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In the fall of 2001 the GHI launched a new program to bring together young scholars from both sides of the Atlantic. The first annual Medieval History Seminar was held at the GHI in October. A dozen German and American doctoral students had the opportunity to discuss their work on topics ranging from the role of exile in Carolingian political culture to the reception of a Swedish visionary’s writings in fourteenth-century Bohemia with three leading figures in the field of Medieval studies. The GHI is grateful to Professors Caroline Walker Bynum, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary for agreeing to serve as mentors, to Research Fellow Christoph Strupp for organizing the seminar, and to the ERP/German Program for Transatlantic Contact for its financial support. The Medieval History Seminar will be held alternately in the United States and Europe; the Humboldt University, Berlin, will be hosting the 2002 seminar this fall.

Shortly after participating in the Medieval History Seminar, Professor Bynum returned to Washington to deliver the 2001 Annual Lecture at the GHI. Her subject, violent religious imagery in late Medieval Europe, had unintended topical resonance following the September 11 attacks on New York and Washington. Images of bloodshed and dismemberment that horrify or baffle modern observers carried, Bynum suggested, connotations of wholeness and inclusion far removed from the “violent tenor of life” in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries so often noted by other scholars. Building on Bynum’s argument, Professor Mitchell Merback explored the connections between guilt and violence in the “economy of violence” of the late Medieval world. The texts of both Bynum’s lecture and Merback’s comment are featured in this issue of the Bulletin.

In October, nearly a thousand scholars congregated in Washington for the annual meeting of the German Studies Association (GSA), the world’s largest organization dedicated to interdisciplinary work on German history, society, and culture. The 2001 conference marked the 25th anniversary of the GSA’s founding, and the GHI joined in the celebration with an open-house reception. GSA president Henry Friedlander was on hand for the reception along with many long-time friends and associates of the GHI. Gerald R. Kleinfeld, the GSA’s executive director and editor of the German Studies Review, reflects on the development of the field of German Studies over the past quarter century in an interview with GHI Research Fellows Vera Lind and Raimund Lammersdorf in this issue. Lind and Lammersdorf also spoke with two other scholars at
the forefront of the field in the United States, historian Mary Nolan of New York University and Germanist Frank Trommler of the University of Pennsylvania.

This issue also features an essay by former GHI Research Fellow Wilfried Mausbach on how the United States’ European allies viewed the undeclared war in Vietnam. During his time in Washington, Mausbach helped organize a major international conference that placed the Vietnam War in a broad international context. That conference was the basis for the volume *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives*, which Mausbach edited together with Lloyd C. Gardner and Andreas Daum. *America, the Vietnam War, and the World* is now in press and will appear next year in the series “Publications of the German Historical Institute” published by Cambridge University Press.

Like previous issues, this *Bulletin* provides an overview of the work by younger scholars supported by the GHI and the Friends of the German Historical Institute. Eva Giloi Bremner and Jonathan R. Zatlin were the recipients of the 2001 Fritz Stern Dissertation Prize awarded by the Friends. The texts of the presentations that Giloi Bremner and Zatlin gave at the annual Friends’ Symposium appear in this issue. Philipp Loeser and Annette Puckhaber summarize the findings of research they carried out in the United States while they were visiting post-doctoral fellows at the GHI. Both were part of the GHI’s Transatlantic Program, which was co-sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Humboldt Foundation. Bernd Schäfer, who joined the GHI as a Research Fellow in the summer of 2001, discusses the newly available sources that he is using for his reexamination of U.S. foreign policy in the Nixon-Kissinger era.

The diversity of the research interests of GHI-affiliated scholars is reflected in the broad range—temporal, geographic, and thematic—of the conferences that the Institute sponsored in the second half of 2001. The public’s reaction to a prominent British politician’s suicide in the early nineteenth century, Bollywood’s use and transformation of American cinematic conventions, the Kohl government’s response to the rapid collapse of the German Democratic Republic in late 1989—these are all topics that have recently come within the GHI’s ever-widening purview. More information on GHI-sponsored conferences and symposia is provided in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

*Christof Mauch*
FEATURES

VIOLENT IMAGERY IN LATE MEDIEVAL PIETY

Fifteenth Annual Lecture of the GHI, November 8, 2001

Caroline Walker Bynum

Columbia University

Anyone who has done even the most cursory sight-seeing in European churches has encountered the apparent expressionism and morbidity of late medieval piety. Given the current preoccupation of scholarship in the humanities with what contemporary jargon calls “alterity” or “the transgressive,” we are hardly likely to miss the twisted crucifixes bearing a dead and tortured God, the transi tombs that display carvings of the elite of Europe nude and gnawed by worms, or the vast altarpieces telling of grisly and prolonged executions of the culture’s martyred heroes and heroines, the saints. See plate 1. Nor, given the national crisis that has followed so precipitously upon our own millennial turn, are we likely to ignore medieval fears of the apocalypse or the period’s often eroticized depictions of naked bodies tormented eternally by strange beasts in the mouth of hell. There is much sentimentalism, to be sure, in the later Middle Ages—sweet-faced Madonnas with chubby babies, cozy scenes of the domestic life of God’s family—but a quick walk through any museum of European art leaves one with uncomfortable memories of writhing hands, severed body parts, monstrous claws, torn hunks of flesh, and everywhere streams of bright red blood. Comparisons to Picasso’s Guernica or the paintings of Francis Bacon spring unbidden to mind.

Popular accounts such as those of Johan Huizinga, Barbara Tuchman, and Philippe Ariès have stressed the horrors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries—plague, economic collapse, famine, war—and have described the “violent tenor of life”—persecutions, pogroms, public torture and executions. I do not wish today to return to the topic of medieval society and politics they have explored, although the world they describe is not irrelevant as background. But what I wish to talk about here is the violent quality of the religiosity itself—what we might call its visual violence, especially the prominence of the motifs of body parts and of blood. At a time when depictions of violence are controversial in our own culture—consider, for example, last summer’s obsession with the details of Timothy McVeigh’s execution—we may learn something from consid-
Plate 1. Detail from an altarpiece by Henri Bellechose, commissioned about 1416, depicting the last communion and beheading of St. Denis. Paintings of the gory martyrdom of saints were very popular in the later Middle Ages.
ering the violence our late-medieval ancestors located at the heart of their religion.

Exhortations to Christians to meditate on the fragmenting and bleeding of bodies—both the bodies of the saints and the body of Christ—are everywhere in late medieval devotion. Although the age of the martyrs was in fact long past, by far the largest number of saints’ lives told, retold, and depicted in retables and prayer books were stories of the prolonged deaths of early Christian heroes and heroines, piece by piece by bloody piece.3 Favorites were virgin women who, defending themselves against both apostasy and rape, were described as “intact” and “integral” to the end despite drowning, burning, the severing of breasts and lips, and finally decapitation. What German historians call *redende Reliquiare*, speaking or expressive reliquaries—that is, containers in the shape of body parts—appeared alongside the earlier reliquary form of box- or church-shaped casket and became ever more popular. See plates 2 and 3. Prayers to the wounds of Christ proliferated, although traditions differed as to the number. (Some held there were 5475, others counted 6666; but whatever the precise enumeration, the obsessive and quantitative nature of such spirituality is clear.)4 The so-called *arma Christi* or instruments of Christ’s death became popular devotional foci as well; and the heads of scoffers and torturers that, in such depictions, floated around Christ along with flails, knives, etc., contributed to a visual association of fragmented body parts with passion piety. See plate 4. Despite the emphasis of Gospel accounts on the wholeness of the dead Christ (whose cloak was not divided among the soldiers, nor his legs broken), prayers to his body parts developed and proliferated, and devotional images came to depict his severed hands and feet or to focus on the wound in his side or heart, disconnected from his body. See plates 5, 6, 10 and 11. Although there was considerable theological dispute about them, relics (supposed actual pieces) of Christ’s body were revered at certain locations. (Charroux, for example, in a rare parallel to the body and blood of the eucharist, claimed to possess both the holy foreskin and the blood of the circumcision.)5

Over it all washed blood. Several trends, among them the establishment and promotion of the feast of Corpus Christi and the withdrawal of the chalice from the laity, made devotion to the eucharistic host (the body of Christ) ever more central liturgically and theologically, it is true. But what was known as “spiritual communion” (receiving the presence of Christ in the eucharist through seeing the host or even through meditation) tended to eclipse sacramental reception—that is, eating. And the less frequent became reception of blood and even body, the more central devotion to blood became. The bleeding Christ, sometimes pitiful, sometimes threatening, was—at least in northern Europe—omnipresent. See plate 7 for an example. Eucharistic hymns and prayers, which in the days of
Plate 2. This thirteenth-century arm reliquary, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is an example of the body-part reliquaries so popular in late medieval Europe. Although the container depicts a body part, the sheathing of silver and cabochon crystals suggests that the bones inside (which were probably not arm bones) possess already the incorruptibility of heaven.
Plate 3. Reliquary bust from Cologne about 1350, now in the Schnütgen Museum. This bust did not contain a skull but rather served to display fragments of other bones, dust or garments in the grillwork on the breast.
Plate 4. Panel painting of the so-called “Mass of St. Gregory” from Nuremberg about 1490. Here we see Christ, the Man of Sorrows, surrounded by the instruments of his torture and execution (known as the arma Christi), appearing in a vision to pope Gregory the Great.
Plate 5. The “Arma Christi with Five Wounds,” outer panel of the Buxheim altar (ca. 1500), workshop of Daniel Mauch, now in the Ulm Museum. In this depiction of the five wounds received by Christ on the cross, the Savior’s body disappears entirely to be replaced by bleeding fragments.
Plate 6. The “Five Wounds of Christ” from a Flemish diptych of 1523. A particularly graphic example of Christ’s body parts standing for, and evoking, the whole.
Plate 7. In this small drawing from the first half of the fourteenth century, now in the Schnütgen Museum, St. Bernard of Clairvaux and an anonymous nun embrace a crucifix on which Christ has become a bloody smear. Depictions that emphasize the bleeding Christ became increasingly common, especially in northern Europe, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.
the early church saw grain and grape gathered into loaf and bunch as a symbol of Christian unity, increasingly stressed the eucharistic body as beaten on the threshing floor, ground in the mill, and squeezed in the wine press until no drop of blood was left. Pilgrimages swelled to places such as Walldürn, Wilsnack, Weingarten, and Orvieto, which claimed to display the blood of Christ, either collected under the cross on Golgotha or produced miraculously in cases of sacrilege or extreme devotion. The dramatic impact of the liturgy was sometimes enhanced by acting out the wounding of Christ’s side with a large wooden figure containing a hidden bladder of animal blood.  

Two examples from opposite ends of Europe will show how vivid, expressionist, even tinged with violence, such blood piety was. The first is from a traditional vision-narrative of the late twelfth century, which tells of an English monk from Evesham Abbey, found as if lifeless on Good Friday with “the balls of his eyes and his nose wet with blood.” Once recovered, the monk recounted to his brothers a vision of the cross.

While I was kneeling before the image and was kissing it on the mouth and eyes, I felt some drops falling gently on my forehead. When I removed my fingers, I discovered from their color that it was blood. I also saw blood flowing from the side of the image on the cross, as it does from the veins of a living man when he is cut for blood-letting. I do not know how many drops I caught in my hand as they fell. With the blood I devoutly anointed my eyes, ears and nostrils. Afterward—if I sinned in this I do not know—in my zeal I swallowed one drop of it, but the rest, which I caught in my hand, I was determined to keep.

Following this encounter, the monk traveled in vision through the places of punishment, graphically described, and thence to the places of glory. But even in the midst of glory, there was blood.

The tongue cannot reveal nor human weakness worthily describe what we saw as we went on. . . . In the middle of endless thousands of blessed spirits who stood round, . . . the pious redeemer of the human race appeared. It was as if he were hanging on the cross with his whole body bloody from scourgings, insulted by spitting, crowned with thorns, with nails driven into him, pierced with the lance; while streams of blood flowed over his hands and feet, and blood and water dropped from his holy side! Near him stood his mother, not anxious and sorrowful now, but rejoicing . . . with a most calm countenance . . . .

However fearful the monk of Evesham felt at consuming blood from the crucifix, he felt not so much grief or fear as wonder and vindication at the
heavenly display of Christ’s wounds, which snatched men from the devil’s clutches into the choirs of angels.

By the later fourteenth century there was no longer fear of the audacity of drinking, even drowning in blood. Catherine of Siena wrote to her confessor and spiritual son, Raymond of Capua:

I, Caterina, . . . send you greetings in the precious blood of God’s Son. I long to see you engulfed and drowned in the sweet blood . . . . which is permeated with the fire of his blazing charity . . . . I am saying that unless you are drowned in the blood you will not attain the little virtue of true humility . . . . [S]hut yourself up in the open side of God’s Son . . . . [and] there . . . rest in the bed of fire and blood.

Nor is Catherine’s desire for drowning and burning only metaphorical. The letter that opens with these words is a report to Raymond concerning the execution of the young Perugian Niccolò di Toldo for the political crime of uttering a drunken slur against the new Sienese government. Catherine accompanied him to the scaffold, knelt beside him, and (she says):

His head was resting on my breast. I sensed an intense joy, a fragrance of his blood . . . . [And] when he had received the sign I said: “Down for the wedding, my dear brother, for soon you will be in everlasting life.” He knelt down very meekly; I placed his neck [on the block] and bent down and reminded him of the blood of the Lamb. His mouth said nothing but “Gesù!” and “Caterina!” and as he said this, I received his head into my hands, saying, “I will!” with my eyes fixed on the divine Goodness.

Then was seen the God-Man as one sees the brilliance of the sun. [His side] was open and received [Niccolò’s] blood into his own blood . . . . Once he had been so received by God . . . ., the Son . . . gave him the gift of sharing in the tormented love with which he himself had accepted his painful death . . . . for the welfare of the human race . . . .

Now that he was hidden away where he belonged, my soul rested in peace and quiet in such a fragrance of blood that I couldn’t bear to wash away his blood that had splashed on me . . . . So don’t be surprised if I impose on you only my desire to see you drowned in the blood and fire pouring out from the side of God’s Son. No more apathy now, my sweetest children, because the blood has begun to flow and to receive life!

An English commonplace book of the fourteenth century expresses the same spirituality in a simple anonymous jingle:
I wolde ben clad in cristes skyn
That ran so longe on blode
& gon t’is herte & taken myn In.9

What then are we to make of the obsession of late medieval piety with bodily partition and bloodshed? Is the graphically violent art and devotion of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the response of an exhausted Europe to famine, war, religious controversy and epidemic, a morbid wallowing in rising rates of death and disfigurement, an expiation and displacement of actual by visual and textual violence? Placing motifs of fragmentation and bloodshed in their context suggests immediately that the answer is far more complex. For the fragments so prominent in late medieval texts and images are metonyms, partes standing pro toto; the blood was—as the passages from Catherine and the monk of Evesham explicitly state—fertile and salvific in its very terribleness.

I begin my exploration of the religious significance of parts and partition with those obvious fragments, the relics of the saints. Historians have made much of the way containers came to echo or “speak” contents in the later Middle Ages; indeed the German term redende Reliquiare means just that. Yet recent research shows that speaking reliquaries usually do not in fact contain the bones their shape implies.10 Arm reliquaries hold shin or pelvic bones. Head reliquaries only sometimes contain skulls; often they are merely forms for displaying other bone chips on the breast. See plates 2 and 3. A reliquary that depicts one saint may contain the splinters, dust, or garments of another. Indeed if the point of arm reliquaries were to display arm bones, it would be puzzling that the vast majority are right arms. And why are there no elbows or thighs? Sketches of actual rituals suggest that the function of such objects was often liturgical—that is, arm reliquaries served to extend and make visible the arm of the prelate high above crowds as he blessed the faithful with the sign of the cross.11

There was in the Middle Ages, it is true, an enthusiasm for dividing the bodies of the saints in order to spread the power of holy bodies as widely as possible. Indeed even the bodies of non-holy but prominent figures—kings and queens, nobles, cardinals—were for similar reasons divided for multiple burials. But the form of reliquaries—like the form of transi tombs, with peaceful, clothed, regal figures carved above worm-eaten skeletons—was intended not so much to display the partition of earthly death as to foreshadow the glory of bodily resurrection. Hagiographers wrote of the saints as pearls, carbuncles and crystals at the very moment of death; arm, rib and head reliquaries denied putrefaction by sheathing the bits they contained in gold and precious stones.12 The art that recounts the severing of Agatha’s breasts, the multiple penetrations...
of Sebastian by arrows, the torture of St. Catherine on the wheel also displays these same saints whole, carrying their severed parts as attributes. We know St. Lucy is Lucy on medieval altarpieces because she bears her eyes on a plate, but she faces us with those eyes restored. See plate 8.

The future is wholeness. At the blast of the last trumpet God will reassemble in every detail the body as it was in life, for Christ himself promised “Not a hair of your head shall perish” (Luke 21.18). As Peter the Venerable wrote in the mid-twelfth century, the relics of the saints are already their resurrection bodies:

The divine dignity divides his martyr into equal parts, so that he may retain his soul for himself among the mass of the blessed and give, with marvelous largess, the relics of his sacred body to be venerated by the faithful still living in the flesh. . . . Behold whose bodies you venerate, . . . in whose ashes you exalt, for whose bones you prepare golden sepulcres. They are sons of God, equal to angels, sons of the resurrection. . . . And in this hope I have confidence more certainly than in any human thing that you ought not to feel contempt for the bones of the present martyrs as if they were dry bones but should honor them now full of life as if they were in their future incorruption. . . . Therefore because the bones of the present martyr shall flower like an herb, rising to eternal life, because the corruptible shall put on the incorruptible and the mortal the immortal, because this body of a just man snatched up to meet Christ shall always remain with him, who will not, with full affection, bring to be honored in this life what he believes will be elevated in the future glory.\textsuperscript{13}

Even depictions of the moment of Last Judgment sometimes show God’s angels reassembling the scattered bits of long-departed human beings at the end of time.

Moreover, the grisly accounts and depictions of martyrdom from the high Middle Ages show curiously affectless victims. The saints do not appear to feel their torture. Although to modern tastes there is something almost pornographic about the slashings and penetrations of the slim, smooth, beautiful—and highly objectified—bodies of Agatha and Sebastian (and I do not discount the complexity of medieval responses as well), medieval theory was clear: the saints were blessed in death by the anesthesia of glory. \textit{See plate 9.} God extended the bliss of the beatific vision to block their pain. According to Thomas Aquinas, only Christ suffered in execution, and that only because he willingly assumed his torment for the sins of the world.\textsuperscript{14}
Plate 8. In this initial L from a fourteenth-century manuscript, the martyr Lucy appears serene and beautiful with her eyes both in their normal position on her face and in the dish she carries.
Plate 9. Modern viewers are often surprised both at the sadism of medieval depictions of martyrdom and at the serenity with which the saints face execution. Theologians argued that the martyrs’ vision of God protected them from feeling pain. In this painting of “The Martyrdom of St. Agatha” from 1473, the saint seems almost smug in her imperviousness to torture.
This brings us to those other parts I spoke of above—the fragments of Christ’s body, the torture instruments, the waves of crimson blood. Here also things are not quite what they seem. Indeed the *arma Christi* were until about 1300 signs not of suffering but of triumph, of Christ’s authority to judge. They were, as the name implies, coats of arms, signs of nobility and power; and as *arma*, they were also defensive (shields against the devil and his works) or offensive (weapons of attack against the enemies of Christ). Only in the later Middle Ages did they become signs of pain and injury, visual triggers to remind Christians of what God had suffered for them, and even such torture was sometimes understood as love. In an odd reversal of the passion story, some late medieval images portray Christ crucified by the virtues, the saving sacrifice poured out in response to human love and fortitude. Hence the *arma Christi* became inducements of empathy, signals of enacted caritas to which caritas responds. Non-narrative and scattered around the picture field with no regard to perspective or proportion, these *arma* functioned as signs, a heaping up of detail to encourage pious adherents to meditate in a random order that could be different in every recourse to the image, hence ever challenging and ever new. Understanding this, we are struck more by the restraint than by the violence. In a panel painting of the so-called “Gregorymass” from Nuremberg about 1490, for example, a knife represents the circumcision but we do not see cutting; three nails remind us of the moment when hands and feet were violated; a single spitting head stands in for mocking, beating and humiliation. See plate 4.

Like the *arma Christi*, the wounds of Christ evoked love. In a fifteenth-century Carthusian miscellany, for example, the suffering Christ, or Man of Sorrows, displays his own heart to a little lay figure kneeling below. See plate 10. The heart bears within it all five wounds of Christ’s body, and the accompanying dialogue, which offers both reproach and comfort, ends with the hope that we will soon come to joy. God complains: “O man unkynde, hafe in mynde, my paynes smert. Beholde and see, that is for the, percyd my hert . . . .” And man responds: “O lord right dere, thi wordes I here, with hert ful sore . . . . That we may alle, into thi halle, with ioy cum sone. Amen.”

This image returns us to the theme of fragmentation, for here as elsewhere in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century devotion we find special attention given to the severed parts and gouged out organs of God. The stress on blood is palpable; red is one of the few colors in this artist’s simple palette. Yet when we read the words inscribed around—indeed we might say spoken by—the wound in the heart, what we find surprises us. For the wound says: “This is the mesure of the wounde that our Ihesus Christus sufferd for oure redemption.” Something about the
Plate 10. In this drawing from a fifteenth-century Carthusian miscellany (London BL Add. 37049, fol. 20r), Christ displays his side wound to a kneeling layman. Between the kneeling figure and the Savior, Christ’s heart, which incorporates all five wounds, almost becomes Christ himself. The accompanying dialogue castigates humankind for piercing Christ’s side with sin.
length of the incision seems to be important. And indeed images of the side wound were adored, valued and (we can tell from the worn quality of the parchment) repeatedly kissed not because of the erotic overtones some modern historians have thought to see in them but because medi eval devotees believed they represented an authentic measurement of Christ. In a late fifteenth-century woodcut in the National Gallery in Washington D.C., the wound becomes Christ’s body. See plate 11. A scroll to the left says: “This is the length and width of Christ’s wound which was pierced in his side on the Cross. Whoever kisses [it] . . . will have . . . seven years indulgence. . . .” And the scroll to the right tells us that what is within the wound is not merely an abbreviated version of the arma Christi—the cross, mocking titulus, and the heart with three nails—but another measure: “This little cross standing in Christ’s wound measured forty times makes the length of Christ in his humanity. Whoever kisses it with devotion shall be protected from sudden death or misfortune.”

The image is a kind of amulet; the little measure within the wound participates in Christ as fully as do the relics of his blood, foreskin or shroud.

An enthusiasm for measurement and quantification was a new characteristic of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century culture; the counting of Christ’s wounds (5475, 6666, etc.) and the exact calculations of indulgences surely reflect this. But the sense that length is metonym for person has far older roots. I cannot discuss them all. But it is worth noting that pilgrims traditionally brought back from the Holy Land measures of Christ and of holy places (some of these measurements were said to have miraculous origins), and that those who sought healing or offered thanks for it afterward often gave to the altar of the saints candles made to their own measure. We are told, for example, in a twelfth-century account of wonders at Becket’s tomb that a certain Ethelburga wished to give the martyr a candle made to the length of her gouty left arm, in hope of a cure. The miracle consisted in the fact that she “had scarcely begun to measure [the limb] with a thread than . . . she felt all the pain receding.” Because made to her length, the candle was Ethelburga. If made to the dimensions supposedly given in a vision or brought from the Holy Land, an image of the wound was Christ.

Enumerating parts, anatomizing the body, was, moreover, a means of possessing it, of re-uniting the fragments and incorporating them into oneself. Just as medieval love poetry dwelt tenderly on the details of the beloved’s beautiful form—lips, eyes, eyebrows, neck—so poems to the wounds of Christ named and counted his parts, making them one with the soul, his lover. Thus, for example, when Gertrude of Helfta used Psalm 102 to pray to the wounds, she addressed the first verse to the
Plate 11. In this late fifteenth-century German woodcut, the side wound (tilted on end) becomes Christ’s body; the Veronica serves as head, the wounded hands and feet as limbs. Within the wound, a little cross—one of an abbreviated set of arma Christi—provides a measure of the true length of the human Christ. The little image offers to those who kiss it seven years of indulgence and protection against sudden death.
wounds of the feet, the second to the side, the third to the left hand, the fourth to the right. An English poem of the fifteenth century not only speaks to each body part as a well or refuge within which the soul can hide—well of mercy (right hand), well of grace (left hand), etc.—but also accompanies each verse with a little drawing of the wound in question, making the anatomizing visual. As David Areford has brilliantly shown, medieval *mappaemundi* often situate the entire known world within the body parts of Christ, suggesting that parts contain whole, that enumeration is incorporation. Just as the devotee moves around the field of the *arma Christi*, taking into himself the suffering, guilt and protection of Christ's agony, instrument by instrument, so he enters Christ's wounded parts themselves, incorporating as he is incorporated into God. The fourteenth-century mystic Richard Rolle wrote:

And, yit, Lord, swet Jhesu, thy body is lyk to a nette; for as a nette is ful of holys, so is thy body ful of woundes. Here, swet Jhesu, I beseche the, cache me into this net of thy scourgynge, that al my hert and love be to the; . . .

Efte, swet Jhesu, thy body is like to a dufhouse. For a dufhouse is ful of holys, so is thy body ful of woundes. And as a dove pursued of an hauk, yf she mow cache an hool of hir hous she is siker ynowe, so, swete Jhesu, in temptacion thy woundes ben best refuyt to us. . . .

Also, swete Jhesu, thi body is like to a honycombe. For hit is in euche a way ful of cellis, and euch celle ful of hony, so that hit may nat be touched without yeld of swetnesse. . . .

The tendency of medieval piety to metonymy was undergirded by a central doctrine of learned theology, the doctrine of concomitance (the idea that the whole Christ is present in every particle of the eucharist). Often thought to have developed as a rationalization for withdrawing the chalice from the laity, the doctrine was in fact older than this practice. Formulated in the eucharistic disputes of the eleventh century as a defense against literalist claims that Christ, really present in the consecrated host, was broken and digested, the doctrine meant not only that Christ's blood was fully present in the consecrated wafer but also that the Christ present in the sacrifice of the mass was the Christ of the resurrection, "invisible, impassible, indivisible." As Gabriel Biel would argue in the fifteenth century, it had to be bread that became body at the consecration; the nature of the species is important; like must become like. Hence bread becomes body, wine blood. But the wafer was all of Christ by concomitance—blood, soul, and the glory of divinity. Otherwise the faithful would receive only dead flesh.
Indeed, in the high Middle Ages, metonymy or concomitance became a general way of thinking about presence. A Dominican champion of the supposed relic of Christ’s blood at Weingarten, for example, defended this non-eucharistic presence with an argument borrowed from eucharistic theology. Opponents had argued that Weingarten’s relic must, for theological reasons, be spurious; Christ could have left no particle of his glorious body behind on earth after his resurrection. But, argued Gerhard of Cologne:

just as [Christ] could make his subtle and glorified body touchable and visible to his disciples, so he could have one and the same blood in heaven and yet leave it behind as a comfort for his believers here on earth. Cannot one and the same all-powerful Savior in one and the same moment be changed into the sacrament in the hands of a thousand priests, really here present and undivided, and yet not be absent there [in heaven]?  

From folk assumptions that a measure or particle (fingernails or hair) can be the person to abstruse theological debates over the mode of presence of an immaterial God, medieval culture gloried in the paradox of parts that not so much represented as were the whole. 

It is this quality of paradox that characterizes the blood cult at the center of late medieval piety. The ubiquitous Man of Sorrows is not only a half dead figure in his coffin, mournful and mourned; the bleeding body stands upright; there is a hint—if only a hint—of resurrection. The cult of the wounds, the blood, the heart of Christ expresses not solution or resolution but the simultaneity of opposites: life and death, glory and agony, salvation and sin. The beautiful Schmerzensmann of Meister Francke, whose wounds pour blood and whose crimson-lined white cloak encircles him like flayed skin, is tenderly, almost erotically, alive. Accompanied by angels, who bear the lily of resurrection and the sword of judgment, he is sacrificial victim, lover, and the judge who is to come. See plate 12. The wounds, the blood of Christ, are present then even in heaven; they are access, condemnation, and recompense. Gertrude of Helfta, summoned by Christ to “drink from the torrent of [his] delights,” saw in a vision a hedge set with thorns over which she could not pass. It was only when Christ himself lifted her over and set her beside himself that she saw the wound in his outstretched hand. The bleeding hole in Christ’s flesh was not beginning and hurdle; it was goal and reward. 

The gifted theologian Julian of Norwich summed up the paradoxical significance of blood when she described her own moment of death and transformation:

And when I was thirty and a half years old, God sent me a bodily sickness in which I lay for three days and three nights, and on the
Plate 12. The “Man of Sorrows,” ca. 1430, by Meister Francke, now in Hamburg, is a particularly beautiful evocation of the suffering Christ, who is judge (one angel bears a sword), promise of resurrection (the other angel bears a lily), lover, and sacrificial victim.
third night I received all the rites of Holy Church and did not expect to live... So I lasted until day, and by then my body was dead from the middle downwards, as it felt to me. Then I was helped to sit upright and supported, so that my heart might be more free to be at God’s will, and so that I could think of him whilst my life would last. My curate was sent for to be present at my end; and before he came my eyes were fixed upwards and I could not speak. He set the cross before my face, and said: I have brought the image of your saviour; look at it and take comfort from it... After this my sight began to fail... Everything around the cross was ugly and terrifying to me, as if it were occupied by a great crowd of devils.

...And suddenly at that moment all pain was taken from me, and I was sound...

And at this, suddenly I saw the red blood flowing down from under his crown, hot and flowing freely and copiously, a living stream, just as it was at the time when the crown of thorns was pressed on his blessed head...

And in the same revelation, suddenly the Trinity filled my heart full of the greatest joy... And I said: Blessed be the Lord!... and I was greatly astonished by this wonder and marvel, that he who is so to be revered and feared would be so familiar with a sinful creature living in this wretched flesh.

... [And] I saw that [our Lord] is to us everything which is good...

It is not that joy replaces pain, or brilliance blood. The hot blood flows at the moment of intimacy and liberation. Blood is ecstasy.

I seem thus to have argued here not only that things are not what they seem but that they are indeed their opposite: agony is ecstasy, part is whole, torture is redemption. And that is at some deep level the heart of Christian belief in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Paradox is the core.

Yet the horror remains. And repulsion was a possible response. Medieval Christians were themselves sometimes sickened at the violence of image and text. For example, when Christina Ebner of Engelthal saw a vision of Christ as he hung on the cross, she was terrified. Margery Kempe became physically weak and fell down, crying and twisting, when she thought of the crucifixion. Moreover, people were aware that one kind of violence could be displaced onto another, that violence echoes violence. Margery tells us she thought of Christ beaten or wounded not just when she saw the crucifix but whenever she “saw a man or a beast... [with] a wound or if a man beat a child before her or smote a horse or another beast with a whip... as well in the field as in the town...”
Margery, the violence of everyday life only reduplicated her sorrow at the violence inflicted on Christ. But the displacement could work the other way; the horror and filth of living could seem to pollute God. A fourteenth-century woman from Montaillou named Aude recoiled in horror from the physicality attributed to the host on the altar:

I thought of the disgusting afterbirth that women expel in childbirth and whenever I saw the body of the Lord raised on the altar I kept thinking, because of that afterbirth, that the host was somehow polluted. That’s why I could no longer believe it was the body of Christ.

Whatever the personal and experiential roots of Aude’s obsession with the placenta may have been, her skepticism was directly engendered not only by the doctrine of real presence but also by an affective devotion to the body of the infant Jesus that carried with it overtones of cannibalism and contamination.

Mystics and theologians sometimes deployed concomitance and paradox to focus the gaze of Christians away from such horror. University professors and canon lawyers struggled to contain outbursts of pilgrim enthusiasm for the bloody bits and pieces of sites such as Orvieto or Wilsnack, attempting not only to harness but even to suppress blood cult. To give only a single example. In late-fifteenth-century Würzburg, a tractate on “the perils of the eucharist” maintained: “It is a periculum to the host if the figure of flesh or a child or any other thing appears in it.” Hence, argues the treatise, the priest should consume such a host immediately if an individual claim is made; if, however, many people profess to see it, the priest should repeat the consecration with new hosts, and the miraculous one should be hidden from view so that every opportunity for a crowd to gather is avoided.

Yet, despite the efforts of papal legates and learned professors to staunch the flow of bloody hosts and miracles, fourteenth- and fifteenth-century spirituality ever more intensely visualized experience as fragmentation, anatomized the body of God itself, and craved blood.

Modern historians have sometimes used psychoanalytic theory to understand this piety. In such interpretation, late medieval meditation becomes a kind of neurotic fetishizing, a transferring of religious response to isolated body parts, an obsessive and voyeuristic compulsion to repeat that reflects and creates ever-increasing anxiety about the body. And the anxiety, the obsessive enumerating, are clearly there. But it is easy to over-emphasize this, to forget the beauty and centering of the images. The parts depicted in the Carthusian miscellany are not the parts of Picasso or Francis Bacon; they pull toward wholeness.

The wounds Rolle apostrophizes are cells of honey, clefts of refuge, doorways to sal-
vation. It is not so much that we pull Christ toward us when we anato-
mize him as that he lifts us to heaven. As the German translation of the
Song of Songs (a text much loved by medieval mystics) put it: “[Christ
says]: Grow and eat me, not that I will be changed into you through the
eating of the body but rather you will be changed into me.”

42 The fright-
ening and mournful Schmerzensmann of Dürer’s famous Gregorymass
offers in one of the arma Christi itself a ladder to heaven. Whereas in the
Nuremberg panel of 1490 (see plate 4 above) the ladder is simply propped
among lance and sponge as an instrument of torture, in the Dürer it
breaks across the picture space, joining the viewing pope (and us who
view him) to the otherworldly place where the vision of Christ appears.
See plate 13. In these examples, art and text connect more than they divide.
Psychoanalytic theories of voyeurism and obsession move too far from
the medieval context to offer more than an interpretative hint, distorting
although suggestive, as much a projection of our own fetishizing dis-
placement as a response to medieval images.

Yet there is a sense in which we need, I think, a psychological inter-
pretation, although one closer to the concepts of medieval theologians
and craftsmen.43 For, as the images and texts themselves tell us, some-
thing nagged at the heart of this spirituality: a blaming of self that could
oh so easily become a blaming of other. Sacrificed for humankind in an
overwhelming love that made even the virtues a cause of his death, Christ
was forever reproach as well as lover, judge as well as friend. Poem after
poem apostrophized (and blamed): “O man unkynde....”44 As Mechtild
of Madgeburg asserted: the wounds of Christ will bleed until there is no
more human sin—that is, they will bleed, accusing sinners, until Judg-
ment Day itself.45 The reproaches of Good Friday—“Oh my people, what
have you done unto me?”—reverberated around the Schmerzensmann.

We see this move from love to blame if we look at the figure of
Longinus, the soldier who lanced Christ’s side with a spear. Over the
course of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the image changed. Early
understood as penitent sinner who knelt to ask forgiveness and was
healed under the cross by Christ’s blood—or even as facilitator of re-
demption who opened Christ’s side so that the saving blood might de-
scend—Longinus came to stand for accused humankind.46 Thus the lance
and indeed the entire arma Christi came to have new meaning. As arma,
they were increasingly seen to be daily wielded by us against God. And
they were also wielded by God against us. In the later thirteenth century,
the author of the immensely popular Golden Legend wrote: “They [the
arma Christi] show Christ’s mercy and justify his anger, for we remember
that not all men are willing to accept his sacrifice [emphasis added].” The
author of the Speculum humanae salvationis wrote in the fourteenth cen-
Plate 13. In this woodcut of the “Gregorymass,” by Dürer, 1511, the looming Christ is both terrifying and compassionate. The ladder is no longer only the instrument by which he was lifted to agony; it has become a means of access, for both pope and viewer, as well.
tury: “All Christ’s weapons are aimed against sinners.”

We are the Christ killers. The enemy is us!

Such a burden of guilt seems to cry out for transfer. And transferred, projected, displaced it was. As early as the eighth century, the wounds of Christ had been given multiple significances. Bede enumerated these. The wounds were proof of Christ’s death, intercession to God the Father, demonstration of love, reproach to the evil and the damned. By the fourteenth century, texts regularly expanded the final category to target the Jews. A German sermon explained that the purpose of the third (demonstration of love) was to show the blessed how dearly they were blessed, the fourth (reproach) was to demonstrate at the Last Judgment the guilt of the Jews. The Provencal mystic Marguerite of Oingt, in a different enumeration, wrote that Christ held a book for teaching in which the white letters told his life, the silver ones detailed his blood poured out for us, the black described “the blows and slaps and filthy things the Jews threw in his face and on his noble body . . . [until it] looked like a leper’s.”

The blame reverberated from self to other and back to self. Gerhard of Cologne wrote, defending the relic of Christ’s blood: “we are the new Jews.” In a Dürer woodcut of 1510, the Schmerzensmann accused all Christians:

I bear these cruel wounds for thee, O man!
And I heal thy frailty with my blood.

. . . .
But thou dost not thank me. With thy sins thou often tearest open
my wounds.
I am still lashed for thy misdeeds.
Have done now.
I once suffered great torment from the Jews.
Now, friend, let peace be between us.

Set amidst graphic arma Christi, the isolated mocking and spitting heads of Christ’s humiliation become increasingly hostile, increasingly distorted, increasingly Jewish. Note the mocking Jewish head in the Nuremberg panel, spitting at the face of Christ; plate 4.

Nor was blame and the projection outward of self-reproach limited to the Jews. The Man of Sorrows surrounded by torture instruments was sometimes (as in a very early example from Rházüns) connected with another motif of guilt and reproach: the image known as alternatively the Feiertagschristus or “Christ attacked by the sins of the world.” In this image, blasphemers, criminals, and peasants or artisans who violate the Sabbath are depicted murdering Christ. See plate 14 where the draftsman has drawn lines from the tools of artisans to the wounds on Christ’s
Plate 14. On the wall at Rhäzüns in Graubünden, Switzerland, about 1400, the Christ of the “Gregorymass” with surrounding arma Christi is joined by another depiction of attacks on Christ. The Man of Sorrows is also attacked by the tools of artisans and peasants who violate the Sabbath.
Although scholars have insisted that the *arma Christi* and the *Feiertagschristus* are independent traditions, at Rhaizüns they are next to each other, visually parallel and conceptually linked. In both, the implements that surround the wounded Christ accuse their wielders of attacking God. Hence the Man of Sorrows—an image that often summoned Christians to identify with Christ's suffering—here identifies Christians instead with those who attack Christ and calls them to expiate and expunge that guilt.

Wounds and *arma* accused both self and other. In an even more troubling and graphic sense, the blood that spilled across European piety also accused, calling for vindication of, as well as empathy with, Christ. The majority of the blood cults of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Europe were places of supposed host desecration, and these wonder-hosts—sites of pilgrimage and pogrom—targeted lower-class women, thieves, and most of all Jews as violators of God. Holy objects and holy matter (the consecrated body and blood of Christ) were understood not merely to signal the presence of the divine by bleeding or surviving disaster but also to reproach the guilty and point out their secret crimes. The presence of blood came increasingly to be *ipso facto* proof of the violation of God. As long ago as the 1930s the German scholar Romuald Bauerreiss noted that the *Schmerzensmann* itself seemed to be a trigger of pilgrimage, persecution and pogrom. Images themselves, as Paul Binski has argued, do not merely reflect, they constitute reality. Hence there is horror as well as glory at the heart of late medieval piety—the horror of a guilt that easily turned from blaming of self to blaming of other in a spiral of scapegoating and self-castigation.

To conclude. My purpose in this lecture has been to make you uncomfortable, both with the material I have presented and with my argument. I have intended not only to talk about elements of religion that are to most of us frightening but also to force you to think about them in new ways, to admit that first impressions are misleading, to accept that things are not what they seem. I have argued that imagery of partition and bloodshed is often, if understood in historical context, not violent. In the religion of late medieval Europe, part is about whole; blood is about access, ecstasy and incorporation. However violent the general tenor of life in fourteenth and fifteenth-century Europe may have been, the gory body parts apostrophized in its prayers and panel paintings are no simple reflection of a violent society. They have a more complex and multi-layered significance. And yet, I have argued also that our first instincts are not totally inaccurate. There is a deeper violence in this spirituality after all. The images I have explored suggest and constitute a religiosity of blame and self-reproach as well as of ecstasy and love.
Thus I draw no easy lesson for modern viewers. Nor do I think we should take modern theories or parallels as more than hints to guide us into the quite alien world of the late Middle Ages. But perhaps an understanding of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century religious imagery will suggest to us that we too should not be cavalier about violence, projection and reproach in our own images and texts. In the late Middle Ages at any rate, even subtle and sophisticated ideas of concomitance and paradox provided inadequate protection against the sin whose redemption they were meant to signify.

Notes

1 I would like to thank Anne-Marie Bouche, Patricia Decker, and Jane Rosenthal for help with the plates and Dorothea von Mücke for her critical reading.


3 See Brigitte Cazelles, Les Corps de sainteté d’après Jehan Bouche d’Or, Jehan Paulus, et quelques vies des XIIe et XIIIe siècles (Geneva, 1982).


5 X. Barbier de Montault, Oeuvres complètes, 7: Rome (Paris, 1893), 5.2: 528.


8 The Letters of Catherine of Siena, tr. Suzanne Noffke, OP, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 202 (Tempe, Arizona, 2000–2001), 1: 85–89. And see Caroline Walker Bynum,


14 Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologica, 3, q. 14, art. 1; q. 15, art. 5; and q. 54. And see Martha Easton, “Saint Agatha and the Sanctification of Sexual Violence,” Studies in Iconography 16 (1994): 83–118.


19 Hennessy points out (Morbid Devotions,” 124–27) that the manuscript speaks elsewhere of “the mouth of the heart.”


22 John Shinner, ed., Medieval Popular Religion, 1000-1500: A Reader (Peterborough, Ontario, 1997), 161; see also 165. For many other examples of measurements, both of Christ and holy
objects (such as the column of the Flagellation) and of penitents offering thanks, see the catalogue in Barbier de Montault, *Oeuvres complètes*, 7: 311–12, 340–43, 354, 364, 407 and 470.


34 See R. N. Swanson, “Passion and Practice: the Social and Ecclesiastical Implications of Passion Devotions in the Late Middle Ages,” in *The Broken Body*, 1–30, esp. 11, and Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel*, 102.


37 It is worth noting that some religious writers warned against substituting meditation for service of neighbor. Walter Hilton, for example, advised Christians not to strain after devotion but rather to wash Christ’s feet by attending to others; see Bennett, *Poetry of the Passion*, 60.


41 In his study of the iconography of the crucifixion, Mitchell Merback points out that, to medieval viewers, pain was world-constituting not world-destroying; see *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel*, esp. 20, 28, and 198–217.


43 Those who know the literature will recognize in my argument here a parallel to the emphasis of scholars such as Delumeau or Camporesi on the late Middle Ages as a culture of guilt; however, I shift the emphasis somewhat. See Jean Delumeau, *Sin and Fear: The Emergence of a Western Guilt Culture*, tr. E. Nicholson (New York, 1990); Piero Camporesi, *Juice of Life: The Symbolic and Magic Significance of Blood*, tr. Robert R. Barr (New York, 1995).

44 See above n. 18.


48 Schrade, “Beiträge zur Erklärung des Schmerzensmannbildes,” 170–72, and see nn. 15 and 17 above, nn. 51 and 53 below. On the early medieval background to this sense of blood as blame and guilt, see now Rachel Fulton, From Judgment to Passion: An Intellectual History of Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary (New York), to appear.


50 Schiller, *Iconography*, 2: 197. For Gerhard, see above n. 29.


52 Crucial on eucharistic miracles and host desecration is still Peter Browe, *Die Eucharistischen Wunder des Mittelalters*, Breslauer Studien zur historischen Theologie NF 4 (Breslau, 1938). For examples of bleeding objects other than hosts, see Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 329 n. 138. I am at work on a study of blood devotion in the later Middle Ages; for some first thoughts on the subject, see Bynum, “Das Blut und die Körper Christi.”


55 On the effects of the violence in our own imagery, see Garry Wills, “The Dramaturgy of Death,” The New York Review of Books 48.10 (June 21, 2001): 6–10. Eamon Duffy, reviewing James Carroll, Constantine’s Sword (2001) in The New York Review of Books 48.11 (July 5, 2001): 24–27, takes the position, with which I agree profoundly, that traditions must not dismantle themselves in order to effect reconciliation. Nonetheless, for all Duffy’s efforts to defend late medieval piety against charges that it was violent and guilt-ridden—to find resurrection, for example, in its images of crucifixion—the conclusion of my paper is that some of that charge must stick.
REVERBERATIONS OF GUILT AND VIOLENCE, RESONANCES OF PEACE: A COMMENT ON CAROLINE WALKER BYNUM’S LECTURE

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I

Caroline Walker Bynum’s lecture, together with her pathfinding scholarly oeuvre, offers us a wealth of evidence that there indeed existed in the later Middle Ages a “violent quality [in] religiosity itself,” and that this structure of violence was central to Christian culture, its mental world, its texts, images and practices. Its forms are myriad. Communication with the blessed and forlorn dead through their fragmentary remains; popular pilgrimages to the sites of fabulous blasphemies; penitential pantomines performed with whips, chains and nails; mystical woundings, visionary incorporations and ecstatic interpenetrations; cold awakenings to the horrors of the world and the inevitability of death and judgment; and the ever present spectacle of blood, visibly spraying or palpably flowing—all of these images of late medieval religion reveal a morbid fascination, a collective preoccupation with sin and punishment bordering on the obsessive neurotic. They are the symptoms of an emergent “Western guilt culture,” as Jean Delumeau has dubbed it, and yet they are also part of a religious system. One of the remarkable achievements of Bynum’s work over the past two decades has been to recuperate a great overlooked treasury of doctrines, images and practices, materialist practices that appeared to an older generation of historians as corruptions of the faith. Through her eyes we have been able to glimpse their inner, cultural logic, and grasp their potentiality as alternative sites of human experience, in short, to understand them on their own terms. Her analysis here challenges us to extend that project of understanding to the domain of visual images, images marked—like the practices surrounding them—by a curious admixture of violences both rhetorical and real, images that served and activated a mode of piety which, as Bynum describes it, “ever more intensely visualized experience as fragmentation.”

Close readings of historical texts, coupled with a special regard for the human body as a locus of meaning, have been the touchstones of the new historicist enterprise in Anglo-American scholarship since the 1970s, and Professor Bynum’s work has long exemplified this approach for me-
dievalists. Among its advantages, this mode of criticism succeeds by virtue of a certain willingness to work within limits, to curtail the ever expansive process of contextualization, and to resist the temptations of grand historical narrative. There is, however, a trade-off: for all the insight we gain into human experience and representation within the precincts of intellectual or artistic or mystical striving, we often pass up the chance to revisit the larger territories of history. This seems fair enough, but what if the choice were proven to be a false one? What if we could fruitfully connect our micro-analyses of texts and images to a macro-analysis of social and political processes, those oft-cited “backgrounds” to the cultural artifacts we study? The interdisciplinary study of violence, I submit, provides us with a unique opportunity to hazard such connections. Within a limited space, I should like to rough out a grid upon which these manifold conditions and forms, experiences and expressions, events and processes of violence in the later Middle Ages might be interrelated.

II

Central to Bynum’s portrayal of late medieval religion is her account of a fervent eucharistic piety, which encompassed both the liturgical celebration of the Mass, and para-liturgical devotions to the Holy Blood by mystics and pilgrims in a wide variety of contexts. Emblematic of this “vivid” and “expressionistic” blood piety was the image of the Man of Sorrows or Schmerzensmann, which depicts Christ wounded, bleeding and dead in the tomb, yet paradoxically alive, upright and suffering, animated by a mysterious life-force. This image-type, which survives in many thematic variations and in every artistic medium, was formerly known as the imago pietatis, or “image of pity”. It is the descendant of the Byzantine “passion portrait,” developed in conjunction with the Good Friday liturgy of the Eastern church, where an increasing theatricalization and “psychological realism” drew participants into a close, affective relationship with Christ and Mary in their human suffering. Around 1300 the imago pietatis burst upon the public scene in the West, the result of a campaign by the Carthusians of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, in Rome, to promote indulgences around a venerable mosaic icon, purportedly commissioned by Pope Gregory the Great in memory of a miraculous vision during the Mass. Of course, 1300 was a pivotal year. It not only coincided with progressive institutionalization of the Feast of Corpus Christi throughout Europe, but it was also the Anno Santo, or “Jubilee Year,” in Rome, when the church unveiled its program for rehabilitating the penitential system. Central to this was an initiative to transfer more and more
penitential obligations—the everyday management of sin and purgation for the living and the dead—to the laity. Thus we may speak of a combination of forces that catapulted the Man of Sorrows into such a widespread popularity: not only an official cultic prestige—indulgences could be earned for both the S. Croce original and its licensed copies—but a flexible formula through which more ambitious artists could condense a wide range of eucharistic meanings and stage devotional response in terms of an empathetic identification. Followed closely by its thematic sister-image, the Pietà, the Man of Sorrows flowed rapidly downstream into the many tributaries of devotional practice and mysticism, cultic and mortuary display, art and visionary literature.

As an archetypal image of sacrifice and offering, the western Man of Sorrows image stakes its rhetorical power on several basic stereotypes of “visual violence.” Unmoored from narrative and frozen in time, these images transfix the pious beholder with a spectacular surplus of blood, wounds and pain as objects for contemplative immersion. Together these stereotypes of sacrificial violence ensure that the image will be, in an important sense, unbearable to behold. And yet medieval people knew that this was a spectacle of violence worth enduring because, on one level, physical suffering, undertaken voluntarily, paved the way for redemption, and on another, as Bynum points out, “the blood [of Christ] was . . . fertile and salvific in its very terribleness.” Whoever gazed upon the imago pietatis could hope to reap the same spiritual benefits that were attainable through what was later called “ocular communion” (Augenkommmunion), in which the power of the consecrated host was accessed through sensual vision alone.

If the eucharistic body of Christ occupied the general field of salvific vision, it was the gaze of the suffering redeemer that formed the true “locus of the look,” as Michael Camille would say. An exchange of gazes, facilitated by the artist’s quest for what Hans Belting calls a “psychological realism” and undergirded by mimetic desire, establishes a dialogue between the spectator and the person present in the image. And it is here, at this locus of meaning, that Bynum lodges one of her most compelling claims about the mode of response typical of late medieval piety. Contemplation of these images, she tells us, unleashed “a violence of guilt and self-accusation, ultimately of condemnation.” Intended to be “more reproach than comfort,” the images target a painful awareness of that abject spiritual infirmity which every Christian inherited from Adam and Eve. This is consistent with much one finds in late medieval devotional culture, especially the art and literature of the Passion, marked as it is by this element of pious antagonism. Supplicants were to be agitated toward feelings of guilt, the psychical bedrock of the church’s penitential system. When St. Bonaventure urged the penitent toward compassion for
Christ’s suffering in the Passion, he leveled this reproach: “And you, lost man, the cause of all this confusion and sorrow, how is it that you do not break down and weep?” For the pious personality of the late Middle Ages the vision of the bleeding Man of Sorrows was an aching revelation of one’s own guilt. It functioned as a visual call to penance.

At work inside this matrix of affective compassion and penitential self-recrimination, Bynum identifies a pivotal mechanism of response. The “burden of guilt,” she explains, “seems to cry out for a transfer . . . [and] transferred, projected and displaced it was”—upon the sinners, unbelievers, the evil and the damned, in particular the Jews, the inveterate enemies of Christ and Mary. At this point I am tempted to digress a little, and explore the dialectics of violence found in our sources for medieval Christian anti-Judaism, especially the notorious stereotyped legends of murder, sacrilege and conspiracy—those thinly veiled “texts of persecution”—that imparted to the Jew of Christian fantasy an insatiable bloodlust and a capacity for violence against the holy. But I will steer clear of the larger context to better follow Bynum’s epidemiology of Christian guilt. As she notes, the dialectic of self-reproach and anti-Jewish polemic can be found, among other places, in Albrecht Dürer’s visionary image of the Mocking of Christ, created as the frontispiece to the Large Passion of 1511. While the woodcut, which places Christ in the company of a German mercenary or Landsknecht, merely alludes to the notion that our sins “tearest open my wounds,” the verses—penned by the Benedictine monk Cheldonius—vividly juxtapose the legacy of Jewish violence against the body of Christ with the idea of a “perpetual passion” caused by Christian sin. Together, then, text and image build toward a surplus of horror mixed with love-longing, one that threatens to spill over the boundaries of the devotional encounter and flood the penitential self with the unbearable violence of unexpiated guilt. To prevent this, guilt must be displaced—it must be projected outward; a scapegoat must be identified and cast into the role of all-powerful tormentor. But scapegoats are as much mirrors as they are targets; and guilt is not so easily cast off. So guilt “reverberates” back, as Bynum puts it, from the persecuting Other back upon the penitential Self.

III

Reading Professor Bynum’s paper in preparation for this commentary, it struck me that this pivotal insight reveals something not only about the psychodynamics of a distinctly Christian guilt-complex, but the nature of violence as well—and perhaps also, I hasten to add, about the intrinsic connections between guilt and violence. But rather than view one simply as the cause of the other—in Freud’s classic explanation, aggression held
in check to spare love and friendship eventually closes in upon the self as a burden of guilt—let us see them as parallel structures with similar mechanisms. At the risk of some simplification, we might formulate the parallelism this way: guilt “reverberates” between Self and Other within the individual psyche much the same the way violence does within the social body. Both guilt and violence, for example, tend to seek out a chimerical Other, a surrogate victim or scapegoat, whose persecution and ejection functions to restore the “moral” equilibrium of the group or, in the case of guilt, satisfy the individual’s craving for wholeness, for redemption. Such rechannelings of guilt or violence reverse the course of the original crisis, shielding the subject or the group from its own rivalries and destructiveness. Similarly, and as a functional equivalent, both guilt and violence can also be “exported”—rerouted outside existing psychical or social boundaries so they no longer afflict the center. All of these mechanisms are forms of transfer: one may speak of projections or displacements, substitutions or exchanges, reverberations or resonances.

In articulating the problem this way, I am drawing upon the work of the literary critic René Girard, especially his important book of 1972, *Violence and the Sacred.* Girard’s theory of violence, surrogate victimage and ritual has had a profound impact on the study of religion; critical interest in his project peaked in the late 1980s and continues to thrive in some quarters. Like other cultural theorists, Girard sees violence as an irreducible force in human affairs, but goes further, claiming for it a protean role in the formation of ritual, myth and prohibition, the triad that defines the dynamics of the sacred. To some degree unhistorical in his thinking, Girard reifies violence and treats it as a semi-autonomous force, akin to physical energy itself. In his model the structuring power of violence—most crucially human violence itself—remains hidden behind the religious and cultural forms to which it gives rise. Real violence, however, moves from victim to victim quite concretely, sometimes in symmetrical reciprocities, other times along new vectors and in ever-renewing forms; invariably it appears to actors caught up in the social drama as a contagion beyond human control. But violence is controllable and is controlled by a defining mechanism, substitution. For Girard it forms the logic of sacrifice: “When unappeased, violence seeks and always finds a surrogate victim. The creature that excited the fury is abruptly replaced by another, chosen only because it is vulnerable and close at hand.” Sacrifice, in this sense, is a practical technique for managing the internal tensions of social existence, “the dissensions, rivalries, jealousies and quarrels”—all of them grounded in a “mimetic desire” which more often than not turns conflictual. Once it erupts, this violence threatens to proliferate unchecked (reciprocal killing during a blood feud is perhaps the purest example). It poses extraordinary dangers. The fun-
damental purpose of sacrifice, the ur-form of all ritual, is to “to stem the tide of indiscriminate substitutions and redirect violence into ‘proper’ channels”; thereby does it “protect the community from its own violence”. At stake is the moral cohesion of the community, hence its very survival.

Though generated largely from his study of literature and anthropological evidence, Girard’s insights into the ritual structuring of violence place important demands on the historian’s analysis of violence within the more advanced and socially differentiated civilization of medieval Europe, a civilization that suffered not only the afflictions of war, insurgency, blood feud and organized crime, but also ecological disasters of unprecedented scope. It demands, in short, that we think in terms of a larger web of contexts and interactions through which the principal forms of violence, overt and latent, are interwoven. Of these forms—though they are not easily separable—I count seven:

1. celestial or divine violence
2. demonic or magical violence
3. political violence
4. social and/or religious violence
5. criminal violence
6. domestic, sexual and/or interpersonal violence
7. psychological or symbolic violence

These different forms coexisted in the later Middle Ages, and contemporaries often lamented their recurrence as tandem symptoms: “When the pestilence filled the world,” said one Austrian observer in 1359, “men became accustomed to spreading great violence among us.” Thus to deal with one form of violence often means necessarily involving the others. J. R. Hale, for example, accepts as axiomatic “the existence of a pool of latent personal violence which can add to the dimensions and change the mood of the violence in other categories.”

To bring these micro- and macro-manifestations of violence together, to see them operating at multiple levels of exchange, would be to describe what several scholars have called an economy of violence. At the local level, so to speak, an economy of violence encompasses not only the day-to-day “dissensions, rivalries, jealousies and quarrels within the community” (Girard), but also illicit violence, crime, its ongoing repression by authorities, and the forms of collective violence like organized pogroms, and so on. At the regional, national or transregional levels, an economy of violence extends further to the various forms of state violence: wars between societies or states, crusades, regional persecutions of heretics and other outgroups (today, as we all know too well, the economy of violence has attained international and global proportions). During times of crisis,
in particular, one finds all the diverse “sectors” of this economy humming from the stimulating effects of a free and open trade across borders—a highly volatile series of exchanges that threatens to overwhelm all safeguards and controls hitherto devised. Disclosing the vertical linkages between different levels of conflict within societies and between states, patterns of socialization, violent cultural representations and rituals, and the most salient psychological pressures and syndromes—this is the principal task of such analyses.

Though it may sound like an imprecise map for research, we need to ask whether there is such as thing as an historical economy of violence, what its parameters might be, and how we might correlate its horizontal linkages with the vertical ones. Scholarship may presently not be able to manage this complex web of interactions—as it could only be done collaboratively—but in the meantime we can attend productively to the local patterns of violent behaviour, to the dynamics of specific “communities of violence,” and ask how the “big violences” of politics and history ramify through the rivalries, dissensions, jealousies, repressions and yearnings from which spring the “little violences” of everyday life. Ideally these questions would always return us to those countless moments of transference and symbolization in which the impulse of the “primitive sacred”—Girard’s foundational mechanism of surrogate victimization—gives rise to culture and its myriad ritual forms, its images, myths, legends and dramas.

IV

For the later Middle Ages the most dynamic context of mutual interaction between religious mentalities and society, and the place where the micro- and macro-processes of violence came together, is in the sphere of public life. Here a diverse array of rituals brought people of different social strata together, and into close contact with the modalities of power, both sacred and secular. Although urban Europeans came together to celebrate and affirm a host of beautiful things—princely advents and victories, royal weddings or childbirths, religious processions and popular festivals—an equally significant portion of public occasions were “rites of violence.” These were principally of four kinds: 1) symbolic rites undertaken as “shows of force,” such as ceremonial displays of military might or militant piety; 2) sacrificial spectacles like judicial executions or penitential processions (to which I shall return); 3) theatrical rites of violence, including such events as the mock battles of carnival and popular religious drama, where stage-managers abided by the old dictum “there must be blood”25; and 4) the deadly serious rites of collective violence, popular revolts, urban riots or pogroms, both local and regional.26
Each form of violent public ritual, sacred and secular, offers us the chance to study that elusive phenomenon of social life Walter Benjamin called, in reference to the mass culture of his own time, “simultaneous collective perception.” But since there is no way for me to show this with an example of each, allow me outline two characteristically late medieval examples of a spectacle of violence, my second category. These examples can help us penetrate the cultural logic of what I am calling the “penitential personality” because each offered what amounted to a public stage for its actualization. In late medieval and early modern society, personal experiences were often played out, as spectacle, for others to see and judge, emulate and affirm. Cruel and compassionate, violently expressive and given to bouts of that “hyperbolic humility” described by Huizinga, the penitential personality came out in public as a stylized mode of response. It thus constituted what anthropologists call “representative behavior.”

Within the later medieval public sphere, one might say, simultaneous collective perception was always already a type of simultaneous collective performance.

Pre-eminent in many accounts of public life in the later Middle Ages are the public rituals of criminal justice. These “spectacles of punishment” directly involved the populace in several ways, from the rite of sentencing outside the townhall, through the procession which lead the condemned to the execution grounds (Richtstätte), to the mutilation and execution itself, which was sometimes staged and choreographed for great dramatic impact. Far from being the vehicles of a collective sadism, executions in the later Middle Ages were frequently very solemn occasions, quasi-sacramental rites of confession, absolution, purgation and passage into death. Emotions could run high, we know from contemporary chronicler’s reports, not because of a rampant Schadenfreude, but because audience members collaborated actively with church and civic authorities to provide the criminal an opportunity for a good, Christian death (bene moriendi). Thus the fate of the “poor sinner” (Armesünder) often provoked a great outpouring of compassion, itself modeled on the pity felt for Christ and Mary in their Passions. Collective perception of this official violence, performed in the name of legal authority, was therefore informed by the same dialectic of penitential guilt and blame that structured private devotions. When the criminal performed his penance and was held up as a pseudo-martyr, suffering (passio), in the form of abject pain, could reverberate back into compassion (compassio), which people in groups seem to have experienced as a form of catharsis. The community’s own internal violences were purged along with the criminal’s sins. But when the penitential drama did not go as expected, when the anticipation of an edifying death was foiled, unexpiated guilt and violence overflowed the channels set out for it. Revenge was then often
taken on the authorities or their visible agent, the executioner, or on the culprit himself.

Compassionate identification between performers and audiences also occurred outside the boundaries of legitimate public rites, especially in crisis-times. First in Italy in 1260, against the backdrop of wars and ecological disasters, and then again, across Europe, during the Black Death of 1348–51, with its attendant eschatological hysterias, penitential brotherhoods, the so-called *disciplinati* or flagellants, turned asceticism and mysticism into a kind of popular street theatre. Modeled on the supplicatory processions of time immemorial, when celestial powers were called upon to shield communities from disasters, flagellant processions were a new kind of missionary-revivalist event. They combined the universal call to penance with hymn-singing, preaching, and miraculous cures; but the centerpiece of the processions were the carefully choreographed rites of self-scourging. So far as we know, the rituals performed by these amateur holy men utterly absorbed and galvanized their urban audiences, and the line between performers and spectators was often blurred or dissolved entirely (chroniclers speak of townspeople joining in the scourging). What the flagellants presented to their audiences, in the end, was not only a theatrical, *living* imitation of the suffering Man of Sorrows, but a salvific spectacle that reproduced the spiritual benefits of the original.

Thus did these rituals of violence embody many of the traits Bynum attributes to the mystical “blood piety” of the era: expressionism and morbidity, a “simultaneity of opposites”, a tendency toward quantification (lashes were counted out), a pursuit of bodily pain and fragmentation, a metonymic logic and a guilt-ridden craving for wholeness. And yet, as a form of mysticism, the flagellant processions differed decisively in their social meaning from the cloistered penitential strivings of saints like Heinrich Suso, Catherine of Siena, Richard Rolle and Margery Kempe. Their approach to the “reorchestration of the meaning of symbols” characteristic of performative modes of religious behavior occurred under different conditions. The difference lies in their public and visible nature—the opportunities they provided for simultaneous collective perception, as well as that “representative behavior” which not only shores up, but also reproduces the moral order. In Girardian terms, they are more efficient in processing violence into culture. This is not to privilege one sacrificial sphere over the other; public and private must be seen together. Through innovative readings of sources, visual as well as verbal, and with the help of theories borrowed from anthropology, sociology and psychology, cultural historians can extend the micro-analyses of the kind pioneered by Bynum into the broader economies of political, social, and religious violence.
Let me offer in conclusion a brief reflection on the undoing of violence. Like those for whom the violence escalating on the global stage today is overwhelming and scarcely comprehensible—a perilous unravelling of the world, or simply the latest episode in an eternal war between good and evil—the people of the later Middle Ages tended to see only a surplus of bloody misfortune, a ceaseless danse macabre stamping out all innocent life. We no longer wonder why this was an age notorious for extravagant and violent religious behaviour, why the “craving for the beautiful life” took such desperate forms, why its overheated eschatological fears exploded into millenarian insurrection, or why this age produced such baleful poetic laments. It was a time of endemic, intractable violence at nearly all levels of society.

Yet we betray the people of this time, I think, if we forget that the same civilization which found itself afflicted by war, insurgency, blood-feud and crime, also struggled valiantly to contain these outbreaks through a variety of peace-making initiatives. From the tenth-century experiments in protecting non-combatants like the “Peace of God” (Pax Dei) and the eleventh-century prohibition on feudal violence at certain sanctified times, the “Truce of God” (Treuga Dei), down to the efforts at creating territorial peace (Landfriede) and peace leagues (Landfriedensbündnis) in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—these programs and platforms, measures and laws for putting violence in check belong as much to the medieval economy of violence as violence itself. How peacemaking figured in late medieval religious culture, however, is a question that has hardly yet been broached. That a desperate craving for peace resonates strongly through this culture becomes glaringly obvious as soon as we tune ourselves to look for it. “The future is wholeness,” according to Bynum, not only for the dismembered martyr of history and legend, but also, by implication, for the fragmented subject voluntarily immersed in the devotional spectacle of sacrificial pain. Violence has no cultural meaning without its opposite in view, however utopian the latter may be.

Some of the historic efforts to control or even “cure” violence succeeded, we know, only in spawning new forms of violence more virulent than what came before. Others were self-consciously—and therefore paradoxically—dipped in the blood of atonement. When the flagellants appeared wielding their whips in imitatio christi, diverting the “scourge” of God’s punishment upon their own bodies, they were applying a routine pre-modern distinction between good violence, necessary to put human spiritual affairs in order, and bad violence, capable of sowing disorder. Audiences grasped the difference. Before they were persecuted as millenarian radicals, the flagellants were missionary peacemakers. For a
brief time they succeeded in settling scores among Italy’s major warring factions, compelling consensus with an activist violence of unmatched spiritual prestige. By aiming this performative, sacrificial violence like a living vaccine against the virus of intractable social and cosmic violence, they were articulating a notion as paradoxical and illusory as it is persistent: that only violence can put an end to violence once and for all. In doing so they were obeying the reproach of Albrecht Dürer’s imploring Man of Sorrows when he speaks the lines, “Now, friend, let peace be between us.” And yet, through a simultaneity of opposites, the Man of Sorrows appeared to his supplicants, Caroline Bynum reminds us, as both a living god of reconciliation and an atavistic icon of bloody persecution.

Notes

1 This is a slightly enlarged version of the comment delivered at the German Historical Institute on 8 November 2001.


6 This family of devotional images also commanded a range of sepulchral and funereal associations which are today largely overlooked by scholars interested exclusively in its service to Passion mysticism; for these related contexts the foundational study is Romuald Bauerreis, Pie Jesu. Das Schmerzensmann-bild und sein Einfluss auf die mittelalterliche Frömmigkeit. (Munich: Widmann, 1931), esp. 87–91.

7 An analysis of these stereotypes, or an explication of their operations as signs, would take us far afield; I consider there to be eight principal stereotypes of violence in the domain of visual representation: armed conflict; physical attacks by individuals or groups; judicial torture, mutilation and execution; bodily disfigurement; wounds; blood; expressions of pain; and weapons. For a discussion of these in the context of late medieval Crucifixion iconography, see my The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe (London: Reaktion Books, 1999), esp. 69–125.


11 From the Lignum vitae (Tree of Life), quoted in Denise Despres, Ghostly Sights: Visual Meditation in Late-Medieval Literature (Norman, Oklahoma: Pilgrim, 1989), 26–7.


13 Bynum noted only in passing the connection between eucharistic devotion and antagonism toward Jews in Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 64; in her sprawling critique Kathleen Biddick (“Genders, Bodies, Borders: Technologies of the Visible,” Speculum 68 [1993]: 389–418, esp. 400–08), faults Bynum for not properly situating the imagery used in the plates for Holy Feast within the “intense, popular propagandizing about sacred and polluted blood” which undergirded anti-Jewish accusations and attacks on Jewish communities during this period.

14 Published in Nuremberg in 1511 as Passio domini nostri Jesu per Fratrem Cheldonium collecta cum figuris Alberti Dureri, the booklet was the completion of a project Dürer began with seven Passion woodcuts made between 1497 and 1500; for reproductions, see The Complete Woodcuts of Albrecht Dürer, ed. Willi Kurth (New York: Crown, 1946), no. 214. A new edition with commentary appears in Jordan Kantor, Dürer’s Passions (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2000).


17 “The sacred consists in all those forces whose dominance over man increases or seems to increase in proportion to man’s effort to master them. Tempests, forest fires, and plagues, among other phenomena, may be classified as sacred. Far outranking these, however, though in a far less obvious manner, stands human violence—violence seen as something exterior to man and henceforth as a part of all the other outside forces that threaten mankind. Violence is the heart and secret soul of the sacred” (Violence and the Sacred, p. 31).

18 Ibid. p. 2.
19 Ibid. 10.


21 Hale proceeds from a simpler model than mine, identifying four categories of violence: personal, group, organized illegitimate and organized legitimate violence. “All these categories were recognized, and seen to be interconnected, in the Renaissance.” See his “Violence in the Late Middle Ages: A Background,” in Violence and Civil Disorder in Italian Cities 1200–1500, ed. Lauro Martines (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), pp. 19–37, both quotes on 36.


23 I borrow the term from an exemplary study of this kind, David Nirenberg, Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages (Princeton: University Press, 1996). Also see the pioneering study by Natalie Zemon Davis, “The Rites of Violence,” in Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974), 152–87, which sees religious violence “related . . . less to the pathological than to the normal” (186).


26 The conditions and impulses of local, urban massacres must also be distinguished from those undertaken by roving popular armies of Judenschläger, as happened in the Rhineland during the first crusade of 1096, during the so-called “Rintfleisch” massacres of 1298 in Franconia, and the so-called “Armleder” uprising of 1336–8, which began in Franconia and spread into Bavaria and Lower Austria. For the 1096 events, see the essays in Alfred Haucke, ed., Juden und Christen zur Zeit der Kreuzzüge (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke, 1999); on the latter two persecutions, which resulted in the formation of numerous Holy Blood cults and pilgrimages, the definitive study is Friedrich Lotter, “Hostienfrevelvorwurf und Blutwunderfälschung bei den Judenverfolgungen von 1298 (‘Rintfleisch’) und 1336–1338 (‘Armleder’),” in Falschungen im Mittelalter. Internationaler Kongreß der Monumenta Germaniae Historica München, 16.–19. September 1986 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1988), pt. 5, pp. 533–83.


29 See my *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel*, op. cit., 142–57.


33 The *Treuga Dei*, for example, succeeded only in lending a newly sacral character to the feudal fighting it henceforth restricted to permissable times—thus crusading violence was not far behind; see Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Feudal War and Monastic Peace: Cluniaic Liturgy as Ritual Aggression,” *Viator* 2 (1971): 129–157, here 156.
The year 2001 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the German Studies Association (GSA). Besides celebrating and looking toward the future, it is also an occasion for going back in time and reflecting on the beginnings of the association, how it developed over the decades, and what it has meant to scholars. GHI Research Fellows Raimund Lammersdorf and Vera Lind discussed these questions with two scholars long active in the GSA, Professor Mary Nolan, chair of the history department at New York University (NYU) and a specialist in modern German history, and Professor Frank Trommler, who teaches German literature at the University of Pennsylvania and served as President of the GSA in 1991–92. Professor Gerald R. Kleinfeld (Arizona State), the Executive Director of the GSA since its founding in 1976 and editor of the German Studies Review from 1978 to 2001, spoke with Lammersdorf and Lind about the GSA’s beginnings and development and shared his thoughts about its future.

Nolan, Trommler, and Kleinfeld were interviewed separately last fall. Their comments have been organized around six broad topics that emerged from all three interviews: the development of the GSA; the GSA as an interdisciplinary forum; gender issues within the GSA and as a topic of research in German studies; trends in teaching and student interest in German studies; and German and American approaches to German studies.

1. Looking Back at Twenty-Five Years of the German Studies Association

What was the driving force behind the founding of the association? What were its original goals? How did people become involved with the GSA? How did the membership develop? How was the GSA financed? How have the different scholarly disciplines within the GSA worked together in the last twenty-five years? What has the GSA meant for each discipline?

Kleinfeld: When the GSA was founded we were founded as an organization of scholars in German literature and German history. My idea was that we had more in common with one another than German historians have in common with, say, historians of Latin American history or Germanists with professors of English literature. What we had in common
was Germany, Austria, the German-speaking world of Europe to which we brought different perspectives, approaches, and methodologies. We also had in common that the major organizations in the field did not offer us a sufficient opportunity to develop our interests. In the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the American Historical Association (AHA) the space in their conferences and journals devoted to Germany was very small and so, in order to develop ourselves, to talk, to have a community of scholars, we needed to meet as scholars on our own and in our own way. So the Western Association of German Studies was founded. It started as a Western Association because the universities here are more distant from one another. Yet, within a year, we found that we had members from the East Coast who soon constituted the majority. Obviously, there was a real need felt all over the country for such an organization. So we became a national organization, except in name, very quickly. At the beginning of the 1980’s we added political scientists to the mix, and also recognized that we are a national association, and changed our name to the GSA. And the association has gone on from there.

The GSA has from the very beginning encouraged young people. Along with senior scholars, we also have a very high participation of assistant professors and the lower ranks of the academic enterprise. This participation is not only passive, but active. There are no cliques in this organization and you can very easily be noticed and certainly be tapped for something within the organization and suddenly find yourself on a committee. We have had assistant professors who have been on the Executive Committee and on the Program Committee and in various other ways, so that it is an extremely democratic and open institution. This is one of the things that I wanted to ensure, that the association remains open. If you ask about anything that I’m proud of it’s the openness of the association, a lack of feeling that it is an insider group.

The German Studies Review is an open journal too. When I founded the GSR the only journal in German history was five years late in getting articles published. If you submitted a manuscript it was falling into a black hole. I was able to organize our journal in such a way that a scholar could get an article in print in the GSR in six months. Even if an article took a long time to review it could be published within three or four months after that. This is very rapid publication, and it gives an opportunity for people to have their research in front of their colleagues very quickly. Peer review was important, blind review was essential, then the breadth of what we offer plus 60 or 70 book reviews per issue—that’s 180 book reviews each year, 18 to 20 manuscripts a year—and the bunte Mischung, the fact that we could offer everything from something on the study of the body to something on the body politic, meant that the journal could make a real contribution.
The GSA has always been both multi- and interdisciplinary. This means that people research and present papers on topics that reflect their own disciplines, and also on interdisciplinary topics. The association has encouraged both. We have to recognize disciplinary methodologies as well as the role of departments within traditional university structures. However, we have much in common, and many themes lend themselves to interdisciplinary study. Professionally, too, we find interests across disciplines. Some people would like the interdisciplinary nature to be strengthened. Others are comfortable with separate research.

There are at least three or four different concepts of German studies represented in the United States and Canada today. The GSA does not attempt to impose a single concept, but it has developed guidelines to encourage working together. It was German Departments that initially encouraged interdisciplinarity. But, historians have also been interested in cooperation in research. Gender studies is an example of that.

The finances of the GSA are based upon membership dues, and there are also about 25 institutions that pay about $ 150 (it varies according to the type of institution) a year to the GSA for an “Institutional Membership.” For a very long period of time we did receive financial support from what was called StADaF, Ständiger Ausschuß Deutsch als Fremdsprache, through the embassy. This was designed for three things: first, to pay for the travel of some Germans to our conference; second, to pay a small subsidy of a few thousand dollars to the journal; third, to pay for a teachers’ workshop for public school teachers in whatever region we met that would take place on the Thursday before our annual conference.

That was going on for a long time until about six years ago when the money ran out. We then applied for a substantial sum in the form of a Marshall Plan Dank grant from European Recovery Program (ERP) funds to support our conferences over a three year period.

I suggested that we ask our members and the people who attended our conferences to make voluntary donations to the GSA as a Dank for the Dank. Well, they did, and donated over $ 200,000. We put that money together with money that I had saved in administration costs of the Association over the years into an Endowment Fund. Out of the earnings we have since funded the travel of Germans and participants from third countries to the annual conference. We now have no financial support other than our own income. On occasion, we receive grants like the DM 30,000 25th anniversary gift from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) to support East European attendance.

Our cooperation with various institutions and other scholarly organizations is excellent. We are a member of the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS), where we represent the German-language region of Europe. In the ACLS we are able to represent the spectrum of
interest of our members in a broad group of 62 organizations that ranges from the American Political Science Association (APSA) to the American Economic Society to the American Historical Association. In this organization there are 62 executive directors, and we meet twice a year to network, and we also exchange practical and scholarly information. Through the ACLS we are talking with the National Humanities Alliance, which is a major arm for working together with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. Thus the GSA exerts influence on behalf of German studies across the spectrum of the scholarly community. This has been important, and useful. Jennifer Michaels, our present Delegate, is a member of the Delegate’s Steering Committee. The GSA has also provided advisory support to the German Historical Institute and advised R. Gerald Livingston when he founded the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at the Johns Hopkins University. The GSA is affiliated with the Association for the Study of German Politics of the United Kingdom, has been represented at conferences at the Center for German Studies at the University of Birmingham, England, and pursued contact with specialists in the study of Germany in Eastern Europe. The GSA also supported the continuation of the Max Planck Institute for History in Germany. After German unification, there was a major involvement of the GSA in integrating the universities of the eastern Länder into the international academic scene, and numerous scholars, students, and university administrators were invited to GSA conferences.

**Trommler:** I have been with the GSA since 1982. My impression was that the first intellectual impulse to meet in an interdisciplinary association came from historians. I had the feeling that historians of German history in their large departments and organizations looked for a more hospitable organizational environment so they were particularly forceful and inventive members of the GSA. I remember that in the mid-80’s it became avant-garde for Germanists to go to the GSA because it was something that was to be discovered and used. We Germanists were also not too pleased with our organizational support. The MLA is a huge organization that didn’t give us enough outlets and attention and the American Association of Teachers of German (AATG) was geared primarily toward high school and college teachers of the German language. We wanted interdisciplinary outlets.

The intensity with which interdisciplinarity was thought about in the 1980’s came also from the need of German departments to make friends in other departments and to branch out and to remodel the field in connection with other methodologies and other departments. The best contribution at that time were the curricular guidelines that the GSA
produced in the mid-1980’s according to which undergraduate curricula could be revamped in German departments. I think that the German studies movement helped save a substantial number of usually small German departments in the late 80’s and early 90’s. They learned to interconnect with other colleagues and currents in the academy and did not have to rely solely on the teaching of literature and language, though this is still the basic function, the bread and butter of German departments. Gerry Kleinfeld and his colleagues built this great structure of annual conferences and the GSR. For many of the younger people in training and in the faculties in the 80’s, the GSA was the organization through which they could pursue their interests beyond German literature in a national frame of reference.

In the late 80’s when I became Vice President and then President, we spoke about the ideal composition of 40% historians, 40% Germanists, 10% political science, and 10% art historians and colleagues of other fields. This balance between historians and Germanists was something we tried to maintain. It probably still exists.

The GSA is also trying to have a constant balance between what we call democratic and elitist currents. We want the prominent colleagues to lecture, talk, be part of this, but we also always want to be open to younger people. There is at times discomfort among the younger ones if too much weight is given to the more prominent colleagues and vice versa. This is something that Gerry Kleinfeld has been able to combine and balance—aside from many other credits I give him. He has been stern in steering the democratic course.

2. Networking

When we asked about the role of the GSA within the field of German Studies, all three interviewees said networking was central. Its annual conference, they suggested, is the most important occasion for networking.

Kleinfeld: The GSA offers networking within disciplines and among the disciplines, which I think is really very good. We have grown in this way and this continues to the present time. The annual GSA Conference is a significant opportunity for networking. People meet, often across the disciplines, and develop projects together, make new contacts for a variety of purposes. The Conferences have become large enough, and have so many foreign scholars present, that networking is a significant feature.

An example of the networking nature of the GSA and the breadth of the GSA is that the British Association for the Study of German Politics has asked to be affiliated with us and they want to have an annual representation at our conference. They literally say that this is the confer-
ence on German politics. We’ve had about forty sessions that had in one way or another something to do with German politics at our conference. This is enormous, and there aren’t conferences like that in Germany. The conference is unbureaucratic and it offers the opportunity for a free exchange of ideas. The format of the panels calls for a moderator, presenters, and then a commentator, plus discussion which makes for a critical format. But we also have no theme for our conferences. We’ve had some trouble with some older senior colleagues in Germany who wonder: Shouldn’t the conference have a theme? There is no one theme for 800 people, what kind of theme are you going to have for 800 people? The objective of this really is to give a forum for ongoing research on the German-speaking region of Europe. And I think that is very, very significant.

The aftermath of September 11 has shown that there is a greater need for a dialogue. I think the GSA has an opportunity to foster that dialogue. We are the only transatlantic network. When you think that there are 90 German professors and more than a dozen Austrians and occasionally also Swiss who come to our conference and that from the very beginning German has been an equal language to English at the conferences—German is in fact the first language because everybody is expected to know German but not everybody is expected to speak English—you can have discussions going on in either language. When you talk about the decline of an academic exchange the GSA stands out as the major transatlantic venue and certainly our British colleagues have also seen it as such.

3. Interdisciplinarity, or: From Germanistik to German Studies

Each of the interviewees stressed the importance of the GSA’s interdisciplinary orientation. The association has been instrumental in transforming traditional Germanistik into the much broader, multidisciplinary field of German studies, which has expanded scholarly horizons in each associated discipline.

Trommler: Interdisciplinarity is at the core of what the GSA should facilitate. The particular impulse to make the organization a catalyst originated from organized panels with an interdisciplinary approach so that historians and Germanists actually learned from each other. I was and am much engaged in this. I know how hard it is to bring people from different disciplines together, yet what is not organized doesn’t function. This is always the big problem in the GSA that it is seen as an interdisciplinary organization, but if it is not thoughtfully pursued, interdisciplinarity does not deliver.

At the same time the claim for interdisciplinarity has opened the door for a lot of dilettantism. Some people thought they could base a talk or an
article about the mood of East and West Germans after the fall of the Wall on six weeks’ reading of Die Zeit or the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung. The issue of quality has to be constantly addressed in the GSA as well as in departments. We have to be more rigid in our selection. Historians have a strong and admirable measure of good work according to archival sources. Literary critics have other criteria. Their sources are the texts. The two disciplines in their different views of texts can compliment each other and this is something that should also be used as quality control.

**Nolan:** It’s not always clear what interdisciplinary work means. Do you learn a lot? I think absolutely. At the annual weekend meetings of the German Women’s History Study Group with women in German language and literature, (which the DAAD has generously supported) we jointly pick a topic and then historians propose some articles and the Germanists propose other articles and we read and discuss them. I think that we learn a lot that each of us separately will take back to our teaching and our own work.

I tend to suspect that if people say you can only do interdisciplinary work fruitfully if you have expertise in each discipline it is a way of preventing any kind of collaboration that will go beyond the disciplines. It seems to me the purpose is not to have each side replicate what the other knows but to engage in a conversation that asks how far can we go thinking from one perspective, how far from another, how do we need to think in new ways to get beyond the limits of both, even as we build on their strengths. In my experience it works best if there’s some sort of substantive problem, some sort of theme, rather than a more abstract focus on methodology or theory.

**Trommler:** The field in general has undergone significant developments. The traditional Germanistik as far as I experienced it in the late 60’s and early 70’s in the United States was strongly influenced by the German model. Not least because of the political developments in the twentieth century, the wars between the United States and Germany, German departments had been marginalized and isolated in the academy. This is one of the reasons why the close connection with Germany made sense because this is the country where Germanists were published, where visiting professors could be invited, where American students were supposed to spend some time.

Since the mid-80’s an Americanization of Germanistik has taken shape, promoted by a younger generation of American-born scholars who realized how big the ocean is between the two continents and that in order to keep Germanistik and German as a field of study interesting for young Americans they would have to open it towards different methodologies and a different identity. Americanization means a genuine ap-
proach to the foreign country that encompasses more connections and methodological reflections, in particular from feminism, cultural anthropology, postcolonialism, and new historicism. Traditional Germanistik would not have been able to accommodate these influences. Not to forget, however, that the impulses which have transformed American Germanistik didn’t come from Americanization alone. The first step was taken by younger Germanists, sometimes German-born, in the late 60’s and early 70’s who turned towards a social history of literature. The drive in the 80’s towards German studies was a way of reintegrating the somewhat isolated field of Germanistik within the academy. These developments have created concern especially among the older generation of colleagues who have maintained a German-oriented Germanistik. Some colleagues from Germany who attended GSA conferences have said this is not our Germanistik anymore. I wouldn’t say that all younger colleagues followed this trajectory, but as a development it became ubiquitous because it is intellectually stimulating and helps integrate German studies in the intellectual discourse in the academy which itself underwent a great transformation from the older pattern in the 70’s and 80’s.

Nolan: The identification of many historians who went to graduate school in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s was less with one geographic area than with themes and approaches, such as the new labor history or new social history. When people thought about National Socialism they were using the paradigm of fascism and trying to draw on various Marxist theories and both critique and use them. It was also a time when being interdisciplinary tended to mean that if you did labor history or if you were concerned with the state and capitalist development you were talking to political scientists and sociologists who were very historically oriented. You wouldn’t be talking to people in literature. There was a real bifurcation between people doing German literature then and people doing German history. And you’d go to social science history rather than German studies. I used to visit both the Social Science History Association and the GSA. At some point I switched as the more interesting conversations were going on in German studies.

Kleinfeld: One fundamental difference between history and literature was that by the 1960’s and 1970’s textbooks on German history would stop at 1945 while Germanists were talking about authors like Günter Grass or Stephan Heym. Historians would say, oh well, you know there aren’t any archives open and the only thing after that is political science and we don’t want to do that kind of research. The GSA put the study of Germany since 1945 on the map. Historians are now also interested in this period. The GSA enabled, encouraged, and helped historians to teach and do research about post-1945 Germany for the first time and provided a
venue for political scientists who worked on current Germany when it was difficult to find space at the American Political Science Association.

But the GSA also encouraged the study of the GDR because from the very beginning we knew that the Germanists in the association were very interested in the literature of the GDR. And by offering research on the GDR very early on we were able to focus historians and political scientists as well on the study of the GDR. We even invited people from the GDR to the GSA. They came from all walks of life. We had SED people, members of the Ehrenkommission, and all sorts of individuals. And after the fall of the Wall we continued with an examination of the integration process. I invited student representatives from the East, people from the university administrations, even people from the state governments to come over and speak about what was going on in the East. As a result, during the first summer after the collapse of SED rule I conservatively estimate that 800 GSA members were in the East. This is an enormous number. And the amount of research that came out of that was quite substantial.

Certainly, historians, Germanists, and political scientists have all become more interdisciplinary over the past two decades, and the GSA has played a role in this. Sometimes, the advocates of interdisciplinarity are surprised at the successes they have achieved. While some German departments have only renamed themselves, others have truly striven for a broader concept of German studies. Even the renaming is an effort to say that they are a part of this new trend.

4. Women and Gender

Feminism, issues of gender equality, and gender as a focus of research have come to play a major role within the field of German studies in the twenty-five years since the GSA was founded. The inclusion of women within academia has also been an important concern.

Nolan: When I went to graduate school, nobody worked on women and gender. There was only one full-time woman on the faculty at Columbia, and she was in African history. As I was writing my dissertation, the women’s movement began to get going and have a visible presence, but I never took a course on women and gender. When I got to Harvard, I was one of two women, and this was in a department of about 55. Again nobody did women and gender. There was an adjunct who taught an American women’s history course, and then in my last year there, which was 1980, I taught an undergraduate European women’s history course. That was really a taste of the bad old days, of what it was like to really be a token woman.
NYU has been a much better situation. For reasons that were never quite clear, when I got there in 1980 my department had hired four new women and they already had two and they found themselves suddenly with six women, all of whom had had some involvement with either teaching or themselves researching on issues of women (one didn’t use the term gender then). Some men were a little bewildered, but others were interested in exploring women’s history as well. We were able to do a lot with that in the department, more so outside of European history than within European history. But I think that for most women of my generation in this country, you could fall into one of these relatively happy situations by sometime in the 1980’s. You were not likely to be the token woman and there was a critical mass of women working on issues of women and gender somewhere in the institution. At NYU, it happened to be my department. NYU was totally retrograde about any kind of women’s studies program, but within the department, it worked well.

One of the things that made it much easier for historians of women in Germany was the German Women’s History Study Group that has now been going for about twenty-two years. It meets about once a month in New York City, and mostly we read one another’s work. It has been both a real intellectual stimulus and support network for my generation. About fifteen years ago we were able to get money to run a big conference on gender and German history and then to run some workshops for graduate students. Some of those graduate students have now finished up and gotten jobs and tenure and are now part of the study group. So that’s been a very interesting inter-generational support network. And about ten years ago, we started meeting one weekend a year with a group of women from German literature and German studies.

Today, I think women have a good chance of getting jobs, although some institutions take diversity more seriously than others and it really depends on the complexion of particular departments. It still tends to be women rather than men who work on women and gender with some notable exceptions. In an undergraduate class on women’s history, only five of forty or fifty students will be men. I’m teaching a graduate class with Linda Gordon, who’s an American Women’s historian, and we have nineteen students, of whom two are men. This is pretty typical. I don’t know how it is in literature, I don’t think it’s much better. More men are involved among those working on queer theory and sexuality.

Kleinfeld: When I wrote the GSA By-Laws in 1976 they were gender-neutral. Which national organization was gender-neutral in the early 1970’s? This was not by accident but had been my intention. So we have always been an organization in which women and men play active roles. This is not an organization dominated by men, it has never been. We’ve
had many times a majority of women on the executive committee, once we had an executive committee made up almost entirely of women. We have also been very active in promoting this, we have made several representations to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft about the lack of women recipients of their grants.

Gender studies is a very active field within the GSA, as you can see by the number of sessions at our conferences and articles in the GSR. In this, as well as other areas, the GSA has been able to promote the cutting edge of research. I should stress that our conference program committees change in membership each year, and that no one person is responsible for conference development. The democratic nature of the association ensures that we have the variety and openness that exists.

5. Germany and American German Studies

German studies in the U.S. will always have a special relationship to the work being done in Germany. What are the differences between German and American approaches to German studies?

Trommler: I found that the interest in other methodologies was and is strong among a certain group of German Germanisten. However, the institutional setup in Germany is still adverse to interdisciplinarity as it is practiced here. In the German university, each discipline has a sort of telos, its history is set in a particular way, Germanistik is set in a particular way, while in the United States you are more or less a member of the faculty or of the academy and you have a label on your forehead: I am talking to you as a member of the German department, or I am talking to you as a member of the English department. If people have the right interdisciplinary interest, practicing it as a sort of intellectual stance or Haltung, they can cross disciplinary boundaries easier than in the German context. The openness is there in Germany but the institutional setup makes it harder to talk to the other and make it part of your research and your career.

I don’t know whether the American setup can serve as a model for German Germanistik. I doubt it because the American distinction between graduate and undergraduate studies infuses the overall setup with a lot of institutional reflection on different forms of mediating the foreign culture. This mediation has become a genuine part of the study, also graduate study. And it is an intellectually and pedagogically exciting part that radiates beyond the traditional parameters of research. These traditional parameters have shaped, in their German form, the self-understanding of the whole discipline yet tend to disregard matters of mediation. The movement of multiculturalism which became part of the
internal cultural wars in the United States has given younger Americans
the feeling that if they concern themselves with a foreign culture intellec-
tually they find new and different tools for defining themselves as
Americans. In former decades the study of German culture meant some-
thing different since European culture generally had a higher standing.
Nowadays the American component is conceptually more weighty. After
cultural anthropology established itself, the anthropological approach to
the other culture became a crucial tool. You can use it towards your own
culture but also towards the other and this, I think, doesn’t come through
the established German *Germanistik*. In Germany, it’s a *Lehrfach*, German
is the language of communication. If the look from the outside—from
German studies in the U.S.—has inspired German *Germanisten* to reflect
on what they are doing within Germany it might have done its job. I
doubt whether it has.

**Nolan:** The most obvious thing one can say is that the history of women
and gender is still much more marginalized in Germany than it is here
and women are much more marginal to the historical profession. There
are the token full professor (C 4) women among the historians, some of
them very recent. But there’s never been the sort of critical mass of
women, and in some cases men, in individual departments and in various
associations doing gender topics to create a culture in which it is not only
acceptable to do that kind of work but considered essential so that wheth-
er you do it or not, you read it, you know about it, you take it seriously.
I think that the most fruitful exchanges between Americans working on
German history and Germans have taken place in the areas of labor and
social history, *Alltagsgeschichte*, where there’s probably been more diver-
gence and much more interest on the American side than perhaps the
German side or on questions of memory, identity, and German-Jewish
relations. The bulk of that scholarship has come from this country and, to
a lesser extent, from Israel.

6. Trends in German Studies at American Universities

*In spite of its modernization German studies has to work consistently to main-
tain its standing at American universities. What are the current trends in
German studies departments? Which topics attract students’ attention?*

**Kleinfeld:** There are trends that go in waves but people need to have a
focus on something, we can’t all be generalists or globalists. Who in a
department is a globalist? I think that the study of Germany in univer-
sities is naturally important in order to be able to understand Europe. The
problem on American campuses can be seen in three different ways since
we have three different disciplines. Departments of German or German
studies face a particular problem in the decline of student interest in the study of literature. There is now more interest in cultural studies or German studies within German departments. History departments face a problem in the multiplicity of different things that history departments want to do, whether you still do Germany, as a country study, or whether you want to have cross-country subjects, such as social movements, economic developments, and such. The same thing is true for political science, where country studies are declining, and more interest is shown in theory, international relations, comparative studies, and so on. But, there is still a significant place for the study of Germany, and a considerable student interest across disciplines.

It will never parallel the awful state of American studies in Germany. There are only about six chairs of United States history in Germany, and fewer specialists on American politics. There are a number of scholars in Germany who teach American studies, but the lack in history and politics is unfortunate. In the United States we have a lot more German history, almost every institution has a German historian, almost every institution teaches the German language and has a German studies component. There will continue to be room for this. But there should be more American history and politics at German universities.

**Nolan:** I’ve moved toward trying to think about various transnational and global connections for a range of reasons. One is simply very pragmatic. We have a very small graduate program with very few people who are doing European history. I’m interested in training all my students to think about how to situate the particular area in which they work in larger contexts. I think it’s the only way they’re going to get jobs and it’s a way to make people who are working on other regions and nation-states attend to Europe. And I think they don’t as much anymore. European history was absolutely central when I was in graduate school and started teaching, and now it’s not, for a number of complicated reasons. I also have been trying to think about transnational, global histories because I think in fact the emphasis on the nation-state has blinded people to all sorts of connections and exchanges—of people, of goods, of culture—that one misses when one focuses on the nation-state. That said, I don’t think we are moving toward a global world in which the nation-state is going to disappear in favor of multinationals, non-governmental organizations, the International Monetary Fund, hybridity or whatever. The nation-state is still a key mediator and one has to find a way to both look at the nation-state but in new ways and to look at the forces that shaped it in new ways. I think there were some very interesting panels at the recent GSA meeting, some coming more from the literary side and some from the historical side, that were trying to do that through discus-
sions of Americanization, complex debates about consumption and advertising, or through looking at empire.

Political scientists and sociologists, particularly the ones who now do game theory, have a tendency to think you don’t need to know much about particular places. You can just spin theories or elaborate equations. But people who do literature, cultural studies, and history put a great deal of emphasis on knowing the language, knowing the culture, knowing about particular places. I believe that one thinks better about transnational, regional, global inter-connections and exchanges if one actually knows about concrete places. One needs to move in different milieus, one needs one sort of regional or national area and at the same time to be part of other kinds of conversations with people who are not looking just at that area.

In this country, while interest in Third-World and Asian studies has risen, American history still remains the dominant field almost everywhere and, insofar as fields have shrunk, it’s been at the expense of Europe, just as history departments in Germany are even more unbalanced in favor of German history. And if there were changes, it would probably come at the expense of Amerikanistik and not German history. That said, Germany remains a country in which Americans are very interested, German history will remain important but it’s not going to occupy the center stage it did in the 1960’s and 70’s.

Particularly undergraduates are still interested in the Nazi period. When you teach twentieth-century German history or comparative fascism, you can count on getting a really good enrollment. Some of these students will be young men interested in military history, but a lot have much broader interests. Among the graduate students, I think the interests are becoming much broader in theme and period. If there is a hot field or overlapping set of fields, that students at least in modern German history are doing, it would be post-1945 and usually comparative with a lot of work being done on consumption and the economy. Other topics include women and gender going back to the late nineteenth century, fascism, insofar as it’s a question of memory or displaced persons in the immediate post-war period, and German-Jewish history.

**Trommler:** The Holocaust is definitely part of German studies. I found in the 80’s that this was also one of the impulses for me to work more interdisciplinarily. Concentrating on the Nazi phenomenon as an experience within German culture necessitated a look at the literary reflection in the post-war period. This is where literary historians had something to offer. It was not until the archives were opened in the late 80’s that historians moved into the post-war era which had been part of literary curricula for some time.
The enormous success of Bernhard Schlink’s *The Reader* shows how important the topic is. This best-seller was certainly a phenomenon that has helped us. Nazism was seen through the eyes of a person decades after World War II. That’s what was accessible to American students. I still use it.

At the same time the young German literature, the new generation of writers especially in Berlin and Vienna helps build bridges. For many younger American professors and teachers contemporary German literature has a strong interest. They know the authors, they invite them. I would also single out the new Jewish-German literature that receives at times more attention in the United States, where a sizable contingent of Jewish Americans teach German. The development of Jewish communities in Germany, especially in Berlin, are observed with much interest here. Some people still do Baroque poetry but less in the framework of German studies. It is one of the more delicate points of German studies that it has been conceived as focusing mainly on the twentieth century. Over the course of twenty-five years we have always included earlier periods as part of the interdisciplinary venture. It succeeded for the nineteenth century but less so for the eighteenth and earlier centuries, because there is a rather small audience.

**Kleinfeld:** We developed very early a set of curriculum guidelines that would be useful for German studies in the broad sense. What we wanted to do was to allow for the possibility of different concepts of German studies and to encourage interdisciplinarity. But we also wanted to encourage the study of the German language. Historians especially were interested in this because you can’t write history without going to the archives. So the Germanists found that the historians were an ally for the study of the language. But, some German departments were often renamed into German Studies departments, without significant changes in content or curriculum. Frank Trommler has always encouraged interdisciplinarity and contacts among those who use different methodologies.

The GSA can do a lot to support young professors in their careers. We also have our conferences move from city to city and in doing so we can highlight what is going on in that region. This is one reason why we don’t meet only in Washington, D.C. The establishment of Centers for Excellence that were started with German funding at Harvard, Berkeley, Georgetown, and other universities has been beneficial, but you really have to have something more than that. Each institution has its role. Graduate programs need undergraduate institutions as well, to receive students, and to have places for their graduates to teach. Suppose you are going to graduate somebody from Harvard. Where are they going to teach? They are not going to teach at Harvard. And, you cannot just have
German studies at a few graduate institutions or even a small number of undergraduate institutions. Some very excellent research is done by scholars at undergraduate institutions, and the GSA brings them together.

7. The U.S. Job Market in German Studies

The precarious standing of German studies in American academia is most strongly felt on the job market. How can one encourage graduate students to choose German studies? What are the responsibilities and strategies in teaching marketable skills? How will German studies be taught in the future?

Trommler: In order to entice Americans to invest their life and career in the study of a foreign language, literature, and culture, one has to offer as much as possible. Therefore German organizations like the DAAD, Goethe Institute, or Humboldt Foundation have been very, very important. Within the career itself, for instance when you are an assistant professor in a German department, you are on your own yet you can still rely on the network of supporting institutions in Germany. The so-called Mittlerorganisationen have provided structural underpinnings of careers here. And as most Germanists usually work within small departments, very often by themselves, organizational networks like the GSA and the American Association of Teachers of German play a crucial role.

When we compare notes with the French or Italians or with other European languages, they say that the German foreign language contingent is well organized. We owe this both to professional organizations and to support from the Federal Republic, from Austria, and at times from Switzerland. When American Germanists get professionally excited, it might come from the beauty of a Rilke poem. But it might also come from the beauty of a DAAD fellowship.

Nolan: You have to be both anchored in a particular geographic area and then do the regional to try to keep young Ph.D.’s from falling through the cracks. That said, I think it is always a problem to move beyond the traditional definitions of both regions and disciplinary boundaries. There are some programs that offer interdisciplinary Ph.D.’s, and I think those people have a lot of trouble. You are better off doing interdisciplinary work from within a discipline. The academic world changes very, very slowly. That’s the downside of tenure—you can’t shake it up all at once. But I think as Europe, and not just Germany, gets displaced in history departments our students will be better positioned in the job market if they are looking more broadly and think about empire or about Atlantic connections.

Trommler: In the early 90’s we thought we only had to put up a picture of the Brandenburg Gate with young people on the Wall and students
would come to our courses. In the early twenty-first century we know that this doesn’t suffice anymore. It became apparent that while we immersed ourselves in German studies, we neglected the language dimension. If German survives in the academy it is based on combining good language teaching with cultural and political content already in first and second year. We also have to provide access to the Central European and German-speaking countries in courses. One of the most important tools are internships and junior years abroad. In this way the German contingent fulfills its share in the internationalization of American universities. The pedagogical reforms in language teaching have been intensive. There was also an Americanization but it went much beyond German. For a younger person looking for a career in the early twenty-first century, what counts is a combination of excellent language pedagogy and a strong knowledge of literature and culture. This is something that I have tried to push in recent years. In other words, the German studies paradigm should not be seen as a guarantee for careers. It is increasingly important that people can show that they have been part of the professionalization of language teaching.

At the same time more courses are nowadays taught in English. In many departments it has been the only way to convince the deans that the German departments can generate enough enrollment. I teach a course on Kafka, Thomas Mann, and Hesse in English which has quite a large enrollment. I can expect that 10% of the students will go on to take German and will actually read Kafka in German. The student interest in Germany is often not so much based on the love of German language and literature but rather a matter of heritage which is very important and much underrated. Of those undergraduate students who go beyond the first two years and undertake serious studies of language and literature, I would say one third is heritage. Many people from German-American families, also Jewish-German-American families, think that the grandfather has spoken German, well, why shouldn’t I. We have to do more to solicit these students.

Also, many students want German as a language for their business. We have found that in the last five to eight years American business communities and business schools have at times been more supportive concerning foreign languages than deans because deans looked only at the enrollments while business schools looked also at the applicability of the language.

The ease with which younger people take up technological tools, networks, and outlets is most helpful in teaching another culture. At this moment I plead for even more attention for media and film. The German field is small and marginal within the academy and individual colleges. If there is a small department which often has only one or two standing
faculty and some lecturers, the media nowadays provide so much more of an intellectual environment through TV conferencing and through the internet that, if well-wired, the smallness can be overcome. Obviously language is taught best in a classroom and also in the personal encounter with the foreign culture. We always have to see to it that teachers use computers and the internet in an ancillary function and that we don’t lose the personal exchange of the classroom. When I teach a course I have a listserv, course material is on the web, but I make sure that the students have to show in their papers that they have gone to the library and used the traditional printed tools. Yet I am also convinced that students can expand their interest in German studies on their own through the creative use of the internet.

7. Excellence in Leadership: Gerald R. Kleinfeld and the GSA

Gerald R. Kleinfeld has been at the center of the GSA from its founding. He has been so closely identified with the GSA, many have a hard time imaging the GSA without him. Although Kleinfeld plans to step down eventually as the GSA’s executive director, he will continue working for the Association for a while yet.

Kleinfeld: Of course, I will retire. I don’t want to overstay my welcome, but I am not yet rushing out the door. I asked the executive committee to plan, and we all understood that we would need some kind of reorganization, both to reflect the growth and development of the association, and to provide for a smooth operation after I am gone. For example, it no longer makes sense that the executive director is also the editor of the journal, and we are large enough to support the idea of two people for those two jobs. And, with two people for those jobs, it was clear that the secretary-treasurer had to control membership functions. We now have so many committees, that the president had to generate committee memberships. The program committee needed to report to someone throughout its process. In other words, there were real organizational grounds for the structural development of the association. Some of these changes had already been introduced gradually, but we needed to institutionalize them, and put them in the By-Laws four years ago. They now provide for a shared leadership, what I like to call a quadriga, which fits the GSA very well. And in this quadriga the role of the various offices is very clearly defined. By giving up a good deal of what I previously was doing the next executive director can do a number of different organizational things. In other words, we have four key positions: president, editor, executive director, and secretary-treasurer. By dividing the functions, we make each position manageable, and encourage cooperation. The By-Laws provide for an executive council with the president, vice president (really
president-elect), executive director, secretary-treasurer, and past president. The executive committee continues to have the major policy-setting role. There are more than 45 individuals serving each year on quite a few different committees, all with clear responsibilities. In other words, the GSA is a well-structured organization, in which the executive director plays an important role, but we are so democratic that a successor can fit in. It is designed that way. Often, I will walk into the executive committee, and greet new members whom I have never met. I did this year, for example. It is definitely not an insider organization. On the other hand, I have not yet resigned and, although I have survived a heart attack, I am hoping that nobody is rushing to write an obituary. In the meantime, it is important to emphasize that we are democratic, and I am happy to work with other people who have decision-making authority and exercise it.

The challenges in a sense are to maintain and to support the study of the German-speaking parts of Europe in universities where it is under threat. For example we are looking very seriously at the State University at Albany which eliminated the department of German five years ago. And we would like to encourage SUNY Albany to have a German Studies department in the future. This is one of the things that I’d like to do.

We will continue to represent various interests and needs of our members and research on Germany at large. We want to keep the journal going, we want to keep the conference at a high level of quality, we want to keep our dues reasonably priced, and we want to provide our services. Our web page will be developed. We are going to use it for instant news. The web site has had 1,500 hits within four months. We have less than 2,000 members so the web page is going to be a major element in our future planning.

I’ve very much enjoyed doing my own research, I have enjoyed trying to help the membership, provide a venue for them and it’s been fun. But I will also turn this over, as I’ve turned over the editorship already to a successor.

We know that the GSA will go on. We don’t have a huge endowment but we have an endowment that can do some of the things we want. It’s not earning very much money now because of the interest rate and so we need more contributions to be able to do want we hope to do. I have regarded my role in the association as that of a servant of the profession and I haven’t sought to gain anything for myself out of it. I’ve stayed at Arizona State all these years. I look at the whole GSA as a success from the journal to the conferences, a success built by the members. I’ve just tried to be a facilitator. The articles made the journal a success, and the papers make the conference. I arrange for the rooms.
EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES ON THE WAR IN VIETNAM

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This essay argues that European perspectives on the Vietnam War were to a large degree informed by different national experiences with colonialism and decolonization. My intention is to illustrate how these experiences helped to shape British, French, and German world views that in turn underlay the reactions of these nations to the Vietnam War.

Our understanding of the process of decolonization has recently benefited from a considerable broadening of perspectives. The traditional examination of relations between center and periphery, colony and mother country, has been expanded to include both global political and economic structures and the domestic dynamics of colonial societies. In addition, Marc Frey has recently made a compelling case for carrying the study of decolonization beyond the formal transfer of power. Even more important for the context of this essay is a growing awareness of developments within European colonial states and of the interdependence between colonizer and colonized. If colonialism is, as Jürgen Osterhammel has argued, a reciprocal relationship, there must have also been a “decolonization of the colonizer” or, to put it positively, a “re-Europeanization of the (West) European great powers.” Thus, historians are beginning to notice and trace the impact of the reversal of a centuries-old pattern, namely, the return of European colonial settlers and administrators to their homelands, sometimes followed by a considerable number of the formerly colonized. Harry Goulbourne, for example, has shown how decolonisation crucially affected concepts of ethnicity and nationality in Britain, and he has rightly observed that “the post-imperial experience […] must […] be taken to be the opposite side of the post-colonial coin.”

Building on these insights, the basic premise of the following exposition is that this metropolitan experience of decolonization, its different character in Britain and France as well as its seeming absence in West Germany, played a major role in how these countries perceived American actions in Southeast Asia.

Britain—Godfather of Orderly Transitions

The British experience of decolonization has long been viewed as exceptional. A tradition of decolonization going back as far as the American
Revolution is generally seen to have informed pragmatic approaches that were able to direct the forces of Asian and African nationalism into evolutionary rather than revolutionary channels. The traces of this narrative were already apparent in the 1950s when the opposition Labour Party developed an intellectually coherent approach to decolonization, a vision that was essentially accepted by Conservative governments as well. India’s transition to statehood served as what might be called the founding myth of this approach and became the prime example of guiding a people to independence. At the same time, the idea—as George Boyce has put it—“that the empire was not declining but was merely being transformed” stood in the way of a fundamental reassessment of Britain’s position in the world. “What was Great Britain in the mid-twentieth century? Was she . . . the leader of the Commonwealth, a major European nation, America’s special partner . . . ?” The answer to these questions, formulated by former American Under-Secretary of State George Ball in the late 1960s, was that postwar British politicians chose to play all of these roles. That was indeed the only way to pretend that Britain was still a great world power. Cultivating a “special relationship” with the United States alleviated the sting of imperial decline and added weight in the councils of Europe and the Commonwealth. Conversely, leadership in the Commonwealth and in Europe would increase Britain’s importance for the United States, allowing the United Kingdom, as Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin hoped, “to apply a brake to American policy if necessary.”

These hopes were soon to be frustrated in Southeast Asia. There, the victory of the Chinese Communists, their immediate diplomatic recognition of Ho Chi Minh’s Democratic Republic of Vietnam (with the Soviets and their satellites following suit), and the outbreak of the Korean War had molded the region in the image of the Cold War. Sinophobia and a Manichean understanding of the global ideological struggle soon led the United States to conflate communism and anticolonialism. The British, on the other hand, were not as inclined to view developments in Asia exclusively through a Cold War lens. To be sure, countering communism was of prime importance to Whitehall. In addition, however, imperial responsibilities especially with regard to Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaya called for a more pragmatic approach to the region’s stabilization, including the diplomatic recognition of communist China and a rather flexible stance on Indochina. Equally important, London’s self-perception as the godfather of an orderly transition to statehood in its colonies induced it to ascribe greater weight to the yearning for independence in Asia and Africa.

It was not least to create some breathing space for such orderly transitions that Bevin’s successor Anthony Eden brokered the 1954 Geneva agreements on Indochina. With an eye on the image of the West among...
peoples struggling for their independence, British officials were even willing to risk a communist victory in Vietnamese general elections, hoping that a Vietminh Government would keep some distance from both Moscow and Beijing. Their internal memoranda betray harsh criticism of America’s foiling of the elections. Whitehall was similarly exasperated by the American decision to stick with South Vietnamese Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem. However, lacking a reasonable alternative and always concerned about the Anglo-American “special relationship,” the British chose not to put pressure on Washington, thereby establishing a fateful pattern in their attitude toward U.S. engagement in Vietnam, which could be summarized as a reluctance to apply the brakes for fear of running out of brake fluid.

To be sure, Britain never lost its skepticism toward American policy in Southeast Asia. But instead of protesting to the Americans, the British tried to employ the Commonwealth, and particularly India, as a force for stability in the region and as an influence that would moderate between American and Asian preconceptions. This approach culminated in the abortive Commonwealth peace mission of 1965. While the effort was possible only because of the relatively benign character of the end of empire, it also proved that the structure of the Commonwealth was rather unsuited for the task.

In bilateral British-American relations, London was always reluctant to expend too much capital on Vietnam. Moreover, the defense of Malaysia against the Indonesian policy of Konfrontasi from 1963 on and the simultaneous worsening of the situation in Vietnam suggested a policy of mutual support between the two Western powers. In 1964, Whitehall combined rhetorical support for American policy with opposition to a larger British role in Vietnam and a tacit preference for negotiations. The Foreign Office decided not to broach this preference in Washington prior to the American elections. However, once the elections were over and Prime Minister Harold Wilson went to see President Lyndon Johnson in December, the moment again seemed inauspicious given the president’s reinforced determination to stand firm in Southeast Asia. When the prospect of escalation finally propelled Wilson to seek a frank discussion with the President two months later, Johnson told him in no uncertain terms to mind his own business. On the other hand, the Americans always recognized that Britain was carrying its part of the regional anticommunist burden in Malaysia. This, and later on the objective of postponing the British withdrawal East of Suez and of stabilizing British commitments to NATO kept Washington from exerting sustained pressure on London for a larger contribution in Vietnam.

As for Great Britain, her global networks and multiple roles in NATO, in the Commonwealth and as co-chair of the International Com-
mission for Supervision and Control of the Geneva Agreements on Indochina reflected her continuing status as a world power and almost designated her to act as an honest broker. The Wilson government, however, had to walk a tightrope in this regard. On the one hand, economic and security considerations did not allow the British to stray too far from American policy. On the other hand, British notions of decolonization, which entailed the creation of strong indigenous governments and orderly withdrawal, were diametrically opposed to what was happening in Vietnam. It is not surprising then that Wilson’s Vietnam policy was increasingly criticized from within the ranks of his own party, leading the prime minister to distance himself from certain aspects of American policy if not from that policy in general.

France—Grandeur et Grincheux

The French did not hesitate to dismiss American policy lock, stock, and barrel. But then France was also in a very dissimilar position from the British, not least because of its decidedly different experience of decolonization. Whereas Britain had reoccupied her Southeast Asian possessions after World War II in order to prepare them for independence and had eventually taken pride in the relative success of this paternalistic mission, France never contemplated giving up her empire in the region. If colonial expansion had already been a project of national rehabilitation after 1870/71, then the recovery of overseas possessions was even more crucial to repair the damage done to French prestige during World War II. Thus the series of French schemes in postwar Indochina was designed to maintain the colonial power’s position as far as possible. When the periphery turned out to be an economic liability rather than an asset, Paris sought to enlist American assistance, holding out acceptance of the European Defense Community in return. The United States, however, was unwilling to finance French colonialism. Washington blamed much of the Vietnamese mess on French ineptitude and before long actively promoted French withdrawal in order to get on with the business of state-building. There were certainly more than a few French officials who, in the words of journalist Jean Lacouture, “felt that in the Indochina affair . . . there was . . . an American game, a trick to supplant the French.”

In contrast to the British, then, France was, in the 1950s at least, unable to use aspects of decolonization as building blocks for a post-imperial identity. On the other hand, European integration provided her with a convenient fallback position. In fact, French metropolitan decolonisation took the form of re-Europeanization much earlier and much less ambiguously than the British retreat from Empire. Up to the mid-1950s,
developments in Indochina slowed down European integration; thereafter they accelerated it. French modernists such as Jean Monnet, Robert Marjolin or Gaston Deferre perceived the dissolution of colonial empires and the beginnings of European unification as inextricably intertwined. Quickly dismissing the idea that Europe might be enlisted to save the French Union, Paris instead decided to mobilize the resources necessary for the modernization of French society by pulling her remaining client states with her into Europe. Thus Europe did not save but replace the Empire.

The problem with the replacement was, however, that it lacked the necessary grandeur as long as it remained heavily dependent on the United States. Therefore, when Charles de Gaulle returned to restore French greatness he faced two major tasks: first, to finish the business of decolonisation in order to concentrate on Europe as the future basis from which to project global power; and second, to break up the bipolar structure of international relations in order to make room for other powers next to the United States and the Soviet Union.

Educated before 1914, de Gaulle was thinking in nineteenth-century categories. He would have had a hard time comprehending Benedict Anderson’s idea of the nation as an imagined community. To him, the nation represented the only community that could be imagined as an actor on the world stage and the only entity that would survive the tradewinds of time. He was looking for a concert of nations, not unlike the European Concert of a century earlier but now including non-European powers—a concert, nevertheless, to replace the American-Soviet duet. Whereas the dichotomy of the Cold War legitimized U.S. leadership of the Free World, it limited French independence. This is what de Gaulle was chiseling away at when he pronounced that France saw herself as belonging to but not being confined to the western world. It is also what French Prime Minister Georges Pompidou had in mind when he declared in 1965 that “The old division of the world into two monolithic blocs is outdated. Out of this emerges France’s role. She is condemned by her geographic situation and her history to represent Europe.” Here Pompidou also named the two principal factors that, according to de Gaulle, determined the interests of nations. De Gaulle believed, in the words of a research memorandum prepared for the U.S. Department of State, “that geography and history rather than ideology basically govern political alignments. As a consequence, the present East-West conflict is not a crusade to the death between competing ideologies but a contest for power arising essentially out of the misunderstanding of their own national interest by present and recent Russian leaders.”

To be sure, de Gaulle’s understanding of national interest was not devoid of racial biases. Thus he reminded Russian leaders that theirs was
“a white nation of Europe . . . richly endowed with land, mines, factories and wealth, face to face with the yellow masses of China, numberless and impoverished, indestructible and ambitious, . . . casting her eyes about her on the open spaces over which she must one day spread.”

Similar distinctions along ethnic lines may have helped him cast off the myth of an Algeria populated by French citizens. The French Minister of Information, Alain Peyrefitte, recorded him one day exclaiming, “Arabs are Arabs, Frenchmen are Frenchmen. Do you believe that the French body could absorb ten million Muslims, who would be twenty million tomorrow and forty the day after that? . . . My hometown would no longer be called Colombey-les-Deux-Eglises but Colombey-les-Deux-Mosquées!”

To American interlocuters “le général” explained that Southeast Asia was “a ‘rotten’ territory” and “that the Vietnamese had no stomach for the war.” Nevertheless, it was his conviction that nationalism, this most French of all -isms, could not be stopped, which led him to push ahead with decolonisation. “In the matter of decolonization,” he told his cabinet, “the only victory is to go away.”

The same conviction also formed the basis of his belief that the American endeavor in Vietnam was doomed to fail. American designs of democracy would be smashed to smithereens by Vietnamese nationalism in much the same way that French paternalism had been. Even more important, de Gaulle was convinced that the same fate awaited communism, be it of the Soviet or Chinese variety. As de Gaulle had put it in his World War II memoirs already in 1954: “In the world’s incessant movement, all doctrines, all schools, all rebellions last only for a while. Communism will pass away. But France will not pass away.”

The predominance of nationalism over communism suggested that the conflict in Southeast Asia could be resolved by traditional balance-of-power methods. This required the participation of Red China. Whereas Washington’s ideologically driven policy attempted to isolate Beijing, France extended diplomatic recognition to the People’s Republic, and de Gaulle declared that a solution to the crisis in Southeast Asia was impossible if it excluded the major power within the region. France wanted the People’s Republic and the United States to agree to a neutral buffer zone in Southeast Asia stretching from Indonesia in the south to India in the west and Taiwan and the Philippines in the east. According to an analysis prepared in the State Department’s Policy Planning Council, it was de Gaulle’s view that within this neutral buffer zone “the elements of real national strength in Southeast Asia (Sihanouk, Sukarno, Ho Chi Minh) must be given full rein and latitude to rule the area’s destinies, irrespective of their ideological character.”

Washington’s Manichean Cold-War approach to Southeast Asia was not compatible with de Gaulle’s world view of a multilateral concert of great powers trying to reconcile their competing
interests regardless of ideological preferences. In this regard, it is certainly true, as Anne Sa'adah has aptly observed, that de Gaulle “had a critique of American policy in Indochina even before the United States had a policy in Indochina.”

In addition, and unlike the Americans, de Gaulle never really saw any difference between the first and the second Indochina wars. It is indeed almost amusing to watch how France and the United States, in their perceptions of each other’s actions in Southeast Asia, traded places within a decade. De Gaulle now declared that Americans were against every colonialism except their own. His success in disentangling France from the Algerian imbroglio even allowed him to assume the mantle of decolonizer who could contrast France’s wise withdrawal from Africa favorably with a superpower that ravaged a small nation. This, at least, was the not too subtle message emanating from his speech in Phnom Penh on September 1, 1966 as well as from numerous other pronouncements. While Americans felt that it was a “disgusting slander” to compare their own role in Vietnam with the role of France down to 1954, while women returned French-made handbags to New York department stores, Chicago restaurant owners stopped serving French wines, and more imaginative minds started to stick pins into de Gaulle voodoo dolls, “le général” continued publicly to advise Washington to heed the lessons Paris had learned in Indochina and in Algeria. In a sense, Algeria represented France’s India. And indeed de Gaulle viewed the 1962 accord between France and Algeria as a model for relationships between the western world and less developed countries. The French experience of decolonization therefore provided France both with a reason to sulk because of its humiliation at American hands in Southeast Asia, and with an example of a successful retreat, which could be held up to their successor in Vietnam. More important, this experience forced France to seek grandeur through Europe by opposing the American contention that there was a unity of interest in the Free World and instead seeking to resuscitate a many-voiced concert of great powers independently guarding their own national interests. These cornerstones of postcolonial French identity lay at the heart of de Gaulle’s relentless criticism of American actions in Vietnam.

Germany—Postnational Power in Postimperial Europe

In contrast to France, it was impossible for Germany after World War II to contemplate imperial greatness or even to unilaterally articulate its national interests. Besides, Germany had lost what little it had of a colonial empire already during World War I. In any event, the Emperor’s Asian possessions had been mainly confined to a single spot on the Chi-
nese coast. Kiaochow had been acquired in 1897 with the colonialists explaining “that Germany needed a coaling station for her navy—which at that time hardly existed, but which was then created, as A. J. P. Taylor put it, in order to protect the coaling station.” After 1945 Germany was not merely a postimperial country, however; it was in fact a postnational one. This refers not only to the ensuing territorial division of the nation but also to the profound lack of orientation experienced by a population that had witnessed the complete military and moral collapse of National Socialism. In trying to reconstruct a national identity, Germans therefore used to make reference to supranational frameworks. One of these frameworks was the so-called “Christian Occident.” This concept rejected both materialism and the notion of mass men, thereby conveniently distancing its adherents in West Germany from fascism as well as from communism and integrating them into the antitotalitarian consensus of the postwar era. However, the concept also smacked of premodern mythology and its implicit reservation against secularization soon appeared out of place in a society marked by dramatic economic and technological change.

Another supranational framework that outlasted and eventually replaced the Christian Occident was the Free West. The Free West was more than a mere geographic landscape. Its demarcation lines were defined by a specific set of generally accepted values and norms like pluralism, democracy, individualism, and freedom. The conditions of the Cold War made Germans susceptible to this long despised concept of the West. It offered inclusion, refuge and a new sense of belonging. The United States spent considerable sums to nurture the West Germans’ ideological integration into the West. A major tool in this regard were cultural centers, so-called America Houses, that represented, in the words of an American cultural attaché in Bonn, “the visible symbols of our determination to weld Germany irrevocably to the free world.” The citizens of the Federal Republic, therefore, became West Germans in more than one sense.

It is no surprise, then, that West Germans internalized the bipolar certainties of the East-West conflict and that they viewed much of what was going on in the world through the lens of the Cold War, including the process of decolonization. Moscow lurked as the moving spirit behind almost every development that seemed threatening. Thus, to German politicians the 1954 Geneva accords looked like “appeasement.” In their eyes, the Soviet program appeared as follows: “Beijing is conquered, now the stakes are in Calcutta and what is connected to it, Indochina and so on—to create the position there from which to attack the West with the massed force of the East.” Chancellor Konrad Adenauer explained that “communism has two major theaters of operation. One of these theaters
is Europe, the other, right now, is Asia.” The chancellor also warned his party that Algeria was not a colonial but a European question. If the country would fall into communist hands, the Soviets would hold Western Europe in a double lock. Officials in the Foreign Office feared that the brutal war in Algeria might drive the country into communist arms. They wanted France to relent so that cooperation between North Africa and the West would still be possible, even after a possible French withdrawal. The Free World, it was felt, had to assess the Algerian problem not from a colonial but “from a higher and therefore more correct viewpoint.”

By the late 1950s, the Free West had long since turned into the Free World, now solely defined by the absence of communist regimes. Soon, Vietnam became the forward defense line of the Free World. Almost simultaneously it came to represent a symbol for the staying power of this “imagined community.” It was not only some distant spot in Southeast Asia, which was threatened there, then, but also the framework of West Germany’s nascent identity. It was therefore more than a phrase when Chancellor Ludwig Erhard declared that there was no country more closely attached to Vietnam than Germany, even if it lay far away geographically. The standard expression to capture this relationship was the analogy between Saigon and Berlin, which U.S. National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy carried to extremes when he remarked “that the defense of Berlin, right now, is in Vietnam.”

The Berlin-Saigon analogy and the underlying idea of an indivisible freedom adapted Vietnam to the dualistic framework of the Cold War, located it unambiguously on the map of the Free World, and interconnected U.S. policy in Southeast Asia with the most fundamental political experiences of West Germans. The dichotomy of Free World vs Evil Empire allowed for easy identification. A study prepared on behalf of the U.S. government by the political scientist Karl Deutsch found that German leaders indicated an “emotional attachment to the image of a bipolar world.” Contrary to their European partners in Paris, the Germans not only willingly accepted the notion of a holistic Free World, they were also prepared to concede its leadership to Washington. Responding to de Gaulle’s 1958 scheme of a Franco-British-American triumvirate, a German Foreign Office memorandum observed that “the political strength of the present western alliance is based on respect for the equality of each member state . . ., with these member states in turn voluntarily acknowledging the leadership role of the United States.” Given the strongly divergent French and German world views it was only to be expected that the issue of Vietnam would prove to be a burden on the Franco-German alliance as codified in the 1963 Elysée Treaty. Chancellor Erhard in particular could not comprehend why de Gaulle wanted to transform
dualism into pluralism. “The Free World,” he told his party, “should realize that only a uniform policy can advance our cause.”

To be sure, in its quest for security, reunification, and European integration the Federal Republic could not afford to wholly abandon either the U.S. or France. Franco-American tension regarding Vietnam was therefore a major reason for Bonn’s official silence on the issue up to 1961. When the intensifying conflict made this position untenable, Foreign Office memoranda continued to argue for an attitude that was much less unequivocal than the one the Chancellor presented to the Americans. Caught between a rock and a hard place by their two indispensable allies, the Germans wanted to have it both ways. As the Foreign Office’s Southeast Asian desk explained in 1965, the government approved of the present policy of the United States, while agreeing with the general objective of French policy. That did not satisfy de Gaulle, however, who included Vietnam in a long list of grievances against German policies that seemed to sabotage the idea of an independent European policy. De Gaulle’s disappointment and the consequences he drew from it triggered the well-known NATO crisis of the mid-1960s. Thus, the Vietnam issue became a factor in European alliance politics.

While de Gaulle sulked over German subordination to the United States, Bonn had to cope with mounting pressure from Washington for a tangible German contribution in South Vietnam. When U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara took the opportunity of a trip to Bonn in May 1964 to ask for the assignment of a German medical unit to Vietnam, the Germans instantaneously got entangled in an intricate web of the legacies of the past and the liabilities of the presence. Erhard’s principal advisers held that a civilian hospital operated by the German Red Cross would be the only option, worrying that the public might otherwise get the impression that regular army units were being sent to Vietnam. With the memory of German soldiers fighting on foreign soil still fresh in the minds of not only Germans but the whole world twenty years after World War II, the Bonn government would not even consider such a scenario. Relentless American pressure for some German personnel on the scene finally led to a host of German aid measures undertaken in 1966. There was one problem common to identifying and implementing all of these projects, however. They had to appear substantial enough to impress Washington, yet domestically and to most of the rest of the world they had to appear as innocuous humanitarian gestures, lest they give an opening to the East German regime. At year’s end German authorities congratulated themselves on having successfully walked a tightrope. The embassy in Saigon reported that several political expectations linked to Vietnam aid had been realized. “The U.S. has given up the desire for a military or paramilitary German contribution; the pointedly nonmilitary
nature of aid has so far kept the other countries of the Free World, including the neutral ones, from being openly annoyed by the German engagement...; the hospital ship Helgoland, at first planned as an excuse, has turned out to be the best idea in terms of German humanitarian aid.” It was acknowledged that the cautious term “humanitarian aid” disguised to some extent that German assistance increasingly aimed at improving social structures in Vietnam. Politicians in Bonn pointed out that a collapse of Vietnamese society was Washington’s most serious problem, and they assured themselves that assistance in this sector would support the actual American objectives without unduly highlighting the German contribution.56

American pressure for a tangible contribution to the effort in Vietnam also revealed to the Germans, however, that the analogy between Berlin and Saigon could easily work to their disadvantage. Consequently, Karl Carstens, the number two man in the Foreign Office, took stock of German foreign policy and sketched its future course in early 1966, advising that comparisons between the German and the South Vietnamese situation should be avoided.57 This dovetailed with growing discontent within the governing Christian Democratic party about the increasing American preoccupation with Southeast Asia. If the alliance was mainly concerned with containing Chinese expansionism instead of snatching the eastern part of Germany from the jaws of Soviet communism, then the Berlin-Saigon analogy was of dubious value. Even worse, it tended to turn Berlin, as Frank Ninkovich put it in another context, into “a symbol without any Germanic content.”58 Thus, the American fixation on Vietnam eventually undermined the notion of the Free World as a framework for a West German identity.

Conclusion

British, French, and German attitudes toward the Vietnam War were largely determined by political, security, and alliance considerations. Underlying these considerations, however, were cultural assumptions and self-perceptions rooted in national historical experiences. In the case of Britain and France these were experiences of metropolitan decolonization, which created the need to construct post-imperial identities. The United Kingdom responded to this challenge by turning the history of Indian independence into a grand narrative of successful decolonization, and by establishing a web of loose-knit though still global interrelationships. The contraction of the French empire was fraught with much more pain. This fact goes a long way to explain why this contraction took on the shape of firm re-Europeanization, which in turn was the precondition for the renaissance of a foreign policy patterned along nineteenth-century great
power politics. The case of Germany differs from the British and French ones in that the country was charged with creating not a postimperial but rather a postnational identity. The notion of the Free World was one possible framework in this endeavor. However, when the focus of Free World solidarity shifted to Southeast Asia, the framework cracked. It finally collapsed when American actions in Vietnam came to resemble scenes from the German past—a past from which Germans were actually trying to escape. Thus, it fell to a younger generation to reconstruct the framework for a new identity in the later 1960s.59

Notes


15 In fact, it was suspected within the CIA that U.S. pressure on Britain to increase its military commitment in Vietnam beyond the British Military Mission there would provoke London to “insist on a quid pro quo with respect to Malaysia,” which would “certainly outweigh the usefulness of an increased British role in Vietnam.” It was recommended therefore that “we should not . . . ask for much more than is already being done by HMG.” Cooper to McGeorge Bundy, Subject: The British and Vietnam, Dec. 4, 1964 (sanitized), folder: United Kingdom 12/7–8/64, PM Wilson Visit (I), box 214, National Security File (NSF): United Kingdom, Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, Tex. (LBJL).


21 Thomas Moser, Europäische Integration, Dekolonisation, Eurafrika. Eine historische Analyse über die Entstehungsbedingungen der Eurafrikanischen Gemeinschaft von der Weltwirtschaftskrise


24 Hughes to Meloy, Subject: Study on Trends of French Foreign Policy, Jan. 8, 1963, box 1, Bureau of European Affairs, Subject Files (J. Robert Schaetzel), Record Group (RG) 59, National Archives, College Park, Md. (NA).


27 Telegram From the Under Secretary of State (Ball) to the Department of State, June 6, 1964, FRUS 1964–1968, 1:467; Message From the Ambassador in France (Bohlen) to the President, April 2, 1964, ibid., 217.


31 Green to Rostow and Tyler, Subject: Some Speculations on de Gaulle’s Moves in Asia, Feb. 6, 1964, box 252, Records of the Policy Planning Council 1963–1964, RG 59, NA. French officials indeed believed up to the start of LBJ’s sustained bombing campaign against North Vietnam that both Beijing and Hanoi were ready to negotiate a settlement that in French eyes would entail Hanoi keeping its distance from Beijing, and Saigon installing a socialist government along Cambodian or Indonesian lines. See the memorandum on German-French consultations on South and East Asia held on December 18, 1964, Dec. 23, 1964, B 37/128, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Berlin (PAAA). See also Lloyd Gardner, “Lyndon Johnson and de Gaulle,” in Paxton and Wahl, De Gaulle and the United States, 257–78, esp. 265–73.


33 Returning from the SEATO meeting in Manila in April 1964, French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville observed that the situation in Vietnam was comparable to one the French found themselves in ten years earlier. De Gaulle agreed: “La guerre du Vietnam, c’est vraiment une ‘sale guerre’. Two months later he told Alain Peyrefitte, “Plus les Américains s’engageront, plus l’aspect colonial de cette guerre apparaîtra et suscitera l’hostilité des populations.” Peyrefitte, C’était de Gaulle, 2:496–7.


36 See Peyrefitte, C’était de Gaulle, 1:399.

37 Although French policy can not be explained by pointing out that de Gaulle bore a grudge for the Americans, there certainly is a sense of Schadenfreude, if not of getting even, in some of his remarks. In December 1963, for example, he told Peyrefitte, “Après Dien Bien Phu, les Américains avaient expulsé les Français. Maintenant, les Français prennent la relève des Américains. Juste retour des choses.” Peyrefitte, C’était de Gaulle, 2:483.


45 Ministerialdirektor im Auswärtigen Amt Carstens an Staatsekretär van Scherpenberg, Aufzeichnung 205-82.00/90.38, Betr.: Das Nordafrikanaproblem und die Bundesrepublik, July 17, 1959, BDFD, 1,732–5.


47 Congressional Reception, Feb. 12, 1965, box 1, Congressional Briefings, LBJL.

48 Karl W. Deutsch et al., France, Germany and the Western Alliance: A Study of Elite Attitudes on European Integration and World Politics (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1967), 266. A typescript of the study is in box 211, White House Aides Files: Fred Panzer, LBJL.


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51 See Abteilung I (Jansen) to Staatssekretär, Subject: The Federal Government’s Position toward the South Vietnamese Question, Aug. 24, 1964, B 37/62, PAAA.

52 See the memorandum prepared by Referat I B 5, Subject: The situation in Vietnam, June 26, 1965, B 37/128, PAAA.


54 This is stressed by Alexandra Friedrich, Awakenings: The Impact of the Vietnam War on West German-American Relations in the 1960s, Ph. D. diss., Temple University, Philadelphia, 2000.


56 Rüdt to Auswärtiges Amt, Subject: German Humanitarian Aid to South Vietnam, Jan. 21, 1966, B 136/3657/1, Bundesarchiv Koblenz; German Vietnam Aid, June 22, 1966, CDU/CSU-Fraktion, VIII-006-48/1, Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik, St. Augustin.


59 For a detailed account of the role that the Vietnam War played in this process see Wilfried Mausbach, “Auschwitz and Vietnam: West German Protest Against America’s War During the 1960s,” in Andreas W. Daum, Lloyd C. Gardner, and Wilfried Mausbach, eds., America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).
Start of a Journey

When I first started down the path of researching my thesis, I had a notion that I would write about the way in which the Prussian monarchy manufactured its image during the nineteenth century, and specifically how it sought to retain its predominance and regal aura in an age of growing nationalism and democracy. I decided that I would first look at royal iconography, possibly monuments, and such spectacles as processions, parades, coronations, weddings and so forth—all very much in the tradition of David Cannadine’s work on the “invention of tradition.”

Once ensconced in the archives in Berlin, I happened upon a very promising set of records from the 1870s and 1880s cataloging the bestowal of royal photographs and autographs. Here, I thought, was the jackpot: here I was sure to find evidence of a direct, concerted attempt on the part of the monarchy to control and manipulate its image for public consumption, to present a public face resplendent in its imperial glory and authority.

As so often happens, I found precisely the opposite. Sifting through these documents, I discovered that neither Wilhelm I nor Wilhelm II had an overt policy concerning the content and distribution of photographs of themselves or their dynasty. While they were actively involved in determining the content and iconography of their painted state portraits, their attitude towards their photographic image was, in contrast, largely disorganized and diffuse. Indeed, rather than developing an official court policy towards photography, the Prussian monarchs relied largely upon the entrepreneurial initiative of individual photographers to take, to construct—through photomontage—and to distribute their image as the pho-
tographers saw fit. It was at the suggestion of such private individuals as Louis Schneider, Ernst Litfaß, and the proprietors of photographic companies such as A. Braun and Co., for instance, that specific photographs were produced for public consumption. As a result, these private individuals had a determining influence on the style and content of the photographs—an influence that tended towards creating images that they felt would not only be agreeable to the monarchs, but would also appeal to popular tastes and fashions: in short, be marketable.

This process was further reinforced by the 1876 copyright law concerning photography, which all but encouraged third parties to pirate official royal portraits by making it virtually impossible for the authorized photographers to sue those doing the pirating. As a result, many of the royal portraits in circulation were pirated and were furthermore either retouched or reconstructed as outright photomontages. Such pirated photographs thus often represented altogether new and unauthorized images—images that were geared more towards what the piraters thought the public wanted to see (and buy), than what the monarchy sought to project.

Occasionally this led to awkward results: Wilhelm I, who was no great fan of historical costumes, once complained about a particularly popular (albeit reverent) photomontage depicting him in the imperial robes of Charlemagne, a photo that he felt made him look like “an Indian chief at a rain dance!” But despite his chagrin at what he considered absurdly anachronistic images, Wilhelm did not regard this as a sufficient reason to try to lay down a policy concerning the photography of his person.

The one area over which Wilhelm I did keep a tight control was that of his autograph—or more usually his autographed portrait. But even in this case, I found the unexpected: patriotic young men who wrote to the emperor, swearing their loyalty and martial devotion, were usually not given the desired autographed photos. Instead, Wilhelm sent his regal souvenir to people with whom he felt he had an affective bond—young women who proclaimed their adoration of him; the patriarch of a family of four generations of fishermen; an eccentric pastor born at the very moment when Wilhelm’s father had died, and so forth. It was these people, who touched Wilhelm’s fancy, not patriotic, military-minded young men, who had the honor of receiving an autographed portrait of the emperor.

Naturally, I found all of this rather surprising, not least since Wilhelm I is predominantly associated with Prussian conservatism and militarism rather than with affection, whimsy, and sentimental fancy. Intrigued by this unexpected turn of events, I turned to another set of archival files,
concerning the Hohenzollern Museum—a museum dedicated to the Hohenzollern monarchy and filled with a variety of objects relating to the Prussian dynasty. As the archival files revealed, some of the items in the Hohenzollern Museum were straightforward ceremonial objects and symbols of royal power: regalia, seals, uniforms, etc. But these were far outnumbered by objects of a more personal nature, such as those that exemplified the various monarchs’ personal hobbies and obsessions: for example, Frederick the Great’s snuff boxes, or the walking canes with which Friedrich Wilhelm I was wont to thrash any idlers whom he encountered on his strolls down Unter den Linden. There were also objects of a rather more eclectic and eccentric nature (at least to modern eyes): an iron nail turned half to gold by the court alchemist; a “hat made from the hair of a blackamoor,” hand-crafted by the Margrave Albrecht; Luther’s inordinately large beer mug; and a statue of Priapus to which Peter the Great, while visiting Berlin, took such a liking that he ordered his consort, Catherine I, to “embrace the indelicate piece of sculpture”—under threat of cutting off her head if she refused.

The museum also contained some intriguing corporal relics: locks of Königin Luise’s hair; Wilhelm I’s left sideburn; Frederick the Great’s umbilical cord and two teeth that he knocked out while playing the flute; and—perhaps most bizarre of all—a silver belt buckle that Friedrich Wilhelm I swallowed as a five year old child and shat out three days later.

Along with such relics, the museum also contained a profusion of royal souvenirs—from the individual monarchs’ childhood toys and baby clothes to taxidermic displays of their favorite pets—and popular memorabilia, the latter produced largely by private entrepreneurs, often in great masses for public consumption. Memorabilia commemorating Frederick the Great seem to have been particularly in demand; his image graced a wide variety of collectible items: tea sets and lamp shades; snuff boxes and tobacco scissors; rings and bracelets; fans and handkerchiefs. This memorabilia was part of the general fascination with Frederick that had arisen throughout much of Europe as a result of his successes in the Seven Years War. In fact, there were so many Frederick the Great souvenirs on the market by the late eighteenth century that, when Goethe himself complained that he was being trivialized by his popularity, he drew the analogy that he could “be had on tobacco pipes and tea cups like Old Fritz.” So in Goethe’s eyes, at the very least, Frederick the Great represented the epitome of the commercialization of fame.

Spurred on by my discovery of these surprisingly intimate and often less than regal items, I shifted the direction of my research to the Hohenzollern Museum.
The Hohenzollern Museum

The origins of the Hohenzollern Museum lay in the royal Kunstkammer (essentially a curiosity cabinet) founded in the seventeenth century and housed in the Berliner Schloß up to the early nineteenth century. The royal Kunstkammer was organized as a sort of ‘living encyclopedia,’ containing anything and everything that was noteworthy and unusual—natural history specimens, art works, Roman antiquities and coins, ivory chalices and other curiosities—and it also contained royal relics. The royal relics did not, however, receive any special attention. Up to the early nineteenth century, all of the objects in the Kunstkammer were organized according to the principle of the “affinity” of the materials out of which they were crafted. In other words, all wooden objects were collected together in one set of cabinets, all ivory works in another, all works in silver in yet another cabinet, and so forth. The wooden statue of the Great Elector was therefore grouped together with such disparate wooden items as lacquered Chinese boxes, a runic staff, a Dürer carving, and cherry pits with hundreds of miniscule faces carved onto them.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the museum world, and the Kunstkammer with it, underwent a revolution in terms of organization and classification. The function of the museum became closely tied to the humanistic ideal of Bildung in every sense of its meaning—character formation, edification of the soul, aesthetic education, and intellectual training and scholarship. As a result, the formerly “universalist” collections of the curiosity cabinets were sorted according to pedagogical or more specialized, scientific (wissenschaftlich) criteria. Best known of these new collections was the one in the Altes Museum, designed and built by Schinkel, in which masterpieces of art and sculpture were collected together in a “temple of art” to edify and instruct the viewer. But other collections were winnowed from the Kunstkammer as well: the collections of natural history specimens and minerals were set up as an anatomical and a geological museum, respectively, in the newly founded University; the Egyptian and the Nordic artifacts were moved to other locations and exhibited as discrete collections, etc.

And in order to stay in step with this revolution in museology, the royal relics likewise had to take on a more pedagogical import. Mere curiosity was no longer a sufficient organizing principle. Under the direction of the amateur historian and antiquarian Leopold von Ledebur, and influenced by the spirit and scholarship of the growing number of historical associations and journals of the 1830s, the royal relics were reorganized into a patriotic (vaterländisch) display. Interestingly, it was a patriotic display that honored not only the Hohenzollern, but also great artists and other middle class heroes, so that for a time the Hohenzollern
had to compete with such ‘great men’ as Napoleon, Luther, Beethoven, Schiller and Liszt.

As the Berlin museums’ collections grew exponentially during the second half of the century, and as the need for ever more exhibition space became acute, the collection of royal relics, by now set up in the Neues Museum, was regarded as superfluous and simply in the way. The relics were therefore moved out of the Neues Museum and into a new, permanent home in Schloß Monbijou, which officially opened as the Hohenzollern Museum in 1877 under the direction of Robert Dohme, a privy councilor in the court chamberlain’s office.

What was the nature of this Hohenzollern Museum? Now that the museum’s directors had the opportunity to expand and reorganize the collection, what kind of image of the monarchy did they promote? Given the military tradition of the Prussian monarchy, one might assume that the museum provided a prime opportunity for the Hohenzollern to portray themselves in their full soldierly glory, and Wilhelm I in particular as the hero of the Franco-Prussian war—the hero of Sedan. And yet, once again, I found the unexpected: the Hohenzollern Museum did not principally contain symbols of martial prowess or even regal authority. The Hohenzollern military regalia and arms were sent instead to the new Zeughaus military museum on Unter den Linden. So the Hohenzollern Museum itself did not portray the monarchy in a martial light.

Nor did it follow the other typical pattern for royal museums—that of the cultural-historical museum (kulturgeschichtliches Museum). Most royal museums of the nineteenth century—and of the present as well, if one thinks of Sanssouci, Schloß Charlottenburg, or Schönbrunn—were designed to display the finest examples of luxury arts and crafts—furniture, wall fixtures, paintings, murals, porcelain, and so on—in their original settings. The Hohenzollern Museum, on the other hand, did not seek to be an arts-and-crafts or a cultural-historical museum; this function was already being fulfilled by the Museum of Applied Arts (Gewerbemuseum), located in the Gropiusbau.

Instead, as Robert Dohme emphasized in his inaugural speech, the real purpose of the museum was to encourage “tender-hearted historical commemoration” of the Hohenzollern; as such, “unlike the Hall of Fame in the Zeughaus,” it showed the royals in the intimacy of their “domestic circle and family life” and illustrated “how the individual members of the royal family lived and acted in their private rooms.” The museum was, correspondingly, replete with intimate, homely objects—Easter eggs given to Friedrich Wilhelm III by his children; the gloves that protected Friedrich Wilhelm IV’s trembling hands after 1848; Wilhelm I’s favorite childhood toys (described as “amusing cats and dogs with large wooden
heads”21); Friedrich III’s baby clothes and tiny, purple shoes; a cracked tea cup that Frederick the Great had dropped because its contents were too hot—all of this bric-a-brac suggesting the mildness, vulnerability, frailty, and, ultimately, accessibility of the royal family.22

Nowhere was this more apparent than in the rooms dedicated to Königin Luise. These rooms—exact replicas of her bedroom and boudoir—put some of her most intimate possessions on display: a selection of her toiletries were set out on her dressing table; her bedclothes and nightcap were laid out on top of her bed; and next to the bed stood the cradle in which she had rocked the future Wilhelm I. Not only were these objects intimate, but they also evoked strong, often bitter-sweet emotions in the visitors to the museum—or so, at least, claimed those visitors who wrote about their experiences in the museum. Articles in Die Gartenlaube, Daheim and other popular newspapers of the time typically waxed lyrical over these objects, imagining Luise as she stood above the cradle, “pensive and troubled” as she “rocked the little, exceedingly frail Prince Wilhelm to sleep,” or describing the tears that welled up in the visitors’ eyes when they saw the precious locks of Luise’s hair that a heart-broken Friedrich Wilhelm III had preserved after her death.23

The more I found such descriptions of the museum’s displays, the more I was reminded of Dolf Sternberger’s magnificent study of German middle class culture, The Panorama of the Nineteenth Century.24 In that work, Sternberger identified a mode of experience and emotion that he called genre. Borrowing the term genre from the “genre paintings” that were so popular in the nineteenth century, Sternberger described this way of viewing the world as one that focused on moments frozen in time, just before something emotionally potent was about to occur. These highly-charged, frozen moments compelled the viewer to complete the arrested action in his or her mind, and thereby indulge, vicariously, in all of the heady emotions that infused the scene. As Sternberger wrote about this bourgeois culture of genre: “goodness and nastiness, beauty and inner suffering, innocence and cruelty can be found in abundance just about anywhere, wept for, sighed over, and cursed at.”25

Such was, for example (according to Sternberger), the impulse and meaning behind the locks of hair that were so carefully—and so universally—preserved in the nineteenth century. These locks of hair and other “precious mementos”—yellowed letters, dried roses, preserved childhood clothing—enabled the beholder to “painfully relive the sweet sensations and once again shed the long-dried tears” of love and loss.26 The displays in the Hohenzollern Museum functioned in the same manner; the Königin Luise rooms specifically allowed the public to experience vicariously the genre-esque themes of bitter-sweet sorrow and loss, innocent and endangered childhood, and beauty in death.27
And since, as Sternberger demonstrates, genre was a mode of experience typical of the nineteenth-century German middle class, the Hohenzollern Museum must also be seen as an instance of middle-class culture. Rather than being a martial museum, rather than emphasizing the regal aura of the monarchy, rather than promoting feudalistic ideals for the middle class to imitate, the Hohenzollern Museum catered to the middle-brow, sentimental tastes of its bourgeois audience.

Furthermore, individual Hohenzollern, and Wilhelm I foremost among them, encouraged this tendency towards sentiment. As in the case of the autographed photos mentioned above, Wilhelm I seems to have seen in the Hohenzollern Museum an opportunity to foster affective bonds with his subjects. Wilhelm was well-known in his own day for cherishing the many gifts and tchotchkes that his subjects sent to him on his birthday and other festive occasions. For weeks after these events, he would leaf fondly through the endless letters of congratulation that he had received, and set the gifts—no matter how humble or mundane—out on display in his palace. When he would finally give in to the entreaties of his chamberlains to take the displays down and make some room again, Wilhelm would then send many of the gifts—these tokens of his subjects’ affection—over to the Hohenzollern Museum to be set up on display there. And in this manner, through the aegis of Wilhelm himself, the Hohenzollern Museum became a site of mutual and sympathetic exchange between the monarchy and the public.

Conclusions

This leads me back to the question of how the finished thesis ultimately differed from my original plan to study royal pageantry and spectacle. Royal spectacles can reveal a great deal about the ideal vision that a monarchy holds of itself and wants—again ideally—to project onto the public. As highly choreographed, normative ceremonies, however, they do not reveal very much about the public’s response, about whether the public accepts and endorses that vision or not. On the other hand, permanent, stationary exhibits that seek to draw and to keep an audience—like the Hohenzollern Museum—do illuminate much more clearly the dynamic interaction between official and popular views of the monarchy. They say as much about what museum directors think will appeal to the public and draw an audience over the longer term, as they say about how the monarchy preferred to present itself.

In the case of the Hohenzollern Museum, the emphasis was on the softer side of the monarchy. And in this, the Hohenzollern Museum was not alone; other instances of royal display—the Prinz Wilhelm Palais, palace tours, royal photographs, the production of memorabilia—equally
point to a sentimentalization of the monarchy, a sentimentalization that acted as a potent counterweight to the more soldierly image that prevailed in the Zeughaus military museum or during the annual military parades and reviews.

This sentimentalized image found a direct echo in other privately-run, popular entertainments, such as in Castan’s Panopticum, a wax museum that featured a tableau of Königin Luise rocking baby Wilhelm almost identical to the descriptions of the display in the Hohenzollern Museum; or in a panorama in Dresden that showed Wilhelm I in his study amidst a profusion of affectionate gifts from his subjects.

Moreover, as my dissertation demonstrates, the Hohenzollern Museum indirectly mirrored what I call the “culture of display” of nineteenth-century middle-brow entertainments—panoramas, wax museums, zoos, natural history tableaux, and so forth. The collection of royal relics followed popular trends in entertainment throughout the course of the nineteenth century, from a focus on the news-worthy and exotic in the early years of the century, through the romanticism and emphasis on the cult of the hero in the middle years, and finally to the “dream worlds” of the Wilhelmine Empire. Indeed, in its last incarnation, the collection of royal relics in the Hohenzollern Museum had in common with privately-run, middle-brow entertainments that spirit of genre, historicism and fantasy that was so fundamental to bourgeois popular culture. This similarity between the Hohenzollern Museum and other popular entertainments points to the fact that the museum—and by extension the monarchy itself—was, at least in part, a form of popular entertainment for the middle class.

Which brings me, finally, to the title of my dissertation. The quote comes from one of the better-known anecdotes about Wilhelm I at the time. Out on a stroll in Bad Ems, he passed a group of children looking at a shop-window display of photos of the Emperor himself, the Crown Prince, Bismarck and Moltke. The children were discussing which photos they were going to buy, and one small boy piped up: “Ich kaufe mir den Kaiser!”—“I’m going to buy the Emperor!” The others cheered and said “yes, yes, we want to buy the Emperor!” Wilhelm, tickled, walked up to the children and said, “Come along, I’ll buy the Emperor for you” and bought each of them a photo of himself.

The point about this anecdote—and about the Hohenzollern Museum and the other royal institutions that I examined in my thesis—is that much of the middle class public in Berlin did “buy into” the monarchy, as it were, but it bought into an image of the monarchy that was a reflection of the bourgeoisie’s own tastes and values. And the monarchy, equally, was willing to sell an image of itself that appealed to the middle class.

94 GHI BULLETIN NO. 30 (SPRING 2002)
It is in this way that the fact that the Hohenzollern remained popular—even in an age of mass democracy—becomes more readily intelligible. The monarchy did not retain public support by inducing the middle class to forfeit its cultural hegemony, or by “feudalizing” it. Rather, in the Hohenzollern Museum and the other institutions that I discuss in my thesis, the monarchy reflected middle-class taste. Guided by middle-class entrepreneurs, advisors and museum directors, the monarchy allowed itself to be both commodified and displayed in ways that did not emphasize its pomp or circumstance—its regal aura—but rather highlighted its domesticity, sentimentality, and emotional accessibility. To support the monarchy was therefore not necessarily to support a feudalistic institution at the cost of denying bourgeois culture; instead, the monarchy was, in fact, part and parcel of that modern middle-class culture.

Notes


4 When it came to publishing his portrait in the press, Wilhelm I relied heavily on Louis Schneider. Editor of Der Soldatenfreund, “reader at court,” and librarian of Wilhelm’s private library, Schneider was what might today be considered an unofficial (and largely self-styled) press secretary. For his own account of his press activities, see: Louis Schneider, Aus dem Leben Kaiser Wilhelms, 1849–1873, 3 vols. (Berlin, 1888). For Ernst Litfaß’s activities, see: Stadtmuseum Berlin, Ernst Litfaß (1816–1874): Bestandskatalog des Nachlasses (Berlin, 1996), 31. For A. Braun and Co.’s successful efforts to produce a photograph of Wilhelm I, see: Neue Preußische Zeitung (Kreuzzeitung), no. 68, 22 March 1877.

5 The copyright law and pirated photographs are discussed in a letter from the chairman of the Photographische Sachverständigen-Verein, Dambach, to Wilhelm II, 4 May 1889, GStA-PK, HA1, Rep. 89, Nr. 2792.


7 See footnote # 2 for references to the archival files containing letters to this effect.

8 The files concerning the Hohenzollern Museum are contained in the following series: “Hohenzollernmuseum und die an diese abgegebenen Einsendungen,” Bd.1-5 (1850–1918),
For the museum’s precursor, the Kunstkammer, see the series of archival files: “Kunst-, Antiken-, und Münzkammer in Berlin und deren Personal,” (1810–1832, 1833–1879), GStA-PK, HA1, Rep. 89, Nrs. 20435, 20436.


13 For descriptions of the Kunstkammer in the late eighteenth century, see: Friedrich Nicolai, Beschreibung der Königlichen Residenzstädte Berlin und Potsdam, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1786), 791–799; and J.D.F. Rumpf, Beschreibung der außern und innern Merkwürdigkeiten der Königlichen Schloß in Berlin, Charlottenburg, Schönhausen in und bey Potsdam (Berlin, 1794), 271–286.

14 For the most recent and definitive examination of the development of German museums, see: James J. Sheehan, Museums in the German Art World: from the End of the Old Regime to the Rise of Modernism (Oxford, 2000). For the wrangling that led to the division of the Kunstkammer into individual collections, see: Friedrich Stock, ed., “Zur Vorgeschichte der Berliner Museen, Urkunden von 1786 bis 1807,” Jahrbuch der Preußischen Kunstsammlungen, beihet II, vol. 49 (1925).

15 For a recent and comprehensive examination of patriotic, or vaterländische, museums and associations in Germany, see: Susan A. Crane, Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany (Ithaca, NY, 2000).

16 See, for instance, Guido von Ussedom’s plea for more space: “Denkschrift über die nötigsten Erweiterungsbauten zur Raumgewinnung in den Königlichen Museen,” 19 February 1873, GStA-PK, HA1, Rep. 89 Nrk. 20447; see also: Berlin, Königlichen Museen.

17 The story of the founding of the Hohenzollern Museum is told in detail in: Robert Dohme, Unter fünf preußischen König: Lebenserinnerungen (Berlin, 1901).

18 For histories of the Zeughaus, see: Regina Müller, Das Berliner Zeughaus: Die Baugeschichte (Berlin, 1994); Monika Arndt, Die “Rahmenhalle” im Berliner Zeughaus: eine Selbstdarstellung Preussens nach der Reichsgründung (Berlin, 1985); and David Joseph, Zur Baugeschichte des Königlichen Zeughauses in Berlin (Berlin, 1910).
In fact, Robert Dohme, who had long desired to establish a royal museum, traveled to Copenhagen in the late 1860s to get inspiration from Rosenborg Castle, a royal museum already then evocative of present-day museums such as Schloss Charlottenburg or Schönbrunn. In the end, however, Dohme’s Hohenzollern Museum was very different in style and content from Rosenborg Castle, as a perusal of their respective catalogues demonstrates. Compare, for instance: *Führer durch das Hohenzollern-Museum im Schlosse Monbijou* (Berlin, 1883); and Dr. Phil. P. Brock, *Die Chronologische Sammlung der Dänischen Könige im Schloß Rosenburg: Eine Kurzgefaßte Übersicht* (Kopenhagen, 1888). For the history of museums of applied arts, see: Barbara Mundt, *Die deutschen Kunstgewerbemuseen im 19. Jahrhundert* (München, 1974). For the history of cultural-historical museums in general, see the various essays in: Bernward Deneke and Rainer Kahl, eds., *Das kunst- und kulturgeschichtliche Museum im 19. Jahrhundert* (München, 1977).

20 *Staatsbürger-Zeitung*, vol.13, no.82a, 23 March 1877.


22 Descriptions of all such items can be found in the various guides to the Hohenzollern Museum, from: *Das Hohenzollern-Museum im Königlichen Schloß Monbijou* (Berlin, 1878); to *Führer durch die Sammlung des Hohenzollern-Museums im Schloße Monbijou* (Berlin: 1895); etc.

23 Such sentiments were voiced in: Georg Hiltl, “Das Hohenzollern Museum im Schloše Monbijou zu Berlin,” *Daheim*, vol.13, no.41, 7 July 1877; Walter Schwarz, “Das Luisenzimmer im Schloße Monbijou zu Berlin,” *Die Gartenlaube*, vol.10, 1877; Berliner Tageblatt, no.69, 23 March 1877; Königliche privilegirte Berlinische Zeitung (Vossische Zeitung), no. 69, 23 March 1877; *Staatsbürger-Zeitung*, vol.13, no. 82a, 23 March 1877; Paul Bellardi, *Königin Luise, ihr Leben und ihre Andenken in Berlin* (Berlin, 1893); Lindenberg, *Hohenzollern-Museum*.


26 Ibid, 62.

27 Along with Dolf Sternberger’s examples of genre, see also the images of childhood and motherhood in: Wolfgang Brückner, *Elfenreigen—Hochzeitsraum: Die Oldruckfabrikation 1880-1940* (Köln, 1974).


29 Both Castan’s Panopticum and Berlin’s other wax museum, the Passage Panopticum, were filled with exhibits high in genre-esque content and style. Such displays as the one of Luise rocking baby Wilhelm’s cradle, or “A Morning Pint at Chancellor Prince Bismarck’s,” in which parliamentarians had gathered in Bismarck’s home for an early morning glass of beer and were engaged in “free and easy, good-natured small talk,” fit in quite naturally with other sentimental displays. See: Castan’s Panopticum: Catalog (Berlin, 1910); and *Catalog des Passage Panopticum* (Berlin, 1897).


31 The anecdote is repeated in numerous sources; for one example, see: L. Hoernemann, Hohenzollern-Album enthaltend charakteristische Züge aus dem Leben der Regenten und Regentin- nen aus dem Hause Hohenzollern (Düsseldorf, 1882), 11–12.
The Currency of Socialism:
Money in the GDR and German Unification, 1971–1989

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In August of 1988, an 84 year-old working-class resident of Leipzig named Erich K. wrote to the Central Committee of the East German communist party to lodge a complaint about money.¹ Ironically, he was less concerned about not having enough money than he was that the German Democratic Republic (GDR) had too much of it. Because of money, K. argued, socialism had so far been unable to create the economic conditions necessary for the liberation of humanity. Instead, socialist states with their bank notes are enmeshed in the capitalist network of bank notes, and for this reason the socialist economies in all socialist states do not make much headway.²

The problem with money according to K. was that it derived its value from human suffering. In a reference to his military service during the Second World War, K. contended that “the trail of capitalism leads over the war dead and much other human misery, and capitalism turned all of this into money, minted increasingly from the suffering of humanity.”³ The GDR’s entanglement with capitalist money had not only impeded the economic progress of socialism, but the use of money itself had also compromised socialism’s moral superiority. To restore ethical and economic autonomy to the project of socialism, K. urged the communist party, or SED, to abolish money.

Officials at the Central Committee were greatly disturbed by K.’s letter. They arranged for local representatives of the regime to visit the elderly man in his home and “discuss” his ideas. After a brief exchange of views, the elderly man declared himself satisfied by the delegation’s explanation of socialist monetary policy. To the relief of the Central Committee, he withdrew his letter. Not two weeks later, however, K. recanted, complaining that his guests had not really engaged him in conversation because they had put words into his mouth.⁴

Incensed by K.’s open disregard for the coercive etiquette of letter-writing in the GDR and infuriated by the seeming incompetence of local authorities, the Central Committee declared that the East German central
bank was responsible for the fiasco. In a scathing letter, the Central Committee charged that the bank was unable to control the circulation of ideas in the area of its own expertise, the circulation of money. The Central Committee then demanded that Gerhard Serick, Deputy President of the bank, coerce K. into rescinding the retraction of his withdrawal.5

Faced on the one hand with intense political pressure from the SED leadership to silence K. and an avalanche of cantankerous letters from the elderly man on the other, Serick tried to depoliticize the affair by attributing K.’s recalcitrance to his advanced age. Noting that his ideas were “totally confused and ludicrous,” Serick suggested that K. was simply senile.6

But even if K. were merely muddled and ornery, he had succeeded in agitating the communist party leadership with his suggestion that a profound discrepancy between theory and praxis existed in the GDR. Not only had K. pointed out that the party had yet to implement its egalitarian promise of a moneyless society, but he had also disclosed the extent to which the GDR was indebted to its capitalist enemies.

As K.’s case implied, the SED sought to encourage the formation of ideological allegiances through economic practice, but its attempt to govern an industrial—and divided—nation by force had instead fostered the creation of political allegiances through money. The East German mark, the SED hoped, would displace capitalist money and mores, untangle the moral inversions of capitalist logic, and distribute social justice in the place of social alienation. Yet, the intellectual debt of Marxism-Leninism to liberal economic theory ensured the planned economy’s inability to function without recourse to capitalist media of exchange. The regime supplemented its authoritarian and inefficient economy through the market, importing western technology and establishing the Intershops, or hard-currency stores. In the end, the party’s contradictory response to the consumer desire manufactured by the East German industrial base consisted of abjuring the West German economic model while simultaneously promoting the circulation of West German money and merchandise.

K.’s portrayal of money as a source of social injustice resonated strongly with East German Marxist-Leninists, who agreed that money could have no place in the future of the socialist state. To some extent, their mistrust of money had been shaped by the peculiarities of German economic history. The traumatic experiences of the hyperinflation during 1923, when Germans had too much money, and the radical deflation of the Great Depression, when they had too little, turned a majority of Germans away from liberal solutions to the challenges of modernity.7 After World War II, the return of inflation heightened the determination of many Germans to organize economic activity according to the prin-
The principle of social justice. The role of money as a causal factor in German history took on new meaning in 1948, however, when the Deutsche Mark replaced the Reichsmark in the western zone of occupation and precipitated the partition of Germany into a capitalist West and a communist East. For forty years, the two German states sought to link national identity with economic organization—the social market economy in the Federal Republic, and central planning in the GDR. In 1989/90, the systemic competition between capitalism and communism would once again thrust money into center stage, as East German demand for West German marks paved the way for German-German reconciliation after the collapse of the Berlin Wall. For the first time in German history, money played a unifying, rather than a divisive, role. In the meantime, however, K. and millions of other Germans like him experienced money as a medium for creating social stratification.

In addition to this peculiarly German equation of money with social inequality, the East German communist party had inherited an ideologically antipathy towards money from the Soviet Union. Like other Marxist-Leninist parties, the SED staked its claim to power on a scientific critique of capitalism that understood money as the locus of social alienation. The production methods specific to capitalism entail the subordination of ethical to economic values, which finds its clearest expression in the profit motive. This elevation of the market over morality, often justified by the liberal equation of private vice with public virtue, results in a profound inversion of means and ends, where the purpose of human economic production—the sustenance of life—is confused with the instrument we employ to sustain that life—the pursuit of money. We end up living to work, rather than working to live. In addition, the production relations specific to capitalism lead to a form of alienation that Karl Marx termed commodity fetishism, or the false attribution to inanimate objects of the power to gratify human needs. According to Marx, money is the quintessential commodity fetish because it debases all the gods of man and turns them into commodities.

Money is the universal, self-constituting value of all things. It has therefore robbed the whole world, human as well as natural, of its own values.

Based on these insights into the workings of capitalism, the SED sought to distinguish between “real” and “false” needs. “Real” needs, whether of a physical or spiritual nature, are generated by the material conditions of a given society in history. In contrast, “destructive, parasitical, and false (illusory) needs” consist of “needs [that] are deformed, manipulated, and in part artificially manufactured to suggest illusions to working people about their real situation in society.”

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Through this dichotomy, the SED established an equivalency between false needs and commodity fetishism, between desire and money. The planned economy, or so the SED alleged, is superior to capitalism because it removes the grounds for desire by creating social conditions in which only real needs exist. As the medium for the satisfaction of real needs, socialist money offers the opportunity to apportion the wealth of society along egalitarian lines.\textsuperscript{15}

Making money worth less, however, was not the same as making it worthless. The social construction of value in the GDR was mediated not by a utopian transparency of needs, but by shortages of economic and ethical goods. The replacement of money with planning indicators did permit the party to emphasize its production priorities. The system of apportioning resources from the center, however, led to the uneven distribution and waste of resources. Freed from the threat of bankruptcy, East German factories were no longer guided by cost constraints. Ignoring costs, however, permitted inefficiencies that were eventually to overwhelm the productive capacities of the East German economy.

For consumers, the waste and inefficiency in the planned economy often expressed itself as a problem of complementarity, or the reliance of one commodity on another in order for it to function.\textsuperscript{16} To give just one example, in the summer of 1979, East Germans experienced a severe shortage of ketchup, a scarce and highly desirable commodity.\textsuperscript{17} The shortage of ketchup induced consumers to shift to mustard as a substitute. The mustard plan for 1980, however, had not anticipated such an increase in demand. The responsible factory had no difficulty producing the extra mustard, but discovered that it did not have enough jars in which to put the mustard. The production bottleneck created a minor political crisis, as East Germans were forced to eat without the aid of condiments. By April of 1980, the Politburo found it necessary to intervene by conscripting a glass factory to take up the slack in production. The glass factory had no problems meeting this revision in its plan and was able to produce several million containers. It did so, however, only by ignoring another task: producing marmalade jars.

The chronic shortages of consumer goods afflicting the planned economy undermined the value of socialist money. Although the East German mark sufficed to complete purchases of the basic necessities of life, such as bread and the rent, it could not overcome shortages or the unofficial forms of rationing typical of the planned economy, such as exceedingly long lines and black markets. To ensure the prompt delivery of washing machines, to reduce the long wait for cars, or simply to purchase good coffee or stockings, West German money played a prominent role. As a result, the GDR’s monetary regime fragmented into two competing modes of exchange. Socialist money was used to satisfy “real”
needs, but only capitalist money could fulfill the desires of East German consumers.

As the elderly K. had noted, the GDR’s entanglement with capitalist money seriously undermined socialism’s political legitimacy. With the assumption of power by Erich Honecker in 1971, the GDR’s reliance on the West to solve its economic problems increased dramatically. In order to curry favor with the populace and consolidate his power, Honecker launched a new economic policy aimed at shifting more resources to meet consumer demand.

Yet, political coercion and the pace of technological innovation under socialism rendered sustained economic growth impossible. The GDR was in no position to boost production of consumer durable goods. What little improvement in living standards Honecker did achieve came at the expense of long-term investment in the GDR’s industrial base. By the late 1980s, the East German infrastructure had thoroughly deteriorated. In 1989, for example, 75 percent of all equipment in the East German manufacturing, mining, and energy sectors was more than 20 years old.18 In 1988, moreover, the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate, which was responsible for monitoring the state apparatus, reported that nearly half of the warehouses in the GDR had holes in the roof through which rain could drip onto food, consumer goods, and machinery.19

By the mid-1980s, the maintenance of public space had deteriorated so much that the Workers and Peasants Inspectorate felt impelled to investigate the state of sanitation in the GDR. After checking the toilets in over 10,000 stores and 6,000 restaurants, they classified more than half as substandard, the worst of which involved restaurant facilities from which fecal matter had not been removed for years.20

By authorizing increases in the supply of consumer goods without a parallel increase in the productivity necessary to fund them, Honecker overextended the regime’s productive capacities, driving the GDR deeply into debt with the West. In 1970, the year before Honecker’s takeover, the GDR’s foreign debt had risen to a record $1 billion. Just ten years later, however, the debt jumped to $11 billion, and would soar to $21 billion by 1989.21

As the GDR’s debt to the West began to surge, the party concocted a variety of schemes aimed at reducing imports. Some of the GDR’s import-reduction strategies illustrate the more ridiculous aspects of the proscriptive abstinence inherent in Marxist-Leninist consumer ideology, such as the attempt by economic planners in 1977 to eliminate coffee. In support of his plan, the State Planning Commissioner declared that “the Planning Commission has not been drinking coffee for a long time, and it’s all right, we’re still alive”—as if the rest of the population would be as eager to forego such simple pleasures.22
The planning apparatus also embarked on misguided attempts to engineer substitutes for imported items. In 1980, for example, East German scientists patented a method for candying unripe tomatoes as a sugar ersatz. They estimated that the process would save the GDR 3 million West German marks annually. The only problem was that East Germany had neither the facilities adequate to store the green tomatoes during the fermentation process nor the machines necessary to produce the sugar substitute—not to mention serious questions about the surrogate sugar’s taste. More effective, if rather desperate, were plans to sell off the GDR’s gold reserves, weapons stockpiles, and even its cultural treasures, from works of art to cobblestones. The GDR also put a price on its education system, advertising its willingness to train students who had been rejected from western medical schools in return for hard currency.

Eventually, the corrupting influence of fiscal necessity colonized areas of life officially considered ethically sacrosanct, such as health care. In 1988, for example, the GDR agreed to permit Hoechst, one of the largest West German pharmaceutical companies, to conduct tests of a new medication for high blood pressure. Because West German authorities believed these tests posed a danger to human life, Hoechst had been prevented from testing the drug in the Federal Republic. Given the shared language and institutional history, the excellent medical training of East German physicians, and the SED leadership’s willingness to overlook moral reservations, the GDR provided a perfect testing ground for life-threatening drug studies. In return, Hoechst agreed to pay 500,000 West German marks.

The hitch was that Hoechst wanted to use patients in an already advanced stage of illness for a double-blind study in which half the patients would receive a placebo. The risks were serious, as one concerned member of the East German medical community pointed out. Worried that “the contract will . . . be based on a one-sided consideration of money,” he sought assistance from the secret police against the Ministry of Health and the economic apparatus. The Stasi agreed to help prevent the tests—less because of the ethical questions raised by the study than for security reasons. If news of the test was leaked, the Stasi reasoned, it could “be used for negative political activities against the GDR, including blackmail.” This incident and others like it complicate arguments that seek to reduce the life of the GDR to the coercive excesses of its secret police. As I try to demonstrate in my dissertation, representatives of the SED’s economic apparatus were capable of an even greater disregard for human life in the pursuit of money than the most cynical Stasi officers.
By far the most important source of hard currency, however, was the Intershops.\textsuperscript{28} Much like the Soviet Beriozka, the Czechoslovak Tuzex, the Polish Pewex, and the Bulgarian Corecom, the East German Intershops were initially designed to offer inexpensive Western goods exclusively to Western tourists as a way of supplementing the GDR’s hard-currency receipts. These similarities ended in 1971, when Honecker embarked on an aggressive expansion of the Intershops, not only increasing their number but also opening them to East German citizens for the first time.

The economic decision to expand the sphere of Intershop activities was reinforced throughout the 1970s by Honecker’s political decision to respond positively to the overtures of detente. The liberalization of travel arrangements between the two Germanies made it feasible for large numbers of West Germans to travel to the GDR for the first time since the Berlin Wall went up. Naturally, West German visitors brought with them West German currency, increasing the circulation of West German marks in East German hands. Gifts from family and friends constituted the main source of western currency. The result was a flourishing illegal market for goods and services in return for West German marks.

Trade on the black market had always represented a challenge to the party’s power because it took place beyond the purview of the plan and embodied an alternate system of values in competition with the planned economy. To reduce the scope of black market trade, the party moved it inside the Intershops, which opened their doors to East Germans in 1974. The result was a sharp increase in the GDR’s intake of hard currency, soaring from 170 million West German marks in 1971 to 1.2 billion in the revolutionary year of 1989.\textsuperscript{29}

Officially sanctioning the use of Western currency, however, did little to make the West German mark less attractive. Instead of reducing the presence of Western money and all that it symbolized, the Intershops only made the extent of its circulation more apparent. The gradual depreciation of the East German mark, moreover, took on a political dimension once the regime gave its official blessing to a two-currency economy, in much the same way that the party leadership’s public preference for Volvos devalued the domestic automobile industry.

In addition, conceding the Intershops such a large role in the retail sector encouraged the very social stratification based on commodity fetishism that the SED was nominally devoted to eradicating. Most of those blessed with West German money owed their access to it to ties of family or friendship—which automatically excluded most party members, who were obliged to cut off all contact with the Federal Republic. Rather than rewarding people loyal to the regime, then, or improving the position of the working class, the Intershop system privileged the very people whose sympathy for the GDR was most likely to be the least enthusiastic.
Yet, the social value of West German money was not restricted to the ability to purchase high-quality commodities, or even the prestige attached to these products because of their scarcity or western origin. Rather, the West German mark was imbued with the nimbus of an alternative value system in direct competition—ideologically and monetarily—with the GDR. For this reason, official sanction of trade denominated in hard currency was tantamount to legitimizing capitalist relations, leading to an increased orientation towards western consumer goods and a serious threat to the GDR’s currency. Ironically, the SED’s own economic practices were eroding the ethical and financial ground on which socialism stood.

For their part, East Germans who had no access to hard currency sought to appeal to the regime’s egalitarian sensibilities against the Intershops, flooding the regime with letters of complaint. One woman, for example, charged that

the GDR is a socialist state, in which the privileges of certain people should be abolished. That is why I am indignant about the Intershops in this country.\textsuperscript{30}

Many letters written to party officials, however, journeyed on to the next logical step. They inverted the relation between egalitarian ideology and divisive practice, demanding uniform access to West German money, and the Intershops along with it, as a right that should be accorded everyone in keeping with the regime’s advocacy of social equality. Another woman wrote Honecker to demand that “in the future, West German marks are to be part of monthly salaries” so that everyone might have the opportunity to shop in the hard-currency stores.\textsuperscript{31} In another curious reversal, many East Germans linked moral probity to Western money. One man, for example, denounced

the corruption and fraud blossoming in all walks of life. As a Christian, I don’t want to be involved in this. The only way to remain honest is to obtain West German marks. That’s why I would like to apply for 50 percent of my salary to be paid out in West German marks.\textsuperscript{32}

Clearly, the population was increasingly inclined to link economic performance, as measured by the supply of Western currency, to questions of political power.

What began as an attempt to modernize the retail sector in order to consolidate the rule of a new political leadership ended up intensifying the contradictions inherent in the GDR’s approach to consumer sovereignty. Although expanding the Intershop retail chain helped ease the financial crisis brought about by Honecker’s policies, it also unleashed
the demons of Western consumerism and national division, deepening social stratifications that could not be explained away by Marxist-Leninist ideology. East Germans were tantalized by the glimpse of Western consumerism provided by the Intershops, which functioned as enclaves of capitalism on socialist soil, yet they were frustrated by the unequal access to it.

In fact, the division between the Intershops and the black market, between the East and West German mark, and between socialism and capitalism reinforced a growing split in the planned economy. The SED was unable to reconcile its ideological aspirations—a society free of the social alienation represented by capitalist money and merchandise—with the practical exigencies of governing an industrial society by force. The party attempted to manage the needs of socialist consumers by turning to the West, but this policy introduced currency and commodities that had been produced according to a system of valuation that was antithetical to socialism. Worse, the appearance of new and high-quality goods on the East German market, combined with the officially sanctioned method of distributing them via access to West German currency, only engendered the very same commodity fetishism that the SED publicly vituperated.

The SED’s attempt to control what money can buy, as well as what purchase it has on human imagination, failed. By 1989, the party’s preference for financial expediency over ideological consistency had consumed both the GDR’s economic strength and its political legitimacy, as some East Germans were permitted to consume what they could of the West, while the others were left with nothing to consume but the ideology itself.

Notes

1 The Federal Archives granted access to this and other petitions on the condition that the privacy of East German citizens who wrote letters is preserved.
2 The German, replete with idiosyncratic spellings, runs: “Die sozialismuslichen Staaten sind mit ihren Banknoten mit in das kapitalistische Banknotennetz mit hinein verstrickt und darum kommt die soziale Wirtschaft in allen sozialischen Staaten nicht so richtig voran” (Bundesarchiv Berlin (BarchB), DN10 3287, petition from 23.8.88 to the ZK, p. 1).
3 Ibid. See also BArchB, DN10 3287, K. to SED, 10.11.85, and K. to Honecker, 20.6.77.
5 BArchB, DN10 3287, Ehrensperger, Abteilung Planung und Finanzen, to Bruno Meier, Stellvertretender Präsident der Staatsbank, 7.9.88. See also BArchB, DN10 3287, Gerhard Serick to Manfred Wackernagel, Abteilung Planung und Finanzen, 20.11.85.
6 BArchB, DN10 3287, Serick to Ehrensperger, 9.9.88.
7 For more on the German economy between 1918 and 1945, see Gerald D. Feldman, The Great Disorder: Politics, Economics, and Society in the German Inflation, 1914–1924 (New York


13 This is Marx’s definition of need as expressed in: *Das Kapital, MEW*, vol. 23, (East Berlin, 1970), p. 185. It appears in slightly different form in official GDR literature, such as Willi Ehliert et al. (eds.), *Wörterbuch der Ökonomie Sozialismus* (East Berlin, 1984), pp. 136–7.


16 The problem of complementarity achieved popular notoriety in the GDR in the early 1980s through the East German pop-star Nina Hagen’s song “Michael, du hast den Farbfilm vergessen.” Although the text does not directly mention the shortage of color film—presumably to pass the censors—the lyrics contrast the colorfulness of the singer’s experience with the frustrating black and white record her lover will leave her.

17 The following account is derived from BArchB, DE1 53092, Komitee der Arbeiter-und Bauern-Inspektion, 29.4.80, pp. 63-69, and BArchB, DE1 53092, State Secretary Heinz


19 Stiftung Archiv Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BA), DY 30, Vorläufige SED 41853 [Band I], Komitee der Arbeiter- und Bauern-Inspektion, Arbeitsgruppe für Organisation und Inspektion beim Ministerrat, Staatliche Finanzrevision, [no date, but most likely 8.9.88], Anlage 1, p. 5). Other problems included the high humidity registered in warehouses, as well as the use of aging storage space, some stretching back even into the fifteenth century (see the documents in SAPMO-BA, DY 30, Vorläufige SED 41853).


22 BArchB, DE1 56348, “Interne Beratung mit E. Honecker z. Schrb. 14.3.77,” p. 113. It is worth mentioning that East German coffee was often mixed with chicory to make it go further.


25 BArchB, DL2 995. Bulgaria also offered cheap medical training to Greek medical students.

26 The following information is drawn from BStU, MfS-ZAIG 14614, Hauptabteilung XX/3, “Bericht. Medikamententestung in der DDR,” 18.2.88, pp. 23-4.

27 See, for example, Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle, Untergang auf Raten (Munich, 1993).

28 Surprisingly, this includes the vast sums earned from the amount of hard currency that Westerners were obliged to exchange per day (the Mindestumtausch). In the first six months
of 1989, for example, the GDR earned 135.8 million DM from these transactions, versus 120.6 million in the first half of 1988 (SAPMO-BA, DY 30, Vorläufige SED 41757, Ministerium der Finanzen, “Information über die Entwicklung der Einnahmen aus dem verbindlichen Mind- estumtausch, dem zusätzlichen Währungsumtausch, den Visa-, Straßenbenutzungs- und Gehnemigungsgebühren sowie der Ausgaben für private Reisen der Bürger der DDR in das nichtsozialistische Wirtschaftsgebiet und der Einnahmen und Ausgaben der DDR aus dem privaten Reiseverkehr gegenüber der Deutschen Bundesbahn im 1. Halbjahr 1989,” 4.8.89, p. 4.). Of course, Intershop profits were dwarfed by the total of all lump-sum payments made by the Federal Republic to “compensate” the GDR for the burden of keeping communication between the two countries open, including maintaining transit highways and delivering mail. After 1982, however, Intershop revenues became the largest single source of hard currency, exceeding the 520 million DM the West German government paid annually for highway maintenance and transit costs, which was the largest component of the lump-sum payments.


30 BArchB, DL2 930, petition from 4.2.88.


32 BArchB, DG7 VA-1813, petition from 16.5.89.
The term *globalization* long held a privileged position as a theoretical catchword. Its hegemonic status has crumbled, though; partly because the excitement over changes in the level of investigation—worldwide as opposed to regional and national—has cooled down. Instead, work on details is gaining in prominence. Investigations of idiosyncratic historical developments and of interactions between different social realms in the process of globalization demonstrate the complexity of phenomena in question. Voices have been raised to denounce theoretical generalizations about a multitude of historically contingent cases. At the same time, the discussion has moved from a focus on economic and technological detail to culturally specific potentials of transnationalization or transregionalization. Since globalization has become an accepted phenomenon, many crucial questions now concern the area of global cultures. Globalization necessitates communication with unfamiliar partners. Different cultures provide different symbolic orders as groundwork for communication and action. In such a scenario, values and communication rules from within a single national culture will not always be adequate tools. The switch to another cultural memory or the negotiation of new cultural memories for communication groups beyond the paradigm of the nation establish global cultures in the sense of new symbolic orders, new arenas for communication. Individual capacities for such moves depend to a significant degree on cultural skills acquired in a national or regional culture. Different cultures have differing capacities for putting their own heritage at risk.

At this stage, it makes more sense than ever to investigate the capabilities of proponents of individual national cultures to transcend fixations on national heritage and move on to globalized scenarios of interaction. While such studies would be helpful with respect to countries all over the globe, my own expertise demands that I limit my study to Germany, a Western country and former colonial power. Germany is generally viewed as a *Kulturnation*, its *Sonderweg* and the experience of the Third Reich further contribute to cultural seclusion and illusory self-
sufficiency in an increasingly global world. Even today the difficulties that significant parts of the population, its politicians and intellectuals have in coming to terms with the realities of a multicultural immigrant society and accepting the challenge of identity formation in globalized, multicultural settings are fairly apparent.

A cultural self-centeredness and an actual lack of “globalized biographies” may well be impairing the ability of many Germans to act competently in culturally mixed environments. But the situation of contact still deserves more attention than it receives. Conservatives tend to brush off failures in non-European contexts and instead refer to rich histories of cultural transfer within Europe or with the United States. On the other hand, many cultural critics like to dismiss even the most serious and well-intentioned attempts at interacting with other cultures as orientalist, imperialist, even racist. They move on to reformist movements—migrant literature, literature by international postcolonial star authors—and leave many things unsaid about the genesis, workings and failures of experiential modes in the old German tradition, culturally hegemonic as it may be.

In order to focus on the clash between limited German negotiation skills and increasingly demanding global constellations, my study takes a look at German travel writing about India in the twentieth century. One key assumption is that interchange with non-European regions is different from multilateral negotiations within the confines of Europe. Lack of experience, lack of knowledge and lack of willingness to make cross-cultural communications a priority all reinforce outdated modes of behavior and communication. In the case of India, Germans have for centuries inventively promoted images that are meagerly substantiated by travel and experience. This tradition runs through from the Middle Ages to the Romantics’ utopia of India as a land of poetry and paradisical bliss to CDU candidate Jürgen Rütter’s infamous slogan “Kinder statt Inder” (children instead of Indians) in the 2000 state-election campaign in North-Rhine-Westphalia. At the same time, more pragmatic views as well as criticism of prevalent practice have always been integral parts of German culture, even if most well-intentioned efforts had tremendous difficulty in dissociating themselves from ruling doctrine. The second key assumption deserves a closer look. It states that actions, experiences and writing strategies as demonstrated by travel literature are more intricate than postcolonial critics think, e.g. poetologically motivated or part of productive interchange.

A Case for Literature

The coming-to-grips with India in experience and writing is as much a test run as it is a valuable exercise for German negotiation skills. An
impressive body of travel literature attests to this. Unfortunately, this whole corpus of work is routinely discredited as mass literature or as simply an instrument of dominant racist, orientalist or imperialist ideology. While it is certainly important to address all travel writing as literature—the travel experience is not available as such, its representation is informed by certain symbolic orders and therefore in need of interpretation—its reduction to ideological messages is counterproductive.

This objection actually extends to much of postcolonial literary criticism. Representations of the Third World in German literature have often come under attack as fabrications with a strong colonialist bias. To be sure, many individual texts and authors have been engaged in orientalist and imperialist discourses. And more often than not the critiques are telling. Much of the literature in question is marred by a dismaying lack of sensitivity and reflection. As Susanne Zantop once remarked, the postcolonial writer is not merely the writer who makes literature after the globe has been decolonized on a political scale. To qualify as truly postcolonial, he should above all be able to reflect and critique his own position. Instead of acknowledging, let alone integrating the “Other’s” voice and viewpoints, Western literature still tends to shy away from dialogue. Instead, it engages in representational patterns that shrink the Other to the stature of an object. It is postcolonial literary criticism’s key issue to expose certain standardized mechanisms of dealing with the Other. These mechanisms include: projection, the other as evil alter ego or paradisical utopian space; distancing in time, the Third-World subject is relegated to an earlier (primitive/innocent) cultural stage of development, lacking the deeper insights of European intellectuals; and the detached modern tourist gaze, accompanied by the very practical desire to view things from a privileged position: from up above or from the safe distance of the train compartment or the automobile seat.

While the achievements of postcolonial studies as a whole are quite remarkable, it has become more and more apparent that the criticism produced by no means exhausts the literature in question. It has always tended to reduce literature to an instrument in political struggles. The writer is habitually measured against the ideal of political activism she does not necessarily aspire to nor is obliged to strive for. The writer of fiction as social and cultural critic, as a privileged force in the reengineering of political processes having gone seriously awry a long time ago—this is itself an overcharged vision of authors amid the centering modern and postmodern force fields of the twentieth century. While moral obligations and cultural responsibilities may indeed exist, it should not come as a surprise if authors do not meet them. After all, their field of reference is determined by relatively homogenous traditions, based on native language, canonized literature and a clear-cut set of notions about GHI Bulletin No. 30 (Spring 2002) 113
issues such as representation, realism, the role of the author, the role of writing and so on. Before they can remodel the real world, they first have to remodel their own literary cosmos. And in this effort they are up against a vastly intricate web of constraints. Therefore, it is not impossible that what can be viewed from a critical distance as ideological failure may on closer observation still be a powerful attempt at rearranging common European or German frameworks of verbal expression, however much likely to misrepresent an Other.

Another argument concerning the same point hinges upon the distinction between theory and practice or between conceptualizing and acting out. The theory of theory (the theory of science) claims that theories should be precise, unambiguous, and economical. The practice of theory may well be different, but no doubt the driving force of the activity always aims at the clearest possible construction of distinctions and lines of argumentation. Playfulness, compromise, difference may be achievable in the act, but there is no way of denying that the bulk of theoretical work engages in the construction of dichotomies and linear reasoning. A generalizing and abstracting activity, be it essentialist or merely designed for heuristic purposes, sets up dichotomies and inevitably misses the complexity of the living. Clifford Geertz instead argued in favor of “thick description”; more recently Anil Bhatti has claimed that human interaction across historically established barriers should be based on the acknowledgement of the Other rather than on acts of understanding. In both cases strong conceptualizations and deductive reasoning are dismissed in favor of complex yet somewhat humble cognitive activities lacking closure. In so far as postcolonial theorizing involves both a political edge and strong guiding dichotomies—at the core we find empirical substrata such as physical suffering or differences in material living conditions—it necessarily and willingly ends up with a strongly conceptualized picture of the world, indeed so strongly conceptualized that at times it loses sight of most potentials of the current situation for future development.

Unqualified dedication to a political cause does not, however, raise the predictive power or the explanatory adequacy of a line of thinking. Especially literature is not limited to political activism, and in taking on an entire web of references and contexts, its sensitivity reaches beyond the polarizations that theoretical and political work delivers. In putting the focus of interpretation on literary questions of representation and aesthetics, the relation of the individual text to issues of postcolonization and globalization will be much more differentiated. Immediate preoccupations and cultural ignorance do not become more tolerable, yet their predominance, their endurance and possible alternatives will be traced more thoroughly as contingent upon a complexity of traditions. While
rebellion seems possible, it still takes a genius to master and overcome the intricate legacies of the past. This is often more than can be expected.

The Corpus

The *Deutsche Bibliographie* (*DB*) gives an idea of the wealth of material published on India as a subject matter throughout the twentieth century. The subheadings under the category *Indien* changed significantly over the years, and the *Deutsche Bibliographie* did not always distinguish thoroughly between travel accounts proper, fictionalized accounts and fiction. It does not spare the scholar an autopsy of the available material. Still, the bibliography gives valuable insights into the proportions of the reception of India on the book market. This is not the place to elaborate on book production in general, but I do wish to point out a few tendencies indicated by the listings.

Roughly speaking, the eight five-year periods from 1911 to 1950 averaged about 110 entries for *Indien* each, including new editions of popular books such as Waldemar Bonsels’s *Indienfahrt* (first edition 1916, the 1930 printing brought the number of copies in print to 350,000), Hermann Graf von Keyserling’s *Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen* (1919, 3rd ed. 1920), Hermann Hesse’s *Aus Indien* (1913), Ernst Haeckel’s *Indische Reisebriefe* (1882, 6th ed. 1922), or Sir John Retcliffe’s (alias Hermann Goedsche) *Nena Sahib* (1858). After 1950, the number of entries gradually rose from approximately 230 for 1951–1955 to approximately 450 for 1981–1985. The postwar period saw a particularly sharp increase in highly specialized scholarly work (e.g. sociology, geology, literary studies) and travel guides (eight entries for 1981–85, ten entries for 1986–90). Such information-centered texts relegated individualized narratives and adventurous tales for younger readers (*reifere Jugend*) to the lesser ranks. The corpus is no doubt varied, ranging from art history, philosophy and religion to anthologies of Indian literature in translation (individual authors in translation are not listed under *Indien*) and German literature with Indian subjects to anthropological, political and economic studies.

The absolute number of travel accounts and fictionalized reworkings of travel experiences may amount to somewhere between one and two hundred. Some trends become immediately apparent. Early on the travel activities tended to be related to professional interests and were in this sense spin-offs from missionary work, trade relations or politically motivated visits. The journey of the Kronprinz Wilhelm of the German Empire and Prussia in 1910-11 was the topic of at least six independent publications. Emil G. Pick’s *Reisebriefe eines österreichischen Industriellen aus Abessinien, Indien und Ostasien* from 1909 highlighted an industrialist’s impressions. Later, the Hagenbeck preserve in Ceylon (John Hagenbeck,
Unter der Sonne Indiens, 1926), mainly based on animal trade, attracted wild life experts as well as naturalists, mountaineers and other guests. Examples are Hermann Wiele (Für Hagenbeck im Himalaja und den Urwäl dern Indiens: Dreißig Jahre Forscher und Jäger, 1925), Oscar Kauffmann (Aus Indiens Dschungeln, 1924), but also the traveling painter Oswald Malura (Als Maler durch Indien: Eine nicht alltägliche Trampfahrt, 1949). Occasional glimpses at the life of Christian missions were given (e.g. Luise Albrecht, Eine Frau erlebt Indien, 1938), but with respect to spirituality, the main thrust strongly gravitated towards non-Western experiences of the self and of religion, ranging from an interest in theosophy to hippie culture to New Age (Christiane Rücker, Unterwegs nach Indien: Meine Reise zur inneren Harmonie, 2000). When indologists traveled, their accounts tended to downplay the personal element. Richard Garbe, Indische Reiseskizzen (1889, 2nd ed. 1925), Paul Deussen, Erinnerungen an Indien (1904), Helmuth von Glasenapp, Die indische Welt als Erscheinung und Erlebnis (1948), Dietmar Rothermund, Small Indien (1979), Annemarie Schimmel, Berge, Wüsten, Heiligtümer: Meine Reisen in Pakistan und Indien (1994) are some examples over time.

On the whole, professional pursuits gradually receded as a motivational factor for journeys to India. Traveling gained importance as an activity in itself. Individuals traveled to fulfill their dreams and later wrote about it. World travelers and correspondents emerged as a new class of specialists commissioned to travel and document their insights in writing. Names such as Sven Hedin, Alma Karlin (both widely read in translation), Richard Katz, Colin Roß, Arthur Holitscher, Egon Erwin Kisch, or Gisela Bonn come to mind. Later, in the late 60s, the two impulses merged when globetrotters made it a point to finance their favorite pastime by writing about it. Travel guides became popular, and accounts of Indian experiences that were obviously subjectively colored had chances of survival in only two niches. They either related to extreme experiences of globetrotters and mountaineers, for example in the Himalayas, or they were written by novelists. The latter had regular access to India mainly on the basis of institutionalized international cultural relations. Particularly the Goethe Institute (in India named Max Mueller Bavan) regularly invited German authors and organized reading tours. Among others, Günter Grass and Ingeborg Drewitz benefited from the Max Mueller-lecture circuit.

Apart from such trends and patterns, a few long-time residents of India who published their impressions in German are noteworthy. They were actually exposed to everyday Indian culture, and occasionally added unusual perspectives: J.A. Sauter, Mein Indien: Erinnerungen aus 15 glücklichen Jahren (1921/22); Otto Mayer, Zwanzig Jahre an indischen Für-
Obviously, a lot of research has to go into the closer analysis of individual cases. Very little work has been done even on prominent authors. Authors of the second rank are regularly mentioned but do not seem to merit closer attention (Hanns Heinz Ewers, Waldemar Bonsels, Rudolf Kassner, Bernhard Kellermann, Marie von Bunsen, to name a few prewar names). Particularly literature from the 70s onwards may even be lost over time. Much of the material was published only in paperback, and it seems that neither libraries nor private collectors have made a point of preserving it.

**Methodology and Case Studies**

It is not my goal to write a general introduction to German travel writing on India. Instead, I want to look at patterns and skills of negotiating global cultures. Travel writing from India shows what kinds of people took the risk of exposing themselves to a strange culture, which traditional images and ideas had a strong hold on the imagination of the individual, and when and why dominant discourse was subverted or crumbled. The central aspect of cultural negotiation is foregrounded, and a multitude of different perspectives, time and again coinciding in the treatment of certain key issues, ensures differentiated, yet coherent results.

My study is designed to elaborate on cultural and sociological, not so much on political, economic or technological developments. It sets out to analyze differing capacities and capabilities in cultural negotiation, contingent upon dominant intertexts, shifts in the makeup and habitus of the traveling elite, unsettling travel experiences or ambitious philosophical and poetological programs. The findings are not necessarily representative of German society. The individuals involved cover a broad spectrum of German society, and yet their travels, aspirations and problems are conceivably “exotic” for much of the German population. Those who travel to India and do not write, those who write but do not publish, and indeed those who do not publish nor write nor even travel are left out of the picture. Nevertheless, travel literature in both its crude and more sophisticated versions is deeply anchored in German culture. Social restrictions, cultural backgrounds and intertextual constraints prestructure the make-up of the group of travelers just as much as the available set of preconceptions and writing strategies. But in contrast to the situation at home, the traveler-writer’s expectations inevitably enter into some sort of dialectics with an experience of India that cannot possibly meet them all. Sickness, failure of the means of transportation and other factors may cause irritation. Duties such as writing, to be performed in a...
hostile climate, may undermine an uncritical complacency just as much as obligations to contact certain people, to go to certain places, or to provide certain pieces of information or even photographs to a third party involved. Regardless of whether the writer involved tries obstinately to stick to his agenda or whether he tries to find new ways of understanding and representation, it is always crucial to identify such breaks and fissures in the travel routine. The moments of physical breakdown, of unhappiness and uncertainty, but also the bold gesture of introducing new techniques of observation or representation and disparities between argumentation and metaphors all point to unresolved problems at the core of the experience abroad or its representation. Many times, such problems are not thoroughly worked through on the part of the author for lack of willingness or reflective power. It is all the more important to locate them and treat them as experimental innovations or crucial shortcomings in the process of establishing global cultures.

After a close look at numerous travel writings encompassing the spectrum of different approaches, professions and decades, certain recurring patterns stand out. It becomes possible to assemble a number of case studies each of which should discuss a critical issue. Some of the issues are more obvious than others, but each of them is central to at least three books on Indian travels and pertinent with many others. Each case study will start out with the close reading of an individual text and then contextualize the findings with reference to the corpus as well as to cultural and historical developments.

a) The Human Body
Already Hermann von Keyserling had noted that Ceylon’s climate changes a traveler’s character. It seems clear that the human body as a receptacle of culturally coded behavior is compromised in an environment where its usual functioning is no longer guaranteed. The body’s vulnerability forces different routines upon the traveler and brings him culturally off balance.

b) Socializing and Western Contexts
Cultural demarcations are enforced, maybe even defined, by the erection of in- and out-groups. The club culture of the British was at some point copied by the Germans, but certain experiences, such as unexpected friendships with Indians, loneliness in British hotels, professional contacts with Indians as painters, photographers or merchants, also pointed in another direction.

c) Communication Techniques
In the nineteenth century, Germans were often known to have a command of the Sanscrit language. This was not a living language, but the
wide-spread fascination with indology still enabled many Germans to communicate if crudely with native Indians. How the knowledge was used, and particularly how the ability to communicate in Sanscrit was supplemented by later generations deserves attention. Generally, very few dialogues appear in the travel writings. Journalists with their high interest in interview situations are a notable exception to this rule.

d) Itineraries and Intertexts
The most common travel routes to and in India have changed over time. While it would certainly be an overstatement to call the developments dramatic, they had specific causes and certain impacts on travel experiences.

f) Pictures
Illustrations are almost a defining characteristic of German travel writing from India. Many authors took pictures with handheld cameras and included them in their books, some even painted on the subcontinent. The implicit or explicit assumption always is that pictorial representation can represent Indian reality more adequately than any written account. The dialectics between writing and pictures deserve close attention, both in the process of coping with experiences in India and from the point of view of the aesthetics of reception as a feature of the finished book.

g) The Romantic Tradition
Romantic images linger over many of the travelogues. Some of them are clearly generic, but others function as references to specific canonized texts. The rejuvenation of Eichendorff’s *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* and others has some curious and funny aspects.

h) Information and Pragmatism
The expectations of the reading public have changed significantly over the years. Instead of the exotic tales prevalent until World War II, many readers now demand guidebooks for travelers, how-to-books for professionals abroad or nonfiction on politics and the economy. This shift in interest has also impacted the general approach travel writers adopt in view of their material.

Notes
2. Among others, sociologists have moved towards culturally informed interpretations of globalization issues. See Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*,


5 The notion is of course a contested matter (see Hans Magnus Enzensberger, “Europäische Peripherie,” in *Kursbuch* 2, 1965, 154–173). “Former European colonies” or “current extra-European cultures” may also establish the intended reference, while “developing countries” is surely burdened with unfavorable connotations.


11 See fn. 1.

12 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak wishes to “insert” the subaltern as “the being on the other side of difference” into “the long road to hegemony.” “This is absolutely to be desired,” she adds, willing to take risks in an enterprise of social engineering the single-mindedness of which cannot be a measure for literature (G. Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*, Cambridge, Mass. 1999, 310).


14 For my purposes, estimates are sufficient.

15 This is no more than an educated guess. At this point no comprehensive overview is available, and to my knowledge nobody has a firm grasp of the relevant material. The most detailed accounts of German-Indian cultural encounters are still little more than unsystematic collections of material. See Walter Leifer, *Indien und die Deutschen: 500 Jahre Begegnung und Partnerschaft*, Tübingen, Basel 1969; Veena Kade-Luthra, ed., *Sehnsucht nach Indien: Ein Lesebuch von Goethe bis Grass*, München 1993; Martin Kämpchen, ed., *'Von der Freiheit der Phantasie ...'. Indien in der deutschsprachigen Literatur 1900–1999, die horen 196*, Bremerhaven 1999.
16 The journey even licensed a special subcategory in the Deutsche Biographie for 1911–14 (see fn 13), where the six items are listed.

17 The travel guide is of course a phenomenon originating already in the nineteenth century. But the first Baedeker for India was written no earlier than in 1914, and a significant rise in the number of Indian travel guides occurred only a long time after World War II.

18 As Manfred Pfister has pointed out, certain intertexts such as books on the subject, standard behavioral patterns and current clichés may prestructure an encounter quite comprehensively. More specifically, some factors in question are: fictions on India (the Romantics, Kipling, Tagore etc.), scholarly work on India, the itineraries, which often follow certain well-trodden paths, and the roles a traveler chooses to play or has to play (in India as a woman, as an emigrant, as a painter, as a moutaineer, as a biker, as a journalist, as a prince). All of these components may guide the traveler to the point where she merely repeats what others have made of the subject before. (Manfred Pfister, “Intertextuelles Reisen, oder: Der Reisebericht als Intertext”, in: Herbert Foltinek, Wolfgang Riehl, Waldemar Zacharasiewicz, eds., Tales and their telling differences: Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Narrativik, Heidelberg 1993, 109–132).
German Student Exchange Programs in the United States, 1946–1952

Annette Puckhaber

In the wake of World War II many politicians and educators saw understanding through personal contact as a step towards avoiding the mistakes made after World War I and securing a lasting peace. Academic and professional exchange of persons programs were regarded as a new and valuable form of diplomacy that might succeed where others had failed: “Diplomats in scattered capitals spend endless nights seeking new ways to guard the future while people of every nationality scan the headlines for encouraging words,” stated one article in the magazine Independent Woman. “Meanwhile a new community agency, the Foundation for International Understanding Through Students, is quietly at work in the state of Washington, and a significant pattern for a happier world is there being developed. Perhaps the formula that has been found in its Laboratory for Peace, if widely put to work, can create a force that will blot out the visionary bomb that seems to cloud the horizon.” The Foundation for International Understanding Through Students was one of many institutions that organized exchange programs. With regard to Germans these programs were often linked to an additional goal: political reorientation.

My research focuses on the political context of these student exchange programs and on how they were presented in the contemporary press. My primary sources are located in archives, libraries and universities. Considering the great number of American daily and weekly newspapers, magazines, college and university newspapers, it is impossible to evaluate all of them. However, the “Bibliography of Periodical Literature on the Exchange of Persons Program” provided a good starting point for research in different archives and universities.

Exchange of Persons Programs as an Instrument of Reorientation

A new era began in German history in 1945. Within a few years West Germany not only adopted a democratic constitution, but left behind the international isolation of the Nazi period and eventually became a member of the Western alliance. The United States has been seen as the “midwife” in this new orientation of the Federal Republic of Germany. U.S. policy not only spurred administrative changes in Germany, but also fostered changes in German society itself. In the eyes of American re-
formers, the earlier failure of German democracy was less a structural failure than the result of the prevailing authoritarian, illiberal and anti-democratic educational ideas.6 U.S. policy aimed at a reorientation.7 The aim was not to superimpose the American political system, but rather to install democratic values in the minds of Germans. Genuine reform, U.S. officials realized, had to come from the Germans themselves. Exchange programs were seen as contributing to this goal.

The first tentative steps were taken in 1946, when 50 students from Germany visited the United States. Endorsed by the Military Government for the first few years, the exchange was carried out largely at the initiative of private organizations. The exchange programs became an integral part of the American policy of democratization in Germany. In 1949 the Office of U.S. Military Government (OMGUS) launched its “German Program” which came under the auspices of the Office of the U.S. High Commissioner (HICOG) in 1950.8 The program was one-sided in many aspects: “. . . the German program started out as a unilateral American-initiated, American-funded, and American-directed implement of United States policy serving primarily United States interests.”9 Less an exchange than a program to bring Germans to the States, it was intended to show Germans a democracy at work: “The Exchange Program means, primarily, that Germans sponsored by some organization, institution or group are sent to the United States for a period of study and observation of the American way of life, our institutions, the operation of constitutional government based on the democratic ideal.”10

The details of the programs were in most cases left to the organizations involved with a minimum of official interference. Although the U.S. government actively sought a reorientation of Germany, the operation of the exchange programs did not much interest American officials. They believed that a first-hand view of democracy would automatically bring about the desired change of attitude, belief and behavior. As George Shuster noted: “Exchange was at first conceived of by the Occupation as an instrument for smuggling in democratic bacteria. Believing that exposure to life in the United States was the best way of producing carriers and therewith contagion, a very great many people, young and old, were dispatched to this country.”11

The U.S. government did, however, take an interest in the selection of the exchange participants as far as it pertained to questions of national security. Excluded from participation were persons convicted by a court of the occupational powers, former members of now banned organizations (e.g. the NSDAP or other voluntary organizations associated with the Nazi regime) or persons who had been known for an antidemocratic conviction as well as members of communist organizations. Exchange participants included children of former prisoners of war as well as of
former Nazi leaders. Individuals were not held responsible for crimes committed by their family members. As the exchange programs expanded, officials paid increasing attention to individual records rather than the simple question of membership in Nazi organizations. In some cases exchange participants had to go through as many as seven security checks to obtain a military exit permit and a visitor’s visa.

While the program started out in the U.S. occupation zone, once the Federal Republic of Germany was founded persons from other parts of the country were allowed to apply as well. By the combined efforts of private and governmental organizations, about 3,000 German students visited the United States between 1946 and 1952. They were chosen on the basis of their knowledge of English as well as their declared willingness to return to Germany afterwards, and they needed private sponsors in the United States. Students were not the only group participating in the exchange programs but their situation differed from that of others.

German Youth as an Investment in a Democratic Future

Exchange programs generally targeted “leaders” and, in the case of young people, “future leaders.” The inclusion of young people was important. On the one hand, they had to be at the center of a democratic renewal if changes in German society were to last. On the other hand, National Socialism had had a bigger impact on youth than on any other group. Unlike their parents or grandparents, young people were not able to fall back on social values that had been promoted before National Socialism. All they knew was society as it had existed during the twelve years of the Nazi regime. However, adolescence is a period of evaluation. Values, norms, styles of conduct are examined, reflected upon, accepted and internalized—or discarded. During this time a young person develops a stand in favor of or against a system and its representatives. Goals and methods to achieve them are questioned. German youth of the postwar period needed alternative concepts of community and social behavior. This was recognized by occupation officials: “After the total bankruptcy of National Socialism, to which all young people were exposed in their formative years, there remains very little to give their lives a new direction. They live in a society characterized by political, economic, and social disorganization, where democratic ideas have not taken sufficient root to give rise to a new growth of culture and education. The importation of new ideas and methods through exchange of books, magazines, educational films, etc., while of great value to a reeducation program, cannot alone accomplish the task. It is imperative, therefore, that a large number of young Germans be brought face to face with a democratic way of life, within the United States and other countries.”
Exchange participants were chosen on the basis of several criteria relating to democratic viewpoints and qualities of leadership: “Not only scholastic records are considered but also general personality and appearance, promise of leadership, adaptability, political record, and open-mindedness.”\(^{18}\) The meaning of leadership potential remained vague, as the Chief of the Cultural Exchange Section within the Education and Cultural Relations Division of OMGUS admitted: “‘Leaders’ is an elastic category including anyone who goes to attend a conference, teach or lecture, confer, receive on-the-job training or carry out planned observation—in short all types of activity in the cultural fields except matriculated study.”\(^{19}\) Previous membership in the Hitler Youth did not necessarily exclude young people from participation in an exchange. Individual records were taken into considerations by looking at the date and age of their admission.\(^{20}\)

**The German Student Exchange through the Eyes of the American Public: Reasons for Bringing German Students to the United States**

The youth programs received widespread attention in the U.S. media. While newspapers referred to the purpose of the exchange of persons programs and the selection of the participants only in the broadest terms, they often gave exchanges repeated coverage. What themes and interests did the articles focus on?

The American Field Service (AFS) was the most prominent organization involved in the exchange of high school students, and its visiting students were frequently the subject of press coverage. AFS presented its exchange program to the public as follows: “The aim is to assure that young people whose records mark them as future leaders in their own lands shall learn from personal experience what the United States is really like. Part of the program is to offer these young people many opportunities to meet Americans, receive their hospitality, and to travel widely during their stay here. It is the hope of the American Field Service—and a worthy hope—that these young men and women will return to their native countries with a true understanding of American democracy and a friendship for American people.”\(^{21}\) For the American Field Service, the German student exchange was part of a general exchange program. AFS saw its mandate in promoting “goodwill among nations,”\(^{22}\) a broader approach that tied the reorientation of Germans to the concept of international understanding as a path to maintain peace. This did not mean that AFS students from Germany were not aware of their special mission. In an interview, Klaus B. expressed his hope to take home democracy with him.\(^{23}\) Eva K. explained: “‘My duty in coming to America . . . was to
come over and get to know the American everyday life and to see Americans all together. I am to bring a fair impression back to Germany”, and she added, “to tell Americans what we are doing in Germany and what problems we have.”

Newspaper articles generally gave two basic reasons for welcoming the exchange participants to the United States: to teach young Germans the value of democracy and to dispel their frequent misconceptions about Americans. There were many misconceptions, although in some cases they derived from a simple lack of knowledge. Technical terms like re-education and reorientation were hardly ever mentioned in the media coverage, nor were the reasons for the exchange program discussed. U.S. officials emphasized that the exchange programs spread knowledge about and sympathy for the United States: “It [the exchange program] is all part of the increasing effort on the part of this nation to be correctly ‘understood’ by representatives of other nations which, by reason of geographic separation, may not be in position to know the motives which impel us in our international diplomacy.” The article continued, however: “They [the exchange students] will help our own students to understand the problems of other lands and to appreciate the oneness of different races and nationalities.” And on a critical note the article stated: “Then Americans would be more certain to step lightly in other lands, to boast less, and to talk more of our hope for peace than of the prospect of war. If other peoples knew us better, we would be more sure of ourselves.”

Although this was not specifically intended, newspapers acknowledged that even a “one-sided” exchange involved two parties and just as the guests got to know their hosts, the hosts also got to know their guests. Many Americans were curious about the situation in Europe and political developments in Germany. One college paper asked: “Would Western Germany fight on the side of the U.S. in a war against Russia should such a war come? What is the attitude toward the U.S. in Germany? How strong is nationalism in Germany?”

The Exchanges as a Community Effort

Not only curiosity awaited the participants upon their arrival, but whole communities planned their welcome. Newspaper articles testified to the high degree of community involvement in the exchange programs. Individuals, groups, town councils, local Rotary and Kiwani clubs, the American Legion, and many more participated in the preparations as well as the operation of the exchange. Friends and relatives of particular German students funded individual scholarships, but churches and institutions of higher education sponsored the majority of the participants. Frank Banta, Chief of the Cultural Exchange Section, noted in 1948: “Religious groups
have been the most active in giving scholarships to German students: The National Catholic Welfare Committee, the World Council of Churches (Protestant), the Mennonites, the Quakers and the Church of Christ have each given three to 21 scholarships. The University of Kentucky and Michigan State College have each given three scholarships and others have been offered by Mississippi, Minnesota, Washington State and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.\textsuperscript{28}

But community involvement went far beyond scholarships. Volunteers were kept busy with fundraising, they had to find host families willing to offer board and lodging to the visitors in their homes, and they had to organize events and special activities for the guests. The response within communities was sometimes overwhelming. In Ridgewood a higher number of families responded than needed: “Fearful at first that they would have difficulty getting enough beds for them [196 exchange participants], committee members had to fight off eager residents of Ridgewood and surrounding towns . . . , all of them clamoring for a foreign student guest.”\textsuperscript{29} The exchange participants were swamped with invitations to give public lectures or to attend formal as well as informal dinners, lawn parties, picnics and barbecues; companies and communities outside the school district invited the foreigners to visit. With the assistance of Greyhound, the American Field Service organized bus trips around the country for their students. Many wanted to chip into and to join in the hospitality to make the guests feel welcome. In many cases, the exchange participants became a focus of discussions, planning committees, and council meetings before they even set foot on American soil.

As a result, the arrival of the exchange participants was anticipated by their host families and whole communities and regions. To satisfy public interest, media coverage followed the exchange participants. Requests from reporters, newsreel cameramen and photographers for exchange students to pose for pictures became common during their stay, but particularly while traveling. The \textit{Sunday News} remarked: “Used to this [the media attention], they flung themselves into the spirit of the thing like veterans.”\textsuperscript{30} A particular active exchange participant spoke supposedly to an estimated 6,000,000 students and 15,000,000 adults, partly through personal appearances, but mainly thanks to 15 radio or television shows.\textsuperscript{31}

The public support for the program in the United States was less the result of a successful exchange than a predisposition. Thus the newspaper articles included hardly any critical analysis of the political aims of the exchange program, but mostly human-interest stories. Readers wanted to read about the persons their community sponsored, they were looking for reports on the activities of the exchange participants and quotes on their adaptation and their impressions of the United States. Of course, they
were also interested in reading about their own good deeds: Not surprisingly, many articles mentioned host families by name and would sometimes report on admirable community efforts in a column such as “Good Citizens At Work.” In general these efforts lasted to the very last day of the exchange participants’ stay. In Lima the city presented their stop-over visitors on their final bus trip around the country with a package of souvenirs as a remembrance. At the Amarillo High School students collected money to buy true Texas-style farewell gifts for their two exchange participants: Both boys received a large Western hat, a wide leather belt and real cowboy boots. This last example showed that even peer groups involved themselves actively in the community activities.

Dealing with the German Past

While it was true that most articles, particularly in smaller newspapers, did not discuss political issues, their readers found some references to the German past in quotes from exchange participants. Many German students expressed astonishment about their warm welcome and the lack of resentments expressed by Americans upon meeting former enemy aliens. “Although many Americans view the German nation as a whole with some skepticism or at least reserve, there was scarcely any resentment against the individual German, provided he showed some tact and tolerance in human relationships,” said Friedrich G. For some the stay in the United States meant an escape from everyday confrontations with the German past. “I like it here because they don’t ask you if you are Catholic or German or Jewish or Irish, but instead, if you know how to drive a truck, or write well,” Manfred P. told one journalist. An exchange particularly under the auspices of an international exchange program, like the American Field Service, which did not limit its program to Germans only, sometimes offered temporary national anonymity. Germans reflected on differences between the host country and their homes, but in their adaptation to the United States they were in the same boat as exchange participants from Belgium, Finland, France or Norway.

In their reflections on Germany the exchange participants remained fairly superficial. The German past was hardly ever addressed in a direct way. Germany was presented as a war-torn country: “Germany is extremely war-weary; the destruction of Allied bombers is still visible almost everywhere; on street corners in every city and town begging war-cripples are grim reminders to the people; and the dismantling of basic industries has only just ceased.” “Our main thought is to rebuild our country,” Herwig L. emphasized. The students projected to the American public a perception of Germany as a country that had suffered as a result of the war and was facing the consequence of losing it.

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tion in Germany was not perceived as a punishment for past wrongdoings. On the contrary, while they did not attempt to justify anything that happened under the National Socialism (insofar as they touched upon these issues at all), the Nazis were often presented as the “others,” a group that was not identical with the German population and that had actually oppressed or seduced the latter, and in particular young people. “During the time of the Nazi regime, German schools (especially high schools) were completely controlled by the government and strongly influenced by the ideas of Nazism. It was the idea of the Nazi leaders to train the youth for their places and thus secure the future of the regime. When the war was over... and the Allies took over the German government and territory a tremendous chaos was left. And most of all the German youth was damaged, not materially but psychologically. Men who had been heroes, were now criminals. Things which had been good were now crimes,” Kurt B. reflected.

As frustrated as some Americans felt about the lack of guilt for Nazi crimes expressed by the German population, many newspapers were willing to put the blame on the older generations and to see the young people as “contaminated” by an authoritarian regime. Membership in the Hitler Jugend was presented as a nonpolitical act: “When he was 10 years old,” one newspaper wrote about an exchange student, “he joined the Youth Movement. But to Herwig it was more of a ‘game’ than anything else. In Germany the movement was something you entered into when you came of age, ‘like going to school,’ he commented.” It was not concealed that they had run around in uniforms and worn the swastikas, but they had not been of age then and had not known better. At least one German exchange student believed that his background gave him the advantage of a better vantage point: “As I am coming from a country where many people have been most seriously affected by war and the evils of a totalitarian state, I may have a better eye for all those things which an American by habit takes as self-evident.”

In the United States many Germans had friendly encounters with Jews again for the first time in years. In a few cases, Jews and Jewish organizations even contributed to the operation of the exchange. The encounters left an impact. Friedrich G., for example, started reflecting on guilt and responsibility: “Of special importance... was the meeting with Jews and citizens of those European countries that were occupied by the German army during the war. Although I never approved of, or excused, the horrible crimes committed by the Nazi regime, I was no friend to the conception of collective German guilt. But here, facing those who had been directly or indirectly discriminated against and persecuted by the Germans, I recognized the full extent of those crimes more clearly than ever before and I could not help having a personal feeling of guilt—or, at
least, a truly deep feeling of shame.” While he realized that he might not be guilty of having committed crimes, he began to understand that he shared a moral responsibility because the Nazi regime took place in Germany.

Designed as a program to promote transnational understanding on a personal level, the exchange showed early promise. The student program helped to create some unlikely friendships. “They had become inseparable during Eva’s year, the German girl and the Jewish girl, studying, reading, swimming together. ‘Eva is part of my life,’ Ruth says. ‘Everyone loves her. Some may have come just to learn. She came to learn and absorb. After graduation, I am going to Europe to travel and study, and in Germany we will do this together.”

This friendship was extraordinary by contemporary standards, and it was not the only one that developed: “The atmosphere of good will and understanding which prevailed in the college was particularly beneficial for social intercourse with those people who had suffered under the Nazis and who had every reason to hate the Germans. Hostilities were avoided and in most cases we could find a common basis of understanding. In the course of time some of the Norwegians, Frenchmen and Netherlanders were among the best friends I made in the United States. In Europe, under less fortunate external conditions, this might not have been achieved.”

In general, however, newspapers drew a blank on questions about dealing with the German past. If they dealt with the issue, it was not often in articles and columns on German exchange participants visiting the United States. The students were in many cases allowed, as mentioned above, to distance themselves from the National-Socialist past. The more time passed, this trend might have intensified as the focus shifted toward anticommunism: “…Western Germany is trying to forget Nazism and recover from the crippling of the last war; it is really trying democracy and definitely does not want communism.”

Shared Anticommunism

The rejection of communism became a shared bond between West Germans and Americans in the late 1940s and early 1950s. It helped exchange participants to find acceptance during their stay, partly because of their “expertise.” Some had experienced a short period of Soviet rule, or faced it in their daily lives in Berlin. Americans were curious about living in proximity to the communist regime, and the students were only too willing to share their impressions: “Klaus lived in the Russian zone until a few years ago. According to him, living in the Russian zone is even worse than most Americans imagine.” Konrad T. “declared that ‘conditions in the eastern zone are much worse than in the west, while so-
called free elections are just a farce.’” In some situations the fear of communism was used to distract Americans from the German past. Some students maintained that the “real threat” to Germany came from communism and that Nazi ideology was “dead.”

Strengthening the bonds to the United States and building a Western alliance became a theme: “...Germans realistically see that without a strong Western Europe, the two and one half million Red Army soldiers now stationed just east of the Iron Curtain could sweep away German resistance like leaves before a tornado.” Anticommunism and pro-Americanism went hand in hand: “Firm American stands against communist expansion in two instances—the Berlin Blockade and the Korean situation—have greatly boosted the attitude toward the U.S. in Western Germany.” The theme was not just suggested by German exchange participants but also offered by American journalists: “We hope that these boys and girls who visited us will go home and tell their people and friends some of the great truths about America—our hopes for world peace, our desire to love our neighbors, our sense of decency in world affairs and our wish that the nations of the world solve their common problems through mutual understandings.” And as the article continued to explain: “Some of this might filter through the Iron Curtain into Russia and her unfortunate Satellites and who knows what might happen.”

Exchange of persons programs as an instrument to achieve detente with communism? This might be stretching the evidence for the time frame under discussion, but as an undercurrent it could be occasionally detected.

Concerns and Failures

Newspapers mentioned a few concerns about the exchange. Some of these concerns involved organizational aspects, dealing with the operation of the exchange and principles that should be followed: “A few lessons had to be learned the hard way. The commission now knows that it should not expect good results if it assigns an urban youth to a Pennsylvania farm. It has learned that however benevolent the purpose in mind, Roman Catholic students can be brought over successfully only with that church’s cooperation.” Regardless of the last statement, however, the article discussed the opening of the Brethren Service Commission program to other denominations.

Another issue was the change in appearance of the exchange participants during their stay. Journalists claimed jokingly that it became nearly impossible to tell them apart from their American fellow students. Their sense of fashion was “Americanized”: “After a year of living in the homes of Americans, attending American high schools, and socializing with
American teenagers, their inhibitions have become non-existent, their clothes follow the pattern perfectly, and their English is excellent. Boys clad in Stetsons and cowboy boots were outstanding among the students, although most of them had taken to blue jeans. The girls, with short hair shining in the latest styles wore shorts and not a few were barefoot as a concession to the heat. It was a bit startling to hear them chattering in the typical slang of our own teenagers, with just enough accent to make the words sound different. The change of appearances of the girls were probably the most obvious. Many had arrived with braids which they would carry home in their suitcases, sometimes along with shiny new evening gowns that resembled ensembles known from the movies.

Such startling changes could cause problems of readaptation upon their return to Germany, as a few articles pointed out. AFS addressed the problem in its final orientation round to the students: “They discussed the necessity for un-Americanizing themselves before they reached home, so as not to shock their families. Mr. Edgell asked them to think before starting to show off as world travelers, in order not to antagonize their fellow countrymen, and thus undo the good that is expected from these student exchanges. The differences in standards of living was brought out, and they were cautioned to return as natives of their own countries still, bent on using the good things they have learned to improve them, and on avoiding such American faults as have caused misunderstandings.” Organizers were concerned that the success of the exchange of persons programs with regard to the exchange participants’ mission upon their return, would be endangered by the change of appearance, attitude and behavior. Chosen as potential future leaders in their home country it was essential that the returnees would not alienate themselves from the other Germans, so that they would be able to maintain and build up their influence.

Failures were rarely reported. It seemed that in most cases the careful selection process prevented them, although a few placements did not work out, and sometimes the exchange experience caused new prejudices:

In ten cases families were changed for reasons of maladjustment. One German girl, who was too ‘sophisticated’ was returned home. Perhaps the main failure came with a 17-year-old boy who lived in Birmingham, Ala., studying at Phillipps High School. He had arrived from Germany without a prejudice in the world. His father had died opposing the anti-Semitic program of Hitler. He had never seen a Negro. When he gave his views of life in the South, he spoke amusingly with a rich Southern accent—but what gave the accent point was that he had taken on completely
that region’s social coloration. He trotted out every cliché in the bag against Negroes, calmly observing that segregation may be unconstitutional but necessary, since Negroes were slaves but eighty years ago. He scouted segregation, called Negroes ill-mannered and unable to help themselves or understand democracy...  

While the exchange of persons programs were intended to spread democracy by exposing participants to American democracy, the organizers had not anticipated the effect of the segregation issue on the students. The exchange participants could not help noticing this basic limitation of the American democracy, and not all internalized the regional prejudices as their own:

In these two cities [Augusta and Savannah, Ga.], I got my first realistic impression of the Negro problem in the South. I was shocked at the Negro sections which looked so unworthy of human beings. I constantly had to keep in mind what the Nazis had done with the Jews and their political enemies. Here, at least, nobody was persecuted or killed. When I stood on the highway in the Negro section of Augusta trying to get my next ride I felt strange in being the only white man on the street in a vicinity that could just as well be a part of darkest Africa. It was a feeling of being in a hopeless minority. At that moment I could understand, although not approve, some of the attitudes white people have developed in regions largely populated by Negroes. It was, of course, ignorance which produced this strange feeling, and I saw the trend which leads from ignorance to prejudice, from imaginary necessity for self-defense to ‘preventive’ aggression.’ Later, after I became personally acquainted with some fine Negroes and learned that they are human beings, too, differing very little from me in their mentality and reactions, I lost my feeling of strangeness with them.  

To prevent one-sided views on racial segregation the AFS decided “that it would be desirable to bring students up from the South for at least part of their school year and expose them to non-segregated study in our northern schools.” But this solution did not resolve the problem in its whole extent.

**Mission Accomplished?**

While students were encouraged to study American democracy and to observe its functioning in everyday life, there is no reliable way to mea-
sure the effectiveness of this program of reorientation. Many German exchange participants expressed their love for the host country, their hope to return. But based on their own admissions in newspapers, one cannot be sure that it was not “the amount and quality of the food, the family car, the heating system in the house, radios all over the place, and television” that impressed them the most. Their awareness and appreciation would sometimes spread to their American hosts—although occasionally the German students criticized that Americans took their surrounding luxury for granted and failed to appreciate it. Nonetheless, many students took an active interest in the U.S. polity, policies and politics. The students of 1952 followed the presidential election campaign keenly: “If the students had its way, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower would have no competition. It was hard to find one in the group who wasn’t sporting some sort of Ike button, badge or sticker.” In general students could be found in school societies and as members of student councils. They might have been elected to these councils as a gesture of welcome, but the experience of serving in a student council gave them the opportunity to observe and experiment with democracy on a micro-level.

The educational system in the United States fascinated many and was probably their favorite object for comparison:

Wolfgang said he was particularly struck by American schools, which he found far advanced over those in Europe. ‘Schools in the United States,’ he said, ‘are not just places to study. They are places where people learn how to be good citizens, how to make good homes, how to work with each other. Most of all, schools in the States are places where young people learn they are personally responsible for the society in which they live, and individually responsible for the kind of government they get.’ He spoke of student government in American schools which he said was an eye-opener. He was impressed by the existence in nearly all high schools of ‘school newspapers—which are actually prepared and published by students themselves.’ He was impressed, too, by the co-educational school system, by the large number of practical subjects studied by the pupils and by the wealth of audiovisual teaching aids and the large school auditoriums ‘which are as big as our biggest movie houses.”

In their own sphere the American school system symbolized the path toward democracy. The exchange students did not think that they received a better education in terms of the subject matter covered in the United States, but some believed that they learned democracy from its roots. And they learned to stand up for their beliefs and defend “democracy” in discussion groups.
Was the student exchange program presented as a success to the public? In some cases, newspaper articles expressed a mixture of hope and warning: “It is hoped they [the exchange participants] have learned America’s lesson well for it is true that in their hands lies the destiny of Germany and perhaps the future of the world.” Many students were staunch supporters of the value of the exchange:

There is no doubt that the exchange of persons is one of the most effective means of establishing friendly relations between Germany and the United States. Germany has given a striking example in the past how separation from the outside world can breed intolerance, overestimation of one’s own abilities, and receptiveness to wicked propaganda. The sphere of influence of a single exchange person may be rather small when he returns to his country. However, if we succeed in increasing the exchange of persons of good will so that these single spheres add up to a considerable power, the attitude of a whole nation might be influenced in a positive way. This seems particularly important for a country like Germany, which is in a state of transition and hence fairly susceptible.

Gertrude Samuels of the New York Times recognized and admired the sense of mission of these students: “Yet one—after witnessing the human ravages of the concentration camps, the equivocal attitude of older Germans today, the neo-nazism stirring in regions like Bavaria—wonders what will become of the idealism of these youngsters as they return to their old environments. They, too, are puzzled as to how they are going to make their new information known and their influence felt back home.” After all they were a small group, facing generations who might turn out resistant against change: “You could only hope that their year’s experience had given them some immunity against the fatherland’s political disease, and courage to face up to stubborn resistance to change.”

The reformers involved in the exchange expressed a qualified success: “As might have been anticipated, the results were both good and bad, but I am myself convinced that the good predominated. The [democratic] bacteria were not scattered about in such profusion as had been hoped, and yet their presence can be easily detected.” Frank Banta stated: “The real fruits of the present program will be borne two and three decades later, when the students now in classrooms and laboratories, studying and observing a way of life easier and freer and happier than they have ever seen before, will be leaders in a future Germany.” Henry Kellermann concluded about two decades later: “The program indeed has become a success. It had provided an impulse for democratic reform.”
Since the reorientation scheme at the heart of the exchange of persons programs arose from the belief that rubbing elbows with a democracy would spread Western democratic values, its success was highly dependent on individuals and what they made of the opportunities offered to them through the exchange. Reorientation might have been the goal, but in the end it was often more of a byproduct.

Questions for Future Research

In my future research I intend to focus on internal evaluations of the student exchange by a participating organization like the National Catholic Welfare Conference which collected reports and letters for internal evaluations of their program. Do these contemporary reports give insight on the way the students digested their impressions and experiences? Did the students change their perspective regarding life-style, consumption and education etc.? In-depth research on the internal evaluations might also reveal themes and topics that the organizations asked students to reflect on. Provisional archival findings suggest that individual Americans were indeed concerned about an exchange program that brought former enemies to their country. Questions regarding the usefulness of the expenses arose: “I can think of many less expensive ways of ‘selling democracy’ to Western Germany! We might start with cleaning up Landsberg prison [. . .]”77 The alleged anti-Semitism of a German exchange student resulted in a public protest and an investigation by the Department of State.78 How did organizations respond to such public concerns? These are some of the questions I wish to pursue in my follow-up research.

Notes


2 For this research project I have visited the National Archives, Catholic University of America Archives, American Field Service Archives and the Rockefeller Archive. I also corresponded with dozens archivists from different universities, colleges and schools across the country.

3 In this article “American” is used as referring to the United States only.

4 Henry P. Pilgert, “The Exchange of Persons Program in Western Germany,” Appendix 4, p. 87ff.


The term reorientation asserted itself eventually against the term re-education.

In 1952 the Federal Republic of Germany signed the Fulbright Agreement and the German Program converted into an integrated part of the Fulbright Program. Following Ulrich Littmann’s argument, the inclusion of Germany as an integrated part of the Fulbright Program resulted in a change of intentions involved. (See Ulrich Littmann, *Gute Partner–Schwierige Partner. Anmerkungen zur akademischen Mobilität zwischen Deutschland und den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika, 1923–1993* [Bonn, 1996], p. 86.) Thus my research ends in 1952.


Interdivisional Reorientation Committee (OMGUS), Cultural Exchange Program (February 1949), Foreword.


The portion of exchangees from (West) Berlin was always higher than from any other area. Polls indicated that they were more pro-American and anticommunist before their arrival in the States than West Germans. See Rupieper, *Nachkriegsdemokratie*, p. 404.

The number is an estimate taking into account the exchangees of 1946 as well as Kellermann’s records of the later years. See Kellermann, *Cultural Relations*, p. 261.


Ibid. The Hitler Youth was founded in 1926. The Reichsjugendgesetz of 1936 laid down that all German youth should be organized in it. Pressure to join increased thereafter and in 1939 membership became mandatory for German youth between the age of 10 and 18. Thus the date and age of admission was significant. For a timetable see Arno Klönne, *Jugend im Dritten Reich: Die Hitler-Jugend und ihre Gegner* (Düsseldorf, 1984), p. 303f.

In one case, e.g., an exchangee admitted that she had expected to see shooting cowboys and natives. AFS Archives: scrapbook (Dec 13, 1951–July 11, 1952), RG 4, box 1, “Europeans Tour Parks, Players Guild, Hartville.”


Spectator–Hamilton College, October 27, 1950, “Exchange Students Discuss Homeland at IRC Meeting.”


Spectator–Hamilton College, October 27, 1950, “Exchange Students Discuss Homeland at IRC Meeting.”


Kurt Biedenkopf, “BIKO”-column, October 14, 1950, in The Davidsonian.


AFS Archives: RG 4, box 1, Gertrude Samuels, “Can German Youth Teach Its Elders?” reprinted from the New York Times by the AFS.

See AFS Archives: scrapbook (Dec 13, 1951–July 11, 1952), RG 4, box 1, Duluth News Tribune, July 5, 1952, “Foreign Students Greeted”; A Jewish family even offered to take in Hildegard Speer, the daughter of Albert Speer. She was put up with a Quaker family, but only the intervention of the Jewish family might have secured her participation in the exchange program. See “Reise zur Versöhnung,” in Stern Spezial, no. 21, summer 2001, p. 15-17.


AFS Archives: RG 4, box 1, Gertrude Samuels, “Can German Youth Teach Its Elders?” reprinted from the New York Times by the AFS.


Spectator–Hamilton College, October 27, 1950, “Exchange Students Discuss Homeland at IRC Meeting.”


AFS Archives: scrapbook (Dec 13, 1951–July 11, 1952), RG 4, box 1, The Oak Ridger, July 7, 1952, “German Youth Says Yanks Easy To Be Friends With.”


AFS Archives: RG 4, box 1, Gertrude Samuels, “Can German Youth Teach Its Elders?”, reprinted from the New York Times by the AFS.

Spectator–Hamilton College, October 27, 1950, “Exchange Students Discuss Homeland at IRC Meeting.”

Ibid.


AFS Archives: RG 4, box 1, Gertrude Samuels, “Can German Youth Teach Its Elders?” reprinted from the New York Times by the AFS.


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AFS Archives: RG 4, box 1, Gertrude Samuels, “Can German Youth Teach Its Elders?” reprinted from the New York Times by the AFS.

Ibid.


Kellermann, Cultural Relations, p. 243.


See National Archives: RG 59, Stacks 250, Row 39, Compartment 17, Box 2435, File 511.623/5-50, Assistant Secretary’s response to Senator Warren G. Magnuson, dated July 14, 1950.
TRIANGULAR DIPLOMACY RECONSIDERED:
NEW SOURCES AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY,
1969–1976

Bernd Schäfer

I

Who can count the books and articles published on U.S. foreign policy
between 1969 and 1976? Who can follow the broad track of publications
on Henry Kissinger alone, not to mention his own writings or the even
more numerous works on President Richard Nixon? Do we need even
more?

By definition, historiography is a creative rather than definitive pro-
cess. In theory, each new scholarly publication should advance our
knowledge and capacity to reflect on a certain subject. In reality, many
simply present another account of the same sources over and over again
or ignore results of other work. Therefore the number of publications on
a certain subject does not indicate much; there might be no significant
advancement of our understanding. The volume of publication might
simply reflect the popularity of a subject. What has always driven histo-
riography forward and will continue to do so, however, is first and fore-
most the quest for unearthing and analyzing new sources, presenting and
reflecting them from different perspectives and applying a diversity of
methods to the evidence available in order to comprehensively further
our understanding. Until the present, political, especially diplomatic his-
tory has seemed remarkably immune to modern methodological ap-
proaches. Yet aspects of social and cultural history promise to deepen our
understanding of a classical topic of diplomatic history. This project,
featuring Henry A. Kissinger as a main protagonist, also aims at aspects
of intellectual history and will certainly shed new light on this renowned,
but highly controversial politician and academic. Since most of the rel-
evant archival material has been released in recent years and much more
will become available in the near future, the use of new sources will
certainly lead to new findings and interpretations.

On November 1, 2001 President George W. Bush signed Executive
Order 13233, which, if upheld, will severely limit historians’ access to
new information on the presidencies and also affect research at the Na-
tional Archives and in Presidential Libraries. By reinterpreting, in fact,
revising, the 1978 Presidential Records Act, this order entitles incumbents
as well as former presidents or their families to veto the release of major
segments of their presidential papers. If enacted as intended by the White House, the order will keep randomly secret the filed communications between a president and his advisers and so deny historians access to the crucial deliberative processes that lie behind an administration’s policy-making. This Executive Order has already been challenged in court by major professional historical organisations and individuals. It may take years to settle this dispute. In any event, the sitting president’s order will apply to the Reagan, Bush I, Clinton and Bush II administrations. Fortunately for this project, it will not, however, affect the way in which the papers of the Nixon and Ford presidencies are governed by the 1978 Presidential Records Act, an important piece of legislation enacted in the aftermath of the Watergate experience. These sources will be exempt from any executive orders and the currently contested files on “deliberative processes” can be explored in rich detail as far as the presidencies between 1969 and 1976 are concerned. Historical evidence on the foreign policy of this period is accessible at the National Archives in Washington and the Ford Presidential Library in Ann Arbor.

The two terms of the Nixon presidency, the second of which came to an early end and had to be finished by Vice President Gerald Ford, were one of the most intriguing and innovative in post-1945 U.S. foreign policy and world history. Despite Richard Nixon’s grave personal shortcomings, some foreign policy achievements of his presidency are generally well respected today. It remains disputed to what extent such praise is justified. Foreign policy in the Nixon/Ford era was brilliantly framed and spectacularly as well as deviously executed by Henry Kissinger in his roles as National Security Adviser and later Secretary of State. Kissinger had acquired unprecedented standing and powerful leverage on two American presidents, but was totally dependent on them for his own political power. During Kissinger’s tenure in the White House and at the State Department, foreign policy temporarily achieved the celebrity status of its protagonist.

The years from 1969 to 1976 therefore fully deserve a thorough analysis from various methodological perspectives also from outside the English-speaking scholarly community. Conversely, a broadening of its focus to topics of international history might help German-speaking historiography to overcome narrowly German perspectives. There also is a European aspect that pertains to the impact of traditional European strategic thinking on world politics—or at least the impact of such a self-perception on Kissinger’s part. Comprehensive historical studies on international foreign policy and the US-Soviet-Sino relationship between 1969 and 1976 making use of the newly available sources are basically nonexistent in Germany. Publications so far consist of works of political scientists exploring, systematizing, and analyzing so-called geo-strategic
concepts and “grand designs” of U.S. foreign policy or Chinese strategic flexibility and astuteness during the Nixon/Ford/Kissinger period.

II

Newly released sources from this period have ended the monopoly of interpretation that historical protagonists enjoyed for a long time. These sources will enable us to raise scholarly debate on U.S. and international foreign policy after 1969 to a new level. This will finally “level the playing field” between historians and historical actors, as it was recently put by the American diplomatic historian Robert Schulzinger, who wrote about Henry Kissinger as a “Doctor of Diplomacy” in the pre-access period.

In the beginning there were visible public actions, definitions, and pronouncements by the various contemporary actors on different sides. The years between 1969 and 1974 allegedly were those of a grand design of U.S. foreign policy that ushered in a new era of “classical realism.” The United States as the foremost global power would apply “triangular diplomacy,” designed by Kissinger as the president’s primary political adviser, vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China. This policy was supposed to balance the other world powers by according them seeming respectability, while secretly hampering Soviet and Chinese strategies wherever possible and thereby establishing a Metternich-style order to maintain a permanent “equilibrium” refereed by the United States of America. Whereas Russian and Chinese public statements and positioning remained carefully phrased and restrained by ideologically polarized thinking, the American administration, having to face the electorate every four years, reached for the stars rhetorically. Richard Nixon referred to his historic trip to China in February 1972 as a “week that had changed the world”. When he returned from a summit in Moscow later that year he declared “the beginning of the end of an era” in which millions of people had lived under the shadow of a nuclear threat and an arms race.

Kissinger, the President’s National Security Adviser and Secretary of State, confided to the journalist James Reston in 1974: “I think of myself as a historian more than a statesman”. Henry Kissinger, the former Harvard professor of international relations, loved to convey the image of the diplomatic thinker trained in European history and a diplomatic practitioner in the tradition of aristocrats like Castlereagh, Metternich and Bismarck, who, in pre-democratic eras, dealt with monarchs, nobles and rubber-stamp assemblies enabling them to define and manipulate nations solely according to their presumed power and interests. Although there is no consensus whether the comparison of Kissinger with those nine-
teenth-century statesmen should be regarded as flattering or telling, many scholars continue to invoke such analogies.

This alleged grandeur of foreign policy came under heavy domestic fire from the left as well as from the right when Nixon’s presidency sank under the weight of Watergate. Events in Vietnam and other parts of the world turned ever more against U.S. interests and began to sink detente as well. Triangular diplomacy and the political careers of its protagonists suffered badly. In 1975 Zbigniew Brzezinski, who would become National Security Adviser two years later, showed his disgust with contemporary American foreign policy. Kissinger’s former Harvard colleague, who was to become quite controversial himself, described the diplomacy of those years as “covert, manipulative and deceptive in style. It seemed committed to a largely static view of the world, based on a traditional balance of power, seeking accommodation among the major powers on the basis of spheres of influence.”

The less than glorious end of the Nixon and Ford administrations and the ever fascinating concept of a balance of powers steered from Washington provoked some former political actors to set the historical record straight with hindsight and to shift blame to former and current critics in Congress, the media and the antiwar movement. As a result, immediately after 1976 the conflicting spin of the actors entered the public stage. Major and minor figures wrote memoirs and published essayistic and anecdotal reflections, among which the publications of the two main actors clearly stand out. According to their memoirs, it will always be controversial to what degree Nixon or Kissinger shaped actual policy (and maybe even history), but the analysis of new sources available might to some extent help to overcome this dilemma and current guesswork.

Writing their versions, both Kissinger and Nixon took advantage of the fact that archival sources would be closed to the public for a considerable time. Kissinger, in particular, made brilliant use of this opportunity to shape historiography, giving his files to the Library of Congress as “personal papers” and keeping them away from the National Archives, requesting that they remain closed until at least 2001 or five years after his death. Supported by teams of collaborators, he produced comprehensive, masterfully written volumes on his role in the Nixon and Ford administrations: “It would be difficult to think of any public figure who has himself chronicled that involvement at greater length, or with such care.” These historiographically ambitious memoirs determined the discourse for some time, although they were countered by journalistic accounts based on oral interviews with actors who were more or less favorable to the personalities and policies of the protagonists from the era between 1969 and 1976.
Grudgingly, the main actors had to admit that their selective memories would not have the final say. Back in 1971, when he started to have all his conversations in the White House taped, Richard Nixon had sown the seeds that would destroy his historical reputation, which he had so carefully rebuilt with his memoirs and public appearances. "The President is very history-oriented and history-conscious about the role he is going to play, and is not at all subtle about it, or about admitting it," his adviser Alexander W. Butterfield told a Senate Committee on July 16, 1973. Since Nixon was even less subtle in his conversations, the first release of his tapes in 1996, which he and his family had so desperately sought to prevent, revealed his personality and finally overshadowed his achievements. Besides the contents of such tapes, there are probably more gems to be discovered in the archives, such as the President’s personal "madman theory."

Kissinger, the trained historian of diplomacy, did a much more sophisticated job of shielding himself from potential distortions by future historians, when in his 1979 volume of memoirs he claimed a monopoly of adequate interpretation for the contemporary actors and minimized the relevance of archival sources:

The written record would by its very volume obscure as much as it illuminated, it would provide no criteria for determining which documents were produced to provide an alibi and which genuinely guided decisions, which reflected actual participation and which were prepared in ignorance of crucial events [. . .]. Official files of our period would not necessarily disclose what decisions were taken by the ‘backchannels’ bypassing formal procedures or what was settled orally without ever becoming part of the formal record. [. . .] The participant has at least one vital contribution to make to the writing of history: He will know which of the myriad of possible considerations in fact influenced the decisions in which he was involved, he will be aware of which documents reflect the reality as he perceived it, he will be able to recall what views were taken seriously, which were rejected, and the reasoning behind the choices made.

Such sophistic arguments, which are all too well known to contemporary historians, should not be rejected outright as deliberate manipulations of historiography, since they contain some truths and apply to most political bureaucracies in history. They remind the historian to be careful and circumspect in his or her judgment, but should always be considered as what they really are—namely, a challenge rather than the deterrent that the historical actors intended them to be. The second intention definitely applies to the author of the lengthy quote just cited above.
This challenge is a very serious one and ideally will lead to true historiography, access to historical sources and the subsequent process of writing or re-writing history by historians. Now the playing field has indeed been levelled. With regard to American sources, regular declassification is proceeding due to President Clinton's Executive Order 12958, mandating the release of all material twenty-five years and older for which no exemption claims have been raised by federal departments and agencies. Despite many invocations of national security for certain files and some stalling of agencies, with the help of mandatory reviews and the Freedom of Information Act historians and the public have so far witnessed the release of many important files concerning the foreign policy of the years from 1969 to 1976. Especially the indefatigable staff of the private National Security Archive at George Washington University has unearthed many crucial documents on this period and keeps focussed on it. Most spectacular were the recently announced releases of transcripts from Henry Kissinger's telephone conversations during his tenure as National Security Adviser and Secretary of State between 1969 and 1976, which were provoked by pending lawsuits. The relevant records of the State Department, the all-important National Security Council Files, and the Henry Kissinger Office Files from the White House were opened in April 2001, and further material from the Nixon Presidential Project at the National Archives and the Gerald Ford Library in Ann Arbor permit a thorough scrutiny of U.S. sources on foreign policy in general and the bilateral relations and triangular diplomacy with the Soviet Union and China in particular. Regular declassification processes and releases of Nixon tapes over the next few years will turn up even more records. There are rumors about the current administration amending the declassification policy shaped by the preceding Clinton administrations, but politics is a tedious process and further developments remain to be seen.

Of course, it would be highly desirable and utterly fascinating to have similarly systematic access to Russian and Chinese archival material of this period. From time to time we might see some files concerning those years opened in Russia and in China. The United States provides the best conditions for individual scholars, organized efforts like the Cold War International History Project or institutionalized initiatives from historical offices of federal departments to turn up or trade archival material from these two countries. Russian- and Chinese-born scholars now working at U.S. academic institutions use personal networking with their countries of origin to obtain material and include hardly accessible unofficial foreign-language material in their English-language publications. Provincial archives outside of Beijing or archives in former Soviet republics now outside of Moscow's reach could serve as a partial substitute for
the closed central party and state archives in these two respective capitals with regard to the period concerned. Perhaps we might get even more revealing glimpses than we have had so far. The international situation might always unexpectedly further archival access in these countries. Actually, compared to its current status such access can only improve.

As a result of all this developments, historical research on triangular diplomacy has many more sources at its disposal than it did a few years ago and therefore many publications have become outdated. Although analyses of the new material might overwhelmingly focus on the role of the United States, the self-perceived mastermind and director of this diplomacy, the gain for historiography will certainly exceed the scope of Washington’s domestic infighting and foreign-policy concepts or the discussion of hegemony, strength and the decline of major powers. What is required is a comprehensive examination and analysis of the newly available sources by taking into account and keeping track of the scholarly and autobiographical literature on the subject. This also include interviews with historical actors who are willing to share their experiences with historians.

III

We will certainly gain detailed insights into the structural and deliberative foreign-policy processes of the different branches in the U.S. government between 1969 and 1976. The scope and accuracy of the information on its foreign diplomatic counterparts can be evaluated and rated according to what we know today about the regimes in Moscow and Beijing at that time. Although some information obtained by American intelligence will be withheld from historians for national security reasons, the accessible sources will help to draw a picture of the state of knowledge of the decisive U.S. policymakers and shed light on the foundations of deliberative processes in Washington.

Historiography will be able to reconstruct more accurately how U.S. diplomacy was conducted through regular and secret channels between 1969 and 1976—and how this might have been perceived by the negotiating counterparts from the other sides. Some U.S. “backchanneling” with blunt disregard for other democratic institutions in the Executive and Congress, for which Henry Kissinger in particular became famous, might have resembled a secretiveness of politics and diplomacy that is quite familiar to politicians from authoritarian socialist countries. Notwithstanding the domestic debate on the moral conduct of a U.S. foreign policy to be grounded in the pursuit of human rights, the alleged effec-
tiveness of this secretive style inside a democratically elected government should also be investigated.\textsuperscript{21}

The new historiography will teach us even more about Washington bureaucratic infighting between the White House and the State Department and among certain actors within these governmental institutions than we already know anecdotally from various memoirs and publications of informed observers. We may be able to reflect on the leverage that such infighting provided for America’s diplomatic counterparts, especially when U.S. negotiating partners shared with them their disdain for other U.S. actors. It might be posited hypothetically at this point that American information on frictions within the Chinese or Russian or Vietnamese leadership might well have lagged behind the information those countries had about U.S. internal quarrels and divisions, both in quantity and quality. Who will ever know for sure as long as vital intelligence files from all sides remain classified?

Hopefully there will also be some new insights into how diplomacy was conducted by Soviet and Chinese officials\textsuperscript{22} and which motivations, fears, and political processes were behind their decisions and maneuvers.

The process of detente and triangular diplomacy had clearly started with a fundamental weakness and alleged decline on the U.S. side motivating its paradigmatic changes vis-à-vis the two major communist powers. The war in Vietnam had developed into a domestic nightmare from which the Nixon administration had solemnly promised to withdraw after a settlement of “peace with honor.”\textsuperscript{23} Ending this war was perceived by the government coming into power in 1969 as the key for reelection in 1972. These well known facts gave America’s foreign counterparts generous leverage over the U.S. On the other hand, the United States profited from the rivalry between the Soviet Union and China that erupted in bloody military clashes in the summer of 1969 and many threats later on. A tangled system of interests and incentives evolved on each side of the triangle, with the U.S. as the self-perceived main angle attempting to exploit the weaknesses of the other two and fostering their rivalry. But the questions of who was in fact exploiting whom, whether the U.S. self-perception was really accurate, and why detente had to collapse domestically, lead to two final, complex problems: Were the U.S. foreign-policy concepts and strategies of those years really shaped by traditions of nineteenth-century European diplomacy? Or was this merely rhetoric that attributed intellectual brilliance to an otherwise conventional approach? Did the history of diplomacy prove to be of any use in dealing with the world in 1969 and beyond and, if yes, to what extent? And did the actual secret diplomacy and its results match the intellectual framework displayed in public? To what extent did personalities involved matter more or less than concepts or presumed national interests?
We might also look for possible convergences between the conduct of diplomacy and the way of thinking that went along with it, when a democracy like the United States and totalitarian, rather than authoritarian, systems like Brezhnev’s Soviet Union and Mao’s China applied similar patterns of political diplomacy. Did the triangular diplomacy, as it actually happened, weaken or strengthen the democratic or the totalitarian partner? What did the partners gain or lose with regard to their respective foreign-policy strategies and conduct of diplomacy? One might suspect a slight undertone of envy when reading Henry Kissinger’s remarks from 1979 about the Soviet Union: “The Soviet leadership is burdened by no self-doubt or liberal guilt. It has no effective domestic opposition questioning the morality of its actions. The result is a foreign policy free to fill every vacuum, to exploit every opportunity, to act out of implications of its doctrine. Policy is constrained principally by calculations of objective conditions.”

Notes

2 Richard Valeriani, Travels with Henry (Boston, 1979).
9 For instance: “In a twist of strategy Bismarck would surely have appreciated, by agreeing to accord both of its Cold War rivals the status of normal states, the United States gained the leverage to play each off against the other. The Russians and the Chinese achieved the respect they desired, but only by becoming objects of American manipulation.” (Gaddis, Rescuing Choice, 576).
11 Henry A. Kissinger, *White House Years* (Boston/Toronto, 1979); and *Years of Upheaval* (Boston/Toronto, 1982); and *Years of Renewal* (New York, 1999).
12 Gaddis, *Rescuing Choice*, 564.
16 Ibid., XIV.
18 Kissinger, *White House Years*, p. xxiii.
CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIA, SEMINARS

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST IN WEST GERMANY: THE 1960s

Conference at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, April 19–21, 2001. Conveners: Philipp Gassert (University of Heidelberg) and Alan E. Steinweis (University of Nebraska). Co-sponsored by: Fritz Thyssen Foundation, Cologne; The University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Participants: Pertti Ahonen (University of Sheffield), Lloyd Ambrosius (University of Nebraska), Bernhard Brunner (University of Freiburg), David Cahan (University of Nebraska), Detlev Claussen (University of Hannover), Belinda Davis (Rutgers University), Geoff Eley (University of Michigan), Carole Fink (Ohio State University), Norbert Frei (Ruhr University, Bochum), Elizabeth Heineman (University of Iowa), Jeffrey Herf (University of Maryland), Dagmar Herzog (Michigan State University), Michael Hochgeschwender (University of Tübingen), Konrad H. Jarausch (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and Center for Contemporary History, Potsdam), Detlef Junker (University of Heidelberg), Habbo Knoch (University of Göttingen), Jürgen Lillteicher (University of Freiburg), Harold Marcuse (University of California at Santa Barbara), Marc von Miquel (Ruhr University, Bochum), Dirk Moses (University of Sydney), Elizabeth Peifer (Troy State University), Axel Schildt (Contemporary History Research Center, Hamburg), Michael Schmidtke (University of Bielefeld), Karen Schönwälder (University of Giessen), Joachim Scholtyseck (University of Bonn), Susanna Schrafstetter (University of Glamorgan), Detlef Siegfried (University of Copenhagen), Sigrid Stöckel (Hannover Medical University), Jeremy Varon (Drew University), Klaus Weinhauser (University of Hamburg), Jonathan Wiesen (Southern Illinois University), Lora Wildenthal (Texas A&M University).

Since the end of World War II each generation of Germans has been confronted by the challenge of working through the implications of the Nazi regime and the Holocaust. Germany’s problematic history from 1933 to 1945 had consequences not only for the political system and the international relations of the two postwar German republics but also for national identity, religious faith, education, legal practice, social policy,
gender roles, cultural diversity, and many dimensions of daily life. As West and East Germans created new polities and set out to transform their societies, and as they sought domestic and international legitimacy, their common recent past always informed, and often dominated, debates on the present. Heretofore, serious scholarly attention to the postwar legacy of this past has focused on the 1950s, the decade in which the two German states were established and consolidated. The next frontier in the field is the “tumultuous 1960s,” a period usually considered a crucial turning point in postwar history. West German youth rebelled against a culture that many believed had become excessively materialistic. They criticized the politics of West German realignment toward the West and looked critically at their own nation’s past and present, pointing to the many continuities that persisted from the Nazi era. These included authoritarianism (not least in the institutions of higher education, in the police forces, and in the legal system), xenophobia, technocracy, and patriarchy. Purging society of these legacies became an urgent priority of the West German New Left.

In recent years the once widespread consensus that the leftist impetus of the late 1960s instigated a sea change in how Germans dealt with the Nazi past has come under scrutiny. Many historians now argue that the public debate took off during the late 1950s and accelerated during the first half of the 1960s. The pivotal events are well known: the anti-Semitic graffiti that appeared on synagogue walls in Cologne and other West German cities around the turn of the year 1959–60, the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, the Fischer and Jaspers controversies, the Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt, the parliamentary debates about the extension of the statute of limitations, the emergency laws, scandals involving disclosures of Nazi-era activities of high-ranking politicians, the rise of a large-scale extraparliamentary opposition, the resurgence of a neo-Nazi party, and the Six-Day War of 1967. Picking up on some of the contemporary debates of the 1960s, historians are assessing the ambiguities of the transformation that took place during that tumultuous decade. The “’68ers” radicalized the discourse about the Nazi past, but in the process their emphasis on a generic “fascism” also tended to universalize and dehistoricize that past. They may have raised public consciousness about continuities from the Nazi era to the Federal Republic, but their often strident rhetoric and drastic methods may well have been counterproductive inasmuch as they alienated significant segments of the West German population. Moreover, quite apart from the ’68ers there were other factors at work that forced West Germans to confront the past; the rise of the neofascist National Democratic Party (NPD), for example, deeply affected the outcome of the debates inside and outside the Federal Parliament (Bundestag). As the Nebraska conference clearly brought out, the chang-
ing atmosphere and the evolving discourse on the Nazi past did not automatically prompt a radical transformation with regard to the politics of the past (*Vergangenheitspolitik*). The 1960s may have witnessed a remarkable change in how the legacies of National Socialism were publicly addressed, but the “crucial decade” was still marked by a remarkable degree of continuity in many areas of *Vergangenheitspolitik*, including, for example, the compensation for stolen (“Aryanized”) property and the continuing failures of the legal system to bring some of the worst perpetrators to justice.

Now that the 1960s are on the agenda of historians, the Nebraska conference aimed at providing a first collective overview of research on the *Vergangenheitspolitik* of that era. The presentations focused on achieving a better understanding of the political, social, and cultural forces that shaped the politics of, as well as the discourse about, the Nazi past. As Konrad Jarausch observed in his keynote lecture, such an understanding requires us to set the “critical decade” of the 1960s in the long-term context of postwar German history. Whereas Nazi crimes have been at the center of German discussions about the past for several decades, the legacies of a second dictatorship, that of communist East Germany, have complicated the picture since the early 1990s. Furthermore, the recent political skirmishes over the “youthful radicalism” of German politicians of the ‘68 or post-‘68 generation, most notably Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, have added a third contested layer of history to an already complex discussion. Because of the overwhelming presence of the Nazi era in German debates about the past, it is no accident that the question of how ‘68ers confronted Nazism is one of the central issues of current controversy about “1968.” Did the ‘68ers contribute to the liberalization and democratization of the Federal Republic by initiating “a freer discussion of the Nazi past,” as the protagonists themselves claim? Or did they introduce “new myths through a shallow combination of neo-Marxism and pop-psychology,” as their critics argue? Answering these questions requires a better understanding of the general character of the “controversial 1960s.” As Jarausch observed, it also requires an assessment of what exactly was remembered and what was forgotten during the immediate postwar years.

The conference’s opening panel, chaired by Dagmar Herzog, addressed the issue of how members of German elite groups coped with their own complicity in the crimes of the regime. In his paper Jonathan Wiesen analyzed the strategies of government and business circles in responding to accusations of corporate criminality during National Socialism. Because West German identity had come to depend so heavily on the country’s economic prowess (the so-called *Wirtschaftswunder*) during the 1950s, the German economy, once a locus of Nazi crimes, became a
means for securing a new, democratic Germany. During the 1960s, as discussions shifted from abstract totalitarianism to a focus on specific crimes, including those of German industry, memory started to play a more complex role. For one thing, it became more difficult to fend off memories of the Holocaust abroad by mobilizing the anticommunist fears of American politicians. What this rapidly changing environment of the 1960s meant to West German conservatives has received surprisingly little scholarly attention, as Joachim Scholtyseck argued in his paper on “Conservative Intellectuals and the Debate About National Socialism and the Annihilation of Jewry.” According to Scholtyseck, conservative thinkers were much more deeply involved in discussions about the meaning of Nazism for Germany’s past and present than has been assumed by their critics. The leitmotifs of the conservative view included the “demonism” of Hitler, the dynamics of “mass and power,” and the role of secularization and de-Christianization. According to Scholtyseck, many conservatives had become convinced that the Federal Republic was immune to the dangers of extreme nationalism and Nazism, and therefore felt helpless when they were confronted with a changing discourse about the Nazi past during the 1960s.

The panel’s third paper, presented by Klaus Weinhauser, dealt with “The Nazi Past and the Modernization of West German Police.” Weinhauser placed his paper in the context of historical questions about the continuity of personnel between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic, especially among civil servants. As Weinhauser showed, investigations of policemen who had committed crimes during National Socialism were often blocked or impeded by the culture of camaraderie among police officers. Although politicians and police union functionaries were beginning, in the early 1960s, to question the role of the police during the Third Reich, many policemen saw themselves as victims, having been exploited by an overwhelming regime. Efforts to address their complicity were countered by the heroification and mythologization of the Weimar police. Furthermore, authoritarian leadership ideas among the police were only gradually abandoned during the late 1950s and early 1960s, when technical innovations forced police officers to act more independently. Only the delayed generational change of the mid-1970s resulted in a deep caesura in the personnel structure of the police. In his commentary Norbert Frei underscored the important role that was played by East Germany in breaking down some of the myths of the 1950s, such as the supposed “coercion” of German industry into cooperating with Hitler and the distancing of the “clean” Wehrmacht from the crimes of the SS. During the 1960s the situation of many conservatives became increasingly untenable as continuities between the Third Reich and the Federal Republic became the subject of intensified scrutiny.
The second panel, chaired by David Cahan, examined judicial efforts to deal with crimes committed during the Nazi era. Bernhard Brunner presented a paper on the “Frankreichkomplex,” a large-scale criminal investigation by German authorities into Nazi crimes committed in France during World War II. Of the 199 high-ranking perpetrators Brunner identified, 119 theoretically could have been prosecuted after the war (the rest had died or disappeared). Yet after twenty years of investigations only nine were brought to trial, three of whom were punished in the 1980s. This result, Brunner argued, cannot be attributed exclusively to a lack of interest on the part of the West German justice system. A fuller explanation also requires us to consider the legal and political contexts of the prosecution. One major obstacle was posed by the treaties between the three Western Allies and the Federal Republic, the intention of which had been to insulate immediate postwar Allied war crimes prosecutions from the German justice system. Until the 1970s legal interpretations of these treaties impeded investigations of perpetrators who had already been convicted in absentia in France. Brunner observed that the 1960s witnessed a more intensive legal prosecution of Nazi crimes on the one hand, but a more restrictive development with regard to the legal and political framework on the other.

This point was reinforced by Marc von Miquel’s paper on the “Debates About the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes.” For Miquel “conflict” was the central characteristic of the 1960s. The initiation of large-scale court cases brought the annihilation of European Jewry to the forefront of public debates. This led to a decreasing willingness to permit former perpetrators to integrate into West German society without bringing them to trial. At the same time, however, the 1960s witnessed the high-point of the so-called Schlußstrich mentality: Public opinion polls showed that a majority of the West German population was in favor of letting bygones be bygones and of closing the door on further prosecutions. In Miquel’s view many Germans were simply unwilling to accept the conclusion that could be drawn from the trials: that the genocidal politics of the Third Reich had not been the actions of a few outsiders but had come from the mainstream of German society. Although a larger amnesty scheme did fail in the Bundestag, the clandestine (and often forgotten) invocation of a minor article in the penal code intended to decriminalize traffic violations led to the termination of pretrial proceedings against former members of the Reichssicherheitshauptamt. In many ways the “normal” legal framework was not suited to the requirements of prosecuting crimes against humanity.

A similar argument was advanced by Jürgen Lillteicher in his presentation about “Compensation for ‘Aryanized’ Property in West Germany.” Any effort to compensate for the loss of property during the Nazi
regime was destined to raise highly complicated legal and political issues. The central paradox was that although after 1945 West Germany became a society that adhered to the rule of law, many of its members had benefited from illegal acts, including the plundering of Jewish and other property before 1945. Although outside (and to a certain degree internal) political pressure led to gradual improvements in the laws governing the return and compensation of lost property, the process was hampered by the extremely legalistic approach taken by bureaucrats and judges. Furthermore, an observable lack of goodwill on the part of the institutions involved in compensation amplified the shortcomings of the civil law code for dealing with the consequences of the war. Lillteicher illustrated his findings with the vivid example of several Holocaust survivors who were required by the courts to demonstrate that their belongings, which had been taken from them at the ramp in Auschwitz, had been brought into the part of Germany that was now the territory of the Federal Republic. Lacking such evidence, the West German courts refused jurisdiction over the cases. Thus, an overtaxed legal system met with the unwillingness of the courts to handle the issues of restitution in a generous way.

The commentator, Jeffrey Herf, reminded the audience that the study of twentieth-century German history has become an international affair and that many of the conclusions drawn from the reign of National Socialism and its aftermath are relevant to other nations. Taking up the general question posed during Jarausch’s keynote lecture, Herf characterized the attempt to put the past on trial as one of the most dangerous and difficult tasks for a young democracy. Nation building, rather than justice, was the prevailing value, and the attainment of real justice might well have required a prolongation of the Allied occupation and a postponement of German sovereignty and democracy.

The third panel, devoted to “The Public Sphere,” was chaired by Detlef Siegfried. Belinda Davis, in her paper on “New Leftists and West Germany: Violence, Fascism, and the Public Sphere, 1967–1974,” began with the observation that between 1965 and 1977 Germans from all political camps regularly “instrumentalized” the past. For New Leftists, state-authorized violence in reaction to demonstrations was interpreted as proof of the continuation of “fascism” in the Federal Republic. From their point of view the silencing of the New Leftist critique of West German society, and the alleged failure to address the issue of fascism, resulted in a large-scale corruption of the public sphere. The second paper, on “Photographs of Nazi Crimes and the West German Public in the 1960s,” was presented by Habbo Knoch. Using photographs, Knoch addressed a central question of the politics of memory during the 1960s: How did Germans deal with the contradiction between their self-perception as victims of World War II and Germany’s apparent departure
from the norms of Western civilization? According to Knoch, the increas-
ingly frequent display of images of Nazi crimes created visual impres-
sions that did not conform to the prevalent individual and collective
memory of Germans as a “community of victims.” This “crisis of inter-
pretation” intersected with the breakdown of intergenerational consen-
sus, given that the younger generation did not share painful personal
experiences of wartime. The extraparliamentary opposition of the 1960s
responded to this cleavage by explaining “Auschwitz” in terms of a fas-
cist, imperialist, and capitalist power structure, of which the students
considered themselves to be victims. This interpretation of the past cre-
ated a “second silence” because it focused on iconic sites such as Aus-
chwitz and on industrialized mass murder rather than on the more typi-
cal experiences of the older generation under Nazism. As Knoch argued,
the universalization of Nazi crimes may have undercut the self-
stylization of Germans as victims, yet it also absolved the older genera-
tion of direct, personal responsibility for Nazism.

The third paper, by Elizabeth Peifer, dealt with “The Public Demo-
stration of the 1960s: Participatory Democracy or Leftist Fascism?” The
debates about public demonstrations, Peifer argued, can be used to help
understand how the Nazi past was addressed during the 1960s because
many critics saw street demonstrations as a rerun of the mass rallies of a
totalitarian past. Emphasizing the ambiguous legacy of the 1960s, Peifer
maintained that the public demonstrations contributed to a broadening of
democratic practices in Germany. The commentary by Geoff Eley placed
the critique of the ‘68ers in the broader context of postwar liberalization
efforts as presented by Jürgen Habermas in his work on the “public
sphere” (or “publicness,” which Eley suggested as a better translation of
Offentlichkeit). As Eley argued, the confrontations of the 1960s may have
highlighted some of the weaknesses of the Habermasian project of po-
itical reform, yet the liberal project showed a continued vitality even
after 1969 when the SPD-led coalition government embarked on a new
round of reform.

The conference’s second day opened with the fourth panel, which
covered “The International Dimension” and which was chaired by Lloyd
Ambrosius. In her paper Carole Fink analyzed the complicated relation-
ship between the two states most closely connected with the legacies of
the Holocaust, Israel and West Germany. Placing the “special relation-
ship” between Israel and the Federal Republic in the international con-
text, Fink interpreted the Six-Day War as a major turning point in Ger-
man-Israeli relations. Out of necessity West Germany and Israel had
formed a reluctant “special relationship” before 1967. In 1965 the two
states had established formal diplomatic relations, and the advent of the
Grand Coalition government in fall 1966 had signaled a “more self-
assured, less penitent West Germany.” Despite the overwhelming support of the German population during the Six-Day War, especially among the middle generation of thirty-five to fifty-year-olds, the gradual opening of West German foreign policy toward the East and the breakdown of the Cold War consensus transformed the relationship. Automatic support was no longer given to Israel’s policy because West German governments tried to “normalize” the country’s relationship to the survivor state despite the often expressed “special moral obligation emanating from our past” (Willi Brandt).

Pertti Ahonen’s paper, on “The Taming of West German Territorial Revisionism During the 1960s” addressed another legacy of National Socialism that severely limited West Germany’s room to maneuver. A new approach vis-à-vis the countries to Germany’s east met the fierce resistance of the expellee organizations representing Germans who had fled their homelands after World War II. Although none of the mainstream political parties in the Bundestag supported open territorial revisionism, the Christian Democrats, who enjoyed close links to the expellee lobby, were faced with a serious political problem. Especially in the southern German states the Christian Democrats depended on the votes of Germans who had origins in the former eastern territories of the German Reich. Because of the electoral successes of the neo-Nazi NPD during the second half of the 1960s Christian-Democrat politicians treaded carefully with regard to Eastern policy issues. Therefore, as Ahonen argued, “on tactical and opportunistic grounds” the Christian Democrats gave a new Eastern policy a lower priority than did their Social Democratic and Free Democratic rivals.

The third paper, by Susanna Schrafstetter, focused on nuclear weapons, the central security issue of the Cold War. The renunciation of the development of nuclear weapons by Adenauer in 1954 had been a precondition of West Germany’s entry into NATO. This step, however, could also be seen as the last Allied wartime restriction on defeated Germany. Therefore, questions of nuclear strategy were always inextricably linked to the German past. This became clear during the heated debate over the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1967–8. Supporters of the treaty pointed out that Germany had to accept the legacy of defeat, whereas its foes, including many high-ranking Christian-Democrat politicians, saw the treaty as yet another instance in a series of unfair, vindictive measures, such as the Treaty of Versailles and the Morgenthau Plan, that other states sought to impose on Germany. The commentary by Detlef Junker focused on specific issues brought forward by the papers. He emphasized that history was not just an argument thinly veiling other political or strategic purposes. The Munich analogy and other references to the past highlighted the very real limitations and geopolitical challenges politicians
faced during the 1960s. The success of Brandt’s Ostpolitik during the early 1970s was its grounding in a realistic assessment of West Germany’s international environment, something to which German political elites had been oblivious throughout most of the twentieth century.

The fifth panel, chaired by Dirk Moses, focused on what many commentators and historians have considered to be the hallmark of the 1960s: the role of the student movement and the New Left. In recent years historians and political commentators have strongly disagreed about the impact of the student movement on West German discourse on the Nazi past. Whereas some have seen “1968” as a symbolic new founding of the Federal Republic against fascism, others have criticized the protest movement for instrumentalizing and dehistoricizing the Nazi past through fascist theory. In his paper on “The Student Movement and National Socialism” Michael Schmidtke addressed these issues by analyzing the contemporary discourse about fascism and by looking at the use of the past in political education and during the protests against the so-called emergency laws. Schmidtke argued that the original contribution of the student movement lay not so much in initiating public debate over the Nazi past but rather in promoting political and social change through political acts that demanded civil courage, as well as in pedagogical experiments like the Kinderladen movement. “Coming to terms” thus was primarily aimed at the overthrow of the “authoritarian character.”

In the next paper Jeremy Varon explored the relationship between terrorism and the Nazi past. The Red Army Faction (RAF), in Varon’s view, took its cause to such extremes because it wished to compensate for the perceived absence of meaningful resistance to National Socialism between 1933 and 1945. The RAF’s armed struggle highlights some of the paradoxes of the New Left in general. RAF members attempted to “purify the nation” and relieve themselves of the burden of the past by refusing to be “good Germans.” They would overcome the past by armed resistance. At the same time the RAF also took up the guise of the victims of Nazism. The Stammheim maximum-security prison near Stuttgart, where many of the terrorists were held, was thus equated with Auschwitz. Varon concluded with the observation that by taking up such guises the RAF and other radical groups “risked mirroring qualities they opposed not only in the present but also in the past.”

The third paper, by Michael Hochgeschwender, focused on a segment of the “other side” of German society that was deeply affected by “1968” but that is often left out of the story: Catholic student fraternities. While the social and cultural forces that manifested themselves during the 1960s transformed the Catholic milieu in a very profound manner over the long term, the immediate impact of the ’68ers was rather limited. Their lifestyle, revolutionary rhetoric, neo-Marxist language, and whole-
sale condemnation of the role of the Catholic Church during the Third Reich led Catholic fraternities to distance themselves from the protest movement. Because the Catholic milieu had some powerful historical myths of its own, such as its resistance against Hitler, the radicalism of the ‘68ers proved largely counterproductive. Furthermore, Catholics, for decades a minority in the German Reich, did not show any inclination to respond to the New-Left critique of what they finally considered to be “their” state. The commentary by Detlev Claussen drew on Claussen’s own scholarly findings as well as on his recollections as a former protagonist of the West German student movement. Placing the protests in the larger framework of German history Claussen attempted to identify both the direct and indirect consequences of “1968.” He pointed to the inflated use the term fascism to connote evil. Considered in its long-term context, this reductionism, which, he conceded, tended to obscure the specific character of National Socialism, was neither a surprising nor particularly unfortunate development because it prompted a more thorough examination of the Nazi past in the years that followed.

The sixth panel, chaired by Harold Marcuse, dealt with several aspects of social policy (Sozialpolitik). Karen Schönwälde presented a paper on “West German Society and Foreigners in the 1960s.” She argued that the presence of the past was an important factor in the 1960s response to foreigners in Germany. Analyzing the efforts of the West German Federation of Employer’s Associations, Schönwälde asserted that the recruitment of foreign labor during the 1960s was consciously placed in a historical perspective. Employers urged their German employees to develop positive attitudes toward foreign workers and to convey a tolerant image of Germany. Potential negative perceptions abroad therefore were a major determining factor in West German policy toward foreigners. In contrast, efforts to exclude “Afro-Asians” from recruitment as “guest laborers” highlighted the continuity of racist thinking among officials and demonstrated the limits of the shift toward a more self-critical reflection of Germany’s past.

In the next paper Sigrid Stöckel argued that in the health care system the primary confrontation with the past did not occur in the 1960s but in the late 1940s and 1950s. Stöckel emphasized the existence of several pasts, not only the Nazi one. Because of the experiences of Weimar and the Third Reich, public health officers in the Federal Republic came under pressure from “free” doctors. Because social medicine was associated with the “state” medicine of the Third Reich, West German developments were retarded in comparison to other countries. Lora Wildenthal’s commentary centered on the specific issues brought up by the two papers. As Wildenthal remarked, it remains an important task for historians to dis-
entangle “the cynical from the political” in their efforts to understand how people confronted the past during the 1960s.

Two concluding commentaries by Elizabeth Heineman and Axel Schildt opened the conference’s final discussion. Heineman reminded the audience that the 1960s challenge us to continue asking new questions. For example, the impact of gender on everyday life and religion, and the reconfiguration of class and capital remains an important agenda to be studied in the context of West German “coming to terms.” Referring to Konrad Jarausch’s keynote lecture, Heineman also underscored that our understanding of the 1960s is inevitably based on how we see the 1950s. Finally, developments during the late 1980s make it necessary to place West Germany in comparative perspective with East Germany. Axel Schildt then summarized some of the Nebraska conference’s findings. First, new empirical results have come to the fore. Historical inquiry has moved into a critical phase where we can expect to deepen and broaden our knowledge of the 1960s. Second, the conference showed that many open questions remain, especially with respect to Vergangenheitspolitik and the impact of the antifascist campaigns of the 1960s on the establishment. Third, we have to look behind the myths that were created by the student movement. Following up on earlier remarks by Detlev Clausen, Schildt argued that it has become increasingly clear that the Nazi past was probably not the main issue of “1968.” Fourth, the broadening of the public sphere that took place during the 1960s was a critical feature of the decade. We therefore need more empirical studies on the media, school education, and a host of related fields. Fifth, if “coming to terms” was a main locus of West German history in the 1960s, it has to be related to the social and economic transformation that took place during that same period. The discussion should therefore take place within the larger framework of the “Westernization” of the Federal Republic. Sixth, the 1960s were characterized by a special atmosphere that can be observed in pivotal events, such as the Spiegel crisis, and that was present in the theatrical, witty, and sometimes irresponsible slogans of “1968.” Last, Schildt identified some issues that were missing and that should be treated in a more a systematic fashion; the generational conflict was of particular importance.

The ensuing discussion reiterated many of the issues that had been on the agenda for the preceding two days. The question of periodization: When did the 1960s begin and when did they end? How important is “1968” as a caesura and as an event? How are the various German pasts and chronologies connected? Where do the 1960s stand with respect to long-term developments in German history, not only with respect to the Third Reich but also going back to the Weimar Republic and earlier? Furthermore, what do we learn from the multiple presences (and
disguises) the Nazi past took during the 1960s in both Germanies, and how do we cope with the “triple burden of history” (National Socialism, communism, and “1968”) that seems to be at the core of our own historiographical concerns? How did generational conflict and natural generational transitions influence 1960s discourses as well as Vergangenheitspolitik? Finally, how honest and how accurate was the “coming to terms” during the 1960s? We will have to wait a few more years for more conclusive answers to many of the issues that were discussed in Lincoln. Although participants may have raised many more questions than they could probably answer, the Nebraska conference, the first international meeting of its kind that was exclusively devoted to the issue of the Nazi past during the 1960s, turned out to be a stimulating event.

Philipp Gassert
Alan E. Steinweis

ANTI-AMERICANISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Conference at the GHI, July 6–7, 2001. Co-sponsored by the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS). Conveners: Patrice G. Poutrus (GHI/AICGS and Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, Potsdam) and Ingrid Creppel (George Washington University). Participants: Jan C. Behrends (University of Bielefeld), James W. Caeser (University of Virginia), Arpad von Klimo (Humboldt University, Berlin), Peter Krause, (Europa University, Frankfurt/Oder), Richard Kuisel (State University of New York, Stony Brook, and Georgetown University), Alan Levine (American University), Robert McGeehan (University of London), Gabor Rittersporn (Centre Marc Bloch, Paris/Berlin), Bernd Schäfer (GHI), Christoph Strupp (GHI).

After September 11, it is difficult to write a report about the subject of anti-Americanism in the twentieth century. The horrible pictures of the airplanes hitting the Twin Towers and the subsequent catastrophes have not left my mind. I also believe, however, that if we do not want to be dominated by terrorism we have to remain open to and willing to engage in intellectual controversy. Such is the task of intellectuals in open societies. To avoid any potential misunderstanding, I would like to begin by explaining why I chose anti-Americanism as the subject for this conference.

Although the history of ideas and transatlantic relations are not my own field of research, thinking about communist dictatorship and the mentality of post-communist societies led me directly to it. After the close
disguises) the Nazi past took during the 1960s in both Germanies, and how do we cope with the “triple burden of history” (National Socialism, communism, and “1968”) that seems to be at the core of our own historiographical concerns? How did generational conflict and natural generational transitions influence 1960s discourses as well as Vergangenheitspolitik? Finally, how honest and how accurate was the “coming to terms” during the 1960s? We will have to wait a few more years for more conclusive answers to many of the issues that were discussed in Lincoln. Although participants may have raised many more questions than they could probably answer, the Nebraska conference, the first international meeting of its kind that was exclusively devoted to the issue of the Nazi past during the 1960s, turned out to be a stimulating event.

Philipp Gassert
Alan E. Steinweis

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Although the history of ideas and transatlantic relations are not my own field of research, thinking about communist dictatorship and the mentality of post-communist societies led me directly to it. After the close
of the twentieth century and its bipolar world order, the debate over liberal Western values and their universal validity has gained new relevance. Whereas at the beginning of the twentieth century Western values were represented by states such as Great Britain, France, the United States and the Netherlands, the United States has gradually become the representative of Western ideas in public perception. This dominant status of the United States did not remain unchallenged in the discussions of the past century. Sharp criticisms and harsh polemics against “America,” whose origins can be traced back to the Romantic Age, were constants of political thought on both the right and left of the political spectrum. These findings allow us to speak of nationalistic, popular, socialist and religious fundamentalist regimes of the twentieth century as embodiments of an anti-liberal and anti-American consensus. Many of these regimes succeeded in legitimizing themselves negatively, through the public rejection and proclaimed overcoming of the ideas of 1776 and 1789. In place of America’s model of an “open society,” these regimes claimed to have established a more authentic form of society. Blaming of the United States and its allies for failing to establish their own systems is also part of authoritarian discourse.

Using the German case with its many shades of radical anti-Americanism as a point of departure, our conference sought to gain new insights into the phenomenon of anti-Americanism through a comparative perspective. Recognizing the central role that the American-Soviet conflict played in the twentieth century, it seemed useful to explore the ramifications of anti-Americanism on the periphery of this conflict and in their specific historical constellations. We also thought that it would be valuable to examine the issue outside the European context, perhaps in Latin America or the Middle East. Through a comparative perspective, we hoped to be able to sketch the constants and specifics of antiliberalism in the twentieth century.

The workshop started with a lecture by Alan Levine on “The Idea of America in European Political Thought, 1492 to Today.” Levine divided his presentation into four parts: First Attempts to Explain America: 1492–1580s; America as Nature: Montaigne and the Enlightenment Debate; Reactions to America’s Great Political Experiment after the American Revolution; America as Technology. Levine explained that in the eyes of European political theorists, America had gone from the symbol of nature to the symbol of technology, its opposite. America was first blamed for being insufficiently natural, then praised as the epitome of nature and the home of natural rights, then, finally, blamed for losing all touch with the natural human spirit. In these debates, so Levine’s final statement, America has served both as Europe’s past and as Europe’s future, but in
debating America European thinkers were really engaged in a battle for Europe. The stakes were—and are—the fate of modernity.

James W. Caeser followed this up with a lecture on “Forgotten Early-Twentieth-Century German Views of America: Theodor Lessing and Müller Freienfels.” Based on these two cases, he sketched the dominant idea of America in European thought that was created at the end of the nineteenth century, when “Americanization” became associated with a spiritually empty project to conquer nature, imposing a sterile understanding of materialism on Western (and world) culture. Caeser argued that this image of America was a forerunner of the current term “globalization,” which he sees as a synonym for Americanization.

Jan C. Behrends’s presentation “Anti-Americanism as Legitimatory Narrative: German Traditions and Communist Inventions in the Early GDR” showed that anti-Americanism took various shapes during the existence of the GDR. It proved to be a very flexible ideology and was tied to many different ideas: the peace discourse as well as the comparison between the USA and the USSR, which tended to disappear later in the East German state’s existence. East German anti-Americanism contained traditional motifs of German anti-Western thought, but also a type of Sovietized anti-Americanism, which used images imported from the Soviet propaganda cosmos. In many ways, the Socialist Unity Party (SED) tried to connect traditional ideas of German political thought with its own ideology. In a way, the SED leadership stuck to a world view that had been adopted in the 1930s. But although this propaganda failed and American culture was just as successful in everyday life in East as in West Germany, Behrends argued that the regime did succeed in installing deep skepticism or even distrust towards American politics and society in large segments of the East German population.

Peter Krause’s paper “America as a Model? Images of the United States in the German Press of the 50s and 60s” presented the West German counterpart to Behrends’s paper. Examining West German media coverage of issues related to the United States, Krause concentrated on the coverage of two issues, McCarthy and the race riots of the 50s and 60s, in the German news magazine Der Spiegel. He argued that German self-identity is mirrored in the way images of the U.S. are presented in public discourse.

The second day began with the Richard Kuisel’s lecture “The Gallic Rooster Crows Again: The Paradox of French Anti-Americanism.” The principal issue Kuisel addressed was the paradox that even though America and France are more tightly connected than ever before, by both trade and popular culture, the French have expressed harsh criticisms of the U.S., such as the criticism of America’s “hyperpower” voiced by high government officials as well as the increasing antipathy voiced in French
opinion polls towards certain aspects of American culture and society. To explain the paradox of anti-Americanism in an Americanized Europe, Kuisel stressed three recurring fundamentals: (1) certain constants, that is, stereotypes, notions of cultural superiority, domestic political infighting; (2) circumstances (The 1990s, for instance, have been much like the 1950s and 1960s, in the sense of the U.S. posing as a superpower and a socio-economic model for Europe); (3) and “real” issues or rivalries, such as trade, competition for global influence, and security issues. In addition to this historical pattern, Kuisel analyzed what is new about the current bout of U.S.-bashing. Here globalization is the most obvious new element. American dominance and triumphalism are perceived as having created a sense of powerlessness that have put a traditional sense of “Frenchness” or identity in jeopardy. The new strain of French anti-Americanism, Kuisel concluded, is a form of retaliation: retaliation against a seemingly omnipotent United States that tries to impose the self-serving process of globalization on France; retaliation against Washington’s obstructionist and unreliable hegemony in international politics; and retaliation against America’s promotion of its flawed social model, which challenges a traditional construction of Frenchness.

In his talk “Anti-Americanism in Hungary? Functions of Anti-U.S.-Ideology in Hungary after WW I,” Arpad von Klimo moved the focus from Western to Eastern Europe. He explained that Hungary was at war with the U.S. twice in the twentieth century. Hungary was characterized by a ‘Prussian’ social structure with a ruling stratum of large landed property owners and a very aggressive and militaristic gentry. Antiliberalism and antimodernism were strong elements in Hungarian political discourse after 1918. But there were always counterbalances to the German orientation. Klimo saw the reasons for this continuing phenomenon in the geo-political location of Hungary in the twentieth century.

Gabor Rittersporn’s presentation “Hopeless to be Alike, Impossible Not to Imitate: America in Soviet and Post-Soviet Eyes” showed that hostility towards all the values that America is supposed to embody was not a constant feature of Soviet attitudes vis-à-vis the United States. Anti-Americanism did not permeate every milieu even when it became a permanent fixture of Soviet policy. On the contrary, periods of the most vehement officially sponsored hatred for America saw the emergence of an increasingly sympathetic understanding of the values that the United States was perceived to stand for. If at the beginning this understanding was mainly confined to intellectuals or circles close to them, it became fairly widespread with time. In one way or another, American achievements and norms became the yardstick of everything the Soviet regime managed to accomplish. But the dubious modernity of the USSR left a heavy heritage to post-Soviet Russia. The sympathy toward the United
States that contributed to the collapse of the Soviet system runs the danger of becoming captive to the same dialectics of Enlightenment that had characterized the evolution of Soviet perspectives on America.

At the conference’s conclusion, academic discussion gave way to political debate. In his paper “European Unity and Anti-Americanism: Are They Inseparable?” Robert McGeehan argued that, with the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, “Europe” can now experiment with ventures that would present the option of not only separating from but opposing the United States. The only political force strong enough to justify the economic sacrifices necessary to achieve a militarily operational Europe, he suggested, is anti-Americanism. Will European anti-Americanism, liberated from the closet of the Cold War, develop sufficiently to achieve the unity which has so far been frustrated by the necessity of Atlanticism? This threat to NATO is of great concern to the Bush Administration, even as George W. Bush’s policies on defense, the environment, and human rights make easy targets for what is emerging as “the ugly European.”

Both the style and viewpoint of McGeehan’s paper were surprising and made the discussion of the subject difficult and unsatisfactory. The original goal of the workshop was to compare and discuss different cases of anti-Americanism, not to engage in political argument. For a historian, watching a scholarly argument about the past turn into a heated political debate about the present was an exceptional experience that reflected the differences between the academic cultures of history and political science. It became clear that we reached the border between academic analysis and political opinion and that this border is porous. Nevertheless, especially after September 11, it is necessary to distinguish between political interests and fundamental values. Academic analysis can, of course, address both, and the answers should not be limited. That is one of the strengths of open societies. The question about the importance of anti-Americanism in the twentieth century was not answered by this conference, but it is was opened up. This made the event interesting.

Patrice G. Poutrus

A WORLD AT TOTAL WAR: GLOBAL CONFLICT AND THE POLITICS OF DESTRUCTION, 1937–1945

Conference at the Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, Hamburg, August 29 to September 1, 2001. Co-sponsored by GHI Washington, GHI London, Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung, and Max-Planck-
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The fifth and final conference in the series on Total War was devoted to the Second World War. Several central problems dominated the discussions at this conference, as they have the previous four. The effort to reach a consensus about the definition of “total war” bore little more fruit this time, even though we confronted a conflict that many instinctively regard as a paradigmatic case. In his opening remarks, Roger Chickering again drew attention to the vexing problems of definition. He suggested that the term “total war” be used historically and limited to the era in which contemporaries themselves employed it, which began in the later phases of the First World War and culminated in 1945. Gerhard Weinberg emphasized the global dimensions of the second of the last century’s great conflicts. Hew Strachan noted the radicalization of operations over the course of the war, which reflected, he argued, the salience of racism in the thinking of both sides. Myriam Gessler and Stig Förster then suggested that genocide represented an essential ingredient of total war, and that one might characterize the Second World War as the closest historical approximation of an ideal-type called total war, insofar as the Holocaust approximated “absolute genocide.”

The second session explored further the question whether specific modes of combat and operations distinguished total war. Holger Herwig underscored the elements of central command control, limitless aims, and rhetorical extravagance in the German conduct of the Battle of the Atlantic. Jürgen Förster’s paper on the German land war likewise found indices of “totality” in the unlimited and uncompromising objectives of the German forces, the lack of restraint with which they pursued these aims, the central control exercised by Hitler, and the degree to which German society mobilized for war. By contrast, in his broad analysis of the Ameri-
can war in two theaters, Dennis Showalter concluded that this country
did not fight a total war, insofar as mobilization never reached the ex-
tremes that it did in other belligerent countries. Nonetheless, the Ameri-
can effort was not only geared from the outset to global dimensions, but
was also conceived as a “mega-war,” which, Showalter contended,
“changed the world’s paradigms” technologically and institutionally for
the rest of the twentieth century.

The next session was in some respects the most intriguing, for it
suggested specific parameters for measuring the “totality” of war. Mark
Harrison and Stephen Broadberry argued that the economic dimension
was in any case pivotal. Harrison examined the plight of the Soviet
economy during the war and concluded that the mobilization of re-
sources was the single most important factor in deciding the war in favor
of the USSR. Broadberry’s analysis of the British economy likewise ar-
gued that in total war “victory is dependent on the scale of resources that
can be mobilized.” During the ensuing discussion, the two economists
argued further that a national commitment of more than forty percent of
all resources to war might well be taken as the threshold of “totality”—a
standard which all the belligerents save Italy met during the Second
World War. John Gillingham’s paper on the American mobilization noted
the difficulties of cross-national comparison, but likewise emphasized the
place of productive capacities in the war’s outcome.

The mobilization of societies was the theme of the following session.
Here Jill Stephenson offered a comparative analysis of the war’s impact
on women in Germany and Great Britain. Her conclusions suggested that
even in the wholesale mobilization of women, basic sectorial divisions of
class, confession, gender, and region survived in both countries. John
Barber’s survey of the involvement of Soviet women in the war made
clear that in this, as well as other respects, the experience of the USSR
represented an extreme case, if the measure of “totality” is the “intensity
of destruction and suffering.” This argument found support in Hans
Mommsen’s review of compulsory labor in German society, which em-
phasized the brutality under which laborers from the Soviet Union and
Eastern Europe suffered particularly. Mommsen also stressed the para-
dox that modern total war should have witnessed a reversion to the
atavistic institution of slave labor. Bernd Greiner’s survey of American
society at war highlighted the distinctions between the experience of war
on the two sides of the Atlantic. The watchword in North America was
“volunteerism,” which mitigated sectorial tensions and turned mobiliza-
tion into a “truly national effort.”

To the extent that agreement has emerged on a conceptualization of
total war, it has emphasized the blurring of boundaries between combat-
ants and noncombatants. This theme accordingly occupied a prominent
place in our deliberations. Gerhard Hirschfeld’s survey of German occupation policies in Europe made clear, however, that the burdens were more “total” in Eastern Europe than Western Europe. In the east, he argued, German policies seemed intent on the “total destruction of the occupied territories” and the remaking of social institutions. The paper by Heinz-Heinrich Nolte lent support to this conclusion, as well as to the proposition that the war reached a pinnacle of brutality in the Soviet Union. Nolte’s analysis of partisan warfare in Byelorussia demonstrated how the German effort was directed indiscriminately not only against the indigenous populations of areas controlled by partisans, but also against the natural environment. The casualties of the German war included crops, trees, and the “scorched earth” itself. Two papers then took up the strategic air war. Richard Overy’s survey of the war against German cities nodded to the economists, as it argued that strategic bombing was based on materialist premises—the proposition that material destruction was the key to undermining enemy morale. Robert Messer’s analysis of the American decision to drop atomic bombs on Japanese targets raised the issue of proportionality, the “morality of killing some innocent people in order to save the lives of others.” He also made it clear, though, that despite questions subsequently raised by historians, the American leaders who ordered the bombings were sufficiently committed to a doctrine of total war that they were not troubled by their decision.

Questions of morality, atrocity, and law were featured then in a session on “criminal war.” Birgit Beck examined the problem of sexual violence and racism among German troops, noting that the proliferation of unreported cases makes conclusions difficult to document. She argued nonetheless that women became primary targets of sexual violence during this total war, particularly on the eastern front, where incidents were at once racially motivated, far more numerous, and more leniently prosecuted than in France. Christian Gerlach’s examination of the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944 dwelt on the themes of underdevelopment and subversion. The German leadership persuaded itself that this was not only a backward land, but also a hothouse for Jewish left-wing agitation. These perceptions justified both the pitiless exploitation of the country’s resources and the deportation of its Jewish population. In her paper, Louise Young explored the cultural contexts of Japanese atrocities against the Chinese in occupied Asia. She argued that atrocities began amid counterinsurgency in 1931, but that they rested on long-held Japanese cultural perceptions, which portrayed the Chinese as a primitive people who stood outside the purview of the law. Daniel Segesser’s survey of the development of international law represented a fitting conclusion to this session. It underscored the impact of the Second World War in broadening the understanding of war crimes, as well as the Allies’
determination to establish legal and institutional foundations to punish them.

The final session of the conference was devoted to a roundtable discussion, which was led by Jean-Philipp Reemtsma, Michael Fellman, Sir Michael Howard, Wilhelm Deist, Robert Toombs, and Jörg Nagler. Their presentations and the ensuing discussion touched many of the issues that have guided our considerations of total war throughout the conference series. Several of these issues are worth special mention. Reemtsma emphasized the cultural dimension of the problem, the fact that total war rested on the systematic simplification of distinctions between “us” and “them”—to the point where these contrasts could be portrayed as absolute. Wilhelm Deist offered some cautionary advice about positing an “age of total war.” The elements of total war, he argued, have been multiple—their roots have been historically deep, and many of them remain with us (as a glance at events in Africa during the past decade confirms). Robert Tombs suggested that the conceptual disagreements about total war reflect two different approaches to the problem, which he characterized as “nominalist” and “realist” or, drawing on another historiographical debate, “intentionalist” and “functionalist.” If the one stressed the professed ambitions of historical actors to wage something akin to total war, the other emphasized the indices or ingredients that defined the phenomenon. Finally, Michael Howard raised some troubling thoughts about the conflict that most have agreed was the most total ever fought. The sheer complexity of the Second World War, Howard observed, undercuts the effort to characterize it as total. The war was a profoundly different phenomenon in Washington and Leningrad, Hamburg and rural Bavaria. “Total war,” Howard concluded, “is not all of a piece.”

Roger Chickering

Judging the Past in Unified Germany


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In his presentation, James McAdams argued that, compared to the enormity of the crimes committed by the Third Reich, the wrongdoings of the East German communist government during its forty-year rule pale into
banality. Hence the broad effort since 1990 to deal with the offenses of that regime may seem to be of secondary importance historically. Still, the thoroughness with which German authorities in the 1990s strove to deal with the GDR’s record stands in stark contrast to the ambivalence displayed by the West German authorities in the 1950s when it came to the crimes of Hitler’s rule. The GDR past has proven to be “masterable,” and retrospective justice in united Germany has been a success.

McAdams’s presentation focused on two of the ways in which the united Germany tried to come to terms with the past of the German Democratic Republic: the opening of the files of the Ministry of State Security (Stasi) and the investigatory commission of the German Bundestag. In his analysis he concentrated on four propositions that relate historical analysis to retrospective justice. First, the politicians, officials, and judges involved functioned as lay historians who brought their legal and moral categories to bear. Second, only three rule-of-law principles could be applied: guilt must be individualized, retroactive lawmaking is impermissible, and it should not be required of those being judged that they should have been heroes. Third, in the application of these principles, there proved to be considerable room for a flexibility that led to reasoned and careful judgments about what behavior should have been expected under the GDR regime. Fourth, the leaders of unified Germany, in pursuing retrospective justice, were constrained by the historical context. They did not have the option of not involving themselves in its pursuit. The only question was how to do so.

Drawing on her experience as an academic fellow with USAID, Ann Phillips began by pointing out the importance of historical truth in building the foundations of healthy, democratic societies everywhere. Getting at that truth is in itself a healing process, although Mc Adams’s presentation had underscored the ambiguity of the process in Germany. Taking issue with McAdams regarding the adequacy of Germany’s dealing with Hitler’s legacy, Phillips pointed to the GDR’s payment of huge reparations to the Soviet Union and to the Federal Republic’s acceptance of guilt, its apologies to the victims, and its massive compensation payments. The Germans since 1945 have done a great deal to atone for the crimes of the Third Reich.

Although the German approach to the GDR’s past was more multifaceted than that of other countries practicing retrospective justice, there were important shortcomings. First, as a general rule, vetting of civil servants on the basis of Stasi files took place mostly in the new, eastern states. Second, the work of the parliament’s investigatory commission was highly politicized. An examination of the eighteen-volume commission report reveals the dominance of West German perspectives, while the views of GDR citizens were solicited only when it was convenient.
Thus the commission criticized the East German Lutheran Church’s accommodations to the regime, for example, but did not challenge West Germany’s Deutschlandpolitik to the same extent. And is it fair, Phillips wondered, to question the complicity of the East German “silent majority?” It should not be forgotten that the communist regime provided opportunities as well as limitations to some of its citizens; the dissidents did not necessarily want to unify with West Germany or adopt its system; and most citizens of all communist countries east of the Oder-Neisse, with the exception of Poland, accommodated to their regimes as well. In sum, the entire elaborate effort to deal with the GDR past has been politicized.

The second commentator, Bernd Schäfer, argued that the whole process of retrospective justice has led to polarizations that have been far uglier than McAdams suggests. To achieve unity among all Germans, it will be necessary to bridge the extremely sharp divisions within eastern Germany that derive not only from the pre-1990 past but also from the pursuit of retrospective justice after unification. In late 1990, those who had been disadvantaged or persecuted by the communist regime had tremendous expectations that all the wrongs of the past would now be righted. But even if there has been a huge gap of expectations in regard to achieving retrospective justice, the process has had an enormous learning effect. A truly informed public debate has ensued, and a huge amount of scholarly literature has been produced. From personal experience in eastern Germany, Schäfer testified to how eager ordinary citizens have been to discuss their GDR history and how shocked they often were when learning about it.

The opening of the Stasi files, Schäfer pointed out, provided a straightforward process for dealing with the communist past. Moreover, the files revealed an immense amount about how the GDR’s dictatorial regime functioned—an invaluable lesson for historians on how all similar systems work. The consequences of the public disclosure of some files’ contents, however, deserve harsher criticism than McAdams dealt out. The vetting of employees on the basis of the files has also led to inconsistencies and even some arbitrariness. The very same easterners who initially wanted to make a clean sweep of personnel later came to resent the dominance of western Germans in the jobs that opened up in the structures of the east.

Today, eleven years after unification, a degree of normalization has set in with regard to dealing with the GDR past. The period of a continuing stream of new revelations is over now. Passivity now prevails, not the personalized resentments of previous years. Of course, Schäfer concluded, the past is still being used by the PDS and its opponents as an instrument to help mobilize core constituencies. But the hostility of the
PDS and other parties in the East toward West Germans stems from the period since, not before, 1990. Dealing with that postunification period and its consequences rather than the GDR past is obviously the challenge for the political leadership of today’s Federal Republic.

Robert Gerald Livingston

THE FEDERAL CHANCELLORY AND GERMAN UNIFICATION


More than eleven years ago, in the historic year of 1990, October 3 as “Day of German Unity” crowned West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s political achievements. Soviet leader Michail Gorbachev, who had merely sought to introduce perestroika in the Soviet system to modernize socialism, had unintentionally unleashed a chain of events that culminated in the dissolution of the Soviet bloc in general and the German Democratic Republic in particular. After Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic republics had started on a path of irreversible transformation into pluralist societies, the GDR dug in and preserved its Stalinist pattern of government and society for some time. But since the GDR was the only non-nation state in the Eastern bloc and was permanently challenged by the existence of comparatively affluent West Germany, the regime’s stonewalling proved to be difficult and finally impossible in the wake of the Soviet changes. In late 1989, demonstrations on the streets of the GDR not only forced the opening of the borders and the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also soon led to ever increasing calls for German unification. Barely two months after the first major demonstrations in Leipzig and Dresden, the SED regime had basically been eliminated by December 1989.

Driven by these events, the West had to react. In the Federal Republic it was above all Chancellor Helmut Kohl who seized this unique window of opportunity to further German unification. Although he faced domestic political pressure from the SPD opposition and had just survived an internal revolt in the CDU, from November 1989 to October 1990 Kohl rose to the occasion to save his chancellorship and shape German history in the twentieth century. At that time Michael Mertes was leading the Planning and Speech Writing Department of the Federal Chancellery in Bonn, before he became a division head there until 1998. Currently senior
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Robert Gerald Livingston

THE FEDERAL CHANCELLORY AND GERMAN UNIFICATION


More than eleven years ago, in the historic year of 1990, October 3 as “Day of German Unity” crowned West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl’s political achievements. Soviet leader Michail Gorbachev, who had merely sought to introduce perestroika in the Soviet system to modernize socialism, had unintentionally unleashed a chain of events that culminated in the dissolution of the Soviet bloc in general and the German Democratic Republic in particular. After Poland, Hungary, and the Baltic republics had started on a path of irreversible transformation into pluralist societies, the GDR dug in and preserved its Stalinist pattern of government and society for some time. But since the GDR was the only non-nation state in the Eastern bloc and was permanently challenged by the existence of comparatively affluent West Germany, the regime’s stonewalling proved to be difficult and finally impossible in the wake of the Soviet changes. In late 1989, demonstrations on the streets of the GDR not only forced the opening of the borders and the fall of the Berlin Wall, but also soon led to ever increasing calls for German unification. Barely two months after the first major demonstrations in Leipzig and Dresden, the SED regime had basically been eliminated by December 1989.

Driven by these events, the West had to react. In the Federal Republic it was above all Chancellor Helmut Kohl who seized this unique window of opportunity to further German unification. Although he faced domestic political pressure from the SPD opposition and had just survived an internal revolt in the CDU, from November 1989 to October 1990 Kohl rose to the occasion to save his chancellorship and shape German history in the twentieth century. At that time Michael Mertes was leading the Planning and Speech Writing Department of the Federal Chancellery in Bonn, before he became a division head there until 1998. Currently senior
foreign-policy editor of the Bonn weekly Rheinischer Merkur, he shared his insights into the decision making processes within the Federal Chancellery in late 1989 and 1990 with a packed audience at the GHI.

In his presentation, Mertes sought to shed some light on hitherto little-noticed details concerning the role of the Federal Chancellery and Helmut Kohl personally during the process of German unification. He began by outlining the structural and staff resources of this center of political power. Here Mertes emphasized the so-called Chefsachen, that is, matters to be handled by the chancellor himself, which included the full complex of Deutschlandpolitik or German-German relations.

In this respect Helmut Kohl relied on the intra-German policy specialists in the “Working Staff for Deutschlandpolitik” and the generalists in the Planning and Speech Writing Department, holding both in a balance that was characterized by certain conceptual tensions. According to Mertes, the generalists like himself had an easier time coping with the unfolding events because they used “Germany” instead of the “GDR” as their mental frame of reference. Their connection with the CDU headquarters and Kohl in his role as party chairman also increased their political weight for the chancellor. Mertes reported that only six people in the chancellery had constant access to Kohl and worked closely with him outside the official hierarchy.

From the West German perspective, the course for unification was set between November 9, 1989 and the first free parliamentary elections in the GDR on March 18, 1990. Of particular importance was the “Ten Point Program” presented by Helmut Kohl to the Bonn Bundestag on November 28, 1989. Right after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Federal Chancellery experienced a “combination of joyful excitement and a feeling of deep uncertainty” about the future course of events. When GDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow proposed a “Vertragsgemeinschaft” between the two German states on November 17, Kohl and his advisers started to work on a program to take up this challenge and simultaneously outdo it. Mertes outlined the various stages of drafts and discussions and the chancellor’s central role in defining a confederation as only an intermediate step en route to German unification. The key sections of the Ten Point Program that Kohl himself set down in writing not only opened the supposedly closed chapter of German unity, but also proposed an eastward expansion of the European Union.

Since the Ten Points were not cleared with the Western allies, however, and deliberately did not mention the recognition of the Polish borders because of the CDU/CSU’s domestic constituencies, the initial reactions to Kohl’s bombshell of November 28 were certainly mixed outside of Germany. In the end, however, Kohl was able to get international and domestic support for the Ten Point Program as well as his announcement.
of an Intra-German Monetary Union on February 6, 1990. The latter came one day after the Federal Chancellor, acting in his role as chairman of the CDU, had forged the electoral “Alliance for Germany” in the GDR, thereby paving the road to the CDU’s electoral success in the East German election of March 18 and later in the all-German elections of December 2, 1990.

In his comment, Robert Gerald Livingston underscored Mertes’s points about Kohl’s activity as CDU chairman during the early months of 1990. Sometimes overlooked in historical accounts of German unification is the massive entry of the West German parties onto the GDR political stage, including the creation of the “Alliance for Germany” in early February, which was the key to the CDU’s subsequent success not only in the March 1990 elections but in managing the unification process as a whole so successfully. For Kohl and his staff in the Chancellery did not bring Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the FDP’s leader, Vice-Chancellor and Foreign Minister, into the deliberative process that resulted in the Ten Point program of November 28, 1989. In their dealings with the United States, the decisive supporter of unification among foreign countries, Kohl and his chancellery used their links to George Bush’s White House to good advantage and did little to counter the distrust of Genscher and “Genscherism” that was rife in the American administration.

Livingston argued that the truly decisive period in accelerating the unification process was the first two to three weeks of January 1990. The fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989 was followed by a westward exodus of East Germans that imposed great housing and welfare burdens on municipalities in the Federal Republic. After a brief hiatus during Christmas, this outflow began again in early January. The cry of the East German crowds “If the DM doesn’t come to us, we will go to it” carried an implied challenge that the Federal Republic had to face. Due to the pleadings of West German politicians at the municipal and state levels who feared the coming influx, the timetable implied in the Ten Points drafted by Mertes and his colleagues was greatly accelerated. In the end, the pace of unification escaped control.

Bernd Schäfer

**INDIVIDUALITY AND EARLY MODERN AUTOBIOGRAPHY BEFORE 1750**

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INDIVIDUALITY AND EARLY MODERN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
BEFORE 1750

The rise of individuality in the second half of the eighteenth century is a well-known phenomenon. A new concept of individuality became the center of consciousness, perception, and reason. This transformation gave rise not only to a new culture of letter-writing, but also to autobiography as we know it. Many of the most famous autobiographies, ranging from Jung-Stilling to Goethe’s *Dichtung und Wahrheit* belong to this period. As part of the anthropological turn, this development has led to a number of studies based on these autobiographies and other personal documents exploring gender relations, the division of work and, last but not least, individuality.

In contrast to these studies, this panel inquired about the status of individuality in autobiographies before the late Enlightenment. Few scholars working with autobiographies written before 1750 have dealt with this broad question. Instead they have investigated such subjects as marriage, attitudes to the body, the culture of groups, and social relationships. A number of studies have touched upon the subject, and although they have not denied traces of individuality they have often considered them negligible and not worthy of intensive study.

There seems to be good reason for this belief. Because society before 1750 was characterized by inequality, hierarchy, (enforced) religious uniformity and community orientation, one might tend to think that this left little room for expressions of the self, or that the repression of individuality was as all-encompassing as the repression that Clifford Geertz observed in Bali, where people were reduced to an impersonal set of roles. The important role of honor in early modern society, for example, suggests this. It is therefore not surprising that many scholars believe that early modern autobiographies reveal a universally depersonalized and public version of the self.

There are, however, a number of arguments that call such a view into doubt. It is well-known that interest in the individual increased during the Renaissance, as expressed, for example, in portraiture (and self-portraiture), or in admirable autobiographies like Montaigne’s *Essais*. Self-consciousness likewise increased in Reformation Germany, where autobiographies appeared in rapidly growing numbers and are generally regarded as of higher value than those from the following century. Thus some studies concentrating on the sixteenth century have taken the problem of individuality more seriously and have devoted space to discussing the problem.

The question arises as to what is an adequate approach to the problem. It seems questionable that working with such crude dichotomies as
social personhood versus modern individuality, or in somewhat qualified terms, a depersonalized version of the self versus a unique, personal private self, is really helpful. This panel therefore investigated individuality in early modern autobiographies through a more subtle approach, namely, by assuming a certain degree of blending of the conceptions of persona and individual. This implies that one should look for degrees of individuality in the sources rather than full-blown individuality in the modern sense. Due regard to a possible difference where there should be no difference in autobiography, namely between the author, the narrating self, and the hero of the tale, is also helpful. When combined with appropriate attention to the distinction between public and private (some autobiographies were never intended for publication, others were published during the lifetime of their authors), this approach might lead to interesting insights into the question of an evolution of the self (not necessarily a linear one) or its sudden emergence at the end of the eighteenth century.

Thomas Safley presented a paper entitled “Individuality and Autobiography in Early Modern Germany: A Reflection on Merchant ‘Ego-Documents.’” Analyzing the unpublished autobiographies of two merchants from late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth-century southwestern Germany, Safley scrutinized the connection between a specific social context, the emergence of autobiographical expression, and the emergence of individuality. These three elements have long been linked, and although the nature of the connection has been questioned, the connection itself has not. The two merchants, Caspar Koch of Memmingen and Matheus Miller of Augsburg, composed chronicles of their lives that differed substantially both in form and content. Though their writings can only be described as autobiographical, they share neither purpose nor intended audiences. Safley concluded that these differences suggest that each autobiographer wrote for individual purposes, but not out of a sense of individuality.

The second paper, “Master Johann Dietz: The Author as His Own Fictional Counterpart,” presented by Tina Löffelbein, offered an in-depth analysis of the autobiography of a Baroque barber-surgeon. On first sight, this text appears to be constructed in contemporary stereotypes, in which the author is mainly part of the wider world and his individuality vanishes in the absence of introspection. But Tina Löffelbein showed how to detect the hints Johann Dietz is giving the reader as a proof of his singularity. On the level of content, for example, he repeatedly describes his emotions for the reader. Also, through a close look at Dietz’s narrative strategies, Löffelbein revealed a very self-confident author, who turns religious terms (significants)—like the protection of God—into narrative
Instruments in order to build up suspense for his story, in which he himself is the hero fighting his way over major obstacles.

In his presentation “The Body, Sixteenth-Century Autobiography, and Individuality,” Otto Ulbricht traced individuality in autobiographies by looking at specific themes, in this case remarks about the body and its states during the process of aging. At least in theory, the ailments of the aging process can lead to the realization of the changeability of one’s individual character, thus revealing a central characteristic of the modern understanding of individuality. However, it is well-known that sixteenth-century autobiographers tended to present themselves as unchanging figures from childhood to death. Ulbricht stressed that this point serves as a reminder of the many obstacles facing such an investigation. As the authors are not given to introspection and analysis of emotions, it seems important to start with a reduced understanding of individuality. Or to put it another way, lower levels of individuality (like self-consciousness and self-perception) and awareness of one’s individual body are detectable in the implicit comments of the authors. Among numerous texts, Otto Ulbricht examined the autobiography of an old pastor who suffered from a kidney stone and was able to isolate traces of individuality in the expressions of pain. The pastor tried to build up familiarity with his illness, which he regarded as an unwelcome guest who dwelt within him and whom he would have to host for the rest of his life. But the pastor was also worried about how much he could complain in his writing. It seemed difficult for him as narrating self to find a balance. On the one hand, he insisted on writing about his pain, but on the other hand, he felt the need to justify why he wrote about it. This debate with himself indicates a deviation from given models—a degree of individuality.

After the commentator Kaspar von Greyerz pointed out the methodological difficulties of the connection between autobiography and individuality, including a critical evaluation of the literature (for example, Charles Taylor’s book Sources of the Self) a lively discussion with the audience ensued, many of whom were experts on autobiographical writings from different disciplines.

Vera Lind
Otto Ulbricht

Germany in the Cold War Since the 1960s

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GERMANY IN THE COLD WAR SINCE THE 1960S

Revelations from newly accessible archives in Eastern Europe and recently declassified material in U.S. archives as well as from the reshaping of historiographical approaches that emerged after the end of the Cold War have yielded new and exciting results in the history of international relations of both Germanies. The findings of this panel provided new perspectives on the issue of hegemonial relations in a bipolar world and called for a re-assessment of international relations along multilateral and multipolar lines.

The prevailing notion of hegemony is a construct of a Cold War consensus between historians on the left and the right. They attributed to the two main antagonists, the United States and the Soviet Union, quasi-omnipotence. The difference between the political persuasions simply turned on whom to blame for being more abusive of this power. The papers suggested that this hegemonic world view needs to be relativized. Hegemonic power, even in the case of the Soviet Union as an undemocratic and illegitimate hegemon, is never absolute. Client states do not lose agency, and they exert whatever influence or power they have. We would do well to explore their policies as those of more independent actors.

Hegemonic power depends to a large degree on how willing the client power is to withstand pressure and to stake out its room for movement. It also depends on the importance that particular issues have for a client power. In the case of Poland, its traditional mistrust towards the Germanies—never mind that one was a socialist brother country—provided enough pressure to pursue a more self-confident policy. By contrast, West Germany's sensitivity about the recent past called for avoiding militaristic foreign policies and withstanding American demands for German armed participation in the Vietnam War.

A specifically German theme of all papers was West German self-perception versus the view from the outside. It has been a dogma of West German foreign policy that the Nazi past of genocidal imperialism limited its ability to pursue a foreign policy that was as sovereign, that is, as forceful as its relative military and economic power would have allowed for. It seemed necessary and appropriate for the Federal Republic to regain the trust of other nations first. Generally, German policy makers believed that other powers were so distrustful of Germany—even if unfairly so—that it was often enough to assume outside resistance to stop Bonn from wielding its power.
Yet the three papers showed that Germany’s room for maneuver was much greater than anybody in Bonn thought. Of course, in case of doubt, the Germans could always be accused of returning to their old aggressive ways. Revanchism was a particularly popular bogeyman set up by the East, whereas the West appeared to be more discreet when raising its individual or collective eyebrows. Yet, overall, the thinking in Washington, Warsaw, and Moscow was far more resigned to accepting Germany’s right to pursue its national interests. The foreign policy leadership of the Soviet Union had far fewer doubts about the inevitability of German reunification than generations of West German leaders. In Washington, the successes of Chancellors Erhard and Kiesinger suggest that Germans had more leeway in defending their interests. The outright fear in the Johnson administration about what would happen in Germany if it caused Erhard to fall suggests that the American government believed that the Germans had more options than merely following U.S. leadership.

Douglas Salvage’s paper on “The GDR and Poland’s Response to Bonn’s Ostpolitik” put all this into an even more complex framework as he traced Polish policy towards the two Germanies and the Soviet Union. He argued that Poland’s support for Willy Brandt’s Ostpolitik was determined more by the inner dynamics of the Warsaw Pact than by Gomulka’s desire for improved relations with West Germany. Specifically, the GDR’s unwillingness to serve as a buffer state against German unification, along with Moscow’s failure to compel it to do so, led Gomulka to make his historic opening to Bonn. Only the utter failure of Gomulka’s hard line towards West Germany and within the Soviet bloc led him to seek improved relations with the FRG.

What Salvage’s work suggests is that, although it was communist, the Polish government was thinking more in terms of traditional national interests than of Cold War bipolarity. Direct personal confrontations between Gomulka and Ulbricht perfectly exemplified the historical enmity between Poles and Germans, that is, long-standing Polish memories of Prussian and German oppression, and German arrogance and prejudice against allegedly lazy and incompetent Poles, which found its way into the German language in the proverbial Polenwirtschaft. Unable to gain Soviet support, Gomulka finally responded to West German overtures, knowing that Moscow would favor improved relations with West Germany despite the fears of East Berlin.

Thus, what has long been perceived as an ideologic monolith turns out to display complex and shifting power dynamics. Poland was not only free to exert pressure, even if unsuccessfully, but the Soviet side obviously understood and acknowledged the Polish motives for objecting to the proposed developments. Salvage’s work removes the cover of a
clockwork whose mechanics were far more complicated than those of us who only saw the regular movements on the face could have imagined.

In her paper "Paying for the American Defense Guarantee? The Vietnam War’s Influence on the West German-American Offset Negotiations in the late 1960s," Alexandra Friedrich gave an example of how the power of the hegemon depends on the perceptions of the client. The West German government had agreed to purchase its military supplies from American companies in order to offset the considerable American expenses incurred in the defense of Western Europe and because it feared that the United States was about to abandon its European allies in order to concentrate on Vietnam. This mechanism left room for conflict between the two governments both because Germany’s military requirements remained far below the desired sums and because of continued American demands for the participation of German troops in the Vietnam War.

Chancellor Erhard was in awe of the Americans and naively believed that he could rely on Johnson’s friendship. He was obviously unfamiliar with Truman’s adage: “If you want a friend in Washington, get a dog.” It appears that the Americans understood Erhard’s weakness very well as they bluffed him with repeated threats of troop withdrawals. Erhard’s successor, Kiesinger, seemed far less enthralled, was willing to call the bluff, and successfully rejected American claims. Here is a case where personalities really mattered as Kiesinger’s more self-confident approach empowered the client state.

To German eyes, the fact that members of the Johnson administration showed no concern about Germany’s recent past when they called for a German military contribution to the Vietnam war was quite surprising. Cold War thinking had so far displaced the memory of World War II that the White House harbored no fears about a resurgence of German power politics.

This difference in historical consciousness about Germany’s past became very obvious in Tom Maulucci’s contribution on "The Question of Bundeswehr Out-of-Area Activities, 1955–1999: From Strategic Necessity to Constitutional Doctrine and Back." Here again we find Johnson and his administration apparently unconcerned about the use of German troops in combat situations, believing, in the words of Dean Rusk, that “it is important that we get some Germans into the field.” During the early years, it appears that memories of German World-War-II atrocities, at least in Europe, were still so strong, that the German government quite rightly argued that it would be impolitic to get involved militarily anywhere outside of West German territory. Domestically, Bonn also had to take into account the “count me out” attitude of many Germans during rearmament. At the same time, out-of-area activities were so far beyond the realm of possibilities that there was no need for a theoretical explo-
ration of their constitutionality. When the Social Democrats began participating in the Federal Government, the moral conviction that out-of-area activities were out of question took over. CDU chancellors might have perceived German out-of-area activities as possible embarrassments, but for Brandt and even for Schmidt it was a matter of moral conviction. It was easy to turn this into a constitutional prohibition as the Grundgesetz was largely designed as the very antithesis to the aggressive militarism of the Nazi dictatorship.

The intent of the German Founders was to create a new German approach to foreign policy. Constitutionally restricting the Bundeswehr to defensive purposes was meant to prohibit any German government from ever again considering military power as a political tool. After two world wars, von Clausewitz’s dictum of war as the continuation of politics by different means was to be stricken from Germany’s political testaments. To atone for the evil this nation had brought on so many in the past, West German foreign policy sought to establish the Federal Republic globally as a benign power. The emphasis on multilateralism, international law, and international organizations as the basis for conducting foreign policy was an attempt to further a legalization of the international system, quite in contrast to the traditional power politics of the superpowers. Constitutional prohibitions against out-of-area activities therefore gained considerable weight.

Yet for the United States Clausewitz still rings true. The U.S. can act with impunity, even in violation of international law, because it is not burdened with as disastrous and inhibiting a history as that of the Germans, and, of course, because it has the power to get away with it. Therefore it has no respect for what Henry Kissinger called “essentially legalistic argument[s]” if they stand in the way of what the U.S. perceives as its vital interests.

At the same time, in Germany, resorting to the Grundgesetz was a way of keeping the issue out of the public debate. A taboo obviated the need to constantly defend this decision, for example against right-wing militarists who stood to gain legitimacy by supporting American demands for troops. The Schmidt government’s constitutional arguments may also have been a polite way of disagreeing with some of the power politics that American administrations were pursuing. By putting up constitutional prohibitions, the Germans were avoiding a situation in which they had to publicly disagree with the United States over fundamental security issues, a situation that might have weakened the Western alliance.

Raimund Lammersdorf
ACROSS THE BRIDGE: GIs IN GERMANY


This event was a pre-release screening of the documentary film “Across the Bridge: GIs in Germany,” which is about the relationships between the American military (soldiers, dependents, civilian employees) and the Germans among whom they lived and worked during the half-century of the Cold War. On behalf of the GHI, R. Gerald Livingston welcomed an audience of about 50 guests, who had been invited to view the film and to offer comments and criticism designed to improve the final version. Philipp Gassert discussed his participation in the exploratory meetings of scholars studying the history of the American military in Germany that had been convened by Moorhus and Grathwol as well as his position as a Zeitzeuge who had grown up in a small German town that hosted a garrison of American troops from 1952 to 1994. He also described the active research program at the Historisches Seminar at the University of Heidelberg under the direction of Professor Detlef Junker. (For a report on the conference “GIs in Germany” sponsored by GHI in November 2000, see the Spring 2001 Bulletin of the GHI, pp. 130–37). Finally, Gassert mentioned the Historisches Seminar’s interest in creating an archive of materials related to the American military presence in Germany and appealed to members of the audience who had served in Germany to consider contributing documents and artifacts to such an archive.

Robert Grathwol explained how his research, conducted in collaboration with Donita Moorhus, had led to the film project, which was sponsored and funded with a generous grant from the German Information Center. Grathwol emphasized the overwhelming numbers of Americans involved as part of the military presence in Germany—between 12 and 16 million when soldiers, dependents, and civilian support personnel are all counted. The American population in Germany represented every geographic area as well as every ethnic, religious, and social group that constitutes American society. The social and cultural contacts that developed between these Americans and the Germans whom they encountered turned the experience—albeit largely unintentionally—into the largest cultural exchange program in human history. Grathwol indicated that the intended audience for the film was the general public but that, as
historians, he and Moorhus had tried to insure that cinematic consider-
ations did not outweigh historical accuracy in the film’s presentation.

The film itself begins with the battle to seize the bridge at Remagen
and progresses to the withdrawal of the bulk of American forces in the
mid-1990s. The narrative line is carried by the observations of those who
lived the experience rather than by an omniscient narrator. Music conso-
nant with the chronology of the story underscores the cross-cultural in-
fluences. A lively discussion followed the screening of the film.

Comments ranged from laudatory for all that the film covered in its
52 minutes to critical of some of the issues it left out. Cinematic choices,
such as the staging of interviews, occasional rough transitions (both vi-
ually and historically), and the multiplicity of focal points attracted com-
mentary. Some observers found the selection of interviewees too heavily
weighted towards officers, so that the experience of the enlisted solder
received less attention. As co-producers Grathwol and Moorhus acknowl-
edged that the film remained a work in progress. The film’s producer-
director, Max Lewkowicz, of Rainmaker Productions Inc., in New York
City, hopes to use the nearly 200 hours of videotaped interviews and the
substantial collection of archival footage that he has acquired to develop
a six-hour series for public television.

Robert P. Grathwol
Philipp Gassert

MEDIEVAL HISTORY SEMINAR

(Columbia University, New York), Johannes Fried (University of Frank-
furt), Patrick J. Geary (University of California, Los Angeles), Christof
Mauch (GHI), Christoph Strupp (GHI).

In 2001 the German Historical Institute successfully launched a new an-
nual program for German and American doctoral students in medieval
history: the Medieval History Seminar. The seminar is based on the for-
mat of our well-established Transatlantic Doctoral Seminar for students
of modern history. Every year in the fall it will bring together an equal
number of doctoral students from both sides of the Atlantic for a week-
end of scholarly discussion and exchange.

For the first seminar, proposals from all areas of medieval history
were taken into consideration. The conveners selected seven American
and nine German students to present their dissertation projects. Over the
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summer all students prepared papers of high quality for a conference reader, that was distributed among the participants in advance. Unfortunately, due to the developments after the terror attacks of September 11, only five of the German students and only one of the German mentors were able to come to Washington for the seminar in October.

Although the first Medieval History Seminar thus had to start with a smaller group of participants, it nevertheless managed to create an atmosphere of lively discussion and intensive intellectual exchange. Since the papers had been pre-distributed, there was ample time for questions and arguments in the six panels. Each panel featured two papers, introduced not by the authors themselves but by two of their fellow students acting as commentators. The discussions benefited greatly from the enthusiasm of the participants and the expertise of Professors Caroline W. Bynum, Johannes Fried, and Patrick J. Geary, who had agreed to serve in this year’s seminar as senior scholars and moderators. Without claiming to be representative for the discipline as a whole, the papers provided fascinating insight into current research in medieval history in Germany and North America.

The majority of the papers concentrated on aspects of late medieval history. Three projects dealt with earlier periods: Steven Stofferahn presented his work on the political culture of Carolingian exile. He posed a broad range of questions about the nature, function, execution, and the legal and cultural basis of exile in the Middle Ages, as opposed to later periods. It became clear that an analysis of the practice of exile offers valuable insights into Carolingian political culture, the structure of aristocratic relationships, medieval political rituals, and questions of cultural identity in general.

Valerie Garver dealt with the prudentia—the knowledge, professional, and intellectual skills—of Carolingian aristocratic women. The high level of social competence they could acquire enabled them to effectively manage essential activities, like the running of a household or monastery, the education of children, and the memorial preservation of the family. Prudentia tended to overcome divisions between lay and religious women, but although noble society valued those abilities, they did not necessarily pave the way for a greater public role of medieval women.

Jonathan Lyon’s paper concentrated on a different aspect of family history in the Middle Ages. He explored the kinship networks of the noble family Andechs-Meranier. The Andechs-Meraniers held important secular and ecclesiastical positions in southern and central Germany in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. Lyon argued in favor of a broad understanding of medieval kinship groups and called for historians to pay equal attention to male and female branches of the family.
history in the Middle Ages should be more than a history of “counts, margraves, and dukes” alone. The discussion focused on several methodological aspects of Lyon’s approach.

Ilse Freudenthaler dealt with the account books of René of Anjou, King of Sicily and Naples, and Duke of Anjou, to shed light on the relationship between the financial capabilities and the representational demands of a king. The account books were an important part of the complex everyday organization of a late medieval court and marked the transition from an oral to a written culture in the late Middle Ages. The theoretical approach Ms. Freudenthaler applied to her main source in her paper was based on modern theories of communication and led to an intense debate, whether account books can be treated as means of communication in this sense.

Several papers dealt with questions of religion and reform in the late Middle Ages. “Drinking, gambling, clamorous late-night songs and music; lewd images of women in private rooms; dissolve behaviour in public”: James Mixson’s paper opened with a colorful picture of Dominican religious life in the fifteenth century as contemporary critics saw them, before taking a fresh look at the Observant Movement. This movement was a crucial influence in the changes that late medieval orders underwent. Mixson tried to escape the limits of traditional scholarly models of analysis by concentrating on the “proprietarii,” who have been commonly held up as perfect evidence of compromised ideals. Based on a careful reading of contemporary sources, he called categories such as “radicalism,” “decline” or “reform” into question and situated the Observants in a much broader and more complex pattern of change in late medieval religious life.

June Mechem used the Dornenkron prayer books of the Cistercian Convent of Wienhausen in Lower Saxony in the late fifteenth century to enrich our understanding of female spirituality and daily religious life in general. Through their graphic descriptions the narratives of the Dornenkron books enabled the nuns to identify with Christ and to appropriate the memory of Christ’s Passion as their own. They created a very special form of unity with Christ. Through a detailed analysis of the differences between the books, Mechem aimed at recovering authentic female voices and the spiritual concerns of individual nuns. Several participants in the discussion stressed the importance of gender as a category for a historian’s picture of the past.

In his paper on Prague in the age of Charles IV, David Mengel managed to bring together two topics that are seldom discussed in connection with one another: prostitution and religion. His paper served as a fine example of taking a local perspective on religious manifestations. Prague in the later fourteenth century was a flourishing city that was going
through great physical changes. Mengel explained his concept of “religious topography,” which allowed him to view together instances of religious dynamism and the city’s changing urban structure. This paved the way for a new kind of contextualization of the religious movements of the time.

The revelations of the holy Brigitta of Sweden in the old-Czech translation of Thomas of Štítné served as an example of the Bohemian literature of edification in Pavlína Rychterová’s paper. The revelations Brigitta received in the late fourteenth century dealt with a broad range of subjects: the moral decay of Christianity in general and the church in particular, current political events such as the Hundred-Year War, and the rule of the order she founded. They were published after her death in eight volumes. Rychterová’s paper concentrated on the reception of these texts in Bohemia, where they were translated and edited by the religious writer Thomas of Štítné and aroused the interest of Emperor Charles IV and professors at Prague University.

Several other papers also focused on developments in regions or cities. Henning Steinführer examined the process of Verschriftlichung—growing literacy—in a number of medium-sized cities of Wettin Saxony between the thirteenth and fifteenth century. The economic development of the region, demographic growth, and a more specialized administration all contributed to this process. His research illuminated the development of medieval municipal institutions as well as the everyday life of the cities.

David Sheffler contributed to the history of medieval education, a difficult subject because of the lack of traditional sources for southern Germany. He focused on the schools of Regensburg and reconstructed the educational landscape of the city through a case study on the murder of the cathedral cannon Conrad von Braunau during a popular school festival in the city in 1357. Beside much detailed information on the operation of two ecclesiastical schools in Regensburg, the paper contained valuable information on the tense relationship between cities and church-run schools in general. Steinführer’s and Sheffler’s papers both raised the problem of micro-history, which is always vulnerable to criticism of the selection criteria used for the case-study and can be in danger of overstating the importance of single cases.

The last panel featured two papers on medieval historiography. In his discussion of the medieval historiography of the West German city of Münster, Oliver Plessow concentrated on the methodological aspects of his subject. Medieval texts challenge modern historians through their usually complex tradition. This is also true for Plessow’s main source, the “Chronicle of Florence of Wevelinghoven,” the first history of the bishopric of Münster. Using contemporary theoretical models of “narrativ-
isim” from France and the Anglo-American world (including the work of Roland Barthes and Hayden White), Plessow was able to shed new light on the difficult process of the “contextualization” of medieval texts and the element of construction that is inherent in modern interpretations. This led to a lively debate on the relationship between language and reality in general.

Matthias Maser also dealt with a historiographical topic. His paper on the *Historia Arabum* of Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada took the seminar away from Central Europe to the medieval Spanish peninsula. The book by de Rada represents the only surviving history of the Islamic world in Latin. Maser introduced its author, who was the archbishop of Toledo and a leading representative of the Spanish Reconquista, and his historiographical writings, which circled around the remarkable project of a “Spanish” national history.

The final discussion of the Medieval History Seminar, chaired by Professor Fried, focused on the commonalities and differences between German and American medieval historiography. The papers and discussions as a whole concentrated largely on aspects of medieval culture and social relations. They avoided well-trodden paths of research by using new sources and new theoretical approaches and stayed away from dogmatic discussions and scholarly jargon. The group agreed that international medievalist research during the last decades has been characterized by several important developments, including: increased thematic convergence, a dwindling of the nationalistic dimension of research on the Middle Ages in Germany, and the growing importance of a European dimension in research topics. But the discussions in the seminar also shed light on the important differences between the ways in which topics are approached and discussed on each side of the Atlantic. Participants also stressed the differences in the university systems, which lead to different career paths for German and American medievalists. The seminar certainly reached its goal of bridging the gap between the two scholarly cultures and helping young medievalists establish professional contacts within the community of medievalists, especially in USA.

The Medieval History Seminar was made possible through a generous grant from the German Program for Transatlantic Contacts of the Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, Bereich ERP-Sondervermögen, administered by the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau in Frankfurt. The second Medieval History Seminar will take place at the Humboldt-University in Berlin in October 2002. If you are interested in participating, please see the Announcements section of this issue for further information and application requirements.

*Christoph Strupp*
Participants and Their Topics

ILSE FREUDENTHALER, University of Augsburg, “Hofkultur und Repräsentation. Die Rechnungsbücher Renés von Anjou (1409–1480) als serielles Medium”

VALERIE GARVER, University of Virginia at Charlottesville, “Prudentia and Carolingian Aristocratic Women”

JONATHAN LYON, University of Notre Dame, “Expanding Kinship Networks: The Broader Family of the Andechs-Meranier”


JUNE MECHAM, University of Kansas, “Female Piety and Private Prayer: The Dornenkron Prayer Books From the Cistercian Convent of Wienhausen in Lower Saxony, c. 1450–1500”

DAVID C. MENGEL, University of Notre Dame, “From Venice to Jerusalem: Prostitution, Conversion, and the Religious Topography of Emperor Charles IV’s Prague”

JAMES D. MIXSON, University of Notre Dame, “Observants, Conventuals, and the Problematic of Reform in the Late-Medieval Religious Life”

OLIVER PLESSOW, Westfälische Wilhelms-University Münster, “Überlegungen zu einer Methodik der Untersuchung mittelalterlicher historiographischer Texte: Das Beispiel der münsterschen Geschichtsschreibung”

PAVLINA RYCHTEROVA, University of Konstanz, “Die Revelaciones der heiligen Brigitta von Schweden in der alttschechischen Übersetzung des Thomas von Štítné. Die Erbauungsliteratur in Böhmen, ihr Charakter und ihre Wirkung”

DAVID SHEFFLER, University of Wisconsin at Madison, “Festum Stultorum: The City, the Bishop, and the Schools of Regensburg”

HENNING STEINFÜHRER, University of Leipzig, “Stadt und Schriftlichkeit im wettinischen Sachsen zwischen dem 13. und 15. Jahrhundert”

STEVEN A. STOFFERAHN, Purdue University, “Renegades, Relatives, and Refugees: The Political Culture of Carolingian Exile”
Tenth Annual Symposium of the Friends of the German Historical Institute and Award of the Fritz-Stern Dissertation Prize


The Friends of the German Historical Institute convened in Washington on November 9–10, 2001, for their tenth symposium, chaired by Professor Konrad Jarausch, President of the Friends. The morning of November 9 featured the presentation of the Fritz Stern Dissertation Prizes, one of the GHI’s most joyous occasions, thanks to the Friends, especially when it takes place, as it did this year, in the presence of Professor Fritz Stern. The Prize committee, composed of Professors James Brophy (University of Delaware), Elisabeth Heineman (University of Iowa), and Jonathan Petropoulos (Claremont McKenna College), who chaired the committee, awarded this year’s Stern Prizes to Eva Giloi Bremner (Ph.D., Princeton University) and Jonathan Zatlin (Ph.D., University of California at Berkeley).

A capacity audience enjoyed the presentation “Ich kaufe mir den Kaiser! Royal Relics and the Culture of Display in Nineteenth-Century Prussia” by Eva Giloi Bremner. In the words of the prize citation, Bremner’s work presented a “highly creative combination of institutional history, the history of consumption, and the study of high and popular culture.” This was followed by Jonathan Zatlin’s no less fascinating paper on “The Currency of Socialism: Money in the German Democratic Republic and German Unification, 1971–1989,” a “financial history” as well as “a very serious and fundamental intervention into the social science of money.” Questions from the floor concluded the morning program.

In the afternoon, Dr. Bernd Schäfer, Research Fellow at the GHI, made a convincing case for reclaiming historiography from the spin of contemporary political actors in his presentation on “Triangular Diplomacy Reconsidered: New Sources and American Foreign Policy, 1969–76.” The archival paper trail of those years, combined with the careful evaluation of personal memoirs, promises to yield new insights and a fuller understanding of this still highly disputed subject.

The Friends convened again on Saturday to review programs and activities of the past year and plan for the coming year. Dr. Christof Mauch, and the Institute’s fellows and staff are deeply grateful for the continued guidance and support provided by the Friends.

Malve Burns
GLOBAL HOLLYWOOD: RETHINKING THE NATIONAL, TRANSNATIONALITY, AND GLOBALIZATION

Conference at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, November 29–December 1, 2001. Conveners: Heide Fehrenbach (Northern Illinois University), Christof Mauch (GHI), Thomas Saunders (University of Victoria). Co-sponsored by the History Department, the Dean of Humanities, and the Vice-President of the University of Victoria, British Columbia. Participants: Nora Alter (University of Florida), Charles Ambler (University of Texas, El Paso), Matthew Bernstein (Emory University), Barton Byg (University of Massachusetts), Sumita Chakravarty (New School University, New York), Anne Ciecko (University of Massachusetts), Seth Fein (Yale University), Victoria de Grazia (Columbia University), Sheldon Hsiao-Peng Lu (University of Pittsburgh), Richard Maltby (Flinders University, Australia), Michael Raine (Yale University), Martin Roberts (New York University), Philip Rosen (Brown University), Vanessa Ruth Schwartz (University of Southern California, Los Angeles), Ruth Vasey (Flinders University, Australia) and Denise Youngblood (University of Vermont).

In our more and more globalized world, films have taken on an increasingly transnational character. Films are often produced in multinational cooperation, and the same movie may be played to audiences all around the globe. The Western, for example, was invented by Americans, but the Europeans tried to imitate the genre and its commercial success with their own (Euro)Westerns. Kung-Fu movies are popular in every continent of the world, and Dakar has joined Cannes, Berlin, and New York on the film festival circuit.

Throughout the twentieth century, Hollywood occupied a very strong position that extended well beyond the Western world. Hollywood films, aesthetics, genres, stars, and production models set trends in the United States as well as abroad. Despite Hollywood’s wide-reaching hegemony, however, culturally and nationally defined film industries have always played and continue to play an important role.

At the end of November 2001, a group of scholars from the fields of film studies, cultural studies, history, and literature came together in Victoria, British Columbia, to explore the various ways that “Hollywood”—as industry, institution, and icon—has figured in the articulation of local, regional, national, and transnational cinemas. In taking a global perspective and broad temporal sweep, the conference sought to foster
dialogue on the comparative study of Hollywood’s influence and to encourage sensitivity to the evolution of that influence and the world’s engagement with it. One goal of the conference was to extend and refine our understanding of the relationship between cinema and identity in a global setting by exploring Hollywood film production as well as the range and evolution of meanings attributed to American cinematic culture. Another goal was to discuss the strategies employed by various groups to locate their “own” cinemas in localized form.

The conference, hosted by film historian Thomas Saunders, was opened on Thursday evening by Andrew Rippin, Dean of Humanities at the University of Victoria, and Christof Mauch. Rippin and Mauch both emphasized the relevance of the conference topic—not least in light of the terrorist attacks of September 11, which had caused a postponement of the conference, which, in turn, prevented several participants from attending. Through TV and media reporting, the terrible acts of violence had become a constitutive part of the global imagination while at the same time reflecting resistance to American cultural engagement.

The first paper delivered the following morning—Phil Rosen’s “Reformulating Hollywood as Global Cinema”—focused on globalization in historical perspective and the film-theoretical concept of cinematic classicism. Rosen argued that it was precisely the long-term aspect of Hollywood’s international success that allowed so many to align it with the general designation of classical cinema. He suggested that the 1910s and 1920s were formative both industrially and textually for Hollywood’s global ambitions. The commercial and military consequences of World War I were of decisive importance for Hollywood, opening the way for it to take advantage of the communications and transportation infrastructure of the British Empire. It was between the 1870s and 1920s—during the third or “take-off” phase in Roland Robertson’s model of globalization—that cinema was invented and films began to be distributed worldwide. The organization of Hollywood’s global distribution network and the establishment of “classical cinematic codes” should therefore not be seen as something radically new but as developments that date back to beginnings of capitalist modernity.

In his paper on Chinese and American cinema, Sheldon H. Lu discussed the transnational character and unprecedented Western success of the Chinese-language feature film Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (directed by the Chinese-Taiwanese-American director Ang Lee). Lu argued that the longstanding fragmentation of the Chinese nation state shaped the history of transnational cinema in China. While mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong had separate cinematic traditions for many years, the 1980s saw a trend toward co-production and collaboration
across national and regional borders—both among the three Chinese cinemas and between those cinemas and other film industries. It was only after the end of the Cold War, however, that joint productions increased on an unprecedented scale. Transnationalism, “flexible production,” “flexible citizenship,” the cross-border movement of people and ideas, and the mixing of genres culminated, as Lu argued, in Crouching Tiger, thereby creating new commercial possibilities for global entertainment. Lu pointed out that flexible filmmaking in transnational cinema must not be confused with other categories of border-crossing filmmaking. Cinemas such as “exilic cinema,” “diasporic cinema,” and “postcolonial ethnic cinema” imply a sense of displacement or alienation, Lu argued, whereas transnational movies such as Crouching Tiger provide “enormous thrills and pleasures to worldwide audiences.” At the same time, “reception gaps” between East and West continue to exist. While Couching Tiger achieved unprecedented box-office successes in the United States and Great Britain, audiences in mainland China and Hong Kong found it unspectacular, familiar, and, at times, quite implausible.

In her paper on “Hollywood in Bollywood,” Sumita S. Chakravarty examined the nature of Hollywood’s influence on Bombay cinema—the world’s largest film industry. Chakravarty’s paper, summarized in her absence by Heide Fehrenbach, pointed out that Indian cinema was distinguished from the outset by its difference from its American counterpart and that this difference was the key to survival and success. Through repetition and redundancy, through song, dance and elements of melodrama, Bollywood cinema carved out a niche in the non-Western world. At the same time, it made use of star glamour and formulas for success similar to those employed in Hollywood. The national and the global were not mutually exclusive in Bollywood. To explain the (world)wide appeal of Indian movies outside of India, Chakravarty invoked Veit Ermann’s concept of the market-driven “global imagination.” She insisted that a truly global analysis should not position the Third World as a mere hunting-ground for Western capital in search of profits, but see it rather as “a site of negotiations of the local and the global.” The reason for the global success of Bollywood’s aesthetics can only be described as a combination of film as market driven product and the film star’s body as a site of mobile identifications. The Raj character in the old Raj Kapoor film Shri 420 is an example of such mobility—a hero suspended between the industrial and the pre-industrial, between cynical and clown.

In his paper on the Mexican and U.S. film industries in the “Golden Age,” Seth Fein demonstrated how cinema crossed the U.S.-Mexican border and transformed cultural frontist representations between the 1930s and 1950s. He pointed out that one of the major factors of Mexican cin-
ema’s wartime development was the direct intervention of the United States government in Mexican film production through the Office of the Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs (OCIAA). The “Golden Age” of Mexican cinema, despite the national myths that underlie so much of Mexico’s official history, must be understood as a metonym for the Hollywood style—a “derivative and repetitive commercial genre, marketed internationally through a story system, produced in privately owned studios.” Furthermore, Fein argued, an understanding of the transnational, hybrid history of cinematic practices may help in understanding the history of transnationalism and hybridity that lies beyond the screen.

In her paper “Popular Cinema and the Invention of the Asian Blockbuster,” Anne Ciecko explored the box-office success of three fin-de-siècle Asian films: Jose Rizal (Philippines, 1998), Nang Nak (Thailand, 1999), and Shiri (South Korea, 1999). Each of these films broke local box-office records previously held by Hollywood’s Titanic. Ciecko argued that the success of each of these films was based on a combination of the manipulation of familiar stories or characters (such as folk-narratives or local stars), the development of spectacle-driven and expanded-scale entertainment, and a marketing strategy that employed Hollywood for favorable contrast. While the future of local feature film-making and film-going in the Philippines, Thailand, and South Korea is obviously subject to many economic and political factors, Ciecko argued that the landmark significance of local productions in South East Asia and its capabilities of “blowing the Hollywood ship out of the water” should not be underestimated.

In a paper titled “Shadows and Unreal Things,” Charles Ambler analyzed the persistent appeal of American movies among African audiences. He discussed the ways in which white Africans had often cut films beyond recognition according to race categorization and in order to remove any seemingly offensive scenes or images. He also examined the longstanding myths about early audiences’ encounters with films and the supposed perplexity of the “natives” when confronted with modern technology.

Vanessa Schwartz’s presentation on “Hollywood on the Riviera” shifted the focus of the conference to the culture of European film festivals as an alternative to Hollywood’s domination. Schwartz argued that the Cannes festival, which emerged as a major European cultural event in 1946, was not only grounded in specifically French or European traditions but also implied a cosmopolitan outlook. The key to the success of Cannes was, according to Schwartz, “precisely that it promoted itself as chic, hip and cosmopolitan as opposed to national.” Although the Americans never believed they were adequately represented in Cannes, the festival organizers allowed additional films to be shown outside the competition. This move guaranteed Hollywood box-office success and high
visibility in a European setting. At the same time, by promoting cosmopolitan stars such as Omar Sharif (who lacked national specificity), Cannes became a vital institution for international film beyond the reach of American hegemony.

Like Vanessa Schwartz, Barton Byg focused on alternatives to Hollywood. In his paper “We All Live in Inceville,” Byg discussed East German Indianerfilme. (Because Byg could not attend, his paper was presented by Heide Fehrenbach.) Byg pointed out that although they imitated Hollywood conventions, the German Democratic Republic’s Westerns were unique in a number of ways. They were genre hits in a country where that could not be expected; they replicated an American convention without awaking the cultural watchdogs; and they conveyed “official” Marxist ideology by way of expressing solidarity with Native Americans, the victims of U.S. imperialism. GDR Westerns were the only European movies that presented the genre from the point of view of the Indians. Byg saw the success of the Indianerfilme as a result of their providing sanctioned access to pleasures that were otherwise taboo. He emphasized, however, that it is best to interpret these films “less as an anomaly than as a uniquely popular expression of international cultural practices using fantasies of Indian culture and history which have some connection—albeit indirect—to reality on various levels.”

Richard Maltby interpreted the Western and its success in the United States as a product of the myth of Anglo-conformity. It was ironic, he argues, that Westerns were also used to promote the idea that Hollywood belonged to the world rather than to the United States alone. The worldwide success of classic Hollywood movies (especially Westerns) can only be explained, according to Maltby, as a result of the deliberate adoption of strategies of semantic indeterminacy and ambiguity. In search of markets, Hollywood exported its consumer product, that is, its movies, to the least differentiated audience, which in turn guaranteed the largest profit. Thus, “the Western provided a neat metaphor for the process of consumerism being identified with Americanism.” Maltby argued, in sum, that no artifact, even if it is highly charged with ideology, can avoid reinterpretation.

Maltby’s argument was echoed by Ruth Vasey, who pointed out that the Hollywood film industry managed to design a line of products that were deliberately fashioned to be attractive in a variety of viewing situations. Nonetheless, Hollywood should be seen as the national cinema of the U.S.: even as it aims its products towards a globalized market, Hollywood has been unable to offer audiences around the world representations of their own mores and cultural landscapes on screen.

In his paper on “Hollywood, Pop and Americanization,” Michael Raine discussed the reinvention of Japanese cinema in the 1950s. Raine
pointed out that the history of Japanese cinema was international before it was national. The first films shown in Japan were produced abroad, and the first Japanese efforts at film-making also depended on foreign equipment and advisors. Moreover, the spread of cinema as a vital element of Japanese mass culture depended on vernacular modifications of industrial and textual practices developed by Hollywood studios in the 1910s. In the 1950s, the Golden Age of Japanese cinema, film gave Japan a chance to explain itself to the outside world. Taking the genre of the “three girls” film, which was inspired by the Hollywood musical and U.S. pop music, as a case study, Raine discussed the struggle to create a “modernist” film culture in Japan based on personal expression, individual text, and reflective critique. The “Japaneseness” of these films, according to Raine, is to be seen as “differential rather than essential, and almost never without a Western—specifically, a Hollywood—intertext.”

While historians of the Hollywood film industry have often emphasized the cultural diversity of international audiences, Matthew Bernstein reminded the conference of the cultural and ideological diversity within the United States itself. In his study of Lamar Trotti, a Southerner in Hollywood, Bernstein discussed Trotti’s vision of the South, particularly in the interwar period. As a screenwriter, Trotti sought to demonstrate that the South was a civilized place and that North and South had more in common than they realized. His engagement came partly in response to Universal studio’s big-budget production of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* in 1927, which had the potential to insult the South. Trotti played a crucial role in providing Hollywood with insight into the South and in creating films that Southerners could applaud.

Papers submitted by two other participants who were unable to attend—Nora Alter (“Producing an Alternative: Hans Richter”), and Denise Youngblood (“The Cosmopolitan and the Patriot: The Brothers Mikhalkov-Konchalovskii and Russian Cinema”—rounded out the material for discussion at the conference.

In a stimulating wrap-up commentary, Martin Roberts criticized the fact that historical evidence had been privileged over ethnographic evidence throughout the conference. He pointed out that anecdotes were sometimes of great importance in understanding the (deterritorialized) transnational contact zones that films constitute. Roberts also suggested that a non-metropolitan theory of the global was needed; and he described the power of Hollywood as discursive rather than ideological. Above and beyond that, Roberts triggered a discussion about the role of the media in America’s current war on terrorism, about the iconicity of the movie theatre in Afghanistan (when it becomes a target for resistance), and about how media consumption (TV, videogames etc.) is depicted in the media as a signifier of normality.
A second commentary, forwarded to the conference by Victoria de Grazia, elaborated on and challenged the idea of Hollywood’s discursive power. De Grazia pointed out that Hollywood, like other global businesses such as McDonalds, was willing to appropriate and hybridize any product in the name of profit. While this argument suggests that there is indeed so much semantic malleability that one might assume the dominance of discursive power, de Grazia reminded the conference of those key moments in the twentieth century when the American state had sought to align imagery with the exercise of power—particularly in times of emergency and war, including the current war on terrorism. In those moments, the “American image machine” notoriously moves from discursive construction to ideological use and exercises exceptional power.

The final discussion lasted for two and a half hours and was at times heated, especially when it came to questions of methodology. Among the many topics discussed was the character of the Hollywood empire: should it be described as an empire of trade or an empire of state? Should one define it as imperial or global? And, finally, is global imagination at all possible?

Christof Mauch

SUICIDE IN EARLY MODERN EUROPE

Conference at the German Historical Institute, November 30–December 1, 2001. Conveners: Vera Lind (GHI) and Jeffrey Watt (University of Mississippi). Participants: Donna Andrew (University of Guelph), Machiel Bosman (Amsterdam), Jim Boyden (Tulane University), Elizabeth Dickenson (University of Texas), Craig Koslofsky (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), David Lederer (National University of Ireland), Jeffrey Merrick (University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee), Paul Seaver (Stanford University).

The history of suicide is a fairly new topic of historical research, but has become increasingly important in the past decade as a way to understand broader cultural and social issues as well as long-term changes in mentality. Almost forty years ago, the English historian Peter Laslett wrote in his famous study The World We Have Lost that increased knowledge of the history of suicide would provide a sensitive index of the relationship between personal discipline and social survival, and would so illuminate the society of our ancestors. This conference brought together new research on the history of suicide from different European countries. The
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papers concentrated on the early modern period, during which significant changes in attitudes toward suicide took place. Far into the seventeenth century, Europeans tended to identify suicide with demonic temptation, but by the eighteenth century the devil disappeared and gave way to an interpretation that has remained dominant until today: Suicide is generally understood as the expression of a physical and/or mental illness. The conference participants tried to explain this change from different perspectives, since the phenomenon of suicide involves cultural, political, legal, medical, social, sexual, religious, and intellectual aspects. They discussed the legal dimension of suicide as well as the relationship to political culture. Cases of prominent suicides from several countries were analyzed. Statistical evidence, questions of gender differences, and psychological approaches also contributed to a broad debate on the history of suicide.

David Lederer presented the first paper, on the cultural history of self-sacrifice in Hungary, a country that has one of the highest rates of reported suicides in the world. In trying to explain this high rate, Lederer suggested that during centuries of war and oppression, Hungarians cultivated a resilient tradition of self-sacrifice that became part of their cultural identity. Although historical records of suicide cases are lacking, he reported that there is an abundant number of legendary cases that employ a wide definition of suicide and martyrdom. This explanation is supported by the fact that the Hungarian suicide rate has dropped rapidly since the country regained independence and stability.

Machiel Bosman concentrated on the juridical aspects of early modern suicide in Amsterdam. On the basis of judicial proceedings from 1532 onwards, he identified three stages of decriminalizing suicide from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century: In the sixteenth century, suicides generally did not appear before a court. Instead, authorities were more likely to punish only the suicides of criminals. A century later, suicides were tried in the courts, but the laws were not enforced, and a quiet burial was the norm. In the eighteenth century, only criminals were prosecuted for killing themselves, and this was done by exposing their dead bodies in public in order to deter others. Bosman argued that neither the Reformation nor the Enlightenment influenced the decriminalization of suicide in Amsterdam. He found that denying burial to suicides had more to do with a code of honor than with religious concerns, and the process of decriminalization started long before the Enlightenment.

Donna Andrew presented a paper entitled “The Suicide of Sir Samuel Romilly: Apotheosis or Outrage?” Romilly was a member of the English Parliament, a prominent lawyer, and a crusader for the abolition of the slave trade, as well as the reform of criminal law. His suicide in 1818 received a lot of attention and evoked a broad public debate. Andrew
investigated this debate to find out more on early nineteenth-century attitudes toward suicide and came to the conclusion that the public could not decide whether Romilly’s death represented sin or sacrifice. The majority mourned him as a model policy-maker, self-made business entrepreneur, and family man. In order to understand his suicide, they drew a connection between his family values and public achievements, and came to the conclusion that his extraordinary efforts had taken their toll on his physical and emotional well-being. His suicide could therefore be seen as the result of an illness. Romilly thus evoked the image of a warrior fallen in battle—a victim of the sacrifices he had to make. Others, however, criticized his death, mostly on religious grounds. They condemned his lack of Christian submission, insufficient faith, pride, and what they saw as an act of cowardice. Besides the debate over sacrifice or sin, other contemporary themes emerging from the discussion on Romilly’s death were the question of the necessity of inquest juries and operations, and the recognition of a social bias in verdicts, visible through the leniency with which Romilly was treated due to his prestige.

Vera Lind presented a paper on the early modern psychological experience of suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts. By searching for the cultural codes reflected in the internal perceptions, she explored the way suicides experienced their body and mind, how they articulated their feelings, how they connected specific sensations to the wish to end their lives, and their perceptions of suicide. Lind argued that although suicide had been decriminalized, suicidal feelings remained an unspeakable, unthinkable taboo throughout the early modern period. Bodily signs and feelings were experienced within the culturally constructed stereotypes of melancholy, but were not connected to the wish to die. Instead, people who survived their suicide attempts later described themselves as passively enduring some external, forceful feeling that overcame them, thus allowing them to escape responsibility for what then happened. However, the way they identified these outside forces changed during the eighteenth century. Whereas diabolical temptations dominated in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, illness and personal problems increasingly became the causes by the mid-eighteenth century. Lind concluded that the perceptional taboo of the suicidal act also shows that there was a more or less conscious awareness of its religious, social, and legal consequences. The cases in which suicides did not describe themselves as being driven by outside forces that they passively endured were suicides connected to religious melancholy and to the phenomenon of murder committed out of suicidal thoughts.

In his paper entitled “Suicide and the Secularization of the Body in Early Modern Saxony,” Craig Koslofsky analyzed an administrative dispute between civil and church authorities over the burial of the body of...
a suicide between 1702 and 1706 in Leipzig. This micro-historical approach not only allowed him to show how attitudes towards suicide were expressed, but also how church and city politics worked in this context. The dispute highlighted suicide in popular belief and in church law at a time when ideas about suicide started to become increasingly secularized. Although the burial of suicides had become the responsibility of local administration by the end of the sixteenth century, ultimately the Saxon consistory won the dispute and reclaimed authority over the bodies of suicides. Koslofsky concluded that the secularization of ideas about suicide led only indirectly to a secularization of authority over the body of a suicide.

Jeffrey Merrick discussed how a social history of suicide in late eighteenth-century Paris could be written by picking the year 1775 as a case study. After evaluating different types of sources for their usefulness, Merrick settled on the reports of the forty-eight police commissioners in Paris who were responsible for the investigation of sudden and suspicious deaths. Some of the most interesting observations Merrick gleaned from his analysis of twenty suicide cases in these reports concern the social networks operating and the collective attitudes of the time. Acquaintances of the dead overwhelmingly blamed their suicides on physical or mental disorders, and did not refer to sin or crime. Also, when talking to the police, witnesses generally toned down or even manipulated their stories in order to avoid posthumous prosecution.

Paul Seaver investigated the reactions towards suicides in seventeenth-century London, especially the reasons offered to explain why people killed themselves. Although both the church and state at this time still considered suicide a terrible crime and sin, Seaver concluded that the treatment of suicide cases “points to the new and powerful role London as a metropolis was coming to play in English society and culture.” The big city as a center for communication, the exchange of ideas, book production, and the formation of opinions became a leader in new attitudes and cultural change during this century.

Jim Boyden and Emily Dickenson co-authored a paper on ambiguous attitudes toward suicide in early modern Spain. They took the example of a women committing suicide at the beginning of the sixteenth century to illustrate some of the important points of Spanish perceptions. Like other European countries at the time, the Spanish church and state unanimously condemned suicide. Suicides were denied a proper burial, and their families were deprived of property and prohibited from taking up high-profile careers. However, due to the influence of Jewish traditions and the important role of honor in Spain, social attitudes towards suicides were more complex. There were some cases in which honorable suicide
was openly admired, and others in which people pitied the actions of the victim if he or she were infused by insanity.

Jeffrey Watt used the Republic of Geneva in the eighteenth century as a case study of the incidence of and attitudes toward suicide in relation to changing religious perceptions. He paid special attention to whether a typically modern gender difference existed, in which men consistently kill themselves in greater numbers than women. The archival sources for Geneva are especially rich, and the criminal records for suicide cases combined with a death registry that recorded every single death in Geneva provide an almost complete picture of the number of suicides in addition to details on the circumstances. Watt’s evidence suggests that the Enlightenment had little to do with secularization of suicide but furthered a change in mentality that was already under way. The desacralization of Genevan society at the beginning of the eighteenth century affected every level of society, men and women alike, and dissociated killing oneself from demonic possession. Mental and physical illness were cited as the most common motives for suicide by the end of the century. Watt observed a striking gender difference and suggested that the higher number of male suicides was due to a greater vulnerability to a wider range of motives as religious deterrents declined, although men were no less religious than women. As further evidence, he also cited the fact that the majority of female suicides were viewed as the expression of an illness whereas only half of all male suicides were attributed to poor health. Political and economic crises may have been more immediately responsible for the explosion of suicide numbers as well as the growing gender gap, but the development of a more secular mentality was the most decisive factor for changing attitudes towards suicide.

All in all, the conference highlighted the latest research in a field that is still developing. The papers showed that research on suicide can dramatically improve our understanding of early modern societies, especially when it comes to explaining long-term changes in mentality in different levels of society. Additionally, it became clear that suicide must be understood as a cultural phenomenon. A publication of the papers in an essay collection is currently in preparation. The beautiful warm weather at the beginning of December ensured that the success of the conference was not entirely a scholarly one. In fact, the atmosphere was so enjoyable that the group irritated some fellow restaurant guests one night, who eavesdropped on the continuing lively discussion and were left slightly stunned when they found out that this happy group had come together for a suicide conference. It should also be noted that the conference began and ended with the same number of participants.

Vera Lind

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World War II, the Afghan army was equipped by Germany. And during
the Cold War, the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Demo-
cratic Republic were competitors in Afghanistan, thus doubling the im-
pact of economic aid and ideological influence. As a result, Germany
owns two embassy compounds in Kabul today.

After the lecture, comments and questions focused on the continuity
of German foreign policy and the German-Afghan relationship. The
lively debate addressed both context and consequences of the German
mission during World War I. It became clear, that after the visit of von
Hentig and Niedermayer, all nation-building efforts in Afghanistan were
influenced by the close contacts between Afghanistan and Germany. Both
countries were intertwined in a unique way that helped to develop mu-
tual respect and understanding. Against this background, the UN talks
on Afghanistan on the Petersberg in November and December 2001 were
another step on a long road. It will hopefully lead to peace, stability, and
prosperity in a country that has suffered terribly since the Soviet invasion
in 1979.

Hans-Ulrich Seidt