mit den Lügen" (265) – as if to say Durruti was the guarantor of certainty and truth. Indeed, this line sets up the collage of differing, sometimes very colourful versions of how the anarchist leader died.[131] The only point of agreement is that a bullet wound was the cause of death. The narration seems to favour one particular version, though, as evidenced by its exclusion to the fourth section, after the other versions in the chronology of the text, and consisting of an eye-witness account bulwarked by the sober reflections of three close comrades, all of whom recognize the utter lack propagandistic value in the most plausible version of Durruti's death. What follows is journalist and anarchist sympathizer

[131] In "*Die sieben Tode Durrutis*," there is one of the very few examples of the fascist perspective, more specifically the Nazi one. An article from the *Völkischer Beobachter*, a Nazi organ, is reprinted, which subscribes to the theory that the communists killed Durruti, putatively proving the treasonous nature of the Left.

Jaume Miravitlles's reflection upon accepting that Durruti was, in all likelihood, killed by a bullet from his own gun which fired accidentally while he exited his vehicle:

> Wenn es so war, wird das Verhalten der CNT verständlich. Diese Art von Tod hätte einen Beigeschmack von tödlicher Ironie gehabt; die Massen hätten eine solche Version kaum geglaubt und akzeptiert. Ein Mann, dem der Umgang mit Waffen so selbstverständlich ist wie der Sekretärin ihre Schreibmaschine! Es ist klar, daß die Anarchisten keine Lust hatten, den Mythos, der sich um Durruti gebildet hatte, durch eine so banale Erklärung zu zerstören. Das war undenkbar. Das durfte nicht sein. (277)

Here again we have the text exhibiting a narrative distance on and self-reflexive irony about writing in the analogical comparison of weapon and typewriter use. Inclusion of such documentary fragments[132] yields literary results as the language of Miravitlles's comparison and his commentary on the myth of Durruti demonstrate, and this provides the producer of this text with pre-fabricated literary source material. The statement captures the literary/narrative catastrophe that is Durruti's death, if the version of the gun accident is accepted. But the mere fact of its inclusion in Enzensberger's novel represents a necessarily self-reflexive moment where the text acknowledges the literary failings of reality which itself refracts the failings of literature/narrative.

The other versions of the death form much better narrative material and fuel the emotion within the chaos of the civil war. The myth building by way of an improbable yet narratively more effective version of the hero's death is presented as a necessary step in the narrative construction of Durruti's character.

[132] In this case an exerpt from an interview on May 8, 1971 (298).

There is here a conceivable and interesting parallel to Enzensberger's contention in his essay, "Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien" (1970)[133]– which will be discussed below – that the New Left was effectively afraid of the new media and acted this way out of suspicion of something that would not cohere with its narrative of themselves. In that case it was the moral objection to media manipulation which, according to Enzensberger, the New Left felt it was above because of the purity of its message ("Baukasten," 97-99), whereas the narrator of *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* presents and favours the accounts of Spanish anarchists who recognized the necessity of manipulating the transmission and mediation of the episode of Durruti's death – some even believing their own lie as a sort of ontological necessity, Emilienne Morin is one example of this.

Her character provides the reader some insights into Durruti's personal life, along with another example of a figure who sheds an alienating light on the circumstances of the situation in Spain. Morin has a doubly privileged perspective on the story; she has the most personal relationship with Durruti, although this does not mean she is privy to all information about him, and she is a French woman in Spain with a differing, if not judgmental outlook on the Spanish left, compared with France: "[e]s war ein Unterschied wie Tag und Nacht. Auch die Mentalität der spanischen Genossen... Sie schienen mir, entschuldigen Sie, aber sie schienen mir ein bißchen simpel, ein bißchen elementar" (84). The

[133]This essay was written only a couple of years before Enzensberger began his archival research on his documentary film for the WDR, which became the basis for the novel. I will refer to the essay as "Baukasten" henceforth.

difference most striking to her is the traditional role of women, saying, "[d]ie Spanier hatten nie etwas übrig für die Befreiung der Frau" (96), although she claims Durruti was not as bad, "er wußte schließlich auch, mit wem er es zu tun hatte!" (96). But what is most significant is her adherence to the narrative convention that is supposed to maintain the mythology of Durruti's heroic death, officially or in the public narrative, while privately, tacitly acknowledging that it was an accident. She says: "Ich war nicht dort, ich kann Ihnen nichts darüber sagen. Aber natürlich konnte man den Leuten nicht erzählen, daß es ein Unfall war, schon weil niemand daran geglaubt hätte. Also hieß es, er sei an der Front gefallen" (280). Her point of view is sobering, yet seeks to mediate the public-personal divide of historical narrativization in an obvious way that calls attention to the process.

An Outline of the Critical Reception

In the roughly fifteen years of his literary career that had passed when *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* was published – this was Enzensberger's first novel – he was known first and foremost as a poet, essayist and publisher. To understand this modal shift and the novel's role in the literary dynamics of the early nineteen seventies, we must begin by casting a glance at its critical reception over the last three and a half decades. It becomes apparent that the literary value and character of the text are neglected, as scholars and critics seem to lose themselves in discussions of the truth and accuracy of not only the novel's but especially of the

author's representation of historical events. In the critical literature on *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* it is all too often the case that Enzensberger's personal political views are cited as the intentional motor behind this literary text; in other words, the author is constantly presumed to be identical with the narrator. This section of the chapter seeks to understand the scholarly responses to the figure of the author and his relationship to his narrator. Presently, the question is, what is at stake in the reception of this text over the years and how does the critical discussion of the novel advance our understanding of it? More specifically though, how does the author as mediator dominate the discussion and what problems does this raise for the current project? In proceeding toward an answer to this question, it is useful to keep in mind the following assessment of Enzensberger's intellectual personality, uttered by Peter Schneider in an essay on the former entitled, "Bildnis eines melancholischen Entdeckers" (1999): "Sein Spieltrieb und seine geistige Beweglichkeit haben ihm den Vorwurf der Unzuverlässigkeit eingetragen. Ich halte diesen Vorwurf in einem Land, in dem das unerschütterliche Festhalten an obsolet gewordenen Überzeugungen als Charakterstärke gilt, für einen Ehrentitel" (Schneider "Bildnis" 144).[134]

To begin with, some responses to the novel from the time of its publication, and Hartmut Lange's article, "Nochmals: die Revolution als Geisterschiff" (*Kursbuch* 25,1972)[135] is a critical reception from Enzensberger's

[134]I am citing Schneider's essay from the volume, *Der Zorn altert, die Ironie ist unsterblich* (1999), Rainer Wieland (ed.), and I will refer to it as 'Schneider "Bildnis."'

[135]Henceforth cited as 'Lange.'

own ranks, so to speak, as it appeared in the journal he founded and constitutes criticism from the political left. Lange bemoans the wanting literary qualities of the novel: "Die Dokumentation wäre, glaube ich, romanhafter, also geformter, wenn Enzensberger die Protokolle, Tonbandaufnahmen nicht literarisch auffrisiert, ihre Brüche nicht geglättet, ihre Substanz nicht durch Zahllose Überschriften paraphrasiert, also durch literarische Ambitionen banalisiert hätte" (Lange 76). I would submit that Lange's criticism is problematic because it places an extraordinary faith in a notion of authenticity and purity of the document; he goes so far as to say he has the impression, "Enzensberger vertraut nie der Kraft der Dokumente" (Lange 77), which is most probably the case. Lange is correct then in saying that there is a smoothing over and polishing of the gaps and breaks between documents, along with paraphrasing and translation, of course. This is no banalization of the historical "truth," rather it is precisely the exposition of the ambivalent potential (or power, to use Lange's term) that the document possesses; any ostensibly objective, documentary account is subject to editorial mediation. The utopian moment which is conjured up by the novel is the notion of unmediated access to reality, an idea I discuss below. Here though, the documentary speaks novelistic language and the novel a documentaristic one. Just this tension becomes clear through close readings of the transition between the novel's chapters and its glosses. The shifting perspectives represented within the chapters point to the infinitude of narrative possibility offered by the

documentary evidence, with its eye witness accounts etc., threatens to explode the unified form sought by the novel as literary work.

One of the best-known critics of the text who takes it to task is Karl-Heinz Bohrer, publisher of the liberal journal, *Merkur*. In sections Bohrer's book on utopia in literature – *Der Lauf des Freitag* – he criticizes the mythologization of the Durruti figure in the novel. Bohrer correctly identifies the utopian moment in Enzensberger's novel as "once upon a time" (Bohrer 54), in contrast to other utopian narratives that project into the future or offer present-time alternatives; however, what Bohrer fails to recognize, is that this utopia of "once upon a time" reflects the utopian potential of nostalgia – the good no-place can be narratively located in any historical context, but it nonetheless remains a utopian space of representation. The difficulty is that he subscribes to an functionalistic model of rationality in which literature serves a prescriptive and utilitarian enlightening function instead of playing a critical dynamic role as determined by the interpretative freedom and flexibility of the reader. The following passage from Bohrer's text reveals some problems with his reading, along with his apparent antipathy for the author.

> Es ist Enzensberger von links die Frage gestellt worden, welche Bedeutung das Buch heute haben könnte, welche politische Anweisungsfunktion darin stecken könne, worauf Enzensberger etwas ratlos prätentiös erwiderte, er meine einfach, daß diese Geschichte des Anarchisten Durruti noch einmal erzählenswert gewesen sei. Warum? Wenn wir zu dieser inhaltlich leeren Antwort hinzunehmen, daß Enzensberger im Text ausdrücklich einen politischen Kontext zwischen neoanarchistischen Studentengruppen und dem authentischen Anarchismus dementiert und dies nicht nur für den naheliegenden Fall von Baader/Meinhof etwa, sondern für jeden denkbaren – so daß er

> folgerichtig einen Zeugen als letzten Satz des Buches sagen läßt: 'Man macht nicht zweimal dieselbe Revolution,'[136] dann erscheint das Buch zunächst wie ein sehr nostalgischer Erinnerungsreiz, ohne einen unmittelbar einsehbaren oder verwendbaren politischen Sinn. (Bohrer 54)

This response must be understood from the political and historical circumstances of the early nineteen seventies, keeping in mind the critic's liberal and anti-radical position. Caught in the wave of nostalgia being proclaimed by the 'New Subjectivity,' Bohrer's critique is premised upon an entirely negative definition of nostalgia. One of the central questions of his inquiry pertains to the relationship between utopia and reality (Bohrer 37), where his concept of utopia is more in line with a realizable type. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* engages in what Bohrer links to a melancholic memory project, that seeks emancipation from resignation which results in a nostalgic act that separates utopia further from reality.

Enzensberger's putative denial of any link between the so-called neo-anarchism of the Student Protest Movement of the nineteen sixties and Spanish anarchism of the nineteen thirties is perhaps also to be traced partly to confusing the author with his narrator, and partly to failing to understand an ironic contrast which uses a distancing and critical distinction of the two anarchisms to solicit comparisons; the differences are undeniable, but parallels are inevitable because of the timing of the book's publication. Bohrer says, "der Roman ist eine

[136]I will be discussing this very line – which, to my mind, Bohrer has completely misunderstood – in the last section of this chapter. Incidentally, it is not the quotation of just any eye witness but rather it stems from Emilienne Morin, Durruti's romantic partner. This is a rather significant placement of such a statement by such a character in the novel, and Bohrer goes so far in his misreading of the novel to refer simply to Morin as "einen Zeugen," using the masculine indefinite article to describe this key female figure.

dokumentierte Fiktion – denn es ist durchaus eine Fiktion" (Bohrer 53) and he criticizes the book as an example of a backward looking utopian novel. "Enzensberger stilisierte in der Tat von Beginn an aus dem historischen Material eine mythologische Figur: die des proletarischen Helden" (Bohrer 56), the problem is, according to Bohrer, that Enzensberger had no interest in de-mythologizing the figure, who embodies antiquated notions of the anarchistic hero which are not "properly" utopian, but instead regressively romantic. He accuses the novel of focussing on the "es war einmal" and not the "es wird einmal" (Bohrer 54), although he mitigates that claim later, saying: "[...] aus dem 'Es war einmal' [entsteht] doch noch ein 'Es wird einmal.' Das eben bedeutet, eine ästhetische Utopia herstellen, die einer eingehenderen politologischen und ideologischen Diskussion allerdings nicht auszusetzen ist. Der Dokumentarist Enzensberger hat in Wahrheit eine wunderbare Geschichte erfunden" (Bohrer 61). Bohrer comes up short, because he fails to see that precisely this figure of Durruti captures a kernel of the dialectical tension between the anarchist utopia and the nostalgia for a folkloric hero.

Pasolini's response to the novel is vastly more charitable. He published a book of literary responses in 1973, translated into German as, *Literatur und Leidenschaft. Über Bücher und Autoren*. One short chapter is dedicated to his assessment of *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, under the heading, "Der Autor als Vermittler," which is an overall positive and enthusiastic reception of the novel, wanting from the outset to liberate it from a misreading of 'collage.' Keeping in

mind that Pasolini's text was originally aimed at an Italian speaking readership, it recounts the circumstances under which the novel was produced and gives a brief summary of the narrative content. Importantly, Pasolini peppers his account with commentary, pointing out key facts such as, "[i]m ganzen Buch gibt es nur zwei Zeugnisse der Gegenpartei (ein Journalist und eine Agentur, beide aus dem faschistischen Lager). Die Gestalt Durrutis wird also immer positiv gesehen, sehr positiv sogar" (Pasolini 145). This, of course, is fuel for Bohrer's fire in his polemic against the mythologization of the anarchist leader, but the criticism of mythologization is there, as Pasolini rightly claims, "zwischen den Zeilen" (Pasolini 145). His argument, contra that of Bohrer, is that the literary quality of the book triumphs over comparisons to historiographical objectivity. "Die literarische Qualität Enzensbergers tritt auch in einer raffinierten und spezifischeren Weise zutage. In der Anordnung der Zeugnisse nämlich, wo eine 'Rangordnung' steigender Dramatik am Ende über chronologische Abfolge triumphiert" (Pasolini 147). Certainly, this is the point of view taken in the current chapter, over one such as Bohrer's.

As the nineteen eighties dawned, some distance had already been achieved on the student movement and on *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*'s publication. What follows is a brief overview of the novel's reception between the early eighties and the early twenty first century, starting with Ingrid Eggers whose monograph, *Veränderung des Literaturbegriffs im Werk von Hans Magnus*

Enzensberger (Eggers 1981).[137] She aligns herself with a position similar to Bohrer's saying, "Enzensberger hatte, wie Karl Heinz Bohrer richtig dazu bemerkt, kein Interesse daran, Durruti zu entmythologisieren" (Eggers 109-10). For Eggers the failure to demythologise is troubling because the reader is ostensibly forced to sympathize with the anarchist side, and because the narrative of the end of Spanish anarchism and heroes like Durruti, lends the story "einen nostalgischen Zug" (Eggers 110). This supports her earlier claim that the story has, "keinen aktuellen Bezug, sie ist nicht auf andere Verhältnisse übertragbar" (Eggers 109), a contention against which I seek to argue convincingly and rebukingly.

A key Enzensberger interpreter and scholar is clearly Reinhold Grimm, who has published extensively on the author. One particular article of Grimm's, "Poetic Anarchism? The Case of Hans Magnus Enzensberger,"[138] submits the well-argued thesis that the author's literary work is essentially marked by anarchic historicism, in which, "Enzensberger's anarchism and his utopianism (no matter how dystopian it may have become) are insolubly tied together" (Grimm 756). The unresolvable contradictions, of which I spoke in the previous chapter, in the context of *Lenz*, exist, according to Grimm, in the figure of Enzensberger, the author, and his narrative product. He also claims there is an "elective affinity" between Enzensberger and Büchner – for us this is another link between

[137]Henceforth cited as 'Eggers.'

[138]In *Modern Language Notes*, April, 1982, to which I will hereafter refer as 'Grimm.'

Enzensberger and Schneider. Grimm states of the former affinity: "Their comparison, however cursory, ought to have sufficed to substantiate this kinship, especially as to their view of anarchic historicity, and to situate Enzensberger and the fundamental incompatibility pervading his life and work, the very essence of his existence, in the appropriate historical frame" (Grimm 756). Grimm does not give an extensive analysis of the Durruti novel, rather he contextualizes its anarchistic elements in Enzensberger's poetics, thus laying the groundwork to assert the connection to authors like Büchner but also Brecht. Of the novel, Grimm writes: "[w]hat seems especially worthy about it is its mosaic-like structure which is in itself a sort of anarchic puzzle meant to provoke the reader's historical – or, if you wish, poetic – imagination and creativeness" (Grimm 747). This is absolutely the point; the novel offers its readers the opportunity to reconcile poetic and historical reading, which does not mean making them one, rather accepting that these are not mutually exclusive categories. Perhaps this is the utopia of the novel's reception.

In a symposium address in 1990, Arrigo Subiotto gives the historical background of Spanish anarchism, i.e., why the country's history and political economy provided fertile ground for an anarchist movement. Subiotto also points to the various other literary, journalistic and academic figures who write about the Spanish Civil War, such as George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938), George Woodcock in *Anarchism* (1963) and Gerald Brenan in *The Spanish Labyrinth* (1943), thereby contextualising the narrative content of Enzensberger's

novel in the broader historiographical and literary discourse on the civil war in Spain. The article is an exegesis of the novel via yet more historical information – this is a self-reflexive moment in the reading and study of the novel, because the novel itself thematizes the reading and study of history – bringing its own historical context into the aforementioned contextualisation and makes the claim that, "Enzensberger here passes harsh judgement on the student movement" (Subiotto 68). This is a reference to the final *Glosse* of the novel in which the narrator does make such a statement, I will argue though, that this is part of the provocative allegory the novel sets up.[139] Subiotto, moreover, points out that the novel has a biblical parallel in so far as it "is the story of a messianic figure subsumed in exactly twelve chapters, reminiscent of the stations of the cross" (Subiotto 67).

Holger Heinrich Preusse argues, for example, "[a]uf der inhaltlichen Ebene des Romans, die Enzensberger's konkrete politische Haltung dieser Zeit dokumentiert, läßt er ein historisches Gemälde des spanischen Anarchismus entstehen" (Preusse 150).[140] What is problematic here is the claim that the novel documents Enzensberger's political attitude. The novel may reflect this attitude, be influenced by it, but the book is not a political diary of the author. Even if the author and the narrator seem so close they must be identical, it does the literary value of the novel great damage when we read it primarily under the auspices of

[139]Incidentally and significantly for the present section of this chapter, Subiotto briefly mentions Bohrer's assessment of the novel, calling it "somewhat hostile" (Subiotto 59).

[140]In, *Der politische Literat Hans Magnus Enzensberger*; henceforth known as 'Preusse.'

authorial intention. That this novel is in no way the product of an intentionally acting author who was also politically motivated, is not the argument being made here, rather, it is my contention that the emphasis must be shifted toward reading of Enzensberger's text which seeks less the very problematic measurement of historical accuracy and more the possibilities and tensions associated with interpretation in the reconstruction of a historical narrative. In their respective texts on *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, Preusse and Ingrid Eggers both see the novel as key moment of disillusionment, as the end of the student movement or at least the adumbration of this end. These interpretations go much more in the direction of resignation and see the novel as signifying the end of utopia.

A much more recent critical reception of the text can be found in the *Zagreber Germanistische Beiträge* of 2004, the special issue of *Beiheft 8* having been devoted to historical narrative, including an article by Milka Car. The article, with the title "Historischer Roman zwischen Dokumentarismus und historiographischer Metafiktion," frames the problem of historical narration as follows: "Enzensbergers These, die 'Geschichte sei kollektive Fiktion,' [outlined in the first *Glosse*] legt die Frage nahe, wer die Geschichte als fiktive Konstruktion festschreibt, mit welchen diskursiven und symbolischen Strategien gesellschaftliche Verhältnisse präsentiert werden und welche historischen Ordnungsmuster diese Deutungen strukturieren" (Car 293). Car is referring to the interests or biases, present in any reconstruction of a historical narrative, which the narrator points out in the first *Glosse* (which is discussed in the next section),

and this in turn orients us in the direction of language and ideology in historiography. But Car continues: "Es scheint, daß mit diesem Spiel der De- und Rekonstruktion der Geschichte Durrutis die vielbeschworene 'Exekution des Erzählers' vollzogen ist" (Car 298). This is not the case. In fact, there is a shifting focalisation which calls attention to the overt presence of the narrative voice in the *Glossen* and its apparent absence in the intervening chapters. The narrator conceals himself behind the newspaper reports, propaganda pamphlets, and eye witness testimony but he is still narrating and so underlines how history achieves its existence as narrative only through the possibility of its reproduction. There are only narrators in the construction of historical narrative – history as original is no more, it is lost in, well, the past and its events are therefore only demonstrable within a selective framework which is itself necessarily ideological, despite scientistic pretensions to evidentiary objectivity and accuracy. Car's question about history as fictive construction goes to the heart of the matter at hand, namely, the utopia of a pure historiographical meta-position from which to ascertain the truth of how history really happened, outside ideology. That is the truly good place which is no place!

Regardless of one's narratological stance on the relationship between author and narrator, whether one or the other is 'dead,' Hans Magnus Enzensberger represents a kind of intellectual force in the narrative of the nineteen sixties and seventies student protest movement and its literary production, broadly speaking. In his essay, "Bildnis eines melancholischen

Entdeckers," Peter Schneider reminds us, though, that Enzensberger sought to maintain a certain distance on that movement.

> Viele haben damals sein eher ausprobierendes als einverständiges Verhältnis zur Achtundsechziger-Bewegung mit Begeisterung verwechselt. Die "Kulturrevolution" war für ihn wohl zuallererst ein Spiel, ein Experiment, das bislang interessanteste, das die sechziger Jahre zu bieten hatten. Er nahm teil als ein Spieler, der mit hohem Risiko spielte, aber eines nie riskierte: den Abstand, der ihm Ironie und Eleganz gewährte. Allerdings frage ich mich, wie er die Nachbarschaft so vieler schauderhaft geschriebener Flugblätter und Pamphlete ausgehalten hat. (Schneider "Bildnis" 139)

I would submit that an answer to Schneider's just posed question is simply: he wrote *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*. He thematized his role as author and narrator, of intellectually influential force – "[k]aum ein anderer Schriftsteller hat einen ähnlich großen Einfluß auf die Achtundsechiger gehabt," according to Schneider (Schneider "Bildnis" 139) – in his documentary novel, creating a self-reflexive literary-historical work of art that refuses closure on the issue of historical narrativization.

Nostalgia and the Utopia of 'Unmediated Access to Reality'

In the context of the post-1968 phase and the trajectory of utopia toward nostalgia, it behoves us at this point to return to the question of why and how *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* is interesting today. On the one hand, the issues surrounding representation and historical narrative seem to have a lasting currency and thus make a novel that thematizes and problematizes these issues relevant, as ours does, but that is not very satisfying because those problems and

questions of representation are open-ended and unresolvable. In the context of the utopia-nostalgia dynamic, though, a more specific and precise discussion is possible, if we focus on the utopian aspects of the tension between restorative and reflective nostalgia mentioned above. This involves examining the relationship between the novel's documents and its *Glossen*, which to my mind, represent a form of essayistic writing that reflects on the process of producing a historical narrative through source material. This also relays our discussion into the emergence of the postmodern, which celebrates inconsistencies and impossibilities – i.e. the impossibility of creating the authoritative and complete picture of history – in the narrative reproduction of history. Or, as Linda Hutcheon puts it: "[i]n very general terms, the postmodern questioning of this totalizing impulse may well have its roots in some sort of 1960s' or late romantic need to privilege free, unconditioned experience" (Hutcheon 63). She is, of course, alluding to one of the key utopian desires of the sixties and seventies, namely, authenticity or authentic experience, a vague and hard to define category.[141] What is important for us here is, though, is the privileging of 'free' experience, which Hutcheon links to a romantic desire – I would call this a nostalgia for a utopia of free, unconditioned experience. Zilliacus, to bring us back to the discussion of the documentary form, raises the issue of *Narrenfreiheit* in that genre with Günter Wallraff as the advocate of this sort of freedom. It is

[141] I will not get into a discussion of 'authenticity,' for it opens too great a set of questions that are outside the scope of this project. However, I would point my reader to Michael Rutschky's book-length essay, *Erfahrungshunger. Ein Essay über die siebziger Jahre* (1980), where experience and authenticity are reflected upon.

not a terribly original idea that the court jester can get away with statements others cannot, even if they are true, but Wallraff insists that this role of the jester remains and has been passed on to the documentary author, who is not bound by the constraints and accountability of journalistic ethics.[142] With the emerging postmodern impulse of the early seventies there is a realization that the documentary may not possess the privilege of accessing and representing historical or other experience unconditionally or freely; rather, works such as Enzensberger's call attention to the utopian notion of having, what Hutcheon calls, "unmediated access to reality" (Hutcheon 33). An 'unmediated access' to historical reality is the utopian moment that crystallizes in the tension between restorative and reflective nostalgia in the Durruti novel.

By the seventies, Enzensberger recognizes a kind of "'Fetischismus' des Dokuments" and cites his Spanish civil war narrative as an attempt to break free of the "Kult der Authentizität."[143] While his novel thematizes the fallibility and precariousness of documentary historiography, Enzensberger does not capitulate to impossibility, rather he holds fast to the idea of letting others speak and minimizing the role of the author. In the self-reflexive first *Glosse*, "Über die Geschichte als kollektive Fiktion," the narrator generates a seemingly frank, authentic discourse about its own project of documentary reconstruction. The

[142]See Zilliacus's aforementioned article for further discussion of Wallraff.

[143]I am quoting and paraphrasing statements Enzensberger made to Zilliacus in a letter which the latter cites in the article we have been discussing (Zilliacus 108-09).

narrator writes: "*Das einfachste wäre es, sich dumm zu stellen und zu behaupten, jede Zeile dieses Buches sei ein Dokument. Aber das ist ein leeres Wort. Kaum sehen wir genauer hin, so zerrinnt uns die Autorität unter den Fingern, die das 'Dokument' zu leihen scheint*" (14-15). This appears to be an attempt to disabuse the reader of any sense that the book claims authority by way of its access to source material, thereby disarming the obvious critiques of unreliability in documentary narration. Or so it would seem. The distinctly literary narrator – this is after all a novel – cleverly lures the reader into series of apologies for the contradictions and inconsistencies he presents, while what the novel actually demands of its reader is a distanced, sophisticated reading, in which the utopia of authenticity or proximity to realism emerges from the contradictory process of restoring the past through narrative and reflecting on the imperfection of that memory project, to paraphrase Boym.

The following quote from the first *Glosse*, sets the tone for the novel's project of historical (re)construction, exhibiting an example of playful literary irony. The following sentence from that *Glosse* contains an interesting double meaning: "*Die Geschichte ist eine Erfindung, zu der die Wirklichkeit ihre Materialien liefert.*" While "die Geschichte" refers to history, in general, it can also be read as a definite phrase, i.e., *this* story is an invention with which reality has supplied its material. This is a freedom the text allows itself as *Roman*. The passage continues:

> *Aber sie ist keine beliebige Erfindung. Das Interesse, das sie erweckt, gründet auf den Interessen derer, die sie erzählen; und sie erlaubt es*

> *denen, die ihr zuhören, ihre eigenen Interessen, ebenso wie die ihrer Feinde, wiederzuerkennen und genauer zu bestimmen. Der wissenschaftlichen Recherche, die sich interesselos dünkt, verdanken wir vieles; doch sie bleibt Schlemihl, eine Kunstfigur. Einen Schatten wirft erst das wahre Subjekt der Geschichte. Es wirft ihn voraus als kollektive Fiktion*. (13)

The narrator makes it perfectly clear that historical representation is always an ideologically tinged interpretative undertaking. This assertion is a direct challenge to the dominant positivistic historiography in post-World War II West Germany, which was taught in schools and universities and effectively prejudiced the generation of the 1960s protest movement.[144] The quote also points to the utopian notion of historiography free of interests, i.e., ideologies. In the essay "Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien," Enzensberger couches this problematic in the language of manipulation of media, and since history is always mediated – despite the utopian ideal of unmediated access to reality – here too there is no such thing as "eine reine, unmanipulierte Wahrheit" ("Baukasten" 97).[145] The novel itself represents the attempt to capture a political utopia in the frame of

[144]Historian and theorist Hayden White points to the rhetorical character of historiography in his essay, "Rhetoric and History" (1976), arguing: "If rhetoric is the politics of discourse, as discourse itself is the politics of language, then there is no such thing as politically innocent historiography. There is nothing disgraceful about this condition; it is a condition shared by every discipline in the proto scientific phase of its evolution. But until historical discourse is submitted to rigorous rhetorical analysis, this ideological and political aspect of it will remain undisclosed– except in those cases in which the political intent of the writer is so manifest as to render its propagandistic nature obvious. Moreover, until we submit historical texts to rhetorical analysis, we shall no doubt go on vaguely praising great historians for their 'style' without being able to specify what this 'style' amounts to" (White 24). Like any narrative tradition, historiography is subject to ideological interpretative categories. White wants to assail positivistic historiography, which pretends to truth and objectivity, by analysing it rhetorically and ideologically, illustrating that every historical text belongs to a political discourse, consciously or unconsciously.

[145]This quotation is taken from section of Enzensberger's essay that criticizes the New Left for the idealistic and ethically entitled belief in the pure truth. He says: "Die Dämonisierung des Gegners verdeckt die Schwächen und perspektivistischen Mängel der eigenen Agitation" ("Baukasten" 98).

historical documents, the interests of which the reader should be capable of recognizing and even perhaps making the connection to their own present context. The utopian striving in the narration of the novel is recognizable through the mediation of the story by the "true subject of history" ("das wahre Subjekt der Geschichte").

This "true subject of history" is perhaps a curious concept but I would simply suggest that it is akin to Walter Benjamin's "Subjekt historischer Erkenntnis." This is, "die kämpfende, unterdrückte Klasse selbst," according to Benjamin (Benjamin Illuminationen 257).[146] In Enzensberger's Text this is certainly plausible; Buenaventura Durruti would then be the embodiment of the oppressed, struggling working class.[147] The voices that transmit his story are also largely from these ranks and they are what is supposed to lend the novel its narrative fuel. What we are in fact dealing with in this novel is a narrator who is acting more like an editor and publisher – in German one would say, *Herausgeber* – of a lost story about the losers of history.[148] He is doing this in the name of the subject of history, publishing the collective fiction of history, returning to the

[146]I am here citing from the Suhrkamp edition of *Illuminationen*, belonging to the *Ausgewählte Schriften I*, no date of publication given; I will hence refer to the text parenthetically as, 'Benjamin *Illuminationen*.'

[147]We remember that the narrator claims, "*Die Massen* [*haben*] *sich in ihm* [Durruti] *wiedererkannt*," in the seventh *Glosse* (259).

[148]Arrigo Subiotto points out that: "*Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* is important in Enzensberger's oeuvre not only because it articulates his deep-seated sympathy with the anarchist perspective on the world but also by making a distinctive contribution to the cluster of his aesthetic ideas that engage with the nature of literary composition and originality, the relationship of truth and fiction, the imaginative role of the editor and essayist, and the significance of oral and unlettered forms of literature in a cultural environment generally hostile to them" (Subiotto 72).

utopia that was the fleeting moment of anarchist victory. But this story is not least a fiction because it is incomplete and can only be read through the lens of the interests of different groups. These are in actuality the sources of the narrative that constitute the collectivity of history, but they do so only through a nostalgic act of recollection, which implies a utopian moment.

To construct historical narratives, especially this particular sort where there is nothing but conflicting and contradictory information in the form of eye-witness accounts, is to restrict and to limit: the literary historiographer must choose the events and characters for the literary representation and accept the consequences of the manifold possibilities of interpretation resulting from it. The collectivity of tradition, of the transmission of historical material must also be accommodated. To function as editor and publisher of a history is to have presentiment about the interpretative potential and possible languages of interpretation.[149] The production of a text like *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* as process of (re)collection speaks again to the tension between restorative and reflective nostalgia. The notion of collecting presumes a form of nostalgia for

[149]On the issue of interpretation, Enzensberger is arguably influenced by Susan Sontag's article, "Against Interpretation" (1964), which criticizes the notion of the 'correct' interpretation. Sontag states: "[...] interpretation is not (as most people assume) an absolute value, a gesture of mind situated in some timeless realm of capabilities. Interpretation must itself be evaluated, within a historical view of human consciousness. In some cultural contexts, interpretation is a liberating act. It is a means of revising, of transvaluing, of escaping the dead past. In other cultural contexts, it is reactionary, impertinent, cowardly, stifling" (Sontag 7). This echoes the view espoused by Enzensberger's "Ein bescheidener Vorschlag" essay which is distinctly against the idea of 'correct' interpretation, as taught or imposed by an authoritarian educational system ("Ein bescheidener Vorschlag" 191) if reading is to be this liberating (or anarchic) act.

whatever is the object of collection; there is a drive to preserve something, for whomever, before it is lost. It is the case, however, that in this act of collection there is a strong utopian drive which serves precisely the same end. The collection itself then becomes the representation of a tension between the nostalgic categories and the utopian moments in its construction. In this act of nostalgic (re)collection, Enzensberger's novel casts the telling and re-telling of history into the spotlight, contrasting the voices and language of the eye witnesses, the sources, and the narrative voice of the *Glossen*.[150]

The figure of journalist Simone Weil represents one of these voices which the text has appropriated for its documentary narration. Weil's is an example of the more troubling, painful aspects of nostalgia; she seeks to represent, or better, restore the events, thematizing confusion, inconsistency and imperfect memory, which lends her voice a reflective character. The figure of Simone Weil,[151] the

[150]Pasolini argues that Enzensberger has invented an entirely new form of historiography and in a chapter of R. Grimm's *Hans Magnus Enzensberger* (1984), called "Hans Magnus Enzensberger: *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*," he writes of the narration in the novel: "[h]ier geht es zunächst und vor allem darum, das Buch als das zu betrachten, was es ist (oder sein möchte): nämlich ein Werk außerhalb seines Autors... der als reine Vermittlungsinstanz eines von selbst enstandenen Buches auftritt" (Pasolini *H.M.E.* 74). This recalls Enzensberger's final words of his media theory essay and the sentiment of the first *Glosse* in which the author is to work as an agent of the masses, blending into them, only when they themselves become the authors of their own history.

[151]Simone Weil (1909-43) was a complex, contradictory personage, according to scholars who have written on her life and writings (see Selected Bibliography for further sources). In the introduction to his biography of Weil, *Utopian Pessimist* (1990), David McLellan writes: "Certainly there are few lives which involve as much paradox as hers: born into a comfortable bourgeois family, she became a fanatical supporter of the proletariat; a pacifist, she fought in the Spanish Civil War; a Jew, attracted to Christianity, she refused to join the Church because of its adherence to the Old Testament; she wrote a lot – and beautifully – about love, but abhorred all physical contact with her fellows; her outlook on life and politics was sombre, even pessimistic, yet she was ever ready to propagate utopian schemes for the reformation of society; finally, she abjured her splendid gifts by refusing existence itself and her death was caused, at least partially, by self-starvation. (McLellan 1)

outsider, allows for a constructively alienating moment in the reading of the novel. She is a voice of reason, not bound by party affiliations in Spain, although clearly identified with the Left.[152] Enzensberger's inclusion of Weil's writings as historical document which reflects on historical memory, generates another layer of self-reflexive irony in the novel. A close reading of Weil's accounts on the reception of the situation in Spain reveals a sense of the impossibility of representing or even fully understanding it. Her contributions also provide the unique perspective of an outsider – she was a foreigner (French) and, obviously, a woman. Weil is a journalist whose aim is to report as objectively as someone sympathetic to the movement can. The result is a rare critique from inside the ranks of the anarchist column. She recounts, for instance, the taking of a fifteen year old prisoner who had fought with the Franco's nationalist forces: "Er wurde zu Durruti geschickt, der ihm eine ganze Stunde lang die Vorzüge des anarchistischen Ideals schilderte und ihn dann vor die Wahl stellte, entweder zu sterben oder unverzüglich in die Reihen derer einzutreten, die ihn gefangengenommen hatten, und gegen seine früheren Kameraden zu kämpfen" (162). The boy declines and is shot. Weil reports feeling guilty about this event, despite having heard about it only after the fact, but this is not really the point. The following quotation from Weil's fragment on Spain exposes the fragmentary

[152]On a more literary-interpretative horizon, Weil represents the under-represented – not surprisingly perhaps, women are vastly under-represented as sources of this history. This is primarily owing to the smaller number of women involved in the armed revolutionary anarchist movement. However, those women that do contribute to the construction of the historical narrative provide the interpreter of the text with a particularly enlightening point of view on the 'object of this book,' Durruti.

understanding of that civil war and the chaos and confusion of it and illustrates the context of events such as that with the young prisoner of war:[153]

> [...] what is necessary and what is ideal, are so mixed together as to produce a hopeless confusion not only on the level of facts but even in the very consciousness of the actors and spectators of the drama. That very confusion is the essential characteristic of and perhaps greatest evil of civil war. It is also the first conclusion to be drawn from a rapid survey of the events in Spain, and what we know of the Russian Revolution confirms it only too well. It is not true that revolution automatically corresponds to a higher, more intense, and clearer consciousness of the social problem. The opposite is true, at least when revolution takes the form of civil war. In the agony of civil war, every common measure between principles and realities is lost, every sort of criterion by which one could judge acts and institutions disappears, and the transformation of society is given over to chance. How can one communicate something coherent, after a brief sojourn and a few fragmentary observations? At best, one can convey a few impressions, point out a few lessons. (Weil 255; in German in Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie 185)

One of the clearest notes Weil strikes here resonates with the *algia* of the "imperfect process of remembrance," to use Boym's turn of phrase. But in Enzensberger's text, as a part of the novel, this passage recalls the project of restorative nostalgia, for it is a document of the time that seems to yearn for truth – the restorative nostalgics "believe that their project is about truth" (Boym 41). Weil's language laments the confusion that characterizes the context of war and hinders the portrayal of events. A passage of reflective nostalgia is being used by Enzensberger in his restorative memory project, the goal of which is to thematize the imperfect process of remembrance.

[153]I have quoted the fragment from Simone Weil, *Formative Writings 1929-1941* (1987), and will refer to this as 'Weil.' The fragment is printed in Enzensberger's novel on page 185.

The essayistic *Glossen* do the reflective work of the novel, and the reconstructive or restorative documents, like Weil's text, give a sense of immediacy to gleaning an understanding of the time. To put the discussion of the essay in the context of this project, it is of the utmost importance to remember that the three authors, on whose work we are focussing, all choose the essay as a central mode of expression. How they differ is in their respective attempts to integrate the essayistic and literary forms. Peter Schneider's *Lenz* does not appear to be an experiment in melding the forms, although certainly themes raised in his essayistic corpus find expression in his literary text, so it is safe to say that for his part there is still some separation between essay and fictional literature. Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise*, on the other hand, represents the explicit attempt to create a hybrid of novel and essay, as we will see in the next chapter of this project. Enzensberger has juxtaposed the essay with the document in an ordered fashion with a narrative arc to create a novel which exposes the process of mediation which is narrativization and historiography. It is our task now to read the Durruti novel through one seminal and prescient essay in particular, namely, "Baukausten zu einer Theorie der Medien."

What the essay-form encourages is authorial freedom to engage the interrelationship of form and content, notion and concept, and eternalize the transitory.[154] Certainly, the narrative of Buenaventura Durruti is but a fragment of

[154]In "Der Essay als Form," Theodor Adorno writes: "Der Essay aber will nicht das Ewige im Vergänglichen aufsuchen und abdestillieren, sondern eher das Vergängliche verewigen. Seine Schwäche zeugt von der Nichtidentität selber, die er auszudrücken hat; vom Überschuß der

the Spanish Civil War narrative, and transitory in its own right, owing largely to the fact that it belongs to the story of the losing side of that war. The essay married to the documentary form seems ideal for reconstituting a fraction of history, and challenging positivistic notions of historiography; the other side of this coin is of course the reading experience of this novel which, in accordance with the freedom of the writer of the essay, is then the 'anarchic act,' Enzensberger espouses. The media theory essay articulates what would become the methodological underpinning of *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, specifically as we have seen expressed in the first *Glosse* with the rhetorical reflections on authorship and authority. In his essay, then, Enzensberger states: "Der Autor hat als agent der Massen zu arbeiten. Gänzlich verschwinden kann er erst dann in ihnen, wenn sie selbst zu Autoren, den Autoren der Geschichte geworden sind" ("Baukasten" 129). Representing the voices of the actors of history in documentary form is an attempt, however preliminary, to begin putting this methodology into action.[155]

This synthesis of the masses into the authors of history implies a collectivity of authorship that would result in the possibility of unmediated access

---

Intention über die Sache und damit jener Utopie, welche in der Gliederung der Welt nach Ewigem und Vergänglichem abgewehrt ist. Im emphatischen Essay entledigt sich der Gedanke der traditionellen Idee von Wahrheit." (This reference is from Theodor Adorno's *Schriften II. Noten zur Literatur* 18).

[155]Karla Lydia Schultz's article, "*Ex negativo*: Enzensberger mit und gegen Adorno" (1984), discusses the author's relationship to the late philosopher – although Schultz does not refer explicitly to *Der kurze Sommer*, the philosophical affinities between Enzensberger and Adorno she presents are highly relevant to the current discussion of the novel.

to history. In his essay, Enzensberger is interested in theorizing the problems of mediation, which reflect the current reality and the history of historiography, including its future. I would like to focus my discussion on two portions (each consisting of a few of Enzensberger's numbered sections, of which there are twenty two) of the essay that appear to lay much of the theoretical groundwork for the Durruti novel; the first portion focuses on the problem of medial manipulation and the New Left's responses to it – which are surprisingly nostalgic for older forms of communication! – and the second portion represents the final sections of the essay, dealing with the role of written literature, in relation especially to the oral tradition, the process of production (writing) and the documentary form.

In a passage from the first portion of the essay, Enzensberger outlines the fundamental problem manipulation where there is, I believe, a definite and important thematic link to the first *Glosse* of the novel.

> Manipulation, zu deutsch Hand- oder Kunstgriff, heißt soviel wie zielbewußtes technisches Eingreifen in ein gegebenes Material. Wenn es sich um ein gesellschaftlich unmittelbar relevantes Eingreifen handelt, ist die Manipulation ein politischer Akt. Das ist in der Bewußtseins-Industrie prinzipiell der Fall.
> Jeder Gebrauch der Medien setzt also Manipulation voraus. Die elementarsten Verfahren medialen Produzierens von der Wahl des Mediums selbst über Aufnahme, Schnitt, Synchronisation, Mischung bis hin zur Distribution sind allesamt Eingriffe in das vorhandene Material. Ein unmanipuliertes Schreiben, Filmen und Senden gibt es nicht. ("Baukasten" 101)

There is, to make a reasonable addition to the last sentence of the quotation, no such thing as unmanipulated translation either, which falls perhaps under the rubric of writing but is worth noting explicitly for the discussion of *Der kurze*

Sommer der Anarchie because virtually all the documents that constitute the chapters are translated from Spanish or French. In the first *Glosse* Enzensberger 'translates' the ideas presented in his essay into the novel, using themes introduced in the above quotation:

> *Der Nacherzähler hat weggelassen, übersetzt, geschnitten und montiert und in das Ensemble der Fiktionen, die er fand, seine eigene Fiktion eingebracht, mit voller Absicht und vielleicht auch wider Willen; nur daß diese eben darin ihr Recht hat, daß sie den andern das ihre läßt. Der Rekonstrukteur verdankt seine Autorität der Unwissenheit. Er hat Durruti nie gekannt, er war nicht dabei, er weiß es nicht besser*. (15)

The narrator of the *Glossen* is taking on the voice of Enzensberger's media essay; he is admitting the tenuousness of narrative authority under the motto: "Ein unmanipuliertes Schreiben, Filmen und Senden gibt es nicht." What this underlines is the fact of many layers of manipulation, in the sense outlined by Enzensberger above; that is to say, the translation is one obvious 'technical intervention' – a very basic necessity in the presentation of these texts to a German-speaking audience – in a series of other manipulations that resulted in the creation of this novel.

Of interest to Enzensberger in the first portion of his essay, is the resistance to the progressive or revolutionary possibilities of the new electronic media expressed by the New Left, betraying ultimately their bourgeois prejudices.[156] "In der Medien-Feindschaft der Neuen Linken scheinen alte

[156]In his aforementioned Enzensberger-tribute essay, Peter Schneider notes that, "Das World Wide Web jedoch, in dem mittlerweile die halbe Welt herumturnt, straft er mit dem Desinteresse eines Mannes, der es dreißig Jahre früher, in seinem 'Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien' vorausgedacht hat" (Schneider "Bildnis" 142).

bürgerliche Ängste wie die vor dem 'Massenmenschen' und ebenso alte bürgerliche Sehnsüchte nach vorindustriellen Zuständen in progressiver Verkleidung wiederzukehren" ("Baukasten" 99). Such statements belong to the broader critique of the late nineteen sixties left-wing activists by writers and thinkers of older generations, but Enzensberger's criticism gets much closer to the heart of the utopia-nostalgia problematic; there is a clear recognition of the problem of nostalgia infecting the utopian drive – in this particular instance it is with respect to the mediation of progressive ideas and the equalization of access to information and constructions of history. He claims the media, "erlauben es [...] zum ersten Mal, historisches Material so zu fixieren, daß es jederzeit vergegenwärtigt werden kann," and anyone can re-present this material, however, "dieser Zugriff [access to the historical information saved in electronic devices] ist ebenso augenblicksbestimmt wie die Aufnahme" (both "Baukasten," 103). This adumbrates his later essay "Ein bescheidener Vorschlag" and its stance on the freedom of reading; in the media essay, he is attempting to demonstrate how the bourgeoisie must relinquish the notion of control over the reception of information through media. In the institutions that study the older forms of communication and mediation, they were much better able to exert this power.

This criticism of the bourgeois responses to the progressive potential of media, in the form of nostalgia, extends to some key figures in Marxist theory, while sparing others. Approaching what I identify as the second portion of the media essay, Enzensberger writes:

> Mit einer einzigen großen Ausnahme, der Walter Benjamins (und in seiner Nachfolge Brechts), haben aber die Marxisten die Bewußtseins-Industrie[157] nicht verstanden und an ihr nur die bürgerlich-kapitalistische Rückseite, nicht ihre sozialistischen Möglichkeiten wahrgenommen. Ein Autor wie Georg Lukacs repräsentiert vollkommen diesen theoretischen und praktischen Rückstand. Auch die Arbeiten von Horkheimer und Adorno sind von einer Nostalgie nicht frei, die sich an frühe, bürgerliche Medien heftet. ("Baukasten" 115)

This will of course challenge us to understand the place of written literature in Enzensberger's conception of the media, and see what progressive possibilities remain in that particular medium. As is well known, he reiterates the death of bourgeois literature – for instance in "Gemeinplätze. Die neueste Literatur betreffend" – which he frames as part of the utopian struggle, but this in turn will necessarily involve a sustained influence of bourgeois forms of art.

The question of literature in relation to the electronic media becomes the focus in the second portion of the essay, leading to its end. Specifically, and most significantly for the present project, Enzensberger addresses the issue of documentary literature:

> Die Ratlosigkeit der literarischen Kritik vor der sogenannten dokumentarischen Literatur ist ein Indiz dafür, wie weit das Denken der Rezensenten hinter dem Stand der Produktivkräfte zurückgeblieben ist. Sie rührt daher, daß die Medien eine der fundamentalsten Kategorien der bisherigen Ästhetik, die der Fiktion, außer Kraft gesetzt haben. Die Opposition Fiktion/Nicht-Fiktion ist ebenso stillgelegt wie die im 19. Jahrhundert beliebte Dialektik von "Kunst" und "Leben." ("Baukasten" 125-26)

---

[157]For a discussion of the etymology of Enzensberger's term *Bewußtseins-Industrie* I would point my reader to Frank Dietschreit and Barbara Heinze-Dietschreit's monograph *Hans Magnus Enzensberger* (1986), where they write: " Enzensbergers Thesen zur *Bewußtseins-Industrie* müssen als *Analogie* und *kritische Weiterentwicklung* der Vorgaben Adornos verstanden werden" (authors' emphases; Dietschreit, Heinze-Dietschreit 49).

Such statements are peculiarly relevant to considerations of *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, given its genesis as documentary film which was then transposed into the literary medium as a novel. The betrayal of the fiction/non-fiction dichotomy provides a crucial component in the understanding of the Durruti text because it pre-emptively subverts those critical voices, some of which were heard in the previous section of this chapter, that cannot accept the book's structure as valid literary form nor its heritage as filmic text. This, again, speaks to the utopian aspect of the novel as documentary fiction project, in terms of mediation and media; narrative is not the exclusive province of the book *topos*. Enzensberger points to the bourgeois desire to own cultural objects, possessing them for eternity, whereas the new cultural forms, and I would argue this includes documentary literature, are much more part of an open-ended process of production that create what he calls *Programme*. These are a kind of dynamic form of cultural production that adapt and subsume their dialectical contradictions in culture; this means, "daß das Medienprogramm strukturell endlos auf seine eigenen Folgen hin geöffnet ist" ("Baukasten" 127). This is also the author relinquishing control of the consequences of the narrative produced.

There is also an interesting parallel between Enzensberger's notion of eternalizing cultural objects and the quotation from Adorno's *Der Essay als Form* cited above, in which he says the essay does not seek to distil the eternal from the transitory, rather it wants to eternalize the transitory. I have made the claim that *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* is the manifestation of the latter point,

employing the essay form in conjunction with the documentary to grasp a lost moment in history. It would appear, then, that this novel is simply an attempt to create a cultural object for ownership; however, the arguments made in Enzensberger's media essay situate the book form squarely in the context of media, just not new or electronic media, and certainly do not proclaim its death. To the contrary: "[ü]brigens ist es äußerst unwahrscheinlich, daß das Schreiben als spezielle Technik in absehbarer Zeit verschwinden wird. Das gilt auch für das Buch, dessen praktische Vorzüge für viele Zwecke nach wie vor offensichtlich sind" ("Baukasten" 124). Eternalizing the transitory as novel (with essayistic and documentary formal components), forces a move into the realm of media and mediation, because that process can only be done through a medium. Here though, we are once again thrust into the utopian question of the possibility of skipping this mediation, something that was earlier referred to as unmediated access to reality. In the media essay, this is where Enzensberger turns to Benjamin's "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," citing only the first half of the following sentence: "[d]er apparatfreie Aspekt der Realität ist hier zu ihrem künstlichsten geworden und der Anblick der unmittelbaren Wirklichkeit zur blauen Blume im Land der Technik" (Benjamin *Illuminationen* 157).

While Benjamin is talking about film in the passage from which the above quotation is taken, Enzensberger is referring more generally to medial production, reading Benjamin's use of the term *'Apparat'* as a precursor to the term 'medium'

– "der Begriff des Mediums stand ihm noch nicht zur Verfügung" ("Baukasten" 126). In other words, Enzensberger sees in Benjamin's text the recognition that all production is in fact re-production, but more importantly, that an unmediated view of reality is a utopian ideal. Benjamin chooses the iconic romantic-utopian symbol of the blue flower – Heinrich von Ofterdingen's 'holy grail,' in Novalis's novel of that name – to symbolize this view. Benjamin's realization is important to Enzensberger in terms of the dissolution of the constructed difference between fact and fiction, a distinction which, in bourgeois capitalist society, lends a kind of authenticity to documents, which he argues, "dient lediglich dem Schutz ökonomischer Interessen" ("Baukasten" 126). This is all to say that in narrative, including the narrativization of history, documentary material cannot claim a position above or outside the mediation of that narrative, shedding the 'true' light on history – this would be the utopian unmediated access to reality. The problem is exacerbated by the return to the sources: "Das Material, sei es 'dokumentarisch' oder 'fiktiv,' ist in jedem Fall nur Vorlage, Halbfabrikat, und je eingehender man seinem Ursprung nachforscht, desto mehr verschwimmt der Unterschied" ("Baukasten" 127).[158] This describes the utopian moment of nostalgia, in which the return and the yearning for an origin becomes a quest into a no-place, just as the subsequent mediation of whatever historical narrative the original material is intended to produce will itself be situated in a utopian realm of (re)production,

[158]It would be worth pursuing the Platonic idea of the Simulacrum, the copy with no original, raised more recently by Jameson, in connection with Enzensberger and Benjamin, in another project. Unfortunately, it falls out of the purview of the current project, though only just, so it should be kept in mind.

mediation and reception.

Dystopian Nostalgia and the Future of Utopia

In this final section, we begin with a close reading of the fifth *Glosse*, "*Über den Feind*," which represents one of the few passages in the novel that demonstrate the ideological conflict on the future of the Spanish state from the 'enemy's' point of view. The title of this section refers to tension between ideological and political movements whose notions of political utopia represented in the narrative illustrate their quest for progress on the endpoints of the modernist project's political spectrum – and how they often rely too heavily on restorative tendencies. Caught in the middle are the people, who are not a uniform, single will to revolution, but a heterogeneous mass, most of whom share poverty and oppression from the state. The question is: how is the dystopian potential represented and can the utopian be emancipated from it? In the case of *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie,* the answer to the latter half of this question comes down to the figure of Durruti. The problem, as the fifth *Glosse* states, is that the dystopian potential comes from an enemy visible only on the periphery: "Wo ist der Feind? Er taucht in dieser Geschichte immer nur am Rand des Gesichtsfeldes auf: [...] Er bleibt fast immer anonym" (210).

The ideologies presented by the various movements are ghosts haunting the narrative present of that historical context with visions of the future, playing on and exploiting fear and hatred of their ideological enemies. The narrator

details some aspects of the anarchists' weaknesses and some reasons to fear their failure. Interestingly, there is a parallel to the "Baukasten" essay, in terms of the warning the Left about missed progressive potential – the essay is of course directed at the New Left, but the novel was written after the essay's publication and the following passage generates a convincing comparison: "In Spanien wie zuvor in Italien und Deutschland mobilisierte er [fascism] unbewußte Kräfte, von deren Existenz die Linke keine Notiz genommen hatte: Ängste und Ressentiments, die auch in der Arbeiterklasse lebendig waren" (213). The comparison is based on the fourth section of the media theory essay, in which Enzensberger criticizes the New Left for its lack of self-reflection with respect to its attitude toward the new media and medial manipulation – "Die neue Linke der sechziger Jahre hat die Entwicklung der Medien auf einen einzigen Begriff gebracht: den der Manipulation" ("Baukasten" 97). The quotation from the fifth *Glosse* implies that the left in the nineteen thirties also lacked self-reflection, resulting in the Right's assumption of power. The problem is, if there is nothing but the manipulation of ideology – which is achieved through some form of mediation –, then it is a matter of controlling it and being self-critical.

While the New Left harboured the conspiratorial theory of manipulation, the Left, more specifically the anarchists in the thirties, allowed the Right to capitalize on the real anxieties of the masses, by being out of touch with them. Of the New Left Enzensberger writes: "[d]ie These von der Manipulation dient auch der eigenen Entlastung. Die Dämonisierung des Gegners verdeckt die Schwächen

und die perspektivischen Mängel der eigenen Agitation; wenn diese statt die Massen zu mobilisieren, zur Selbstisolierung führt, so wird ihr Versagen pauschal der Übermacht der Medien zugeschrieben" ("Baukasten" 98). What is problematic is the misunderstanding of ambivalences toward institutions that mediate ideology in the broad population; until the age of mass media, this had of course been the Church and the state. The following quotation from the fifth *Glosse* provides an illuminating example of this conflict:

> *Was die Anarchisten versprachen, aber nicht einlösen konnten, war eine völlig diesseitige, ganz und gar zukünftige Welt, in der Staat und Kirche, Familie und Eigentum aufhören sollten zu existieren. Aber diese Institutionen waren nicht nur verhaßt, sondern auch vertraut, und die Zukunft der Anarchie weckte nicht nur Sehnsucht, sondern auch verborgene Ängste von elementarer Kraft. Dagegen bot der Faschismus die Vergangenheit als Fluchtburg an – eine Vergangenheit, die es natürlich nie gegeben hatte. Der Haß auf die moderne Welt, die Spanien seit der Aufklärung so schlecht behandelt hatte, konnte sich in einem fiktiven Mittelalter verschanzen, die bedrohte Identität sich festklammern an den institutionellen Gittern des autoritären Staates*. (213)

These are the sentiments many reactionary, fascist movements in Europe capitalized upon, especially those in Italy and Germany, where the feeling of having been let down by modernity itself inspired a retreat into nostalgia, at least from a propagandistic perspective, for these extreme Right movements and governments certainly profited from many aspects of modernity.

To a German speaking readership, the parallel presented by the novel is very obvious; however, where industrialization and modernization proved trying and slow in Spain,[159] by the late nineteen thirties, the German nation had

[159]Referring here to information provided in the *Glossen*, especially the second, third and fourth.

modernized, colonized, perpetrated genocidal acts (Herero massacre), and led the world into its most horrific war between 1914 and 1918. This is a key moment of differentiation for the interpretation of these two historical contexts and their narrativization. The regressive potential of the fascist/nationalist Right is, of course, not exclusively available to that side of the political spectrum; having read the "Baukasten" essay, to use just one example, we remember that the past offers its own "Fluchtburg" to the Left, in terms of suspicion of the progressive potential of new electronic media and their manipulation by the enemy. The dynamic of longing for an anarchist future and the "verborgene Ängste von elementarer Kraft," that yearn for the stability of the known institutions is the novel's iteration of the contradiction faced by utopian movements.

The narrator's primary achievement in this *Glosse* is assuming the critical gaze on the anarchist movement in the "objective" or at least historically removed voice that punctuates the novel's sections. Criticism of the anarchists from eyewitnesses is present in the accounts, especially in the subsection, "Die Kehrseite," of the chapter, "Der Feldzug;" specifically Simone Weil's recollection of the murder of a teenaged boy unwilling to convert to the anarchist ideology (162), referred to above. However, as Pasolini points out (cited above), there are only a very few instances of serious criticism or opposing ideological views in the novel. The fifth *Glosse*, though, focuses its critical view through the success of the anarchists' main enemy, the fascists. They understand how to exploit the international system, according to the narrator, taking advantage of the

appeasement politics of western democracies before World War II. The anarchists appear naive, in so far as they do not take into account the role of geopolitics and the global economic system related to it in their very localized and decentralized revolutionary movement: "Von der internationalen Organisation des Kapitals hatten sie in ihren Broschüren gelesen, aber auf die Konsequenzen waren sie nicht gefaßt;[...]" (214). The realization of the misunderstanding of the realities of international politics and the strategies employed by larger powers to gain any sense of an upper hand over other major powers, is a peripatetic moment in the narrative, because it is the beginning of the end. The narrative of the novel commences its descent to the end and Franco's forces' ultimate victory. This beginning of the end, though, does nothing to imply that an anarchist victory would have constituted a desirable alternative ending to the novel or the historical narrative it represents. From the perspective of this *Glosse*, in the context of the novel's narrative, it appears likely that only a dystopic future will come of the Spanish Civil War, whatever the outcome. This does not, however, mean resignation for the anarchist movement, for they have the heroic narrative of their leader as a key moment of hope. The figure of Durruti is a paradigm for the other Spanish anarchists; this is evident quite early on in the novel, where his commitment and focus on praxis are highly praised. For instance, his behaviour when imprisoned, as recounted by a comrade in the section "Neue Gefängnisse" (101-103), who lauds Durrutis unflinching fighting spirit, when faced with a setback such as incarceration – "[e]r war es, der uns gezeigt hat, wie man

kämpfen muß" (101).[160] Pasolini harbours a similar view adding to this paradigm a historical relevance in the context of the nineteen sixties protest movement. For him though, Durruti is also a negatively paradigmatic figure because: "kein einziges Mal in seinem ganzen Leben hat er sich mit dem Manipulieren von 'Subkultur' befaßt. Und ebendeshalb behaupte ich, sein Paradigma sei im Hinblick auf die sechziger Jahre und deren Anarchismus und Kommunismus (ob nun marxistischer oder anderer Observanz) ein negatives. Was damals tobte, war eine Orgie der Subkultur oder des kleinbügerlichen Wütens gegen jegliche Kultur" (Pasolini 145). There is a moral and ethical inference tied to the puritanical aspect of Durruti's character, referred to above. The statements on the ageing revolutionaries in the final *Glosse* along with the novel's last chapter, demonstrate the model followed by these old anarchists. The narrator writes, "[d]iese Revolutionäre aus einer andern Zeit sind gealtert, aber sie wirken nicht müde. Was Leichtfertigkeit ist, wissen sie nicht" (283). Then the listing of praiseworthy character traits ensues, "sie sind keine Melancholiker. Ihre Höflichkeit ist proletarisch. Ihre Würde ist die von Leuten, die nie kapituliert haben" (283), "[d]as sind keine kaputten Typen" (284); this is all in the name of Durruti's fighting spirit and an asceticism that stems from a pragmatic bond to the anarchist ideal.

[160]Reinhold Grimm's article, "Poetic Anarchism?," which deals with the theme of downfall and apocalypse within the strongly utopian dynamic of Enzensberger's work, and what Grimm calls "his unflinching anarcho-utopian stance" (Grimm 750), constitutes a reflection of the protagonist in the figure of the author as intellectual force and influence (also noted by Peter Schneider), in the context of the student protest movement.

In the final chapter, then, the following quotations illustrate the integral link between the figure of the protagonist and the anarchists' utopian investment in him: "Durrutis Lebensgeschichte entspricht sehr genau der Entwicklung des spanischen Anarchismus in seiner Gesamtheit," (286); "er war ein Mann der Tat" (290); "ein Intellektueller war er nicht" (290); "er wollte [seine Ideen] in die Tat umsetzen" (291). He appears to be the personification of revolution in action, and thus the antidote to the quagmire that is the conflict between *Wort* and *Tat*, which is so ingrained in the German cultural tradition, which is pertinent in relation to the student movement of the nineteen sixties. The latter is mentioned explicitly, if by way of reference to the Parisian May revolts. The narrator does not disguise the condescending attitude of the veteran anarchists toward the younger generation – a provocative invitation to a comparative reading, especially in the context of the early nineteen seventies. The criticism of the old guard represents the distinct attempt to differentiate and dissociate themselves from the neo-anarchists in a move that would block the allegorical-utopian operation suggested above, undermining the identification of this younger generation with the historical collectivity of the anarchist movement. While these old anarchists nurture their backward looking utopia, their hero, our protagonist, died in the name of progress, and the reanimation of his story through the novel's narrator evokes the possibility of emancipating this narrative from obscurity, representing the potential salvation of that utopia from a regressive, mythologizing form of nostalgia.

The final sentences of the novel, often interpreted as resigned – by Eggers and Bohrer, for example – are spoken by Durrutis widow, Emilienne Morin, who says: "Aber was vorbei ist, ist vorbei. Man macht nicht zweimal dieselbe Revolution" (293). The language is simple, her point plain, with one crucially ambiguous exception in the meaning of the latter sentence, which leaves open the possibility, maybe even the necessity, for other revolutions. The idea is simply that nostalgia for past revolutions is senseless, the very same revolution can never be repeated; what remains unspoken, logically not negated is the possibility of similar utopian drives in the future. To end the novel with such a statement is, on the surface, an editorial decision; the narrator as editor situates the statement according to the context of his collage text. This act of placement is, above all, a literary move that speaks to the literary quality of the text, recognized early on in its reception by Pasolini and ignored by many others.

Despite the victory of Franco's Nationalists, the revolutionary, utopian impulse remains within the aging revolutionaries. The final sections of the novel, from the last *Glosse* on, describe the afterlife of the revolution, the final chapter is indeed called, "Die Nachwelt." Here is where the novel fits into the historical context of its publication, and makes its most poignant comment on the period of transition and regrouping, but also of disenchantment and factionalization in the wake of the 1960s student revolutionary movement. Emilienne Morin's comments are relatively harsh, this is her character, but read in sequence with the penultimate account, that of Frederico Monroy, the portrait of the revolution's

afterlife ends with a final note of hope, of belief in the fluctuating nature of history that will not sustain a dictator like Franco. There is, ultimately, a belief in the return from exile to effect change in the moment that history offers them, this is nostalgia coloured by utopia.

The utopia of the early nineteen seventies is, then, that the history of the utopian ideals of the sixties protest movement would not lose the fight against the force of time; the only means in this battle is tradition and transmission of the narrative, the return to the sources. The Durruti novel is no story of resignation following the very real failure of the anarchist revolution in Spain. Within the lines of the above quotation from the first *Glosse*, we can read the Susan Sontag's imperative, namely, "[i]nterpretation must itself be evaluated, within a historical view of human consciousness." In this purview it is appropriate to complement this idea with the following quotation by Benjamin: "Die *Erinnerung* stiftet die Kette der Tradition, welche das Geschehene von Geschlecht zu Geschlecht weiterleitet" (Benjamin *Illuminationen* 399). It is in the tension between the age-old form of narration, the oral tradition, and the modern fictionalizing of the novel genre, that *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* is suspended and it wants, as Pasolini opines, to be just that thing that would simultaneously represent the culmination and the negation of the novel. Regardless, Benjamin's chain of tradition must be navigated through Sontag's interpretative evaluation and by way of an open-allegorical reading, we can approach the novel-(hi)story, the context of the novel's production and the contemporary history in which we read the text.

Benjamin cites Lukacs's *Theorie des Romans*, where the latter claims, "'die ganze innere Handlung des Romans ist nichts als ein Kampf gegen die Macht der Zeit'" (Benjamin *Illuminationen* 400).

The novel demonstrates its utopian character in terms of its narration; it radicalizes and seeks to revolutionize the narrator's role, bringing about the end of the bourgeois novel. The narrator is either apparently entirely absent, or so radically present that he is confused with the biographic person of the author. Instead of authorial and authoritative narration, we have the word of the people close to the events, interspliced with the sober and scholarly contextualisation of an editor and publisher (*Herausgeber*) of this narrativization. Herein lies a narrative nostalgic element, namely, in the return to the sources. The narrator appears more as mediator of an orally transmitted history, as would have been common before the age of mass-alphabetization. The eye-witnesses and documents speak for themselves – or at least this is the illusion, because the narrator/editor chooses, organizes, creates; it is in the narrative material that reality offers that the (re)construction of history and its mediation are possible.

Enzensberger's novel addresses the age-old problem of the mediation of narrative; there is a story to be told, and how can it be represented? In some sense, he has chosen to represent the oral telling and re-telling of a history, albeit in written form. It is common practice in literary narrative for a narrator to refer to an oral tradition of a story as evidence of its credibility. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* wants to show a removal of such filtering narrators by exposing the

source of each aspect of the narrative in the form of direct citation; this has the effect of making the novel appear more raw and perhaps more organic. Herein lies a structural utopian moment that relies on a nostalgic trope, namely, returning to the people, to the oral tradition as origin of narrative. This return, *nostos*, is not without its *algos*, pain, understood here as the fragmented and contradictory process of narrative reconstruction. The montage of accounts and the *Glossen* give the sense that a larger, unifying narrative is impossible. At a minimum, Enzensberger's novel accents the tenuousness of accounting for all aspects and facets of a story/history; to be sure, the text calls attention to itself as a collection of largely anecdotal, sometimes propagandistic, sometimes journalistic narrative engaged – not naively, by the way! – in the utopian process of preserving memory and mediating history for posterity.

The text has another central quest, namely, to preserve a sense of the utopian political ideal aspired to during movements such as the Spanish anarchist one or the nineteen sixties student protest movement. Here the notion of collectivity is key, for the novel proclaims its stance on writing history as "*kollektive Fiktion*," as we have seen in the first *Glosse*. The utopian political strivings of the student movement, we remember, revolve largely around the move away from authority and authoritarian thinking toward an ideal of collectivism. The volume, *Wir warn die stärkste der Parteien*, cited in my introductory chapter, is a prime example of the collective writing of history. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* takes this project seriously and although it is

produced – *herausgegeben* – by a single author, it presents the possibilities (and problematics) of moving away from authoritative historical narration. In addition, this documentary text is illustrating that historical narration is always already a fiction, which suggests that there could be nothing but novels writing history. This shift away from authoritative mediation of and perspectives on history, back to an apparently more organic transmission of narratives, speaks to the political ideals of the student movement; the New Left in West Germany sought to disassemble the authoritarian social structures – in the university hierarchies and high schools, for instance. Enzensberger's novel reflects through anti-authoritative narration the anti-authoritarian project of Spanish anarchism as a historical example for the progressive project during the student movement in West Germany.

CHAPTER THREE

Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise* and the Rebellion of Subjectivity

Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise*[161] is a narrative journey that constructs its literary utopian space primarily via a painful, yearning nostalgia that simultaneously places itself under a critical lens. The narrative is, largely, an inward (re)turn that confronts the autobiographically inspired narrator's personal past and his present context, in the attempt to emancipate the narrative subject from the burden of his history and re-cast the construction of his identity. This re-casting and constructing means that the novel is not a resigned nostalgic vision, but rather that it engages the modes of nostalgia, which we have discussed throughout this project, in key parts of its narrative edifice. There is a distinct sense, however, that the novel is struggling with the narrativization of the past, confronting the German concept of *Geschichtsbewältigung*.[162] This represents a utopian idea of overcoming the past which seeks precisely to negate nostalgia for it, and here, I argue for a reading of Vesper's novel that challenges nostalgic taboos, embracing instead a form of nostalgia that seeks out its utopian dimension, and in particular,

[161] Parenthetical references with only page numbers refer to the *Ausgabe letzter Hand* (2003).

[162] In his article, "Aufbruch in die Vergangenheit. Bernward Vespers *Die Reise* (1977/79), to which I refer henceforth as 'Glawion,' Sven Glawion proposes a reading of the novel that views it, "als einen Versuch [...], sich der eigenen Vergangenheit narrativ zu entledigen" (Glawion 25). This speaks to a belief that one could overcome or deal with one's past by narrating it.

explores nostalgia as constructor of utopia.

In this chapter, the idea is to examine how Vesper's novel functions in the emergence of nostalgia from a view obscured by utopia; that is to say, how this novel demonstrates that nostalgia is actually always already part of utopia, yet can sometimes be overshadowed by it. To begin with then, we look at the Romantic influence on Vesper and how this represents a form of literary or cultural nostalgia, which is not merely a resigned turn to the past for comfort and escape from the present. In fact, the turn to the literary past proves to be a source for rebellious inspiration, as one major aspect of Romanticism is its response to a revolutionary period – where the literature of the post-1968 phase attempts to understand its failed revolution, much (especially early) Romantic cultural production emanates from the spread of French Revolutionary ideas (which are largely informed by Enlightenment rationalism). While these are obviously different contexts, it is never the less important to consider their central similarity, namely, their status as post-revolutionary periods of cultural production, in which nostalgia and utopia become more apparent as equal parts of the same dialectical structure. The search for alternatives to the constructed status quo, for transcendence of the mundane, also connects Vesper's work to a Romantic drive, although admittedly, the latter is often motivated by a religious or spiritual desire, while Vesper is seeking a more intellectual or psychological transcendence. I frame this more in terms of rebellion and transgression of boundaries. This border tension also gives the novel a postmodern valence, although I do not label

this text a 'postmodern novel;' the idea is that *Die Reise* represents an emerging postmodern impulse in accompaniment of its nostalgic turn. In the final section of this chapter I explore the impermanence and restlessness brought about by the rebellious drive and how that is determined by the generational conflict that pervades the novel. I contend that this conflict functions metonymically for postwar West Germany, and that this generates an anxiety in the novel.

Vesper's autobiographically informed "novel-essay" (*Romanessay*, as it is subtitled) was written between 1969 and the author's suicide on May 15, 1971, and published posthumously in 1977, and is comprised of three main narrative horizons (although these could be disputed).[163] Without ascribing a particular hierarchy to them: the first is the description of a road trip and comment on the contemporary context of the late 1960s; the second a detailed account of an LSD trip; and the third consists of memory excurses which recount the narrator's childhood in an authoritarian household under a father who is unrepentant Nazi poet Will Vesper.[164] This chapter traces the trajectory of nostalgia toward utopia in *Die Reise*, as the narrator pursues an inward path toward his subjectivity, while

---

[163]I choose the term horizon here – and use it interchangeably with 'plane' – because it allows our reading to avoid the idea of independent narrative levels. To my mind, that terminology denotes a hierarchy within the narration – the so-called autobiographical "level" tends to be privileged in many critical interpretations – and does not do the collage-style interweaving of the different horizons justice. It should also be noted that what constitutes the levels is itself unclear; I am referring here to the article by Georg Guntermann, who sees the drug trip as part of the voyage-level, the political reflections and "momentary perception" as part of another level, and finally the *Einfacher Bericht* as its own level. I disagree with the definition of the first two, and feel moreover, that contrary to his argument, the horizons are indeed quite closely integrated.

[164]*Die Reise* is a seminal text of the so-called *Vater-Bücher* and the *Generationsromane* of the 'New Subjectivity,' however, while these terms had gained significant currency at the time of *Die Reise*'s publication, they were probably foreign to Vesper himself.

the text creates and encounters a conflict and tension between the reflections on personal history and the public historical context of the late nineteen sixties, where on the political Left, the quest for subjective narrative exploration was taboo.

The vehicle for the nostalgic trajectory toward utopia is autobiography; *Die Reise* is a presumably autobiographical text.[165] Autobiography necessitates a return and constructs the past in literary space; inherent in any autobiography is the dynamic tension between truthful recollection and representation of a personal past, and the construction of a biography, based more on an author's agenda than fact.[166] Glawion puts it this way: "Es gibt [...] ein erzählendes und ein erzähltes Ich, über die Vesper versucht hat, sich selbst zu verstehen, mitzuteilen und *neu zu erzählen*" (Glawion 26). The autobiographical tension is one example of the utopia-nostalgia dynamic, where the utopian goal of the nostalgic trajectory would be the subsumption of the "erzählendes Ich" by its new and enlightened "erzähltes Ich;" in other words, the author would create a narrated identity so convincing, it would replace his own remembered self. In spite of the tension between memory and construction, and the basic unreliability of autobiographical inscription in narrative, Andrew Plowman takes the decisive stance that the novel

---

[165]Debate on the novel's categorization could deteriorate very rapidly into a frustrating semantic argument about the definition of autobiography and that is not my interest in this chapter.

[166]In the article, "Hitlers Hippies," from the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* of March 13, 2005, Claudius Seidl warns: "[...] wenn man arbeitshypothetisch von der Identität beider Figuren ausginge, hätte man natürlich noch ein paar Fragen an das Buch, [...]" (Seidl 27) Of course, the text opens infinite questions.

is an autobiography and that this has not been adequately enough examined,[167] "with all the theoretical and literary considerations that this involves" (Plowman 509).[168] One of the guiding questions Plowman poses is, "[i]s there a concept of autobiography that informs the text?" (Plowman 509), which sets up a discussion of the tension between autobiography as mimetic reflective representation of the subject, and autobiography as the invention of the subject. If there is a 'concept of autobiography' in *Die Reise*, then it is the narrative as trip: as road narrative, drug trip, memory project, for which the inherent ambivalence of autobiography provides a means of navigating the path that constantly oscillates between nostalgic return and utopian striving.

The novel's formal and thematic complexity are summarized as follows by Roman Luckscheiter in his recent article, "Der postmoderne Impuls" (2007), which dedicates a sub-section to the novel.[169] He writes:

---

[167]Plowman derives his argument from the theories of Louis A. Renza's "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography" (1977), which submits that the autobiographical act creates a fiction through the disjunction between the author's intent to present his past in public and the "private 'pastness' of his experience" (Plowman 516), and Paul de Man's article "Autobiography as De-Facement" (1979), which sees a "degree of referential productivity" (Plowman 520) in the fiction of autobiography. In his conclusion, Plowman writes: "Though the problem of autobiographical truth proves intractable, it is clear that for Vesper the autobiographical act cannot be surrendered wholesale to the concept of self-invention and that some measure of autobiographical truth therefore remains a political necessity" (Plowman 520).

[168]In his article, "Bernward Vesper's 'Die Reise': Politics and Autobiography between the Student Movement and the Act of Self-Invention German Autumn: The Critical Reception of 'Die Reise'" (1998), hereafter cited as 'Plowman.'

[169]In a letter to the März-Verlag publishing house dated 11 September, 1969, found in the appendix (605-08), Vesper outlines his own view of the narrative planes (*Erzählebenen*) saying there are three: first, the real journey; second, the drug trips, including the *Einfacher Bericht* and portraits of his parents; third, the "momentary perception," the narrative present-time. Of course, Vesper acknowledges that these levels will intermingle and eventually be conflated, hence the

> In ihm [the novel] laufen die verschiedenen Strömungen der Protestbewegung zusammen und erzeugen eine symptomatisch heterogene Kombination aus Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Zukunftsvisionen, aus romantischer Modernekritik und Moderne-Überwindung, aus politischem und ästhetischem Bewusstsein – der Roman ist zugleich Dokument einer postmodern zu nennenden ästhetischen Hybridität *par excellence* und Dokument eines existenziellen Konflikts und Scheiterns, markiert durch den Abbruch des Manuskripts aufgrund des Selbstmords des Autors 1969 [sic!].

Aside from the error that Vesper actually began his manuscript in 1969, and did not commit suicide until 1971, Luckscheiter's relatively brief description, then discussion of the text raises a number of crucial issues that I seek to problematize and explore in greater detail in the current chapter. First, the heterogeneous combination of "Vergangenheitsbewältigung und Zukunftsvision," second, the spectre of Romanticism, third, the novel's postmodern dimension – Luckscheiter's primary interest, and something we will address below, situating it in the context of the utopia-nostalgia discourse – and finally, the existential crisis. From our perspective, the first opposition – overcoming the past and vision of the future – flows from the utopia-nostalgia problematic, for the notion that one could master or overcome the past is wishful thinking, especially in post-World War II Germany, and even more acutely for Vesper himself; however, mastery of the past means re-visiting it, a nostalgic process which uncovers a deeper nostalgia for an idealized past. What I mean here is simply, the narrator attempts to deal with his upbringing under his father's National Socialist ideology, which presents its own utopia – one we consider a dystopia – based, however, on a deep-

---

disagreements about what constitutes which particular level, and my suggestion of narrative horizons as a way of reading these facets of the text.

rooted Germanic nostalgia. We will discuss this below in the context of the Vesper family *Gut*, a potent symbol of the journey's goal – the non-trip, the locus of the personal past and its fraught vision of a future.

In his article, "Die Wiedergeburt des Erzählens aus dem Geist der Autobiographie" (1979)[170] Bernd Neumann sketches the oppressive societal atmosphere of the "*goldene Fünfziger*," saying: "[...] die Fünfziger waren nicht nur eine Periode der dichterischen Innerlichkeit; sie waren zugleich die hohe Zeit des bundesdeutschen Law-and-Order-Denkens" (Neumann 95). The reaction to radical protesters in the sixties and seventies, and the putative threat they posed to society, spawned an atmosphere in the seventies similar to that of the fifties, according to Neumann. This is, in his view, the reason for the return to autobiographical writing. Where the fifties saw young intellectuals turn to Existentialism – "Sartre, Camus, Heidegger und Jaspers wurden gelesen" (Neumann 96) – the literature of the seventies reflected these ideas.[171] We will

---

[170]Henceforth referred to as 'Neumann.' It is a comparative study of Hermann Kinders *Der Schleiftrog* (1977) and Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise*. The article situates the two novels in their contemporary literary context which is marked by what Neumann deems a return to autobiographical writing after the 'death' of bourgeois literature and the ensuing turn to the documentary and agitprop forms. Neumann argues: "Die entscheidenden Jahre, welche die heute ca. Fünfunddreißigjährigen prägten, waren die fünziger Jahre" (Neumann 94). His thesis is twofold: for one, he argues that despite the familiar protestations and proclamations by the New Left that bourgeois literature was dead, the so-called subjective factor, as a problematic, was never entirely relegated from the left-wing scene. The second and more specific aspect of the thesis, is that Vesper's novel demonstrates how: "die 'Herkunft' dieser so wiederstandskräftigen Problematik deutlich [wird]: sie entstammt, lebensgeschichtlich wie historisch, den fünfziger Jahren, und hier insbesondere dem 'Existentialismus', der diese Jahre beherrschte" (Neumann 98).

[171]As we will see below, Vesper was well versed in Camus's ideas, as his engagement with Camus in a seminar paper on Novalis and references to the French philosopher in *Die Reise* demonstrate (568, for instance).

not enter into a broad debate about existentialism, although we will examine Camus's notion of rebellion, as read by Vesper, and pose the question: how, if at all, does this notion or concept or rebellion speak to the broader theme of the tension between utopia and nostalgia? To present a brief opening to an answer, we should note that, for Camus, rebellion has a metaphysical, ethical and political imperative; it derives its force from creativity, and this creative force defines art. Vesper's novel, I would suggest, is coloured by such a rebellious discourse.

It is, however, the connection to Romanticism, and particularly to the literary figure of Novalis, that is one of the central ways in which *Die Reise* follows a nostalgic trajectory toward its literary utopia, and this is where our discussion of the novel commences. Before doing so, one brief theoretical point, a reminder of sorts; Svetlana Boym's study, *The Future of Nostalgia*, views Romanticism as a seminal moment of modern nostalgia, with its utopian implications. We remember that Boym states, "[t]he object of romantic nostalgia must be beyond the present space of experience, somewhere in the twilight of the past or on the island of utopia;" that Romantic nostalgia is "not a mere antithesis to progress." The idea is that nostalgia is outside experienced and extant time and space, which is why she draws the link to utopia. Novalis is one of the most powerful literary figures whose work represents these ideas about Romantic nostalgia. He is clearly situated in the early Romantic period, in the immediate aftermath of the French Revolution, and his work responds to and problematizes Enlightenment values, although he does not negate them. Novalis's *Heinrich von*

Ofterdingen (1802) is a prime example of a utopian nostalgia of this ilk. *Die Reise*'s construction of a nostalgic object – in this case the narrative of personal history and identity – casts its gaze, "not only backward but sideways, and expresses [it]self in elegiac poems and ironic fragments, not in philosophical or scientific treatises" (Boym 13). Instead of elegiac poems, Vesper intersperses his text with what he calls "Zeitungsgedichte," and the documentary and essayistic passages sometimes read as philosophical or scientific treatises or at least ironic fragments thereof. Vesper's connection to Romanticism represents our first example of nostalgia constructing utopia.

"*... macht die blaue Blume rot!*" Vesper's Novalis

Die Reise provides a specific example of a renewed dialogue with Romanticism in the period following the climax of the student protest movement of the nineteen sixties, as the 'New Subjectivity' dawned. My argument is that Novalis exerts a particular influence on Vesper's construction of subjectivity in his novel, and moreover, in the context of the post-1968 phase, the subjective turn is an act of rebellion against the ostensible objectivity of left-wing activists, on one hand, and the burden of history. The basis for my discussion will be the close reading of a passage from *Die Reise*, and a short examination of an essay on Novalis, written by Vesper. It is worth noting that the latter's autobiographical protagonist is on a narrative road and drug trip that mirrors Novalis's project of poetic *Bildung* in

Heinrich von Ofterdingen,[172] in so far as both novel fragments seek to explore the subjective realm, in opposition to and tension with the outside world, and in so doing, construct a literary utopia of the subjective, which is arrived at by a process of nostalgia. The central question here is: how is Vesper's narrative inflected by Novalis's notion of the inner realm, in the wake of a failed revolution, i.e. how does Novalis's subjectivity inspire Vesper's, in the post-1968 context? In a general way, the issue is the relationship to and (re)construction of the past, but in a specific sense, the concern of Vesper is the very personal historical narrative of a generational conflict that seems, simultaneously, to function as a metonymy of post-World War II Germany. This highly complex montage-text is, on all levels, a confrontation with politics and history in relation to the literary subject of the first generation to have been born shortly before or during World War II, and to have grown up in the post-war era of Konrad Adenauer's *Wirtschaftswunder*-republic.

The hybrid form situates the novel in a formal discourse closely linked to the Romantic literary tradition of intertwining genres, poetry and prose, for instance. Novalis, whom Richard Faber believes to be a key utopian ancestor to the generation of the nineteen sixties protest movement, engaged this literary

---

[172]For a recent scholarly contribution on Novalis and his reception over the last two centuries, I would point my reader to Dennis F. Mahoney's monograph, *Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis)*, 2001. Also worth looking at is the chapter dedicated to Novalis in Azade Seyhan's, *Representation and its Discontents* (1992).

technique to particular effect in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* (1802).[173] Faber opines that the students' slogan at the *Germanistentag* of 1968, "schlagt die Germanistik tod, macht die blaue Blume rot," fails to recognize the inherent utopianism of Novalis's floral metaphor from his novel saying: "in der jungen Linken ist die utopische Vorläuferschaft des Novalis unerkannt" (Faber 11). In other words, it seems Faber believes the students are equating Novalis' blue flower with the construction of the status quo, as embodied by the academic profession of German literature. Vesper echoes this sentiment in his novel in an argument about the academic study of literature, saying, "Die Germanistik ist eine Archäologie" (46), and deals only with fossils. But while Vesper's narrator might say this, I contend that Vesper actually did recognize Novalis as ancestor to a project of subjectivity that recognizes and attempts to resist the force of nihilism. In the second part of my paper, I discuss Vesper's 1961 seminar paper, "Gibt es eine nihilistische Krise bei Novalis?,"[174] found as a fragment at the März Verlag archive, within the *Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach*.[175] First, though, I will undertake a close reading of a passage from *Die Reise*, which I argue, interacts directly with Novalis.

---

[173]In his book, *Novalis: Die Phantasie an die Macht*, to which I will refer as 'Faber.'

[174]My reading of Bernward Vesper's Novalis is based, in part, on the unpublished fragment of this seminar paper, written in the summer semester of 1961 at Tübingen, where Vesper, who held a grant from the *Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes*, studied under, among others, Walter Jens.

[175]I will cite Vesper's term paper as 'Vesper "Novalis."' Missing are: pp. 12-25, and pp. 33 to end. The list of works cited is also missing, so it is difficult to determine from which editions of texts Vesper is quoting.

In order to demonstrate this textual link between the two, we must first look at a quotation from Novalis's '*Blütenstaub*' fragment 17: "Wir träumen von Reisen durch das Weltall: ist denn das Weltall nicht in uns? Die Tiefen unsers Geistes kennen wir nicht. Nach Innen geht der geheimnisvolle Weg. In uns, oder nirgends ist die Ewigkeit mit ihren Welten, die Vergangenheit und Zukunft." Vesper cites part of this fragment more or less directly, then adds to it; he writes: "Nach innen führt der geheimnisvolle Weg, aber er führt wieder heraus" (254). Now, this connection has been recognized by others, in particular Frederick A. Lubich in a brief passage in his 1986 article, "Bernward Vespers *Die Reise*: Der Untergang des modernen Pikaro,"[176] which argues that Vesper's novel mirrors, "die drei Entwicklungsstufen vom barocken Schelmenroman über den klassischen Bildungsroman zum romantischen Erlösungsroman. Letzterer fand in der magischen Selbstergründung von Novalis' *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* seine exemplarische Ausgestaltung, und es ist dieser Roman, auf den Vesper in seiner Reise in den Weltinnenraum anspielt" (Lubich "Pikaro"226). Lubich situates *Die Reise* squarely in the subjective, inward-looking novel tradition, something Glawion concurs with in his essay on Vesper's novel-essay. While he is interested in investigating the religiously coded language of the novel and the construction of male gender identity on the political left, he also alludes to the "Referenzen auf die literarische Tradition der Romantik" (33), and in an endnote he too cites Vesper's "nach innen führt der geheimnisvolle Weg...," and gives a nod to

[176]Which I will cite as 'Lubich "Pikaro."'

Lubich.

While a few scholars mention the connection between Vesper and Novalis, in reference to this specific intertextual moment, there has not been a closer examination of the textual link between the two.[177] A close reading of the passage in *Die Reise* in which Vesper quotes Novalis, opens the door to a better understanding of just how closely Vesper engaged with this Romantic writer's ideas on subjectivity. In examining the language Vesper uses, we see how directly it responds to the '*Blütenstaub*' fragment, answering the rhetorical questions the latter poses, but from the perspective of a nineteen sixties drug trip fantasy, not an early nineteenth century idealistic, Romantic one. The passage to which I am referring, presents a convergence of narrative horizons, in particular, of the LSD trip and contemporary road trip planes. The realistic context in which Vesper is on a road trip to see his son, Felix (whose mother, incidentally, is Gudrun Ensslin), is documented by the reproduction of his Motel bill, and is marked by the relatively banal description of the drive, running out of fuel, refilling the tank, odd noises the car makes. Yet the entire passage of approximately six pages is in italic typeface, the text's typographical indication that this is a drug trip scene, and is peppered with reflections inspired by the *Rausch*. I submit that this passage is a self-conscious textual interaction with Novalis's '*Blütenstaub*' fragment, beyond the simple reference to it, mentioned

[177]The broader 'episode' takes place from page 251 to 259; I am interested specifically in the passage on page 254.

above. The passage begins with proclamation: "*In uns IST nichts.*" This frames the answer to Novalis's rhetorical question: "IST denn das Weltall nicht in uns?" The framing is completed by the direct reference to Novalis's fragment at the end of the passage.

Vesper's response blends profane language of the body with the reflections on his feelings of emptiness about his subjectivity and his trip. This LSD inspired reflection stands in ironic contrast to Novalis's fantastical, "[w]ir träumen vom Reisen durch das Weltall," and the mysterious, "[d]ie Tiefen unseres Geistes kennen wir nicht." Vesper writes: "*Ich richtete meine Ohren nach innen, wo* nichts *war. Ein Klopfen, wo die vom Rauch zerfressenen Reste des Magens lagen, bei jedem halb ausgeführten Atemzug eine in der Speiseröhre aufsteigende Kotzsäule*." Vesper's road trip is not a exploratory metaphysical journey through space, rather it is a mundane voyage by car to see his young son – whom he calls "die kleine Sonne," a revelation he reaches in another drug trip scene. Instead of the depths of the spirit, Vesper describes his physiological depths, empty both literally and figuratively, with the rather unpleasant exception of the vomit seeking escape. He is sleeping "*mit geöffneten Augen*," and as a result the primary sense is hearing, yet turning his ears inward leads only to the aural perception of nothingness.

This is not to say that Vesper is simply negating Novalis's sentiment, for the second half of the passage leads to a recognition and confirmation of his subjectivity, which will no longer be seen as a "*Pergamenthülle um das* Nichts."

The turning point is an almost synaesthetic perception and grasping: "*Plötzlich hörte ich eine Stimme einen kurzen Satz bestimmt aussprechen. Ich richtete mich auf, hörte dem Satz nach, der das ganze Innere des Autos ausfüllte.*" The sound becomes spatial and *begreifbar*, his car suddenly a metaphor for his own inner emptiness now being filled with definitive utterance; the voice he had lost is regained. The passage reaches its climax with the realization: "*Ich war gestorben und wieder geboren worden.* ICH *war vorhanden, ein Subjekt, das der Welt nicht hilflos ausgeliefert war*." This, I would argue, functions as a response, perhaps an affirmation, of the last line of Novalis's fragment, "[i]n uns oder nirgends ist die Ewigkeit mit ihren Welten, die Vergangenheit und Zukunft." Vesper is asserting his subjective existence which contains the worlds of the past and future; there is nowhere else for them to be, otherwise he would be that empty shell, that *Pergamenthülle*. His "geheimnisvoller Weg" inward is perhaps not the idealized recognition of eternity, where the past and future exist in a tension that constitutes Novalis's "goldenes Zeitalter," i.e. the idyllic and utopian middle ages represented most iconically in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. Rather, Vesper's path can emancipate the subject from inner emptiness by leading back out and assert that the burden of the world, which I would suggest is tantamount to the burden of (Vesper's personal) history, must not necessarily force its subject into resignation, despair and finally, submission.

Novalis's negative assessment of the French Revolution and the ensuing crises places him in a broad category of German intellectuals and artists who

abhorred the perversion of Enlightenment ideals in the Terror, but as Herfried Münkler argues, Novalis interprets, "die sich mehrenden Konflikte und Katastrophen als Zeichen der bevorstehenden Wende" (Münkler 71).[178] This speaks to an apocalyptical, yet utopian view of the loss of order and an anarchical state that promises destruction of the old order and the dawning of a new one. This sentiment appears to be of interest to the student Vesper, who cites Novalis's famous philosophical fragment, "[d]er echte philosophische Akt is die Selbsttötung; dies ist der Anfang aller Philosophie, dahin geht alles Bedürfnis des philosphischen Jüngers, und nur dieser Akt entspricht allen Bedingungen und Merkmalen der transzendenten Handlung." The truly rebellious subject destroys the old, in favour of the new, as Vesper puts it in his essay, "Novalis habe sich töten wollen, um damit sein Selbstbewußtsein völlig zu befreien" (Vesper "Novalis" 27a). Of course, Vesper recognizes the paradox this creates. I would also suggest that this symbolic death and the emancipation of self-consciousness informs the crisis, death and rebirth of the subject, proclaimed by Vesper in the above passage from *Die Reise*. Vesper links this idea of rebellion he sees in Novalis with Camus's modern idea thereof in the seminar paper, inferring the central difference between the Romantic notion of emancipating the self through some type of suicide, and the modernist, Camusian opposition to suicide in favour of a rebellion of constant resistance. Vesper presents Camus and Novalis as facing similar issues of nihilism with divergent answers to the painful and

[178] In his 1996 article, "Die Geburt des neuen Europa aus dem Chaos."

insoluble problems it poses; we might think of Vesper's work, then, in terms of a return to the tradition of confronting nihilism in search of new subjective fortitude against the void.

The agency asserted by Vesper in this passage of the novel is inspired by the concepts of resistance, refusal and rebellion, presented by Camus, to whom Vesper refers in his Novalis-paper. He draws a parallel between Novalis's idea of suicide and Camus's famous philosophical opposition to it. For Camus, suicide is surrender, it is the admission that one is overwhelmed by life; in the introduction to *The Rebel* (*L'homme revolté*), he writes, "[t]he final conclusion of the absurdist process is, in fact, the rejection of suicide and persistence in that hopeless encounter between human questioning and the silence of the universe" (Camus 14).[179] Novalis, we know, did not commit suicide, and perhaps we could say that his '*Blütenstaub*' fragment functions as an attempt to encounter this 'silence of the universe,' which is for him the exploration of subject's inner realm. Vesper argues that Camus presents resistance as rebellion and protest, and that in fact, resistance is linked to perseverance which is the truest form of rebellion, in the face of a choice between suicide and hope – a choice which forms the crux of the nihilistic crisis. According to Vesper, Camus chooses, "den dritten Weg, das Ausharren [...], das stets mit Protest gekoppelt auftritt, der ja seiner Natur nach Hoffnung einschließt. Also gibt es auch bei ihm nur die Alternative" (Vesper "Novalis" 28). Novalis' protagonist in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen* embodies this

[179] I am citing the English translation by Anthony Bower (1954), hereafter referred to as 'Camus.'

rebellion against nihilism and acceptance of the absurdity of life, the rejection of reclusiveness and suicide, in favour of creative, artistic endeavour, says Vesper in the middle of his discussion of Camus and Novalis (Vesper "Novalis" 27-28).

Tragically, Vesper did not ultimately accept Camus's "final conclusion of the absurdist process" and succumbed to his own nihilistic crisis, given his suicide. However, *Die Reise* – which, crucially, is not determined by Vesper's suicide, until it is ended by it – represents the protagonist's attempt to gain purchase on his subjectivity in relation to his personal history; in other words, to refuse, resist and overcome the father – in this case, the embodiment of unrelinquished Nazism, which many in Vesper's generation saw latent in the broader bourgeois class of the Federal Republic. A deep ambivalence toward the father subtends the rebellious project against his ideological influence – Glawion contends there is a planned patricide: "der Vatermord [wird] aufgeschoben und [findet] schließlich nicht statt" (Glawion 31) – and this ambivalence is marked by a deep identification of the son with the father. Glean continues: "Die tiefe Liebe zum Vater und die Identifizierung mit ihm blockierten Vespers Loslösung vom Vater und die Emanzipation von dessen politisch-literarischer Geschichte" (31). In fact, Vesper writes, "[u]nd Gott war mein Vater und mein Vater war Gott" (377), underlining the worshipful aspect of this relationship. Vesper's attempt to rebel by asserting the rebirth of his *ich* that does not helplessly surrender to the world, signals the changing of a literary and cultural paradigm, namely the shift toward a 'New Subjectivity.'

Luckscheiter comments on this shift: "Zur 'Dekolonisierung' des eigenen Ich und zur Erlangung der von Reimut Reiche dringend empfohlenen 'neuen Subjektivität' boten sich Rauschmittel an, die den Größenwahn förderten und dem Ich eine geradezu göttliche Perspektive verschafften" (156). This "göttliche Perspektive" attained by the assertion of the subject would place Vesper on the level of his apotheosized father and allow him to contest the latter's authority; we know this fails. The gesture of resistance is the imperative to 'decolonize' or perhaps rediscover subjectivity in the post-World War II, post-1968 context; it means taking the "geheimnisvoller Weg" inward, but going further and pursuing it out again, engaging the notion of refusal in the attempt to dissolve the identification with the past/the father – what Vesper calls a "*dissolution-solution*" (254). He had seen the desire to dissolve the subject in Novalis, in order to cast it anew, and I believe *Die Reise* attempts this, in the sixties spirit of breaking down boundaries between art and life – the group *Subversive Aktion* is a good example of this.[180] The novel possesses a distinctly Romantic inflection, by way of the tensions Luckscheiter mentions above, the tornness and paradoxes of critiquing the modern world and trying to escape it, in the quest for subjective assertion from an older generation. The figure of Novalis embodies many of the ambivalences and ambiguities faced by Vesper, and although Novalis was no

[180]These sixties avant-gardists took their cue from the nineteen twenties Dadaists and surrealists, not Romanticism. Unfortunately, this discussion of nostalgia for the Weimar period is outside the scope of my project, but I would point my reader to Martin Papenbrock's article, "Happening, Fluxus, Performance. Aktionskünste in den 1960er Jahren," in: *Handbuch 1968* 137-49.

political radical,[181] he did affirm an emancipatory discourse of the subject, which inspires Vesper and is perhaps politicized by him, by force of his post-1968 context.

Contextualizing Reflections on the Critical Literature

Broadly speaking, the reception of the novel has focused on psychologising readings, based ultimately, on Bernward Vesper's biography and its metonymic value in post-war Germany, which are undeniable. When contemplating the scholarly and critical responses to *Die Reise*, we must remember two crucial facts about the novel. First, it is a fragment, unfinished (perhaps unfinishable). Second, it prefigures a new literary interaction with autobiographical fiction that would define much of the nineteen seventies literature, yet Vesper's text could not inspire or influence this writing because of its late publication. This autobiographically informed seventies literature often represented a search for authentic experience, and includes for instance, Verena Stefan's *Häutungen* (1975), or Hermann Kinder's *Der Schleiftrog* (1977), and Peter Schneider's *Lenz* (1973) to name a very few.[182] This fact of late publication generates the historical irony that Vesper's novel is the paradigmatic text of the New Subjectivity that never was. It is the first major autobiographically inspired confrontation with

[181]Münkler's article discusses the political dimension of Novalis.

[182]I would point my reader to Lützeler's article, cited above, but especially to Peter Beicken's article "‚Neue Subjektivität:' Zur Prosa der siebziger Jahre," found in the same volume, for a more detailed discussion of the context and the other literary figures. The article makes no mention of *Die Reise*.

recent history to come out of the student protest movement which raises the issue of the post-war generation's guilt by association with this history – "wir sind Hitler," "ich bin Hitler" (106-07). Had it not been for Vesper's own 'Max Brod,' Jörg Schröder, the text would never have been published and thus never attained the status of *Generationsroman* ascribed it by some.[183]

Two responses to *Die Reise* come from very prominent authors of the post-war period not directly associated with the student movement, namely, Peter Weiss and Heinrich Böll.[184] The latter claimed, "Vesper gibt Auskunft über uns selbst, keine erfreuliche, in seiner Selbsentblößung entblößt er uns mit [...]" (Böll "*Reise*" 37).[185] While Böll's article makes an interpretative argument about the novel, which will be discussed presently, Weiss makes brief reference to *Die Reise* in his aphoristically structured *Notizbücher*,[186] in which he writes:

> Mit dem Buch von Bernward Vesper (Die Reise) war der intellektuelle Höhepunkt der Bewegung des Jahrs 68 erreicht worden. Sein Selbstmord stand bereits unterm Zeichen des rapiden Niedergangs, der Verzweiflung. Die aufrührerische Generation geriet jetzt, z. gr. Teil, in die Lethargie, und die Desperatesten gerieten in die Raserei. (Ein Jahrzehnt wird es noch

---

[183] Of course one could surmise that the publisher simply recognized that the time and market were right in 1977 for the publication of such a work, otherwise it might never have seen the light of day. Unfortunately, it is outside the purview of this chapter to pursue the editorial history of *Die Reise*, something lacking in the scholarship.

[184] It is worth noting here that Peter Weiss authored one of the first post-war documentary dramas of West German literature, the provocative and tone-setting *Die Ermittlung* (1965), based on the transcripts of the Frankfurt trial of Auschwitz guards. Their acquittal, represented in the piece, fed the students' frustration and belief in the latent fascism of the Federal Republic.

[185] In an article from *konkret* entitled, "Wohin die Reise gehen kann" (1978). To which I will hereafter refer as 'Böll "*Reise*."' Quotations from Böll's article appear on the back cover of the 6th edition of *Die Reise* (2003), which is the text cited in this chapter.

[186] In this case, we are dealing with *Buch 40, 16.2.78–15.5.78*, which I am citing as 'Weiss.'

> dauern, bis die Opposition wieder zu konstruktiven Handlungen kommen kann). (Weiss 672-73)

Reading Weiss's quote carefully, we realize that it has a tripartite structure – novel, author, context – only the first sentence mentions the novel, the second pertains to Vesper's suicide and the third to his generation. The representative nature of the book for the 68er generation rang loudly amongst the early intellectual reviews; Weiss recognizes the irony that the novel associated with the climax of the Protest Movement was available to the public only almost a decade later. Vesper's death, it would seem, fits into a historical narrative of demise represented by his novel, which would not be revealed until 1977. His is a narrative of someone who belonged to the most desperate who fell prey to insanity, to paraphrase Weiss. It is precisely this narrative arc of Vesper's biography which is so confusing to the reading of *Die Reise*, for after the fact – i.e. after the novel's release – his life and death seem representative of the story of the student protest movement. Weiss never makes the claim that the novel is an autobiography, nor does he call it a generational novel, although he does label it the intellectual climax of the protest movement; in this brief comment he does manage to call attention to the tension between the novel's and its author's narratives.

Böll's article, "Wohin die Reise gehen kann," begins to sketch some of the more detailed reception to *Die Reise*. Böll's attitude toward the book's literary quality is summed up in the following statement, "[e]s gibt in der 'Reise' Partien, die *auch* literarischen Rang haben, über das autobiographisch-authentische

hinaus" (Böll "*Reise*" 36). Böll wants to discover the root causes of terrorism in the novel;[187] that is to say, he makes the argument that Bernward learned "terror" at home from his father's authoritarian parenting, "[...] dieser fürchterliche deutsche Terror, den Teller leer essen zu müssen, egal was auf den Tisch kommt [...]" (Böll "*Reise*" 35). This goes hand in hand with the "heile Welt" of *Gut Triangel*, according to Böll, who confesses the traditional way of life on the family property described in the novel would make even him nostalgic. "Ich frage mich, ob der selbstzerstörerische Wirbel und Wahn, in dem Bernward Vesper endete, nicht aus dieser 'heilen' Welt stammte, die natürlich Aufklärung und Humanismus verachtete" (Böll "*Reise*" 35).

The real problem of Böll's article, according to Claudius Seidl in his article, "Hitlers Hippies" (2005), is what Seidl purports to be Böll's moralizing tone and his association of terrorism and table manners. "Den allerdümmsten Artikel über ‚Die Reise' hat vermutlich Heinrich Böll geschrieben," in which Seidl says Böll prescribes "eine große Dosis Moral" as therapy for the conditions in 1977 Germany. Commenting on the above quote from Böll's *konkret* article, Seidl writes, "den Teller leer zu essen: das alles war, irgendwie, Terror für Heinrich Böll."[188] Seidl wants to make a clear distinction between the fictitiousness of the novel and the autobiographical 'truth' of the narration: "[...]

---

[187]Böll considered Vesper a potential terrorist.

[188]Remembering that the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* tends to be a more conservative newspaper, it is not surprising that Seidl attacks left-wing assertions that bourgeois etiquette is authoritarian.

‚Die Reise' IST ein Roman und keine Beichte, und daß Schröder das Buch im Untertitel ‚Romanessay' nannte,[189] ist nur dem Umstand geschuldet, daß der Versuch, einen Roman zu schreiben, nicht ganz vollendet wurde – [...]" (Seidl 27) Seidl is responding to a reading of the novel as map toward Vesper's demise, reading the suicide into the novel as its unhappy end: "Ein glückliches Ende hatte die 'Reise' nicht, es wird wohl keiner je **alle** Ursachen herausfinden, die die 'Reise' zu einer Reise in den Tod machten" (Böll "*Reise*" 37). Clearly the novel does not properly end, and the author's suicide is not part of its narrative. While Seidl's point is well taken, it is important to consider that Böll is responding to *Die Reise* from a much different vantage point, when West German society was facing political violence and perceived instability in the present, which was a response to the violence of the past. "Nein, 'wohltuend' ist diese Lektüre nicht, notwendig ist sie, wichtig, nicht nur, weil sie Aufschlüsse gibt über das Brüten in nazistisch verseuchten Küchen" (Böll "*Reise*" 37). Here Böll opens the self-critical historical dialogue he felt was necessary in the Federal Republic, and this imperative holds greater sway over the distanced reading possible only from the privileged position of the much later twentieth and early twenty first centuries.

Neumann notes that at the heart of the autobiographical is the return to the subjective in novels like Vesper's, and of course, his was among the first to engage the subjective factor just at the peak of the student movement. However, I

[189]This is not quite true, for Vesper, in a letter of August 23, 1969, writes to Karl Dietrich Wolf that he is working on "eines mühsam mit 'Romanessay' bezeichneten [Text]" (603). This letter is found in the "Editions-Chronologie I" of the 2003 *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, which Seidl is reviewing in this article.

think it would be most prudent to apply the lesson of Neumann's thesis not only to the idea that the subjective was in an ever-present tension with the generation of the 68ers, but that their turn toward representations of their biographies is a confrontation with the conflicts, tensions and ambivalences of representation, in general. In other words, where Neumann sees a return to autobiography, I would suggest that, in the case of Bernward Vesper, there is a rebellious re-appropriation of the genre which exposes the lacunae and ambiguities of self-presentation, -representation, and -misrepresentation; I will expand on this in the next section. *Die Reise* uses the inherently ambivalent form of the novel to problematize notions of veracity and verisimilitude in autobiographical representation.

Lubich presents a somewhat different take on the autobiographical in *Die Reise*, arguing that the novel belongs to the picaresque tradition. In, "Der Untergang des modernen Pikaro," Lubich writes: "Als konstitutives Element aller Schelmenromane gilt die Erzählperspektive der Autobiographie, in welcher der Erzähler von seinem turbulenten Lebenswandel Rechenschaft abgibt" (Lubich "Pikaro" 220). For Lubich, the picaresque novel belongs broadly to the *Bildungsroman* genre; however, whereas other picaresque heroes were able on some synthetic level to reconcile bourgeois values with hermetic amorality, and the *Bildungsroman* is seen as successor to the *Schelmenroman* (Lubich "Pikaro" 219), Vesper's novel illustrates the disintegration of the bourgeois emancipation and the social codes and values it had worked to establish since the Baroque

(Lubich "Pikaro" 220).[190] Trying to differentiate between the autobiographical and the fictional nourishes the ambivalent tension of the novel. In an article one year later, Lubich will claim that *Die Reise* represents an autobiographical conversion narrative. Entitled, "Bernward Vespers *Die Reise*: Von der Hitler-Jugend zur RAF. Identitätssuche unter dem Fluch des Faschismus" (1987),[191] the article is based on the thesis that, "Vespers Wandlungsprozeß, seine Konversion von der extremen politischen Rechten zur extremen politischen Linken nicht eine Befreiung von der Vergangenheit darstellt, sondern vielmehr ihre Rekapitulation unter ideologisch umgekehrtem Vorzeichen" (Lubich HJ/RAF 77). There is, again, something of the *Bildungsroman* gone wrong; the blame lies clearly with the perverse national socialist utopianism of the protagonist's upbringing, which will be discussed in a later section of this chapter on the conflicting utopias of father and son.[192]

Plowman reads these conflicts in the text from a strongly psychoanalytic

---

[190]The paradigm here is none other than Grimmelshausen's *Simplicius Simplicissimus*, although Thomas Mann's *Felix Krull* and Günter Grass' *Die Blechtrommel* feature as prominent modern manifestations of the picaresque novel. What is relevant here is that Lubich illustrates the ambivalence of autobiography using the picaro figure, for he is both a utopian idealist on a quest for self-discovery – "utopische Heilssuche" (Lubich "Pikaro"225) – and a liar: "Während die Kindheit überaus wirklichkeitsgetreu und psychologisch differenziert vergegenwärtigt wird, steht die Schilderung der Lehr- Wanderjahre bereits ganz im Zeichen der pikaresken Abenteuer- und Gauklermär" (Lubich "Pikaro"229).

[191]I will refer to this article as 'Lubich "HJ/RAF."'

[192]Unfortunately, Lubich here cites Jillian Becker's inflammatory book, *Hitler's Children, The Story of the Baader-Meinhof Terrorist Gang* (1977). This polemic rant purports to be a study of the RAF, but is in fact an ideological attack based on the thesis that radicalism begets radicalism, regardless of the political stripe. It seems fairly clear that the RAF members were mostly of middle class, politically liberal origin with few Nazi skeletons in the closet. Stefan Aust's study, *Der Baader Meinhof Komplex* (1985; 1997 revised and expanded edition) presents a far more balanced view on this topic.

perspective, specifically, through the references to Wilhelm Reich and Herbert Marcuse: "Insofar as it is constructed as a revolutionary case history grounded in the theories of Reich and Marcuse, *Die Reise* is premised upon mastering the past analogy with the Reichian method of character analysis" (Plowman 518). The latter views the family structure as a miniature version of the authoritarian state which determines and anchors a process of repressive socialization and ultimately leads to a "rigid character structure or armour," according to Plowman (Plowman 510). The point of this section of his article is, quite rightly, to reposition interpretation of the novel by examining it in the context of its production, rather than in the context of its publication in the so-called German Autumn of 1977. "To date, the 'New Subjectivity' of the 1970s and a series of texts about father-son relationships written toward the end of that decade (the so-called 'Vater-Bücher') have tended to provide the literary context for scholars seeking to assess *Die Reise*'s aesthetic merits" (Plowman 509). The current chapter certainly tries to maintain a similar interpretative vector and operates under the hypothesis that Vesper's novel is probably one of the first markers of what would later be called the New Subjectivity.[193]

One of the more recent contributions to the scholarship on *Die Reise* is an article by Gerrit Jan Berendse entitled, "Schreiben als Körperverletzung: zur

---

[193]Peter Schneider's *Vati* (1984) is probably one of the better known "Vater-Bücher," and although its publication is at the very tail-end of what can be called the New Subjectivity, it belongs to the tradition of Christoph Meckel's *Suchbild. Über meinen Vater* (1980) and Peter Härtling's *Nachgetragene Liebe* (1980), all of which quite possibly owe a debt of inspiration to *Die Reise*.

Anthropologie des Terrors in Bernward Vespers *Die Reise*" (2001).[194] Berendse argues: "Im Einklang mit der sogenannten Neuen Subjektivität wird eine neue Sprache entwickelt, die nicht nur schockiert, sondern vor allem Verdrängtes an die Oberfläche der Öffentlichkeit bringt" (Berendse 319). There is a newly codified language of violence and body in the novel, and that this represents the meeting place of literature and terrorism under the category of authenticity, which Berendse says, "läßt sich sowohl als lebensbejahende Selbstvergewisserung als auch als verhängnisvolle Selbstverneinung definieren" (Berendse 320). Importantly, Berendse adds that the body was a dominant cultural symbol of political action. What is immediately provocative about this article is its claim that this new language or code prefigures his own suicide: "Die von Vesper generierten destruktiven Energien zielen in masochistischer Manier auf den Privatkörper des Autors, führen den Selbstmord figurativ vor. Das reale Ableben des Autors korrespondiert der Zerstörung der Körperbilder im Text" (Berendse 320). While this is certainly correct, there is also an ironic treatment of suicide in relation to the novel, for instance, when the narrator speaks about representing his own suicide in his novel called *Hate*,[195] saying, "ein 'allen unbegreiflicher, tragischer *Selbstmord*'" (21). If anything, the narrator is presaging the possibility

---

[194]Henceforth known as 'Berendse.'

[195]Berendse claims that Vesper had wanted to title his work *Haß*, but this is what the narrator mentions in the novel (here, p. 20). However, in a letter from 6th March, 1971, Vesper writes: "Übrigens, der endgültige Titel ist *Logbuch*" (618). *Trip* and *Die Reise* had also been contemplated, and as Berendse rightly points out (Berendse 324), Jörg Schröder decided to ride the immense wave of popularity enjoyed by Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, by giving Vesper's novel-essay a road narrative title.

of the author's suicide with ironic mirroring that does not take itself terribly seriously, mocking clichéd death scenes. We must be careful not to inscribe the text *a posteriori* with the author's own body, hypostasising it as necessary narrative endpoint.

This idea of the body writing history in Berendse's article is compelling: "Die Darstellung von Körpern eröffnet Einblicke in die komplexen historischen Vorgänge" (Berendse 321). The body is the realm of what he calls the inflationary use of the word 'authenticity,' which was so fashionable in the seventies, arguing that it was the symbol of "lebensbejahende Selbstvergewisserung als auch verhängnisvolle Selbstverneinung," and Berendse continues: "[d]er menschliche Körper als Domäne der Authentizität war in dem damaligen westdeutschen Kulturraum das dominante Kollektivsymbol, das auch die Texte und meist sprachlosen Aktionen der Roten Armee Fraktion prägte" (Berendse 320). The idea is that the body's symbolic potential is revisited in literature, mirroring the tabloid sensationalization of photographs of the dead, and writing versions of history other than the exploitative, reactionary one of the *Bild* newspaper, for instance. Reading the novel in this fashion means reading the novel 'after the bodies began piling up,' i.e., in the context of the Red Army Faction terrorist actions during the seventies, when photographs of bodies were common iconography in the news media. The theme of death and the body count in *Die Reise* are undeniable. "Vesper beläßt es nicht bei einer Leichenschau, sondern bemüht sich, eine Verhaltenslehre vorzulegen, die sich auf den Umgang

mit Angst, Schmerz und Tod spezialisiert— immer von den zugleich liebevollen *und* horrenden Erinnerungen an die ehemalige Verlobte Gudrun Ensslin und den Vater Will Vesper begleitet. Diese Ambivalenz zerreißt das Innere des Erzählers [...]" (Berendse 323). Berendse's article is one of the few to underline the importance of the unresolvable inner tensions that inhere not only within the narrator, but also within the text itself – it is both novel and essay, document and fabrication, incomplete and unfinishable. Paralysis could of course have resulted from such ambivalence, but we have a text that is not a document of paralysis, rather it illustrates the other possibility in the face of ambivalence, namely, action by way of refusal. This will generate Vesper's narrative rebellion.

The critical literature focuses on a two main aspects of Vesper's novel; first its autobiographical status, and second its historical valence, then the two are connected to help explain a period in postwar West Germany in which the state was threatened from within. While the figure of Vesper constructed in the novel appears in the critical reception as a kind of extreme symptom of the left wing 'infection' of German youth in the sixties, his literary historical sensibilities remain largely unexamined – Lubich and Glawion do point to the link to Romanticism, but do not pursue a close textual analysis. My argument is that this novel is, in fact, an act of rebellion that mobilizes the nostalgic impulse in the author's utopian project of trying to reconcile his personal history with the public political context and his desire to change the latter through revolution. Because of Vesper's early death, *Die Reise* represents the culmination of his work, from his

insightful seminar paper on Novalis, to his work on *Gegen den Tod*, through his publication of the *Voltaire Flugschrift*. I do not subscribe to the sometimes reductive interpretations of the novel to an anthropological explanation of terrorism in Germany or as a document of disillusionment about the student protest movement; rather, I read this novel as a sensitive work of literary fiction that explores many traditional themes and tropes by often radical and taboo-breaking means. Nonetheless, the text seeks to do what much literature does, namely, question its social and historical context, and now we must attempt to understand how.

Rebellion, Resistance, Refusal

It is my contention that on the nostalgic trajectory toward utopia, a concept of rebellion subtends *Die Reise*; that is to say, the text develops and channels a rebellious structure and language that resist and refuse the status quo, and are driven by a utopian impulse that would resolve the tensions between the individual and the collective, between the lived history and its representational construction in the novel. The path Vesper takes to his utopia is nostalgic, but nostalgic in so far as it goes not only backward (the *Einfacher Bericht* and the memory excurses in the narrative present) but sideways (the drug-trips), to paraphrase Boym. Vesper's nostalgic acts seek release or emancipation from the progression of his real history – the novel is the attempt to construct an unreal, utopian space –, similar to Novalis's nostalgic yearning for an inner realm, the

"Weltall" within us and the idealized middle ages of *Ofterdingen*. This is nostalgia's utopian rebellion against the status quo; Herbert Marcuse says art is the medium for resisting that status quo: "[i]n its [art's] advanced positions, it is the Great Refusal – the protest against that which is" (Marcuse *ODM* 63).[196] I discuss the Great Refusal below, but here I would like to continue with the connection between nostalgia and rebellion.[197] In *The Rebel*, Camus writes that, "[e]very act of rebellion expresses a nostalgia for innocence. [...] But, one day, nostalgia takes up arms" (Camus 77). Innocence is the utopia of post-World War II Germany but especially for Vesper's narrator, whose paternal association with the crimes of National Socialism and the refusal to acknowledge and atone for them, generates an increasing sense of the narrator's resistance to the parental ideological stance, in the novel's literary representation and construction of the nostalgic space. The central questions here are: what characterizes this concept of rebellion in the novel? And, how does it manifest itself in our reading?

As Vesper's Novalis-paper indicates, he identifies Camus's idea of resistance and perseverance coupled with protest; Camus himself makes an explicit analogy between rebellion and art. He locates the origins of modern

---

[196]In *One Dimesional Man* (1964), which I cite as 'Marcuse *ODM*.'

[197]In his article on literature and the student protest movement in West Germany, "Von der Intelligenz zur Arbeiterschaft" (Lützeler 1980), Paul Michael Lützeler writes: "Immerhin wird durch Vespers *Reise* deutlich, wie tief die 'Große Verweigerung' wurzelte in den sehr persönlichen Konflikten der Studenten mit ihren Eltern" (Lützeler 119) Lützeler's article gives a good overview of the period and especially the literary responses to it, citing Vesper's novel on several occasions. Lützeler recognizes the legacy of existentialism in Marcuse's work, and in fact, in the student movement, in general (Lützeler 128).

rebellion primarily at the end of the eighteenth century and at the heart of Romanticism.[198] This to say, he creates a tradition of rebellion that re-focuses itself in the twentieth century as a nostalgic category, but one that still seeks a utopia. This is significant to our project in so far as we are talking about the literary utopian project that takes a nostalgic trajectory; Camus writes: "In every rebellion is to be found the metaphysical demand for unity, the impossibility of capturing it and the construction of a substitute universe. Rebellion, from this point of view, is a fabricator of universes. This also defines art" (Camus 224). There is a yearning for unity, which I would argue is akin to Vesper's yearning for a narrative unification of his subjectivity and his personal history; the utopian dimension of this is the fabrication of substitute universes, idealized realms, like Novalis's inner space. However, rebellion also recognizes, accepts and seeks to overcome ambivalence and it affirms "the existence of a limit and the divided existence that we represent: [rebellion] is not, originally, the total negation of all existence. Quite the contrary, it says yes and no simultaneously. It is the rejection of one part of existence in the name of another part which it exalts" (Camus 220). This process of rejection and exaltation is a very Romantic idea and is tantamount to the artistic process – the painful process to achieve rebellious creativity, i.e. construct substitute universes, is what *Die Reise* manifests.

Writing is presented as rebellious action in a passage from the "Einfacher

---

[198] "Metaphysical rebellion, in the proper sense, does not appear in any coherent form in the history of ideas until the end of the eighteenth century..." (Camus 32).

Bericht," where young Bernward faces political disillusionment for the first time (479-80). It is the 1953 federal election in West Germany, and Will Vesper has engaged his teenaged son in political activism for the *Deutsche Reichspartei*, on the radical political right. The party places last in the polls on election day; for the young political activist, Bernward, the experience is formative: "Die Niederlage war vernichtend" (479). He has been raised to believe that the family's existence would be threatened by the new system, i.e., industrial capitalism: "Was, wenn es der Industrie gelang, die Landwirtschaft endgültig zu ruinieren, was, wenn die Schulden stiegen, immer mehr Land verkauft, wir gezwungen werden würden, das Haus zu verkaufen? Die Zukunft stand vor mir, schwarz wie eine Wintergewitterwand" (480). Here we have the nostalgic trajectory tracking toward the false utopia – the father's nostalgic, nationalist socialist dystopia. The response to this quandary represents the first instance of writing as action in the personal recollections of the *Einfacher Bericht* (even though it comes quite late in the novel, which is another moment of the book's self-reflexive irony).[199] The narrator says: "Ich überlegte ein paar Tage. Es hat keinen Sinn, sich etwas vorzumachen. Die überwältigende Mehrheit des Volkes wollte das Vergangene vergangen sein lassen. Ich setzte mich an die

[199]Glawion remarks on the texts increasing emphasis on the *Einfacher Bericht* horizon, the further one reads – "Am Ende des Textes überwiegt 'Der einfache Bericht'" – and he continues saying, "[d]ie Aufbrüche führen zunehmend in die Vergangenheit, gleichzeitig rückt die politisch-utopische Zukunft in immer weitere Ferne" (Glawion 27). This is true, but the novel's actual utopia comes into focus here, the one constituted by the nostalgic trajectory; the political utopia of the left appears flatly in the novel, and disjointed from the narrator, as the political passages are often in the distanced documentary style and potentially quotations of other texts.

Schreibmaschine, tippte eine Analyse, die ich der Lokalzeitung schicken würde" (480). Here, his political *action* is typing which bears out the realization that returning to the past would be a rebellious act in that context. The protagonist recognizes the power of the return, the *nostos*, to the past; it is replete with regressive and progressive potential.

What ensues is the trajectory toward the peripetia in the autobiographical narrative, when the young Bernward begins to question his parents' ideological convictions (489-94). This in turn sheds explanatory light on the larger project of *Die Reise* as a rebellious text. Bernward's parents find his newspaper article and forbid him from sending it, with no real reason. In other words, they disempower him in the moment he has tried to take action against his defeat, and this would seem to explain the beginning of his turn against his parents' ideology, instead of mere youthful revolt, the anecdotes about which pepper the *Einfacher Bericht* throughout the novel. Reacting to the news of the interdiction, delivered by Bernward's mother, on behalf of the father, he says:

> Ich schrie sie an. "Seid Ihr wahnsinnig geworden!" Es ist mein Recht, in dieser Sache, über die wir uns einig sind, zu unternehmen, was ich für richtig halte, es ist mein gottverdammtes Recht! Ich geriet in Zorn, ich lief im Kreis umher, schrie und fluchte, weinte und drohte. Fast unbeteiligt sah mir meine Mutter zu. Dann lächelte sie. "Du vergißt, wo du dich befindest" [...]. Ich fühlte meine Ohnmacht, ich merkte, daß ich mich, von Heulkrämpfen geschüttelt, lächerlich machte. "Na prima," sagte ich plötzlich, "lassen wer det!" Ich riß ihr den Artikel aus der Hand, zerfetzte ihn und warf die Schnipsel in den Papierkorb. (480)

Bernward is enraged and feels powerless; he believes it is his right to respond in this matter, "über die wir uns einig sind." He is incensed by what amounts to

censorship from his parents, when he is representing their point of view. In the course of this passage we see his anger and frustration, the stony cold reaction of the mother, the recognition of impotence, and then the "lassen wer det!," Bernward's use of the Berlin dialect, which will earn him a rebuke from his mother, as signal for the rebellious act of tearing apart his article. The obviously symbolic destruction of his own text – a textual suicide, if one likes – is a reflection on the frustration about writing already thematized in the novel. The frustration and powerlessness of the writer trying to engage politically and seeing his efforts thwarted from within his side, is a theme one can apply to the protest movement, being careful not to generalize too much. None the less, sometimes the writer's solitary act of protest (through a text) does not serve the collective political interest of his side, a point Bernward's parents appear to be making. Clearly, the above excerpt represents to some extent an incidence of adolescent rage, but it also represents the first painful awareness of the consequences of politically motivated writing and the politics of writing as an act of protest or resistance.

Marcuse's concept of turning away from the given political and economic system, in favour of a progressive socialism that understands the psychological drives of the political subject, links the Great Refusal to art, specifically, when he writes that art *is* the Great Refusal, and continues: "The modes in which man and things are made to appear, to sing and sound and speak, are modes of refuting, breaking, and recreating their factual existence" (Marcuse *ODM* 63). Marcuse is

pointing out the utopian (in the sense of being unreal and idealized) structure of representation in art; by way of comparison, Camus says rebellion, "In man, is the refusal to be treated as an object and to be reduced to simple historical terms" (Camus 219). In the above passage from *Die Reise*, we have an example of Marcuse's concept of refusal as breaking and recreating– the mother destroying the text creates a symbolic representation of textual destruction, yet because it is a textual representation, it is the act of recreating, of refusing its actual destruction, in other words, fabricating a substitute universe. But again, the fabrication involves a return, nostalgia, and it is painful yearning for and resistance against the history that has led to the status quo.

Marcuse's rebellious refusal presents the utopian as possibility in technological and practical terms: "what is denounced as 'utopian' is no longer that which has 'no place' and cannot have any place in the historical universe, but rather that which is blocked from coming about by the power of the established societies" (Marcuse *EL* 3-4).[200] This situation provokes a refusal common to all people, according Marcuse; "it makes them reject the rules of the game that is rigged against them, the ancient strategy of patience and persuasion, the reliance on the Good Will in the Establishment, its false and immoral comforts, its cruel affluence" (Marcuse *EL* 6). Marcuse also responds to Camus's above connection of rebellion and art in an essay entitled "*Existentialismus. Bemerkungen zu Jean-*

[200]Marcuse also outlines this idea of ending the utopian in a presentation he gave in Berlin in 1967 called, "Das Ende der Utopie," which informs his *Essay on Liberation*. I will refer to the latter as 'Marcuse *EL*.'

Paul Sartres L'Etre et le Neant." He writes: "Für Camus ist der einzig angemessene Ausdruck, das absurde Leben zu leben, und das künstlerische Schaffen, das sich weigert, das Konkrete zu begründen, und 'mit Bildern das ausfüllt, was keinen Sinn hat'" (Marcuse *KG* 51).[201] *Die Reise* represents the legacy of this creative rebellious refusal in its structure and content, and their entwinement with the novel's context of production.

Vesper rebels against his condition through his writing: he uses sexually explicit, often colloquial language unacceptable to a bourgeois readership, then switches registers; he seeks new perceptive experiences by way of drugs, again contrary to accepted values of the time; he claims he will 'settle scores'– "endlich mal auspacken, abrechnen, es den Leuten zeigen" (24). Most of all, Vesper rebels against the literary conventions of the student movement era by presenting a deeply subjective narrative, writing for instance: "Sollen wir unsre Gefühle vernachlässigen? Ist es nicht meine Pflicht, die 'subjektiven Bindungen' an ein Kind abzulegen, um uns der Veränderung eines Systems zuzuwenden, das uns zu solchen Wandlungen zwingt?" (164-65).[202] These are almost heretical questions

---

[201] Cited in *Kultur und Gesellschaft 2*, 1965. Referred to as 'Marcuse *KG*.' Marcuse also points out that: "Camus lehnt die Existenzphilosophie ab: sie muss das Unerklärliche 'erklären,' das Absurde rationalisieren und so seine Wirklichkeit verfälschen" (Marcuse *KG* 51). Importantly, Sabine von Dirke also points out that Marcuse's concept, "connotes a deliberate activity" (von Dirke 114), which underlines the creative and constructive core of the Great Refusal, and by extension rebellion.

[202] Neumann suggests that Vesper's book answers the first of these questions in the negative; the text favours the inward quest as opposed to the acknowledged necessity for action: "[...] Vesper schreibt ein Erinnerungsbuch, obwohl er die Notwendigkeit der politischen Aktion intellektuell einsieht und bejaht. Statt der politischen Aktion, die für ihn in der Tat wohl bedeutet hätte, den 'bewaffneten Kampf in den Metropolen' aufzunehmen, überwältigt ihn die Faszination der

in the context of the student movement and allude to parents who put their children in the care of the collective, in order to pursue their political activism.[203] *Die Reise*'s subjective, nostalgic acts constitute its rebellious political action; it is the locus of confrontation between the personal, which includes memory or nostalgia, and the public revolutionary discourse and utopian yearning for political change of the student movement. The creative space, the 'substitute universe,' of the text represents a very real moment of interaction in the utopian rebellious project.

The concept of rebellion in writing is also a self-reflexive trope in the novel. Statements such as, "ich *kann nicht mehr schreiben*" (293), appear throughout the text on the contemporary narrative plane, and betray the manifest irony that these claims are made in writing, echoing Hoffmannsthal's "Letter of Lord Chandos," i.e. asserting the impossibility of expressing one's self in writing, while doing this in writing. What is more than just the occasional expression of frustration about the inability to write are the passages that actually thematize and reflect on writing, often in an oppositional tone, and tend to begin with the overt reference, "SCHREIBEN: [...] (122; 298, for instance)." The following quotation from the novel illustrates Marcuse's idea of breaking and recreating, in as much as it attacks writing, in writing, and manifests frustration with the lack of concrete

---

recherche du temps perdu" (Neumann 119). What Neumann is creating here is an incarnation of the classical binary opposition between *Wort* and *Tat*, which is actually falsely mutually exclusive.

[203] It is quite conceivable that Vesper is referring specifically to Ulrike Meinhof, who left her daughters in communal care, because she was going into the revolutionary underground. Vesper mentions her on several occasions, referring to her break from Klaus-Rainer Röhl (e.g.199-200).

representation. In other words, the impossibility implied by the utopian literary project is finding expression.

> SCHREIBEN: was immer die Apologeten auch darüber sagen mögen, und, zur Rationalisierung ihrer eigenen Praxis, sagen *müssen*, die heutige Literatur ist eine einzige chronique scandaleuse. Das sind alles keine Anleitungen zum Handeln. Man ist stolz darauf, die Wirklichkeit zu verleugnen, Destillate zu Papier zu bringen, die Ort, Zeit, unten, oben, nur noch ahnen lassen. Das ist die ganze Moderne. Und natürlich lehnen sie dann die Literaturpreise des Systems ab, um ihrer papierenen Onanie wenigstens einen Hauch von Protest zu verleihen, nonsens. Her mit dem Geld. Und verteilt es an diejenigen, die den Kampf um die Fabriken schon aufgenommen haben. (298)

The narrator's rabid critique of writing as out of touch with reality and ultimately "papierene Onanie" with only a hint of protest, applies to his contemporaries' as well as his own writing. The last two sentences of the paragraph illustrate this rather amusingly: first the demand for prize money, then the almost apocryphal sentence introduced with the coordinating conjunction "und," performs what has just been described.[204] Even the narrator cannot resist the self-reflexive impulse on such a self-reflexive passage; in the very next paragraph he comments on the one just cited: "Es ist einfach das Ergebnis des Frustrationsprozesses nach 210 Seiten Niederschrift. Humanistisches Zwangskotzen!" (298). Notably, the linguistic register of this passage tends to the crass colloquial with words and expressions about bodily and sexual functions, and this is of course part of what constitutes the rebellious character of the text. It is also indicative of the text's

---

[204]The "her mit dem Geld" resonates again in the author's letters to his publisher, which are themselves an apocryphal text in the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*, from which I am here citing; there the demand for cash advances dominate in the letters to Jörg Schröder.

boundary value, i.e., its place on the vanguard of the modernist confrontation with its own politics of representation, which ultimately results in the label 'post-modern.' This passage, which itself claims to have described "die ganze Moderne," is showing signs of self-reflection motivated more by rebellion than by a modernist impulse to self-criticism and reflection about the process of writing. The text fires a polemical salvo at (its) present-day literature with its refusal to acknowledge progress, referring to it rather as a "chronique scandaleuse."

In a later essayistic passage, sub-titled "*Lesen-Schreiben,*" he reiterates the problem of what Enzensberger called the 'reading class.' "Das Proletariat allein hat die Macht, die herrschende Klasse zu stürzen; diejenigen, die Bücher lesen und schreiben, haben die Macht, den Sturz wiederum zu verzögern" (435). This ironic critique of phony or only half-hearted political commitment in literature is yet another manifestation of ambivalence, resulting from the frustration mentioned above. The frustration centres on the inability to effect changes of reality, an admission that the text we are reading is also, in some sense, "papierene Onanie." The narrator writes that he would rather do something different, "da mit der Veränderung der Wirklichkeit fortfahren, wo ich aufgehört habe, statt diese Wirklichkeit in das Hintereinander der Buchstaben zu zwängen, wo sie getrost veröden kann, angenehm für jeden, der seine geilen Augen die Linotype entlanghuschen läßt" (298). Writing as autoerotic spectacle betrays the notion of *engagement* and the idea of literature as "Anleitung zum Handeln." It remains unclear where the narrator would continue with his project of changing

reality, not to mention, what this project might be, if not this book. The frustration of representing reality is the clear theme here, and it is problematized by way of the necessity to represent in linear, typographic fashion that which is non-linear.[205]

Rebellion is a utopian striving that creates space in art to which it can turn and return; this is how rebellion mirrors the tension between utopia and nostalgia. Rebellion is also the hope to overcome the absurdity and solitude of existence and it produces a collective spirit that may even bridge the division between the individual and the collective. In terms of the current project, there is hope for the reconciliation of the personal and the public. Post-war bourgeois society had extolled the virtues of private citizenry, leaving political action to the 'experts,' i.e. the politicians, de-politicizing the subjective and individual. The disjunction between the individual and the political power structure leads to a kind of solitary suffering, until a collective movement of individuals renounces this suffering; in West Germany the key moment of collectivity was the formation of the extra-parliamentary opposition (*außer parlamentarische Opposition*, *APO*). Camus ends the first section of his essay saying, "[i]n absurdist experience suffering is individual. But from the moment that a movement of rebellion begins, suffering is seen as a collective experience" (Camus 28), followed by the post-Cartesian

[205] See Glawion 27 for connection of autobiography and linearity.

proposition: "I *rebel* – therefore we *exist*" (Camus 28).[206]

The rebellious character of the text extends beyond its critique of modern(ist) literature and the representation of rebellious and transgressive acts from the *Einfacher Bericht*. The transgressions perpetrated by the novel in its drug-trip narratives are a confrontation with the tear between established norms of perception and the search for new categories of experience.[207] Two particularly good, representative passages are the "Hofgartenerlebnis" (104) "Peyotl-Märchen" (219).[208] Both take place in gardens, the first in the Munich Hofgarten, the second in a garden, "der da bei der Stadt war" (219), which might well be the same, and use the city-nature contrast as symbolic backdrop for the experience of the drug trip versus sober reality.

The postmodern impulse makes itself visible in symbolically in the drug trip scenes in their thematization of border tensions. Linda Hutcheon argues for the importance of border tensions and transgressions as an element of the postmodern, and certainly this impulse is present in *Die Reise*. Hutcheon says the

---

[206]Neumann misquotes Camus on this point, claiming the latter says: "Ich rebelliere, also bin ich" (Neumann 111).

[207]We saw above how Lubich connects the *Bildungsroman* and the *Schelmenroman* characteristics of *Die Reise*; Vesper's narrator moves through these categories on what Lubich calls an "*utopische Heilssuche*" (Lubich "Pikaro"225). Part of this movement, according to Lubich, is: "Der durch den Drogentrip geschaffene Assoziationsspielraum" which suggests, "die Narrenfreiheit, in der sich das im Erwachsenen steckengebliebene Kind mit all seinen Sehnsüchten und Aggressionen auszuleben versucht" (Lubich "Pikaro"231).

[208]I have chosen here to cite the pages on which these passages start under their respective headings, not where they end, because this is unclear. They are interrupted by the other narrative horizons but appear to continue without its being clear whether that we are reading the same passage; the only certainty that we are in fact on the drug trip horizon comes from the italicized typeface.

main tension in the debates surrounding the postmodern are whether it is worldly or parodic and self-reflexive, and she goes on to argue that precisely such binary tensions are what determine the experience of the postmodern (Hutcheon 18).[209] Other tensions include, "the transgression of boundaries between genres, between disciplines or discourses, between high and mass culture, and most problematically, perhaps, between practice and theory" (Hutcheon 18). This concept of transgression is related to an understanding of postmodernism as constituted by an inherent ambivalence that sees resistance and reaction in constant tension with one another. In the "Hofgartenerlebnis" scene, Bernward and his travel companion, Burton, cross the threshold from sober dialogue to free association and hallucination. The Hofgarten is described as, "[d]er abgeschlossene Raum," it is a clearly demarcated space within which the two characters will transgress social convention and attain new perceptive experience. The "Hofgartenerlebnis" generates a tension between reality and the narcotic hallucinatory sphere, but the reality is only a narrative one and the enclosed space of the Hofgarten mirrors the enclosed aesthetic space of the novel. Boundaries like these must be established before they can be crossed. In other words, this is the creative impetus of rebellion in action.[210] However, the narrator is conscious

---

[209]In, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989).

[210]Hutcheon notes that boundary crossings acknowledge the boundaries and in fact expose the tensions they create (Hutcheon 34-35; 72-73). The idea of narrative horizons, I am advocating in this chapter, is an interpretative strategy that uses a conceptual and structural category such as this because it challenges the notion of borders and boundaries almost by definition; a horizon is the seemingly limitless surface plane, although it is of course the boundary between earth and sky.

of the critique of the constructive possibilities created through the drug trip: "Martin Walser im letzten Kursbuch: 'Noch ist nicht gezeigt, wie einer, der vom Trip zurückkommt, etwas mitbringen kann, was ihm hier hilft. Es sei denn: Erinnerung. Und: Sehnsucht nach dem nächsten Trip" (115). In other words, does the transgression result in anything other than memory or yearning? I would suggest that these are actually very fruitful for the writer, as the existence of this text demonstrates. The memory of and yearning for the drug trip are nostalgic moments that generate an understanding, however illusory, of an alternative to quotidian reality, representing an attempt at experiencing utopia.

Early Romantic writing takes many of its rebellious cues from the transgression of boundaries, especially those set out by Enlightenment rationality. The early Romantics celebrate irrationality and the contradictory, for instance, yearning for social and cultural progress which they seek in an idealized German past. While I am not trying to co-opt Novalis for postmodernity, I am attempting to place him in a discourse of boundary transgression through the representation of narcotic intoxication which, evidently, Vesper recognizes. In his "Hymnen an die Nacht" (1800), Novalis praises the mysterious, boundless realm of the night, which affords the initiated subject a view of its own inner universe. This stands in direct contrast to the clearly demarcated boundaries of the daylight hours, during which reason and rationality, Enlightenment values, exert their influence on the world – the poetic voice laments this power with the question: "Endet nie des Irdischen Gewalt?" (2nd hymn). It is in the second hymn that Novalis suggests a

means of accessing the fantastical realm of the night at any time, but only if one is not a fool who understands the night merely as a restful break from the day. The poetic voice sings to the night: "Sie [*the fools*] fühlen dich nicht in der goldenen Flut der Trauben – in des Mandelbaums Wunderöl und dem braunen Safte des Mohns." The true poetic being can access the utopian universe of the night through intoxication, and follow the mysterious path inward, while the fool clings to the limiting mode of day for his understanding of the world. This is the Romantic rebellion against the perceived tyranny of Enlightenment rationalism: absconding into the subjective realm by way of narcotic and poetic intoxication, and it seems to have found a resonance in Vesper's drug trip passages.[211]

As the "Peyotl-Märchen" commences, the narrator steps into a public garden and begins to describe it, he begins to feel exhaustion; fighting this feeling he says, "[...] *ich mußte wachen und meine Augen aufsperren, ein Wimpernschlag hätte die sanfte Erscheinung des Gartens vor mir zerissen*" (219). The idea that batting an eyelash could tear the perception represents this attempt to perceive reality as vulnerable to tearing. What is central here is the notion boundary or border, represented by crossing the threshold into the garden and thus into the realm of altered perception; the transgression illustrates the crux of rebellious

---

[211] As Michael Rutschky writes in his article, "Über Schriften zum Terrorismus" (1978) , "*Die Reise*: das IST das alte Strukturmuster des Bildungsromans. Bei Vesper IST damit der *Trip* gemeint: die vom Rauschgift erzeugte Ekstase, die das Ich wenigstens zeitweise seinen unerträglichen Lebenszusammenhängen entreißt, um es in ganz andere Welten zu versenken" (Rutschky *Merkur* 193). We remember that Rutschky's lengthy essay, *Erfahrungshunger*, seeks to capture the desire for subjective experience that gained currency in the nineteen seventies and is evident in *Die Reise*.

action. This passage includes a specific reflection on the narrator's personal motivation for joining the student protest movement.

> *'Die Tatsache, daß ich mich dem sozialen Protest angeschlossen habe, war weder auf eigene Not aus sozialer Ungerechtigkeit, noch auf materielle Entbehrungen oder Wechselfälle im Kampf ums Dasein zurückzuführen, sondern einzig und allein auf das Vorbild aller sozialen Tyrannei, der Tyrannei des Familienvaters eines Überbleibsels der Tyrannei, die der Stammesälteste in der Urgesellschaft ausübte.'* (222)

This quote is both general and specific; it has clear applicability to the narrator's personal situation and that of many in his generation, but it also applies more broadly to society and a critique of the patriarchal structures. In other words, the metonymic value of the narrator's personal history inspires his rebellion. The question is, does he want to negate his own role as tyrannical *Familienvater*? Perhaps the answer lies in the latter specification of the father as head of the family, i.e., Bernward does not see himself as this tyrant with respect to his son, Felix. Bernward's admission that he joined the protest movement because of 'the tyranny of the family father,' and the fact that this is personal, but because of its generalized phrasing, also a clear public historical reference, turns the rebellious discourse away from issues of social injustice. In fact, the first and second clauses of the sentence almost seem critical of social activists, suggesting the possibility of selfish motivations und the pretence of altruism. But again, things remain hazy, for the sentence is placed in single quotations and is, in fact, a late

addition to the manuscript.[212] This *a posteriori* insertion in ironically distancing quotations marks another occurrence of the rebellious mode of the text, where content and form work with and against each other to create ambivalence in what should be a key moment of epiphany. *Die Reise* exalts the experience of the drug high, an altered state of perception – which, it must be acknowledged, is illusory.[213] The text calls attention to the disillusionment with the enlightening potential of the drug trip by portraying the protagonist's drug induced perception of the disjunctions of his experience, addressing to some extent the lament of having to force experience into linear representation.

Impermanence and Generational Conflict: the Nostalgia for Utopia

The potent symbol that negates the journey is its endpoint, in this case *Gut Triangel*, which is the physical end of the road narrative and the symbolic goal of the mnemonic voyage – the journey is the return home. The *Gut* is the point to which the *nostos* leads and ceases to be a return, it is the permanence that defines the contrast with impermanence. On the "*Einfacher Bericht*" narrative plane, we have a case of nostalgia on our hands, one loaded with issues of history, family relations and psychology, and the conflicting ideas of utopia. The focal point for

---

[212]As indicated by its framing in forward slashes in the *Ausgabe letzter Hand*. The publisher's note at the beginning of this edition states: "//...//: Zusätze des Autors im Nachlaß-Manuskript."

[213]Lubich points out that at the end of the novel, the narrator expresses disillusionment with the possibilities of narcotic intoxication: "Das allmähliche Abklingen der Drogenwirkung gegen Ende des Romans ist begleitet von einer wachsenden Ent-Täuschung über deren bewußtseinserweiternde Fähigkeiten" (Lubich HJ/RAF 91).

this narrative dimension is the Vesper family stead, the *Gut Triangel*. It is simultaneously *locus amoenus* and *horribilis*, the nostalgic destination which is representative of the perverted utopian national socialist ideology even after the ultimate demise of its popular political and historical manifestation; the *Gut* is the place where nostalgia for the conditions of possibility of (this particular) utopia thrive.

This section examines the themes of impermanence and the generational conflict, and organizes itself around the symbol representing home, the end of the road, illusory stability, and historical anachronism in *Die Reise*, namely, *Gut Triangel*, the Vesper family home. It may appear contradictory that a concrete location represents impermanence, but the generational conflict bears this sense of liminality out. Despite a rejection of his own upbringing, the narrator retains a sense of *Heimat*, home, expressed by the father and instilled in the son, in spite of the narrator's ideological differences with his father.[214] *Die Reise* is in many ways a *nostos*, a return home, and the *algia/algos*, the yearning for home, has a utopian element to it. According to Jack Zipes, Ernst Bloch posits *Heimat* as a key part of utopia: "Bloch's word for the home that we have all sensed but have

[214]The term *Heimat* is worthy of lengthy discussion, for which we do not have the forum here. It should be made clear, though, that the word is used here in full awareness of its ambivalence and fraught history. Celia Applegate's book, *A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat* (1990), traces the development and use of the term in Germany, and she asserts: "*Heimat* has never been a word about real social forces or real political situations. Instead it has been a myth about the possibility of a community in the face of fragmentation and alienation. In the postwar era, Heimat has meant forgiving, and also a measure of forgetting. Right up to the present, it has focused public attention on the meaning of tradition and locality for the nation itself" (Applegate 19). We see that the concept, as presented by Applegate, resonates with the utopia-nostalgia dynamic, especially where she identifies it as a myth about possibility, something I would call the nostalgic yearning for utopia.

never experienced or known" (Zipes xxxiii).[215] Of course Zipes notes that Bloch is purposely re-appropriating a concept that has distinct Nazi resonances. The *Gut* represents the openness and indeterminacy of utopian *Heimat*, it is a literary locus, unreal, deeply symbolic and therefore unavoidably ambivalent. The national socialist resonances are acutely present in the generational conflict, which would be more exactly labelled a conflict of utopias between father and son. The vexed possibility of revolutionary and historical transcendence that typifies Vesper's project is derived from a deep-seated sense that the present is unacceptable and only a transitional phase – this thinking is common to Left and Right, son and father. What impulses guide and conflict the characters? How does a sense of impermanence or tentativeness in politics and society play into this complex? In what way does this reflect the generational conflict in the post-World War II Federal Republic?

The preoccupation with travel and the trip in Vesper's narrative is patent; early in the novel the narrator proclaims: "Der Mensch ist von Natur aus ein Wanderer, nur die ökonomische Notwendigkeit hat ihn seßhaft gemacht. [...] Es ist unfaßlich. Noch nie gab es so viele Straßen auf der Erde, so sichere Land- und Seewege. Aber noch immer stirbt ein Großteil der Leute in dem Ort, wo sie geboren wurden" (69-70). This sets the tone for restlessness, the need to travel, transgress, lamenting the stasis in society—despite all the possibilities of travel, a

---

[215]Cited in Jack Zipes's introduction to his and Frank Mecklenburg's translation of a selection of Bloch's essays entitled, *Utopian Function of Art* (1988).

majority of people remain in one place, satisfied to conserve and preserve their status quo. The lament for this stasis derives from the narrator's personal circumstances; a later quote from a drug trip sequence addresses the accident of landing in a historical context: "*Ich habe nicht darum gebeten, Europäer werden zu dürfen, geboren als Deutscher im Jahre 1938 in einer Klinik in Frankfurt an der Oder, als Kind von Mittelklasseeltern, die einem vertrottelten Traum vom tausendjährigen Reich anhingen*" (238). This is a generational novel for the first post World War II generation in West Germany, who pose the "Gretchen question" of history to their parents: "*wie hast du's mit der Vergangenheit*?" In other words, what were you doing during the Third Reich? Why are we left with this legacy? Why are certain structures of society and politics unchanged from this period? Vesper's text compels us to scrutinize the construction of these questions and their answers, because the narrator's personal history is so explicitly burdened by the unrelinquished, unrepentant national socialist ideology of his father, thus the answers to the aforementioned questions are, in Bernward's case, painfully and terrifyingly simple.

One central and unifying thematic principle of this novel is the notion of impermanence and potential instability of the present historical context which implies either a progressive or a regressive potential. The text expresses a kind of transitoriness, a loss of solid ground, a questioning of categories, such as bourgeois family values, the notion of perception in the drug trip scenes, and on a structural level, its sometimes apparently random passages disrupt a sense of

narrative flow and progress that might develop. The following passage from the novel titled, in English, "Life is so permanent," begins: "Schreiben: losgelöst von einem Ort: Triangel: Berlin: Hamburg? Seine Identiät überall begreifen, sie mit sich herumschleppen, nicht 'aus Anlaß von' mit den Objekten kommunizieren, sondern der 'ewig wandernde Mittelpunkt des Kosmos...'" (122). The ironic title of the passage highlights the permanence of impermanence and notably, Triangel is the first locus from which the writing subject suggests detaching his identity, in order to 'grasp it everywhere.' This insight into the lack of a centred identity seems to be undermined, though, by the very next clause in the sentence, which speaks of hauling one's identity around almost as if it were a burden, and perhaps it is. The sentence drifts off into what is either an ellipsis or a simple lacuna. In any case, the uncoupling of the identity from terrestrial constraints and the restless syntax of the statement instil this passage with a feeling of detachment. Gerrit-Jan Berendse draws the parallel here to Kerouac's *On the Road*; Berendse says: "Der Prozeß der Selbsterfahrung verlangt nach einem Ausbruch aus der Isolation, wodurch ein Unterwegssein ausgelöst werden kann" (Berendse 324). This illustrates again how Lubich sees this kind of breaking out and questioning of bourgeois categories of self as indicative of the picaresque in Vesper's text. The sense of detachment and liminality of the road connect *Die Reise* to Schneider's *Lenz* and the tradition of the road narrative. Schneider's protagonist also seems to be carrying the baggage of history, if we think of his experience of the tear (*der Riss*) when he is thrown into memories of his childhood. Lenz, we remember, is

also struggling with his status as outsider and his unravelling identity, and these issues of identity motivate his journey but are exacerbated by it, too. Certainly the transitionality and transgressiveness associated with the road narrative and the picaresque tradition are appropriate in the context of the sixties for they pose a direct challenge to the conservative status quo.

While this kind of impermanence expressed in art is not necessarily revolutionary or new – Bertolt Brecht writes, "[w]ir aber wollen ihre [*past periods'*] Unterschiedlichkeit belassen und ihre Vergänglichkeit im Auge behalten, so daß auch das unsere als vergänglich eingesehen werden kann" (*Kleines Organon für das Theater*, aphorism 36) – , it is perhaps particularly acute given the historical period of the late nineteen sixties and the social upheavals of the time. The era of student movement, especially in its radical phases, represents a destabilisation through attacks on and protests against bourgeois institutions that symbolized the relatively young Federal Republic – the arson at the *Kaufhof* and *Schneider* department stores in Frankfurt on Main of April 2, 1968, for instance. In this period, it seemed possible that the country was not fated to remain the strong capitalist, and authoritarian, democracy it had become through the *Wirtschaftswunder* of the 1950s – of course the student protesters believed themselves to have recognized precisely the lack of true democratic values and an

inherently fascist structure in their country.[216]

The writing in the "Life is so permanent" passage reflects the thematic restlessness. In the same passage as the above quotation, the narrator stalls with his point, then interrupts himself, continuing in the very same paragraph: "Diese Stadt muß eingeebnet werden, diese Häuser, kubische Parzellen, müssen dem Erdboden gleichgemacht werden, alles muß gleich gemacht werden. Die Revolution ist die Voraussetzung dafür, die Häuser abzubrechen und die Gefangenen zu befreien [...] die Revolution ist gerechtfertigt [...]. Die *Massen* werden siegen. Wir werden siegen"(122). This is the next sentence after the previous quotation, and is exemplary of the contrasts and paradoxes often compounded in one paragraph which destroy the apparent development of narrative flow, to paraphrase Berendse. He labels this the "cut-up and fold-in" technique ascribed to William S. Burroughs, whom Vesper quotes a number of times. On the one hand the narrator understands his decentred identity, yet attempting to express it leads him only to a 'dot, dot, dot' and he reverts to a revolutionary discourse of equality and victory of and identification with the masses.

What I am calling a 'restlessness' of the writing is also the representation of the narrator's inability to express fully the frustration at his de-centred identity, which turns into a diatribe about the revolution and the apocalyptic end of

[216]Ulrike Meinhof's columns in *konkret* represent the public intellectual expression of these frustrations, especially with respect to the politics of the justice system, the military and other institutions such as universities. The collection of Meinhof's columns, *Everybody talks about the Weather...* (2008), provides the English-speaking world insight into this sentiment on the intellectual New Left in West Germany.

America: "Die letzten Tage der USA sind *nahe* herangekommen" (122). The use of the present perfect tense here gives this statement an immediacy, for it is not a premonition or prediction, it is a statement of fact. The downfall of the United States appears to be a pre-condition for the revolutionary victory; it is at the least a rhetorical mode in which the narrator convinces himself (and attempts to convince his reader) that the conditions for the revolution exist. However, without really expanding on the destabilisation of the western world through this revolutionary *tabula rasa*, the text switches back onto the drug trip horizon, where the narrator reflects vaguely on subject-object relations. The themes of impermanence and restlessness as pre-conditions for radical social change (*Umwälzung*) are extinguished by the narration's own restlessness, i.e. shifting narrative planes and leaving the reader hanging. This, I would argue, is another cue taken from the postmodern impulse, for the text creates a thematic boundary which it reflects, frustratingly (for the reader) and perhaps playfully, on the structural level of the narrative. The destructiveness of the writing, its ruptures and breaks in form but also its basically aggressive tone, exhibits a sense that perhaps the utopian narratives of modernity are simply unrealizable, in fact, purely utopian in culture that is shifting toward a postmodern paradigm. The *Gut* and the generational conflict are form and content (as inextricably and dialectically linked as they are) of the literary representation of the utopia-nostalgia dynamic in the context of a novel, whose narrative becomes dominated

by Vesper's memory project, the nostalgic journey.[217]

The Vesper family stead represents a powerful image of the open-ended utopia-nostalgia dynamic in the novel, in terms of its historically symbolic value and as narrative focal point of the contemporary or road narrative plane of the novel and the *Einfacher Bericht*. The drug trip sequences do not revolve so directly around the *Gut*, though its psychological valence in these passages is ever-present. The estate represents the feudal system, bourgeois appropriation and in the post-World War II era, an anachronism that harbours Will Vesper's "*vertrottelten Traum vom Tausendjährigen Reich*" (238), to quote Bernward on a drug trip.

Early in the novel, when the author is speaking from the contemporary narrative plane, remembering his father's death, the stage is being set for the *Einfacher Bericht*, and the catalyst is the narrator's return, in the narrative present, to the family home with his son to write the novel we are reading. His recollection of the father's death brings about reflections on his social class: "[...] mein Vater, der klassenmäßig gesehen ein Trottel war, der der Bourgeoisie, besser noch: dem feudalistischen Abglanz in der Großbourgeoisie auf den Leim kroch

---

[217]Thinking back to Luckscheiter's quotation cited at the outset of this chapter, we recall that he sees the postmodern impulse leading to Vesper's existential crisis. He expands on this idea with respect to identity construction: "In der exzessiven Beschäftigung mit sich selbst, deren Dokument das Romanfragment Die Reise darstellt, wurde noch eine weitere Ebene zum Problem: Während Identität in der Postmoderne ästhetisch definiert und psychische Grenzphänomene wie den ‚Schizonarziss' (Ronald Laing) zum Phänotypen einer neuen Epoche erklärt wurden, gestaltete sich Vespers eigene Identität zunehmend spürbar in den existenziellen Kategorien eines psychischen Leidens aus. Vom erträumten und im Rausch kurzfristig erreichten Gefühl der Omnipotenz blieb letztlich nur der Anspruch radikaler Selbstgesetzgebung, der in der Selbstauslöschung endete" (Luckscheiter 157).

[...]" (40). This passage is very interesting if we compare it with one from late in the novel, the "Notizen zur Fortsetzung des einfachen Berichts," in which the narrator critiques his the estate which represents his father's pretensions: "Das 'Gut' ist ein pseudo-feudales Kunstprodukt aus der Zeit der bürgerlichen-feudalen Allianz nach 1871, [...], Gründung eines Rentiers, der sich mit den Gewinnen der Konjunkturen von 1848 und besonders des Krieges 1870/71 mit dem Landbesitz in das politische und gesellschaftliche Leben Preußens einkaufte" (566). The locus of *Heimat* is an artificial product at the base of the economic history of Germany; the highlighting of '*Gut*' suggests the irony of the word's double meaning. The property is an anachronistic hold-over from the feudal system, by no means a 'good' thing. It is the product of capitalist exploitation justified by a fundamental contradiction that it belongs to a pre-capitalist era when some putative harmony existed. Politically most spurious is the fact that the *Gut* is the result of profiteering by a social climbing bourgeois capitalist seeking a ticket into the Prussian establishment, whose values of *Zucht* and *Ordnung* form the basis of Bernward's upbringing under Will but whose entitlement and nobility the latter resents. The narrator's interpretation of his father's relationship to the property certainly mirrors this image of the social climber wanting to establish himself and his ideology in a physical location. While the nineteenth century burgher profited from revolutionary chaos and war, gaining control of the estate, Will Vesper profits from divorce and death: "Mein Vater ließ sich von seiner ersten Frau, [...], scheiden. Er zog dann auf das Gut am Südrand der Lüneburger Heide, das der

erste Mann meiner Mutter hinterlassen hatte" (56).

Gut Triangel embodies historical ambivalence even for Will; on the one hand there is a nostalgia for a certain utopian vision of Germany, i.e., that perfect Germanic land that has not been perverted by influences from the west, east or south. It is a place where structure and order prevail, where cats are evil Egyptian creatures, unfit as house pets, and dogs are the proper animal companion.[218] On the other hand, though, the *Gut* represents the landed aristocracy, toward whom the national socialists were not particularly favourably disposed. Here the narrator attaches another historical irony to the *Gut* as symbol in Germany's political history: "Anders als die alte Landaristokratie, die schon aus ihrem Standesdenken heraus den Faschismus ablehnte, wurden so die Erben der mißglückten bürgerlichen Revolution von 1848 zu den Vorkämpfern des deutschen Faschismus" (566). Will Vesper's petty bourgeois pretensions – he comes from a proletarian background, "[m]eine Eltern aber stammten beide aus dem Proletariat" (578) – elicit a sense that he is heir to the tradition that broke the path for Nazism. Will also seems to be taking part in a masquerade, masking his own lack of belonging, playing make-believe. Bernward invests the *Gut* with historical tension because of its significance as the main site of his personal history, and the turn away from the nationalist Right it involved. On the stage of public history, *Gut Triangel* is the symbol of bourgeois striving for noble status,

---

[218]I am referring here to the episode with *Kater Murr* (354-58), Bernward's forbidden pet who is named for the title feline of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Lebensansichten des Katers Murr* (1820).

and stands for the kind of societal thinking that led Germany to fascism.

In the novel's final phases, Bernward's recognition that, "[d]as Gut, auf dem ich aufwuchs, war ein Kunstprodukt" (578), contrasts strongly with the naturalized view of his home presented throughout the *Einfacher Bericht* passages. The recognition of their constructedness may be a symptom of the postmodern impulse, yet the tension generated between the appended sections of the novel Vesper writes in the psychiatric hospital in Eppendorf, and the sincerely, although not uncritically, narrated scenes from his childhood, speaks to a dissolving narrative identity. In contrast to this dissolution, a passage such as the following one illustrates the locus of childhood on and around the *Gut* as a harmonious interaction with nature, a nostalgic vision of pastoral life, celebrated of course, by the Nazi ideology's version of utopia. The passage begins:

> AUS DER GLEICHMÄSSIGKEIT DES SOMMERS, dem rhytmenlosen Abfließen der Tagesläufe, dem Aufstehen, dem Schulweg, den Stunden in den engen tintenbeklecksten, mit Runen und Initialen übersäten Bänken, dem Rückweg, dem Mittagessen, dem Mittagsschlaf, den Schularbeiten, den Spielen, dem Nachtgebet, dem Schlafengehen glitt die Zeit unmerklich hinüber in den Herbst, wenn morgens der Tau auf den Wiesen kälter, wenn aus der Aller der Nebel aufstieg, wenn der Sand auf dem Weg zur Mausekuhle feuchter wurde, wo wir die kleineren Kinder, unter Kiefern und Bärlapp unser Lager hatten, hinüberblickend zur Rotfederchen-Kuhle, wo die älteren, die Dorfkinder, die Arbeiter, die erst nach fünf Uhr, wenn die Sonne hinter dem Pocken, auf ihren Rädern oben, wo der Hügel gegen den Fluß abfällt, [...] (314-15)

The sentence continues on to the conclusion that it is time for the traditional *Schlachtfest*. The rhythmic listing of clauses constructs a natural cycle of life in the countryside, where children develop a sense of health and a relationship to nature. This is one of the purest examples of the nostalgic trajectory toward a

utopian space in the past, however its literary representation situates it outside the past in the literary space. The language of nature interspersed with the routine of the children generates a idyllic image of the past that recalls an idealized Romanticism of nature. Temporality is naturalized as the unnoticed progression through the cycle of nature, and the soporific, lulling experience of that process – "Schlafengehen" is placed next to "glitt die Zeit" – is highlighted by the seemingly endless flow of the sentence (which is one page long). This stream of consciousness, nostalgic representation displays the tension between the realistically portrayed idyll of the past and the artifice of its literary recollection. This passage also approximates Boym's concept of reflective nostalgia, that "lingers on ruins, the patina of time and history, in dreams of another place and another time" (Boym 41). While ruins are not so much the issue here, frost and fog imagery could be seen as the "patina of time and history," and certainly the passage lingers on the other time and place – the length of the sentence alone has a lingering effect.

The estate represents the locus of return to Bernward's personal history and the confrontation with his contemporary context, but this begets a confrontation with history in a somewhat broader sense – we remember the quotation from the *Peyotl-Märchen* which expresses the problem of his personal situation's metonymic value. The illusory stability of life on the *Gut*, represented in the novel, contrasts itself with the idea of impermanence, something both father

and son seek to exploit in their ultimately divergent pursuits of utopia.[219] Will Vesper wants to be the author – beyond being an actual author of books! – of stability, i.e. authority, and desires a political system which support this enterprise by analogy. The present system is unacceptable to Vesper senior and any sense of its instability must be exploited as proof of its inherent fallibility and inferiority to national socialist *Reich*. Bernward and his generation began to challenge the restorative politics of an ideology of stability. The estate serves as the locus of the rigid family structure as metaphor for society inscribed by the father and his backwardly idealized notion of a Germanic utopia. The Federal Republic is the unacceptable status quo.

The idea of a latent and now emergent fascist structure can be read as the exposition of the fallacious democracy and its tenuous stability. One particular image in the novel encapsulates the sense of tenuousness in the Federal Republic; reflecting on his Jewish American travel companion on the road narrative horizon, the narrator says: "Burton hätte jetzt lernen können, wie schwer es ist, in diesem Scheißland zu arbeiten, auf dem Vulkan, auf dessen Hänge man z. Zt. ein paar Lupinen gepflanzt hat" (197). The idea of beautifying a volcano with flowers is

---

[219] Andrew Plowman has pointed to an important psychological contrast in the socialization that occurs at the Vesper family home. The argument, as we remember from above, is based on Wilhelm Reich's idea of a character "Panzer" formed under an authoritarian familial structure, which is vital to fabricating stability. "If the father-son relationship appears as the mechanism through which repressive social imperatives are internalised, the concept of a character armour formed in the process finds striking metaphorical expression in the concentric barriers surrounding Vesper during his youth at his family's estate near Gifhorn in North Germany" (Plowman 510). This speaks to the *Gut*'s symbolic value, but serves as a point of contrast for Plowman's argument that, "if *Die Reise* takes from Reich the concept of a rigid character structure formed within the family, it derives from Marcuse's *An Essay on Liberation* the belief that hallucinogenic drugs like LSD could, albeit temporarily, dissolve that character structure" (Plowman 511).

of course a risky enterprise, and depending on how active the mountain is, an absurd one. Looking back at Germany's history from the perspective of the first post Second World War generation gave reasonable grounds for concern. This image of the flowers growing on the volcano speaks to a sense of instability in the young Federal Republic; this is the basis for utopian political striving, on both the left and the right. The volcano is apt as a metaphor, because it is laden with explosive potential or with the petrified stability of an extinct volcano.

Will Vesper is certainly represented as viewing even the early post-war period as only a temporary setback in the realization of his radical national-socialist utopian vision; Vesper senior sees the restorative tendencies not as a return to national socialist fascism but rather as analogous to a return to early medieval conditions: "[d]ie Karolinger regieren, sagt mein Vater, die Reformation wird rückgängig gemacht" (387). Significantly, the age of Charlemagne is known to have been a period of cultural renaissance that re-established the orientation toward Rome as the locus from which emanated a sense of worldly culture; this was the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. Contrarily, Will Vesper locates the point of reference for the evolution of the ideal modern German state in the protestant Reformation, the ultimate Germanic rebellion against Rome. The Germano-centrism exhibited by Will expresses itself as hatred toward centres of power in German history found in Rhineland, i.e. Aachen and Trier but importantly also Bonn. Berlin, it is well known, was also loathed by the Nazis – we think of Hitler's plan to rebuild the city and rename it Germania –,

and Bernward's mother channels some of this national socialist sentiment of her husband's in the angry tirade against her son cited above, when he provokes her by speaking in a Berlin dialect: "'Hör auf zu berlinern!' rief sie, 'so spricht man nicht, Du bist hier in einem deutschen Haus.' Dann sagte sie genüßlich: 'Ich bin in Berlin aufgewachsen un rede nicht so ein Kauderwelsch wie Du! Das ist Scheunenviertel, Müllerstraße [...]'" (480-81). Berlin is "perverted" by its ethnic diversity and metropolitan character, a quality common to other great urban centres, such as Rome. But while the Bonn republic was not centred on a great world capital, it was, in the eyes of a character like Will Vesper, representative of non-German incursion and therefore necessarily transitory in his narrative of Germany's historical destiny.

The socialist movements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, on the other hand, are the paradigms of modernity and progress for the generation of sixties protest movement. The significance of Will Vesper's critique becomes clear: he raises his family under the aegis of the unacceptability of the present political system. The conditions for changing that system rely of course on some sort of structural instability, whatever the kind and whatever the source, e.g. through economic disaster, as in the Weimar Republic, or mass social upheaval. The student revolutionaries of the radical ilk sought to exploit the instability that arose out of the massive protests in the name of anticapitalism, to destroy a hated state they believed to be an imperial puppet of the United States. The idea that the Federal Republic was to be just another short-lived German state

is not altogether unreasonable, for German political history since unification in 1871 had not exactly brought forth many examples of stable democratic governments. Radical ideological groups had often profited from this kind of political climate or at least such instability provided the context for these groups to flourish. Ignoring the geopolitical climate of the Cold War and a real desire in the western world that Europe not descend once again into chaos and war, we can see how ideological radicals of any political stripe would want to see the early years of a new democratic German republic as yet another opportunity for them, a version of history repeating itself, something I would argue is much better described as a form of nostalgia. This is the nostalgia for the conditions of possibility of utopia.

The novel, then, exposes this generational conflict that amounts to a conflict of utopias, but there is a new ingredient in the age-old struggle between parents and their maturing offspring: it is a postmodern impulse. The obvious question is: what is the latter? Followed by: how is it manifested in *Die Reise*? In terms of the current chapter, the postmodern impulse is guided by the literary celebration of impermanence and fragmentation, and by the hybridity of the novel, with its documentary passages, *Zeitungsgedichte*, drawings, and above all, the often alienating interruptions and interpenetrations of the narrative planes. It is important to keep in mind, though, that we are talking about an impulse, not a fully developed sense of the postmodern novel. For one, this is still the narrative of one subject, who is fraught with inner tensions and feels the anguish of the

decentred subject, something the authors of Romanticism, for example, had already recognized. The project of the student protest movement is also basically a modernist project of social change.[220]

The crux of the generational conflict is the anxiety of metonymy; that is to say, Bernward, whose rebellion we know to have been largely motivated by the tyranny of the father, is facing the analogical value of his personal history in post-war Germany. His violent outburst in the Munich apartment and the subsequent mental breakdown testify to the narrator Bernward's inability to cope with his text. Ultimately, we are left with Will's distorted and unrelinquished belief in the national socialist utopia, and Bernward's inner conflict facing the absurdity of his father's position, which results in such claims as: "Das Reich wird kommen, und sei es in tausend Jahren" (448), a statement made after Germany's defeat. These national socialist convictions had not waned in the wake of that ideology's political and military defeat, and I would suggest that his refusal to accept Nazism's bankruptcy and culpability – "ich lasse mich nicht entnazifizieren! Die Alliierten sind schuld am Krieg!" (449) – cast Will in the role of rebel, in the context of the new Federal Republic of Germany. The common ground between generations is a fear and hate complex which suggests the possibility that the

[220]In this context, we have seen how Marianne DeKoven argues that the late nineteen sixties is the period in which the post-modern began to penetrate modernism. She asserts: "[w]here modernism represented fragmentation but yearned, in the light of its master narratives, for unity, wholeness, and synthesis, postmodernism, in its decentering and diffusion of dualistic structures of domination, generally embraces fragmentation" (DeKoven 16).

concept of rebellion is largely prefigured by the father.[221] Böll's interpretation of this, which we saw above, suggests that Vesper's authoritarian upbringing betrays the roots of terrorism in the nineteen seventies. In the narrator son's left-wing utopian ideology, there is a restless drive for action and transgression. A perhaps more contemporary interpretation of this restless drive, so intricately bound up with the road narrative, indicates that we are beginning to see the postmodern impulse behind the novel's concept of rebellion.

[221] This idea of the 'fear and hate complex' is discussed by Lubich (Lubich "Pikaro"78).

CONCLUSION

In the course of this study, I have attempted to demonstrate how utopia and nostalgia exist in a dynamic relationship in three literary works of the post-1968 phase in West Germany. To reach a broad and generalizing conclusion about this interaction is, of course, difficult. My intention was to take three different authors' literary texts – Peter Schneider's *Lenz*, Hans Magnus Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*, and Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise* – and examine them as specific instances of an emergent cultural shift from forward-looking utopian visions to more reflective, inward-facing utopian perspectives that, however, cannot escape a nostalgic dimension. Nostalgia was, as it turns out, always already an integral part of utopia.

What is ultimately at stake in the context of the late nineteen sixties and early seventies, is the question of history. The controversial question the first post-war generation posed to their parents, namely, where were you, what were you doing and how do you stand vis-à-vis the Nazi past? This is what I have deemed the "Gretchen-question" of history – *wie hast du's mit der Vergangenheit*? The question is also directed at the German cultural tradition, specifically literature, as the death of bourgeois art is proclaimed in 1968. The utopia is the notion that a revolution in political and cultural spheres could break a perceived pattern in European history that had only led to iniquity. A new society in which culture had shed the burden of its past did not emerge and artists

had to face cultural history, just as Germans had to face their political history, and the question that arises pertains to the interrelation of art and politics, the age-old issue in Germany of *Geist* versus *Macht*. The reflection and introspection which accompanied the confrontation of these questions in the post-1968 period, became known as a wave of nostalgia and resignation at a failed revolution. I have tried to show that nostalgia is not a simply negative, resigned category, but instead a sometimes painful return to a narratively reconstructed past. In effect, nostalgia has a strong utopian dimension.

The works of the post-1968 phase under consideration in my project, demonstrate a clear confrontation with the issues of political and cultural history, and problematize in their own way the dynamic of the personal and the public. This emergent 'New Subjectivity' appears to be something more like a renewed subjectivity, a return to the idea of a tension in art between the narrating history and story, and experiencing them. To a large extent, narration constructs experience or at the very least, its mediation and representation. In this construction of historical narratives, personal and public, the relationship between art and political power manifests its dynamic and fraught interaction, this tension appears to be unresolvable. The thematization of this tension is precisely what generates the literary quality of the literature of the dawning 'New Subjectivity.'

The resignation and inward turn of the *Nostalgiewelle*, proclaimed by some critics of the early seventies, rest on the narrative of failure of the student protest movement, posing questions such as: what was actually achieved by

student protest movement? By the literature of that movement? These presume a negative answer. It is important to remember that the student protest movement did in fact change society, not necessarily in the way it sought to, but posing the controversial questions of their society and publishing literary works that shook the conservatism of the Adenauer years opened debates about politics, history and social injustice that had heretofore been suppressed. Speaking about the analogous situation in the United States – I am careful not to call it a parallel situation because, clearly, the historical issues are not exactly the same –, Tom Hayden reminds us of reforms that led past a cultural shift and into a political change that saw women's rights, minority rights, gay rights, and environmentalism, to name a few, become mainstream political issues.[222]

> It is important to remember these reforms in the blurred and contentious struggles to recall the Sixties. To say they were merely superficial cooptation is to miss the significance of the sacrifices made and the empowerment gained for millions of people. If they were only superficial reforms, why did the state oppose them so ferociously for so long? Furthermore, to say the Sixties were about only a "cultural" shift rather than a political one is to ignore the lasting legal, regulatory and institutional significance of these reforms. But one cannot read the list without wondering where it all has gone. Are we still restless, or pacified, or in between? This is the second paradox: the Sixties largely ended when our most popular demands succeeded. When order was reformed, order was restored.
>
> (Hayden http://1968ineurope.sneakpeek.de/index.php/home/showSite//0/8)

Hayden points out some key successes of the protest movement that also became true in the West German context (especially as Sabine von Dirke argues, with the rise of the Green Party). What is interesting in the more immediate post-1968

[222] In his essay, "The Future of 1968's "Restless Youth" (2008).

phase is the perception of the protest movement's failure, and the resignation thematized by Schneider, Enzensberger and Vesper – though resignation by no means occludes utopian striving entirely. Hayden's question, "are we still restless, or pacified, or in between?", must be answered with a simple 'yes,' we are always already those things.

Hayden goes on to give a brief and generalized narrative of the genesis of protest movements, reflecting his experience of them – as sort of a parallel to the worker-narrator's report we read in my introductory chapter. One particularly telling quotation from that account recognizes the process of emergence, fragmentation and mnemonic reconstruction in such movements: "The movements touch chords of memory in the mainstream, continue to grow through transformative moments (for example, the shooting of an innocent person), and face their own divisions between the radicalized and the pragmatic" (Hayden http://1968ineurope.sneakpeek.de/index.php/home/showSite//0/8) This mini-narrative has remarkable applicability to the West German student movement, in as much as the shooting of Benno Ohnesorg was a key polarizing moment in the German student movement, as was the confrontation with inner discord and division. What is important to the current project is the idea of the memory project introduced by the protest movement and its cultural production.

My introductory chapter sought to frame this study's broader thesis that utopia has always been balanced by a nostalgic component, and that in the late sixties

and early seventies, the nostalgic aspect begins to assert itself and come to the fore. The idea is that utopia moves from an activistic model of progressive societal change to a more self-reflexive form of nostalgia. In effect, the concept of utopia becomes inscribed with nostalgia, and the two manifest themselves in a dialectical interrelationship that is open-ended and non-teleological. I proposed that, while the utopian dimension of protest in the sixties has been an established mode of reading that period and the seventies are understood as in some way nostalgic and subjectivist, the entwinement of utopia and nostalgia has not received proper critical attention.

In the chapters that followed, I suggested that the road narrative provided Schneider's *Lenz* with a metaphoric locus of the utopia-nostalgia tension; that the documentary in Enzensberger's *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie* problematized the return to a forgotten historical narrative through historiographic reconstruction; and that Vesper's *Die Reise* blended autobiographical nostalgia with utopian rebellion. Clearly, I have not provided authoritative readings of these texts, something I would argue is impossible anyway, however, I have attempted to offer suggestions of how these authors helped shape the post-1968 literature of West Germany, in the very few years after the tropes and forms of Germany's literary tradition had been criticized and pronounced dead. This is not to say that these three authors simply proved this claim wrong, rather it is to say that they revisited traditional literary discourses of the confrontation with history and historiography, personal and subjective crises. Romanticism proved to be a

vital reference point in these texts (in some cases more explicitly) and it is this connection between protest and utopian ideal, and romantic nostalgia which deserves further scholarly attention.

My dissertation hopes to be a contribution to understanding how we will continue to see the role of cultural production during the social upheavals of the sixties and seventies in the Federal Republic of Germany. The open question remains, how does the nostalgic inscription of utopia in art, politics and history develop from the late sixties onward, beyond our three authors' works? These are broad questions, that need to be posed as scholarly and critical inquiry into the post-1968 period, especially the nineteen seventies and eighties, is just beginning to comprehend the vastness and complexity of literary production during this time.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY[223]

Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. *Die Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Versuche und Fragmente*. 1947. Amsterdam: Querido; Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1988.

Adorno, Theodor. "Der Essay als Form." *Noten zur Literatur I*. Rolf Tiedemann, ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974. 9-34.

Applegate, Celia. *A Nation of Provincials. The German Idea of Heimat*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, California; Oxford, England: University of California Press, 1990.

Arendt, Hannah. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. (1964). New York: Penguin, 1994.

Arnold, Heinz Ludwig, and Stephan Reinhardt, eds. *Dokumentarliteratur*. Munich: Text und Kritik Boorberg, 1973.

Bannasch, Bettina, and Christiane Holm, eds. *Erinnern und Erzählen. Der spanische Bürgerkrieg in der deutschen und spanischen Literatur und in den Bildmedien*. Tübingen: Narr, 2005.

Barthes, Roland. "The Rhetoric of the Image." *Image, Music, Text / Roland Barthes*. Essays selected and trans. Stephen Heath. Glasgow: Fontana Press, 1977. 32-51.

Bauer, Karin, ed. *Everybody talks about the weather... we don't. The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof*. Trans. Louise von Flotow. New York: Seven Stories, 2008.

Baumann, Michael "Bommi." *Wie alles anfing*. Munich: Trikont-Verlag, 1975.

[223]This selected bilbliography consists of works cited in the body of my text and full references to secondary and critical literature (i.e. not including other literary texts) mentioned in footnotes.

Beicken, Peter. "‚Neue Subjektivität:' Zur Prosa der siebziger Jahre." Lützeler, Paul M., and Egon Schwarz, eds. *Deutsche Literatur in der Bundesrepublik seit 1965*. Königstein/Ts: Athenäum, 1980.

Beller, Manfred. "Lenz in Arkadien: Peter Schneiders Italienbild von Suden betrachtet." *Arcadia: Zeitschrift fur Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft* (special issue) (1978): 91-105.

Benjamin, Walter. "Über den Begriff der Geschichte." *Illuminationen. Ausgewählte Schriften 1*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977. 251-61.

Berendse, Gerrit-Jan. "Schreiben als Körperverletzung: Zur Anthropologie des Terrors in Bernward Vespers Die Reise." *Monatshefte für Deutschsprachige Literatur und Kultur* 93:3 (2001): 318-34.

Berman, Paul. *Power and the Idealists, or, The Passion of Joschka Fischer and its Aftermath*. Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2005.

Bloch, Ernst. *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature. Selected Essays*. Trans. Jack Zipes and Frank Mecklenburg. Introd. Jack Zipes. Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 1988.

---. *Widerstand und Friede. Aufsätze zur Politik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968.

Böckelmann, Frank, and Hebert Nagel, eds. *Subversive Aktion. Der Sinn der Organisation ist ihr Scheitern*. Frankfurt am Main: Neue Kritik, 2002.

Bohrer, Karl Heinz. *Der Lauf des Freitag. Die lädierte Utopie und die Dichter*. München: Hanser, 1973.

Böll, Heinrich. "Stimme aus dem Untergrund." *konkret* 2 (1979): 26-28.

---. "Wohin die Reise gehen kann." *konkret* 1 (1978): 34-37.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Brinkmann, Rolf Dieter. *Rom. Blicke*. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1979.

Brinkmann, Rolf Dieter, and Ralf-Rainer Rygulla eds. Acid. Neue amerikanische Szene. Darmstadt: März-Verlag, 1969.

Brunkhorst, Hauke. "The Tenacity of Utopia: The Role of Intellectuals in Cultural Shifts within the Federal Republic of Germany." *New German Critique* 19 (1992): 127-38.

Büchner, Georg. *Werke und Briefe. Dramen, Prosa, Briefe, Dokumente*. 1962. Frankfurt am Main: Insel; Fritz Bergemann, ed. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1965.

Buchwald, Christoph, and Klaus Wagenbach, eds. *Lesebuch. Deutsche Literatur der siebziger Jahre*. Berlin: Wagenbach, 1984.

Bullivant, Keith, ed. *After the 'Death of Literature.' West German Writing of the 1970s*. Oxford: Berg, 1989.

Camus, Albert. *The Rebel*. Trans. Anthony Bower. New York: Knopf, 1954.

Car, Milka. "Zu Enzensbergers Roman *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie*. Historischer Roman zwischen Dokumentarismus und Historiographischer Metafiktion." Marijan Bobinac, Wolfgang Düsing, and Dietmar Goltschnigg eds. *Tendenzen im Geschichtsdrama und Geschichtsroman des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Zagreber Germanistische Beiträge Beiheft 8. Zagreb: Fa. Dominovic Verlag, 2004. 291-311.

Corrigan, Timothy. *A Cinema without Walls:Movies and Culture after Vietnam*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1991.

Dautel, Klaus. "*Lenz*. Die geschlossene Welt der politischen Gruppen und die offene Welt der endlosen Selbstreflexion." *Sozialistische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Gesellschaft* 23/24 (1974): 107-11.

DeKoven, Mariane. *Utopia limited: the sixties and the emergence of the postmodern*. Durham, N.C.; London: Duke University Press, 2004.

Delius, Friedrich Christian. "Peter Schneider und der ‚Lenz' als Geburtshelfer des Rotbuch Verlags." Paul Michael Lützeler, ed. *Phantasie und Kritik: Peter Schneider zum 65. Geburtstag. Eine Festschrift*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 2005. 91-98.

De Man, Paul. "Autobiography as De-Facement." *Modern Langauge Notes* 94 (1979): 919-30.

Dietschreit, Frank and Barbara Heinze–Dietschreit. *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986.

Eggers, Ingrid. *Veränderungen des Literaturbegriffs im Werk von Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Frankfurt am Main; Bern: Lang, 1981.

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus. "Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien." *Palaver. Politische Überlegungen (1967-1973)*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974. 91-129.

---, dir. *Durruti: Die Biographie einer Legende*. Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR), 1972.

---. "Ein bescheidener Vorschlag zum Schutz der Jugend vor den Erzeugnissen der Poesie." Buchwald, Christoph, and Klaus Wagenbach, eds. *Lesebuch. Deutsche Literatur der siebziger Jahre*. Berlin: Wagenbach, 1984. 186-92.

---. *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie. Buenaventura Durrutis Leben und Tod*. 1972. 3rd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1980.

---. "Gemeinplätze: die neueste Literatur betreffend." *Palaver. Politische Überlegungen (1967-1973)*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974. 41-54.

---. *Staatsgefährdende Umtriebe. Voltaire Flugschrift* 11 (1968). Bernward Vesper, ed.

Faber, Richard. *Novalis: Die Phantasie an die Macht!* Stuttgart: Metzler, 1970.

Feest-Hilgenreiner, Johannes. "88a StGB in Aktion. Über Leben, Geburt und Sterben eines Maulkorb-Paragrapen." www.opus-bayern.de/bib-info/volltexte/2007/374/pdf/feest.pdf, 2007.

Foucault, Michel. "What is Enlightenment." *The Foucault Reader*. Paul Rabinow, ed. New York: Random House, 1984. 32-50.

Glawion, Sven. "Aufbruch in die Vergangenheit. Bernward Vespers *Die Reise* (1977/79)." *NachBilder der RAF*. Inge Stephan and Alexandra Tacke, eds. Cologne; Weimar; Vienna: Böhlau, 2008. 24-38.

Greiner, Ulrich. "Söhne und ihre Väter." *Die Zeit* 6 May 1988.

Grimm, Reinhold, ed. *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984.

---. "Poetic Anarchism? The Case of Hans Magnus Enzensberger." *Modern Language Notes* 97:3 (1982): 745-58.

Guntermann, Georg. "Tagebuch einer Reise in das Innere des Autors: Versuch zu Bernward Vespers 'Romanessay' *Die Reise*." *Zeitschrift fur Deutsche Philologie* 100:2 (1981): 232-53.

Habermas, Jürgen. "Der Eintritt in die Postmoderne." *Merkur. Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*. Heft 7. Oktober, 1983. 753-61.

---. *Kultur und Kritik. Verstreute Aufsätze*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973.

---. "Modernity – An Incomplete Project." *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Hal Foster, ed. Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983. 3-15.

---. *Protestbewegung und Hochschulreform*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969.

Handke, Peter. "Die Literatur ist romantisch." 1966. *Ich bin ein Bewohner des Elfenbeinturms*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972. 35-50.

Hohendahl, Peter Uwe. "Politisierung der Kunsttheorie: Zur ästhetischen Diskussion nach 1965." *Deutsche Literatur in der Bundesrepublik seit 1965*. Paul Michael Lützeler and Egon Schwarz, eds. Königstein/Ts: Athenäum, 1980. 282-300.

Hutcheon, Linda. *The Politics of Postmodernism*. London; New York: Routledge, 1989.

"Die Interessen der Arbeiterklasse sind keine anderen als die Interessen der Partei!!!" *Wir warn die stärkste der Parteien... Erfahrungsberichte aus der Welt der K-Gruppen*. Berlin: Rotbuch, 1977. 108-26.

Jameson, Fredric. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991.

Keitel, Evelyne. "Recent Literary Trends: Verständigungstexte: Form, Funktion, Wirkung." *German Quarterly* 56:3 (1983): 431-55.

Klimke, Martin, and Joachim Scharloth, eds. *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007.

Kramer, Karen Ruoff. *The Politics of Discourse: Third Thoughts on 'New Subjectivity.'* New York; Bern: P. Lang, 1993.

Krause, Markus. "Zwischen Autonomie und Solidarität. Anmerkungen zum Bildungsroman der Studentenbewegung." *Wirkendes Wort: Deutsche Sprache und Literatur in Forschung und Lehre* 40:3 (1990): 394-407.

Kreuzer, Helmut. "Neue Subjektivität: Zur Literatur der siebziger Jahre in der Bundesrepublik." *Deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Ausgangspositionen und aktuelle Entwicklungen*. Manfred Durzak, ed. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1981. 77-106.

Lange, Hartmut. "Der Einzelne und sein Anarchistentick." *Konkret* 25 (1972): 52-53. Reprinted under the title, "Nochmals: Die Revolution als Geisterschiff." *Die Revolution als Geisterschiff*. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1973.

Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim. *Emilia Galotti. Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Aufzügen*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004.

Lubich, Frederick Alfred. "Bernward Vespers 'Die Reise': Von der Hitler-Jugend zur RAF Identitätsuche unter dem Fluch des Faschismus." *German Studies Review* 10:1 (1987): 69-94.

---. "Bernward Vespers Die Reise-der Untergang des modernen Pikaro." *Amsterdamer Beitrage zur Neueren Germanistik* 20 (1986): 219-37.

Luckscheiter, Roman. "Der postmoderne Impuls. '1968' als literaturgeschichtlicher Katalysator." *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007. 151-60.

Lützeler, Paul M., and Egon Schwarz, eds. *Deutsche Literatur in der Bundesrepublik seit 1965*. Königstein/Ts: Athenäum, 1980.

Lützeler, Paul Michael. "Phantasie – Widerstand – Mythologie: Der Erzähler Peter Schneider." *Phantasie und Kritik: Peter Schneider zum 65. Geburtstag. Eine Festschrift*. Paul Michael Lützeler, ed. Berlin: Rowohlt, 2005. 9-78.

Mahoney, Dennis F. *Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis)*. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2001.

Marcuse, Herbert. *Das Ende der Utopie. Vorträge und Diskussionen in Berlin 1967*. Verlag Peter von Maikowski 1967. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Neue Kritik, 1980.

---. *An Essay on Liberation*. Boston: Beacon, 1969.

---. *Eros and Civilization. A Philosophical Inquiry into Freud*. 1955. Introd. Herbert Marcuse. Boston: Beacon,1966.

---. "Über den affirmativen Charakter der Kunst." *Kultur und Gesellschaft I*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1965. 56-100.

McGowan, Moray. "Neue Subjektivität." *After the 'Death of Literature.' West German Writing of the 1970s*. Keith Bullivant, ed. Oxford: Berg, 1989. 53-68.

McLellan, David. *Utopian Pessimist: the Life and Thought of Simone Weil*. New York: Poseidon, 1990.

Mecklenburg, Frank, and Jack Zipes, trans. and eds. *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature. Selected Essays*. Trans.. Cambridge, MA; London: The MIT Press, 1988.

Meik, Markus. *Peter Schneiders Erzählung "Lenz": zur Entstehung eines Kultbuches*. Siegen: Böschen, 1997.

Meinhof, Ulrike. "Hitler Within You." Trans. Louise von Flotow. *Everybody talks about the weather... we don't. The Writings of Ulrike Meinhof*. Karin Bauer, ed. New York: Seven Stories, 2008. 138-43.

Michel, Karl Markus. "Ein Kranz für die Literatur. Fünf Variationen über eine These." *Kursbuch* 15 (1968): 169-86.

Miermeister, Jürgen. *Rudi Dutschke/Ernst Bloch*. Hamburg: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1996.

Münkler, Herfried. "Die Geburt des neuen Europa aus dem Chaos." *Neue Rundschau* 107 (3) (1996): 64-72.

Neumann, Bernd. "Die Wiedergeburt des Erzählens aus dem Geist der Autobiographie" *Basis* 9 (1979): 91-121.

"Nostalgie: Das Geschäft mit der Sehnsucht" *Der Spiegel*. Nr. 5, 29. Januar, 1973. 86-99.

Novalis (Hardenberg, Friedrich von). "Vermischte Bemerkungen ('Blütenstaub') Fragment 17." *Novalis Werke* (2nd ed.). Gerhard Schulz, ed. Munich: Beck, 1981. 326.

Papenbrock, Martin. "Happening, Fluxus, Performance. Aktionskünste in den 1960er Jahren." *1968: Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung*. Martin Klimke and Joachim Scharloth, eds. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2007. 137-49.

Pasolini, Pier Paolo. *Literatur und Leidenschaft. Über Bücher und Autoren*. Trans. Annette Kopetzki. Berlin: Wagenbach, 1989.

---. "Hans Magnus Enzensberger: *Der kurze Sommer der Anarchie.*" Trans. Reinhold Grimm. *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Reinhold Grimm, ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984. 73-78.

Pender, Malcolm. "Historical Awareness and Peter Schneider's Lenz." *German Life and Letters*, 37:2 (1984): 150-160.

Plowman, Andrew. "Bernward Vesper's Die Reise: Politics and Autobiography between the Student Movement and the Act of Self-Invention: German Autumn: The Critical Reception of Die Reise." *German Studies Review*. 21:3 (1998): 507-24.

Pizer, John. "Jameson's Adorno, or the Persistence of the Utopian." *Theodor W. Adorno*. Gerard Delanty, ed. London; Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004.

Preusse, Holger Heinrich. *Der politische Literat Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1989.

Renza, Louis A. "The Veto of the Imagination: A Theory of Autobiography." *New Literary History* 9 (1977): 1-26.

Ross, Kristin. *May '68 and its Afterlives*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2002.

Riordan, Colin, ed. *Peter Schneider*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995.

Runge, Erika. "Abschied von den Protokollen." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 17 July 1976.

---. *Bottropper Protokolle*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1968.

Rutschky, Michael. *Erfahrungshunger*. Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1980.

---. "Über Schriften zum Terrorismus." *Merkur* 32 (1978): 187-94.

Schiller, Friedrich. *Maria Stuart: ein Trauerspiel*. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2001.

Schlaffer, Hannelore. "Aufzug der neuen Romantiker." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 19 May 1979.

---. "Der Einzige und die anderen: Zur Sprache der Verachtung." *Merkur: Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken* 37:7 (1983): 844-49.

Schlant, Ernestine. *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Schneider, Michael. "Von der alten Radikalität zur neuen Sensibilität." *Kursbuch* 49 (1977): 174-87.

Schneider, Peter. *Atempause. Versuch, meine Gedanken über Kunst und Literatur zu ordnen*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1977.

---. "Bildnis eines melancholischen Entdeckers." *Der Zorn altert, die Ironie ist unsterblich. Über Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Rainer Wieland, ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999. 137-45.

---. "Peter Schneider über die Studentenbewegung, die USA und Deutschland, Literatur und Politik. Gespräch mit Siegfried Mews." *The German Quarterly* 75 (2002): 9-19.

---. *Lenz. Eine Erzählung*. Berlin: Rotbuch, 1973.

---. "Die Phantasie im Spätkapitaismus und die Kulturrevolution." 1969. *Atempause*. Reinbekbei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1977. 127-61.

---. "Rede an die deutschen Leser und ihre Schriftsteller." *Kursbogen zu Kursbuch 16* (1969).

---. "Über den Unterschied von Literatur und Politik." *Das Vergehen von Hören und Sehen. Literaturmagazin* 5 (1975): 188-98.

Schröder, Waltraut. "Peter Schneider: Lenz. Eine Erzahlung." *Weimarer Beiträge: Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft, Ästhetik und Kulturwissenschaften*. (Berlin, Germany), (20:12), 1974, 128-39.

Schultz, Karla Lydia. "*Ex negativo*: Enzensberger mit und gegen Adorno." *Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Reinhold Grimm, ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984. 237-57.

Seidl, Claudius. "Hitlers Hippies. Ein Wahnsinn, dieses Buch: Bernward Vespers ‚Reise' wird wiederaufgelegt." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 13 March 2005.

Seyhan, Azade. *Representation and its Discontents: the Critical Legacy of German Romanticism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Sharman, Gundula M. *20th Century Reworkings of German Literature: An Analysis of six Reinterpretations from Goethe to Thomas Mann.* Rochester, NY; Woodbridge, UK: Camden House, 2002.

Sontag, Susan. "Against Interpretation." *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1966. 4-14.

Subiotto, Arrigo. "Hans Magnus Enzensberger and the Anarchist Concept." Siefkin, H. and Reid, J.H. *'Lektüre - ein anarchischer Akt.' A Nottingham Symposium with Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Nottingham: Univ. of Nottingham, 1990. 57-73.

Talbot, Jill Lynn. "This is not an Exit: The Road Narrative in Contemporary American Literature and Film." Diss. Texas Tech. University, 1999.

Vesper, Bernward. "Gibt es eine nihilistische Krise bei Novalis?" Seminar paper, University of Tübingen, summer semester 1961. [fragment found at März-Verlag archive, within the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach].

---. *Die Reise. Romanessay. Ausgabe letzter Hand*. März-Verlag 1983. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2003.

Vesper, Bernward, and Gudrun Ensslin, eds. *Gegen den Tod. Stimmen deutscher Schriftsteller gegen die Atombombe*. 1964. Stuttgart: Edition Cordeliers, 1981.

Von Dirke, Sabine. *All Power to the Imagination! The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens*. Lincoln, NB; London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

Weil, Simone. *Formative Writings 1929-1941*. ed. and trans. Dorothy Tuck McFarland, and Wilhelmina van Ness. Amherst: University of Massachussetts Press, 1987.

Weiss, Peter. *Die Ermittlung. Oratorium in 11 Gesängen*. 1965. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005.

---. *Notizbücher, 1971-1980*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1981.

Wieland, Rainer, ed. *Der Zorn altert, die Ironie ist unsterblich. Über Hans Magnus Enzensberger*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999.

Williams, Rhys W. "'Ein gewisses Maß subjektiver Verzweiflung ...': Peter Schneider's Lenz." Colin Riordan, ed. *Peter Schneider*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995. 50-67.

Wir warn die stärkste der Parteien... Erfahrungsberichte aus der Welt der K-Gruppen. Berlin: Rotbuch, 1977.

White, Hayden. "The Future of Utopia." 2005.
www.columbia.edu/cu/news/media/05/342_future_utopia_history/index.html

---. "Rhetoric and History." *Theories of History. Papers read at the Clark Library seminar, March 6, 1976*. Frank E. Manuel and Hayden White, eds. Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Libraray, 1978. 7-25.

Zilliacus, Clas. "Radical Naturalism: First-Person Documentary Literature." *Comparative Literature* 31:2 (1979): 97-112.