Heimat, nation, fatherland: the German sense of belonging. 27th Wisconsin Workshop 1996

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Heimat, Nation, Fatherland
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Terms such as Heimat, nation, or fatherland have such a controversial history that they elude all attempts at one-dimensional definition. This is especially true of Germany, which did not emerge as a more or less homogeneous nation-state until the late nineteenth century and therefore grasped for virtually anything that would legitimate the new civil order by endowing the newly founded Reich with a soul, enriched with cultural identity. Alongside the emotionally charged term "fatherland," which heretofore had been used mostly in a narrowly territorial sense of a Prussian, Bavarian, or Hessian fatherland, and did not take on a national (more broadly German) character until 1871, what now came increasingly to the fore was the equally momentous, perhaps even more charged term Heimat.

This word quickly came to figure as one of the key terms of numerous political and cultural debates around the turn of the century, for it was connected not only with the founding of the Second Reich but also with the ensuing industrialization and urbanization—a process that advanced rapidly between 1871 and 1914, transforming Germany in a matter of decades from a rather backward country to the globe's second-strongest industrial power. By 1900, Heimat had come to mean virtually anything: a romantic nostalgia for preindustrial conditions; a conservative emphasis on various characteristic ethnic attributes; a feeling of ecological responsibility for a particular region; a leftist-utopian desire for shared ownership of the territory where one resided; an aversion for the ugliness brought about by industry; a glorification of the German peasantry as the wellspring of national health; and much more.

Little of this changed after the collapse of the Second Reich in 1918. The term Heimat continued to play a major role in the political and cultural debates of the Weimar Republic, in which three fundamental orientations can be distinguished: 1) a definite repudiation of the forced automation and rationalization of German industry in the mid-twenties, which once again elevated Germany to the second-strongest industrial power of the world; 2) an ever-stronger longing for a truly German national state and, ultimately, for a Third Reich; and 3) as a backlash to
this, a leftist demand that the term *Heimat* finally be transformed into socioeconomic reality. That the National Socialists ultimately carried the day in all these debates resulted from their adroit strategy: associating the term *Heimat* with such notions as nation, fatherland, or folk community. Doing so, they camouflaged their aim for world domination, which perforce led to a crash build-up of heavy industry and armaments manufacturing, all concealed behind a smokescreen of positive-sounding slogans about national and racial rootedness in the soil.

When the Third Reich was finally crushed, many Germans were initially inclined to regard terms such as *Heimat* or fatherland, which had been ruthlessly abused by the Nazis, as depraved or fraught with negative connotations. During the 1950s, these terms were used in West Germany almost exclusively in sentimental, escapist *Heimat* films or in the reactionary phrasemongering of the revanchist organizations of German expellees from Eastern Europe. Such terms were scrupulously avoided by the progressives and liberals of that era. Even on the left, the term *Heimat* was seldom used except in Ernst Bloch’s utopian sense of the “not yet.” Indeed, it was scarcely used after 1945 even by the ecologically aware circles that, prior to 1933, had invoked the word *Heimat* to urge taking responsibility for one’s own region. And as recently as the 1970s, when the movement against nuclear power plants drew ever larger circles of the population into ecological activism, these protesters preferred to use the term *Regio* rather than the fascist-freighted term *Heimat* in order to avoid being pigeonholed as reactionaries or even Aryan Greens.

Only in the most recent times has the outlook begun to surface in Germany that both *Heimat* and *Regio* are entirely usable terms, or at any rate preferable to the patriarchally tainted term fatherland, which has always implied a concept of subordination. Both terms are therefore used quite frequently in Germany today. The word *Regio*, which seeks to denote a multicultural environment, may ultimately be somewhat too colorless. To some ears, it may sound like a neutral description of the area in which one lives and earns a living, without necessarily implying any inner affinity toward it. It therefore ought to be complemented by the positive values associated with *Heimat*, which evokes a stronger sense of cultural and ecological responsibility, even a striving for democratic participation and codetermination for a certain region.
Many if not all the questions bound up with such debates were raised during the 27th Wisconsin Workshop held at Madison on October 19–21, 1995, leading—as always—to lively, at times even contentious, but always fruitful discussions. The presenters invited to address some of the many aspects of Heimat, nation, and fatherland were Hans Peter Herrmann (University of Freiburg), Cora Lee Nollendorfs (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Erhard Schütz (Humboldt University, Berlin), William Rollins (University of Canterbury, New Zealand), Rudy Koshar (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Ted Rippey, Melissa Sundell, and Suzanne Townley (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Karla Schultz (University of Oregon), and Mark Bassin (University College, London University). Their papers appear in this volume in a revised and at times expanded form.

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Madison, April 1996

The Editors
I would like to begin my lecture with a little fairy tale. I found it, if I remember correctly, in an Asterix volume. It was called, I believe, “Asterix and Patriotism.”

We find ourselves in the eighteenth century. All of Germany is occupied by French-speaking nobles and princes. — All of Germany? No! One village, populated with unshakable Germans, persists in offering resistance to the intruder.

It called itself the German bourgeoisie, this village, and it developed a new and beautiful idea. Each person was to have his fatherland, in which he grew up and for which he bore responsibility. And in this fatherland equality and civic freedom were to rule, and all the people were to be enlightened and to honor science and reason and nature. Each person was to love his own fatherland and to be friendly to the fatherlands of other people and to the other people too.

And the citizens in the village said to themselves: this is our idea, and when we tell it to our princes, they will be amazed at what we have invented. They will give us our freedom and say: “Since you are like this you may rule alongside us.”

And the citizens in the village were very taken with their idea, and they called it patriotism, and they cultivated it throughout the whole eighteenth century.

And there were famous people in the city, such as Kant and Lessing and Goethe, and they looked upon all this activity benevolently. Although they called themselves citizens of the world, they found that it was also good that there were patriots. And so patriotism and cosmopolitanism lived in peaceful harmony and pushed ahead with the business of enlightenment and freedom with high hopes.
And then one day there broke out in France the French sickness, the revolution. For in the meantime, in the dark womb of history, real nations had risen up, and the French were the first of this new kind, and Napoleon put himself at their head. And Napoleon went so far as to come to Germany too, and to infect the Germans with his evil French nationalism. And look! the evil nationalism broke out among the Germans, infecting Fichte and Ernst Moritz Arndt and Achim von Arnim and Turnvater Jahn, and Kleist wrote his dreadful Hermannschlacht. They forgot the fatherland and cried out: We want a nation like that too! And in the nineteenth century things got even worse, and nationalism grew from generation to generation.

But patriotism is still with us, too. Because what was once so good and beautiful, must also have been true.

A nice fairy tale—but alas, only a fairy tale. Historians have been telling it for fifteen years, and Germanists have faithfully parroted them. It would indeed be comforting if there had ever been such a thing: pure, innocent patriotism.

But both of this story's presuppositions are false. Nationalism did not put an end to patriotism, beginning with the Wars of Liberation and as an outside force. And nations did not grow in the womb of history and later give rise to nationalism. Rather, nationalism was there first and produced the nation.

And because it all came about so very differently, I will leave the fairy tale behind now and tell a story which I believe to be somewhat more correct. I will organize it into two sections, first a theoretical segment, outlining the state of research concerning patriotism, and then a practical segment, seeking to apply the results of this research to selected patriotic texts from the outset of the Seven Years War.¹

I

Historians have not spoken of "patriotism" in the eighteenth century for long. It has been well-known that there were "Patriotic Societies" since
the 1960s, when interest in the epoch of the Enlightenment and interest in socio-historical questions merged and rediscovered the historical and literary disciplines of the eighteenth century. But it was not until 1980 that Rudolf Vierhaus, in a since much-quoted essay and anthology, first advanced the thesis that a relevant patriotic current emerged in the eighteenth century.2

In the second half of the eighteenth century, Vierhaus argues, patriotism was a widespread moral-political attitude and a fully elaborated program among the bourgeoisie. Its goal was to bind the individual citizen to his responsibility for the "common good," to awaken his interest, independent of class affiliation, in practical community tasks, and to include him in the responsibility for the whole: "der Bürger Wohl zu bauen, den Staat beglückt zu machen."3 Patriotism was tied closely to the universal, humanistic goals of the Enlightenment. In contrast to particularistic nationalism, it united the goals of the fatherland with citizenship in the world.4

On the other hand, according to Vierhaus, patriotism in the eighteenth century was not identical with the Enlightenment. It had many faces—alongside the more narrowly understood enlightened form, oriented toward reason and seeking reform, there existed a face of patriotism oriented toward history and tradition (example: Carl von Moser), as well as a variant which emphasized emotionality (examples: Gleim and Klopstock). In these diverse forms, patriotism had effects well into the nineteenth century. It had its starting point, Vierhaus continues, in north German cities, especially Hamburg, but spread very quickly across the entire German realm. “Fatherland,” depending upon patriotic demands, might be the city; it might be the territory of an absolutistic prince; or it might be the entire German empire. Simple patriotic maxims and sentimental effusion existed side by side with a sophisticated and challenging literature, which had developed patriotism theoretically and which propagated it in practice.

Since Vierhaus’s study,5 patriotism understood in this form has become part of our basic view of the eighteenth century, and as such has been treated in individual analyses and broader surveys.6 Even in those writings where the word is used only in passing or not at all, the concept
still structures the representation of German national thought, placing a caesura around 1790–1800.

A certain consensus has been achieved in research regarding the inner structure of patriotic thought as well. Its temporal development has been clearly mapped: the Seven Years War effected a dissemination and intensification of both patriotic thought and the writing of patriotic poetry, which increasingly dealt with current affairs. Between 1770 and 1776, during the literary Sturm und Drang, ample evidence of a patriotic literary fashion appeared. Patriotism experienced a third boom after 1790—it merged into the literary-political movement consistently designated “early nationalism,” which was spawned by the Wars of Liberation.

With regard to content, in addition to the above-mentioned distinctions between a patriotism directed toward a city, a territory, and an empire, it is usually and correctly pointed out that many of the well-known, “great” authors of the eighteenth century more or less distanced themselves from patriotism and developed an explicitly cosmopolitan type of thinking (e.g., Lessing, Wieland, and Goethe). This aspect then leads into the thorny issue of a distinction between cultural and political patriotism (i.e., efforts toward a German national literature versus the call for a new political organization in Germany).

Such distinctions may perhaps be useful for historiographical portrayals—but for fundamental questions about the origin and status of patriotic thought, feeling, and writing, they block our view rather than opening it up. They artificially separate, often with obviously exculpatory intent, what can only be understood in its context.

Emphasis on this interconnection is even more important in light of textual evidence in which different forms of “patriotic” thought coexist in motley confusion. Within the writings of one individual author, cultural-patriotic and political intentions are sometimes barely distinguishable from one another (e.g., Herder), patriotic and cosmopolitan statements often stand in close proximity (e.g., Lessing, Klopstock, and Schiller), an exceedingly aggressive nationalism can break out all of a sudden (e.g., Gleim) or be discarded again after a short time (e.g., the members of the Göttingen Grove). And, as I will shortly show, the presupposition of all
these categorizations, the reasonably neat division between patriotism and nationalism is refuted by the texts.\(^9\)

Patriotism/nationalism in the eighteenth century is evidently not about a "concept," with a content to some extent definable, nor is it about a "movement," with a center, margins, wings, and divisions. Rather, it is about something much less definite, about a kind of experimental play with words, concepts, feelings, and images, which in turn encompass a relatively wide breadth of meanings, but which constitute a relatively tight nucleus of emotions. National thought in the eighteenth century was still a rather vague, free-floating discursive context, into which very different positions could be inscribed. Even with this indeterminateness, however, this discursive play with the words "patriot," "fatherland" and "Germany" must have been enticing enough to writing and reading contemporaries that many could not resist it. Others, alternatively, were violently opposed, while only very few were not at all tempted. Even Goethe, later the citizen of the world *kat exochen*, swam along with the patriotic wave in 1771 and with *Götz von Berlichingen* wrote an emphatically fatherlandish drama.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the patriotism of the eighteenth century is that one cannot determine what the "patria" is. The patriots from Hamburg were referring to their city-state, in its ascent to middle-class prosperity. Thomas Abbt was referring to the militaristic, Friderician Prussia, and Friedrich Carl von Moser applied the term "fatherland" to an "empire" which didn't exist and never had, although he maintained that it was the "spirit" of the current one. Everyone meant something different—and what was the common feature?

For the time being, to avoid over-hasty designations, one can say only that this common feature was evidently not something that existed "out there" in reality, but rather that it was an inner feeling, an idea which bound anyone who said "fatherland" to that which he said when he said it. If there had been no commonality on the level of the signified, the popularity of the concept would be inexplicable; had the binding element lain on the level of reality (and not of opinion and feeling), the different denotations and bitter quarrels concerning the proper referent would have been unthinkable. Thomas Abbt found it absurd that Moser wanted to
take the decrepit German empire as his fatherland, whereas Justus Moser
did not understand that Abbt looked on Prussia as his fatherland, etc.

"Deutschland? Aber wo liegt es? Ich weif das Land nicht zu finden":
Schiller's famous distich puts the problem into sharp relief. Patriotic-
ism existed before its object, the fatherland, came into being at all. Patriotic-
ism was a collective wish that a fatherland might exist in the future. All who
wrote about the fatherland were phantasts, dreamers, but as they wrote
about it and made reference to one another and quarrelled over the proper
form of the fatherland, they created for it an imagined, a literary reality.

This insight into the imagined, discursive-literary character of patrio-
tism puts our reflections about its nature onto solid ground. It is compat-
ible with the recognition of recent research on nationalism: nations are not
natural conditions, but rather invented ones; they are "imagined commu-
nities,"11 "gedachte Ordnungen."12 As Ernest Gellner writes: "It is na-
tionalism which brings forth nations, not the other way around."13 In the
development of patriotism in Germany, one can observe the birth of such
a community through the paradigmatic emergence of the national collec-
tive imaginary "Germany."

If it is true that the concept "Germany" in the eighteenth century is not
to be understood as the name of a political or social reality, but rather as
a discursively produced representation of writers, the question as to the
causes and motives for the collective imaginary still remain. Scholarship
on patriotism agrees on this issue, consistently pointing to the "search for
identity" produced among intellectuals in general and writers in particular
by the so-called modernization process in the eighteenth century as the
reason for the emergence of national representations.

But what is the meaning of "search for identity" in this context? In
order to define this term somewhat more accurately, I will briefly touch
upon well-known facts from the history of the eighteenth century.

Marxist-oriented historians are well-acquainted with the idea of a
fundamental transformation between feudal and bourgeois social forma-
tions, a process which entered its final and accelerated phase in the eigh-
teenth century. But they in particular have all too often neglected the
cultural, mental, and psychic processes which accompanied this rupture.
Among "bourgeois" historians, Hagen Schulze has sketched a comprehen-
sive picture of this upheaval. He has represented it as a far-reaching change in the demographic make-up of Europe, an irreversible beginning of the industrial revolution, a revolutionizing of the nature of communication in European society, and a resulting general crisis of legitimation and values. Schulze uses dramatic, almost apocalyptic images to make clear the depth and power of this upheaval, which left nothing economic, social, political, cultural or psychic unchanged. Though this upheaval’s political sign later became the French Revolution, its social reality was perceptible and perceived much earlier.

Writers experienced in disproportionate measure the difficulties and the opportunities of this epochal upheaval, from which our contemporary society emerged with its “threelfold fragmenting of the modern self into outer nature, society, and inner nature.”14 They shared the general situation of the German Bildungsbürger in the eighteenth century—on the one hand, economically weak and politically powerless, because they were completely bound to the bureaucratic apparatus of the absolutist state; on the other hand, socially mobile, intellectually active, and future-oriented, culturally inventive and decidedly eager to enter into intellectual and literary partnership with Western European cultural elites.15 Writers were exposed earlier and more forcefully to the contradiction of the emerging literary market, whose constraints and promises led them to experience, with their own persons and more vividly than warranted by the general situation in Germany, the structural features of capitalist society.

The writers themselves perceived their situation as a very precarious one,16 and the escapes they sought were various. One of these ways out was work on a new, collective identity.

I think it is important to remember that it was not just the one, fatherlandish path which revealed itself to German writers; other paths leading out of the real and intellectual problems of their predicament were sought and travelled. Irmtraud Sahmland correctly sets parallel projects alongside the fatherlandish one: the “plans, from Leibniz to Herder, for the foundation of a German academy;” the outline of a new historical mythos, which placed the Greeks of antiquity at the beginning of European cultural history;17 and finally the new and enormously popular preoccupation with German history and historiography.18 The first path, the academy project,
had the advantage of providing for intellectuals in Germany a practical
location for orientation and exchange. The second path, that of Greek
origins, gave the German intellectuals, reeling under the shock of moder-
nity, a sense of place in the newly conceptualized European cultural
history—namely, as men whose task it was to deal in exemplary fashion
with the modern fragmentation of self, just as the Greeks had in their time
exemplarily represented the original unity. The third path, that of histori-
ography, attempted to give an individual profile and a greater stability to
their own unsteady position by uncovering its deep historical dimensions.
This third way is closest to the path which interests us—the attempt to
construct a collective identity belonging only to Germans, a “fatherland,”
a “Germany.” But what does “identity” and the search for it mean in this
context?

Successful ego-identity means that distinctive ability of subjects
capable of speech and action to be identical with themselves, even
during the radical changes of personality structure with which it
responds to contradictory situations.19

This handy definition, with which Habermas attempts to describe the
problematics of identity in our contemporary, “complex society,” retains
its usefulness when applied to earlier stages of our society, in which
comparable, group-specific experiences of “contradictory situations” also
occurred. This is because Habermas connects the possibility of individual
identity in a specific way to the existence of a social group to which the
individual relates. Individual identity presupposes certain forms of affilia-
tion:

Differentiation of the self from others must be recognized by these
others. . . . A group identity extending beyond the individual life-
history is therefore a condition for the identity of individuals.20

All three of the psychic activities which take part in this interplay are
symbolic acts—the experience of my self (as a being, which even in
diverse situations, knows that they have happened to himself)—the recog-
nition of my self (as one person, different from the other people in the
reference group)—and the existence and shape of this group (whose
recognition is important to me, in order to know that my own identity is
recognized by it). It is the symbolic character of both the individual and
the group-referential aspect of any experience of identity which renders
the “phantasmagoric” and “imaginative,” the “discursive” character of
notions like “fatherland” and “Germany” in the eighteenth century ex-
plainable in the first place.

“Fatherland,” “Germany,” “Germania”: these were symbolic con-
structs toward a tentative discursive production of identity-experience.
They were “tentative,” because the identity-producing notions, with their
fragmentary connection to historical realities and their initially weak
mooring in the heads and hearts of other members of the group, carried
very little weight. They were “discursive,” because these notions were
not wholly immaterial, produced in single minds, but rather could have
only emerged through the continuing work of many minds and writing
quills set to the task of distributing in print a common, literary language
of images and concepts.

“Symbolic constructions”—this, in the language of social psychology,
is exactly what recent work on nationalism has carved out in the concept
“imagined communities.”

II

I arrive after this general exposition at the practical part of my lecture, in
which I will confront recent scholarship’s benevolent view of patriotism
with the eighteenth century object itself. To this end, I have not chosen
the many fine examples of cosmopolitan, enlightened intellectual posi-
tions, from Kant to Herder, which occur to cultured readers when they
think of “patriotism in the eighteenth century.”21 The two examples
which I have chosen, though they were also produced well before the
French Revolution, which supposedly represents the dividing line between
patriotism and nationalism, provide a far less peaceful image of patriotic
thought.
In August 1758, two years after the beginning of the Seven Years War, a small volume with the title Preußische Kriegslieder in den Feldzügen von 1756 und 1757 von einem Grenadier was published in Berlin by Lessing’s respected publisher, Voß, and edited by Lessing himself. A few of the songs had been published individually one and a half years earlier. Their great popularity led to the reprinting of the anthology, complete with melodies, illustrated cover, and vignettes. By the following year, it had already appeared in a second, expanded edition. Its author, Johann Wilhelm Gleim, had heretofore distinguished himself primarily as writer of anacreontic poems on love and social intercourse. Now he turned to contemporary political reality and composed, under the assumed mask of a Prussian soldier, panegyrics to Frederick II and stirring poems urging soldiers into battle:

Krieg ist mein Lied! Weil alle Welt
Krieg will, so sei es Krieg!
Berlin sei Sparta! Preußens Held
Gekrönt mit Ruhm und Sieg! (97,6 ff)
(War is my song! Because all the world wants war, so let it be war! Let Berlin be Sparta! Prussia’s hero, crowned with fame and victory!)

In the history of modern war poetry, these texts marked an important turning point. Whereas the poetic treatment of the Thirty Years War had been marked by the horrors of war and characterized by the “topos of the fallen and godless world,” Gleim’s grenadier songs ushered in a valorization of war and a heroization of combatants, not shying from glorification of bloody slaughter for the noble goal of Prussia’s defense. This valorization would be continued in a plethora of Prussia-odes and war poems in the next decade. The war lyrics of the Wars of Liberation and of the War of 1870 harkened back explicitly to Gleim’s poems.

Among the means with which Gleim spurred Prussian soldiers on to battle and a hero’s death was the appeal to patriotic feelings.
Unsterblich macht der Heldentod
Der Tod fürs Vaterland! (98,7 f.)
(Immortal makes a hero’s death, a death for the fatherland!)

Gleim was not the first to render the classical formula into German. As early as 1749, Justus Möser, in a drama about the Germanic hero Arminius, had sworn his readiness to dedicate his blood to the fatherland and to die for the fatherland. Once a “fatherland” had been mobilized as an important value, the logic of the situation forced, as it were, the speaker and writer to elevate this value to the highest one, worthy of the sacrifice of the life of every individual, if need be. The real Prussian war of 1756 was hardly necessary to arrive at this point; in 1743 or 1749, the imagined war in the Germanic Teutoburg Forest had sufficed. But naturally, in 1758, a real war was extremely convenient for the application and propagation of the formula.

Such an intensified and emotionalized “patriotism” demands a tangible concept of the enemy. National identity needs an Other, sketched in bold lines, against which it can delimit itself. In Gleim’s songs, the Hungarians, French, and Russians are such enemies. They distinguish themselves with cunning (whereas the Prussians are full of courage), are also cowardly, and are the ones who had “diesen bösen Krieg . . . geboren” (104,28). They are, simply “der Feind . . . / . . . welcher unsern Untergang / In bösem Herzen trug” (109,26f.).

But not only are the war enemies devalued. In "Siegeslied nach der Schlacht bei Roßbach," all German tribes are disqualified as cowardly, petty, venal, “pitiful” (115,1), or ridiculous: the fatherland of this “patriotism” knows no other lands before itself; it is the unreachable, the highest.

It is obvious that such a fatherland must also have its heroes. Gleim portrays Frederick II as the epitome of the virtuous ruler and general, and at the same time a person with whom one can identify. In relation to the fatherland, he appears as liberator.

One cannot have a Germany-fantasy without a liberator figure. The position occupied by Arminius for Schlegel in 1743 and for Möser in 1749, is taken by Frederick II for Gleim in 1758. It is of no importance
that in the same poem, immediately before, all other German tribes were upbraided. Such details would be forgotten after the victory guaranteeing Prussian supremacy:

Wenn Friedrich, oder Gott durch ihn,
   Das große Werk vollbracht,
Gebändigt hat das stolze Wien,
   Und Deutschland frei gemacht. (117,1 ff.)
(When Frederick, or through him God, has completed the great deed, has bound proud Vienna, and made Germany free.)

This verse articulates a further characteristic of this notion of fatherland—it is directly linked to God. Just as in this verse Frederick, as the executive organ of God, is set so near God as to almost be confused with Him, so are God and fatherland repeatedly juxtaposed:

Denn alsobald gedachten wir
   An Gott und Vaterland;
stracks war Soldat und Offizier
   Voll Löwenmut und Stand.\textsuperscript{28}
(As soon as we remembered God and fatherland, straightaway were soldier and officer filled with class and a lion’s spirit.)

Undisturbed by Frederick’s actual will to power,\textsuperscript{29} Gleim propagates here the belief in the good, just cause, which he sees confirmed in Frederick’s military successes:

Und Brüder! Gott hat Sieg verliehn
   Dem Rechte, nicht der Macht. (118,25 f.)
(And brothers! God gave victory to the Right, not the Powerful.)

The enemy, in contrast, was the power-hungry author of the war;

\ldots drum ist Gott
   Mit uns, und gibt uns Sieg! (104,29)
The declaration that God is with the king and fatherland runs through the poetry anthology like a cantus firmus.

Viktoria! mit uns ist Gott,
   Der stolze Feind liegt da!\textsuperscript{30}

(Victoria! God is with us, the proud enemy lies over there!)

This stands in the first verse of the very next song, and three verses later we reencounter the formula “God and fatherland.” The highpoint, however, is reached in the verse in which all three holy estates—God, the fatherland, and the Prussian king—come together. The Grenadier went in the heat of battle

\begin{quote}
Auf Leichen hoch einher.

Dacht in dem mörderischen Kampf
   Gott, Vaterland und dich;

Sah, tief in schwarzem Rauch und Dampf,
   Dich, seinen \textit{Friederich}.\textsuperscript{31}
\end{quote}

(Over heaps of corpses. Remembered in the murderous battle
   God, fatherland, and you; Saw, deep in black smoke and fog, you,
   his Frederick.)

God is with us, with our king and our fatherland; the Prussian-German triad of God, king, and fatherland is already present here.\textsuperscript{32} Gleim’s catchy, enthusiastic poetastings effectively and prophetically connect the absolutist analogy between prince and God with the personal identification and interiorizing models of his bourgeois world-view and of his bourgeois readership. The path from absolutist mercenary army to modern people’s army in Germany uses Gleim’s \textit{Preußische Kriegslieder} as stepping stone.

One might now wonder how seriously Gleim’s neat rhymings should be taken. The tone of his verses, which speak in easily flowing cadences of the highest things and of dying, does not recommend them to contemporary ears.\textsuperscript{33} But it is not only the bitter militaristic context for which
they were created, and the history of their later effects, which should prevent us from dismissing them as the anomalous slip of a part-time patriot. Gleim's contemporaries took his songs seriously as well. Lessing, Herder, and Goethe praised them as the beginning of a new German poetry: "Here, for once, a German poet has sung truly and worthily about his German fatherland," Herder was still enthusing as late as 1767. And the patriotic trend provoked by Gleim's songs was so great in 1758 that even Lessing was unable to resist, but rather went along with it, even publicly encouraging it. It was only in private that he distanced himself from the aggressiveness of this nationalism.

Such a division into public and a private speech, however, should not mislead us into viewing the public "patriotism" of this time as an ephemeral phenomenon, which we would then oppose to the true, inner attitude of the important intellects. The situation was more complicated, and at the same time simpler.

New forms of public speech were being tested here. Expedient marketing strategies played as important a role in this as the natural course of trends and the readiness of many to throw themselves, with much feeling and in testimonies, on the side of the militarily successful. But it was in the intersection of such different factors that new ways of speaking, new figures of thought took shape, where new formulas for collective self-understanding were adopted, elaborated, and passed on, where needs were formed, awakened, and channeled. Suddenly it was on the agenda to articulate "patriotic" needs. The desire for a collective common ground was discovered and given the indefinable name "fatherland" or "Germany." Among the connotations contained within these names, aggressive tendencies and longings for security were not separable from one another.

One last point should be noted. The aesthetic invention and the effect of Gleim's songs were also a product of their particular relation to reality. The great distance between the texts and the historical reality of the Prussian king and the extremely bloody and terrible battles was the precondition for their fantasy of a unity of king, God, and fatherland, capable of attracting to itself values and projections. At the same time, Gleim fitted his fantasy-world with a host of authentic place names, people, and anec-
dotes. With these timely references he fastened his fiction to reality. In this way, his unreal representation of a Germany which started out from Prussia but at the same time included the majority of her enemies gained the appearance of a foundation in reality. This appearance was extremely opportune for its new and sudden career.

It did not stop at the lyrical armament of the fatherland. Thomas Abbt wrote in 1761 a theoretical treatise on the same theme: Vom Tode für das Vaterland. We are told that student volunteers reported to Prussian military service, "each with a copy of Abbt's treatise in his pocket." Here, in a considered philosophical manner, with all the conceptual tools of Enlightenment philosophy, death for the fatherland is raised up to the moral duty of every citizen. In the process, Abbt leaves behind a number of ideas which until then had made up the core of "patriotic" morality.

The love of the fatherland is no longer a voluntary moral action of the individual, which serves as a self-restriction of his egoism, but is now an obligation, not a matter of individual discretion. This obligation includes even the duty to die for the fatherland. The individual is now subordinated to the whole: "The fatherland has a right to your life."

It is striking to see how the "fatherland" imaginary—originating out of the needs of bourgeois individuals to counter the centrifugal forces of their historical liberation with a binding force—was now politically instrumentalized and radicalized in content. Tethered to the real, militaristic construction of an absolutistic kingdom, "fatherland" was granted the moral right to impose demands on the individual, which extended to that individual's sacrifice and obliteration.

The individual's reward for this extermination was his subsumption into the higher individuality of the state. The "fatherland" endowed the thoughts and feelings of its subjects with its own, lofty content, sublating their particularity and pettiness. He who sacrificed himself for the fatherland became an example for others, and the nation, for which he sacrificed himself, grew thereby into an example for other nations: love of the fatherland "puts the nation forward as eternalized model for other nations." Love for the fatherland thus explicitly became a substitute for religion, and national thinking, for the first time, became the central...
integrative ideology in the modern, secularized state of absolutism. The patriotism of the eighteenth century showed its second, nationalistic face. The Seven Years War, in Gleim’s grenadier songs and Abbt’s treatise, proved itself to be a major step in the history of the development of German nationalism. Yet neither the bloody fantasies of enemy extermination, nor the subordination of the individual to the nearly sacred value “nation,” were original inventions of this time. Both occurred within the Arminius discourse of the 1740s, long before the beginning of the war, expressing the subjective need for orientation and unity as well as masculine demands for power. The war evidently produced neither these fantasies nor this subordination; rather, it merely teased them out and strengthened them. They appeared again a short time later, in exactly this combination, using partly the same formulas, and for traceable biographical reasons, in the work of the authors of the Göttingen Grove. They were taken up, radicalized, and circulated anew in the next great wave of the public discourse of nation, during the Wars of Liberation. In the nineteenth century they unfolded a mass effectiveness unthinkable at the time of Gleim and Abbt, but for which these eighteenth century writers had clearly laid the ground.

III

What follows from these arguments? Certainly not the claim that a peace-loving, cosmopolitan patriotism, as it is represented in the above-quoted texts from Hirschfeld and Herder, did not exist. It does follow, however, that this enlightened patriotism was by no means the predominant one throughout the eighteenth century. And that it was not during the French Revolution and the Wars of Liberation that this patriotism first gave way to a power-oriented, militant, and xenophobic nationalism. Rather, we must realize that the comfortable distinction between a peace-loving, enlightened patriotism on the one hand and a militant, aggressive, romantic nationalism on the other does not hold. Bourgeois striving for freedom and aggressive nationalism do not necessarily contradict one another. The dialectic of Enlightenment is at work already at the beginning; as early as the 1740s and 1750s, in the midst of the freedom-obsessed, reason-orient-
ed, “bright” Enlightenment, “dark,” irrational, and power-obsessed self-assertion and militant fantasies of aggression were also put to paper. Patriotism and nationalism cannot be ordered into a neat historical chronology, and the one can certainly not be understood as a perversion of the other. Rather, both belong together, historically as well as systematically, as twin sides of a modern view of self and world which has its roots in the identity-threatening mechanisms of our social system.

Translated by Melissa Sundell

Notes

1 The following text overlaps in part with arguments in a longer publication on the same theme, which will appear this year: Hans Peter Herrmann, Bodo Blitz, Susanna Moßmann, Machtphantasie Deutschland. Der Vaterlandsdiskurs deutscher Schriftsteller im 18. Jahrhundert (Arbeitstitel) (Frankfurt a.M., 1996).


3 Wolfgang Eschenburg, Der Patriot (1766). Quoted in Vierhaus, Gesellschaften, p. 80.

4 The contemporary political reference in this differentiation was acknowledged from the outset. At the beginning of his essay Vierhaus took up Christian Graf Krockow's call for a “Patriotism with cosmopolitan intent,” which would be necessary for Germans today: Vierhaus, “Patriotismus,” p. 9.

5 The concept, I believe, was introduced into literary studies by Christoph Prignitz, shortly after Vierhaus’s book, but evidently independent of it: Christoph Prignitz, Vaterlandsliebe und Freiheit. Deut-


8 Such “typological” distinctions (“Risorgimento-nationalism; Reform- nationalism; integral nationalism”) determine, for example, the representation of Peter Alter, Nationalismus (Frankfurt a.M., 1985).

9 In the following, therefore, “nationalism” or “national thought” will be used as a general term for the peaceful, “good,” as well as for the aggressive, “bad” examples of the fatherland-discourse. The corresponding adjective is “national.” “Nationalistic” designates in normal speech and here the aggressive variant.

10 Published in 1796 in Xenien, which he coauthored with Goethe, and available in every Schiller and many Goethe editions. Also printed, along with many further relevant statements by writers, in a highly recommended essay by Helmut Scheuer, “Die Dichter und ihre Na- tion. Ein historischer Aufriß,” Der Deutschunterricht 42 (1990), pp. 4–46.


15 The literature on the term, meaning, and historiography of “Bildungsbürgertum” has grown to unsurveyable proportions; for an introduction see Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, pp. 210ff. with further references in his notes. Important for my interpretation is the representation by Hagen Schulze, *Der Weg zum Nationalstaat. Die deutsche Nationalbewegung vom 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Reichsgründung* (Munich 1985), and Bernhard Giesen, *Die Intellektuellen und die Nation. Eine deutsche Achsenzeit* (Frankfurt a.M., 1993).


17 Sahmland characterizes the identity-forming meaning of the myth of the Greeks from Winckelmann to the Schlegels (and beyond), when she quotes one of the most knowledgeable experts on this new “faith” of the German intellectuals: “German Classicism counters the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation with the Greek empire of the German nation.” Walther Rehm, *Griechentum und Goethezeit, 1934–1969* (recte: 1936), p. 15, quoted in Sahmland, *Wieland*, p. 64.

18 Further escapes were, for example: the search for a place of one’s own in the new social form of the bourgeois family; the search for new forms of gender relations; the imaginative work towards a place outside of bourgeois society: landscape. For all of these, work on the individual career was the only way to win balance and security within the “new confusions.”
19 Habermas, *Zur Rekonstruktion*, p. 93, in a summary of the most important social psychological theories and literature on the theme “identity.”

20 Habermas, ibid. In extreme cases, one other person is enough for such a recognition: thus the call for new, intense, and emphatic forms of friendship and romantic love in the transitional period of the eighteenth century, which is felt yet today. Such a recognition can, however, also be spread over the wider basis of a group, which may be conceptualized as extremely large but whose limits must be clear. This group must possess a strong emotional content, so that it can offer support and security to those persons with an exaggerated propensity toward frailty and endangerment.

21 I quote two especially representative references, if only in the notes: “Thus, lively and steadfast sensitivity of the soul toward everything which concerns the fatherland, fed from proper principles; a fiery eagerness to maintain the integrity of its laws, its order, its security, to increase its prosperity, its good reputation, its honor among other states; a constant readiness to stand by it in every embarrassment with insights, with experience, with care, with night-watch, even with the most prized possessions, gladly to protect it against all attacks, gladly to sacrifice blood and life for its necessary defense, and all this out of heartfelt love for the fatherland, without consideration for personal satisfaction: this is patriotism.” Ch. C. L. Hirschfeld, “Betrachtungen über die heroischen Tugenden” (1770), quoted in Vierhaus, “Patriotismus,” p. 16. “What hinders us Germans from recognizing, honoring, and helping one another as, all of us, collaborators on the one building of humanity? Do we not all have one language, one common interest, one reason and one and the same human heart?” Johann Gottfried Herder, *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*, 1. Slg., 6. Brief; quoted from Scheuer, *Die Dichter und ihre Nation* (Frankfurt a.M., 1993), p. 11.

22 In the following pages I cite page and verse numbers from the anthology by Brüggemann, in which other war lyrics of the time are also printed. Cf. *Der Siebenjährige Krieg im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Literatur*, ed. Fritz Brüggemann (Leipzig, 1935).


27 In the rhetorically effective singular: “Was kannst du? fliehen kannst du nur; / Und siegen können wir” (104,5 f.). Additional defamations are to be found everywhere, for example of the Hungarian: “Aus deinem Schädel trinken wir / Bald deinen süßen Wein” (103,14 f.).


29 A critique of Gleim’s patriotic valorization of the horrors of war is not a privilege of today’s perspective. Ewald von Kleist made wide-ranging reports on the bloody and senseless event, and Johann Peter Uz publicly attacked Gleim as early as 1757 for his heroization of the

30 "Siegeslied nach der Schlacht bei Prag," 105,7 f.
31 Ibid., 105,16 and 106,16ff. The emphasis is Gleim's.
32 "With God for king and fatherland" was the motto on the headgear of the Prussian army since mandated in a decree by Frederick Wilhelm III on March 17, 1813. The Staatsrat Theodor von Hippel had it written into Scharnhorst's draft of the mandate. The formula, in Latin, was found as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century on banners of the Prussian militia (Büchmann, Geflügelte Worte, 1957, p. 243 and 1981, p. 358). It is possible that Hippel was inspired by Gleim's well-known songs—Körte's first edition of Gleim's collected works came out in 1811. Its fourth volume: Gleims Kriegslieder, with expanded anthologies of war lyrics from 1778–79, 1786, 1790, until 1798, all in the same style and with the continually repeated formulas about the beautiful "death for the fatherland," about "God on our side," "God and fatherland," and about divine help for the adored Frederick.

33 This discrepancy was perceived during his time as well; see Lessing on Gleim in Schönert, "Schlachtgesänge," p. 132; it most likely added to the success of the poems. The need which they answered must have been considerable.

34 Quoted ibid., p. 135. Schönert puts great emphasis on the discrepancy between the power-political goal and the terrible reality of war on the one hand and Gleim's idyllic sketch on the other.

35 Lessing's position with respect to "patriotic" war enthusiasm has been treated in several articles. See, for example, Gonthier-Louis Fink, "Nationalcharakter und nationale Vorurteile bei Lessing," in Nation und Gelehrtenrepublik. Lessing im europäischen Zusammenhang, ed Wilfried Barner et al. (Munich, 1984), pp. 91–119, and Barner: "Res publica und das Nationale. Zu Lessings europäischer Orientierung," ibid., pp. 69–90.
See Bohnen on the patriotic trend, "Von den Anfängen," p. 127.
Ewald von Kleist, Ramler, and others had provided the actual data which Gleim took for his poems.
Brüggemann, Der Siebenjährige Krieg, p. 47.
Abbt, ibid., p. 50.

There is a controversy in the secondary literature as to whether Abbt's treatise represents or repudiates enlightened positions (Bohnen, "Von den Anfängen," on the former, Sahmland, Wieland, on the latter). I think that the question cannot be answered so simply. On the one hand, Abbt abandons the central demands of the Enlightenment for equality: not only republics, but also "well-structured monarchies" may be fatherlands (Brüggemann, Der Siebenjährige Krieg, p. 47). With this statement, Abbt relinquishes the demands of bourgeois reformers for participatory government. Abbt explicitly views the class system as given: it is understood "that every citizen [is] a soldier, every soldier a citizen, and every nobleman soldier and citizen." Before the commonality of subjecthood, "the difference between peasant, bourgeois, soldier, and nobleman disappears" (p. 53)—the difference is no longer worth mentioning and no longer needs to be abolished. On the other hand, Abbt emphasizes the freedom of the individual as to the choice of his fatherland (it is not identical to place of birth), and dreams of world domination are expressly forbidden within love for the fatherland: "We do not demand from it that it conquer the world" (pp. 69f).

"Ifa father, on the day of battle, has praiseworthily ended his life on the bed of honor, and left to the state his example and his children: will not the children always have this image before their eyes, and be inspired by it to pluck the laurel at exactly the same place where their worthy father plucked it, where he, with laurel-wreathed head, sank into his grave?" (ibid, p. 63).

Ibid, p. 69 (the heading of the fifth section).
It helps one to "overcome the fear of death" in cases where "one does not enjoy the support of a revealed religion." Ibid., p. 74.

A precursor of Abbt's treatise within the philosophical patriotism discourse was the bestseller of the Swiss Johann Georg Zimmermann,

45 This is treated at greater length in the above-mentioned volume (see note 1).

46 See the foundational work by George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars through the Third Reich* (New York, 1975).

47 I emphasize this so strongly because in the discussion following my lecture I was forced to defend myself against the misrepresentation that I had overlooked the freedom-loving patriotism, from Kant and Herder to the German Jacobins, that existed in the eighteenth century.
To state the obvious: German-language terms such as Heimat, Heimweh, Vaterland, and even Nation—all key concepts for this topic—are notions which Americans find alien and enigmatic. Perhaps this reflects the fact that the United States is an immigrant land, or perhaps it has more to do with basic differences between the English and German languages. Translation issues of this kind are especially important, of course, for those investigating the intersection between the two cultures, the German and the American—Germans in America, Germans becoming Americans, German-Americans. This study addresses the experience of German-Americans to roughly the end of the nineteenth century, during a period when immigrants played a major role in shaping the development of the United States, and their attitudes toward Heimat.

Translators face problems. Is Heimweh “homesickness” or “longing for home”? The latter sounds like the feeling a commuter gets after a long week at the office, and the former is something a child might fight at summer camp. Neither notion conveys the sense of the German term Heimweh. “Fatherland,” on the other hand, is not an English word; it is and sounds like a translation. My edition of Bartlett’s Familiar Quotations refers to the word only once: in an English translation of Max Schneckenburger’s poem “Wächter am Rhein.”¹ I have never heard an American refer to the United States as his or her “fatherland.” Nation, nation, Nationalismus, nationalism, and such are also different concepts, just as terms like Volk, Natur, Raum, Kultur, Freundschaft, and so many more are fundamentally unlike their English translations.

What is implied by the German term Heimat is different in size from what is implied by the American term “home.” The American one can be larger. One’s home can be “the Midwest,” America is “the home of the brave,” and soldiers go home to “the states.” The German term is also different in specificity from the American one. The American one is more ambiguous. Is home the town where one grows up, or is it where
one has lived for the last few years? College students ask each other: “Where do you go when you "go home"?”—a question which implies that “home” may have various definitions. And, most importantly, the German term is different in degree of abstraction from the American one. The German term is more concrete. The German Heimat seems to be a place, even something physical one perceives with one's senses. For an American, on the other hand, “home” is something in the mind. Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote: “Where we love is home, / Home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts,” and a familiar proverb whose source I cannot trace states simply: “Home is where the heart is.” Lest there be further misunderstanding: the term “heart” is also different from the German Herz. Americans' hearts and love can belong to abstract or concrete causes, commitments, ideas, things, or persons to which or to whom they devote themselves. Thus the German word Heimat has no English equivalent. Its sound and associations connect it with traditions and feelings which the English word “home” does not convey.

From their European homes they came, the citizens of the Old World whom the Atlantic migration brought to the United States. Three-fifths of the fifty-five million Europeans who emigrated overseas between 1821 and 1924 came to this country. Of these, the group from German lands was one of the largest. In the 1850s alone the number of Germans in the United States increased from 584,000 to 1,276,000; and an even greater absolute number of Germans arrived in the 1880s. By 1910, one-third of the American population had either been born abroad or had at least one parent born abroad, and the largest single element among the immigrants was the German element. Feelings of Fernweh or yearnings for a promised land on this continent did not motivate German immigrants uniformly, and they may not have been a significant motivating factor at all. Indeed, modern scholars stress the influence of the “push” rather than “pull” factors, the fundamental reorganization of the rural economy at home, resulting economic hardships, and occasional crop failures as the decisive elements rather than the strength of the American appeal. Feelings of Heimweh for the land left behind, on the other hand, were a universal part of the immigrant's lot, though the degree of Heimweh was dependent on variables such as the individual's reasons for leaving, suc-
cess here, goals in life, personality, and so on. Those who attempt to evaluate the immigrant experience reach conflicting conclusions. It is exalted as an epic event or bemoaned as the tragedy of what one writer calls "the uprooted." Without a doubt, it was to some extent an individual experience, and generalizations seem both inappropriate and impossible.

Given the multitudes—and the variables—it seems a formidable challenge to assess the attitudes of nineteenth-century German-Americans concerning Heimat. It is difficult even to find appropriate documentation for an investigation of such subjective attitudes and sentiments, particularly in view of the fact that average immigrants were not well educated and did not leave written records of their opinions. Furthermore, even those primary sources which once existed are in a sorry state. German-Americana—a term which in itself suggests that these things are no more than a kind of memorabilia of our forefathers—has not been preserved in usable form. There are no critical editions, and, often enough, there are no editions at all. Much of the literature, no matter what genre, was originally published in pamphlets, newspapers, or journals. Much of it cannot be located—it simply has been thrown away. Authors' biographies, if available at all, often provide erroneous information. The few poetry anthologies which have appeared fail to provide adequate bibliographical references, including dates and places of original publication. This situation is both a cause and an effect of general disinterest in immigrant literature. I myself have argued that German-American Studies is a suspect field for a literary scholar, as the literature involved is often not of good quality. Nevertheless, it is imperative that Germanists get involved in the preservation of this material before it is too late and the German-American tradition of the last 300 years is lost forever.

German-American attitudes toward Heimat can be divided into three general groups. The first is represented by those who came before 1848; the second is largely represented by Forty-Eighters, political refugees who arrived in the United States in the wake of the German revolutions of 1848 and 1849; and the third includes divergent attitudes which can be discerned in statements made by German-Americans toward the end of the nineteenth century. These categories are not parallel to the groups of
immigrants usually identified in immigration histories—those who arrived in the periods 1830-1860, 1860-1890, and 1890-1914—a classification system arrived at by looking at the numbers or waves of immigration or at the countries of origin involved. My groups differ in the immigrants' perception of *distance from the Heimat* and *relationship to the new home* here. They differ at least in part, I argue, because of the changing political situations in both countries, which in turn influenced the immigrants' views. By necessity, the spokespersons of these groups whose works I have examined are a kind of intellectual elite: those who wrote, whose statements have been preserved. I restrict my analysis to statements of immigrants themselves and do not include second or third-generation German-Americans.

**Attitudes of German Immigrants Who Came Before 1848**

The journey which brought earlier immigrants from Europe to this country was long and difficult and meant hardship and risk. In the mid-eighteenth century, the trip often lasted six months; by the mid-nineteenth century, it still often took six to ten weeks and was at best a horrifying experience. Emigration was thus a decisive move—a drastic step—and was viewed as a permanent break with the homeland. An Augsburg newspaper stated in 1816 “Emigration is a form of suicide because it separates a person from all that life gives except the material wants of simple animal existence.”

The German homeland these emigrants had left was not a unified nation, and the land to which they came had also not developed well-defined feelings of self-identity. Until 1815 prejudice against foreigners was not a concern. The inhabitants of young America were for the most part a motley mix of fairly recent immigrants themselves who saw only advantages in welcoming new settlers. One of the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence was that the government of the mother country had hindered the free flow of people into the colonies. George Washington declared in 1783: “The bosom of America is open to receive not only the Opulent and respectable Stranger but the oppressed and persecuted of all Nations And Religions.” No attempt was made at all
by any American governmental agency to restrict immigration until 1830, and from 1830 to 1882 regulatory legislation was enacted only by individual states.\textsuperscript{11}

The United States was thought to be an excellent place for German emigrants to live. In a work published in English in 1836 and in German translation the next year, prospective settlers could read: "The question with regard to [Germans] . . . is no longer whether they shall be tolerated, or what hopes they may have of success?—they are citizens, who have already succeeded."\textsuperscript{12} Steadily increasing interest in emigration, especially after 1830, was reflected in the growing number of publications in German lands and Switzerland which dealt with emigration topics and concerns—at least four before 1848 and an additional seven by the end of 1852, two of which survived nearly 25 years.\textsuperscript{13} Emigration, which had once been viewed as a last resort for those unable to eke out a living in Europe, had by this time achieved a better reputation. One could now find attitudes which were different from the earlier description of emigration as suicide. A Stuttgart paper, for example, stated that one's native land is "not the ground on which we first saw the light of day, . . . not the blue arch of heaven above us. No! It is of a higher nature—our habits and customs, the ties of family and friendship, our language—these constitute the true Fatherland."\textsuperscript{14} Here Heimat is not defined only as the place of one's birth, but rather in terms of human relationships, wherever they are preserved.

Earlier students of nineteenth-century migration history believed that "the European of 1815 or 1914 left the Old World and settled in the New usually as an individual."\textsuperscript{15} But the more accepted model today is one of chain migrations, whereby networks based on kith and kin provided information, mutual support, and guidance.\textsuperscript{16} German communities sprang up, and related offshoot communities developed from these. Despite the unwillingness of the U.S. Congress in 1818 to set aside lands specifically for settlement by a particular national group (at issue was a petition by Irish groups to open part of the Illinois territory exclusively to immigrants from Ireland),\textsuperscript{17} migration patterns exhibit collectivist rather than individualist features, and the extent to which an immigrant became socially embedded was one of the best predictors of his or her long-term
satisfaction. Prospective German emigrants were probably relieved to read: "There are now villages in the states of Pennsylvania and Ohio, and even in the new state of Illinois, where no other language is spoken but German."\(^\text{18}\)

The point is that these early German settlers made what they considered a permanent move from the Old World to the New. They endured a long ocean voyage. They found acceptance in this country. Some established German-American communities and sent for families and friends from Europe to join them, in essence bringing part of their Heimat with them. And they were ready and willing to call the new place their permanent headquarters, perhaps their new home. Literary works they left behind were until about 1825 mostly religious in nature; between 1825 and 1850 they reflected the increasingly political character of the emigration. Numerous works from both categories reflected these notions concerning Heimat, as three poems from this period illustrate.

The first is an anonymous poem from 1777 which bears the title "Gedicht eines deutsch-amerikanischen Grenadiers an die Hessen."\(^\text{19}\) The Hessian mercenaries were nearly 19,000 troops mustered into British service and brought to this country to fight against the Americans, of whom nearly 5,000 did not survive, nearly 11,000 returned to Europe, and approximately 3,000 remained in this country.\(^\text{20}\) The poem's intention is clear: the speaker is attempting to persuade the Hessians to leave the British side and join the German-American colonists:

\[
\text{Kommt zu uns frei von Groll und Trug,} \\
\text{Und eßt das Freundschaftsmahl. . . .}
\]

The \textit{Ihr} and \textit{wir} of the poem, all Germans, are discreet groups, different in politics (freedom versus servitude) and economic conditions (personal property versus low wages). With the phrases "unsere Küsten," "unser Heer," and "Kommt zu uns" the German-American grenadier is uniting himself completely with the Americans. The Hessians' home is described as a "fernes Reich," viewed here as a far-away place with which the German-American grenadier has made a permanent break. Only in the last stanza does the speaker suggest an alliance or bond between himself
and the Hessians, brothers in friendship, united at home in the New World, not the Old:

Wir wollen uns wie Brüder freun  
Und freun am eignen Herd.

The second poem, entitled “Auswanderungslied,” was written by Friedrich Münch (1799–1881), a well-known nineteenth-century German-American leader. Born in Oberhessen and educated as a theologian, Münch was interested in public matters and disappointed with conditions in Germany. A leader of the so-called GieBener Gesellschaft emigration project, he settled in 1838 in Missouri as a gentleman farmer, tending his vineyards, writing philosophical and historical essays, sometimes under the pen name of Far West, and eventually serving as a Missouri state senator. The poem reflects the circumstances for which it was written. The GieBener Gesellschaft had brought a large group to Bremen to set out for Missouri, but—because of a misunderstanding with the shipping firm—only one vessel was ready to depart when they assembled, and part of the group had to wait. Thus the statements “wir gehen euch voran” and “folget unsrer Bahn!” As in the first poem, emigration here means a permanent departure: “Lebe wohl, ich scheide nun.” Once again, political problems in the Old World (“Tyrannie”) are identified as having led to loss of happiness and joy, to the departure, and once again it is freedom which America has to offer. Nothing here expresses a sense of dismay that the Heimat is being forfeited. On the contrary, the group, “brüderlich vereint,” will be together on the Missouri, preserving there important German attributes:

Teutsche Kraft und teutsche Treue —  
Über Meere flieh’ n sie hin.  
O, so blühe dann auf’s Neue,  
Teutsche Kraft und teutsche Treue,  
Am Missouri sollt ihr blühn!
The third literary example from this group is a poem by Franz Lieber (1800-1872). A native of Berlin, at the age of 15 he was wounded in the final campaign against Napoleon. Imprisoned and subsequently denied permission to study in Prussia because of his association with the Turners, at the age of 20 he nevertheless received the degree of Doctor of Law from the University of Jena. He fought in Greece against the Turks, was befriended by the historian Barthold Georg Niebuhr in Rome, and after further persecution in Prussia came to America in 1827. In the United States he edited the first edition of the thirteen-volume Encyclopaedia Americana (1835), which was based on the Brockhaus Conversations-Lexikon, and later became a distinguished scholar of law and political science, first in what was then known as South Carolina College in Columbia and later at Columbia University in New York. Three of his works—his Manual of Political Ethics (1838), his Legal and Political Hermeneutics (1839), and his Civil Liberty and Self-Government (1853)—have given him a permanent place in the field of political theory.

Unlike Friedrich Münch, Lieber saw no merit in separatist German communities in America. Using the name Francis Lieber, he wrote almost exclusively in English and moved in American circles. He was proud of the his adopted country and never disguised his disappointment with the situation in Germany:

This shaking and rude handling [he was referring to problems which threatened the survival of the American Union]—this may make our Union so rickety a thing that we may suffer nearly all the misery and disgrace under which Germany has suffered for centuries in consequence of her wretched federal constitution.

Franz Lieber's "Erguß, in Erwartung mein Vaterland wiederzusehen" was written in 1844. He was making his first trip back to Germany since his departure from Europe in 1827. He refers to himself as a "Pilger," and the tone is wistful, remembering what seems to be a past of long ago:

Vor mir liegt Europa wieder,
Vor mir eine alte Welt,
He refers briefly to his acceptance and success in the New World, but this is not his theme. Instead, his memories of the Old World gush forth, memories of the places which he is about to visit again. These are the scenes of his childhood, his imprisonment, pleasant memories destroyed by brutality (“Blumen . . . zerknickt . . . von rauhen Händen”), friends, foes, history, mountains and rivers from his past. He refers to meeting Alexander von Humboldt (“der größte dieser Zeit”) and to rejoining his son, Oscar Lieber, who studied geology in Berlin, Göttingen, and Freiburg.

Lieber, like the others, had made a permanent break. During his 1844 visit, the Prussian King, encouraged by Humboldt’s support, offered him a position which included a university lectureship, but he declined, unable—like my other examples—to accept or tolerate living under Prussia’s political conditions. He wrote home to his wife: “The whole present tendency of Prussia is a most melancholy one. It is at war with everything noble in our time, and must therefore become worse and worse.” Yet his attachment to Germany remained intact, and he maintained an active interest in what transpired there. He responded to news of the March 1848 uprising (in which his son took part) by sailing once again for Europe, but he returned in the fall, discouraged with what he saw and foresaw there. In August of 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, once again overwhelmed with enthusiasm because of developments in Germany, he wrote “My German letters confirm that all Germans are animated by the noblest feelings. . . . And I sit here and write like a dullard. It is very hard.”
Developments in the Era of the Forty-Eighters

Most of the writers who illustrate my second group were Forty-Eighters. To be sure, the few thousand members of this group (a number which varies, depending on whose estimates one chooses to believe) did not represent the majority of the approximately 90,000 immigrants from Germany who came annually during the 1850s, the majority of whom were farmers and artisans. Unlike them, a large percent of the Forty-Eighters were well educated young professionals who became doctors, lawyers, journalists, and theologians. However, they constituted a powerful intellectual force, and a number of the familiar German-American writers from this period were from their ranks. They quickly rose to positions of visibility and prominence and helped to shape and define German-American attitudes.

Those who are forced to flee their native country as political exiles and to seek asylum elsewhere may feel an enduring dedication toward their homeland which separates them from those who leave because of economic hardship or milder forms of political oppression. The Forty-Eighters had put themselves on the line for the cause of freedom, but their reward had been rejection, persecution, imprisonment, and even death sentences. When they first came to America, many of them hoped that their years here would be no more than a period of temporary exile. They dreamed of the time when they would return to Germany to complete the work they had begun, and they assisted committees of German refugees, such as the "People's League" directed by Arnold Ruge and Amand Gögg in London, in their attempts to raise funds for a second German revolution. With the passage of time, however, hopes dimmed, and they were forced to come to grips with the prospect of permanent exile. As Carl Wittke argues, they were like "men without a country, rejected by Europe, and not yet accepted by America."28

The Forty-Eighters had not made a conscious or intentional break with their homeland. Their interests were still bound up with events in Europe, and they felt themselves to be unfortunate outcasts. Friedrich Kapp describes their situation as follows:
The more deeply the individual is saturated with the culture of his homeland, the more difficult it will be for him to cast off his past like a useless article of clothing and put down roots in a country which needs the work of the forceful fist and the strong arm far more than that of the thinking mind. If, however, as an exception, the individual gets so far in the foreign country, if he places his entire mental powers at its unconditional disposal, then he will still not cease to be a foreigner in the eyes of his new fellow citizens and will nearly always, even with the best will on his part, find no second homeland in the foreign country.29

Kapp, never completely happy here, left America in 1870 and returned permanently to Germany.

The Forty-Eighters, more than earlier immigrants, did come as individuals, sometimes seeking out friends in the United States, to be sure, but often cut off from their families and other connections, and without community support on either side of the ocean. They experienced frustration and confessed their Heimweh. Unlike the earlier writers cited, who stress their satisfaction with the better political circumstances of the New World, what is revealed by representatives of this group is political, social, and cultural loneliness and isolation. The political cause to which they had given their energies was left behind, their friends and families were left behind, and the cultural life they had enjoyed at home was sorely missed in America, too.

Several poems by Caspar Butz serve as illustrations of these themes. Butz (1825–1885), from Westphalia, was persecuted because of his revolutionary speeches and writings. He came to the United States in 1849 and returned briefly to Germany before settling more permanently in Chicago in the mid-1850s, where he was known as a merchant, poet, and politician. One might be tempted to compare “Abschied vom Vaterlande,” dated “Havre, 1849,”30 to Friedrich Münch’s “Auswanderungslied,” as it was written on a similar occasion. But the two poems are different. Münch’s “Lebewohl, Vaterland!” is a permanent farewell, and he devotes his lines to looking forward to a better life in the New World. The lyric voice of Butz' poem, however, finds it hard to take leave of the
Vaterland, despite having taken leave of friends, despite being on board the ship. The poet claims love for the fatherland despite banishment, vowing that he will return when the call comes:

Dann staunen die Völker, o! Vaterland—
—Und wir, wir werden nicht säumen. . . .
Leb' wohl! wenn wir auch bis dahin verbannt
Lebst du fort doch in unseren Träumen.—

The juxtaposition set up here is not between the Old World and the New, but rather between those who leave having turned their backs on the fatherland and those who refuse to give up their hope for a free and united Germany. The New World is here not an attraction, as was the case in Münch's poem; it is described only by the statement "Unser Loos treibt uns fort in unendliche Fernen!"

Butz's stark, moving poem "Heimwehtod" (1853) deals with the loneliness and isolation of the immigrant, here an immigrant woman who commits suicide. The preface-statement at the top points to the lack of understanding on the part of Americans, perhaps the same thing I was addressing in my opening remarks, an inability to comprehend that Heimat can be a physical need, that a broken heart or homesickness is something one can die of. One line in this poem illustrates well the difference between Heimat and Vaterland. The immigrant woman dreams of her "Heimath fern im Vaterland," a Heimat defined in terms of her girlhood memories: the linden tree, her mother, the garden, the church, which is within the larger and more abstract Vaterland. Butz's "Zueignung" is the dedicatory poem in his volume Gedichte eines Deutsch-Amerikaners. His topic here is the loneliness of a poet who writes in a language which is foreign to the country where he lives. This poem is valid as a description of the lot of the exile writer anywhere and at any time: "Und Deutschland hat genug der Sänger / Verbannte Dichter kennt es nicht." The themes here are the same as those in "Heimwehtod": the poet is "vereinsamt, verbannt, vergessen." The worst fate on earth is "hier"—in America—"ein deutscher Dichter sein."
Thus, feelings of isolation, discontent, and longing for what they left behind form a common thread through the literature of the Forty-Eighters. But at the same time two political developments in the United States began to attract their attention and provided them with an American cause. The first of these was the growing sentiment against foreigners, which led to the rise in the 1850s of the nativist or Know-Nothing movement. The second was the escalating discord between the North and the South over the slavery question, which led to disputes over secession rights and eventually to the Civil War. Through the 1850s German-language newspapers, many of which were published by Forty-Eighters, expressed increasing interest in these two issues and appealed to German voters to take a united stand.

In Christian Essellen's periodical Atlantis, for example, one article after another beginning in 1854 was concerned with slavery, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, states' rights, nativism, and American politics, both in individual states and on the national level. Among German-American publications there was overwhelming agreement: according to the Cincinnati Gazette, there were 80 German-language newspapers in 1854 against the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and only eight in favor of it. German-Americans, led by the Forty-Eighters, played a role in the founding of the new Republican Party, and by 1856 Essellen was attempting to organize the German vote to back John C. Frémont, the Republican presidential candidate. He writes: "We believe whoever has not yet formed a firm opinion concerning the matter is not capable of an opinion at all," and continues: "For us Germans there is a special obligation in the present election. . .

We will never tire of calling attention to the necessity of an independent organization of free Germans." One month later, his remarks on the election begin with the words: "Buchanan is elected, the triumph of slavery is assured, the people are subjugated, freedom is conquered."

Slavery was the biggest issue for the Forty-Eighters—of whose "Democratic Absolutism" Lieber spoke. As an institution it was contrary to their liberal principles, and most of them rallied behind the anti-slavery movement, allowing it to supplant and for a time even replace the concerns for which they had fought in Germany. As Carl Schurz declared: "The old cause of human freedom was to be fought for on the soil of the
new world. The great final decision seemed to be impending." When war came, German-Americans, led again by the Forty-Eighters, played a part. Four of the six major generalships—only Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant held a higher rank—which were accorded to men of foreign birth were given to native Germans, and three of these four to Forty-Eighters. But high-ranking military leaders were not alone: the German-Americans as a group were well represented in the Civil War and suffered along with all the others. Every family's experience was different, of course, and not all allegiances were to the same side: Francis Lieber's oldest son, for example, lost his life fighting on the Confederate side, and his second son was severely wounded fighting for the North. Nevertheless, this war can be credited with turning the attention of the German element toward this country's difficulties and causes, at least for a while.

In a poem dated May, 1861, Albert Wolff (1825-1893), another Forty-Eighter, asserts his loyalty to the Union with the words:

"Wenn Alle untreu werden,"
Dem Land und seinem Recht,
Wenn gegen seine Einheit
Anstürmt ein falsch Geschlecht,
Und wenn dem Land der Freien
Verrath und Meuterei
Von seinen Söhnen drohen,
Dann bleiben wir ihm treu.42

Similarly, Butz's poem entitled "Die Heimkehr" includes the lines:

Welch' fröhlich Getümmel die Straßen entlang,
Dort nah'n sie mit hallendem Trommelklang
Um wieder die Heimath zu grüßen.43

Here he is referring to the return home (to Illinois) of the twenty-fourth Illinois Regiment, also known as the "Hecker Regiment" after its German-American leader. Another line in the same poem reads "O! hart ist der
Dienst für das Vaterland!” *Vaterland* and *Heimat* here mean the American ones. After the end of the war, too, one finds the following echo of Lincoln’s stated Reconstruction policy to “bind up the country’s wounds,” as in these lines by Heinrich Binder:

Und dann begrabt den Haß! Löscht aus den Brand,
Den Feige neu zu schüren nie ermüden;
Ihr Tapfern reicht den Tapferen die Hand—
Die Bruderhand der Norden reich’ dem Süden!44

German-Americans were focusing their attention on American problems and dedicating themselves to politics and causes in the new homeland. Aware of their strength and respectability as an influential group—and not losing their separate identity—they were at the same time becoming incorporated into American society. The *Heimat* was no longer mentioned solely in terms of something to be longed for. Thus, with irony, Albert Wolff wrote in 1869 in the first of his “Reisebilder,” entitled “Milwaukee”:

“Ich weiß nicht, was soll es bedeuten,”
Daß hier ich so heimisch bin;
Bin doch unter wildfremden Leuten,
Die wandern her und hin.45

And in a poem entitled “In der Heimath,” Johann W. Dietz (not a Forty-Eighter) lets an old man describe his disappointment rather than his joy at returning to his German home in lines which conclude:

“Am Ziele meiner Sehnsucht
Fand ich kein liebend Herz,
Und nur an Gräbern klagt’ ich
Allein in meinem Schmerz!”46

For these German-Americans, *Heimat* frequently and increasingly meant America. Time had passed, roots had been put down, and adjustments
had been made. They had participated in events of heroic magnitude on this continent, as well as earlier events which had taken place in the Old World. They had become active participants in all aspects of American life, playing leading roles in areas such as politics, war, business, and education—some of which I have not even touched on. Only one feature continued to distinguish them from the rest of America's inhabitants: the German language. Increasingly their sentimental musings about their past, their faithfulness to their heritage, and their longing for their Heimat were replaced by statements of their determination to preserve the German language in their new homeland. This is illustrated by two poems, both entitled "Die deutsche Sprache in Amerika." The first of these, by Friedrich Albert Schmitt (1852-1890), ends as follows:

Doch will ich preisen deutscher Sprache Laut!
O, mög' es blühen, wachsen und gedeihen!
Mein bestes Kleinod, in dem Land der Freien!47

There is no homesickness here. Nor does the notion of clinging to the German language represent loyalty or allegiance to anything at all which lies outside and excludes America. The image is clear. What is praised is the sound ("das Lied," "der Laut"), something physical perceived by the senses. It is something personal—"mein bestes Kleinod"—to be taken care of "in dem Land der Freien." It is a small piece of the poet's cultural heritage, to be tended in the new American homeland.

The second poem entitled "Die deutsche Sprache in Amerika" was written by Wilhelm Müller (1845-1931).48 The German language here means a cultural connection between the German-Americans and both their past and future generations. Nothing in this poem indicates roots in a European Heimat which are to be preserved through continued use of German. Instead, as is stated here, the German language should—like a mighty river—continue to be of influence in America, showing "des eignen Wesens Spuren," even if no longer spoken in this country:

Drum bleibt beim Kampf um eure Sprache wach,
Und wenn sie je verklingt in diesen Breiten, . . .
After the Civil War, several dissimilar attitudes toward Heimat can be discerned among German-Americans. In recent years German-American Socialist writers have received attention, largely because of the work of Carol J. Poore. These writers did not remember their German homeland with sentimental feelings of any kind and mocked those who expressed such feelings. Instead they concentrated on defining their relationship to the United States, either praising America's freedom and equality, or criticizing its economic exploitation of workers. When they mentioned Heimat at all, they insisted that theirs was an international Heimat, the universal and borderless home of all of humanity. Friedrich Wilhelm Fritzsche, for example, wrote:

Dies Vaterland kann keine Macht mir nehmen,
Alldort wo eines Menschen Wiege stand,
Ist meine Heimath jetzt; kein bloßes Schemen
Ist mir die Welt, mein herrlich Vaterland.

Unlike these, other German-Americans, including some of the Forty-Eighters already mentioned, expressed renewed interest in events in Germany. This development must be seen as a natural next step in the continuing evolution of their long-standing political commitments. Just as their efforts to play a role in the abolishment of slavery in the United States had been a continuation of their earlier struggle for freedom in German lands, also their other goal for Germany—unification—was equated in their minds with their devotion to the cause of preserving of the American Union. The connection is made explicitly and repeatedly. Thus Lieber states as early as 1850:
I find that I feel far deeper on this subject of the Union than very many of the native citizens, perhaps . . . because I am a native German who knows by heart the commentary which his country has furnished and is furnishing for the text of querulous, angry, self-seeking, unpatriotic confederacies.

The point is driven home by Butz's poem entitled "Zum 18. October 1863"—the fiftieth anniversary of the battle of Leipzig—and designated "Den Freunden im alten Vaterlande." For Butz the struggle to preserve the Union symbolizes and points the way for Germany's struggle and eventual success. Butz here creates a grandiose allegorical image: the thundering of Civil War cannons announces the struggle for freedom, while freedom, in turn, stands on the ramparts, waiving the American flag and admonishing those in Germany to pursue their goal of unification:

Für Euch auch blitzen unsre Schlünde,
Auf daß ihr rauher Donnerhall
Der Welt das große Wort verkünde:
Noch steht die Freiheit auf dem Wall:
Und siegreich noch, in allen Todesschauern
Trägt sie das Sternenbanner in der Hand,
Und mahndend ruft sie zu Euch von den Mauern:
Ein Vaterland!

Within a few years, the attention of these German-Americans was captured by events in Germany: the unification of Germany, the Franco-Prussian War, and the establishment of a powerful Second Empire under Bismarck and the Prussian King, now called Kaiser. Old sentiments among German-Americans were now joined by feelings of pride in their newly respectable German homeland. The tone and content of their pronouncements changed almost abruptly, signalled by the 1870 appearance in New York of a small volume of poetry bearing the title Heimathgrüße aus Amerika, whose purpose was to celebrate Germany's success.

Among the volume's 32 cliché-ridden poems is Konrad Krez's "An mein Vaterland," probably the most acclaimed poem by a German-Amer-
Fernweh—Heimweh?

ican. Krez, a native of the Rheinpfalz, took part in the revolution of 1848 and came to this country in 1850, where he was known as an attorney in Sheboygan and Milwaukee and served in the Civil War. One finds here also Butz’s “Gruß der Deutschen in Amerika,” with its exhortation to Bismarck to be a liberal leader:

O! sieh, wie Klio’s Auge so ernst jetzt blickt auf dich,
O! sei dem deutschen Volke kein zweiter Metternich!

There is Paul Julius Immergrün’s “An Germania,” which begins with the lines:

Hoch auf dein Haupt, Germania!
Laß allen Zorn entflammen!

There is Bayard Taylor’s “Jubel-Lied eines Amerikaners,” which begins:

Triumph! Das Schwert in tapf’rer Hand
Hat hohe That vollbracht!

There is a poem by Wilhelm Pieper affirming the faithfulness of German-Americans to their German fatherland. There is an appeal to German-Americans to support and assist Germany’s war victims. The longing for the German homeland has returned, this time with visions of grandeur and epic overtones.

With this volume German-American poets were creating a politically charged ideology of Heimat. Though the title of the collection is Heimatgrüße, the word Heimat has given way for all practical purposes to the term Vaterland. The language used here is heroic and military. Germania appears frequently, and Bismarck, Barbarossa, von Moltke, and Napoleon are all mentioned, too. Fire, flames, swords, battles, banners, and dedications figure in, as well as fame and honor. Some of the most flamboyant lines include the following:
1) Wie wird gemahnt in sanften Worten  
An eine theure, heil'ge Pflicht!  
Ach, blutig muß das Feld bethauen  
Des Kriegers Zorn im Heldenstreit.  

2) Des Ruhmes Preis sind Blut und Wunden. . . .  

3) Nun ist für deine Kammern trotz des Jahrhunderts Hohn  
Endlich die Zeit gekommen, die Zeit der Reunion!  

If this volume was meant for Germany, its impact fell a little short of its mark. What was affected was the way German-Americans thought of their homeland. No longer satisfied with thinking of Germany merely as the land of their cultural heritage, they now began to revere it as the land of their patriotic allegiance, whose military glory, political power, and prestige excited their imagination and their sentiments. They longed for the ideologized German Heimat and lost their sense of being at home in their new country. Homesickness reappears, as do signs of a German-American identity crisis. Who were German-Americans anyway? Americans of German heritage? Germans living in the United States? Or was there a third possibility, something completely different indicated by the word “German-American”?

There had been earlier indications that German-Americans yearned to renew strong ties with Germany; they wanted their activities known and their influence felt on both sides of the Atlantic. Butz, for example, editor of the Deutsch-Amerikanische Monatshefte, explained in 1864 that he wanted to turn his Monatshefte into a kind of international journal, continuing:

They have forgotten us too much over in the old fatherland, and they take too little interest in our endeavors. However, we believe that the powerful efforts of the Germans in America in recent years, on the battlefield, in the press, and on the public podium, finally deserve some recognition on the part of our friends in the old homeland.
Similarly, Ernst Steiger’s publishing company in New York advertised a volume of German-American poetry as: “A small volume . . . destined to secure for the poetic talents among the Germans in America the recognition which is their due not only here but also on the other side of the ocean.”

But now, the German-Americans began to sense a schizophrenic aspect of their situation. The journal *Deutsch-Amerikanische Dichtung*, which appeared from 1888–1890, carries a frontispiece showing an allegorical female figure with a cherub beside her bearing coats of arms of both Germany and the United States. (Never mind the fact that there is no such American coat of arms.) In 1889 this journal published a poem by Maria Raible with the title “Deutsch-Amerika,” which begins as follows:

Es ist ein eigen Thun und Lassen,  
Das uns’re Seele tief bewegt,  
Wenn sie zwei Welten muß umfassen,  
Vereint als Heimath in sich trägt;  
Es ist ein rechtes Doppelleben. . . .

In the same issue we also find a review of Johann Straubenmüller’s poetry collection *Herbstrosen*, which praises the author for his “correct conception of the position of German-Americans with respect [to the homeland]” and quotes from one of his poems to prove the point:

Es hat hier in der Völker Mitte  
Der Deutsche einen schweren Stand,  
Doch deutsche Treue, deutsche Sitte,  
Bewahret treu im Vaterland.

Straubenmüller’s poem specifies that German-Americans should not forget their ancestors, heritage, language, literature, scientists, songs, music, composers, and ideals. The widespread and grandiose Humboldt celebrations of 1859 and 1869—on the occasions of Humboldt’s death and the hundredth anniversary of his birth—were early indications of this movement to honor their heritage. Likewise, the *National-Verband deutsch-
46 CORA LEE NOLLENDORFS

*amerikanischer Journalisten und Schriftsteller* held a convention in Milwaukee in August, 1890, and Konrad Nies dedicated a poem to them, which contains these stanzas:

> Sie kamen gefahren von Nord und Süd  
> Feuchtfröhlichen Muths zum Gefechte,  
> Um deutschem Geist und deutschem Gemüth  
> Zu wahren die alten Rechte. . . .  
> Nach Osten tôn' es und Westen fort,  
> Und es klinge nach Norden und Süden:  
> Das deutsche Herz und das deutsche Wort,  
> Wir wollen in Treue sie hüten!69

It is not my intention to speak of the First World War and the resentment and discrimination inflicted by American citizens on their fellow-citizens, the German-Americans. The story is well known. However, it is interesting to note that the ideas I have identified here are among the very sentiments which worried Americans in the immediate pre-war years and led to questions concerning the loyalty of German-Americans. There was the complaint about German-Americans retaining “allegiance to the German language” or remaining “in heart, thought, nature, and act . . . a German.”70 Francis Lieber dealt on a theoretical level with problems of allegiance for natives of one country who have emigrated to and become citizens of another country, stating in 1838 “Allegiance can consist with a desire or duty of emigration, but it will ever prevent a man of any true feeling from fighting against his country, except perhaps in the case of invasion of his adopted country by an army of his native one.”71 But when Alexander R. Hohlfeld, Chair of the Department of German at the University of Wisconsin, argued similarly in 1918 that the United States' declaration of war on Germany put German-Americans into a “tragic and soul-trying situation” and that “the most loyal American citizens of German blood and ancestry will inevitably exhibit, and continue to exhibit, in regard to many matters connected with the war, different intellectual and emotional reactions from those of their fellow citizens not of German descent,” he was dealing with a real and current issue and was severely
taken to task for his views by the American press. The German-American motto proposed by the Demokrat of Davenport, Iowa, did not meet with approval, either. It reads: "Our strength, our labor and our loyalty to the new fatherland; our hearts to the old."

Conclusion

I have attempted to trace the historical development of the attitude of America's German immigrants toward Heimat. Early settlers had come to stay and were interested in transplanting their German culture and customs to their new homeland rather than in returning to the areas from which they had come. Their happiness was to a great extent dependent on their ability to become embedded in communities in the United States—sometimes Anglo-American, but often German-American ones. The wide-open, sparsely populated, developing country which was the United States was theirs to form and shape to their liking. As early immigrants they could import their own way of life rather than having to adapt to something new.

Political refugees like the Forty-Eighters, on the other hand, were a different story. They came with ambivalent feelings, having been expelled from their homes, and not intending, at least at the outset, to put down roots in the New World. For them it was far more difficult to call the United States their home. The situation changed, however, because of their growing involvement in American politics throughout the 1850s and the role they played in the Civil War. The causes for which they had fought in Europe could now be fought for in America, too. Thus war was helping to forge the nation and secure the loyalty of its citizens. Even the Forty-Eighters who had intended only a temporary exile began to consider the United States to be their Heimat.

Germany's unification and military success in the Franco-Prussian War were the next developments which altered the perspectives of German-Americans. Feelings of patriotic pride in Germany not unlike those found in German literature of the Wilhelminian era now began to dominate German-American statements. Allegorical representations of military superiority and heroic grandeur, like those earlier written about the Civil
War, were now applied to the German homeland, creating and reflecting a situation which led to growing nervousness on the part of Anglo-Americans concerning their fellow citizens, the German-Americans, particularly in the years immediately preceding World War I.

Thus the attitudes of German-Americans concerning Heimat did not remain constant, nor did they follow a steady course of development. German-Americans sometimes felt like Germans away from home, sometimes like Americans. The causes to which they gave their years and their energies—sometimes dictated by their own personal goals, but frequently defined by larger political and social events and opportunities—helped set the parameters within which they defined their identity. Difficulties on one side of the Atlantic or the other held their attention and demanded their dedication. Or, on the other hand, they basked in pride over German or American accomplishments and victories. Above all, they felt at home whenever and wherever they were actively involved.

In 1857 a small discussion concerning Heimweh appeared in Essellen's Atlantis. Friedrich Münch, an example of my early group, writing under the pseudonym Far West, expressed little sympathy for Heimweh sufferers, suggesting that only European aristocrats who had lived in privileged circumstances in their former homes were susceptible to such sentiments.74 Essellen, on the other hand, a Forty-Eighter, took issue with this, arguing that the normal human longing for the past, together with the difficulties of undertaking big changes—in surroundings, home, language, and profession—made emigration always a personal misfortune. He suggests work, involvement in the promotion of culture, humanity, and civilization as activities which will help conquer Heimweh:

Thus we are challenged just exactly by this . . . homesickness, which many of us in America cannot yet overcome, to the work of culture, as it alone is useful for restoring the balance in our emotions. Through this work we will easily come out of the sentimentality and romanticism of homesickness . . . and will recover in the fresh, living reality.75
Though he lived only until May of 1859 and did not experience the Civil War, Essellen was already perceiving what many German-Americans had yet to discover: involvement promotes a sense of belonging, of being at home.

In the years that followed, experiences varied. The Civil War made a difference by providing German immigrants with a worthy American cause and helping them to feel at home because of their active involvement in American issues. Some German-Americans gradually lost touch with their European origins and over time became assimilated into German-American or even American communities. Others, on the other hand, turned their attention once again to events in Europe and pointed with pride to Germany's military and political strength. Their spiritual attachment to their homeland thrived both because of Germany's success as a world power, and because of the large numbers of new German immigrants who continued to arrive. Thus it was left to the era of the First World War with its suspicions and prejudices against German-Americans to force a final break.

Notes

6 Thistlethwaite, p. 33.


Quoted by Hansen 3; from the *Allgemeine Zeitung* of Augsburg, 9 December 1816. Hansen cites this statement only in his own English translation. I have not seen the original German.


These were the *Allgemeine Auswanderungs-Zeitung* (Rudolstadt, 1846–71) and the *Deutsche Auswanderer-Zeitung* (Bremen, 1852–75).

Quoted by Hansen, pp. 164–65. From *Blätter für das Armenwesen* (Stuttgart, 22 July 1848). Hansen cites this statement only in his own English translation. I have not seen the original German.

Hansen, p. 11.


Referred to by Hansen, pp. 93–94.

Grund, p. 68.
23 Franz Lieber, “Erguß, in Erwartung mein Vaterland wiederzusehen” (1844), Deutsch in Amerika, pp. 11–12.
29 Friedrich Kapp, Aus und über Amerika. Tatsachen und Erlebnisse (Berlin, 1876), vol. 1, p. 190; my translation. The German text reads as follows: “Je tiefer der Einzelne von der Bildung seiner Heimath durchdrungen ist, desto schwerer wird es ihm werden, seine Vergangenheit wie ein unnützes Kleid von sich zu werfen und in einem Lande Wurzel zu fassen, welches in viel höherem Grade der Arbeit der wuchtigen Faust und des starken Armes als des denkenden Kopfes bedarf. Wenn der Einzelne es aber auch ausnahmsweise im Auslande noch so weit bringt, wenn er ihm seine ganzen geistigen Kräfte zur unbedingten Verfügung stellt, so wird er in den Augen seiner neuen Mitbürger doch nicht aufhören, Fremder zu sein, so wird er mit wenigen Ausnahmen, selbst beim besten Willen seinerseits, im Auslande keine zweite Heimath finden.”


33 For further information on journalists among the Forty-Eighters, see Wittke, pp. 262–79.


37 Ibid., p. 316; my translation. The German text reads as follows: “Für uns Deutsche liegt noch eine besondere Pflicht in der gegenwärtigen Wahlbewegung. . . . Wir werden nie müde werden, immer und immer wieder auf die Nothwendigkeit einer selbstständigen Organisation der freien Deutschen aufmerksam zu machen.”

38 Ibid., p. 373. From November, 1856; my translation. The German text reads as follows: “Buchanan ist gewählt, der Triumph der Sklaverei gesichert, das Volk unterworfen, die Freiheit besiegt.”


41 These were Franz Sigel, Carl Schurz, and Peter Joseph Osterhaus. See Ella Lonn, “The Forty-Eighters in the Civil War,” *The Forty-
Fernweh—Heimweh?


42 Albert Wolff, “Als das Land rief (First Call),” Deutsch in Amerika, p. 73. Dated May, 1861.


49 Carol J. Poore, German-American Socialist Literature 1865–1900 (Berne, 1982); Deutsch-amerikanische sozialistische Literatur 1865–1900: Anthologie, ed. Carol Poore (Berlin, 1987).


51 Phinney, p. 69. From a letter to Daniel Webster dated 6 June 1850.


53 Heimathgrüße aus America, ed. Ernst Steiger, 2nd ed. (New York, 1870). The first edition also appeared in 1870.

54 Ibid., pp. 5–6.

55 Ibid., pp. 6–7.

56 Ibid., pp. 13–15.


61 Ibid., p. 3.
62 Ibid., p. 3.
63 Ibid., p. 6.
65 Heimathgrüße aus Amerika, p. 60; my translation. The German text reads as follows: “Ein Bändchen . . . bestimmt, den dichterischen Kräften unter den Deutschen in Amerika die ihnen gebührende Anerkennung nicht nur hier, sondern auch jenseits des Meeres zu verschaffen.”
66 Deutsch-Amerikanische Dichtung, vol. 2, no. 4, p. 49.
67 Book review signed by Leo Hansen. Deutsch-Amerikanische Dichtung, vol. 2, no. 4, p. 64; my translation. The German text speaks of his “richtige Auffassung der Stellung der Deutsch-Amerikaner zu [der alten Heimat].”
71 Francis Lieber, Political Ethics (Boston, 1838), vol. 2, p. 213.
72 “Address by Professor Alexander R. Hohlfeld, University of Wisconsin, to the Graduating Class of the National Teachers Seminary at Milwaukee on Thursday, 20 June 1918,” *Teaching German in America*, p. 201. See also my Introduction, ibid. pp. 198–99.

73 August 12, 1914. Quoted in Carl Wittke, *German-Americans and the World War (with Special Emphasis on Ohio's German-Language Press)* (Columbus, 1936), p. 23.

74 *Atlantis*, N.S. 6 (1857), p. 27.

75 Ibid., p. 77; my translation. The German text reads as follows: "So werden wir grade durch diese . . . Heimweh, welche Viele von uns in Amerika noch nicht überwinden können, zu der Arbeit der Kultur aufgefordert, weil sie allein geeignet ist, das Gleichgewicht in unserem Gemüthe wieder herzustellen. Durch diese Arbeit kommen wir leicht aus der Sentimentalität und Romantik des Heimweh's . . . heraus, und gesunden an der frischen, lebendigen Wirklichkeit."
Erhard Schütz

Berlin: A Jewish Heimat
At the Turn of the Century?

Their problematic boomtown pride in the capital city is gradually giving way to viewing Berlin as Heimat. . . . And when the Berliners finally perceive an appeal other than the bright lights, then their hearts will grow fond of it.

Walter Benjamin, 1929

Taking Stock: Childhood Heimat and Knowing Loss

So as not to have to begin with the pun that Heimat is where Ernst Bloch has never been, I'll begin instead with a few references to what others have said about Heimat. Heimat, according to Alexander Mitscherlich, is certainly not an objective thing: it is for us a subjective figment of our imagination. To conjure up a real German Heimat, people traditionally imagined a rural, village, or small-town setting, dreamt of half-timbered houses and garden gates, fountains and cobblestones. But that has not always been the case. It does not really come as a surprise that the word "Heimatort" did not appear in Duden's Bedeutungswörterbuch until ten years ago if one is mindful of the term's etymological tautology: Old High German "heimoti," from which Heimat is etymologically derived, simply meant a place and legal relationship, or the right to be present at a certain place or locality. As such a place, or a lot or parcel of land, which the ancient Greeks called "oikos" or "ousia," it also includes more in its meaning—a totality, an autonomous relationship to self, or, to use a Niklas Luhmann term, self-referentiality. Thus Hegel specifically praised the ancient Greeks for "having made their world into a Heimat." And he clarified: "Just as in everyday life today, where people and families feel good in Heimat, are satisfied with themselves, no more and no less, so too was the case with the ancient Greeks." This then demonstrates that one cannot simply be in Heimat or have Heimat. There is always an aspect of
separateness in it, as in Hegel’s example—other families and past eras. *Heimat* is somewhere else in place and time. If we are in *Heimat*, then we are there for a visit or in thought only. To speak about *Heimat* presumes difference, even loss. In that case *Heimat* comes from the word for homesickness. For it, there is no requirement or guide for a way into the unknown, but rather it is enough to grow up, to grow out of the dimensions to which one is accustomed. That is why *Heimat* is basically always the site of childhood one has left behind. Therefore it is not merely comfy (*heimelig*), but also uncanny (*unheimlich*), based on ambivalent feelings and the experience of pain-pleasure. Because of such mixed emotions, such ambivalence, *Heimat* is related to love. Roland Barthes’s quote on love also applies to *Heimat*: “I can easily live somewhere that does not make me happy; I can complain and yet at the same time persevere.” The decisive factor here is the wish to be included. “Those who wish to be included would . . . simply like to be ‘put up with.’” Yearning for childhood’s *Heimat* may go back to feelings of limitless familiarity and comfort, but it is more likely driven by the desire for ambivalence endured, sustained pain-pleasure, terror survived, damaging disappointments, and pain soothed. The result of such a rediscovered *Heimat* is usually stronger than the original *Heimat* itself ever could have been. It is condensed or concentrated—that which is self-evidently combined and conscious of its no longer being comprehensible to itself. Thus *Heimat* is not simply experience of loss, but rather working through loss toward experience. *Heimat* is gaining insight into the loss of familiarity. It becomes an accretion of the guest who stays. In the same way that a guest serves to bring the known into true intimate contact with the unknown, with regard to childhood *Heimat* is also the imaginary presence of the familiar in the unknown which is also always adult life at home.

**Berlin—*Heimat* for the Mobile**

Perhaps you know the dialogue from that film scene where a young woman calls out to a stranger who has enthralled her with his list of Europe’s large cities he has visited:
“My God, that is nearly the whole world. Which city was the nicest? I mean, where—did you, sir—most—feel at home?” The stranger responds, smiling: “At home? Everywhere!” The woman, doubting and amazed: “Everywhere? Don’t you have a Heimat, sir?” To which the stranger says: “But of course—the world!” That’s right, it is the dialogue between Christina Söderbaum and Ferdinand Marian in Veit Harlan’s film Jud Süss. The Jews, the scene suggests, are always already endangered, because they have no Heimat. In Germany they had Berlin, before the masters Harlan served drove them out and murdered them. The young metropolis was a synecdoche for the world. Berlin stood for a site of relentless transformation and restlessness, a place of temporal no-placeness. To this day that was most profoundly expressed by Karl Scheffler’s observation in 1910:

One can have any number of relations with Berlin, but one cannot love it. . . . A conservative basis is missing that could serve as a foundation of a true-life love for the city. . . . Berlin is condemned eternally to become but never to be.

Since becoming the capital in 1871, Berlin was called everything the Jews were called in anti-Semitic propaganda: an open sore, a leech, a parasite. The “hate of Berlin,” Jewish lawyer Richard O. Frankfurter writes, is in “the same category as mass hypnoses such as anti-Germanness and anti-Semitism.” Berlin, as anti-Semitic provinciality (and some Berliners too) would have it, is an asylum, a caravanserai, the hub of the uprooted, of infiltrators and careerists. An instance can be read in an anonymous letter from one Jew to another that appeared in the magazine Das zwanzigste Jahrhundert (The Twentieth Century) in 1891:

Berlin is all ours, the German imperial capital is ours. . . . Finance and the media control the world today—and they’re ours! In Posen they know so little about this, but here in Berlin
it's glaringly obvious. . . . My one and only wish is this: I want to climb to the top—how I do it or for whom isn't important.\textsuperscript{14}

In his novel \textit{Im Schlaraffenland} (In Fool's Paradise, 1900), Heinrich Mann, then working for that magazine, created—not without anti-Semitic undertones—a bitingly satirical portrayal of a Berlin dominated financially and culturally by Jews, where an unconnected newcomer to the city from the Catholic Rhineland becomes a parasitic favorite of Jewish high society.\textsuperscript{15}

In these portrayals Berlin is a faceless place, the epitome of everything \textit{Heimat} is not. The fact that this image is a substantivized ideological construction is voiced in Wilhelm Speyer's novel written retrospectively, in exile, by the fictional patriarch of the Andernach family, who makes the following prophecy in 1888, during the year of three kaisers (Dreikaiserjahr):

\begin{quote}
You inherit money, stocks and bonds, even property and villas. But from all that you're only left with a claim like thin air, that waves a hand over the ground. It doesn't penetrate down to real land; in between there is cold nothingness. When they . . . think the time has come, they'll demand that you hand back your rights with no compensation.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

Initially, however, Jewish immigrants to Berlin had as little \textit{Heimat} feeling for the city as all the others who swelled its population from one million in 1871 to three and one quarter million by 1905. For all of them the city represented at best an adventure, a dream of success, but usually a desperate hope for a chance to lead a dignified life, find work, food, shelter. Whether the Jewish immigrants came from southern Germany or the German and Slavic areas to the east, whether they were fleeing Russian pogroms or—in today's parlance—they were economic refugees, their total numbers were, compared with those of other groups of immigrants, rather small. Even though between 1871 and 1910 the number of Jews in Berlin grew fourfold, from 36,326 to 144,043, that actually represented
a slight decline in the percentage share in the city's total population, from 3.9 percent to 3.86 percent.\(^{17}\)

In light of these factors, to consider Berlin a Jewish *Heimat* means to exclude the majority of Jewish residents, to exclude those in the ghetto for whom Berlin offered temporary shelter, part-time workers and day-laborers, small merchants and manual laborers. "East European Jews have no *Heimat*, but they do have graves in every cemetery," Joseph Roth wrote at the time. And: "No East European Jew goes to Berlin voluntarily. Who in the world would freely choose to go to Berlin? Berlin is an waystation where one resides because one has to. Berlin doesn't have a ghetto. It has a Jewish area."\(^{18}\) To call Berlin a Jewish *Heimat* would mean to exclude for the most part the parvenus, the nouveaux riches from the Kurfürstendamm and the western part of town. It would mean focusing entirely on those who viewed themselves as a kind of Berlin patrician elite. Scheffler’s statement that the bourgeois patricians, "as much as one can even call them that in Berlin, essentially arose from the ranks of the Jews,"\(^{19}\) was confirmed by Lotte Eisner in her memoirs: "We were wealthy and belonged to the Jewish patrician families like the Mendelssohns, the Preussens, the Messels, and the Warburgs, all residing in the section of town around the Tiergarten and in the west." All of them were "dependents of the nobility and the imperial caste" and existed in "self-satisfaction" knowing that "the servants had it good with us, the employees were treated well. Everything was fine. . . . It was," she continues, "all so wonderfully, FABULOUSLY all right." When she also recalls that one did not socialize with "those on Kurfürstendamm . . ., with the nouveaux riches," then one detects in her memoirs an air of pride for what separated such parvenus and their mere wealth from them: *Bildung*.\(^{20}\)

*Heimatbildung—Bildung*,

the House of One's Childhood, and the Changing City

This Jewish patrician class defined itself more by way of *Bildung* than by measures of wealth. "What is money? Money is round and can roll away, but *Bildung* stays with you."\(^{21}\) That phrase Heine has the Jewish count Gumpolino voice sarcastically became collectively internalized.
"Nowhere is there a more pronounced cult for Goethe, for Mozart, Schubert, and Wagner than in these groups." Friedrich Paulsen's prophesied in 1895 that "the decisive antagonisms in the future . . . [will be] those between the educated and the uneducated," that distinctions made hitherto between nobility and the bourgeoisie, Protestants and Catholics, or Christians and Jews would soon be nothing more than "memories." His prophecy, one could easily agree, came true. George L. Mosse has even proposed the word "Bildung" as the twentieth century's synonym for Jewishness. Walter Rathenau offered this especially graphic proof:

I have and know no other blood than German blood, no other race or people than the Germans. If I am driven away from my German soil, I'll still remain German, and nothing will be different. . . . I am convinced that creed, language, history, and culture hold sway over the physiological aspects of racial type and balance them out.

Even Lotte Eisner, who liked to make fun of the "blissful normalcy" of her rather tomboyish enthusiasm for Karl May, proudly remembered as a child devouring not only the Grimm fairy tales and Wilhelm Busch's picture stories, but even playing Mozart at the age of eight, while her father, who "introduced her to the classics," greatly admired Wagner. But that certainly did not mean that German Jews clung to the original universality of such Bildung. Instead, they also went along with nationalistic bigotry and hyperbole, a development Georg Bollenbeck has traced.

"Bildung brings individuals with their own being into sharing in the knowledge of the whole." This definition by Karl Jaspers is not the only place where Bildung moves semantically close to the concept of Heimat. It would be easy to show how Bildung practically became a kind of Heimat for German Jews, especially in Berlin. In the following, let me examine the question of Berlin as a Jewish Heimat more directly, first by offering a view from the outside, then from the U.S. looking in.

Ludwig Lewisohn's book Up Stream, published in 1922 in New York and in 1924 in German translation, was written by a man who was both
deeply disappointed by the U.S. and yet was a passionate patriot. The autobiography by Lewisohn, born in Berlin in 1882, represents a chain of deterritorializations: he left Berlin in childhood, experienced the social decline of his father in the U.S., made the transition to Anglo-American literary culture, failed as a Jew to obtain a university position in any English department, was a failure as an author of serious novels, felt compelled to produce serialized novels until he found a university position as a professor of German, first in Madison, Wisconsin, then at the University of Ohio, where he experienced the dominant pragmatism as anti-intellectual and anti-Bildung and regarded it as typical of the decline of language and culture: "In another generation the classics of the English tongue will be as obsolete as a cuneiform inscription. . . . The hardware man and the undertaker have triumphed." When the U.S. entered World War I, he was denounced as a "Hun" and dismissed from his university position. The discriminatory "Germanizing" imposed upon him led him, as the guardian of Bildung—albeit of the English version—back to Germany, the Heimat of Bildung, as reflected in the transfigured memories of the first eight years of his life in Berlin. As he remembered it, Berlin may have seemed "rugged and grey," but it had an "air of homely and familiar comfort." It was a place of planned order and purposeful sobriety in which, as for nearly all Jews who remembered Berlin, the Tiergarten stood out prominently. He recalled it in the spring: "And I can still see very clearly the statue of Flora surrounded by gorgeous flower-beds and the monument to Queen Louise." And in the winter: "And suddenly dusk and a brazen sun-disc black-barred by trees. Then the swift early winter night and the gas-lamps of the streets and the warmth and security of home." His whole family

 seemed to feel that they were Germans first and Jews afterwards . . . they had assimilated, in a deep sense, Aryan ways of thought and feeling. Their books, their music, their political interests were all German. I remember but one phrase disparaging to their Christian countrymen. It was a curious one: "What can one expect? The Gentile has no heart!"
He recalled German fairy tales, especially German Christmas with the Christmas tree and cuckoo clock, exchanging presents and Königsberg marzipan. But all the same, they went to temple on Jewish holidays. “Two scenes,” Lewisohn remembers, “but the first was native and familiar . . . , the second a little weird and terrifying and alien.” Here is the repertoire of Jewish expressions of Berlin Heimat all in one: Tiergarten, family and home, fairy tales and Christmas.

Like Lewisohn, those who remained in Germany and Berlin also remembered their childhood Heimat, Berlin. Ernst Lissauer, for example, who likewise was born in 1882, gained fame as a young poet with his patriotic poems, and especially at the beginning of World War I he caused a sensation with his “Hate Tirade Song against England.” This poem, as Julius Bab wrote in his book Leben und Tod des deutschen Judentums (Life and Death of German Jewry, 1939),

was printed in all of Germany’s newspapers and on nearly every single sheet of paper in the Reich at the time. The author was Ernst Lissauer, a young Jew who lived entirely in German culture, who gained poetic inspiration from Luther and Goethe, Bruckner and Beethoven and Bach. . . . The collective pulse of the Germans of the time was powerfully affected by this Jew’s poetry; the poem was circulated anonymously or under a German pseudonym a thousand times over—German non-Jews would never have suspected that a non-Aryan author had penned those lines.

The memoirs of Lissauer, who later was deeply traumatized and disillusioned by the course of the war, are therefore to be read as an apology. For example, he stressed his early, naive enthusiasm for uniforms and ruefully recalled that he was “a young man with extremely pro-war views back then.” Of course he also remembered playing games in the Tiergarten. But most of all he recalled the house of his childhood, in “a regular apartment building” in the more elegant area of the Jägerstraße, which—as a world unto itself—contained a small craftshop as well as a bank, plants as well as pigeon nests. In the process of writing he discov-
ered that the “ancient house from childhood is still in his soul” but “is no longer an old house at all.” From this vantage point he described the “feeling of complete naturalness” attached to everything in his childhood until—indeed until all of it, the house and the yard and the stairwell and the street, until the whole city and especially the people in it, no longer seemed natural to me, until a distance arose, a spatial, temporal distance, and nothing at all was natural anymore which had previously been natural, given, the only possibility.

And he reflected further:

What did those other areas of the city mean to me, the ones I visited during my vacation or in which I lived in later years? Now I know I always saw them from the perspective of my childhood house, as a kind of alien Berlin, for I am of the firm though highly subjective conviction . . . that in Berlin one can only live in the house of one's childhood and that actual, real, true Berlin is only the part that surrounds one's childhood home.

Confirming Mitscherlich's later conclusion that “only human relationships relating to a place” can “elevate an apartment or a house to the status of a Heimat,” Lissauer depicted his reacquaintance with characters inseparably connected with the house, for example with the bank teller, in whose presence Lissauer, now an adult, felt split in two. While he carried out his bank business above the counter, Lissauer was simultaneously the young boy again who once observed the adult transactions from below the countertop. And according to Lissauer, it was not until the “porter from childhood,” who stood in front of the house all those years, had died and been replaced by another that the house of childhood was gone and lost forever. Lissauer's memory was not only marked by the fact that he had outgrown the place, but more importantly that the city itself seemed to have changed of its own volition—a constant construction site since the empire years. It was precisely that generation, growing up during the
empire years, which retained sentimental memories of a Berlin that no longer existed.

The strong attachment arising from those memories is also evident in other texts. The successful novels by Georg Hermann, for example, were based on a kind of nostalgia that regrets the disappearance of older ways of life. Others—like Isidor Kastan's *Berlin wie es war* (Berlin as It Was), published by the Mosse-Verlag—sought through memory to connect the old to the new. Continuity with the past was even stressed in such books as *Berlin im Scheinwerfer* (Spotlight on Berlin) that proclaimed Berlin's promising future with the assistance of famous people.

The passionate fixation on the city by way of the experience of loss is especially thematized in the volume entitled *Die Straße meiner Jugend* (The Street of My Youth), a 1919 collection of Arthur Eloesser’s prose pieces written between 1907 and 1918—written, as he bitterly noted after 1933, with the “grateful awareness that the wandering Jew had finally come home to rest on the bosom of the German Michel.”

Eloesser, born in 1870, grew up not in the western part of the city, but rather in the poorer area around the Prenzlauer Berg. To him the Tiergarten was not necessarily the finer neighborhood, but instead a distant day trip destination: “The Tiergarten . . . was not unknown to us, but in our crude defiance we did not appreciate those nice neighborhoods one only ventured into if one was well-scrubbed in Sunday best and accompanied by parents.” Eloesser concedes:

In my youth I did not have any especially tender feelings toward my hometown—I thought everywhere else in the world was more beautiful, warmer, lovelier; Berlin did not become something like a Heimat to me as soon as I seemed to be losing it in the relentless stream of immigrants, as soon as it seemed to begin living for the present and without memory, tradition or reverence for the past. . . . I found my Heimat anew when I searched for its scarce remains buried by reckless progress. And I found not only the street from my childhood . . . , but I also believed I had learned the beginnings of a new path into the future.
But it is an ominous path that he sees; his prophecy for Berlin is that of "a city as a huge warehouse or waystation or factory floor—for those industries our enemies still permit us to run." He laments that "the deformed, turgid monster of a metropolis that is Berlin cannot even tell its head from its tail anymore. The city's extremes are swollen and bloated, and its center has been drained of its lifeblood." And moreover:

Everything is provisional, and to those who were born in Berlin, the city today offers less Heimat than it does to those who have just moved there, because they do not have any memories that get in the way, they have no ambivalent feelings to overcome before they jump into the maelstrom of the present and swim toward a boundless future.

Whereas someone such as Paul Heyse, born in 1830, was still able to offer a positive depiction of his childhood in Berlin, Eloesser wrote a jeremiad on the loss of identity. "Indeed, we were brought into this world as parvenus. . . . We were raised in irreverence, and we now have to accuse the two preceding generations for their having so thoughtlessly sacrificed everything up at the altar of progress." Yet the main reason for his disaffection was reserved for the fate of the children who, although they had been raised "hygienically, aesthetically, with attention to individuality, won't have a Heimat anymore."

An apology for a house of staid traditionalism, which Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl had propagated with such consequences against the "homage paid to mammon" by liberals and Jews, could hardly be formulated with more passion than it was by the Jew Eloesser: "The house did not just have an address, it also had character," he raved: "The house, . . . in spite of all the inequities, skirmishes, and divisiveness, joined a family for good times and for bad. It was our refuge and our strength." And he concluded:

I must proudly reiterate that our childhood had a feeling of autonomy and individuality still worthy of the term Heimat in the city, whether beautiful or ugly. . . . Our existence was not dis-
connected, it was rooted in and intimately associated with our neighborhood, with our street, with our house.\textsuperscript{56}

Discrimination and Mobility—Heightened Sense of Loss

As touching as such confessions may be, hardened anti-Semites are still not moved by them; on the contrary, they interpret them as a sign of what has always made Jewish acculturation or assimilation suspect: as simulation and mimicry.

For that reason many of these memories of \textit{Heimat} are always written against the backdrop of anti-Semitism. Even though Eloesser and Lissauer bracket off any explicit mention of anti-Semitism, their recollections of adolescent group animosities between pupils show a keen awareness of it. "The purest hate," Eloesser suggested, "is always the kind you don't need any reasons for."\textsuperscript{57} Shortly thereafter Lewisohn remarked bitterly: "Assimilation is bankrupt. Germany was the great laboratory for the experiment. . . . But the experiment has failed."\textsuperscript{58} Lewisohn's experience of anti-Semitism in Berlin even took on the unique quality of identification. From his observation that in the U.S. anti-Semitism was disavowed yet still highly operative, he preferred the German version of anti-Semitism because it was so overt—at least one knew where one stood.\textsuperscript{59}

Other writers, such as Franz Hessel, portrayed discrimination as the ultimate traumatic experience. In Hessel's first, highly autobiographical novel, little Gustav wishes he were down on the street with the other boys and imagines himself playing with them until one of them pointed to him and yelled something nasty. And the others repeated it. Gustav winced and asked big Wilhelm: "What's a Jew?" Wilhelm laughed good-naturedly, turned to the others and said: "He doesn't even know what he is." They all laughed. . . . Gustav crept away . . . and never went back to play with those boys in the street.\textsuperscript{60}
Thus a severing of the ties of familiarity arises whose threatening nature heightens the value of what is known and trusted and which bonds one more closely to family and home.

This process also took place when related experiences were felt more indirectly. For example, Lotte Eisner remembered: “I did not care much when I was young that we were considered Eisner’s Jews.” But: “Father warned me that we Jews had to act particularly properly and decently so that others would have no reason whatsoever to hold us in disregard.” Rebelling against the command to behave well, she increasingly identified with social outsiders, finally with the epitome of outsider art at the time, the medium of film.

The repulsive charges of being alien increased the feeling of how alien the city itself had become. But the shock of anti-Semitism was not the only reason Jewish authors early on became aware of the fragility of Heimat feelings. Gertrud Kolmar’s sister recollects:

Gertrud had not even reached her second birthday when our parents moved from the old-fashioned apartment on Poststraße to a more modern one on Lessingstraße. . . . But they did not stay for long on Lessingstraße. Our father, seeking to offer his children both a home and a Heimat in one . . . , looked for and found a villa . . . in the remote suburb which at that time was still on the outskirts, Westend in Charlottenburg. . . . Gertrud had always been proud of having been born in the heart of Berlin, because she felt quite attached to her hometown. But she didn’t grow up there, but instead in the house on Ahornallee 37 in Berlin Westend.

Lotte Eisner was even more explicit: “My brother, my sister, and I were each born when we had different Berlin addresses.” The texts all show that, as Trude Maurer wrote, “Mobility can serve as a defining characteristic of the Jewish minority,” even “perhaps the most prominent feature of German-Jewish history.” Nearly all of them moved several times during childhood, Gabriele Tergit and Franz Hessel as well as Walter
Benjamin. That is why Jürgen Kuczynski's experience of Heimat is all the more distinctive:

Schlachtensee is my Heimat in the truest sense of the word; it is where I would most like to live to this day. That was where my grandfather's vast estate was. . . . My grandfather's properties made us the town's oldest residents, and it is really quite remarkable that even into the twentieth century, four generations (including our children) lived on the same parcel of land in a large city. It is no surprise that the Nazis called us . . . the Jewish landed gentry.©

The act of moving frequently made them more aware of the loss of, and the potential of losing, comfortable connections to Heimat. The random combination of where they were at what age became decisive in determining which house or which street would be the quintessential Heimat. Lewisohn left the city at the age of eight. Lissauer was eight when his family moved into his proverbial "house of childhood." His next move entailed his experience of a final good-bye. To Eloesser, his family's move to the better neighborhood in the western part of the city, where the houses were lined up "with indifference, next to each other," came to represent fate: "Whoever moves to the western area of town never finds the way back again."® There was moreover the privilege, which the average citizen does not enjoy, of being able to go out into the country, sometimes for weeks at a time, and to return and experience a kind of homecoming.® Walter Benjamin probably described that experience most succinctly as the prototype of homelessness (Heimatlosigkeit): "each time I returned from vacation feeling as though I were without a home. And even the dingiest basement of the most dilapidated house where the lights were burning seemed enviable to me when compared with our house, standing darkened in the western area of town."® All that just proves again and again how much the need for a meaningful place is part of every childhood, how much it is an anthropological basic necessity to invest places and things with meaning in order to be able to constitute oneself in them.®
Eloesser made the poignant criticism: “Our children of today who wind up their little cars will never come to know the poetry of the stable.” He was in effect confirming Benjamin’s observation on Stony Berlin that “the stairwell and the sidewalk have always been as much where childhood for city youngsters gains substance as the stable and field are for youth on the farm.” Heimat appears as a mixture of places and things, a combination of the known and the uncanny, the banal and the sacred. Instead of the word Heimat, one could just as easily use the neutralized concept introduced by the ethnologist Marc Augé: anthropological place. The meaning would be the same. Augé defines it as a place of “inscribed and symbolized meaning,” “identical, relational, and historical,” referring to that from which the individual obtains a sense of social certainty. Alexander Mitscherlich had already expressed that earlier in simpler language: Only “human relationships that are connected to a place” “complete” the “elevation” of an apartment or a house to the level of Heimat.

But these places are not only threatened by technological progress, as Augé (or even Eloesser) believed, but also by societal crises. Franz Hessel wrote at the end of 1930:

Childhood happiness can even be found in the poorest streets. . . Childhood happiness is everywhere in . . . Berlin, in the Tiergarten . . . as well as at the foot of the Kreuzberg neighborhood. . . . Yes, your childhood has already been taken care of in a way, you young Berliners. But how will things continue for you afterwards? Is the big city a Heimat, or is it a refuge of last resort? Will you spend nights in flophouses, seek out homeless shelters, and go to the unemployment line?

Yet precisely the crisis during which Hessel wrote was a crisis so great that soon thereafter it even failed the city of Heimat’s ability to provide asylum.
Heimat in the Twentieth Century:
Mother Earth or Labyrinth?

Each of us has a Heimat, allotted as a background space of childhood, a Heimat of childhood which . . . only periodically rises to the surface from the layers of memory underneath. . . . The vanished first Heimat creates a new Heimat. . . . It is precisely the loss of Heimat that gives each of us a home in the world, for it is remote distance that offers the feeling of nearness.\textsuperscript{77}

These words, reflecting again the close relationship between Heimat and childhood, serve as the introduction to Gerd Bergfleth's article in the collected articles entitled Die selbstbewusste Nation (The Self-Confident Nation). But an assertion that begins so sensibly quickly turns into a sheer naming of the enemy and even more totalizing promises of remedies. “The idea of Heimat,” writes Bergfleth, “is found today in death.” The “demons” of “the promoters of the inherent goodness of humanity and of a multicultural-criminal world” have “established a virtual Heimat taboo” and “advanced and championed a utopia of radical deplacement (Entortung).”\textsuperscript{78} As a counterimage, he claims that “Heimat means only one thing: the return home to sacred Mother Earth,” to “the land that is birth, a legacy that Mother Earth passes to every child.” In opposition to abstract appeals to humanity a pseudo-concrete hyperabstraction is set up, a “religion of the Earth.”\textsuperscript{79} It would have to be for all humanity, according to Bergfleth, “for the concept of Earth-Heimat presupposes that the entire planet will become our Heimat, indeed a Heimat for all of us,” especially because Earth can “only symbolically become all humanity’s Heimat: on the way to representing each concrete experience of Heimat.” Yet he finds a special status for the Germans: “what the earth wants” is not revealed to all peoples equally. “Nordic lost redemption” makes the German people the chosen people “because they have traditions of life according to nature.”\textsuperscript{80} Considering the speed with which old mystifications have returned in such proclamations, one is tempted to turn away in horror. Yet taking another look at the idea of childhood Heimat may
offer an alternative, even an alternative to any blind search for an abstract human goodwill as well as coarse, raging incantations of mother earth.

After categorically rejecting Ernst Bloch's frequently quoted final sentence from Das Prinzip Hoffnung (The Hope Principle):

The basis of history . . . is the working, creative human who restructures and improves upon given circumstances. If humans come to comprehend themselves and their situation and to lay a foundation for themselves and their property in genuine democracy without alienation, then something is brought into the world that appears to them as a childhood where they have never been: Heimat. 81

Bergfleth offers the following: "Heimat can never be created but only rediscovered." 82 That claim will be countered here without having to take recourse to Bloch’s theology of history. I shall show that Heimat, as opposed to nostalgia for childhood or to idolization for the good earth, is actually an intellectual and adult challenge in the sense Richard Sennett has interpreted it: “To accept life in its disjointed pieces is an adult experience of freedom, but still these pieces must lodge and embed themselves somewhere, in a place which allows them to endure.” 83

The feeling of Heimat is a fundamental experience of socialization with things and places, the acquired capability of specific sensations. To mistake those sensations for the real qualities of things and places is simply illusory; but to turn them into a pseudo-concrete phantasmagoria of “mother earth” is a dangerous stupefaction. Instead of that, we should recall how adult re-creations of Heimat are able to succeed between on the one hand the validation and impression, sensation and energy of childhood understandings of place—in the house called childhood or the streets called adolescence—and on the other hand the unattainable—and nonexistent—totality of the city as a complex site. These re-creations of childhood take place in full consciousness of their carefully crafted essence as artifice.

Now finally let us cast at least a glance at the text on childhood in Berlin from which this essay got its title, the text by Walter Benjamin.
But speaking of Benjamin will not permit neglect of Franz Hessel—especially neglect of his collection *Spazieren in Berlin* (Strolling in Berlin), which he wrote from Paris, the "Heimat abroad," as he called it. This book garnered him—after all thanks to Benjamin's review—the reputation of the German flaneur par excellence to this day. In these texts he moves with the ease someone going for a walk among the hectic, busy crowds, in the sense of a "sham visitor," attaching himself to tour groups whose various sightseeing stops mesh with his own memories and knowledge. Hessel, according to Benjamin, is not a stranger only affected by "superficial motives, by exotic or picturesque scenery;" instead he is a stranger as native for whom, in whatever he sees or experiences, there seems to be "an echo of the stories the city told him as a child." In the Tiergarten, for example, Hessel searches for "the bearded Apollo of our childhood playground," but he cannot find it and loses his way. "And happily lost, I suddenly find myself standing right in front of the Apollo statue I had not seen in years." The fun in being lost is a form of what Hessel elsewhere in the text calls "playful intention," the art of gaining insight by supposedly getting lost. It is an ironic stance, for just as he finds the statue when he gets lost, so too his text contrasts to rigid and articulate Apollonian art.

Getting lost as one way of treating the city activates in him the behavior and perspective of a child. It does this not only in the fantasy world and via self-delusion, but also through the magical, endowing gaze. Hessel becomes Berlin's myth-maker by bringing to life all the caryatids, ornate friezes, and statues of Imperial Berlin, all those stone monuments to Bildung. A perfect example of that can be found in the brilliant piece called "Persönliches über Sphinxen" (Personal Thoughts about Sphinxes). He writes, "In Berlin, the sphinxes were meant for me," then continues with a paragraph of dense erudite allusions, and then comes to his own childhood: "When I was a schoolboy, my parents lived across the street from the zoo." Nearby, at the gates of a large villa in the empire style...
way to and from school with a threatening glare, especially on Monday mornings. Recently I saw her again. On the slab beneath her clutch a sign was hanging that advertised 3 1/2 and 4 room apartments in the once palatial villa.

Thus with lightning speed, historical and social change is introduced into the text and at the same time attached to changes in the writer's own life history: the older he gets, the more the sphinxes shrink down. The sphinxes on the bridge of the Landwehrkanal, near where the adult lived in a “solid bourgeois house,” were already then, later in life, “milder and smaller;” and the sphinx he now passed on the way to his present apartment in the Bayrisches Viertel is considered “tiny.” And so the text concludes:

Sometimes when I pass by I have to reach over and stroke its back to cajole it into a little fun with mythology. Neither of us has an easy time with that now. What will be my next sphinx? Maybe one of my grandchildren’s stuffed or rubber animals, if I still live to see that! Or could there be days in our future in which those felines stand watch again in front of pyramids or the abyss?89

These are some of the connections the texts make between childhood and the present, myth and history. But they make them while remaining aware that the connection is not automatic; it has to be created, aware that the city must be invested with a meaning whose energy comes from the magic that is the place of childhood. But the memories are also cognizant of difference, peculiarity and deformity, loss and absence, cognizant of the ephemerality of time and place.

Walter Benjamin completed the circle, particularly in the protohistorical, anthropological, and mythological dimensions of the experience of city. Equipped with essays in his Einbahnstraße (One-Way Street) and Berlin radio readings, he began work on prose pieces that first appeared intermittently and were later collected under the title Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnhundert (Berlin Childhood around Nineteenhundred). At age
forty, he admitted, “I seem grown up for the first time in my life.” He wrote the pieces as a “vaccination,” intentionally conjuring up “images that more than any others tend to cause homesickness in exile—those of childhood.” The city is present less in the legend to the map of the city—frequently in the titles—than, to invoke a concept he uses, in an “aroma.” He regards the “aroma” of Berlin dialect as “puncturing the most tender things with the toughest.” Berlin and childhood are inseparably intertwined. Childhood and adulthood, Berlin yesterday and today, closeness and distance are wound together, mirror one another, come apart again, or collapse into each other.

In one of the texts, with the title “Erwachen des Sexus” (Awakening of Sex), Benjamin describes how he goes the wrong way to the synagogue, gets lost, and arrives late:

“I was then overcome . . . all at once by a hot wave of fear—"too late; I've missed the service"—before it was even over, indeed just at the same instant I was overcome by a second wave of irresponsibility—"all that will take its course, I don't care a hoot about it." And both waves crashed into each other relentlessly in a great surge of pleasure which blended the disrespect for the holy day with the pandering of the street scene, which gave me a first indication of what the street offers to adult needs and desires.”

That passage paradigmatically embodies the sense of ambivalence, of pain-pleasure, which forms the basis for all remembered components of childhood. In other words, a sense, an experience colliding with one of the basic motifs of living in the city, of childhood, and of writing: the motif of the labyrinth. That is seamlessly summarized in the piece with the title “Tiergarten:”

The inability to find one’s way in a city is not the problem. But to get lost in a city, the way one gets lost in the woods, takes training. . . . I learned this art fairly late in life; it brought to life
the dream, the first signs of which were labyrinths on my notebook's blotting paper.\textsuperscript{94}

The labyrinth as the site of the pain-pleasure associated with getting lost and the ensuing promise of finding the way again: it becomes the code for \textit{Heimat}, far beyond the metropolis and childhood: "The labyrinth is the \textit{Heimat} of the hesitant. The path of those who are dread reaching their goal most certainly traces the outline of a labyrinth."\textsuperscript{95} Thus the text itself takes on the quality of a place from childhood and becomes a transcribed \textit{Heimat}. And this is not only in the sense Adorno intended when he later wrote: "For those without \textit{Heimat}, writing becomes a place of residence. Yet ultimately writers are not even permitted to find residence through their writing."\textsuperscript{96} But to ward off the negative repercussions of that, Benjamin tries to shield himself as long as he can—by deferring the text in a perpetual rewrite and reordering.

**Summary: The As-If of \textit{Heimat}**

Homesickness becomes a way to knowledge and a strategy of representation. The city is imbued with the perception of the child. But it always occurs as the construction of a magical process, it remains conscious of the images it \textit{produces}, never confusing them with the real characteristics of things and places. The images produced have endured to this day, even though the reality of the places to which they once referred has long since disappeared. In fact, they have become so well etched that today they run the risk of becoming mere urban sentimentality, a problematic correlation. In the same way Richard Sennett sentimentally gushes over New York, Manhattan, and Greenwich Village, invoking Western civilization,\textsuperscript{97} Berlin is also sentimentalized now under the auspices of a Benjamin taken literally. Even the present mayor loves to speak of it as the city of the flaneur,\textsuperscript{98} the city that Berlin must once again become. This image serving as the concept of a city coming into its own is just as onerous as the image of a hyper-Manhattan. For it forgets that Berlin was not like that then, and it did not permit those to stay who could indeed have turned it into a \textit{Heimat} for the flaneur. To assume, under the auspices of Hessel
and Benjamin, that Berlin can again become something it never was, misinterprets the real power of Heimat fiction. It is sustenance for every metropolis—the glue holding together the narrow spaces and the desire for connectedness, the past and the present. But it is that in fiction only. The fact that it might be employed today as a guide for urban planning only shows how urbanity itself, the concept of metropolis, is sheer nostalgia, the yearning for a past that never was—resulting from the fear of homelessness (Unbehauheit) in the virtual globopolis.

But Heimat is a big as-if. A final reference ought not to be made to the best German example of it, Eichendorff's landscape "Mondnacht" (Moonlit Night), but instead to a crystal-clear, confident sense of cities. Speaking of Vienna, not Berlin, Alfred Polgar averred:

When you're abroad, it's as if things have dropped down out of the clear blue sky. When you're in Heimat, though: as if they have grown right out of the ground. It seems as if you know everything, even things you have never seen, as if you've known things from the time they were small.

When you're in Heimat, there is so much yesterday that has melted into today, so much that was is haunting what is, so much old glimmers through the new, that time seems to have the same expanse as space, and that therefore the feeling of its being lost has been cushioned by something impalpably magical.

That, and only that, I believe, is the magic of Heimat we cannot only let enchant us, but also that we have to keep in mind so that Heimat never again becomes what it became and was so terrible in Germany—a death order of barbarism.

Translated by James R. Keller
Notes


6 For the philosopher, the latter certainly serves as more than a mere substitute: "Just as the Greeks are at home with themselves, so too is philosophy just that: to be at home—that one is at home in one's mind, to be domestic (heimatlich) with oneself." Ibid., p. 175.


9 See Mitscherlich, Die Unwirtlichkeit, p. 125.


15 Heinrich Mann, Im Schlaraffenland. Ein Roman unter feinen Leuten (Berlin, 1900).


Eisner, *Ich hatte einst*, pp. 11ff., 16. It was not until later, she says on p. 52, that she read in Busch's *Fromme Helene*: “And the Jew on crooked heels, / With crooked nose and crooked pants, / Winds his way to the lofty stock market / Utterly defiled and depraved.”

Georg Bollenbeck, *Bildung und Kultur*. It is all the more astounding that no mention is made there of Jewish contributions to the establishment and articulation of *Bildung* and the concept of *Bildung*.

Ibid., p. 282.


The year of birth 1883 is ascertained much later; see *Who's Who in America*, vol. 29, 1956–57 (Chicago, 1957), p. 1538. His own earlier statements set it at 1882. See also, for example, *Who's Who in America*, vol. 14, p. 1,979. There is insufficient space here for a fuller account of Lewisohn's life and works, his role in American literary history, and his later work on behalf of Zionism. A helpful initial introduction is Seymour Lainoff, *Ludwig Lewisohn* (Boston, 1982).


Ibid., pp. 238ff. (244ff.). See also Lewisohn's autobiographical novel *The Island Within* (New York, 1928), pp. 128ff.


Lewisohn, *Up Stream*, p. 5 (14f.).

Ibid., pp. 11f. (20f).


40 Ibid.
41 Ibid., p. 35.
42 Ibid., p. 40.
43 Mitscherlich, _Die Unwirtlichkeit_, p. 124.
46 See _Berlin unterm Scheinwerfer_.
48 Ibid., p. 18.
49 Ibid., p. 7.
50 Ibid., p. 9.
51 Ibid., pp. 52 and 79f.
53 Eloesser, _Die Straße_, pp. 12f.
54 Ibid., p. 11.
57 Ibid., p. 16.
59 Ibid., _Up Stream_, pp. 144f. (152).
60 See Franz Hessel, _Der Kramladen des Glücks_ (1913; Frankfurt a.M., 1983), pp. 23f.; see also pp. 36f.

Ibid., p. 41.


Maurer, *Die Entwicklung*, p. 68.


Eloesser, *Die Straße*, pp. 68 and 52; see also p. 32: “the residents of the west... don't find their way back ever again.”


But one must not forget the difference set by one’s environment through lack of or abundance of differentiated stimuli. William Rollins has brought this to my attention.


It can be more accurately defined as paths, crossings, and centers, the dimension of time correspondingly by: rotation, rhythm, and cycle; see Augé, pp. 70, 72, 97.


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78 Ibid., pp. 102, 105, 102, 105; see also p. 114.

79 Ibid., pp. 122, 105, 121.

80 Ibid., pp. 118, 119, 117, 119.


84 Franz Hessel, Spazieren in Berlin (Leipzig, 1929).


87 Hessel, Spazieren, p. 174.


92 Walter Benjamin, “Wat hier jelacht wird, det lache ick,” in Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 4.1, p. 539. But see also his wording in
99 I would like to expressly add, responding to a request by Karla L. Schultz, that this presupposes the inalienable human right to be present at a real place.
100 "And my soul spread / Its wings wide, / Flew over the peaceful land / As though flying home." See also Theodor W. Adorno, "Zum Gedächtnis Eichendorffs," in Noten zur Literatur, vol. 1 (Frankfurt a.M., 1958), pp. 105–45, here pp. 112f. And Bergfleth, "Erde und Heimat," p. 109, refers to that: "the `if or when' (als) in both stanzas [of Eichendorff's `Mondnacht'], which is an `as if or what if' (als ob), proves the images to be similes for a condition that does not yet exist."
To many, “Heimat, Nation, Fatherland” may sound less like the title of a Wisconsin Workshop than a catalog of the slogans at a right-wing Vertriebenentreffen. This apparent inconsistency is a good point from which to start a discussion of the Heimatschutz movement, for it precisely locates today’s predominantly negative attitude toward Heimat phenomena within a specific critical agenda. When it was begun in the late 1960s, the Wisconsin Workshop helped pioneer a strongly Marxist brand of social-historical interpretation that took pride in rejecting “bourgeois” categories of thought. Nineteenth-century ideas of community came under particularly severe scrutiny. One reason is that, to students and scholars immersed in an atmosphere of anti-Vietnam War protests and street demonstrations, words like “Heimat,” “nation,” and “fatherland” all seemed fatally tainted with jingoism and militarism. But behind this general anti-imperialist sentiment there lay a more specific affinity with the work started by Helmut Plessner and continued in the postwar era by scholars such as Ralf Dahrendorf and Hans-Ulrich Wehler. This 1960s generation became synonymous with a highly critical revision of German nationalism: consciously devoted to restoring Germany’s connection to Western democratic traditions, it invariably viewed the old middle class and its displays of patriotism with extreme suspicion, including more limited variants of Lokalpatriotismus.\(^1\) Over the next two decades Germanists of all persuasions adopted this well-intentioned but ultimately short-sighted political bias, perhaps because the conclusions seemed to follow directly from widely accepted rational-economistic assumptions about the course of history. It mattered little whether academics subscribed to the one paradigm of orthodox Marxism, or whether they preferred its safer variant, modernization theory: either way they saw Germany in an inevitable progression toward a more and more fully industrialized and democratized society, and either way they explained resistance to this unavoidable regimen of “progress” as the futile political maneuvering of outmoded
classes. These commonalities led to a new consensus on popular nineteenth-century nationalism: as in Hans-Ulrich Wehler’s highly influential book on the Second German Empire, nationalism was seen now as nothing more than an ‘ideology of integration,’ a weapon cynically used by the collaborationist German bourgeoisie in order to shore up its highly conservative alliance with Prussian nobility. As early as 1965 scholars began to denounce “Heimat ideology” in much the same fashion: with its origins in class warfare and an historically obsolete vision of the world, Heimat was nothing more than a “rear-guard action of old feudal remnants combined with the struggle of the bourgeois defenders against the forward-striving proletariat.” In 1970 Klaus Bergmann applied this understanding to the Heimatschutz movement specifically, which he associated with “agrarian romanticism” and a “pre-industrial social idyll.” Very quickly this became the conventional wisdom on Heimat. More than two decades later critics are still assuring us that this was not only anti-modern day-dreaming—a “projection of the educated middle class . . . only distantly related to socio-economic reality”—but also a manipulative technique of German nationalism, a transparent “ideology of bourgeois consolidation and integration.” Such was the popularity and univocality of this interpretation that scholars early on began to use it in slogan-like condensed form; all that the topic Heimat required in the way of analysis was a passing reference to “Volkstumsideologie,” “Deutschtumsideologie,” or “Germanenideologie.” It should be noted that these views, first aired in the 1960s and early 1970s in forums such as the Wisconsin Workshop, have continued to determine our understanding of Heimat right up to the present: at best it appears to have been nothing more than empty rhetoric, and at worst an instrument of reactionary German nationalism.

I would like to challenge these interrelated assessments of Heimat, modernity, and nationalism by taking a close look at the Heimatschutz movement in late Wilhelmine Germany. At least as far as this movement is concerned, talk of Heimat was not empty rhetoric, nor can it properly be associated with reactionary politics. On the contrary, I will argue that the Heimatschutz idea of Heimat represented a bourgeois-progressive alternative to the Wilhelminian order; then again, this was clearly a selective embrace of modernity, one that referred back to older cultural tropes
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such as nationalism as a means of combatting an already hegemonic capitalist order.

This concentration on the Heimatschutz represents a selection from among various Heimat concepts, to be sure. Nevertheless it should be pointed out that the Wilhelmine era represented something like the peak of Heimat interest: literary histories refer to the Heimatkunst movement, architects talk about a Heimatstil, and general cultural studies often identify Heimat with a wide range of associations and interests that stretches from local history societies to hiking clubs, nudists, and various Lebensreform organizations. Within this rather broad spectrum, though, the Heimatschutz movement was among the largest, and was certainly the most coherent and most engaged proponent of Heimat ideas. It can be dated from the year 1904, the year in which the Bund Heimatschutz was founded. This was a national umbrella organization, whose main function was to coordinate a spectrum of around 25 independent regional and local Heimatschutz Vereine, an array whose total membership by 1914 was around 30,000. To put this in perspective, we could compare it to the Pan-German League, a right-wing pressure-group which many historians credit with an enormous impact on Wilhelmine politics, but which never exceeded 20,000 members.

Although it was founded in 1904, the Heimatschutz movement took much of its focus, not to mention its name, from the much earlier writings of Ernst Rudorff. A professor of music in Berlin, Rudorff began campaigning against the changes that modern rationalized agriculture was making in the landscape as early as 1878. He repeated his criticism in an 1880 article in the highly regarded Preußische Jahrbücher. As the following passage makes clear, an acute sense of aesthetics formed the basis of Rudorff's complaint about the modern environment:

They are doing their best to make the pleasant and variegated countryside into a schematic plan—one that is as bare, clean-shorn, and regularly parcelled-out as possible. Any tip of woods that juts out gets shaved away out of a love for the idea of a nice straight line; any meadow that stretches into a forest is planted up; even inside the forests they no longer tolerate any clearings
or glades into which deer could run. Streams which have the bad habit of winding their way along a curved bed are now forced to flow straight ahead in ditches; all the hedgerows and free-standing trees are sacrificed to the axe, then, too.⁶

Rudorff traced these monotonizing tendencies to the fact that the capitalist decision-making process was based on individuals' narrowly economic, "realistic" criteria. Any responsible decision-making calculus, Rudorff countered, would include an accounting of "idealistic" factors as well, what economists would now call the external effects of private activity. Chief among these was, of course, the aesthetic dimension, but an ecological dimension was also clearly implied in observations that songbird and deer habitat was being destroyed. This kind of aesthetic-ecological thinking would figure large in the later Heimatschutz movement; building on Rudorff's original critique, it would eventually articulate a whole range of demands for restoring or maintaining natural diversity.

One last external or 'idealistic' effect which Rudorff recognized was the social-psychological dimension of the modern transformation: by creating barren and monotonized landscapes, he said, landowners were piling one more source of disenchantment on the rural workforce. Coming from Rudorff this critique had a clearly conservative thrust: he worried not only that traditions were being lost, but also that rural society was losing needed workers, and that these former peasants would end up adding to the unpredictable proletarian masses in the cities. This standpoint has caused many commentators to label Rudorff a reactionary, but in all fairness we should consider that his political conservatism found its outlet not in punitive repressive measures, but rather in a program of concrete improvements for workers. This kind of a strategy for dealing with the lower classes possessed a long tradition: as far back as Friedrich Schiller, bourgeois thinkers had pinned their hopes for peaceful progress on the taming and educating effect of decent surroundings.⁷ This "positive environmentalism," to use Paul Boyer's suggestive term, was moreover highly compatible with the basic thrust of modern socio-economic trends, seeking to reform, and not to reject. Rudorff himself made the point that proletarian workers were justifiably dissatisfied with poor
housing in the “poisonous atmosphere” of industrial factories; already in 1880 he therefore called for a program of decentralized building where every person would have access to green space—thus effectively anticipating the Garden City movement by 15 or 20 years. As did many liberal and progressive Bürger of the Wilhelmine era, the well-traveled Rudorff saw in England the example to which Germany should aspire. Even in terms of protecting the landscape, it was that industrially advanced country which gave Rudorff a strong reformist hope for the future:

Here we have the factual evidence that a highly developed civilization does not necessarily have to lead to a maltreatment of nature. . . . In this country of factories and rationalized agriculture there lives along with the practical mind a feeling for the charm of the landscape that is so deep and so generally cultivated that the country does not look like some warehouse for commercial products, but rather like a garden.

To a remarkable degree this passage from 1880 captures the forward-looking hopes and central concerns of the later Heimatschutz movement. Neither cultural pessimists nor technological optimists, the Heimatschützer sought a level of human progress which was still compatible with nature and beauty. As Paul Schultze-Naumburg, the first chairman of the Bund Heimatschutz, was to put it, the ultimate objective was “an harmonious civilization, one that combines the use of the earth with a respect for it.”

Despite the pioneering ideas that were broached in Rudorff’s article of 1880, little happened. Seventeen years passed in which he tried, unsuccessfully, to interest preservationists in his broader landscape program. Then, in 1897, he published a longer and more detailed exposition of his ideas that ended by proposing a totally new organization; as potential supporters Rudorff specifically targeted architects, historic preservationists, and naturalists along with state administrative and vocational-technical agencies. The greater resonance that this article achieved was probably due to a combination of this more precise strategy and the increasingly ubiquitous scars of Germany’s industrialization; nevertheless it may also have had something to do with the striking label that Rudorff
now used for his reform organization. The word “Heimatschutz” had previously been used only to designate a force for the military defense of the homeland; now, though, it was supposed to galvanize citizens into a program of environmental defense. In the past many commentators have seen this martial vocabulary along with Rudorff’s other appeals to Germanness as a sign of his reprehensible nationalism. But these critics do not give enough weight to the fact that Rudorff was in fact creatively twisting the meaning of “Heimatschutz,” appealing to national sentiments only in order to redirect them. Rudorff made it clear that he considered the usual run of nationalist enthusiasm in the Second Empire a waste of time: if people really wanted to “promote love of the homeland and the Fatherland,” he said, let them work on a truly practical program of saving architecture and landscapes. “That would be a way,” Rudorff concluded, “more solid than fireworks and flower garlands and all those fine speeches with which people these days are always going overboard in celebrating patriotic holidays.”

These lines set up a cultural opposition with a potentially great significance for an historical assessment of the Heimatschutz. When one reads of a patriotism that consisted of an excess of fireworks and flower garlands and fine speeches, one cannot help thinking of Diederich Heßling, the epitome of blustering and speechifying nationalists in Wilhelmine Germany. On a purely personal level it is perhaps worth remembering that Rudorff saw eye-to-eye with Heinrich Mann on this matter, and consistently distanced himself from Heßling-esque pseudo-patriotism. This distance becomes meaningful on a broader historiographical level, though, too, if we recall how Thomas Nipperdey used Diederich Heßling as the starting point for his famous essay challenging the notion of a Wilhelminian “Untertanengesellschaft”; as he suggested, this historical cliché of Prussian nationalism does not adequately reflect the many complexities of the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie in particular, a class of individuals who were in many cases critical of official politics, and often deeply committed to social reforms. This differentiated view provides an important foundation for reevaluating the Heimatschutz movement, whose members came almost exclusively from the bourgeoisie. An analysis of membership lists shows that while commercial backgrounds accounted for
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approximately 30% of the members, the tone of the organization was set by members of the Bildungsbürgertum, who comprised fully half of the membership. A noteworthy thing about this component is that civil servants were by far the largest individual category within it: a full quarter of the typical Heimatschutz association's membership came from state and municipal Beamte, many from the technical side of public administration.14

Until very recently, scholars writing on the Heimatschutz movement have analyzed this pronounced bourgeois participation implicitly or explicitly within the prejudicial terms of a Sonderweg thesis. The basic historical point of view here is one of a "weak" German middle class, one that failed to assume the mantle of progressive democratic change and instead absorbed the values and priorities of the "pre-industrial Prussian elites" who held power. The program of Heimat was additionally suspicious in that it explicitly criticized the new age of industry, and often contrasted modern rationalized ugliness with a greener and more pleasant past. These two elements, the political and the economic-technological, combined in critics' minds to produce an overwhelming indictment of Heimat as an illusory goal, an "ideology" of a washed-up bourgeois class whose only historical prospects lay in stonewalling development altogether. Such clichés have proven to be remarkably long-lived: since Klaus Bergmann's influential 1970 work they have structured almost every other analysis of Heimatschutz activities right up to and including Werner Hartung's 1991 dissertation on Lower Saxony.15 If anything Hartung has turned up the volume a few notches, denouncing the Heimatschutz as an "ideological instrument of a bourgeois conservatism that feared for its power, [and] whose purpose was a defense of the status quo" along with a "cementing of pre-industrial values."16 Fortunately, over the last decade or so David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley have soundly criticized the theoretical foundations on which this view of a cowed and ineffectual middle class rests.17 They concede that the German bourgeoisie may not have achieved the same palette of democratic reforms as did its cousin in England; nevertheless, they argue, it was able to promote its agenda across the board in key sectors of civil society. Education and jurisprudence, for instance, were areas in which bourgeois professionals dominated events.
and were increasingly able to guarantee principles of liberality. But of cardinal importance was the fact that liberal ideals of free trade and the unrestricted disposition of property came to structure the entire economic realm.

I would argue that the Heimatschutz movement is unintelligible without reference to this sub-political realm of bourgeois hegemony for two reasons that I will mention here briefly and then return to in the course of my further thoughts. First, it was clear to Heimatschützer that private, laissez-faire economic activity was the moving force behind the transformations they opposed: as the economist Carl Johannes Fuchs stated in 1905, "it is above all the excesses of modern capitalist development against which the Heimatschutz directs itself." As these critical members of the middle class saw it, the fundamental problem was not not enough Bürgerlichkeit, but decidedly too much: indeed, they saw themselves confronting a truly hegemonic system in which well-entrenched cultural patterns legitimated economic practices that were ultimately harmful to man and the environment. My second point is this: there was a long tradition of state regulation in Germany which made administrative apparatuses the most obvious choice as a countervailing force. But many of the educated Bürger who made up the Heimatschutz were highly ambivalent about the state: they wanted to get beyond economic liberalism, and yet not return to absolutism. They thus wanted people to be considerate of their neighbors and the environment out of conviction, and not, as the general manager of the Bund Heimatschutz put it, as the result of a "kind of police enforcement." Nevertheless the Heimatschützer depended heavily on government agencies for help in spreading their ideas; it is additionally ironic that their program for overcoming the bourgeois economic hegemony probably only worked because of far-reaching commonalities in the bourgeois cultural realm. Both of these elements came together in the unique forum of the regional or local Verein, which functioned as an informal and highly flexible interface between concerned private citizens of the middle class and their civil servant peers. In purely communicative terms, though, the glue which held the two groups together and which made the program of Heimatschutz possible was a shared background in idealistic and aesthetic traditions of the nine-
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teenth-century bourgeoisie. Two of these traditions in particular were of
cardinal importance. One was the largely Romantic tradition of nature
enthusiasm: this provided a mode of discussing and valuing nature that
was not tied to the prevailing “bottom line” thinking of economic utilitari-
nanism. Ethical ideas of the nation were the second tradition to which the
Heimatschutz appealed: these provided a model for the idea of a commonly
held environment, and went a long way toward convincing members of
the bourgeoisie to overcome class antagonisms. Taken together, the
aesthetic and the ethical dimension add up to the idea of Heimat, some-
thing we can appreciate if we take a closer look at what the Heimatschutz
actually did.

In the words of its charter, the Bund Heimatschutz pledged itself to
“protecting the natural and historically developed uniqueness of the Ger-
man homeland.” Despite the rather broad range of possible directions
this implied, in practice the Heimatschutz devoted itself mostly to protect-
ing large-scale visual ensembles: historical city- and streetscapes on the
one hand, nature and cultivated landscapes on the other. Because the
neglect of such resources seemed to be rooted in an atmosphere of public
indifference, much of the Heimatschutz associations’ work was oriented
toward educating public opinion. Both the national-level Bund Heimat-
schutz and various regional associations published well-illustrated jour-
nals, gave public lectures, and distributed pamphlets and postcards. Many
Heimatschutz members enjoyed considerable local prestige, and helped
spread the idea of protecting both natural and built environments through
their own contacts; the fact that a number of journalists were sympathetic
to the cause may help explain a widespread and mostly favorable response
from newspapers of the day. The effectiveness of this kind of general
consciousness-raising is hard to quantify, of course, but it cannot be
ignored as a factor in Wilhelmine cultural life. More tangible was the
Heimatschutz involvement in legislative lobbying as well as several high-
profile battles to preserve individual scenic areas. Not everything that the
movement undertook was crowned by success, unfortunately; indeed, it
lost its first major battle, which was an attempt stop a dam project on the
Rhine at Laufenburg in 1905. Despite this failure critics such as Ulrich
Linse are wrong to generalize from it to an overall ineffectiveness of the
movement. If anything the Laufenburg battle taught the Heimatschutz to seek legislation early, to educate and lobby more intensively, and finally to make use of its members' personal influence wherever possible.

The most visible result of this kind of renewed pressure was the so-called "Disfigurement Law" passed in Prussia in 1907. The law was an important precedent setter in that it allowed localities to regulate the aesthetics of construction or advertising in historic districts; beyond that, it gave regional authorities the right to protect larger rural areas that were "exceptionally scenic." During the legislative process the Heimatschutz tried to get the scope of this portion of the law widened, but was thwarted by a combination of landowning interests and government conservatism. Even after 1907, the German landscape as a whole thus remained unprotected except for small, ghetto-like areas. It proved difficult to improve on this principle in part because much of the contemporary nature movement was fully satisfied with token protection schemes. Scientists associated with the state-run Naturschutz program (begun 1906 in Prussia) preferred to settle for a few sample areas; its popular counterpart, the movement for Naturschutzparks (founded 1910), restricted itself to only three somewhat larger properties in all of Germany. By contrast the idea of Heimat stood for something quite different, for the Heimatschutz committed itself to maintaining all of Germany's ordinary working landscapes, not just individual and highly scenic areas. As a Heimatschutz member from the Rhineland put it in 1913:

The joy of his homeland's appearance should be maintained for each and every person. For this very reason it is not a question of protecting just the old and the old-fashioned, nor a question of protecting just some monuments of nature somewhere, some individual "exceptionally scenic areas": rather, it is a question of protecting the landscape, period.

The demand for Heimat was thus an explicitly global one, and inherently suited to inspiring grassroots activism. One observer in Saxony stated that architectural and planning matters had long remained "foreign to laypeople"; "it was not until the Heimatschutz came along," he said, "that
these ideas were introduced to large segments of the populace.\textsuperscript{23} One factor here was without a doubt the accessibility of the Heimatschutz's aesthetic discussion; moreover, the ease with which citizens could partake helped underscore the fundamentally empowering character of the \textit{Heimat} idea. For it actually reversed modern society's trend toward increasing specialization by telling people that they had a \textit{right} to get involved in planning issues that affected them. Through the idea of \textit{Heimat}, people could assert a role in road construction or city parks, in advertising or in local architecture; even water and air pollution were open to a straightforward, aesthetically guided challenge.\textsuperscript{24} It should be noted that Heimatschützer retained a healthy skepticism vis à vis government agencies: one of the favorite targets was the Prussian government, whose "secrecy" in setting up land deals, privatizing forests, and laying out infrastructure projects directly contradicted the Heimatschutz opinion that these were important "public issues" that had to be exposed to "public critique."\textsuperscript{25} \textit{Heimat} as a civic principle thus stood opposed to top-down machinations, and should probably be counted as a significant first step toward a democratization of German planning.

It was not just a question of opening up the process to more individuals, either: the \textit{Heimat} perspective was fundamentally linked to ideas of a larger community. The aesthetic mode played a big role here by subverting the individualistic foundations of bourgeois society. In the area of aesthetics, entrepreneurs or property owners could not simply hide behind their property lines: the effects of their actions emanated beyond these legal boundaries, and any consideration of the ensemble necessarily integrated individuals into an aesthetic "community." This tendency to link disparate elements into a whole is reflected in the Heimatschutz's wide-angle approach to the surrounding environment. The Otto Ubbe-lohde woodcut which ornamented the \textit{Bund Heimatschutz} journal is a good example of this: details were consciously omitted, and the broad, horizontal perspective had the effect of reducing an entire town to secondary status in the landscape. Alon Confino contends in a recent article that this lack of detail and the often stereotypical nature of \textit{Heimat} scenes are proof that Heimat was never about real places.\textsuperscript{26} Confino overlooks the fact that \textit{Heimat} was in some ways more about a way of seeing than an object of
seeing. *Heimat* was about seeing a totality, about *wanting* to see a totality, even if it came at the price of an initial simplification. Other commentators have of course warned of the potentially inflexible, symbolic, and "ideological" nature of this vision.\textsuperscript{27} Two mitigating factors need to be taken into consideration here. One is that the "totalitarian" danger was greatly mitigated by the explicitly local, limited, and concrete nature of the Heimatschutz objectives, as well as by the discussability more or less guaranteed by aesthetics. The second point that should be remembered is that the aesthetic call for thinking in terms of the wider community functioned as a desperately needed counterbalance to the Second Empire's extremely one-sided and well-entrenched emphasis on capitalist individualism. If space allowed we could review some of the truly hair-raising judicial decisions of the time, the basic tendency of which was to affirm the nearly absolute right of individual property owners to foul and despoil the area around them, even where adjoining property owners could prove direct discomfort or economic loss.\textsuperscript{28} Given the lack of response at this level, it can be imagined how little regard was given to the nominally "victimless" crime of ecological degradation. In this hopeless situation the aesthetic demands of the Heimatschutz constituted a radical recasting of the terms of debate. Ernst Rudorff's 1880 call for an "idealistic co-ownership" (*idealer Mitbesitz*) of the earth indicates some of the deeper meaning which we should see in the Heimatschutz emphasis on ensembles. An aesthetic view of the landscape led inexorably to the assertion of community rights to the environment; the environment, in turn, functioned as the proving ground of a newly viable social community.\textsuperscript{29}

Ideas of the nation provided key reinforcement to both aspects of this anti-individualistic, community-oriented program of *Heimat*. In idealistic German philosophy the nation was equated with qualities of brotherhood and unity; even after the failed revolution of 1848, many members of the bourgeoisie pursued political nationhood in the sincere belief that it could provide the material and juridical framework for the best possible development of all Germans. Among the educated bourgeoisie, and among civil servants in particular, this positive, universalist image of the nation obtained even in the late nineteenth century. My aim in mentioning this
is not to assert that all ideas of the nation were innocuous: as we know all
too well, many were virulently discriminatory and helped legitimate
oppression of the worst sort. One of the lasting contributions of Wehler
and his school is to have pointed out this fact. On the other hand this
emphasis has often obscured our sense for the situations and the areas of
life in which some ideas of the nation were able to serve useful and pro-
gressive purposes. I would suggest that social and environmental pro-
grams are two important areas in which this was the case; here the collec-
tive, long-term ethical basis of the nation proved to be a crucial counter-
weight to the highly individualistic and remarkably short-term ethics of
nineteenth-century capitalism. Of course, this abstract level of reflection
about economic philosophy only becomes convincing if it can be connect-
ed with practical applications. As it turns out, a Heimatschützer named
Carl Johannes Fuchs provides just this sort of link.

Fuchs was an economist at the University of Tübingen, and one of the
most prominent and stalwart adherents of the Bund Heimatschutz. In and
of itself the participation of an economist is worth noting, since many
‘ideological critiques’ of the Heimatschutz movement continue to depict
it as a group of cranky old muddle-headed Volksschullehrer. Paul Schul-
tze-Naumburg had to combat similar impressions all the way back in
1905, and it is interesting to see that he, too, turned to Fuchs for help.
Putting together a petition against the Laufenburg dam, Schultz-Naumb-
burg asked Fuchs for a signature. His letter continued with a small re-
quest: “please, put your ‘Professor of Economics’ under your name so
that the people see that we’re not just a bunch of dreamy-eyed roman-
tics.” Fuchs’s writings do indeed throw clear light on many of the
motives of the Heimatschutz; one thing that they do particularly well is to
locate the Heimatschutz in a much larger context of national thinking,
namely that of the “Historical-Ethical School” of German economics. As
with most ‘schools’ the unity of this group is often questioned, but it
generally includes an 1840s generation around Wilhelm Roscher and
Adolf Knies along with a younger, 1870s generation that featured Gustav
Schmoller, Adolph Wagner, and Lujo Brentano—who in turn was the
mentor of Fuchs. What linked all of these men into one ‘school’ was
their rejection of the atomizing and pauperizing tendencies inherent in
free-market, Manchesterian capitalism. Instead of looking at economics as a science of prices and individual profits, the German National-Ökonom- men preferred to approach it as an area of national social policy, one where the individual's desire for profit had to be balanced against the historically formed collective's interest in stability and continuity. This was anything but a value-free undertaking, of course, and it comes as no surprise that these Beamte of the German state were at pains not to chal-

lenge the existing political structure with their suggestions for reform.

That said, it cannot be denied that the school's strong emphasis on social ethics had decisively beneficial effects. Schmoller, Wagner, and Brentano all figured prominently in the 1872 founding of the Verein für Sozialpolitik, which especially in its early years marked the leftmost bourgeois position on social matters, particularly with its demand that workers be given a bigger piece of the societal pie. A hostile press imme-

diately branded the professors Kathedersozialisten, reminding us that this was still an era in which free-market theories enjoyed an unbroken hege-

mony. Brentano later recalled that "laws governing factories," for in-

stance, "were seen as an outrageous surrender of a citizen's freedom to arbitrary police powers of the absolutist order." Against vulgar capital-

ist convictions of this sort the economists of the Historical-Ethical school set their distinctive brand of socially reformed nationalism: all citizens deserved the foundations of a satisfying material life, they argued, and workers in particular needed to be protected from structural inequalities in the capitalist labor market. Despite its statist thrust, Bismarck's acci-

dent and old-age insurance can be considered an early victory for this line of national-ethical thinking. Over the course of the next forty years members of the Verein für Sozialpolitik managed to occupy several key university chairs; in combination with their direct public influence, their remarkably well-attended lectures created an important pool of support for this specifically social nationalism precisely among young bureaucrats, who were required to study economics.

One innovation of this younger generation was to begin to apply national-ethical principles in a series of reform projects that would eventu-

tally extend to the environment itself. Like his teacher Brentano, Carl Johannes Fuchs was a member of the Verein für Sozialpolitik and a propo-
nent of "sweeping reforms" in the area of housing. In no uncertain terms he theorized capitalism as a danger to the unity of German society; his fellow Heimatschützer, Werner Sombart, expressed their common conviction that

Society cannot withstand capitalism without protective measures. The power that resides in capitalist forms of organization and that is called forth by the uninhibited drive to acquire is one that is so monstrous, that it pulverizes land and people, culture and morality, everything around it, wherever it operates freely.33

This description of capitalism's destructive powers reminds one immediately of the very similar analysis contained in the Communist Manifesto; unlike Marxists of the time, however, Heimatschutz supporters placed no special hope in the eventual curative effect of system-immanent forces. This difference may well reflect a deeper awareness of capitalism's environmental damage, as well as a profound disgust at the progressive liquidation of a many-dimensioned historical inheritance. The degree of indifference shown here did not seem to be fully captured by reference to wages and class antagonisms. Werner Sombart tried to analyze the problem in terms of a destructive psychology. He saw the profit-driven capitalist as a loose cannon on the deck of society, an individual of impoverished abstraction who has lost touch with the concrete social and environmental dimensions of his home: "For the entrepreneur, the Heimat becomes like a foreign country. Nature, art, literature, government, friends: everything disappears into a mysterious void for him."34

This description from 1913 tells us much about the ideas of community that drove the Heimatschutz movement. Heimat is associated with a broad range of non-economic ties to the wider human and natural environment: to have feelings for your homeland means that you pay attention to the art and literature around you, that you are aware of politics, that you do not ignore the surrounding nature. Critics from the Wehler school would of course argue that behind all of these more or less positive values there lurks a strategy of "negative integration": die Heimat is opposed to die Fremde, and thus seems to imply all sorts of nasty chauvinism and
racism. But let us look more closely at the function of this opposition! It is the same one that we find in the opening lines of the Aufruf zur Gründung eines "Bundes Heimatschutz", the 1903 document which started the movement. Playing on the contrast of Heimat and Fremde, Ernst Rudorff opened this first public appeal with the following words:

Homeland protection is our demand! — Foreign invaders are not what we fear; all the more so our native vandals. Since the founding of the new German Empire it has become more common than ever before to speak of "German interests," "patriotic undertakings," and similar slogans; but the homeland itself, our German land, the fertile ground of all our customs—it can be brazenly degraded, raped, disfigured.

With exceptional clarity these lines claim national feeling for the program of Heimat at the same time that they attempt to redefine what patriotism is really all about. This goes hand in hand with a revision of what are admittedly Feindbilder, or "conceptions of the enemy"; thus we do see a strategy of "negative integration." But this is not the negative integration about which most narratives of Wilhelmine history are worried. The enemy is not the working class, for instance, nor is it another race. And as is explicitly stated, neither is it some foreign power. All the fuss about a bigger navy was misplaced, according to the Heimatschützer. In their eyes Germany was threatened not by an invading army, but by "native vandals"—a home-grown class of capitalists who had become more thoroughly indifferent to it than any distant culture could.

Capitalism as danger: this basic thought resounded through many of the more critical reform movements of the turn of the century. Many thematized capitalism's effects on the working class, but it remained for the Heimatschutz to point out the additional connection between capitalism and the environment. No one argued the point better than the economist Fuchs, who saw that workers and nature alike needed protection from laissez-faire policies:
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We have to get rid of a leftover from the period of economic liberalism: the view, namely, that capitalism has to and ought to take over everywhere without limit. Just as we have used worker-protection laws for some time now to set limits to its exploitation of human productive forces, of man, so, too, must we accept the principle of setting limits to capitalism’s exploitation of nature.*

Werner Sombart agreed with Fuchs on the necessity of limits, and envisioned a comprehensive package of “protective measures in the form of worker-protection laws, Heimatschutz laws and so forth.” While these quotations emphasize the parallel nature of the problems in two distinctly different areas, the reformers who gathered around the banner of Heimatschutz also theorized their work on the environment as having direct benefits for the lower classes. Their standpoint here was virtually identical with that of other bourgeois reform groups such as the Garden City and Volkspark movements: although each organization concentrated on different area, all sought to supply workers needed compensation in the form of aesthetic and recreational opportunities in nature. Heimatschutz groups and Germany’s growing cadre of professional garden architects worked particularly closely together in an attempt to guarantee access to green spaces across the face of the nation.

In looking at such reform projects I think it is important not to underestimate the degree of sincerity that they represent, and thus the growing potential for solidarity across class boundaries. Many portrayals of the Wilhelmine era convey the impression that members of the bourgeoisie were riven by a deathly fear of the proletariat and could not approach the working class in anything but a cynically manipulative spirit. What newer historical work emphasizes, though, is that by the last years before the war the German bourgeoisie as a whole, and educated, reform-minded Bürger in particular, tended slowly but surely toward the left and toward an understanding with the Social Democrats. As Dieter Langewiesche and others have argued, the fact that this progressive alliance did not hold in the political arena should not disguise the fact that it succeeded rather well in sponsoring schemes of municipal socialism, obtaining freedoms of
speech and association, and in slowly challenging the worst excesses of the military and nobility. Heimatschutz efforts to protect the local environment deserve to be seen against this background of a real rapprochement. These were first of all not fear-laden “rear-guard actions” against the proletarian enemy, but rather products of an atmosphere in which bourgeois Heimatschützer saw a “profound reduction in political tensions.” Moreover, Heimatschützer often revealed an acute sensitivity to the tangible inequalities of life in Wilhelmine society. One of the clearest statements in this direction was provided by an upper form teacher and Heimatschutz member in the city of Siegen. Heimatschutz, for him, went beyond a question of moral education or internal refinement, and was founded in the basic “human right” to health and material equality. What kind of social ethics do we have, he asked,

when whole areas of our Fatherland are transformed into smokestack forests, thereby robbing the inhabitants of pleasant surroundings, air, light, nature—the things that people need most desperately, the best that they have? When we have to stand by and see how not only the development of emotional life is inhibited, but also that the external elements of life are provided in so meager a measure that the basic conditions for health are lacking? It only adds insult to injury that those who have grown rich off their industrial enterprises usually move away and set up housekeeping in beautiful nature under a clear sky unspoiled by smoke—leaving it to the less well endowed, who are doomed to stay there, to enjoy the view of black mills, and to digest clumps of soot. Again, the better-off can compensate for the continual deprivation by going on a trip—while it is the simple citizen who is tied to the spot, and who consciously suffers under the wretched conditions of his homeland.

Although the speaker of these lines waxed more eloquent than many of his colleagues on the subject of industry, I believe that he was nonetheless representative in his genuine desire to eliminate or at least attenuate social inequalities by working to protect the entire vernacular environment.
Insofar as these efforts succeeded it is probably justified to see Heimatschutz as a key element in that new center-left consensus that would ultimately come to power in the Weimar Republic, albeit under circumstances that in some ways radically undercut the ambitious environmental aims and specifically bourgeois methods of the original movement.

I would like to conclude by returning to a few of the fundamental questions surrounding the Heimatschutz and its idea of Heimat. As we have seen, critics have looked askance at the movement’s aesthetic approach to the landscape, and have often assumed that Heimat was a never-never-land of the reactionary political imagination. Heimatschützer accordingly gained the reputation of being “staunch nationalists,” fervent defenders of the monarchy and even willing supporters of German militarism. But there is nationalism and there is nationalism. As Celia Applegate has argued in her work on Heimat supporters in the Rhenish Palatinate, this kind of differentiation is crucial: for “although Heimat enthusiasts were certainly nationalists, their emphases and their projects were not identical with those of the militarists, imperialists and centralizers.” Our examination of the Heimatschutz bears out the truth of this statement with particular clarity. Contrary to the suppositions of some critics, the aesthetic concerns of the Heimatschutz were linked to practical domestic reforms; rather than being ideological undergirding for the ancien regime, they instead turn out to have been one of those “realms distant from politics” in Wilhelmine society which Thomas Nipperdey identified as “central areas for engaging reality, for coming to terms with the world, . . . [and] for societal change.” The complicated thing about the Heimatschutz is that it had to come to terms with two worlds at once, or in more martial vocabulary, that it had to fight a war on two fronts. The first of these fronts is by now recognized: as part of a modernizing middle-class civil society, the Heimatschutz stood in a certain amount of opposition to the calcified political structures of Wilhelmine Germany’s elites. As best they could, the bourgeois supporters of the Heimatschutz thus avoided the absolutist centers of power and relied on local and regional associational milieus to further their agenda. It is true that they made good use of state agencies and even laws in the process, but this was
done always with the essentially democratic goal of educating and convincing the larger public.

Despite the relevance of the above perspective we will not be able appreciate the unique meaning of Heimat if we do nothing but try to fit it into the mold of European "modernization." This is unfortunately one tendency of the most recent studies on the Heimatschutz, notably those by Hartmut Frank, Matthew Jefferies, and Andreas Knaut. As a rebuttal to the older Bergmann-Wehler school, their more balanced perspective is of course refreshing, but it ends up with some of the same problems. Jefferies in particular shows a familiar willingness to dismiss all non-industrial goals of the Heimatschutz as "volkish mysticism." In doing so he merely reproduces the earlier critics' valorization of a bourgeois-industrial "modernity," and ignores the fact that modernity itself is to some extent the problem. This is a point of view where environmental critiques dovetail with newer work on German social history by Detlev Peukert and Geoff Eley, for example. They have argued convincingly that a fully modern capitalist-bourgeois society is in some ways far scarier than the old-fashioned, patriarchal systems of the nineteenth century. Modernization means that complex technocracies and scientific-economic rationalizations can be mobilized with terrifying efficiency; in a modern society the "marginal" sectors, and that includes the natural substrate of our civilization, are perhaps more vulnerable than ever before to the pressures and prejudices of the majority culture. With regard to the environment the Heimatschützer understood this, albeit in an indirect and aesthetic fashion. They used all the leverage they could to dislodge the already-crystallized certainties of a bourgeois industrial society; trying to get outside the self-reinforcing patterns of instrumental and economic thought, they fell back on a language of aesthetics, a language that allowed them to put their collective finger on a wound that was beginning to afflict modern Germany. The language of nationalism offered itself as another way to combat the social injustices of an individualistic economic system, and to reinforce basic egalitarian principles. This connection to ideas of the nation should not be misunderstood as a kind of statism: quite in opposition to modern schemes of professional intervention and administration, Heimat was always something that you had to feel for yourself,
and share with your neighbors. In an age of capital that has been described as “aggressively homeless,” it may turn out that this Heimat perspective is not as old-fashioned as was once believed.46

Notes


5 The most thorough accounting of Rudorff's early writings to date is the article by Andreas Knaut: “Ernst Rudorff und die Anfänge der deutschen Heimatbewegung,” Antimodernismus und Reform. Zur Geschichte der deutschen Heimatbewegung, ed. Edeltraud Klueting (Darmstadt, 1991), pp. 20–49.


7 Cf. Friedrich Schiller, On the Aesthetic Education of Man (1795); Gerhart Fehl describes how this Schillerian “ideal determinism” was applied by a range of bourgeois architects and planners in the nineteenth century in his Kleinstadt, Steildach, Volksgemeinschaft. Zum ‘reaktionären Modernismus’ in Bau- und Stadtbaukunst (Braunschweig and Wiesbaden, 1995).

9 Ibid., p. 271.
14 Further details on membership in the Heimatschutz movement are given in my book to be published by the University of Michigan Press (1997); an earlier version of the data is contained in my "Aesthetic Environmentalism: The Heimatschutz Movement in Germany, 1904-1918" (dissertation, Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison, 1994).


27 Although he does not treat the Heimat idea directly, Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn has examined the contemporary landscape ideals of the German youth movement, and criticized what he sees as their inflexible and ideological emphasis on an aesthetic view of the land. Cf. his Auf der Suche nach Arkadien. Zu Landschaftsidealen und Formen der Naturaneignung in der Jugendbewegung und ihrer Bedeutung für die Landespflege (Munich, 1990).

28 This tendency of the system of private property to forestall environmental and ecological concern is inherent, it seems to me. The fact that some individuals and companies were able to obtain judgments against polluting neighbors does not much change the picture: not only were these judgments rare, they were also severely limited to an economic dimension, one that stood and stands in almost no relation to long-term ecological viability. Peter Hüttenberger’s opposite conclusion in a recent article—that private property rights inherently constitute an “elementary barrier against the destruction of nature”—seems to be driven by an irrational faith in the ability of private economics to regulate all aspects of the world, an impression which is strengthened in his self-satisfied reference to environmental degradation in “socialist states.” Cf. Peter Hüttenberger, “Umweltschutz vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg. Ein sozialer und bürokratischer Konflikt,” Staat und Wirtschaft an Rhein und Ruhr 1816–1991. 175 Jahre Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf, ed. Hein Hoebink (Essen, 1992), pp. 263–84.

29 In her analysis of the Heimat movement in the Palatinate Celia Applegate found that the countryside functioned as “a source of collective identity not to be found in the urban environment.” Cf. her A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat (Berkeley, 1990), p. 77. It might be more accurate to say that the act of protecting the countryside was the ultimate source of community spirit.

30 UB Tübingen, Nachlaß Fuchs, MD 876 no. 39: letter of 8 February 1905 from Paul Schultze-Naumburg.
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31 Cf. Lujo Brentano, Mein Leben im Kampf um die soziale Entwicklung Deutschlands (Jena, 1931), p. 73.


36 Sombart, Der Bourgeois, p. 462.


Edmund Mugler, “Über Sinn und Bedeutung des Heimatschutzes,” Siegerland 1.1 (July 1911), p. 26. The engaged egalitarianism which speaks out of statements such as Mugler's begins to challenge one of the hoary dogmas of previous research on the Heimatschutz, namely the view that this environmental organization was somehow fundamentally incapable of relating to the working class and its social concerns. This is a view propounded with particular clarity by Rolf Peter Sieferle in his Fortschrittsfeinde? Opposition gegen Technik und Industrie von der Romantik bis zur Gegenwart (Munich, 1984), pp. 159–60. Cf. the similar dichotomy of socially progressive left wing and environmentally sensitive right wing in Geza Hajós, “Heimatschutz und Umweltschutz. Kritik an einer biologistischen Ästhetik,” Zwischen Natur und Kultur. Zur Kritik biologistischer Ansätze, ed. Hubert Christian Ehalt (Vienna, 1985), pp. 397–412.

Gerhard Fehl, Kleinstadt, Steildach, Volksgemeinschaft, p. 143.

Applegate, A Nation of Provincials, p. 86.

Thomas Nipperdey, Wie das Bürgertum die Moderne fand (Berlin, 1988), pp. 74–75.


The continuing scholarly tradition of identifying the discourse of *Heimat* with racism, anti-modernism, and Nazism has recently given way to a useful, mainly Anglo-American critique.¹ I have drawn inspiration from and hopefully contributed to that critique in my own research. Nonetheless, I think it is important to be aware that the *Heimat* movement did contain many of those elements the older scholarship identified, such as racism. To underestimate this—as for example Mathew Jefferies does²—is to misrepresent the historical specificity of the movement and its later influence on and appeal to Nazism. By stressing how terms such as *Heimat* and *Heimatschutz* were appropriated by various groups within or on the margins of the *Heimat* movement, the revisionist literature has also so far done too little to explain how and why this appropriation occurred, and how or whether it changed over time. Neither the older nor the newer research has satisfactorily explained the emotional resonance of *Heimat* as a factor in the building of national identity. Historian Celia Applegate’s important research on the Pfalz could have done more to outline the national significance of *Heimat* discourse.³ In contrast, Alon Confino’s recent article, by correctly stressing how the varieties of *Heimat* imagery created a powerful integrative metaphor for the nation, nonetheless also significantly underestimates important tensions between *Heimat* as a regional concept and the nation.⁴ Today I want to address some of these problems by discussing historic preservation (*Denkmalpflege, Denkmalschutz*), a cultural-political practice often closely identified with *Heimat* discourse but also distinct from it in its use and application of the term.

Like the revisionists, I stress the variable appropriations of *Heimat* and the antinomies that arose from them. My definition of “appropriation” derives from Michel de Certeau’s notion of usage in *The Practice*
of Everyday Life, which captures how the powerless have used the powerful's representations for purposes that are different than those originally intended. These differential uses most often consist of small, tactical subversions rather than more strategic forms of resistance. What de Certeau and others have done less to explore in such work is the differential use of dominant representations among various elites. In my current work I want to know how certain cultural elites used *Heimat* as a signifier to promote national memory and the identity it was presumed to foster. We will see in the following pages that the advocates of *Heimat* regarded their movement as a broad, integral set of practices aiming to unite all groups interested in the physical integrity of the German natural and built environment. Many but not all used racialist arguments. Advocates of historic preservation were often members of the Heimatschutz movement, or of *Heimat* museums, or of local *Heimat* associations. But when they pursued the goals of historic preservation, the meanings and direction of their work often differed from those of other groups associated broadly with *Heimat* discourse. These variable representations and usages, sometimes present in a single individual, resulted in "antinomies," which I understand as contradictions between apparently equally valid principles or between inferences correctly drawn from such principles. To take Confino's position as a foil: whereas he puts the emphasis on *Heimat* as an integrative image of the nation, I stress the possibility that some advocates of *Heimat* thinking—in this case those Germans devoted to preserving historic landmarks—could simultaneously hold potentially antagonistic meanings of a term whose nationalist valence was contingent and uncertain. *Heimat* in its preservationist guise *both* reinforced the nation and limited or modified its appeal. The appropriation of *Heimat* imagery created "gaps" between various culture producers as well as between producers and consumers. I want to explore some of these gaps between roughly 1890 and 1939, with particular emphasis on the role of preservation, monuments, and national memory in the Nazi dictatorship up to World War II.
Significant numbers of Germans became preoccupied with the optic identity of the German nation in the nineteenth century. Why this occurred is a complex issue, but one can refer briefly to three factors. First, Romanticism's emphasis on the constitutive nature of the physical environment for individual and collective identity put a premium on the external markers of nationhood. The German Bürgertum's formation as a culturally identified group in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries strengthened this emphasis, as the Bürgertum regarded the nation's physical environment as a mirror with which to see itself. Second, sweeping economic and social change created important discontinuities between past and future, especially after the middle of the century, though these discontinuities were perhaps not as unusual or rapid as an older historiography claimed they were. National memory appeared not as an antidote to such dislocations but as a way of lessening their impact and—most importantly—constituting them in ways that were compatible with the general force of modernity. Third, a concern with the "look" of the nation emerged from what may be called the unfinished business of German unification. The formation of the German national state left the question of German national identity open. By the last decade of the century, Germans' desire to create more emotional links between people and nation produced a series of initiatives in culture and politics. A "second founding" of the Kaiserreich was seen as a way of achieving a national identity more inspired by Nietzschean "life" than that of the Bismarckian era had been.

Throughout the nineteenth century, historic preservation was promoted by leading intellectuals and officials such as Goethe, Schinkel, and others, and supported by state policies in Prussia and Bavaria. Historic preservation became a limited but well-established cultural practice associated with official nationalism, to use the political scientist Benedict Anderson's term for nationalist activities directed mainly by states and elites. Advocates of preservation differed in their approach to protecting landmarks, some favoring "restoration," which returned buildings to some notionally pristine original form, some favoring "conservation," which saved a structure's historical accretions. Restoration was the dominant
form of preservation until the 1890s. The objects and sites of such prac-
tices were well-known: castles and fortresses such as the Marienburg and
Wartburg; highly valued medieval churches, of which the Cologne cathe-
dral, finished only in 1880, was the best-known but certainly not the best-
loved by preservationists; and the numerous medieval city halls and
Bürger dwellings that still punctuated the fast-changing cities—all with
their varied meanings in the canon of national landmarks.

But the late nineteenth-century desire for a second founding of the
nation also meant that a new era had begun for the preservation of such
sites. The appearance of new voluntary associations signaled the creation
of new and broader middle-class publics for preservation after the last
decade of the nineteenth century. Prussia initiated a series of administra-
tive reforms in 1891, creating provincial conservators positioned to re-
spond to and support regional efforts at monument preservation. The
appearance in 1899 of Die Denkmalpflege, published by the Prussian state
as Germany’s first journal devoted to historic preservation, and the hold-
ing of the first annual preservation congress, the Tag für Denkmalpflege,
in Dresden in 1900, gave further impetus to the new public interest. A
more popular nationalism became evident in such efforts, reinforcing and
also potentially challenging the official traditions of preservationist na-
tionalism. Such new trends endorsed many of the valued sites of nineteenth-
century preservationism, but increasingly they added less well-known
Bürger residences of medium-sized and small communities as well as
peasant dwellings and, still rather hesitantly, industrial artifacts.

One of the key preservation associations in Germany at the beginning
of the twentieth century was the Rhenish Association for Monument
Preservation (Rheinischer Verein für Denkmalpflege und Heimatschutz,
or RVDH), founded in 1906 in Cologne. An “allied” association of the
national league of Heimat groups, the Bund Heimatschutz (to be discussed
below), rather than one of its provincial branches, the RVDH was unique
within the Heimatschutz movement because it concentrated more energeti-
cally on the protection of historic buildings than on other tasks. Among
its leaders was Paul Clemen, a Bonn art historian who had been conserva-
tor of monuments for the Prussian Rhineland since 1893, and whose
career as a preservationist would extend into the next four decades. The
group reflected elite Rhenish social relations in which manufacturers, high-level civil servants, and powerful judges rubbed shoulders in such exclusive clubs and associations. Ranging in size between 1,200 and 1,800, its membership was small, but it is useful to remember that the Werkbund, a leading advocate of modern industrial design and one of the most powerful bourgeois reform groups of the era, had only 1,972 individual members in 1915, and that in any case the RVDH's elite stance gave it influence far beyond what membership numbers suggest.

"With a unanimity that is unusual, the state, the province, the churches, the entire populace today considers the protection and maintenance of historic places to be one of its most important and honorable duties," read the 1906 announcement of the group's founding. But this support for the preservation cause extended only to the most famous landmarks, whereas many less well-known fortresses, castles, or Bürger and peasant houses were being lost. Such structures may not have been artistically important, but they had a tremendous “meaning for the history of the community and its inhabitants” and they were crucial in maintaining “the entire image of the small city and village, of the whole landscape.” Beside concentrating on such historic places, the group wanted to ensure that the entire area would escape what it called the “inartistic and coarse features” of modern society. This elite group was not there to resist modernity but to soften its coarser features, not there to supplant the provincial state but to supplement it.

There was much more variation in social following and function within the preservation movement than the example of the RVDH suggests. Well-heeled groups closely identified with Wilhelm II, such as the Association for the Preservation of German Castles, led by the nationalist castle restorer and architect Bodo Ebhardt, operated alongside regional entities such as the Historical Association of the Pfalz, which in political outlook and institutional makeup was the cultural corollary of a National Liberal politics led by provincial notables. By contrast, the ubiquitous Beautification Societies (Verschönerungsvereine) were far removed from official preservation, often having tasks no more complicated than planting trees around historic sites or cleaning up historic market squares, and
generally having a more middle-class and lower-middle-class membership.¹⁴

The organized Heimatschutz movement, energetically led by the conservative architect Paul Schultze-Naumburg from 1904 to 1914, emerged after historic preservation became anchored in German state practice and public culture. Preservation of historic sites was only one of its goals, which also included promoting traditional building forms and folk custom, nature conservation, and landscape planning. Its aspirations were more sweeping than those of historic preservation: "Let us create a Bund of like-minded people throughout Germany whose goal is to maintain an undamaged and untainted German race [Volkstum]," the group's founding statement read, "and to protect from further misfortune what is inseparable from that mission: the German homeland with its monuments and its poetry of nature."¹⁵ Heimatschutz publications sought maximum publicity, and in 1907 the organization's newsletter announced that in Germany three hundred newspaper articles monthly dealt with some aspect of Heimatschutz.¹⁶ Precisely because of such publicity, the movement's goal of creating an "undamaged and untainted German race" had serious implications. It contained a mythic element, a call for a return to racial origins at a time when organized racialist politics were finding an important niche in German society. Conserving the visual integrity of the nation intersected broadly with inchoate attempts to conserve racial characteristics. The racial message came through unevenly, and the many practical goals of the movement could overshadow its racial-ideological motivations, but the racism was there nonetheless.

In 1911 in Salzburg representatives of preservation groups and Heimatschutz initiated a series of joint annual meetings. Significantly, contemporaries viewed the alliance between Heimatschutz and Denkmalpflege as being neither inevitable nor smooth. Paul Clemen said "this new joint conference of historic preservation and Heimatschutz gives the impression of being a now finally accomplished marriage" that took place after "much tender courting and a somewhat stormy engagement."¹⁷ Given this storminess, what did each mate get out of the marriage? Heimatschutz had a more expansive view of the visual integrity of the environment than preservation did, but this meant it also had a rather indistinct view of the
preservation of historic buildings as such. Significantly, Schultze-Naumburg never published a systematic statement on the goals and techniques of architectural preservation. Heimatschutz representatives often engaged in quiet negotiation with homeowners or businesses to uphold aesthetic standards, but they also developed a more strident tone in public debates than preservation did, often ridiculing opponents, as in the 1907 Bund newsletter. It was rare to see comparably shrill commentaries in the pages of the DP or the RVDH newsletter.

This tradition of shrillness would make it much easier for Heimatschutz advocates to accept the rhetoric of Nazi agitators later even when that acceptance was nowhere guaranteed. Many Heimatschutz supporters were much less cautious about the terms used to refer to a national identity rooted in cultural and even racial characteristics—Volk, Volkstum, and volkstümlich—than was the famous art historian and preservationist Georg Dehio, who qualified his use of these words in a famous speech before Wilhelm II in Straßburg in 1905. Schultze-Naumburg himself wrote cultural criticism in which “racial characteristics” formed the basis of an emphatic attack on contemporary planning and architecture.

By comparison, historic preservationism’s narrative of Germanness looked contemplative and perhaps a little disconnected from daily life. This is why Heimatschutz’s “dowry” was so important to preservation leaders. In 1908 Schultze-Naumburg noted that “with its own growth historic preservation had greatly expanded its program.” Access to Heimatschutz networks gave official preservationism another lever with which it could continue that expansion. Was it a marriage made in heaven? By no means. But there were good reasons why both clear-headed partners had entered into the relationship.

III

Nationalist language in preservation circles was present before World War I and became stronger in the war and Republic. For many preservationists, the nation had become the Volk community (Volksgemeinschaft), a term fraught with new political-racist connotations. This affected how monuments were defined. According to Franz Graf Metternich of Bonn,
who was Rhenish conservator of monuments from 1928 to 1950 as well as a Nazi party member, an artifact could claim to be “a monument . . . if from an educative or aesthetic standpoint it has a meaning for the Volksgemeinschaft based in the past but still living in the present.” This was part of a new “totalistic thinking of preservation” that encompassed the traditional canon of castles, churches, and city halls as well as vernacular and industrial architecture. Heimatschutz could not fail to play a role in this development, as its representatives’ more emphatic racist message, developed in part in the struggle against the flat roof of modernistic architecture and the Bauhaus, became stronger.

Nonetheless, historic preservation possessed built-in resources not for “resisting” the penetration of nationalist-racist discourse but for creating a multiplicity of outcomes to its spread. One such “alternative” could be found in the conviction that heritage preservation as such was something somehow beyond nationalism, something shared by an educated community whose referents were international, humanistic, and scientific. “Despite the many differences in national starting points, historical development, and geographic relations,” wrote the respected Michelangelo scholar and former Austrian preservation official Dagobert Frey in 1930, “the basic problems are still the same; and when understood in a deeper intellectual-historical sense, preservation and Heimatschutz present themselves as a specifically European problem: that of the protection and upholding of Occidental [abendländische] culture in the all-encompassing development of humankind.” Heimatschutz was seen as a part of this perspective, to be sure, but the more pronounced racial and nationalist message of some of its representatives often blunted the focus on “the all-encompassing development of humankind.”

The preservationist response to cultural modernism also suggested a certain balance that worked against a commitment to more radical political goals. It is true that individuals such as Richard Klapheck, a member of the RVDH and of the Rhenish Council for Monuments, wrote in 1928 of the “aping of Soviet ways in Stuttgart” with reference to the famous Weissenhof settlement developed by architectural modernists. Yet there was much more openness to the new than one might at first think. Klapheck made a point of distinguishing between experimentation
with new forms and building materials, which was to be welcomed, and unproven claims about the superiority of flat roofs and “new building,” for which he thought the Stuttgart exhibit stood. In 1930 Gustav Lampmann, editor of Die Denkmalpflege, attacked the Heimatschutz movement’s role in Weimar cultural debates. One had to concede the “strong power of expression of new building” and the “sound, native understanding” it had begun to foster “in broad strata of the Volk,” wrote Lampmann. To the extent that Heimatschutz learned to accept and facilitate this healthy popular outlook, to work as genuine nurturing of Heimat based on “functionality and economy” rather than only as defense of Heimat, argued Lampmann, “it steps down from the authoritarian podium from which until now it has believed it could teach the Volk, in order to mingle with the Volk and promote, with them and from them, that which develops itself actively.”

A major debate over architectural modernism and the historical city took place at the 1928 Tag für Denkmalpflege in Würzburg and Nuremberg, where the modernist Frankfurt planner Ernst May was one of the featured speakers. It was the Heimatschutz representative C. J. Fuchs, a Tübingen economist, who used the most contentious language at that meeting, saying that opposition to the flat roof was a “question of life” and portraying the struggle between new building and more traditional styles as a struggle between “civilization” and Kultur—a well-known trope of the nationalist Right. In contrast, Clemen, the chair of the conference, concluded the debate by noting that the Tag’s function was not to reach a conclusion or draft a resolution. One participant, the municipal building official Ritter of Leipzig, noted that the differences between May and more conservative architects and preservationists at the conference were not all that great: “the fire department found no reason to intervene,” he announced. Several other critics of May did not oppose new building per se but rather May’s contention that German urban dwellers had become “nomads” whose mobility required a new architecture for the masses. Their contention was that German cities had in fact not changed as drastically as advocates of new building claimed. Not architectural modernism in general but new building in particular should be rejected because it was a temporary response to a time of hardship that would eventually fade
It should be noted that this criticism of new building was rooted in a general sense that real and imagined threats to the historic city were less serious than most contemporaries assumed. It was a call not for panic or rigorous struggle but for caution and balance. Weimar could have used more appeals of this kind from conservative cultural producers who in their own way—and unlike so many Heimatschutz representatives—had become Vernunftrepublikaner.

IV

Although the Nazi party was unable finally to centralize and steer preservation and Heimat organizations, it did manage to recontextualize such cultural practices by linking them to its own racialist vision. There was room in this vision for much agreement between the regime and preservation, but also for much dissonance, particularly in the dominant metaphors used to describe the nation as an historical entity.

At a major conference of Heimat groups in Kassel in 1933, the Nazi cultural official Apffelstaedt of Düsseldorf, calling himself a "political soldier of the Führer," told the audience that no one had greeted Hitler's rise to power more than the advocates of preservation and Heimatschutz. "After much casting about in ideologies that were isolated from the real world and that almost led to the dissolution of the entire national organism, after years of criminal and snobbish degradation of popular practices," said Apffelstaedt, "the concepts Volk and Heimat once again circulate in the thoughts of the German people." This was a gross distortion of the recent past from the point of view of historic preservation, which found an anxious but relatively stable institutional-political home in the Weimar Republic. Nonetheless, the statement underlined that sense of historical discontinuity many preservationists shared. "Keenly listening for the voice of his own blood," said Apffelstaedt, "the German man begins to get a sense of his own great past." Although most preservationists did not fall prey to this language of blood and racial stock, they were hardly immune to it. The Kassel conference also featured an address by the famous art historian Wilhelm Pinder, who was much closer to preservation circles than Apffelstaedt. Pinder saw the historical city as the
The concepts of “cleansing” or “purification,” both captured in the German word “to clean [reinigen],” offer even more direct examples. In March 1934 preservationists and Heimatschützer participated in a government campaign aimed at ridding the countryside and historic sites of advertising, a long-standing aim of historic preservation. The slogan was “Germans, cleanse the image of your Heimat.” Critical of the “liberal commercial spirit” that notionally covered natural and historic sites with inappropriate swaths of color and verbiage, the campaign wanted to create a physical environment in which “every right-thinking German can once again feel healthy.”

This language found direct support in urban renewal (Sanierung) programs, which had a hygienic or biological connotation insofar that renewal or “restoration” could refer to the health of an urban “organism.” Hans Vogts, city conservator in Cologne in 1933, openly called for a Sanierung of buildings and a “purification [Bereinigung] of the image of the city” in the Rhine Quarter (or the Martinsviertel) near the Cologne cathedral. This included eliminating undesirable people and replacing them with “valuable national comrades.” Two-thirds of all “renewed” properties changed hands in Cologne, and owners were contractually obligated to the city to rent only to morally fit “Aryan” persons. Vogts was no National Socialist. His interest in urban renewal stemmed mainly from a concern for the future of the German city and a wish to once and for all make preservation “mean more than an artistic matter or the maintenance of a single building.” Taking part in urban renewal schemes meant that the protectors of historic places could be intimately involved in the contemporary “national economy and social policy.” But one did not have to be a Nazi to use racial language in this period. And Vogts’s distaste for the pickpockets, prostitutes, and swindlers of the Martinsviertel was shared widely by the general populace.

In another direction, the inventories of monuments published by preservation agencies took up the themes of mythical decline and transience, also signifiers of National Socialist racist ideology. The inventory for the city of Speyer featured a preface by the well-known Bavarian
conservator Georg Lill that struck a tone thoroughly in line with National Socialist discourse. Justifying the sheer monumentality of the book's size (815 pages), and noting the centrality of the Speyer cathedral to the city's history, Lill wrote that one could

understand the artistic and historical meaning of the city only if one knows about the abundance of works of art and architecture that once existed in this Rhenish frontier city before the time of destruction. Speyer's physiognomy rises up like an image in the mist from the ruins of the past, as with so much of German history. So it is that ethical-national motives are stronger than art-historical and topographical principles in order to create not an inventory of that which exists in the present but an overview of what once was.34

Lill created a virtual city in this passage, a community like the second metropolis of the dead in Italo Calvino's evocative description of the imaginary Laudomania in Invisible Cities.35 In one sense such ghoulishness was thoroughly consistent with the larger project of preservation, a cultural practice that in spite of itself remained fixated on the dead rather than the living. But regardless of the Bavarian conservator's intention, this was also imagery fitting for a regime whose chief architect Albert Speer created monuments designed to retain their grandeur as ruins after one thousand years. Just ten years later, the physiognomy of many German cities would indeed arise like images in the mist of the cruel winters of postwar Germany.

Racialist and mythic discourse supported an expansion of the definition of monuments beyond that which any previous period had seen, a development to which the sheer length of the Speyer inventory gave unmistakable expression. The expansion of the number of objects under consideration by preservationists also suggested that the image of national community had been extended horizontally and vertically. The forty-first volume of the inventory for Westfalen, published in 1935, concentrated on post-1700 "profane" monuments for the city of Münster. It featured a substantial mix of vernacular bourgeois and aristocratic buildings, but
even more striking was the photography, which unlike earlier inventories situated monuments in their daily contexts by including people or evidence of human activity. We find a little girl standing in front of a sixteenth-century house, cars parked in front of a row of eighteenth-century residences, and flowers in the window of a two-hundred-year-old house. Most photos still featured the monuments themselves, but there was now enough of a human presence, a “social” ambience, that reflected a sense of the racial nation “living” its historic places. When the German public called for a wider understanding of monuments in the context of everyday life in the 1970s, one of the embedded if unwelcome meanings of the tradition of saving such vernacular architecture was this political-biological one that found such resonance in the Nazi era.

If preservationists’ sense of the nation was deeper and wider, national memory was now also an object of greater manipulation than before. This too created points of contact with National Socialism. Urban renewal’s play with historical memory is an example. In Cologne from 1933 to 1938 the renewal of the Martinsviertel resulted in much destruction, as sixty-five buildings were torn down and many others substantially modified. Whole houses were moved to other lots. Pieces from the destroyed buildings were used liberally to redecorate new or restored houses, as when a nearly three-hundred-year-old iron wall tie from one house was used on another because it fit well with the new structure’s window frames. A beautiful, richly decorated lintel from the eighteenth century found in the cellar of one destroyed house was placed in the entrance of a shop at a nearby site. Planners used uniform street lanterns for the entire quarter and replaced the old blue enamel street name signs common throughout the rest of Cologne with chiseled limestone signs of the kind that graced some early nineteenth-century cities.

Contemporary conservators as well as their successors understood that such modifications made the renewed district not only a referent of past ages but principally a monument to preservation techniques of the 1930s. Hans Vogt had reservations about what had been done to public memory at the moment he was involved in the renewal project, saying in 1936 that “naturally it is not to be overlooked nor avoided that in their totality these measures do away with much of the district’s picturesque
charm, its patina of age." Yet this play with the past did little to detract from urban renewal as a project of national memory. Rather, from the point of view of its potential popular resonance, it aimed to make history more entertaining, less threatening, and generally "cleaner" than the very "dirty" history Germans had gone through in the previous two decades.

Such actions suggested another point of contact with the defenders of Heimat as well, as reflected in the activities of Heimat museums in this period. The increasingly popular Heimat museum "had stopped being a site for the leisurely musing of the eccentric," read a 1936 account. "Everywhere we see the effort to make 'dead' things come alive for the Volk." There is no lack of examples of how this effort to make the history of the Volk "lively" also resulted in much manipulation. The Heimatmuseum Goch moved into a historic patrician house in 1938, planning to use its courtyard for the reconstruction of a small Bürger residence torn down in another part of the city that would serve as a facsimile of a cigar maker's workshop. Wesel planned a "museum district" that included not only a newly restored room of the garrison headquarters where Frederick the Great met his father after the prodigal son had run away, but also "a pottery workshop ... in which every museum visitor has the opportunity to study the making of beautiful and authentic pottery; a completely new kind of museum exhibit." The pottery workshop was an early example of something that has now become an international trend, namely a kind of historicist science fiction in which the attempt is made not just to preserve historic sites but to replicate past lifestyles and techniques. Building in part on the increased public interest in "technical monuments" of the 1920s, these museums planned exhibits designed to attract not "the cultured" but a less educated and sophisticated audience. They wanted to appeal not to connoisseurs, but to mass consumers of a new social history whose ultimate referent was the Volk, the new German nation.

Through such activities, preservationists and Heimat museum officials intuited an important shift in the way Germans began to visualize the nation. A 1938 discussion of "the art of lighting effects" and "light-painting" in the Vienna University Church considered not only how to make it easier for congregations to read their hymnals but how artifacts
such as historical altars might be presented effectively to the general public. An assistant in the provincial conservator's office of Bonn wrote the District President in Aachen in 1941 advocating modifications in plans for routing the Autobahn junction near Aachen. The proposed minor rerouting toward the west would not only save the moated, late medieval fortress Kalhofen, slated for restoration when peace came, but also create an "especially charming" view for the Autobahn driver, who would gaze at the Kalhofen garden from his or her window. In these and many other instances, a more aestheticized and "consumerist" display of monuments was being proposed, one that suited a secular transformation of the referents and means by which Germans imagined themselves as a nation. One could make the same argument about the way in which Nazism used war monuments, or the way in which Speer aestheticized Nazi party rallies with his "cathedral of ice" created by upturned floodlights, an interesting parallel to preservationists' use of light to display medieval cathedrals and city halls. But a more consumerist approach to preservation was ultimately woven more deeply in the way Germans were seeing their environment and each other. By regulating the display of monuments according to the principles of modern consumption, a new nation was being formed in a secular transformation legitimized through Nazi racism.

These shifts in consuming, seeing, and signifying have parallels elsewhere. In 1926 in the United States, just as the restoration of Williamsburg was being planned, Henry Ford began to assemble Greenfield Village in Dearborn, Michigan. Interested in a more practical and engaging form of historical memory than that given by formal education, Ford reassembled ninety old buildings to represent US development through invention, agriculture, and technology. Like some of the Germans we have discussed, Ford was engaged in the commercial mediation of national memory through historic preservation. Commenting on the Williamsburg project, the Viennese professor Hans Tietze wrote in 1936 that "historical-unhistorical" artifacts represented an American sense of authenticity that was foreign to most European societies. That there were significant differences between US and European appropriations of the past cannot be denied. But Tietze failed to point out that Germans had
also gone a long way toward manipulating historic buildings and artifacts for a public whose gaze was increasingly shaped by the visual imagery and emotional draw of a commercializing society.

Taking a somewhat longer view, it is a considerable distance from the German examples to history theme parks and other mass market phenomena of the 1980s and 1990s. But such phenomena are on the horizon in Hitler's Germany and elsewhere in the Western world in ways they were not just a generation before. One of the great differences, beside those of scale, geography, and social use, was that the Rhine quarters, Heimat museums, and artistically illuminated historic cathedrals of the 1930s were inflected by the hypernationalism and racism of the Hitler regime. To the extent that historic preservationists funded, advised, and oversaw many such projects, they were engaged in the playful selling of what had become anything but a playful national history.

Despite preservationists' contribution to this process—and despite the evidence I have shown—most never tried to articulate their work fully with Nazi racism. They strove for what I have called elsewhere (and with a different emphasis) a privileged marginality: privileged, because the work of protecting historic environments was already imbricated with the language of state cultural policy and elite social networks; but marginal because National Socialist hegemony over cultural politics was unquestioned, because historic preservation neither resisted it actively or regretted serving it during the dictatorship, and because preservationists believed their agenda was different from that of other cultural institutions—including Heimatschutz—because of the nature of preservation practice and the objects and images it engaged. Above all, preservationists considered their work marginal because, their adaptation to contemporary developments notwithstanding, they felt that protecting historic buildings put them somewhat at odds with the rest of a future-oriented, fast-moving society of the kind Nazism in fact helped to shape and mobilize for war and extermination. Sixty years earlier Nietzsche had disparagingly referred to the "history-hungry" of his age who became "walking encyclopedias" crammed with knowledge of bygone "ages, customs, arts, philosophies [and] religions." Preservationists wanted history to engage "life," as we have seen, but there was enough of the nineteenth century,
enough of the historicist "history-hungry" in them to make Nietzsche's harsh judgment applicable to the 1930s as well. In the Third Reich preservationists turned this approach to the past into a resource, a cultural-political safeguard that had important implications for their view of the nation.

Many preservationists insisted that "practical conservation," the application of preservation theory in daily life, remained, in the words of the DKD writer Rudolf Pfister, "an art of the single case and a science of the borderline that barely tolerates any principle that cannot be contradicted or at least found to have exceptions." Not only a comment on technique, this was hardly in the spirit of National Socialism's emphasis on Leistung and a total commitment to the racial community. Within this paradigm of practical conservation, the professional conservator was a combination of pragmatic administrator, art historian, architect, and diplomat. He was called to advise religious congregations that wanted to remodel parts of an historic church and to help city mayors adapt historic environments to traffic needs. "In such cases," wrote the Breslau professor Dagobert Frey, "the conservator cannot be satisfied with policing functions; rather he must advise, assist, and help others to have some backbone. One could speak of a pastoral preservation."46

The pastoral metaphor regulated preservationists' sense of their contribution to national identity. As in all metaphors, certain "entailment relationships" were at work here.47 If the preservationist was like a pastor, then his audiences, which potentially included the whole German Volk, were congregations whose worship was shaped by the formal attributes of a liturgy. The pastor used vestments and artifacts, indeed the church as a whole, to continue liturgical traditions and engage the loyalties of the audiences. Historic buildings were key artifacts of the national congregation's liturgical practice. Preservationists were the pastors who ensured that such artifacts would not only be available but would be used properly.

Such imaginary relationships suggested that nineteenth-century traditions of spiritualizing national identity were still important even if they found a point of engagement with Nazism's racialization of the nation and many Heimat groups' support of Nazism. The difference between the two
paradigms, between spiritualization and racialization, was vividly reflected in the artifacts that best represented them. Although preservationists had now concentrated more systematically than ever before on peasant buildings and urban ensembles of vernacular housing—inspired in part by Heimatschutz's broader vision—they had not forsaken their love for the cathedrals of Cologne, Speyer, and other cities. Medieval Christian architecture above all still served as the regulative of preservationists' national vision. Conversely, for Nazism, although medieval townscapes still worked as backdrops to the mobilization of the nation, it was the Nuremberg parade grounds or Berlin Olympic stadium that most evocatively engaged the Volk's imagination. Between the hushed tones of worshipers and tourists in the Speyer cathedral and the roars of massed crowds of the Berlin stadium there were of course important similarities; both emanated from people who were spectators of and participants in national "total works of art." The journalist William Shirer realized this when he likened the atmosphere of a 1934 Nuremberg party rally to the religious fervor of a Christmas or Easter service in a great Gothic cathedral. But the differences were more striking than the congruences. And they were not only a matter of style. The churchgoer ideally contemplated his or her place in God's creation in the national church, but the comrade of the racial community shouted mindlessly to demonstrate allegiance to the mass. Within this difference, preservation's pastoral metaphor intentionally set limits to Nazism's racialization of past and present. Within this difference, moreover, preservation's adherence to the traditions of an official nationalism erected limits—perhaps not heroic ones, but limits nonetheless—on Nazism's misuse of popular nationalism.

V

I want to make several points by way of conclusion. Heimatschutz's links to the history of nationalism in general and that of Nazism in particular were variable and contingent. No natural or inevitable lineage existed that made Heimatschutz a cultural cognate of hypernationalism or a direct predecessor of Nazism. One of the reasons for the open-endedness of this relationship was that Heimatschutz was a broad movement whose leading
groups and individuals appropriated Heimat imagery for various purposes. Some of these purposes were inspired by racialist thinking, others less so. But to lose sight of the racist elements is to misrepresent seriously the historical resonance of the movement. Nazism mobilized the racialist language, suppressing or de-emphasizing those elements of Heimat thinking that did not fit its social-biological agenda.

On a more general level, it is doubtful that one can take Heimat as an unproblematic metaphor for the nation, as Confino argues we should. The fit was not a perfect one, and at some moments, such as the Third Reich, when a totalitarian regime threatened to engulf local identities and practices, some supporters of Heimat discourse resisted the national pull, albeit imperfectly and certainly not as insistently as was later claimed. Still, the limits on the racial nation were real, and Heimat's potential as a regulative of identities that were not wholly dominated by National Socialist discourse were exploited. Historic preservation, a quite specific cultural practice with a history that both preceded and intersected that of the Heimat movement, embraced a language of race, myth, and nation, but at the same time its advocates erected limits between these concepts and preservationist discourse as a whole—limits that were finally more substantial than those created by most other participants in the Heimat movement. Popular appropriations of historic buildings through tourism, schoolbooks, newspapers, and postcard collecting—a subject only alluded to here—added still more layers of both acceptance and modification of nationalism and racism.

To the extent German studies research places emphasis on such appropriations and antinomies of Heimat discourse, it will I think move beyond an older scholarship whose perspective was too teleological, too unaware of the contingencies of history, too shaken by the historical memory of 1933. But it will also correct some of the newer scholarship, which for different reasons has also underestimated the historical specificity and complexity of the subject.
Notes

1 Most recently, see William H. Rollins, "Aesthetic Environmentalism: The Heimatschutz Movement in Germany, 1904–1918" (dissertation, Univ. of Wisconsin–Madison, 1994).


8 On the variety of techniques of preservation, see James Marston Fitch, Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World (Charlottesville, 1990). My uses of the terms restoration and conservation differ somewhat from Fitch's.

9 For the following, see Rudy Koshar, "Against the 'Frightful Leveler': Historic Preservation and German Cities, 1890–1914," Journal of Urban History 19.3 (May 1993), pp. 7–29, esp. 14–18.


13 For the following, see “Rheinischer Verein für Denkmalpflege und Heimatschutz,” announcement of founding, 1906, Nordrhein-Westfälisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Düsseldorf (hereafter, NWHSADü), Regierungspräsident Düsseldorf, 534.


16 “Der Name Heimatschutz,” Mitteilungen des Bund Heimatschutz 3.5/6 (May/June, 1907), p. 77.


18 Borrmann, Paul Schultze-Naumburg, p. 63.


20 Georg Dehio, “Denkmalschutz und Denkmalpflege im neunzehnten Jahrhundert [1905],” in Kunsthistorische Aufsätze (Munich and Berlin, 1914), as reprinted in Georg Dehio and Alois Riegl, Konser-


22 Paul Schultze-Naumburg, Aufgaben des Heimatschutzes (Munich, 1908), p. 1, as cited in Borrmann, Schultze-Naumburg, p. 63. Borrmann uses the quote to stress Heimatschutz's impact on architectural preservation, but in fact it also refers to preservation's independent growth and maturation.


28 For Apffelstaedt's designation as a "political soldier of the Führer," see Burkhard Meier, "Der Denkmalpflegetag in Kassel, 5. bis 8. Oktober 1933," DP 35.6 (1933), p. 197; the longer quote is from the typescript of the speech, "Volk und Heimat," 10, in ALVR, 11041.
29 Apfelstaedt, "Volk und Heimat," p. 10.


38 Ibid., pp. 254, 255.

Provinzialverwaltung to Regierungspräsident, Düsseldorf, 10 November 1938, NWHSADü, Regierung Düsseldorf, 56235.


George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, Metaphors We Live By (Chicago, 1980), p. 9.

Ted Rippey, Melissa Sundell, Suzanne Townley

“Ein wunderbares Heute”:
The Evolution and Functionalization of “Heimat”
in West German Heimat Films of the 1950s

Contemporary critics had few kind words for the Heimat film of the 1950s, dismissing it categorically as an aesthetic failure. A 1953 review contains the following comment on the film Dein Herz ist meine Heimat: “Dieser ganze Schmus ist so hergesucht, so blödsinnig konstruiert, daß man auch den Bergen nicht mehr zutraut, daß sie echt sind.” Indeed, Heimat films often display unexciting cinematography and sentimental, predictable plots. The regular settings are the heath, the Black Forest, or the Alps, and the films inevitably feature folk costumes and folk music. The narratives typically are based on contrived love stories and cases of mistaken identity, and the resolution usually occurs during a folk festival. These elements were repeated in endless variations in the approximately 280 Heimat films made from 1950 to 1960.

By 1957 German audiences began to tire of this repetition, and attendance of Heimat films declined. Still, the genre had enjoyed immense overall success. Over twenty percent of German films produced in the 1950s were Heimat films, among them some of the decade’s hugest box office hits: Hans Deppe’s Schwarzwaldmädels drew sixteen million viewers in two years, and his follow-up project, Grün ist die Heide, sold nineteen million tickets by 1959. The popularity of the Heimat film suggests that it occupied a significant space in the public imagination, and though its spectatorship was predominantly understood by creators and viewers as a mere leisure activity, closer readings of the texts reveal an array of interest-laden processes at work beneath the performed surface. This inquiry can be seen as an effort to expose the political underside of a genre too often taken as pure entertainment.

Our essay traces the process of ideology formation and dissemination in the films in order to assess their social significance. In specific discussions of community, history, gender roles, and consumerism we consider the implications of what is present and absent in the narratives, and
attempt to locate the points of tension between what they intentionally depict and what they unconsciously communicate. We illustrate how text-immanent processes of conflict and resolution mask ideological messages, and we further attempt to clarify the extent to which these messages are intertwined with dominant economic and political agendas of the emergent Federal Republic. We analyze the genre in two specific roles: as a reflection of the psychological state of a public situated between past atrocity and future uncertainty, and as an element in a process of conditioning that serves to facilitate social transition according to the conservative tenets of the Adenauer era.

**Continuity and Innovation: The Concept of Heimat**

While the *Heimat* film of the 1950s exhibits certain breaks with earlier phases of cultural production under the sign of *Heimat*, several factors in its creation and consumption negate any realistic assertion of a complete rupture in 1945. Aside from significant continuities in personnel, a number of commonalities can be exposed in the social ramifications of these films and those of the forms which preceded them. The following section focuses not only on how the idea of *Heimat* is constructed in the film medium and functionalized within the early Federal Republic, but also on how the genre's position within historical traditions of *Heimat* representation might be characterized.

"*Heimat*" was defined in the early nineteenth century by the Grimm dictionary simply as "das Land oder auch nur den Landstrich, in dem man geboren ist oder bleibenden Aufenthalt hat."\(^5\) By the late nineteenth century, however, its status as a pragmatic signifier with a single, universally acknowledged referent had deteriorated. Gertraud Steiner has located *Heimat*'s first transitional phase in the period preceding the 1848 revolutions, asserting that it was in this moment "zum ersten Mal bewußt erlebt, da sie für viele als unreflektierter Naturzustand und konkrete materielle Sicherheit bereits verloren oder gefährdet [war]."\(^6\) The spread of industry and migration of workers to the growing cities constituted a fundamental shift in the conventions of property and community which had informed life in feudal Germany, and the idea of *Heimat* was first
consciously problematized when the social context which produced it began to change. This process led to a proliferation of aesthetic attempts to capture the essence of Heimat as its status became increasingly problematic.

During the 1890s, some of these trends in representation coalesced into a methodically produced Heimat mythology under the auspices of reactionary politics. The Bund der Landwirte was formed in 1893 by Prussian landowners whose economic hegemony was threatened by increasing agricultural imports. Their political objective was to eliminate this international threat, and the agenda they pursued was affirmed in the cultural sphere in two significant ways: a newly established "Volkskunde" projected a preindustrial utopian vision onto the agrarian community, and "Heimatkunst" used idealized images of provincial life to propagate conservative models of power based on the traditional concept of extended family. Steiner marks these projects as "Agrarromantik," a collective "Selbstverteidigungsreaktion der konservativen herrschenden Mächte." The ideal images they constructed denied historical reality in the attempt to uphold a set of moral principles foundational to the receding socioeconomic order. This trend of cooperation between aesthetic and political conservatism eventually culminated in the "Blut und Boden" mythology of National Socialist cultural practice.

The Nazi-era Heimat film played a significant role in the effort to idealize "Bauerntum" as the site of desirable traditions and stereotype the foreign (most often the urban) as the breeding ground for moral decay. Veit Harlan's Die goldene Stadt (1942) is an excellent example. Its narrative focuses on the tragic fate of Anna, a young woman from western Bohemia who, despite strong links to the Heimat as her place of birth, cannot resist the urge to visit Prague, the "golden city." The realization of this desire spawns disaster, as Anna returns from her unsanctioned adventure carrying an illegitimate child. She is rejected for her impurity, and her eventual suicide reinforces the ideas of fatalistic connection between person and place as well as irreconcilable conflict between the Heimat and the foreign or modern.

The construction of Heimat in Die goldene Stadt represents the final step in the term's transition from valence-neutral label to mythological
ideal. Its stylized image of agrarian life masks the dissemination of ideologies crucial to Nazi success, while “modern” and “foreign” become stigmas attached to that which represents a threat to social harmony. Heimat is depicted as the cornerstone of identity formation, and by defining it through its irreconcilable difference with the outside and a sense of its impending loss, Die goldene Stadt follows a tradition of Heimat art designed to condition public sentiment receptive to practices of exclusion and aggression.

“Heimatbindung” is a term often used to describe the sense of connection and security with which the Heimat is traditionally associated. From early Heimat art to Nazi-era portrayals, the connection is constructed essentially as a bond between the human subject and a fixed geographical point. In the Heimat film of the 1950s, however, we see a new kind of union supplant the more organic ties typical of earlier depictions. Georg Seeflen argues that the antithesis present in earlier phases of Heimat representation is absent here: “Der Heimatfilm handelt von der Beziehung zwischen der Heimat und dem Neuen, dem Fremden, und es wird nicht etwa der Sieg der einen oder der anderen Seite, nicht. der geschichtslos natürlichen Heimat und nicht der technologisch und ökonomisch avancierten Moderne, sondern so etwas wie ein Kompromiß, eine neue Einheit in der Widersprüchlichkeit gezeigt.”

This idea of compromise is key to the processes of connection that take place within the 1950s films, where the standard narrative dynamic of the outsider in the Heimat is often emblematic of a reconciliation between the traditional and the modern. Characters who “cross over” from one milieu to the other do not necessarily meet bitter ends (as did Anna in Die goldene Stadt). In fact, most complete a process of integration which establishes a new sense of harmony and belonging in their lives. Grün ist die Heide (1951) contains paradigmatic depictions of how acts of personal sacrifice can lead to a newfound sense of community, and these portrayals effectively demonstrate the conceptual shift that takes place in this genre.

The film’s principal conflict revolves around Lüder Lüdersen, a former Silesian landowner who is disgruntledly attempting to adjust to a new life in a small town on the Lüneburg Heath. For his daughter Helga,
the process of transition is facilitated first by a job in the local pharmacy and later by a romantic interest in Walter Rainer, the new forest warden, but for Lüdersen himself, the only respite from his feelings of disposses-sion comes from illicit hunting in the town’s forest preserve. Helga eventually learns of this and decides to confront him. The scene begins with her asking how he can behave in such a way when they are doing so well in their new home. Lüdersen, after assuring her that she would not understand, retorts, “Gut geht's uns hier? Geduldet sind wir hier ger-a-de.” He sees his illegal activity as an escape from the anxieties of refugee life: “Warum darf man kein Mensch mehr sein, nur weil man alles verlo-ren hat? Nur wenn ich draußen im Wald bin, in der Natur, dann vergesse ich wenigstens alles Elend.” His fixation with poaching is a symptom of an interrupted existence and as such representative of the frustrations experienced by many Germans who had been geographically displaced or psychologically traumatized by the war.

Lüdersen's compulsion ultimately necessitates his and Helga's departure, and the threat of another forced emigration thrusts him into an awareness of the sense of community he has developed. In a scene near the film's end, he declares his feelings for his “zweite Heimat” during a festival organized by the townspeople for the refugees. Lüdersen speaks emotionally of the pain of transition, explaining, “Wer nicht von der Heimat weg mußte, der kann es nicht ermessen, was es bedeutet, heimatlos zu sein.” He concludes his speech with words of appreciation for the members of his new community: “Ich war nah daran, mich selber zu verlieren, aber durch Güte und Verständnis, wie sie mir hier entgegengebracht worden sind, habe ich mich wiedergefunden. . . . Ich danke Ihnen von Herzen, für alles Gute, was ich hier erleben durfte.” Shortly after these remarks, he walks into the woods to bid a final farewell (conspicuously unarmed, a gesture symbolic of his acquiescence to the authority of local law), where he happens upon another poacher and is shot trying to halt the very transgression he has so often committed. A concluding scene finds Helga waiting in the comforting arms of Walter outside the door of the room where Lüdersen is recovering. The extraordinary circumstance thus acts as a catalyst: when introduced into the mixture of
Lüdersen's revelation in the face of loss and Helga's love for Walter, a resolution is produced in which they can all remain happily in the Heimat.

Another apparent group of outsiders in Grün ist die Heide is the trio of vagabond minstrels. Though completely destitute and without a home, they are anything but marginalized in the community. In fact, they fulfill a specific purpose by following a daily performance schedule, singing for certain people at appointed times and receiving appropriate compensation. An opening scene finds them marching merrily up to the house of the head forest warden, where they greet him and his new protegé, Walter. "Das ist nämlich unsere regelmäßige Tour," explains bandleader Hannes: "Wir kommen jeden Dienstag hierher, wie gemessen." He clarifies for the newcomer how the system of compensation functions. Nodding happily in agreement, Walter hands over some cigars as his superior reappears with some sandwiches for the entertainers. The reward is distributed in less than egalitarian fashion: Tunnes, the oldest of the group, is denied tobacco by Hannes, on the grounds that the former has "ein schwaches Herz." He also receives no share of the food, and is reminded (again by Hannes), "Du brauchst nicht. Du bist dick genug."

We note in this scene that the lifestyle of the vagabonds as well as their interpersonal relations are regimented by a set plan and established pecking order. The minstrels are more absorbed within and reflective of the social structure of the Heimat than they appear at first glance, and their integration into its hierarchy creates the perfect means for them to maintain their carefree attitude toward homelessness as well as for the townsfolk to demonstrate their generosity. Hannes, Tunnes, and Nachtigall may be "obdachlos," but they are not "heimatlos."

These depictions are significant in that they locate the sense of security equated in earlier forms of Heimat art with a bond between person and place in a bond between people. For all of these characters, Heimat is more of an intersubjective psychological phenomenon than a mystical tie to the earth: they are able to create a sense of belonging through a process of integration into a set of social relationships. Their "Bindung" does not serve to demonstrate irreconcilable dichotomies between the Heimat and the foreign, but rather represents a circumvention of the conflict through emotional resolutions. The land itself is important only to the extent that
it facilitates the formation of these relationships; it becomes a space instrumentalized for the attainment of an objective located within the subject. Where one is able to discover a sense of belonging and security—the Lüneburg Heath, the Alps, the Black Forest—is irrelevant; it is only whether one is able to do so that matters.

It is critical to realize, however, that this process of discovery simultaneously reproduces a stratified system of relations. The lack of psychological complexity which typifies the characters undercuts the believability of the emotional bonds they form, thus underscoring the importance of conforming to a certain social order as a means of creating the psychological state of Heimat. Helga and Walter's relationship, for example, seems to be based on little more than their attractiveness and eligibility, and the fact that Walter, as a significant cog in the patriarchy, needs a wife.

In depicting the overcoming of social adversity by love and generosity, the narrative foregrounds the importance of individual compassion in the creation of community. At the same time, its ideological message prioritizes the social practice of finding one's location in a system over any emotional phenomena located within the subject. In fact, the film constructs an ideal of behavior in which emotional realization and social regimentation are virtually fused: the subject unconsciously equates self-actualization with discovering the proper way to conform, thus guaranteeing the integrity of the social order. This model of integration encoded in this film dovetailed effectively with the conservative social agendas of its era.

The material crises of displacement and financial uncertainty, coupled with lingering psychological questions of guilt and identity in the wake of the Nazi era, seem to have created a viewing public especially receptive to the depictions of comfortably "centered" subjectivity in the films. The idea that such a subjectivity was not a matter of fate, but could be procured, must have been extremely appealing. At the same time, the implication that a personal sense of harmony and community could be created by locating a social niche within the landscape of the status quo could not have been more conducive to the political philosophy of "Keine Experimente!"
We can thus characterize the 1950s *Heimat* film both as break and continuity. As we note in one scene from *Heimatland* (1955), the genre potentially constitutes an effort to move beyond the paradigms of earlier *Heimat* constructions. The sequence depicts the president of the local “Trachtenverein” laying out his plan for the upcoming folk festival. He insists that traditional folk costumes must be worn by all participants, and that only “bodenständige Volksmusik” be allowed, “erstens aus Tradition, und zweitens, damit die bodenständigen Sitten und Gebräuche nicht von den sogenannten modernen Einflüssen — beeinflußt werden.” The spectator perceives his speech as a parody of chauvinistic *Heimat* rhetoric, and the strain of jazz in the sequence immediately following implies a rejection of ignorant adherence to tradition and an orientation toward the new. After a protracted attempt to integrate himself into the community, however, the film’s main character meets a tragic death. This exemplifies how the potentially progressive moment in the 1950s genre—the conscious dismissal of a reactionary or fascist *Heimat* concept—is compromised by an underlying equation of self-actualization and conformity. Unlike the Nazi-era *Heimat* film, the Adenauer-era *Heimat* film does not constitute part of a programmatic cultural politics, but rather purports to exist as pure entertainment beyond the political sphere. It nonetheless perpetuates a set of ideological formations beneficial to specific institutions within its social context. That its creators and consumers were disinclined or unable to acknowledge its functionalization does not detract from its potential effectiveness.

*Heimat* and History

In 1961, the film critic Walter Schmiedig complained of *Heimat* films’ unwillingness to deal with contemporary problems and dismissed the genre as “farbige Touristenpostkarten für den von der Geschichte genommenen Urlaub.” Indeed, one of the most immediately striking features of any *Heimat* film is the absence of reference to recent German history and actual postwar problems. These films show no bombed out cities, no starving refugees, and no wounded veterans. In their presentation of characters among untouched and brightly colored landscapes they elide the
twelve years between 1933 and 1945, tapping into a more distant and harmless history represented by innocent regional traditions. Yet beneath the attractive surface of the Heimat films the problem of recent German history does manifest itself, albeit in oblique ways.

Several main characters, often older father figures, harbor a guilty secret from a dark past. The depictions of these men laboring under their heavy burden resonates with problems surrounding the contemporary issue of collective guilt in the aftermath of the Holocaust. In both Sohn ohne Heimat (1955), for example, and Der Meineidbauer (1956), fathers have acted wrongly in a way which dispossesses the rightful inheritor of the family farm. Both men suffer physically as well as mentally under the weight of their transgressions; recurrent chest pains plague the characters through the films, functioning as melodramatic signals of a troubled conscience. These characters achieve peace and a measure of forgiveness from their families only during overwrought deathbed scenes, after these chest-pain “episodes” have escalated into full-fledged, fatal heart attacks. In neither film does the memory of the father disrupt the resolution of the final scene; younger characters are allowed to proceed unfettered. In the words of Heidi Fehrenbach, the father, the “embodiment” of a “problematic past . . . simply and mercifully disappears.”

Other characters, generally younger men, are falsely accused of crimes. The young doctor in Rosen-Resli (1954) has spent time in prison for a murder committed by his fiancée. The hero in Wetterleuchten um Maria (1957) is framed for the murder of his lover’s father. Though the character knows that he is blameless, the ramifications of the accusation within his Heimat world are still severe. Confrontations with accusing authorities seem to shake even the hero’s belief in his own innocence. These plots, however, end with the hero clearing his name. He then rejoins the community by resuming his former occupation, and solidifies his position within it through marriage.

It is significant that there is a generational divide between characters who are actually guilty and those who are falsely accused. Gerhard Bliersbach makes the argument that many Heimat films thematize the strained relationships between German parents and their children, asserting that after 1945 German fathers were “nicht präsentabel. . . . Deut-
sche Väter hatten sich schuldig gemacht.” It is possible to read, then, in these “purely entertaining” films the struggle of the younger generation against the accusation of being German in the aftermath of the Holocaust, as well as its uneasiness with the generation old enough to have enacted the horror. These recurring character constellations in *Heimat* films thus represent positions within the contemporary debate on collective guilt. The enormous popularity of these films was certainly due at least in part to the manner in which they dealt with this guilt question—featuring frequent scenes of easy reconciliation, they offered to the postwar audience hope of forgiveness.

There is an important difference, however, between the representation of these positions within the fictional world of the films and the terms of the real-world discussion. Within the fictions, guilt is always personal—the product of an individual action expiable through the forgiveness of the individuals affected. Here the real-world historical guilt is reduced to manageable size, moved from the public realm to the more private realm of the family. Such a reduction was necessary in order to incorporate this problem into the films—a crime attributable to the community as a whole would have called into question the value of fitting into that community, rending the fabric which bound together its members into a secure *Heimat*. This reduction was the only way history could be made palatable in a society more intent upon getting on with recovery than with critically evaluating the past.

*Heimat* and the Postwar Politics of Gender

An examination of women figures in the *Heimat* films yields additional examples of the way in which the construction of *Heimat* furthered the conservative agenda of the 1950s. During the war, the absence of men on the homefront pushed women into taking on more active roles in industry and agriculture. As late as 1950, nearly one-third of all West German households were still headed by a widowed or divorced woman, and many others depended on the work of women or children for survival. This situation was decried by the clergy and other social leaders who saw it as socially and economically desirable to return to the earlier patri-
archal model of the family. The main mechanism in the process of reintegrating women into the traditional hierarchy was marriage.

Marriage was viewed positively by conservatives in the 1950s, and indeed financially encouraged by the state, for various reasons. The traditional family unit, in which wife and household were subordinated to husband, reproduced and reinforced the hierarchy of the patriarchal state. The family also served as a stable economic unit which enabled the boom of the later postwar period. The CDU explicitly endorsed the German family in its rhetoric, viewing it as the divinely sanctioned building block of the new democracy, and one which had been violated by the interventionist Nazi state of the past and continued to be threatened by the socialist state to the east. Sociologist Helmut Schelsky echoed this ideologically loaded view when he described the family in the early 1950s as “society’s last bastion, the ultimate place of safety.” The Heimat films served this family agenda by depicting marriage and family life as the ultimate goal of all the nubile female characters; the happy ending which concludes most of the films of this genre consists in the certainty that the main characters will wed.

Marriage is, indeed, portrayed as a positive goal for nearly all characters, female and male, in the films. It functions frequently as a symbol for the integration of the individual into the social order. However, while compromises are necessary for anyone who becomes a part of the Heimat, for a woman the sacrifices are greater. She not only has to find a place in the social hierarchy, as is the case for her husband. She must also give up a great deal of autonomy in order to be a proper wife. An example of this occurs in Der Förster vom Silberwald (1955). Here Liesel, a young woman pursuing a career as an avant-garde artist in the city, falls in love with the forest warden in the provincial village of her grandfather. During the course of her holiday in the Silberwald, she is encouraged to discard the trappings of her sophisticated urban life—her provocative dresses, her taste for jazz music and modern art—in order to fit into the conservative Heimat. By the final scene of the film, in which she returns to the Silberwald to make it her permanent home, Liesel has given up her career and life in the city in exchange for the safety of a quiet existence at her husband’s side.
This is an extreme example of a woman surrendering independence for marriage and integration. Not all women in the films are willing to part so readily with the power and pleasure they gain from working outside the home. In one scene from *Die Christel von der Post* (1956), the female protagonist resists the idea of giving up her job at the post office in a discussion with Horst, her fiancé. Horst expresses in his arguments against her the expectations for a couple in the Adenauer era—once married, the husband should be the single breadwinner. When Christel protests, he admonishes her: “Sei doch vernünftig.” Apparently the notion of a married woman working outside the home violates the laws of reason.

Still other female figures, who actually run their own businesses, seem likely to retain their position after marriage. These jobs are not a mere pastime for the characters until they find a husband and are relieved of financial responsibility, but are a constitutive element of their lives. Yet their occupations always resemble home-making. Most of the working women run inns. Maria in *Die Trapp Familie* (1956) transforms the family mansion into a fashionable resort; the female lead in *Am Brunnen vor dem Tore* (1952) operates a successful restaurant and inn. All of these women animate their businesses much as women were to animate the home—they attract and keep customers with their charm, beauty, and ability to organize pantries and linen closets. At least one figure seems at first glance an exception—the marriageable woman in *Rosen-Resli* is the owner of a large business. Yet her company is a plant nursery—the powerful businesswoman cultivates roses. The fact that gardening is a skill expected of housewives, the association of roses with femininity, and the connection between women and nature make this profession, too, compatible with home-making.

The jobs of these female characters, then, do not interfere with the conventional duties or the traditional image of the married woman. Rather, these private, familial duties are extended into the economic sphere, and this traditional image is exploited as a marketing tool. The *Heimat* films do not attempt a simple reproduction of the patriarchal ideology that served as a tenet of earlier constructions of *Heimat*. Rather, they seek to naturalize the new economic activity of women by reconciling
it with traditional views on gender—women are capable of contributing to the *Wirtschaftswunder* because of, not despite, their housewifely accomplishments. During the process of this reconciliation, a commodification and desacralization of the once quasi-mystical connection between woman and home occurs: the home and the woman’s nurturing services within it are procurable by all guests with money to pay for a room in the inn. Georg Seeflen has traced a direct line from the commodification of woman under the aegis of economic progress at work in the *Heimat* films of the mid-1950s to the literal prostitution of women featured in the *Heimat* pornography of the 1960s.16

Though limited to certain traditionally sanctioned areas, the economic independence of these female proprietors of the hearth does pose a potential threat to male characters. The films deal with this threat straightforwardly. While their womanly work is valued, and a certain amount of independence within their domains is allowed, female characters in the *Heimat* are inevitably happier subordinated to an authoritative man. The female innkeeper from *Im weißen Rößl* (1952), for example, develops an infatuation for her male headwaiter only after he forces her to her knees before him. By the end of this scene, her initial resistance to this posture of submission has been forgotten and replaced with unabashed admiration. “Daß Sie so energisch sein könnten, Herr Leopold, das hab’ ich ja gar nicht geahnt!” she exclaims. Though the blustery Leopold is played to great comic effect, the serious message transmitted in this “love scene,” and reinforced by the couple’s engagement near the end of the film, is clear. It is not only correct and proper for men to give the orders and make the demands, it is also much more pleasurable for women that they do so.

Women who refuse to bow to the wishes of the male authority are duly punished. They are portrayed as overbearing shrews and often receive their comeuppance as part of the film’s denouement. An example of this occurs in *Sohn ohne Heimat*, one of the few *Heimat* films that maintain a serious dramatic tone and end tragically. The only unambiguously evil character in this film is the red-haired, strong-willed wife and mother figure. Her sin rests in attempting to exercise too much control over her husband’s inn—an inn which she had inherited from her family
and brought to him as dowry. Though the film never achieves a happy resolution for all its characters, a sense of closure is provided when the male protagonist is able to exact his revenge upon this virago by foiling her schemes and at one point actually wringing her neck. Only properly demure and conformist wives are allowed to contribute actively to the economy of Heimat. These women served as a reflection of and a model for the production of ideology in a society dealing with the specter of working women.

The Role of the Heimat Film in the Wirtschaftswunder

We have shown that the Heimat film of the 1950s provided German audiences with a sense of security by constructing a model of Heimat in which the integration of the individual into the social hierarchy is displayed in a positive light. The restorative social message of the Heimat films was coupled with a favorable outlook on some modern developments. Although dirndls, folk music, and horse-drawn carriages predominate in the Heimat, the city-dwellers who come to visit bring their modern clothes, jazz, and automobiles with them. Just as these outsiders can be integrated into the Heimat, their modern innovations can also find a home in the province. One can actually hear this integration taking place in Schwarzwaldmädels (1950); in the course of the film modern dance music is contrasted with folk music, but at the end a synthesis is achieved in a "Heimat waltz." Despite its emphasis on tradition, the world of the Heimat has room for modern innovations; these new elements are made to appear acceptable to the viewer precisely because the Heimat retains so many other traditional features. The beautiful landscape of the Heimat also renders the processes of modernization depicted in the films acceptable in the eyes of the audience. The Heimat film allowed the viewer the pleasure of seeing the comforts of modern life promised by Erhard's phrase "Wohlstand für alle" portrayed in such a way that they pose no threat to the Heimat.

One aspect of modern life which the Heimat film shows in a particularly favorable light is economic development. Just as the Heimat film reduced historical factors to a personal level in order to make them seem
West German Heimat Films of the 1950s

less threatening, it also tried to reassure audiences by bringing the sweeping economic changes of the 1950s down to scale. The Heimat film served to make the German viewer feel at home in the Wirtschaftswunder in two ways: first, by showing that economic considerations and technological innovations could be integrated into the safe world of the Heimat, and second, by actually turning Heimat into a commodity, available to anyone who could pay.

One of the main plot elements in many of the Heimat films is economic difficulty, either of an individual or of the whole community. The solutions typically reached offered two messages to viewers who also saw themselves having to struggle to find economic stability in the postwar period. One form of solution is a large financial gift from a benefactor. For instance, in Heideschulmeister Uwe Karsten (1954), the community needs a hospital, and a rich woman who marries the local schoolteacher donates the money. A similarly unexpected source of money or material goods in the Heimat film is the game of chance; the female protagonist in Schwarzwaldmädel, for example, wins a new car in a raffle. Owning an automobile was still just a dream for most German audience members in 1950. Such depictions of good fortune in the Heimat films offered viewers an unrealistic fantasy.

The other typical solution to financial problems offered a more practicable model for the spectator to follow: the individual learns to be enterprising and to participate in the market economy. This capitalist spirit is not glorified for its own sake, but is shown as an appropriate response to the economic situation. In several films restaurant or hotel owners advertise to improve business. The community of Der Förster vom Silberwald sells a piece of land in order to raise money, showing that it is possible to bow to economic reality without destroying the unique features of the Heimat. In Rosen-Resli a little girl cultivates and markets a new type of rose in order to support her ailing foster mother. The spectator of the Heimat film was encouraged to become an enterprising capitalist, since this goal is depicted as consistent with the other positively valued attributes of Heimat.

Another function of the Heimat film within the Wirtschaftswunder was to advertise German products. In some cases this took the form of prod-
uct placements. The name of the petrochemical company BP is prominently displayed at the gas station in *Am Brunnen vor dem Tore*. The car which the female protagonist wins in *Schwarzwaldmädel* is clearly labeled as a 1950 Ford Taunus convertible. Even in cases where the name of the company was not displayed on the product, the numerous motorscooters and automobiles that rolled through the *Heimat* served as industry-wide advertisements for this important branch of the German economy. Audiences were encouraged to join the newly mobile consumer society by paying on credit, if necessary. In *Die Christel von der Post*, a young police assistant buys a motorscooter on installments. When the police inspector scolds him for going into debt, the assistant reminds his boss that he himself bought his electric stove on credit. Male viewers were given particular incentive to buy a new set of wheels, since success in love is often shown to be contingent upon owning an automobile. In *Ja ja die Liebe in Tirol* (1955), a man informs his prospective date that they will not be able to take his car as originally planned. When he suggests that they take the train, she cancels the date.

The audiences of the *Heimat* film were also encouraged to be good consumers of the German and Austrian tourist industry. During the 1950s large numbers of Germans gained the financial wherewithal to travel. The beautiful landscapes and the depiction of local color in the guise of the folk festival served as a sort of travel prospectus for potential tourists. To the extent that these films functioned as advertisements for the travel industry, they participated in the commodification of *Heimat*.

Many of the films construct *Heimat* as a holiday destination. Often the main characters do not reside in the *Heimat*; several films begin in the fast-paced big city, then show the characters traveling to the countryside where most of the action takes place. The prevalence of city-dwellers is one reason that the previous sharp moral division between urban and country life is generally neutralized in the *Heimat* films of the 1950s: these films were not intended to alienate city-dwellers, who made up a large part of movie theater audiences, but rather showed that they too could find a place in the *Heimat*.

Another aspect of *Heimat* which reinforced its suitability as an ideal vacation site is the fact that even the local residents hardly seem to work.
The forest warden's main job consists of strolling in the woods, the schoolteacher spends his or her days singing folk songs with the children, and the vagabonds avoid manual labor whenever possible. In cases where unpleasant working conditions are shown, in the guise of an antagonistic employer-employee relationship, the employee often winds up getting the upper hand. In *Im weißen Rößl* the waiter forces his employer to get down on her knees and beg him to stay on with her. The overworked police assistant of *Die Christel von der Post* shows up his boss by solving a detective case. The owner of a jewelry store in *Schwarzwaldmädel* is constantly humiliated in front of his employees. In these instances the films took on the function of carnavalesque wish-fulfillment for the audience in the temporary reversal of the usual workplace hierarchy in the fantasy world of *Heimat*.

Almost all of the *Heimat* films served indirectly as advertisements for the tourist industry, but in some the marketing of *Heimat* for tourists is explicit. In a number of films a hotel serves as the locus of *Heimat*, as in *Im weißen Rößl*, *Ja ja die Liebe in Tirol*, and *Die Christel von der Post*. The commodification of *Heimat* in these films is visible on two levels, which play on the dual nature of *Heimat* as both a physical location and a series of interpersonal relationships. On one level, the beautiful setting is a commodity to which the tourist can gain access by paying to come visit it. On another level, the *Heimat* of which the tourist becomes a part—the group of people in the hotel—is held together solely by economic factors. The stable relationship in this construction of *Heimat* is ensured by the mutual business interests of all the inhabitants.

The economically determined nature of *Heimat* reveals a potential conflict between the surface-level depiction of satisfying interpersonal relationships and the underlying market interests. The *Heimat* film strives to conceal this tension either by downplaying the impersonal economic ties or by showing that they are not at odds with the reassuring *Heimat* feeling which the audience desired. On the one hand, the various love affairs that take place between the tourists and the inhabitants of the "*Heimat* hotel" serve to mask the financial reality. While economic considerations bring the people together, personal relationships then develop and bring about more lasting bonds. On the other hand, the depiction of *Heimat* as a
purchasable good was in keeping with the needs of contemporary audiences. "Heimat" as a permanent tie to a particular piece of land was no longer desirable, partly because this notion was at the heart of the Nazi "Blut und Boden" ideology, which was now taboo, but also because German society was becoming increasingly mobile and urbanized. The Heimat film offered viewers an image of Heimat which was accessible to anyone. The viewer did not have to move permanently to the countryside to get the feelings of security and belonging associated with Heimat; he or she could just go there on vacation. Or better yet, the viewer could go to the movies and experience the Heimat vicariously.

This brings us to the final aspect of commodification within the Heimat film, the explicit and self-reflective performance of Heimat as a means of earning money. The depiction within the films of characters creating and marketing Heimat reflects back on the entire genre, whose purpose was, indeed, to create and sell an appealing vision of Heimat. We see this process already in one of the earliest films, Schwarzwaldmädel. At the beginning the distinction is set up between the city, where nothing is as it seems, and the Heimat, where everything is supposedly genuine. But the deception of theater goes on in the Heimat as well, most obviously in the folk festival at the end, when everyone dons folk costumes and the Schwarzwaldmädel, who is actually a secretary in Baden-Baden, becomes Saint Cecilia for a day. It becomes clear that this is a staged performance for the sake of the film viewers when one realizes that the Saint Cecilia festival should actually be celebrated in November according to the church calendar. In order to showcase the beautiful landscape the filmmakers chose to reschedule Saint Cecilia's Day for the spring.

The festival in Schwarzwaldmädel at least plays into customary notions of Heimat inasmuch as it is a local tradition and is not carried out for financial gain. But several films directly link the performance of Heimat to earning tourists' money. In Im weißen Rössl a zither player greets the arriving hotel guests with a song from their own country. As people of different nationalities approach he flips the cardboard sign he wears around his neck to display the welcome message in the appropriate language. He is rewarded for his efforts by the tourists' tips. Similar exam-
amples of marketing Heimat for profit include Ja ja die Liebe in Tirol, in which a hotel owner in financial difficulty organizes a local Heimat talent contest in order to advertise his business, and the performance of Heimatlieder for money by the wandering musicians in several of the films.

The most blatant depiction of the creation of a certain view of Heimat for financial gain appears in Schwarzwälder Kirsch. This was a late Heimat film, premiering in 1958, and while it is not a typical example, it does constitute a logical progression in the increasing commodification of Heimat. It also reflects the attempt which began in the mid-1950s to resuscitate a dying genre. The Heimat film had reached the height of its popularity by mid-decade; in 1956 theater owners were demanding “eine Abkehr von der Heimatschnulze.” Producers tried to revive the Heimat film by adding more modern music and more explicit references to money and sex. This prostitution of Heimat reached its climax in the Heimat pornography of the sixties.

Schwarzwälder Kirsch is about two famous composers who have written a successful operetta about the town of Glückstal in the Black Forest. Because their piece has brought a great deal of tourist money to the town, they are invited to a local celebration. Upon their arrival they hear two itinerant musicians playing their own rendition of one of their songs, “Ein armer Musikant.” The composers are incensed and play the original version. Ironically, the version of the rich, successful artists is about a poor musician longing to return to his Heimat. But the real poor musicians have no use for the sentimental Heimat nostalgia; their version is about a wandering minstrel who invents the jukebox and becomes a rich entrepreneur. This scene pokes fun at the sentimental view of Heimat, pointing out that it is just a creation of rich artists in order to earn money, and has nothing to do with the hard financial reality of a poor musician.

In the course of the film the two pairs of musicians are mistaken for each other, causing great confusion; there are several romantic relationships, and so on. By the celebration at the end, everything is cleared up and the composers announce that they are going to use the whole story of their trip to Glückstal (that is, the plot of the film) as the basis for their new musical. The final scene is a bizarre visual juxtaposition of the narrative “reality” with the theatrical finale of the musical they are going
to write, including the characters from the film, elements of folk culture, and scantily clad modern dancers. This pastiche is a surreal, perhaps even postmodern commentary on the state of the Heimat film at the end of its popularity.

**The 1950s’ Heimat Film Today**

The ethnologist Ina-Maria Greverus has attempted to formulate a truly progressive and democratic notion of Heimat. She argues that the creation of Heimat should be seen as a political task, one which supports the individual in his or her own attempt to appropriate Heimat actively and creatively: “Die Lebensqualität Heimat ist weder angeboren noch kann sie verordnet werden, sondern sie ist eine Leistung des tätigen . . . Subjekts. Ihm reale Chancen für dieses selbstbestimmende Handeln zu geben, ist die `politische Aufgabe Heimat.’”24 The Heimat films of the 1950s seem on the surface to be a step in this direction. The commercialization of Heimat was one means of wresting the concept away from its previous association with fate and a mythological connection to the soil. However, while the Heimat of these films appeared to offer the viewer a model for self-actualization, this promise was undercut by the fact that acceptance into the Heimat was contingent upon conformity and the willingness to participate in a market economy.

Although these films appeared to encourage the viewer to shape Heimat according to his or her individual needs, they assumed that everyone had the same needs, namely those beneficial to the perpetuation of the political and economic status quo. Under the guise of self-actualization the Heimat films forced a prefabricated ideal of Heimat upon the audience. The process of integration of the subject into the preexisting order modelled in these films is similar to that expected of former citizens of the GDR in Germany today. It would not be surprising if the 1950s’ Heimat films were currently enjoying renewed popularity—not among East Germans, but among West Germans who want “reunification” to mean the integration of East Germany into the West German notion of Heimat.
Filmography

(Heimat films viewed in preparing this essay)

*Der verlorene Sohn*, Luis Trenker, 1934
*Die goldene Stadt*, Veit Harlan, 1942
*Immensee*, Veit Harlan, 1943
*Schwarzwaldmädel*, Hans Deppe, 1950
*Grün ist die Heide*, Hans Deppe, 1951
*Am Brunnen vor dem Tore*, Hans Wolff, 1952
*Heidi*, Luigi, 1952
*Im weißen Rößl*, Willi Forst, 1952
*Heideschulmeister Uwe Karsten*, Hans Deppe, 1954
*Rosen-Resti*, Harald Reinl, 1954
*Der Förster vom Silberwald*, Alfons Stummer, 1955
*Heimatland*, Franz Antel, 1955
*Ja ja die Liebe in Tirol*, Geza von Bolvary, 1955
*Sissi*, Ernst Marischka, 1955
*Sohn ohne Heimat*, Hans Deppe, 1955
*Die Christel von der Post*, Karl Anton, 1956
*Der Meineidbauer*, Rudolf Jugert, 1956
*Sissi—Die junge Kaiserin*, Ernst Marischka, 1956
*Die Trapp Familie*, Wolfgang Liebeneiner, 1956
*Sissi—Schicksalsjahre einer Kaiserin*, Ernst Marischka, 1957
*Wetterleuchten um Maria*, Luis Trenker, 1957
*Schwarzwälder Kirsch*, Geza von Bolvary, 1958
*Die Trapp Familie in Amerika*, Wolfgang Liebeneiner, 1958

Notes

2. Höfig, pp. 176–83, lists 300 *Heimat* films which premiered between 1947 and 1960; our figure derives from this list.


Ibid., p. 12.


For a more detailed examination of these developments, see ibid., pp. 11ff.


For an interesting psychoanalytic reading of this film, see Bliersbach, pp. 33ff.


Bliersbach, p. 40.

Fehrenbach, p. 95.

Quoted ibid., p. 101.

Seßlen, p. 354.

*Der Förster vom Silberwald* is an exception among the films we viewed for this project: in this film the city and all of its modern accoutrements are portrayed as the evil opposite to the healthy, moral life of the *Heimat*.


Again, *Der Förster vom Silberwald* offers an exception among our film sample: the modern artist races to the countryside from the city in a huge red car followed by a cloud of dust; his arrival is accompanied by threatening-sounding music. This is the only portrayal of an automobile in the film.

However, the previous business relationship is not forgotten. In *Im weißen Rössl* the business language is retained: the hotel owner proposes to her head waiter by firing him as waiter but “hiring” him as husband for life. In *Ja ja die Liebe in Tirol*, a guest in the hotel proposes to the daughter of the owner, who essentially runs the business. They drink schnaps together, then he asks her for the bill for the schnaps. She tells him not to worry about it—it will be put on his room account!


The place names mentioned in my title refer to two small resort towns separated by the stretch of Baden-Württemberg, one to the state's south-west, the other just beyond its northern edge. As metaphors, they bear on key differences in recent German philosophy. They measure what has become known as the distance between Freiburg and Frankfurt—two further place names, which, for insiders, refer to the antinomy between Heidegger's fundamental ontology and Adorno's critical theory. For purposes of this talk I shall use “Todtnauberg” and “Amorbach” to map two different notions of home, one that grounds itself staunchly in death, and one that embraces transience: the elevated, rock-hard peasant retreat in Heidegger's case, and, in Adorno's, the river- and border-location of a formerly aristocratic residence.

My paper is organized into three blocks or chapters. I call them “blocks” to stress Heidegger's archaic-ontological notion of home, and I call them “chapters” to indicate Adorno's historical-critical approach. Since both were philosophers interested in poetry, I am also slipping in a poet as foil and correspondent. So my presentation will be interrupted here and there by a montage of a text by Celan, and it will end with some thoughts about his poem “Todtnauberg.” In short, I shall present Heimat via a mythical, a critical, and a lyrical discourse.

First Block:

One Who Dwells, or, Heidegger's Mythical Discourse

Todtnauberg, tucked away in the Black Forest, is situated about 3000 feet high. The name first appears in the charter for a silver mine, signed by Konrad II in 1025, with “Todtnauberg” meaning dead (or deaf) rock, i.e., lacking in ore. But ore wasn't lacking entirely, because mining was the
main industry for the sparsely populated area until the mid-1500s. From then on, the narrow alpine meadows were used for small-scale ranching until, by the 1800s, the land could no longer support the growing population. A cottage industry of bristle-brush making developed, together with the production of wood shingles, timber being the community's major resource. By 1900, twenty percent of the population worked in agriculture and 60% in industry; the remaining twenty percent in commerce and related services. The village had been discovered by an emerging tourist industry. Today, that industry's idiom describes it as follows:

[Der Fremdenverkehr] hat sich zur Hauptherwerbsquelle des gepflegten und weithin bekannten Kurorts entwickelt, der mit seinem neuerrichteten Kurhaus, Schwimmbad, seinen Hotels, Gasthäusern, Pensionen, nicht zuletzt aber mit seiner herrlichen Bergwelt ein bevorzugtes Ziel ist.

In 1923, the year he was appointed professor of philosophy at Marburg, Martin Heidegger, encouraged by his wife Elfriede, built a vacation home in Todtnauberg, a humble cabin he considered his work-site and retreat. It also became a site in hierarchical, binary opposition to the life in the valley below, a life that, according to him, teemed with the chatter and busy-ness of the “They” (das Man). In a letter to Karl Jaspers he exclaims: “Ich fahre am 1. 8. auf die Hütte—und freue mich sehr auf die starke Luft der Berge—dieses weiche leichte Zeug hier unten ruiniert einen auf die Dauer. Acht Tage Holzarbeit—dann wieder Schreiben.”

For Heidegger, the cabin up high stood for the “authentic” life. Here he conceived Being and Time (1927), here he greeted visitors making their pilgrimage to him, here he wrote his “Letter on `Humanism’” (1947), and here, very likely, he composed, his inaugural address as Rector of Freiburg University in 1933. “Von hier aus,” as one of his biographers puts it, “führen alle Wege nach unten.” Celan had a different perspective:

_Eines Abends, die Sonne, und nicht nur sie, war untergegangen, da ging, trat aus seinem Häusel und ging der Jud . . . ging eines_
Abends, da einiges untergegangen war, ging unterm Gewölk, ging im Schatten, dem eigenen und dem fremden—denn der Jud, du weißt, was hat er schon, das ihn auch wirklich gehört, das nicht geborgt war, ausgeliehen und nicht zurückgegeben—, da ging er also und kam, kam daher auf der Straße, der schönen, der unvergleichlichen, ging, wie Lenz, durchs Gebirg, er, den man hatte wohnen lassen unten, wo er gehörte, in den Niederungen, er, der Jud, kam und kam.°

In his lecture on the essence of truth (1930) Heidegger defines this essence as an unfolding, the condition of which is the rootedness in one’s native ground.° (He was not born in Todtnauberg, but Meßkirch, about 50 miles to the east, is part of the same Alemannic region.) His poeticizing reflections, “Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens” (1947), try to articulate this condition. Let me quote one such reflection, typically divided into a landscape vignette and a philosophical thought emerging therefrom:

Wenn es von den Hängen des Hochtales, darüber langsam die Herden ziehen, glockt und glockt. . . .

Der Dichtungscharakter des Denkens ist noch verhüllt.

Wo er sich zeigt, gleicht er für lange Zeit der Utopie eines halb-poetischen Verstandes.

Aber das denkende Dichten ist in der Wahrheit die Topologie des Seyns.

Sie sagt diesem die Ortschaft seines Wesens.°

Let me paraphrase: in view of cows ambling over alpine meadows the poetic nature of thinking reveals itself. Naming the site, it calls into being (small b = existence) the presence of Being (capital B = its essence). This “utopia of a semi-poetic intellect” shows itself in Heidegger’s concluding poem, a scene of rock-hard settlement and plunging waters, of
tranquil thought and anticipation. No human subject is in sight—but blessing muses, right there in the Black Forest:

Wälder lagern
Bäche stürzen
Felsen dauern
Regen rinnt.

Fluren warten
Brunnen quellen
Winde wohnen
Segen sinnt.

It is here amidst sublime nature—sublime kitsch—where philosophy is at home. The rhythm and alliterations of Heidegger's poem recall a thinned-out Wagnerian pathos. There is a plunging and welling-up, held in the balance of sturdy dwelling, a kind of de-sexualized, domesticated echo of Isolde's Liebestod, her abandonment to the wind, the waves, and orgiastic bliss. I quote from Wagner's libretto:

Wie sie schwellen,
imch umrauschen,
soll ich atmen,
soll ich lauschen?
Soll ich schlürfen,
untertauchen?

But home is grounded, and Heidegger, after resigning from his post as rector, grounds himself firmly on his mountain. In an essay of that same year, "Warum bleiben wir in der Provinz?" he explains his decision to remain where he is:

Neulich bekam ich den zweiten Ruf an die Universität Berlin. Bei einer solchen Gelegenheit ziehe ich mich aus der Stadt in die Hütte zurück. Ich höre, was die Berge und die Wälder und die

The passage reaches artfully from distant, hectic Berlin (Heidegger called it bodenlos) to the calm, reassuring touch of the peasant. What will he say? The drama enacted needs no dialogue. Glance and gesture, touch and truth all arise from a proximity that cannot deceive—because it is transparent to the senses. The peasant makes sense, the city does not. There is no mention of politics, perhaps because politics is the underpinning for the scene to begin with. (At the time, having declined the university offer, Heidegger was proposing to run—in Berlin—a training academy for the new Germany’s professorial elite: Todtnauberg in Berlin. But his candidacy was rejected. His essay on provincialism thus was published, fittingly, in the regional paper Der Alemannen—Kampfblatt der Nationalsozialisten Oberbadens.)

Heidegger appeals in this essay to the simple life. He praises an existence that engages in down-to-earth work uncluttered by artifice, a dwelling space that—in his case—allows room a for a “simple and essential” thinking:

What makes this idyllic, labor-inspired site uncomfortable is not only its
subterranean nostalgia for a time that has irretrievably passed (recall that
only 20% of the villagers made their living by agriculture) but its close
association to the three timely “services” Heidegger expounded on in his
rector’s address in the city of Freiburg below. In this rousing speech
delivered in May 1933, he calls for serving the new National Socialist
state with Arbeitsdienst, Wehrdienst, Wissensdienst—all of which draw
their strength, as he puts it, “from the forces that are rooted in the soil and
blood of a Volk.”12 The performance of this speech was accompanied by
the singing of the 4th stanza of the Horst-Wessel-Lied and raising the right
arm in the Hitler-salute.

Still wars also, still dort oben im Gebirg. Nicht lang wars still,
denn wenn der Jud daherkommt und begegnet einem zweiten,
dann ists bald vorbei mit dem Schweigen, auch im Gebirg. Denn
der Jud und die Natur, das ist zweierlei, immer noch, auch heu-
te, auch hier.13

Adorno had quite a bit to say about the idyll of Todtnauberg. In his
lectures on philosophical terminology (1962), on the notion of “profundi-
ty,” he quotes from Heidegger’s laudatio on provincialism and concludes
that Heidegger’s idea of simple groundedness is a gross simplification,
however true the longing it expresses may be.14 To attribute to a place
and position a depth that is more profound than the social forces that
mediate them is, in Adorno’s eyes, an objective lie. In the era of tech-
nology on a rampage, reigned into serving divisive social relations, sim-
licity and groundedness are class privileges. They are not essences that
unfold or disclose themselves.

Now, it would be unfair if we did not mention Heidegger’s own
polemic against technology. But, like his praise of agrarian life, this
polemic has its undercurrent. In one sense, his concept of the pervasive
rule of Gestell, an artificially erected framework and system which is
man’s provocation of nature turned back on him as his own imprisonment
(a being-framed by one’s own machinations), is not unlike Adorno’s
concept of man’s domination of nature and the return of the repressed.15
(For a scathing satire on Heidegger being framed by his own Gestell I refer you to Elfriede Jelinek’s play Totenauberg\textsuperscript{16}). In another sense, Heidegger’s critique of Gestell hardly obstructs his life-long vision for National Socialism. In his 1935 lectures on metaphysics, published unchanged in 1953, there is hope for undoing the damage wreaked by global technology through its encounter with, I quote, “der inneren Wahrheit und Größe dieser Bewegung.”\textsuperscript{17} Since the existing National Socialism, according Heidegger, did not measure up to its radical roots, despite a certain amount of “Säuberung” (!),\textsuperscript{18} the critique of technology must persist.

But the point is not really technology. It is language—more precisely, a way of speaking as if an earlier, simpler era could be resurrected. Worse: considering the time of the speaking, as if this era would be resurrected by so-called “forces” that say one thing and mean another, that say Heimat and mean Lebensraum. (Hans Magnus Enzensberger, in an angry poem twenty years later, writes: “was da Hölderlin sagt und meint Himmler.”\textsuperscript{19}) Adorno rightly understands Heidegger’s philosophy as a philosophy of language, and it is its forced simplicity and ease of groundedness that provoke him:

Eben dieses Abgeleitete, Klischierte genau an der Stelle, wo Ursprünglichkeit gemeint ist, straft den vorgeblichen Inhalt Lügen. Das ist nicht nur das Ganghofersche in dieser Prosa, sondern es ist zugleich auch der Index der eigenen Unwahrheit. . . . Ich meine, es steht hinter diesem Ideal des Ersten als des Bodens so etwas wie der Autochthone als Leitbild: Der, der an irgendeiner Stelle zuerst gewesen ist, der als erster besessen habe, sei der Höhergeartete, der Vornehmere gegenüber dem new-comer oder gegenüber dem Zugewanderten.\textsuperscript{20}

But let us return to Heidegger’s own words. I shall not address his Hölderlin-lectures of 1934/35, resonant of blood-and-soil ideology as they are, with “Germanien” a site of the recuperable glory that once was Greece, and that now (in 1934), founded on the power of the German language, faces its historical moment of transformation.\textsuperscript{21} I shall address a little known essay from 1960 instead, “Sprache und Heimat.”\textsuperscript{22}
The grand national soil of the 1930s seems to shrink to the home soil after Heidegger's turn (Kehre). Or does it? Perhaps the two are one and the same. In his 1933 eulogy for an early Nazi hero, the Freiburg student Albert Leo Schlageter shot by the French in 1923 for his acts of sabotage, Heidegger writes: "As he stood defenseless facing the rifles, the hero's inner gaze soared above the muzzles to the mountains of his home that he might die for the German people and its Reich with the Alemannic countryside before his eyes." After the Kehre, in a lecture given on occasion of the annual meeting of the Hebbel-Society, Heidegger elaborates a more cozy understanding of home. Heimat is the sound of the regional dialect. Man's fate, he claims, is having been born into this sound, of this place. And it is fate that makes us speak truly with each other—that is, speak with those of the same place and tongue.

For Heidegger, language is dialect in the double sense of discriminating speaking and fated communication. Dialect is lodged in the home, is both the mother's tongue and the "mother" of tongues. Baiting his listeners at the North-German Hebbel-Society with his own difference of place, he explains to them a poem by Johann Peter Hebel, written in Alemannic. It is titled "Der Sommerabend." It is just what strikes you as strange, Heidegger tells his listeners, that lets you hear the properties of a dialect, "das Wesen der Sprache als solche." What are these properties? Heidegger says that it is not the "meaning" of words, since that could be rendered in any language, would be "meaning in general." The properties of dialect, rather, mine from the
deep. He urges his audience to listen to the sound, to the melody and rhythm, to the contemplative tone of the poem. Together they reveal a primal language, an Ursprache. He sharply distinguishes this primal language from the general language or Weltsprache (which is flat). While the Ursprache is originary, non-intentional, and organic, the Weltsprache is artificial, manipulative, and constructed. One is fake, the other, proper. And it is the primal language that resounds in the dialect.

Would each dialect, then, have its own space and special ancestor? Heidegger does not address this question, nor does he mention a linguistic community that might have ancestors but not a place—such as the bane of Nazi ideology, the “rootless” Jews, whose “dialect” was forbidden and whose being was eradicated to create Lebensraum right within Germanien. Instead, Heidegger seems transfixed by his own dialect, by the power of what always-already has been seen but not, until now, brought face-to-face: “Jenes, was von uns, ohne daß wir es eigens beachten, immer schon gesichtet ist und deshalb das Gesicht schlechthin genannt werden darf.”

What he is talking about is the pure, unmediated contemplation of the Same.

His language, even in 1960, betrays a purity contaminated by recent history. Resounding with a mix of Hölderlin, Wagner, and Nazi idioms he speaks of the mortals’ “Hut und Hege, Hort und Huld” for a steadfast site in the soil. The unconcealed figure in the poem who makes this erect site on homesoil possible is the setting sun. Or is it the German mother, the Black Forest farm-wife? Wait, it is both:


Mundart, Being, and the maternal—all are gathered into the light of the sun setting over Alemannic ground. Clearly, Heidegger’s conjurations of
sight/site into language make for a home that is higher than others, being situated where it is and providing survey from above. "Wer hier oben wohnt," notes one of his students upon a visit, "der hat für all dies andere Maßstäbe."

As Heidegger speaks about the tired evening sun preparing for her setting, he foregrounds the word *bergend* (= sheltering like a mountain) and claims that the special expression of her sinking cannot be captured by the low-German translation. (The terms "high" and "low" refer to the country's topography, which separates, just south of Frankfurt, two groups of German dialects.) Reading Heidegger, we are prompted to ask: Can a low-placed position envision the full trajectory of the sun? The trajectory of fulfilled time? Is such a position "elevated" enough to span the gaze downward to the ultimate home, the ground, the origin? "Todtnauberg": both name and location seem to code his lofty perspective and a heroically posed orientation-onto-death.

*Weiβt du. Weiβt du und siehst: Es hat sich die Erde gefaltet hier oben, hat sich gefaltet einmal und zweimal und dreimal, und hat sich aufgetan in der Mitte, und in der Mitte steht ein Wasser, und das Wasser ist grün, und das Grüne ist weiß, und das Weiße kommt von noch weiter oben, kommt von den Gletschern, man könnte, aber man solls nicht, sagen, das ist die Sprache, die hier gilt, das Grüne mit dem Weißen drin, eine Sprache, nicht für dich und nicht für mich—*

Chapter Two:

One Who Revisits, or, Adorno’s Critical Discourse

Amorbach, by name and location, appears quite the opposite of Todtnauberg. Situated in the Odenwald in Lower Franconia on the river Mudau, it used to be the residence of the dukes of Leiningen, who also kept a summer palace nearby. Its Benedictine abbey, secularized in 1803 and famous for its organ, was founded in 734 by St. Pirminius. The non-aristocrats living in the area worked originally as peasants and serfs. Commerce in timber arose around 1800, with a lively industry of leather
and textile production developing during the nineteenth century. By the turn of the century, Amorbach had gained a name as a popular resort for its iodine baths.31

Throughout his childhood, Adorno spent many summer vacations there, accompanied by his “two mothers” who introduced him to music, the former court opera singer, Maria Calvelli-Adorno delle Piane, and her sister, his aunt Agathe, a well-known concert pianist. In his sketch of 1966, “Amorbach,” he recalls a scene as a young man that puts the town’s feudal past into perspective:


There is no question that Adorno, born in the wealthy westend of Frankfurt 50 miles to the northwest, considers Amorbach his childhood paradise. In contrast to Heidegger, for whom Todtnauberg was a life-long work-site and retreat, Adorno associates vacation and an early experienced urbanity with the town. In his memory, locals and summer guests mingle, landscape and architecture refract each other, a multiplicity of languages is spoken. It is a place of privilege and play. One of the scenes tells about his imaginative exploration of the stretch of no-man’s-land along the state border. He describes his childish joy in playing at ruling this land, in the colorful Baden and Bavarian flags, in the sounds of the international names of family guests. It is as if he were quoting a latter-day version of Hölderlin’s “Friedensfeier” to himself, sparked by a dash of communism:

Jene Internationale war kein Einheitsstaat. Ihr Friede versprach sich durch das festliche Ensemble von Verschiedenem, farbig gleich den Flaggen und den unschuldigen Grenzpfählen, die, wie
ich staunend entdeckte, so gar keinen Wechsel in der Landschaft bewirkten. Das Land aber, das sie umschlossen und das ich, spielend mit mir selbst, okkupierte, war ein Niemandsland. Später, im Krieg, tauchte das Wort auf für den verwüsteten Raum vor den beiden Fronten. Es ist aber die getreue Übersetzung des griechischen—Aristophanischen—, das ich damals desto besser verstand, je weniger ich es kannte, Utopie.*

Amorbach is a utopia that taught Adorno to keep his eyes and ears and mind wide open. The scenes that make up the text consist of architectural and terrain descriptions, name-, sight-, sound-, and taste-associations, morality tales and historical events, as well as their lightly drawn social analysis. All are refracted by a memory that retains experience as transient, historical.

Ironically, the discoverer of Amorbach for wealthy city dwellers before World War I, according to Adorno, was the painter Max Rossmann, stage-set designer for the Wagner Festivals in Bayreuth. By bringing opera singers and festival musicians to the town, its culinary-cultural level was raised to that of the urban upper bourgeoisie. Amorbach is the backdrop for Meistersinger and for foreign accents, for whispered rumors and rowdy youth-movement groups. Historically, it is a utopia on the brink, lovingly remembered because experienced as a child, but not to be recaptured because ruinous to begin with: “Ein Bild Rossmanns, die `Konfurter Mühle,' unvollendet und auf bedeutende Weise zerrüttet, riß mich hin. Meine Mutter schenkte es mir, ehe ich Deutschland verließ.”**

Auf dem Stein bin ich gelegen, damals, du weißt, auf den Steinfliesen; und neben mir, da sind sie gelegen, die andern, die wie ich waren, die andern, die anders waren als ich und genauso, die Geschwisterkinder; und sie lagen da und schliefen, schliefen und schließen nicht, und sie träumten und träumten nicht, und sie liebten mich nicht und ich liebte sie nicht, denn ich war einer, und wer will Einen lieben. . . . **

---

*Utopie*

**Ein Bild Rossmanns, die `Konfurter Mühle,' unvollendet und auf bedeutende Weise zerrüttet, riß mich hin. Meine Mutter schenkte es mir, ehe ich Deutschland verließ.”

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**Ein Bild Rossmanns, die `Konfurter Mühle,' unvollendet und auf bedeutende Weise zerrüttet, riß mich hin. Meine Mutter schenkte es mir, ehe ich Deutschland verließ.”

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**Ein Bild Rossmanns, die `Konfurter Mühle,' unvollendet und auf bedeutende Weise zerrüttet, riß mich hin. Meine Mutter schenkte es mir, ehe ich Deutschland verließ.”

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**Ein Bild Rossmanns, die `Konfurter Mühle,' unvollendet und auf bedeutende Weise zerrüttet, riß mich hin. Meine Mutter schenkte es mir, ehe ich Deutschland verließ.”

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**Ein Bild Rossmanns, die `Konfurter Mühle,' unvollendet und auf bedeutende Weise zerrüttet, riß mich hin. Meine Mutter schenkte es mir, ehe ich Deutschland verließ.”
Amorbach was not home for Adorno, but neither was Frankfurt after his return. Amorbach was a site experienced within the objective limitation and subjective omnipotence of a fortunate childhood, a place experienced from within the confines of a privileged class and the imaginative psyche of a child. The adult Adorno, the one who remembers and revisits, has no illusions about personal estrangement and social alienation:

By dint of remembrance, however, Adorno lets this, his, experience of happiness stand—without ontologizing or mythologizing it: “Dennoch läßt einzig an einem bestimmten Ort die Erfahrung des Glücks sich ausmachen, die des Unaustauschbaren, selbst wenn nachträglich sich erweist, daß es nicht einzig war.” Utopia, the no-place of home, can only be told as the gap in a story. It halts, in a moment of reflection, the flow of narrative history. He puts this thought negatively in Dialectic of Enlightenment, where he singles out a moment of silence in Homer’s Odyssey: Odysseus returns home as the avenger; he punishes the suitors and especially the faithless maids. By interrupting his story’s flow Homer recalls their unspeakable screams, while his narration tricks his audience into believing that all this happened just once, “once upon a time.” I think we must read the fairy-tale phrase in two ways simultaneously, for its narrative force and its utopian dimension: “once upon a time,” and “once upon a time.”
te, denn sie, das war ja seine Kerze, die er, der Vater unserer Mütter, angezündet hatte, weil an jenem Abend ein Tag begann, ein bestimmter, ein Tag, der der siebte war, der siebte, auf den der erste folgen sollte, der siebte und nicht der letzte, ich liebte, Geschwisterkind, nicht sie, ich liebte ihr Herunterbrennen, und, weißt du, ich habe nichts mehr geliebt seither.39

In contrast to Heidegger's, Adorno's concept of history is not cyclical. Heidegger's notion revolves around the eternal return of the same, even if called the new beginning of an origin always-already thrust toward the future. It makes history into myth. But historical time is one-directional and open-ended. History does not repeat itself; we repeat—through remembrance and commemoration. The ritual of repetition arises from memory. Each time it is performed it is accompanied by hope. But hope pertains to a metaphysical dimension, outside of time-as-history.

Adorno denies metaphysics but stands by metaphysical experience. It is the imaginative, illusory dimension outside of time that makes the reflection on transience possible, with transience itself, as negative determination, prompting remembrance to begin with. In Negative Dialektik he speaks of such experience in connection with place names:

Was metaphysische Erfahrung sei, wird [man] . . . am ehesten wie Proust sich vergegenwärtigen, an dem Glück etwa, das Namen von Dörfern verheißen wie Otterbach, Wattenbach, Reuenthal, Monbrunn. Man glaubt, wenn man hingeht, so wäre man in dem Erfüllten, als ob es wäre . . . Glück, das einzige an metaphysischer Erfahrung, was mehr ist denn ohnmächtiges Verlangen, gewährt das Innere der Gegenstände als diesen zugleich Entrücktes.40

Unlike Heidegger, Adorno does not consider language the foundation of place. The sensory experience of place comes first, then its re-cognition by memory and name. Language arises from the fear of the diffuse and enacts, like magic, the logic of assignment. It carries this logic as its own inscription through social history. Language thus is not the “house of
Being" but the unwitting witness of history—which has been (has been made into) a history of injustice and of suffering.

Like Heidegger, Adorno considers language's discriminatory nature. But with a provocative twist. Recall that Heidegger in his lecture "Sprache und Heimat" distinguished between an originary Ursprache and a constructed Weltsprache. They converge, Heidegger notes, in discrimination, with one (the primal language) revealing the organic difference of rootedness in place, the other (the general, global language) concealing the artificial difference based on relative, techno-civilizational advancement. While Heidegger praises one and condemns the other, Adorno criticizes both, though he gives the edge to the latter. His radio lecture, "Wörter aus der Fremde" (1959), makes the point.

The lecture responded to listeners protesting his "foreign" vocabulary in a previous lecture, which, Adorno believed, had uncomfortably brought home the discrepancy between familiar-mythical and strange-sounding critical language. Foreign words, he argues, are tools of enlightenment. They are tiny cells of resistance against the regressive tendency to repeat what has been made familiar by convention and thus seems "natural." Adorno gives here his own version of Verfremdung. For Heidegger, the strange resides in the familiar if we listen to what is close closely. It is always-already our own. For Adorno, as for Brecht (but in different manifestation), the task is to consciously make strange what in actuality is strange—our social conditions. The careful interruption of the "natural" flow of language highlights the fact that this so-called native medium is the product of history and culture. Attempts to "purify" a language, that is, to free it from so-called foreign derivatives, make it into an a-historical myth, extending from earth-bound clichés to germanizing neologisms, from a naive trust in words to the "jargon of authenticity." The fact that foreign words signify class privilege works against this myth. It would be wrong to hide such privilege—and thereby a divisive society—through a misleadingly "homey" or "plain" language. While Adorno would agree with Heidegger's condemnation of a pseudo-leveling, instrumentalized Weltsprache, he would disagree with his notion of a fundamental Ursprache. A so-called primal language speaks mythologically, whereas a self-consciously artificial language (Kunstsprache) speaks
critically: "Die wahren Worte, Bruchstücke der Wahrheit, sind nicht die verschütteten und mythisch beschworenen Urworte. Es sind die gefundenen, getanen, künstlichen—schlechtweg die gemachten Worte."\footnote{43}

The difference between the two thinkers, the so-called "rooted" Heidegger and the "rootless" Adorno, couldn't be more pronounced. It is a difference as slight as between mythical and metaphorical discourse, as grave as between Being (capital B) and being threatened in one's being (small b). Like Heidegger, Adorno was attached to the German language. Both loved its speculative dimension, Heidegger on his mountain top and Adorno while in exile abroad. But Adorno didn't revere it. Citing his home sickness for the language as his motivation to return in 1949, Adorno writes: "Der Rückkehrende, der die Naivität zum Eigenen verloren hat, muß die innigste Beziehung zur eigenen Sprache vereinen mit unermüdlicher Wachsamkeit gegen allen Schwindel, den sie befördert."\footnote{44}

Each in his attachment took a position irreconcilable with the other's: one as a social critic, the other as self-styled shepherd. Heidegger: "Die Hirten wohnen unsichtbar und außerhalb des Ödlandes der verwüsteten Erde..."\footnote{45}

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}

Let me turn to the last block or chapter. I won't label it either way because it is part of both. In July of 1967, Paul Celan, after a poetry reading in Freiburg the previous night, visited Heidegger in his cabin on the mountain. He signed his name into the guest book with the words, "Ins Hüttenbuch, mit dem Blick auf den Brunnenstern, mit einer Hoffnung auf ein kommendes Wort im Herzen."\footnote{47} Much has been written about this meeting and the elliptic poem that chronicles it. I want to address two approaches in particular, Otto Pöggeler's in his book, \textit{Spur des Worts},\footnote{48} and Mark Anderson's essay, "The Impossibility of Poetry: Celan and
Heidegger in France” (1991).\textsuperscript{49} One is Heideggerian, the other informed by critical theory.

Pöggeler writes that soon after the war young French intellectuals made the pilgrimage to Heidegger, whom he stylizes apologetically as “banned”:

Bald kamen junge Franzosen—gerade Widerstandskämpfer—zu dem geachteten Denker und pilgerten zu seiner Hütte vom “Notschrei” her (so heißt dort ein Berg, doch hört auch Nietzsches Zarathustra in einer seinen letzten Versuchungen den “Notschrei” der Menschen). Wenn schließlich auch Celan zu dieser Hütte kam, dann von seinem 20. Jänner her, . . . [dem] Tag der Wannseekonferenz.\textsuperscript{50}

With this, the tone of the commentary is set. Pöggeler is a much-cited expert on both Heidegger and Celan—what I find disturbing is his lofty balancing act. There is the reverent analogy between Zarathustra’s and Heidegger’s towering heights and the humanistic vista all the way back to Wannsee—whose call, finally, is heeded . . . Berlin in Todtnauberg (where Heidegger once ran a camp for young Nazi intellectuals). Celan’s poem reads as follows:

\textit{Todtnauberg}

Arnika, Augentrost, der
Trunk aus dem Brunnen mit dem
Sternwürfel drauf,

in der
Hütte,

die in das Buch
—wessen Namen nahms auf
vor dem meinen?—
die in dies Buch
geschriebene Zeile von
einer Hoffnung, heute,
auf eines Denkenden
kommendes
Wort
im Herzen,

Waldwasen, uneingeebnet,
Orchis und Orchis einzeln,

Krudes, später, im Fahren,
deutlich,
der uns fährt, der Mensch,
der's mit anhört,

die halb-
beschrittenen Knüppelpfade im Hochmoor,

Feuchtes,
viel.\textsuperscript{51}

The poem tells of plants that soothe hemorrhages and eye strain, of the well outside Heidegger’s cabin with its eight-pointed star (Heidegger had it engraved on his tombstone), of the line written into the guest-book, of the poet’s hope for the philosopher’s word of apology, of singly growing, phallic orchids, of the patches of wetland during their walk, of the small-talk during the drive back to Freiburg—and of the paths over high-altitude swamps padded by sticks once meant for beating.\textsuperscript{52} dampness / much.

Pöggeler, who asks all the right questions about the meeting between Celan and Heidegger, lastly about its impossibility, makes these questions wrong by neglecting to reflect on the language in which he casts them. They are cast in the Heideggerian dialect. This dialect, mushrooming in Germany since the 1950s, is loaded to the point of drowning. And Celan drowned. He drowned himself in Paris, where he had lived since 1949,
a month after a brief second meeting with Heidegger in 1970. I am not suggesting a narrative connection here, my point is this: while Celan's poetry expressed the silence after the Holocaust via the German language, Heidegger's sayings, including his praise of silence, loaded this language *ad nauseam*. Its mining continues.

Both Celan's guest-book inscription and his poem speak of the “Brunnenstern.” Pöggeler puts it this way: “So wird er [Celan] Gast bei Heidegger, dessen abgelegene Unterkunft sich mit dem Wasser der Quellen begnügt, der dunklen Tiefe der Erde aber auch den nächtlichen Himmel mit dem Stern zugesellt.”\(^{53}\) (Adorno once observed concerning self-reflectivity in language: “Wer sich selbst zuhörnt, bangt, ob er nicht ebenso redet.”\(^{54}\) Pöggeler concludes his commentary thus: “Wenn die Begegnung mit Heidegger nicht zu jenem Wort führte, auf das Celan gehofft hatte, dann wich Celan nicht in ein Gedicht aus, sondern überliefernte uns mit diesem Gedicht eine Aufgabe, die auch dann gesehen werden müßte, wenn sie nicht zu lösen wäre.”\(^{55}\) However well-intentioned, this is an ill-spoken commentary. It is the jargon of authenticity. It names in this “encounter” only Celan as a subject, while the other subject, Heidegger, disappears in a prepositional phrase (“die Begegnung mit Heidegger”). And it lauds Celan for not “evading” via a poem (“Celan wich nicht in ein Gedicht aus”), lauds him for passing on a “task” to us, “unsolvable as it may be.” This is preposterous. It suggests that it is not the perpetrator but the victim who just might be at fault—and that a poem is “just” a poem, whereas a “task” is the real thing. Intent is all, expression, nothing. The reader as hero.

Since the 1950s, Heidegger's dialect has been translated all too well. It has been levelled/elevated into pure theory. Mark Anderson, who discusses the poem in the context of Heidegger's and Celan's reception by French deconstructionism, puts his finger on what is most disturbing in this reception. It will have its Heidegger pure but its politics correct. (The transplantation of Heidegger into English via French has its own cultural ironies: ferried across the Atlantic, his rooted, Graeco-Germano *ek-stasis* took on an exotic *chic*.) On occasion of Lacoue-Labarthe's reading of Celan's poem Anderson writes: “[The French reception] involves, finally, making Celan into the seamless exemplar for Heidegger's
'anti-humanist,' subject-less, post-metaphysical philosophy at the same time that, on a biographical level Lacoue-Labarthe himself deems trivial, Celan is called as a moral witness against the philosopher's political errors." The gist of Lacoue-Labarthe's ontological reading is that Celan communicates with Heidegger because Heidegger communicates with Hölderlin. All three are thus stripped of their socio-historical conditions and specific responses to them, while their alleged three-way dialogue is lifted onto the mythical plane of abstraction. Lacoue-Labarthe: "Celan's poetry is in its entirety a dialogue with Heidegger's thought, that is, for the essential aspects with that which in his thought was a dialogue with the poetry of Hölderlin." Such a maneuver erases this poetry's historical expression of Jewish suffering and mourning. Celan's mother and family were murdered by German Nazis, and his hometown of Czernowitz, together with the entire culture of the Bukowina, the culture he was raised in, destroyed:

To assert that Celan, "like Oedipus," has been blinded by Apollo and wanders like a "poor stranger'' in Greece (47), is not only a bizarre argument; it also diminishes Celan's Jewishness, his relations with the Old Testament and Jewish mysticism, his cultural situation in eastern Europe, his political sympathy for Landauer, Kropotkin, Buber, etc. And it obscures (or refuses to acknowledge) the link between Celan's suffering and the very tradition Heidegger champions in Hölderlin, that destiny of Germanentum that the former Rector of Freiburg University lauded until his death with vague allusions to the "grandeur" of National Socialism.

When Celan missed a planned meeting with Adorno in Sils Maria, Nietzsche's retreat high in the mountains of the Engadin, he wrote, in August of 1959, an imaginary conversation with him. He referred to it as Mauischeln, meaning "Yiddish talk." The title of the text, published in Die Neue Rundschau the following year, is "Gespriich im Gebirg." Since I have quoted much of it throughout this presentation, I shall be brief.
Like Celan's visit to Todtnauberg, the conversation takes place in the mountains—the philosopher's mountain. Sadly, it didn't take place. Celan left before Adorno arrived, then sent him the text in a letter. The conversation takes place between the Jew Klein and the Jew Groß—Celan's fine irony for the proportionate weight attached to poetic and philosophical discourse. The poet is little, the philosopher large. But they are cousins, and so they talk. They talk about nature and where they came from, which is "from far away." They talk about the earth up high here in the mountains, its foldings and crevaces, its glaciers; they talk about their memory, their walking stick, and whether the stick is able to talk or to speak.

The Jew Klein has the most to say in this conversation—which in reality is a monologue written as a dialogue. He makes a fine distinction between talking and speaking. Talk is for the living, speaking is not. The stick talks to nature, to the stone, but the stone does not talk, it speaks—to no-one and No-one. It speaks to the No-one who created the stone, the earth, the glaciers, and the plants. The god without name. The dead without name. The walking stick talks; it is a crutch, a tool for walking, a help to go where one is going. Perhaps it is also a writing tool. By touching the stone it remembers the names of those who have been beaten and annihilated. The conversation that takes place and doesn't take place ends with a monologue that is a dialogue in absentia:


Let me come to an end. I called this essay "Todtnauberg and Amorbach"—perhaps I should have called it "Sils Maria and Auschwitz." But the place names I used must suffice. One showed an orientation that refuses to reflect on its self-elevation and posited ground. It speaks the language of myth. The other traced an orientation running horizontally
rather than vertically (or, better: historically rather than fundamentally). It writes a language critical of myth.

Celan went to meet Heidegger, the grand philosopher of language, of the "house of Being," of the conversation—and all Heidegger was capable of was small-talk, *WeltSprache*. They met, but there was no dialogue. He went to meet Adorno, the dialectician of the vanishing subject and its necessity for survival. They didn't meet, but they talked. Celan sent him the dialogue he imagined in a letter. It is not really a conversation, does not speak of presence in mythical *Ursprache*. It's lyrical discourse, *KunstSprache*, yet for an addressee nonetheless.

Heidegger, flamboyantly, settled into the German language as if it were peasant property—his. Adorno, exiled and returning, remained watchful of its lies. And Celan, having nothing to return to, found that home, in language, is a mirage:

```
Nun aber schrumpft der Ort, wo du stehst:
  Dünner wirst du, unkenntlicher, feiner!
  Feiner: ein Faden,
  an dem er herabwill, der Stern:
  um unten zu schwimmen, unten,
  wo er sich schimmern sieht: in der Dünung
  wandernder Worte.62
```

Notes


Ibid., pp. 10-11.


Ibid., p. 180.

Ibid., p. 179.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., p. 22.
37 Ibid.
42 Ibid., p. 117. For a more extensive critique, especially in regard to Heidegger, see Adorno's *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (Frankfurt a.M., 1964).
45 Quoted in Habermas, *Philosophisch-politische Profile*, p. 72.
48 See reference in preceding note.

50 Pöggeler, p. 261.


52 The German word “Knüppelpfad” (= wooden track) refers to sticks laid to form a path across wetlands, but the line break in Celan’s poem also suggests the more general meaning of “Knüppel,” i.e., a stick or club carried by jail wardens and the police.

53 Pöggeler, p. 262.


55 Pöggeler, p. 271.

56 Anderson, p. 15.

57 Quoted in Anderson, p. 10.

58 Ibid., p. 17.

59 Cf. a related reading by Stéphane Moses, “‘Wege, auf denen die Sprache stimmhaft wird.’ Paul Celans ‘Gespräch im Gebirg,’” in *Argumentum e Silentio: International Paul Celan Symposium*, ed. Amy D. Colin (Berlin, 1987), pp. 43–57. Moses bases his argument on Benveniste’s notion of a subjectivity that encompasses multiple experiences, i.e., the “I” in the conversation is constituted by the dialogue itself, ultimately allowing a move toward solidarity, from “they” to “us” (the Jews under the Star of David). It is important, however, to also note the biographical palimpsest of the text, i.e., Celan, the poet, addressing Adorno, the philosopher. Pöggeler does this, though with an insidious accusation reminiscent of Nazi biologism: Adorno, “the established philosopher” with a “borrowed shadow” (i.e., being only half-Jewish), does not understand Celan’s pain. Cf. Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts*, pp. 251–59. Pöggeler’s problem with Adorno also shows up in his recent essay, “Die göttliche Tragödie. Mozart in Celan’s Spätwerk,” in “Der glühende Leertext.” *Annäherungen an Paul Celans Dichtung*, ed. Otto Pöggeler and Christoph Jamm (Munich, 1993), p. 78.


61 I am referring to Nietzsche’s significance in Heidegger’s work, and to that of the Holocaust in Adorno’s.
Mark Bassin

Geopolitics in the Historikerstreit: 
The Strange Return of Mittellage


Hagen Schulze

Die vorbehaltlose Öffnung der Bundesrepublik gegenüber der politischen Kultur des Westens ist die große intellektuelle Leistung unserer Nachkriegszeit, auf die gerade meine Generation stolz sein könnte. . . . Jene Öffnung ist ja vollzogen worden durch Überwindung genau der Ideologie der Mitte, die unsere Revisionisten mit ihrem geopolitischen Tamtam . . . wieder aufwärmen.

Jürgen Habermas

One of the most striking aspects of the debates about national identity which so preoccupied West Germany during the 1980s was the significance which practically everyone was willing to accord to the factor of geography and geographical location. A broad range of views were offered specifying precisely what this significance might amount to, including the rather divergent suggestions that Germany had "lost sight" of its "traditional" place in Europe or alternatively that it had never known this place to begin with. On one basic point, however, there was
common agreement, namely that what was needed was a fundamental reconsideration and reevaluation of the country's geographical position within the Western world, both historically as well as in the present day. This concern was reflected in the call which came from all quarters for a new Ortsbestimmung, and indeed this term became so popular that numerous commentators appeared convinced that the old question “was ist Deutschland?” could now be more satisfactorily formulated as “wo ist Deutschland?” This ascription to geography of a near-transcendental significance for the deutsches Wesen was nothing new, of course, for the familiar elements of Raum, Lage, and Landschaft have had a familiar place in the project to articulate a national identity in Germany from the very beginning. In dealing with these elements, Germans have generally assumed that they are dealing with “objective” and material factors of the natural world, which can be studied in terms of the demonstrable influences they have exerted on the formation and evolution of the nation itself.

The present essay, which is an examination of one strain of the discussion about geography and national identity in the period prior to the Wiedervereinigung in 1989, takes a rather different approach. It proceeds from the assumption that the apparently objective natural elements which are the content of geography are in fact nothing of the sort, but rather themselves fundamentally subject to ideological construction and manipulation. Geography, in other words, serves not as an indifferent basis of analysis, but rather is incorporated—selectively and often capriciously—for the purposes of enhancing and justifying a particular interpretative perspective. What made the material we will consider from the 1980s especially significant in this regard was the fact that for many contemporaries it appeared to resonate with and echo the perspectives of an earlier era, namely those of inter-war German Geopolitik, which had manipulated a geographical analysis for its own more or less clear political purposes. The questions as to how this analysis was carried out in the 1980s, its ostensible purposes at the time, and the degree to which there was indeed an affinity and parallel with the earlier period, will be our main themes.
The “Conditio Germaniae”

It was in the context of developments in West German historiography that the importance of geography for the articulation of national identity received one of its clearest expressions. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a broad revisionist movement began to take shape among a number of prominent conservative historians, who sought to initiate a fundamental reexamination of prevailing postwar perspectives on modern German history. Although the historians involved must have understood that the new perspectives they were setting forth would be controversial, they probably did not anticipate that they would excite a very public debate which even for Germany was remarkable for its intensity and acrimony. This debate has become known simply, and quite famously, as the Historikerstreit. On the most general level, the efforts of the revisionist historians were directed toward rather different two concerns. The first, and by far the most sensational of these was the reconsideration of the question as to the historical uniqueness of Germany’s fascist experience. Most important in this regard was the work of Ernst Nolte, who argued that fascism and fascist genocide was a pan-European, and not a German phenomenon, and moreover that World War II was to be seen as but one bloody episode of what he called the “europäische Bürgerkrieg” of the twentieth century, the instigators of which were not to be sought in Germany alone. Nolte specifically underscored the affinities between Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, including the enterprise of mass incarceration and wholesale extermination of populations undesirable for one or another reason to the respective regimes. Along somewhat different lines, in his book Zweierlei Untergang Andreas Hillgruber tried to relativize the legacy of the Nazi regime by treating in parallel the Jewish holocaust on the one hand and the advancing occupation of Germany by Russian troops in the final months of the war on the other, implying thereby some sort of comparability.

It is the second concern of the conservative revisionists—less sensational and apparently radical, but in the long run arguably much more influential—that is of significance to our theme. Developed most consistently and comprehensively in the work of the historians Michael Stürmer
and Hagen Schulze, it is framed in a broader and more generalized perspective. Germany of the 1980s, they pronounced, was a country bereft of what they called “historical memory,” by which they meant a full vision of the texture and meaning of its historical experience. The sources of this lacuna were to be sought in the immediate circumstances attending Germany’s defeat in 1945. In the desperate conditions of that period, Stürmer wrote,

it all seemed very simple: the less historical memory, the better. Everything that was good belonged to the future, everything despicable belonged to the past. The dead should bury their dead. . . . The Federal Republic of Germany, as well as the German Democratic Republic, were founded on the widely shared illusion that there had been a zero hour [in German history], and this was a redeeming illusion for those who survived the Third Reich. It helped turn attention away from the dreadful past and toward the future. It was in this manner, and only in this manner, that those who had been defeated in the Second World War could create a civil society.

This attitude “allowed for much to be covered over,” he summarized elsewhere, “but it also allowed for life to go on. The only lesson that German history had to teach was that nothing in it could ever be allowed to be repeated.” Yet while a collective amnesia of this sort may have had a function in the immediate postwar period that was therapeutic and even necessary, through the subsequent decades it had developed into an all-pervasive habit of thought in the public consciousness of West Germany and was still prevalent in the present day. Amid the remarkable accomplishments of West Germany’s development, Stürmer asserted, for its own citizens the country remained even in the middle of the 1980s “a land without a history,” and this lack of a collective sense of the national past worked subtly to undermine social cohesion and to fray an already-fragile social consensus. In very much the same way that Germany in 1945 had needed desperately to forget its past, he suggested, it now—forty years on—needed no less urgently to remember, more specifically to redeem a
positive vision of the German historical experience that could be popularly shared. "In order to survive, the Republic needs a cultural core curriculum. It needs its memories of German history within Europe, [it needs] a confirmation of the historical and cultural experiences which we share with our neighbors, and [it needs] out of this a spiritual anchor in the river of time."4

The preoccupation with national survival and Germany's need for a "spiritual anchor" in the 1980s are fundamental to entire message of the conservative revisionists, and will be examined more closely at a later point. Before this, we should trace the particular reconstruction of the German historical scenario which they offered to help fill the putative void in the popular consciousness. Germany's unique historical evolution, they argued, was to be understood most fundamentally in terms of one enduring and all-encompassing factor. This factor stood entirely outside the human realm of society and politics, was to be found instead in the particulars of the country's physical geography: its topographical and physiographical configuration on the one hand and its relative position or location—its Lage—on the other. In regard to the physical geography, three elements were identified as being most important. To begin with, Germany occupied an expanse of land on the European continent which, unlike the territories of the other European states, presented what Schulze termed an "amorphe landschaftliche Gestalt."5 It was in other words open in all directions and possessed no "natural" boundaries, or boundaries which were resident a priori in the physical landscape. Moreover, the region lacked any one central or centralizing point which could naturally assume the function of a nucleus for the nation's development. Finally, this lack of an organizing center was exacerbated by the fact that German territory as a whole was dissected and fragmented by innumerable waterways and mountains or hilly uplands. From the very beginning, this unfortunate combination of natural-geographical circumstances had conditioned the development of Germany and determined its exceptional character as a region of endemic political fragmentation and splintering. "That a modern [unified] power could not develop in this region at the same time as in the rest of Europe," reasoned Schulze, "had a number of reasons: it possessed no natural center, and no natural boundaries. The
territory had no clear contours, it was open in all directions, and was dissected moreover by rivers and mountains.” No other country, he claimed, has had so many capital cities in the course of its history as Germany, and it was only at the late date of 1871 that a “clear answer was given as to where Germany’s borders are.”

It was the factor of Germany’s location respective to the rest of the European continent, however, which served to organize and focus the full impact of these internal physical characteristics. It was one of the great ironies of history and geography that, as much as the country may have lacked any natural center of its own, in its totality it represented an eminently natural center for the rest of the Europe. Germany was the land of the European Mitte, its position was that of the European Mittellage, and this geographical condition served more than any other factor to determine its historical evolution and fate. Schulze in particular depicted the consequences of Germany's Mittellage on the broadest possible canvas.

Since the beginning of the early modern period, since the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, since the discovery of America and the printing of books with moveable type, since the revolution in natural science and the discarding of the geocentric worldview, the state system which would determine the European concert through the centuries took shape: England, Spain, France, Turkey, Russia, Sweden, also the Netherlands and Denmark. All of them [were] on the periphery of Europe. . . . In-between lay a European no-man's-land.

“The great constant factor (die große Konstante) of German as well as European history, which has persisted through all change and which has decisively influenced all epochs, is a basic geographical circumstance: Germany's Mittellage in Europe.” “Germany's geography,” he concluded simply, “is its destiny.” Other historians concurred. Invoking an expression of Thomas Mann’s, for example, Klaus Hildebrand claimed that the influence of Germany's “Pathos der Mitte” was apparent already in the descriptions of Tacitus, while Stürmer underscored its transcenden-
As it turned out, what gave Germany’s central position its extraordinary significance had nothing to do with Germany per se, and instead related entirely to external factors, namely the pattern of power relationships across Europe. Germany’s Mittellage put it at the very hub of the state system that Schulze just referred to, and invested it thereby with an critical strategic quality. Mittellage, simply put, was the ultimate means to the domination of Europe. There was really only one way in which one of the peripheral states could acquire an absolute advantage over the others, and that was by taking control over the center. “Regardless of what the Germans thought or didn’t think about it,” Stürmer explained, an “inexorable law” was at work, according to which “whoever controlled the European center held the balance of Europe and its system of world powers in its hands. No power could allow its opponent to control Mitteleuropa.” Indeed, the other European powers became well aware of this law at an early point, and their collective interest in self-preservation insured their determination that the political consolidation of the center—whatever its sources may be—must not be allowed to take place. The interests of Europe as a whole would be best served, in other words, if the German Mittellage remained politically fragmented, disjointed, and weak. “It was only the amorphous condition of central Europe which kept the continent in balance,” affirmed Schulze: “a glance at the map will show why. Whoever controls this region—be it a major European power or a power of the center itself—would be the master of Europe. Any concentration of power in Germany, therefore, was antithetical to the balance of power in Europe.”

The result of all this was an endemic tension between Germany and the European periphery, which in turn meant that throughout its modern development, Germany was confronted with an existential dilemma, a “paradox dictated by the circumstances of geography.” On the one hand, Germany could remain wide open to the influence of its neighbors, which would mean that they would be able to determine its policies, at least partially. This was in fact the option taken by the other major state in the European center, Poland, which as a result suffered the erosion of its
sovereignty, internal anarchy, and ultimately wholesale dismemberment and absorption by the adjoining powers. The other option was for Germany to organize and arm itself against the rest of Europe in such a way that it would be capable of conducting and winning essentially any war on any combination of frontiers with any combination of hostile adversaries. “And it really was a question of winning,” Schulze insisted, for in every conflict the stakes necessarily involved the continued political existence of the German territories. It was these external pressures, dictated ultimately by the realities of a European-wide constellation of power, which more than anything shaped the basic contours of German and Prussian society and sustained its protracted period of political fragmentation. As it turned out, modern German history was an unsettled chronicle of oscillation between these two options, and in either case the path it chose contained an element of coercion and could not really be said to have been its own.

This pattern of interaction between Europe and its German Mittellage had become apparent already in the treaties that concluded the 30-Years War, in the mid-seventeenth century. These arrangements, which provided for the preservation of the traditional political heterogeneity in the German territories, enabled the major players in continental politics—England, France, and later Russia—to devote themselves unhindered to the struggle for enhancing their own positions in Europe and the world. “The non-existence of a concentrated major power (Machtstaat) in the center of Europe was a condition for the variable geography of power” which took shape in the course of the centuries that followed. “Germany was the mass and the fulcrum of this system, and not a power factor in its own right.” This function of a powerless and neutralized center was then fatefuly enhanced at the Congress of Vienna, when according to Stürmer, Germany was “forced” against its inclinations into expanding its European profile by assuming the role of arbiter between eastern and western regions of Europe “without actually exerting any control” over the continental realms between which it was supposed to mediate. Indeed, it was only this role as a geographical buffer of sorts which “saved” Prussia’s very existence after the Napoleonic wars. “If not for this func-
The subsequent failure of the revolution of 1848 in Germany was also to be explained by the calculus of international power relations. The impending emergence of a unified German state which was liberal and strongly nationalist was perceived as an incipient *Machtballung* or major power concentration in Europe's middle, which would necessarily represent disrupt the geostrategic arrangements agreed upon in 1815. For this reason, it was deemed to be "not in harmony with the interests of the Great Powers," and the latter were successful in aborting the nationalist experiment before it came to term. German national unity was eventually achieved, of course, but only thanks to circumstances which were entirely exceptional, namely that fact that the combined experiences of the Crimean War and the Civil War in the United States had so strained the energies of the European powers and antagonized their relations that they were momentarily disinclined to object. And even with the triumph of unification behind him, Bismarck remained scrupulously and painfully aware of the enduring realities of Germany's *Mittellage*, that is to say the strict limitations and conditions which the European power system continued to press upon the young German state at its center. Without any question, his greatest accomplishment was his success in holding Germany within these parameters for as long as he wielded power.

It was precisely by virtue of this success, however, that the most pernicious and fateful consequences of Germany's *Mittellage* became fully apparent. Invoking a perspective which had been popular prior to 1914, the conservative revisionists of the 1980s argued that because of its external constraints, the German Reich was denied the opportunity to develop the liberal, constitutional, and proto-democratic parliamentary culture which was taking shape in other European countries. "Now the Germans once again paid the price for the old neutralizing of the European center: its civil (bürgerliche) culture was unable to become a political culture." This predicament was best expressed in the observation of the theorist of English imperialism John Robert Seeley, cited copiously by both Stürmer and Schulze, that the measure of the domestic freedom of a state stood in inverse proportion to the external pressure on its borders.
“It was therefore no contradiction,” reasoned Schulze, “that Bismarck used the police to conduct a domestic policy of social repression at the same time that his international policy was one of conciliation and prevention of military conflict. In fact, the one was not possible without the other.” The existence of a united Germany, he concluded, “was tolerated by its neighbors only so long as the lid [of the German cauldron] sat firmly upon its seething contents.” Indeed, asserting that the most internationally disruptive enterprise within Germany in the period leading up to 1914—the production of a battle fleet at the turn of the century—had at the same time been the “most popular defense policy Germany has ever known,” Stürmer suggested that if anything, the Reich suffered from a surfeit of popular democracy rather than a deficit.

With the passing of the great Prussian architect, there was no one any longer inclined to sit on Germany’s lid, and Bismarckian prudence and moderation gave way almost immediately to aggressive nationalism and the quest for political and military predominance, both within Europe as well as globally. The established rules for German conduct in the European power game were thereby irredeemably violated, at which point the road to war became quite simply “unavoidable.” Yet although Stürmer and Schulze had no particular sympathy for Germany’s fin-de-siècle grab for hegemony, they insisted that it, like everything else, had to be relativized and understood in terms of the exigencies of the country’s geographical situation. In this way, they were able to locate a certain rationale and even a perverted justification for it, to the extent that it represented a desperate attempt to escape from or at least neutralize the threat ever-present in the country’s Mittellage vulnerabilities. “In order to eliminate the threat against the center,” Stürmer wrote, “the elites—with the approving support of the masses—developed the bases, the opportunities, and the delusion of hegemony in Europe.” He continued: “[Germany’s active entry into] global politics, the construction of a battle fleet, and Wilhelmian war aims were perhaps deluded (Wahnbild), but they had a cryptic (abgründig) logic of their own. They carried the hope of being able, by achieving hegemony [over the other European powers], to break out of the Mittellage once and for all.” That this attempt was reckless and ill-conceived, and moreover that it failed with calamitous consequenc-
es for Germany, did not in the slightest alter its quality as a response to the external pressures which comprised Germany's geographical predicament.

The history of Germany and Europe between the wars was once again to be told in terms of the now-familiar "dialectic of Mittellage." The victorious powers tolerated and indeed mandated the continued existence of Germany as a unified state only because they feared that otherwise another peripheral power could gain control over it and thereby threaten the entire European order. The fact that this other power, namely Soviet Russia, now presented itself in the guise of a socialist republic of workers and peasants made it a greater menace than ever, and a unified, democratized, and neutralized Germany was assigned the function of serving as a reliable bulwark in the center against any Bolshevik incursion. Yet it was not really the old Mittellage. A fundamental alteration in the operation of the traditional calculus had been introduced which was of great significance, not least of all because it served to establish a vital connection with the period after 1945. The Russian revolution had had the effect of dividing the formerly amorphous penumbra of powers that surrounded Germany into two more or less distinct camps, proto-communist versus capitalist, East versus West. The respective political complexions of these camps, moreover, suggested rather clearly to our historians that Germany's true interests lay with the latter and not the former. The old Mittellage nexus was thereby subtly converted into what Stürmer called the "option between East and West," and the tragedy of Weimar was that the necessary choice between the two was nearly universally resisted. No decision for an unambiguous alliance with the West, in other words, was ever taken. The reasons for this failure, however, continued to derive largely from the external constraints which we have noted throughout. It was the Western powers themselves who, instead of accepting the defeated Germany into the Western world "without any ifs, ands, or buts," kept it instead at arms length with the onerous stipulations of Versailles and their policies throughout the 1920s. "Who can say how Weimar, the first German democracy, would have developed," mused Schulze, "if Ebert, Stresemann, or indeed Brüning could have enjoyed the good will of the allies."
This was not the case, of course, and the resulting instability and schizophrenia in Europe's center prepared the way, the "humus," in Schulze's organic terminology, for the growth of fascism. Once again, however, it was the peripheral powers who bore responsibility, in this case for not acting decisively to resist German expansionist intentions at a time when it was still possible to do so, in the 1930s. The Soviet Union would not commit itself to the necessary alliance of the periphery—i.e., with the capitalist states—against the middle, and the policies of Britain and France were weak and conciliatory. The result was the actual realization of the old European nightmare, in which the center is able to achieve a concentration of power which can credibly threaten the rest of the continent. "With the German attacks on Czechoslovakia in 1938 and then on Poland in 1939," Schulze noted sardonically, the great powers "received the bill for having finally lost sight of the logic of the European balance of power." The phenomenon of Hitler himself was explained essentially in the same terms as German hegemonialism at the turn of the century, in other words as an quest to rectify the vulnerabilities of Germany's geographical position by escaping from it or, as our historians preferred to say, "blowing it up." "After the unsuccessful dress rehearsal of World War I, Hitler represented the final attempt to bring the drama to its conclusion with radical consistency: to break out of the Mittellage once and for all, and to transform Germany from an empire [in Europe] to a world empire, a racial utopia which could not be attacked."

**Geopolitik** and the Problem of Continuity

Although we have noted that the conservative historians undertook their project with the declared intention of returning a sense of historical evolution to a "land without history," what they were in fact doing was something rather different. They were offering an interpretation that could serve as an alternative to another and sharply contrasting perspective in postwar German historiography. This perspective, represented in rather different ways in the work of such historians as Hans Rosenberg, Fritz Fischer, Gerhard Ritter, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Wolfgang Mommsen, Jürgen Kocka, the early Karl-Dietrich Bracher, and others, operated under
the assumption of what has come to be called the "Primat der Innenpolitik." This is the belief that the contours of modern German history and the pattern of its international interactions were above all the product of domestic tensions and struggles within German society and the state. Although Stürmer for one had at least some sympathy for this perspective in his earlier writings, by the 1980s he had become highly critical of it.

Above all, Stürmer and Schulze were deeply disturbed by the singly negative implications which he felt came from the preoccupation with the chronic problems and shortcomings of Germany's domestic order. German history cannot forever remain "a history of evil," wrote Stürmer, "we cannot live by making our own past . . . into a permanent source of endless guilt feelings." In contrast to the "Primat der Innenpolitik" he now called repeatedly for a focus on the "Primat der auswärtigen Politik" or "Primat der äußeren Lage," in terms of which Germany's domestic arrangements and affairs were understood to be a product of external pressures. "Here are the essential elements of Prussia's existence," explained Schulze: "Mittellage, insecure borders, the fear of hostile coalitions and a war on more than one front, . . . and an internal order which corresponds to Germany's external situation." The strategic imperatives which were inherent in Germany's geographical position—its "geographische Positionsproblematik," as he rather grandly put it—proved to be the essential factor in determining the character of the Prussian state overall:

Out of this came the preponderance of the military sector, out of this came the bureaucratic organization of all aspects of life in order to be able to mobilize the last strengths of this destitute state, and out of this came those qualities of diligence, seriousness, and the lack of urbanity and a joie de vivre which made Prussia so unpopular among its European neighbors.

For their part, the response of Wehler and the others to the Mittellage argument of the conservatives was unequivocal. Wehler mocked their attempts to replace the "Primat der Innenpolitik" with a "Primat der Geographie," while Jürgen Kocka pointed out that Poland and Switzerland
were at the center of Europe no less than Germany, yet had had entirely different histories. "Neither is geography destiny, nor does it explain very much," he concluded: "the question of Germany identity is not to be answered in this manner." This sort of straightforward and relatively standard critique of the veracity of their opponents' historical reconstruction would hardly have sufficed to give the Historikerstreit its profound character, however, and the indictment of the critics went significantly beyond it. For having set forth such a geographically inspired interpretation, Stürmer and Schulze were further accused of resorting to and indeed resurrecting the doctrines of Geopolitik, that is a discredited radical-conservative geographical perspective which flourished in Germany in the 1920s and 1930s. In their work, Wehler claimed, the conservative revisionists were seeking to give the old Geopolitik "a freshly polished appearance and renewed relevance," with the quite significant result that it has "once again has become a component part of the scholarly as well as the public discussion in West Germany." Both Stürmer and Schulze scrupulously avoided using the term itself or making any reference to the heritage of the inter-war years, Wehler noted with considerable irritation, "aber der Sache nach geht es um Geopolitik." The distinguished Hamburg geographer Gerhard Sandner made essentially the same point, referring to the "crude location determinism" of Stürmer and Schulze which adopts "the lines of argument developed by German Geopolitik in the 1920s." In view of the notorious reputation of German geopolitics, and in particular its close proximity to National Socialism itself, these points represent a fairly weighty accusation, and need to be briefly examined.

Geopolitik took shape in Germany after 1918. It derived much inspiration from the field of academic geography, in particular politische Geographie and Anthropogeographie, both of which were developed in the late nineteenth century in the work of the Leipzig geographer Friedrich Ratzel. The term Geopolitik was coined by the Swedish political economist Rudolf Kjellén, and the "discipline" was developed most comprehensively—though by no means exclusively—in the writings and activities of the retired Bavarian general Karl Haushofer. From Ratzel, Geopolitik adopted the general perspective of environmental or geographical determinism, or the belief that the characteristics and developmental
pattern of human societies are decisively influenced and in fact determined by the qualities of the physical environments—organic as well as inorganic—in which they are situated. Specifically, it asserted the determining significance of environmental factors for the evolution, organization, and behavior of political states. One of the most significant implications of this latter point was the belief that there are in fact such things as "natural" geographical regions or territorial "individualities" in the landscape. These are geographical regions which, by virtue of the internal coordination of their physical-geographical elements and their clear external demarcation through effective "natural" boundaries, represented ideal arenas for the consolidation of unified and homogeneous political states. None of these assumptions, it may be noted, was unique to Geopolitik. What gave the latter its entirely characteristic stamp was the conviction that, by invoking imputedly transcendent and eternal geopolitical "laws," the geographical environment could be read in such a manner as not only to explain the political situation of the present but to determine the necessary imperatives for future courses of action. It was in this guise that Haushofer sought to offer the services of his Geopolitik to the Nazi regime: as an infallible "science" of domestic and international policy and the "geographical conscience" of the state.

At the time, these precepts were developed in a bewildering variety of different directions and in regard to a broad range of problems and situations. What makes Geopolitik immediately relevant to the issues of the Historikerstreit, and serves at the same time as the basis for the identification of a continuity between the two, is the fact that a version of the Mittellage perspective on German history which we have just considered was articulated during the inter-war period. Its originators were primarily historians, and not geopoliticians or political scientists, but the inspirational affinities with the novel geographical science were unmistakable. The resonances between the pronouncements of the earlier period and the lectures of Stürmer and Schulze, it must be said, are indeed remarkable. Germany's Mittellage, wrote Erich Marcks, "with its open borders," was "the key to its history" and the "destiny of our people." In the mid-1930s, Hermann Oncken developed the point in the following way:
If one seeks the determining lines of the course of German history, one comes up first of all against that precondition of life which over the course of a thousand years has influenced our historical destiny most deeply. This is our continental Mittellage. Germany is the land of the Mitte, with numerous undetermined, blurry natural boundaries, without a real natural center, and without an explicit geographical individuality. This innermost of the basic facts of our state history portends both rich possibilities as well as serious dangers for the will to a state life (staatlicher Lebenswille) of the Germans. On the one hand [it offers] the possibility, powerfully grasping out in all directions from the center, . . . to take over the natural leadership of this part of the world. On the other hand, however, [there is] the danger of being attacked from all sides, such that in the worst case, pressed into the center, all our free self-determination will be lost.

"And indeed," he continued, "this law of life of the geographical Mittellage will grow more decisive in the course of the centuries." Friedrich Meinecke as well gave voice to these sentiments, asserting that it had been Germany's "geopolitical situation within Europe" which confronted it with the fateful and inescapable choice of subservience or becoming a Great Power.

Oncken's point about "grasping out in all directions" is of particular significance, for it indicates that the Mittellage thinking of the inter-war period was susceptible at least to some extent to expansionist and hegemonic impulses. This attitude emerged even more clearly in the observations of another historian, Heinrich Ritter von Sbrik.

The German character (Wesen) has been deeply influenced by the location of its settlement in the center of the continent, with borders that for the most part are open. . . . The openness of its eastern flank offered the invaluable possibility to the German state of colonizing in the north- and south-east, [a process which represented] an immense expansion of Germany's living space and its culture space.
In this expansion, Sbrik saw a deeper destiny for the German nation that was unfolding as he wrote, a destiny which went beyond the mere national-political union of all Germans to involve a “supra-national (übernationale) Central European and European task of the [Third] Reich.” This was precisely the organizational task of the European Mitte.

Just as the belief in Providence has not been lost, so the belief has been revived once again that the task of organizing Europe belongs to the Germans, who are an ancient organizing peoples (der europäische Ordnungsberuf des alten deutschen Ordnungsvolkes). In the German Reich, the continent of Europe has once again received its organizing and leading Mitte, which rests on overwhelming power and is filled with a sense of responsibility for the division [of the continent].

The frenzied tone of these final comments were in all probability not unrelated to the fact that the final volumes of Sbrik’s work were published as World War II was being fought. The basic message he sought to make, however, shares the same spirit as Oncken’s allusion.

The point should be made first of all that the direct influence of Geopolitik on the ideologists and policy-makers of National Socialism is now recognized as having been much exaggerated. The Nazis had absolutely no inclination to sacrifice the all-important criterion of race in favor of the geographical determinism that was the basis of geopolitics, and this bias led them specifically to reject the notion of Mittellage as we have just seen it developed. Nevertheless, the geopoliticians unquestionably made their contribution to the general climate of aggressive hegemonism in inter-war Germany, and it is this hegemonic sentiment that the critics in the Historikerstreit are concerned with above all in connecting their conservative colleagues of the 1980s with the tradition of Geopolitik. Jürgen Kocka makes this point perhaps most explicitly, maintaining that the Mittellage perspective presented by Stürmer and Schulze “would lend itself well for the purposes of establishing [a vision of] a new German Sonderweg.” The sentiment is clearly echoed by Karl Dietrich Bracher, who noted that the current “dramatization” of the Mittellage idea repre-
sents the “repetition of the whining complaints, but also the arrogant assumptions” of the German past.\footnote{47} Wehler is rather more reserved, and carefully avoids attributing to them an explicit German chauvinism and hegemonism.\footnote{48} At the same time, however, he clearly feels that their uncritical use of the old concepts and terminology could very well lead in this direction. On the pages of the Frankfurter Rundschau, the historian Dan Diner emphasized this danger, pointing out that “concepts are loaded” and that “they cannot be revived as one pleases. To touch upon them means as much as striking notes upon the sounding board of memory.” The specific revival of the Mittellage idea, he continued, could bring about a situation in which it would become necessary to as he put it “control the tiger.”\footnote{49} More explicitly than Wehler, Sandner discounts the extent to which the Mittellage discussion in the work of Stürmer and Schulze is itself directed toward the “function of legitimating expansion.” At the same time, however he suggests that the work of Stürmer and Schulze can be related to other, more aggressive manifestations of the reemergence of Geopolitik in the 1980s, and concludes that the unhappy eventuality foreseen by Diner has already begun to take shape.\footnote{50}

What exactly is the relationship of the conservatives in the Historikerstreit to the traditions and doctrines of German Geopolitik? We will consider this question comprehensively in our conclusion, but it is already clear from our consideration of the historical argumentation of Mittellage that there is a great deal with does in fact link the two periods. This is evident above all in the common emphasis on the environmental basis of politics and the determining influence of geography, and in the very important related assumption that there are natural regions which are more or less ideally suited to become arenas for political and national consolidation. In a conceptual essay written to clarify and defend the geographical dimension in the work of Stürmer and Schulze, Imanuel Geiss emphasized this latter point very strongly. Throughout history, he explained, states have always recognized that “geographically unified spaces” offered the optimal conditions for security and prosperity, and for this reason have consistently sought to conquer and occupy them.\footnote{51} From this putative geopolitical fact, it was but a small step to the conclusion that there were states which were “natural”—i.e., possessing a priori the appropriate
natural-geographical basis—and there were those which were not. Stürmer and Schulze themselves enthusiastically engaged this point, implying in their work that the countries of the European periphery were all essentially natural entities, occupying regions “with more or less natural boundaries and a political and economic center which was the geographical [center] at the same time.” Stürmer and Schulze themselves enthusiastically engaged this point, implying in their work that the countries of the European periphery were all essentially natural entities, occupying regions “with more or less natural boundaries and a political and economic center which was the geographical [center] at the same time.”

France was an indicative case in point, where the national idea “coincides with the language area and with the country’s natural boundaries within the ‘hexagon’ between the Rhein and the Pyrenees, the Alps and the Atlantic coast.” Germany however, as we have seen, was fundamentally different: as a non-natural entity, it was destined to a peculiar and unhappy fate. In contrast to the rest of Europe, “the unity of the German state was not at all naturally given,” and precisely for this reason “it was constantly a problem.”

The quality of geographical naturalness acquired its full significance when it became conflated with idea of political normalcy. Normal states, quite simply, were geographically natural states, and Germany, because it was imperfectly natural, was also not entirely normal. In discouraging contrast to the other states of the European system, which had undergone regular development and evolved gradually and more or less organically into unified national entities, Schulze spoke of the “almost zoological variety” and “anarchic tangle” of petty political units which rendered the German lands “irregular and monster-like.” Finally, of course, the spirit of the old Geopolitik was apparent in the uncompromising insistence upon the transcendent significance of Mittellage for the fate of the country. In a speech to the European parliament in 1988, Stürmer offered a truly classical geopolitical formulation of the absolute predominance of geography and location over any category of social or political factors.

Whether the Germans were revolutionary, as in 1848, or whether they had had enough of revolution, as was the case thereafter, Germany remained that country where all European peninsulas were connected with the Eurasian landmass, where the all the strategic power corridors of the continent crossed, . . . and where all of the economic and cultural forces of Europe were grouped, next to each other and opposed to each other.
Despite all of these very real resonances, however, what is perhaps more important is the fact that the conservative historians of the 1980s used their geopolitical argumentation in a manner that was entirely dissimilar to that of their geopolitical predecessors. Their broader agenda was fundamentally different from, indeed in significant ways quite antithetical to that of the inter-war period. The function of their geopolitical argumentation was correspondingly different, as were the final conclusions they drew on the basis of it. Rather than a consistent resurrection of Geopolitik, therefore, what we witness in the Historikerstreit is rather a reengagement with certain traditional doctrines and a traditional terminology in order to set forth what is ultimately a very different set of priorities. Both Wehler and Sandner have at least some appreciation of this, to be sure, but the nature of these new priorities remains obscure, and in all events unexplored in their work. The final section of this essay, therefore, will focus on the deeper function of the geopolitical perspective in the work of conservative revisionists. It will become clear that it is only in the context of their broader agenda—and specifically the manner in which they attempt to render the Mittellage concept relevant for the present day—that the full implication and meaning of the historical scenario we have traced can be understood.

Geography as Legitimation

To get some perspective on the broader agenda of the historians we are considering, it is necessary to focus for a moment away from their historical argumentation and consider instead their critique of contemporary German society. It will be readily recalled that the early and mid-1980s were a time of great dissent and turbulence in German internal affairs. Public opinion was catalyzed above all by the controversial decision of NATO to station middle-range nuclear warheads, directed against the Soviet bloc, for the first time on West German soil. This policy not only stirred considerable domestic opposition to the German government, which had initiated and then strongly supported it, but had the further effect of calling into question the desirability of West Germany's intimate relationship with the Western alliance, and the United States in particular,
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which had developed since 1945. Skepticism about this relationship was widespread, and was evident in phenomena as apparently disparate as the anti-Americanism of the youth movement on the left and the vigorous resurgence of German nationalist sentiments on the right. It was this agitated domestic situation, and the threat they felt it represented for the postwar global order, which provided the focus for the concerns of our revisionist historians. Germany, they argued, was fast becoming a country without any semblance of social consensus. At the same time that it had developed into an economic powerhouse, its social fabric was being torn apart by profound civil dissonances which came from an unrestrained political pluralism. The danger was not to be underestimated or trivialized, Stürmer wrote, for "at issue today are the oldest questions of state, namely from where domestic peace is supposed to come and which forces are supposed to secure it. When there is no more common ground in the past and future . . . , then a pluralism of values and interests passes sooner or later into struggles which place the common existence [of the society] into question." This is not to say, he noted, that modern society cannot tolerate a healthy degree of internal dissent and even conflict,

but this conflict must remain within the limits set by the legal system, the values of the constitution, and a consensus about the past, present, and future. If conflicts do not respect these limits, they will destroy the community. This sort of destruction of values, dialog, and consensus threatens any free society which in the good times does not set limits for itself. It is above all [social] order which makes freedom into something enduring. It is the [existence of a] basic consensus which distinguishes conflict from civil war. Wherever . . . [social] order itself is placed in jeopardy, wherever the value of consensus is placed in jeopardy, as in the European civil wars of the inter-war period, the situation becomes extremely precarious, for there is nothing and no one to stand any longer between modern industrial society and its political decline.\(^58\)
It was precisely this latter condition which was threatening the Germany of his day, a society which had unravelled to the point that "priests, professors, and teachers place their moral premium on contempt for the legal system and on its ongoing destruction."\footnote{59}

The key concept here was consensus, and the inordinately high stakes which Stürmer sees in its evaporation are indicated by his repeated evocation of the specter of civil war and the experience of the Weimar Republic. "A pluralism of values and interests, if it ceases to find common ground, if it is no longer defused through economic growth and no longer muted by continually assuming new debts, will sooner or later lead to civil war within the society, as was the case at the end of the Weimar Republic."\footnote{60} Weimar had by no means been predestined to failure. An "intensified pluralism of organized interests," however, inherited from the Second Reich, permitted "no consensus regarding its constitutional foundations."\footnote{61} The intended parallel with the Germany of his own day did not need to be spelled out any more clearly. The Federal Republic in the 1980s lacked "the security of national self-consciousness and consensus," indeed even "popular support for its own existence."\footnote{62} The only constructive response which the Stürmer and Schulze saw to this dissolution was a vigorous defence of the institutional status quo, both domestic as well as international, and such a defense would have to begin with a revision of the way the national historical record was presented. However, Schulze pointed out in contemptuous reference to the liberal advocates of the Primat der Innenpolitik, because the Germans have been taught that their history is one of "abortive developments and futility," they "have no historical points of connection for the legitimation of our present and future order. Our task can only be that of establishing a new and positive (glückliche) history. . . . It is only on this basis that the opportunity may open up for an enduring union of the German nation with the German state"\footnote{63}—an opportunity, that is, to legitimize the specific state founded in the aftermath of 1945. Stürmer and Schulze approached this goal in two ways, both of which ultimately relied upon the logic of geographical or geopolitical argumentation.

In the first place, it was necessary to rescue the image of the German nation from the castigation and negativism it had received throughout the
decades after the war: to refurbish it, as it were, in such a way as to render it at once broadly acceptable and appealing. A positive and popularly shared vision of this sort could then serve as a kind of spiritual glue, which would supply cohesion for a civilization in which alternative group ideologies had either ceased to exercise any real influence (for example the dream of a classless society) or had not yet begun to do so (as with the case of pan-Europeanism). One elementary and rather crude means of enhancing the image of the nation toward this end was the simple appeal to national egoism, through the repeated insistence on the preeminent importance of Germany in the constitution and fate of the European continent as a whole. For better or for worse, Stürmer observed, Germany had always been the "key to Europe," for "the fate of the periphery was decided in the center." It was the "separation of the Mitte" from the rest of Europe which had been the cause of both World Wars, and this pivotal significance remained undiminished despite its defeat. The Cold War was best understood as the "war of German succession," and the fact that Europe's center lay in rubble at its outset ensured that the power of Germany's West European neighbors was also critically eroded. "Across the centuries," he summed up, Germany had always represented a sort of European quintessence: "the most European (die europäischste) of the European nations."

Another means for the refurbishment of the historical image of the German nation was the notion that across the centuries, Germany had not been a pro-active historical agent but rather a mere reactive victim of circumstance, specifically of the geographical circumstance of Mittellage. The emphasis we have observed on the Primat der Außenpolitik in determining the course of Germany's historical evolution obviously set the analytical framework for such a perspective, and our historians did not hesitate to draw it out. Unlike "the British and their island or the French and their hexagon," observed Stürmer stoically, "the German question was never the sole property of the Germans." Indeed, "if the Germans at any point determined their situation by themselves, this was an exception . . . and never lasted for long." Since the seventeenth century, the traditional role of a stabilizing factor in the center of Europe had been assigned to Germany again and again "without anyone ever asking the
Germans for their agreement,” and this imposition from without of an unsolicited and essentially unwanted task had fateful consequences. In this spirit, as we have noted above, Germany’s failure in the nineteenth century to develop a democratic and participatory political culture was ascribed to the external international exigencies of Mittellage. Indeed, Stürmer’s conviction in this point led him to castigate even such authorities as Jacob Burckhardt, Nietzsche, and Theodor Mommsen, all of whom made the mistake of “blaming Prussia and Bismarck” for Germany’s domestic woes, “and not the [international] system of powers.”

Stürmer then brought the point into the twentieth century by recounting the story of how Konrad Adenauer was once asked by the British High Commissioner to name England’s most fateful error in regard to Germany. The diplomat had Munich or Yalta in mind, but Adenauer’s thoughts went immediately to the Congress of Vienna. “Prussia only wanted Saxony. England forced it to advance to the Rhine, thereby shifting the focus of Prussian power to the West. It was this,” he concluded darkly, “which destroyed first Germany and then Europe.” While it is perhaps a bit strong to condemn this sort of reasoning as a fragment from the “ghetto of national apologetics,” as one critic has suggested, there can be no mistaking the exculpatory intentions that inspire its unrelenting emphasis on the significance of external constraints and pressures in the evolution of Germany. The ultimate effect, as Adenauer appears to be insisting, was to locate the determining factors for this evolution outside of the country, thereby absolving Germany itself of responsibility, at least to a significant extent.

Together with this, an altogether more sophisticated approach to the project of repackaging the German nation was engaged. This took the form of a claim to what may be called national normalcy, and it built upon the notion of “geographical normalcy” discussed in the preceding section. The character of Germany and the deepest impulses and motivations behind its development, it was now argued, had never been essentially different from those of the other “normal” nations of the Western world. The urge for consolidation as a unified nation-state, for example, which dominated Germany’s internal politics and external relations from the mid-nineteenth century on, “was as bad and as good as that of the Poles
and the Irish, the French and the Americans." Even more to the point, the aggressive expansionism and chauvinist nationalism which had been so characteristic during Germany's fin de siècle and had led to the catastrophe of two World Wars was in no way exceptional or unique, for as Klaus Hildebrand pointed out, the Germans were simply rushing to join in "what everyone else had been doing for a long time." By the end of the century, Stürmer wrote:

The fever of a swaggering imperialism held sway from the music halls in England to the mess halls of the American marines, and it did not spare the Germans, the French, the Russians, or the Japanese. The industrial powers in Europe and abroad turned against their traditions and became unpredictable. All of this influenced the German people and German politics. The German delirium did not exceed the European norm. . . . This was true even for [Germany's] construction of a battle fleet, which was a part of a general [international] fever for distant waters, the revolution in shipbuilding, and innovations in field of weaponry. All of the old seafaring nations, along with the Germans and Russians, gave in to the temptation of global politics.

Indeed, although Germany's striving for European hegemony and its Platz an der Sonne was "a childish desire for the equal rights, . . . politically lunatic and fatal," the international commonality of the imperialist project led him to the altogether remarkable conclusion that these strivings had been "morally legitimate" precisely because they were universally shared by the other powers. At heart, therefore, the Germans were thoroughly "normal imperialists," in the expression of Hans-Jürgen Puhle, like all the others. In fact, this was true of German society in general, for its "most important structures—the economy, social classes, the degree of social conflict, the much-condemned 'alliance of elites' against liberal social reform—were not significantly different from the mainstream of European tendencies." What made the Germans special, what in fact "did not permit them to be the way all the others were," was not a Sonderweg but rather as Stürmer put it the German Sonderlage, in other words the nega-
tive singularity of the external factor of geographical location. The realities of their Mittellage position effectively denied them, alone of all the European powers, the possibility of pursuing their expansionist inclinations with any hope of success.

Here Stürmer and Schulze could establish a direct connection with the geo-historical foundations of Germany's development we have considered in the first part of this essay. Once again, they pointed out that the exacting price which the Germans had to pay for European toleration of their national unification was the maintenance of a neutral, pacific, and absolutely ambitionless foreign policy. “Germany's geographical position was a quiet warning to resist entering the [international] competition, a warning which went unheeded,” explained Stürmer. It was a warning “not to seek to calm the domestic situation with swaggering speeches and actions, or to purchase a national consensus by means of global politics.” “The Germans forgot,” he elaborated elsewhere, “that for 200 years they had been a chessboard, and that it was only through extraordinary circumstances in world politics that they were given the chance to become one of the players.” That the “normalcy” in which the Germans so fully shared at the time was one of “false thinking and the delusion of power” was not really problematic. The more important point was rather that it was in fact shared, for this indicated that the Germans were not by nature uniquely aggressive and difficult, but instead at the bottom of it all just like all the others. And if the Germans indeed appeared historically to be specially aggressive and disruptive, then it was the fault of that “Fluch der Geographie” which was very specially theirs, the fault in other words of an objective and external circumstance quite beyond their control, a profoundly unavoidable consequence of their geopolitical destiny.

“German history had to develop differently,” Stürmer concluded, “because geography, history, and European power politics shaped it differently.”

Thus Stürmer and Schulze use environmental determinism in a negative sense, in order to establish the essential normalcy of what might otherwise seem to be a rather non-normal national context. The fact that, as a result, the Germans were only geographically and not as it were genetically different from the rest of Europe, suggested a commonality
which led directly into their most important point about Germany's position in the contemporary world order. The close military, economic, and political relations which developed between Germany and the Western powers since 1945 must at all costs be retained and strengthened. The first to have clearly recognized this imperative was the Federal Republic's first Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, for whom Stürmer and Schulze repeatedly express deep admiration. It was Adenauer who, with an appreciation of the historical legacy of Germany's Mittellage, first recognized that the division of Germany and Europe was not a transitory but rather a fixed arrangement, and one which would endure for a very long time. Rather than identify the national reunification of Germany as the top priority, therefore, his energy was directed instead toward the very different goal of achieving the secure and lasting integration of the Federal Republic into the anti-Soviet bloc of Western powers. To be sure, this policy represented a deep rupture in the history of German-European relations, indeed it was unprecedented, but this did not alter the fact that it was the only policy which could ensure Germany's evolution as a free and democratic state. Reunification itself, it turned out, could eventually come only in this context. "How else, if not by being internally and externally a part of the West, is that political education supposed to take place which will bring the yesterday of the nation-state, the today of European integration, and the tomorrow of German self-determination into a logical sequence?" There was simply no question: Germany's integration into NATO and the Western world in general was and would remain the "deciding condition" for German politics, if the latter was to retain any credibility and influence at all.

It is worth noting that our historians could press this all-important point only by undermining the very environmentalism which had served as the basis of their carefully constructed historical explications. Up to this point, as we have seen time and again, they had treated Germany's geographical situation at the center of Europe as an objective condition which determined the essential pattern of the country's historical experience, and they laid great emphasis on the immutable influence of this circumstance of location, which the factors of human volition could not transform. After 1945, however, what had been immutable quite sud-
denly became entirely malleable, and the geography of European politics was rearranged virtually overnight. With the split of Europe and the Western world into two contending blocks, the *Conditio Germaniae* of *Mittellage* vanished into thin air or, as Stürmer put it, "dissolved itself." At the end of the war, he wrote in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1986, the Germans "bid farewell to the old *Mittellage* and made their home in Western Europe." Indeed, Germany's traditional separation from and antagonism to the Western powers, which up to this point had been explained consistently as a result of the objective circumstances of Germany's geographical juxtaposition to them, was now rated quite differently as a simple "mistake"—that is, an error of judgment which necessarily had a subjective dimension—which could be and was finally "corrected" by more sagacious judgment of Konrad Adenauer. All of this suggested rather disconcertingly that geographical conditions were not necessarily the "große Konstante" of German history that Schulze had claimed, in other words the exclusive and all-determining source of Germany's destiny, and that subjective factors were in fact far more significant than heretofore allowed.

Be that as it may, Stürmer and Schulze felt that Germany's Western integration was the sine qua non for its existence. It was this integration which they saw coming under direct challenge in the Germany of their own day, and they undertook to confront the most vociferous critics directly. Perhaps the most vocal of these came from the ranks of the youth movement, which Stürmer dismissed in toto with unconcealed contempt. Completely preoccupied with their own "dreams and utopias," the young activists of the 1980s were nothing more than a latter-day manifestation of the familiar "boredom with civilization" and "protest in search of a meaning for life" which had driven the Romantic *Jugendbewegung* of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in ever more radical and destructive directions. Their raw anti-Americanism was simply a new version of the old and standard rejection of the West that had been part of the "cultural *Sonderbewuβtsein*" of the Bismarck period: *deutsches Wesen gegen westliches Unwesen*. The contemporary conflict between the generations in Germany represented a "steadily more radical rejection of consensus, an announcement of hostilities, and an inclination to intellectu-
al nihilism. In the name of nostalgia for Rousseau and the utopia of Marx, [German youth] are issuing a radical declaration of war on the contemporary world."87 The most grievous transgression committed by this movement, of course, was its neutralism, that is its desire to disengage Germany from its NATO arrangements and from the East-West confrontation overall, by transforming it into a non-aligned and essentially pacifist entity. In Stürmer’s view, such a goal was a logical and practical impossibility. “Neutrality has always been an illusion,” he scoffed, “in the best case a function of the European balance of power, in the worse case a rejection of Europe.”88 Its future would be no more auspicious. “German efforts to become neutral and independent in the middle of Europe . . . would represent both a regression to the role of an object for world history, as well as the strongest basis for a condominium of the superpowers over central Europe.” The Federal Republic will be a member of the Atlantic alliance, he reaffirmed, “or it will cease to exist.”89

At the same time, Stürmer attacked no less vigorously a phenomenon which would have appeared to emerge out of a very different part of the political spectrum, namely the resurgence of German nationalist sentiment. In his historical lectures he had spoken deliberately and negatively about the destructive effects that the “secular religion of nationalism” had exerted in the nineteenth century; indeed, in 1985 he boasted about how he had been criticized “from the right wing” for his statement that the German nation-state had been a burden for the rest of the European system.90 He saw the contemporary revival of nationalism in essentially the same light.91 Schulze argued that the historical tendency of German nationalism to cast its own positive image against a corresponding negative image of other peoples, even allies, was an essential weakness. In the late nineteenth century, this anti-typing of an “Other” took the form of the contrast between the “Krämergeist” of the British and the “Heldengeist” of the Germans, while today the unenviable role of the former “has fallen to the Americans.”92 Stürmer and Schulze’s view of the Sonderweg notion, which was always closely associated with nationalist sentiment in Germany, was indicative. Because of its negative implications for Germany’s relations to the rest of the Western alliance, they remained implacably opposed to the concept. They denied it any historical validity, claim-
ing that it was the product of clumsy attempts either to make a virtue “out of the curse of their Mittellage” or alternatively to compensate for the “disappointment” and “ethical emptiness” of the decades following upon the thwarted question for unification in 1848. A German Sonderweg palpably implied a “moral and political separation from the West,” and although Adenauer had done what he could to overcome it, after a extended period of dormancy it reemerged in strength in the 1980s as a central part of the new nationalist sentiments. The current search for identity in the Federal Republic, observed Stürmer bitterly, was dominated by a nationalism that was “neutralist,” and by a regrettable “regression into an old, anti-Western Sonderbewusstsein.”

Even more than the question of nuclear warheads on German soil, the mobilizing issue for the new nationalists was that of the political reunification of the two German states. Once again, our historians took an decidedly iconoclastic view. “The epoch of the nation-state has passed,” proclaimed Stürmer, and in an interview published in 1987 Schulze went to great lengths to spell out the problems which a unified “German nation-state in the middle of a divided Europe” would bring, including the destabilization of its own security structures and with this considerable “risks for world peace.” Dismissing the unconditional demand for German unification into a single “Nationalstaat à tout prix” as a cul-de-sac, Stürmer concurred in this de-emphasis on the importance of strictly national consolidation, and he indicated that the ultimate goal ought instead to be “a Europe united in freedom.” For the most part, however, their tone was not quite this explicitly negative. They were willing to embrace the cause of Wiedervereinigung, but only as a goal for the distant future. In the interview just cited, Schulze referred to reunification as a goal with “must always be in mind” but which “is not to be realized in the near future,” and any notions that it might be accomplished under present conditions are “fully illusory.” To Stürmer, it was clear that reunification would become a practical concern only in the next century. “You can set the watch ahead,” he quipped, paraphrasing Bismarck, “but this doesn't make time go any faster.” Both were emphatic, moreover, that under whatever circumstances reunification was to come, it would have to be as Stürmer put it “not against Europe but with Europe,” that is to
say not only a German but more broadly a European affair, and part of the movement to overcome the system of political boundaries in general within Europe. In this spirit, and in stark contrast to German nationalists, they saw reunification not as a continuation and consummation of but rather as a clear break with all of Germany’s earlier experiences in national unification. Perhaps most tellingly of all, even after 1989, Schulze still identified the most important task of a newly unified Germany as enabling a Federal Europe “to become a reality, in order [for Germany] to then be absorbed within it.”

In summing up their reactions to the disturbed times in which they were living, the revisionist historians returned to the geographical determinates which they had identified at the basis of German history and reaffirmed their enduring significance.

The conditio Germaniae is still determined by the fact that Germany was located [first] at the center of the old European system of power, then at the center of a Europe which had become nation-states, and which still today is the very focus of the bipolar nuclear world system. And this [fact of location] serves to determine not only much of Germany history, but much of the German future as well. Germany’s freedom, national self-determination, and sovereignty are not determined abstractly, but rather according to its location in time and space.

It would be insane, he wrote elsewhere, to lose sight of the fact—as he clearly feels that much of German society has done—“that Germany is and remains the center of Europe, which is threatening to the other powers and is threatened by them.” This inability to appreciate Germany’s position amounted to nothing less than a “yearning for destruction, and beyond this a failure to meet the German and European responsibility for maintaining the peace.” In attempting to deduce a geopolitics from the conditio Germaniae, to identify in other words the imperatives for the present day which derive from this enduring geographical circumstance, Stürmer and Schulze drew upon the lessons they established in their analysis of the first unified German state under Bismarck. For the same
reason that the Second Reich could secure its existence only by main-
taining a tight lid on the domestic scene and by both respecting and suppor-
ting the European status quo, they argued, so Germany today was risking
its existence by neglecting these very obligations—this was what Stürmer
meant with his reference to Germany's "yearning for destruction." Do-
mestic ferment had been allowed to grow beyond a point that it was
possible to control, and it had developed moreover in a direction which
opposed it to the postwar European system. Taking their queue effective-
ly from Bismarck himself, Stürmer and Schulze saw the first geopolitical
necessity as being the establishment of order: the resetting of the lid, to
pursue the metaphor, upon a domestic arena which in its own descent into
anarchy could not only destroy itself but could well draw the rest of the
world along with it.

In opposition to the youth movement with its frivolous neutralism and
anti-Americanism, and also to the new nationalism, the Germans in the
1980s had to be taught soberly to understand what an earlier generation
had utterly failed to appreciate, namely the external and objective geo-
graphical limits to their existence. "Does every generation of Germans,"
demanded Stürmer bitterly, "have the right to its own foolishness and to
its own tragedy?" The question was rhetorical, of course, and his point
was that it was necessary above all for the Germans to be able to distin-
guish precisely "what they are able to be in Europe" from that which, "on
the basis of all historical experience, they are not allowed to be." To
achieve this would require—and here the parallel with Bismarck becomes
most explicit—the most sorely lacking moral quality in Germany today,
namely discipline. The Second Reich had been successful under Bis-
marck's leadership precisely because it had remained "disciplined by
history . . . and by its position in the center of Europe." This was a
strategy which pointed the way into the future as well. Germany's "key
geo-strategic role" remained intact after the defeat of 1945, and it de-
manded today from the Germans "the ability to unite freedom with re-
sponsibility, and to maintain the discipline of Central-European Realpo-
litik." To replace the loose and manifestly unreliable system of public
values in the Federal Republic, which advocated diversity without order
or system and the pursuit of individual satisfaction without constraint,
what was needed was the "cautious redirection of the Germans back to the center of Europe" in such a way as to stimulate "a patriotism of moderation . . . , and the Benedictine and puritanical virtues of work, self-discipline, and shared responsibility." The alternative could only be the "tragedy of the Federal Republic, which in view of the current geographical circumstances, would be Europe's tragedy as well." Although at no point did Stürmer and Schulze indicate that any democratic freedoms might need to be curtailed to achieve the turn-around they sought—to the contrary, their insistence on the need for democracy was consistent and emphatic—we can nonetheless readily recognize the accuracy of one critic's characterization of them as "bundesdeutsche Bismarckianer." It was in this spirit that the particular geopolitics which they evoked out of Germany's Mittellage was ultimately articulated.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we may return to reconsider the question raised by Wehler and Sandner about the functions of geopolitics and the nature of the continuities which link the geopolitical analyses of the revisionist historians of the 1980s with the interwar tradition of Geopolitik. On the basis of our examination, I would return to a point made above and suggest that the problem of continuity in fact has to be approached on two rather different levels. In one regard, it seems apparent that there are a number of points which clearly serve to differentiate the two periods in a significant manner. The most important of these is the fact that while both periods similarly understood Germany's Mittellage as the key to explaining its historical destiny, they nonetheless embraced dramatically contradicting perspectives as to exactly what this destiny consisted of. In general, the historians of the 1920s and 1930s wanted to see this as a positive destiny, and accordingly they emphasized the positive potentialities of Mittellage, namely the opportunities it contained for the extension of German expansion and domination over ever-greater stretches of European territory. In its Mittellage, they saw the geographical embodiment of Germany's special mission and its necessary separation from and elevation above the other European powers. Stürmer and Schulze, as we have seen, were con-
vinced instead that Germany's geographical destiny had always been negative. They rejected all hegemonist sentiments unequivocally, and maintained that while Mittellage may have been the source of a German Sonderweg, it was a categorically negative Sonderweg and one which throughout modern history had been the source of national disaster for the country. It was only by rejecting any notion of national exclusivity and overcoming Germany's separation from the rest of Europe—a development in turn made fully possible only by the international circumstances of the political polarization of the world after 1945—that this disastrous heritage could finally be brought to an end.

At the same time, however, there were very real analytical affinities which serve to link the two periods. The most obvious and significant of these is a shared confidence in geopolitics, namely the belief that geographical factors are somehow determinate for the constitution of political life, and the associated confidence that a program of political activity can be read out of these underlying geographical circumstances. Deriving from this latter point is a further commonality, to which we have not yet alluded. This is the fact that in both periods, the geopolitical arguments offered proved remarkably effective in promoting a political position far beyond the narrow academic circles in which they were originally developed. The not-inconsiderable influence which Karl Haushofer enjoyed in the right-wing politics of the 1920s and 1930s has been well documented. It was a product not only of his long-standing personal friendship with figures such as Rudolf Hess, but also of the striking efficacy and persuasive power of his geopolitical terminology and argumentation. In the 1980s, we can recognize certain similarities in the broad appeal exercised by the geopolitics of the conservative historians we have examined in this essay. Much of their analysis of Mittellage was presented not in works directed toward an academic audience but rather in articles and essays written for a much broader reading public. To a certain extent, this was true of all of the historians participating in the Historikerstreit. That the influence of Michael Stürmer went significantly beyond these publicistic activities, however, can be seen in his membership on the boards of numerous conservative foundations and think-tanks, his television appearances, the articles he contributed to the American popular press, and the
fact that he even served informally as an adviser to Helmut Kohl, some of whose speeches he helped to write.\textsuperscript{10} More than anything, this speaks to the remarkable and enduring appeal of the logic of Geopolitik, which has the very unusual ability to manipulate the apparently objective and irrefutable explanatory factors of geography in order to derive whatever political arguments and conclusions may happen to be expedient at the moment.

Notes


Schulze, Weimar, p. 18.


Schulze, Weimar, p. 20.


Ibid., p. 166.

Schulze, Weimar, pp. 23–24 (quote), 18, 30.


Geopolitics in the Historikerstreit

45 “[Geographical] position is not a destiny a people is hopelessly subjected to. Position is a task!” K. Schweirskott, Erdkunde (Breslau, 1943), quoted in Hans-Dietrich Schultz, “Fantasies of Mittellage and Mitteleuropa in German Geographical Discussion in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” Political Geography Quarterly 8,4 (October 1989), pp. 315–40, here 333. Also see Bassin, “Race contra Space,” passim.
52 Schulze, Weimar, p. 16.
54 Schulze, Weimar, p. 16.
55 Schulze took this final observation from the political theorist Pufendorf. “Die Geburt der deutschen Nation,” p. 201.

58 Stürmer, "Braucht die Republik eine Mitte?" p. 273.

59 Ibid., p. 274.

60 Stürmer, "Kein Eigentum," p. 84; Berghahn, "Geschichtswissenschaft und große Politik," p. 35.


62 Stürmer, "Braucht die Republik eine Mitte?" p. 268.


64 Berghahn, "Geschichtswissenschaft und große Politik," pp. 32–33.


68 Ibid., p. 299.

69 Ibid., p. 286.

70 Berghahn, "Geschichtswissenschaft und große Politik," p. 37; also see Maier, *The Unmasterable Past*, p. 117: “apologetics of geographical determinism.”


72 Hildebrand, "Deutscher Sonderweg und 'Drittes Reich,'" p. 389.

73 Stürmer in Hildebrand, *Wem gehört die deutsche Geschichte?*, pp. 100–01.

74 Ibid., p. 131 (emphasis added).


Stürmer, Deutsche Frage und europäische Integration, p. 12.

Stürmer, Deutsche Frage und europäische Integration, p. 20; idem, "Die deutsche Frage als europäisches Problem," pp. 300-01.

Stürmer, Deutsche Frage und europäische Integration, p. 10.


Stürmer in Hildebrand, Wem gehört die deutsche Geschichte?, p. 130.

Stürmer, Das ruhelose Reich, p. 63.


Stürmer, quoted in Berghahn, "Geschichtswissenschaft und große Politik," p. 35.


105 Stürmer, *Das ruhelose Reich*, p. 404.

106 Stürmer, “Braucht die Republik eine Mitte?” p. 275

107 Ibid., pp. 271–72.


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The terms *Heimat*, nation, or fatherland have had such controversial histories that they elude all attempts at a one-dimensional definition. Over the course of modern German history, *Heimat* has come to mean virtually anything: a romantic nostalgia for preindustrial conditions; a conservative emphasis on various ethnic attributes; a feeling of ecological responsibility for a particular region; an aversion for the ugliness brought about by industry; a glorification of the German peasantry as the wellspring of national health; and much more. The contributions to this volume critically examine selected aspects of these concepts, including eighteenth-century patriotism, attitudes of German-Americans, German-Jewish understanding of *Heimat*, the Heimatschutz movement, Nazi appropriations of history, the *Heimat* film, Heidegger’s and Adorno’s notions of *Heimat*, and German geopolitics.

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