VIOLENT, BLACK OCEANS

LITERARY BORDER CROSSINGS IN A GLOBAL AGE, 1990–2005

By

Alessandra Campana

Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty of the

Graduate School of Vanderbilt University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

German

December, 2014

Nashville, Tennessee

Approved:

Professor Meike Werner

Professor Barbara Hahn

Professor James McFarland

Professor William Franke

Copyright © 2014 by Alessandra Campana
All Rights Reserved

To Elisabeth and Ernst Hochholzer-Lanz

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My thanks go to Vanderbilt University's Department of Germanic & Slavic Languages, the Graduate School, and the Max Kade Center, whose ongoing financial support enabled the writing of this dissertation. I specifically thank the Department of Germanic & Slavic Languages and the Graduate School for generously supporting the various travels that I undertook in the course of researching my topic.

During my time at Vanderbilt, my adviser, Professor Meike Werner, has been immensely important to me in regard to professional guidance and on the level of human support; this dissertation would not exist without her persistent faith in me and my project. I furthermore thank all members of my dissertation committee for their consistent support through all the ups and downs of my academic journey, as well as for embracing my ideas and thoughts long before they had taken on a clear shape.

This project was greatly influenced by numerous positive and critical remarks by attentive readers and listeners whom I met in Switzerland, Germany, the United States, and China. I am furthermore indebted to Rebecca Panter for proofreading the final manuscript draft thoroughly and with a preciseness that was nothing short of brilliant; Nora Brügmann for countless illuminating lunchtime conversations; Ingo Kieslich for many insightful comments and suggestions; Oliver Knabe for his unceasing and infectious enthusiasm; and Barbara Wahlster from *Deutschlandradio Kultur* for providing me with invaluable literature suggestions.

Last, but certainly not least, I thank my grandparents, without whom none of this would have been possible – they will forever have my gratitude and love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION iii

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS iv

INTRODUCTION
WATER AND UNICORNS: ON CONTEMPORARY FICTION vii

Chapter

1. MIGRATION
MOVING THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS. HERTA MÜLLER'S *THE PASSPORT* (*DER MENSCH IST EIN GROSSER FASAN AUF DER WELT*, 1986) AND GISH JEN'S *TYPICAL AMERICAN* (1991) 1

1.1. Identity Frogs of Ethnocentrism 9
1.2. Visual Politics of Madness 15
1.3. The Realities of Totalitarianism 30
1.4. Literary Aesthetics of Inevitability 47
1.5. An American Story 71
1.6. Negotiating China and/in the United States 84
1.7. Literary Aesthetics of Political Sensitivity 102

2. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE
COMMUNICATION ACROSS SPACE AND TIME IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM. HUGO LOETSCHER'S *THE MANDARIN'S EYES* (*DIE AUGEN DES MANDARIN*, 1999) 115

2.1. The Beginning of World History 120
2.2. A Realistic Dialectic in a Postmodern ›Grand Narrative‹ 137
2.3. Confronting the Other: West Meets East and Vice Versa 154
2.4. Religious Universalism Re-Evaluated 174
2.5. An Intellectual's Faith in Paper: Deconstructing the Ivory Tower 190

3. DEFINING THE SELF
IDENTITY FORMATION IN A POST-COLONIAL WORLD. MARTIN R. DEAN'S *MY FATHERS* (*MEINE VÄTER*, 2003) AND HABIB TENGOUR'S *THIS PARTICULAR TARTAR 2* (*CE TATAR-LÀ 2* / *BESAGER TATAR 2*, 1997/98) 212

3.1. A Psychoanalytic Setting 221
3.2. From Switzerland to Trinidad and Tobago..237
3.3. Brown Skin, Many Masks..249
3.4. PNM and Black Power, 1970...263
3.5. The ›Knowledge‹ of Literature 278
3.6. Tartars: Then and Now 291
3.7. Postmodern Nomadism in an Interior Exile 303
3.8. The ›Honesty‹ of Literature 316

4. INVASION
RELIGION, WAR, AND THE POLITICS OF NARRATION. IAN MCEWAN'S *SATURDAY* (2005) 329

4.1. Setting the Stage for a Rational Mind...333
4.2. Literature's Empathic Duty: There's Only Love 341
4.3. An Intrusion of Irrationality – 9/11, *Mise en Abyme* 351
4.4. New Atheism and Religious Zeal 362
4.5. A Darwinist Religion 374
4.6. Empire and the Costs of Invasion 385
4.7. Literature's Moral Duty: There's Only Life 401

CONCLUSION...414

BIBLIOGRAPHY...427

INTRODUCTION

WATER AND UNICORNS: ON CONTEMPORARY FICTION

»The Red Bull gathered them for me, one at a time, and I bade him drive each one into the sea. What better place could there be to keep unicorns, and what other cage could hold them?« (Beagle 2008: 220) It is no accident that King Haggard in Peter S. Beagle's famous fairytale *The Last Unicorn* (1968) chooses water as the element in which to keep those creatures of fiction imprisoned. For not only is the last unicorn, who sets out to and will eventually find the others, repeatedly described as a »sea-white legend« (ibid.: 239), but she also shines through morning rain like a dolphin. (see ibid.: 55) Furthermore, when the unicorns finally leave the sea, their bodies fully merge with the water, thus indeed identifying it as the only accurate element with which to surround them: »And in the whiteness, of the whiteness, flowering in the tattered water, their bodies arching with the streaked marble hollows of the waves, […] their eyes as dark and jeweled as the deep sea.« (ibid.: 267) Collectively, they appear as one giant wave that awes the castle's men-at-arms: »The wave parted to go around us. […] It was strange water, like the ghost of a wave, boiling with rainbow light.« (ibid.: 274)

Of course, the last unicorn frees her companions thanks to her courage to face the Red Bull. Yet even more significantly, she possesses another quality that shows her to be the bull's equal. For in her sea-whiteness, we learn, she is »as boundlessly beautiful as the Bull [i]s mighty.« (Beagle 2008: 260) The realm of aesthetics, which is opened up with the fictitious creature's beauty, immediately reveals the allegorical dimension that is contained in this and all other unicorns: as purely fictitious creatures, they come to

represent fiction itself. Consequently, the butterfly that only knows »songs and poetry« (ibid.: 13) is the first creature not to mistake the last unicorn for a white mare. Instead, it recognizes »the long horn above her eyes [that] shone with its own seashell light even in the deepest midnight.« (ibid.: 2) So when the unicorn's beauty is set up against the bull's might, it becomes evident that her beauty has its very own might; and this is what allows for her victory. For just like literature, she has »a unicorn's way of growing more beautiful in evil times and places.« (ibid.: 106)

Over the past two decades, our world has significantly changed. It is irrelevant whether the process of globalization is seen as a blessing or a curse; it is, above all, an undeniable fact. Even though it remains futile to discuss its value, however, it is certainly true that the many challenges and conflicts that globalization has brought about can indeed create the impression of living »in evil times and places.« In addition to a profound economic inequality between the many different parts of the world, for instance, there can be observed an ever-bustling exchange between the particular and the universal, and the countless tensions that arise from this constellation have become an insurmountable facet of everyday life. So although not a new phenomenon, present-day globalization clearly has caused our world to appear more connected, more like a veritable ›world wide web,‹ than ever before. Occurrences that take place presumably far away are potentially momentous for the lives of millions of people anywhere on the globe, as is for example illustrated by the September 11 attacks in the United States and the following international crisis of diplomacy. Without a doubt, the experience of witnessing as well

as undertaking border crossings of various sorts has become a vital pillar of the contemporary human condition.

To literarily respond to this global situation of oftentimes tense interactions in the form of yet another historico-philosophical grand narrative is no longer a valid option. Rather, in order to adequately respond to this multidimensional social reality, writers need to generate innovative forms of narration that are able to capture the essence of our postmodern experience. As a consequence, I argue, literature grows »more beautiful« in challenging times and places by developing new – which is to say: postmodern – ways of being beautiful, based on original forms of writing that dare to step outside and expand the confines of literary traditions.

It is interesting that despite its having turned into »an international movement« (Doležel 2010: 1) that affects nearly all forms of culture, there is still no established consensus on what postmodernism truly is. (see ibid; see also Berman 1989: 147) For the purpose of this investigation into contemporary literary examples of postmodernism, I draw a central parameter for my employment of the term from the American discourse, according to which hierarchies of literary worth are undermined in postmodern thought. (see Berman 1989: 154) In bringing together both well-known as well as largely unknown authors and literary texts, my dissertation illustrates that – and how – contemporary literature ›happens,‹ even when it is not placed in the spotlight of a public stage. I focus in detail on the following authors and texts: Herta Müller (*Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt* / *The Passport*, 1985), Gish Jen (*Typical American*, 1991), Hugo Loetscher (*Die Augen des Mandarin* / *The Mandarin's Eyes*, 1999), Martin R. Dean (*Meine Väter* / *My*

Fathers, 2003), Habib Tengour (*Ce tatar-là 2* / *Besagter Tatar 2* / *This Particular Tartar 2*, 1997–98), and Ian McEwan (*Saturday*, 2005).

Of course, the chosen authors do not agree on the use and value of the term ›postmodernism,‹ either. Yet vitally, their writing exhibits comparable traits, which serves to underline certain tendencies that I claim are representative of postmodern narration in a global age. All texts confirm, for instance, that in order to condense and express a multitude of simultaneous perspectives and truths, whose existence is indisputable in a globalized context, the borderlines of conventionality have to be ›over-written.‹ Thus, the crossing of borders also becomes an artistic method that gives rise to literary aesthetics that relate to their societal context in terms of both content and form. As early as 1911, Hungarian theorist Georg Lukács identified a close connection between literary form and social reality: »Form is social reality, it participates vivaciously in the life of the spirit. [It is] a factor which is in its turn molded by life.« (quoted in Frank 2010: 46) This constellation brings about a highly interesting twist in my argumentation for postmodernism. For even though innovation and originality are pivotal parameters of postmodern writing as I understand it, the strong focus on the social reality that surrounds any text is to be evaluated as a thoroughly traditional literary strategy. As such, it opposes the popular tendency to understand postmodernism as a »ruthless deconstruction of all authority« (Doležel 2010: 3), as a »whirlwind of anarchic relativization that has spread over our planet.« (Nemoianu 2010: 135)

From this it follows that by strengthening a realistic orientation in my definition of postmodern writing as based on the text analyses in this dissertation, I suggest a reconsideration of the concept of postmodernism. Interestingly, this argumentation

against the ›tradition‹ of understanding postmodernism as an abolishment of all authoritative parameters – which include the literary tradition of realistic writing – once again identifies an anti-traditional impetus in postmodern writing. So just as Peter S. Beagle's unicorns seamlessly merge with the water that surrounds them, then, water becomes the ideal medium for illustrating contemporary literature's condition. The fluid nature of water defies the idea of any form of tradition that relies on clear-cut categories, while any body of water still remains bound to a certain form of containment – over which it nonetheless tends to cross repeatedly.

Swiss author Hugo Loetscher poignantly underlines the tension between solidity and fluidity inherent in any body of water by stating that not even a solid coast can fully hold the sea in place; and that, along the line of coastal containment, solid and fluid aspects enter into a curious relationship with one another: »To whom does the coast belong? To the land? To the water? [...] Does the water climb onto the land here. [...] Or is this the place where the land steps into the water.«[1] (Loetscher 2004: 357) By omitting the question mark, this structural question presents itself as a statement, thus confronting us with its factual non-answerability. Evidently, there is a quality to water that cannot be controlled, which in turn causes it to retain a moment of uncanniness. Consistently, Swiss author Martin R. Dean has one of his characters muse, opposite the ocean surrounding Trinidad and Tobago's highly complex multi-ethnic island setting, that »here, the sea was

[1] »Wem gehört die Küste? Dem Land? Dem Wasser? […] Klettert hier das Wasser ans Land. […] Oder ist es die Stelle, wo das Land ins Wasser steigt.« (Loetscher 2004: 357)

darker, heavier, and saltier. There was nothing erotic about it; it was wild and brutal.«[2] (Dean 1994: 268)

This violence of water also becomes a topic when German-Romanian author Herta Müller describes how she experienced the country of Romania under the communist dictatorship of Nicolae Ceauşescu to be a veritable island; after all, »emperors have always utilized water as an easily guarded, suitable belt of isolation.«[3] (Müller 2003: 174–75) Comparably isolating and hence brutal is the ocean that keeps the seaman Odysseus from reaching his beloved Ithaca; and, in that he turns Odysseus into »a kind of alter ego of the modern Algerian, the eternal migrant in between the shores« (»une sorte d'alter ego de l'Algérien modern, l'éternel migrant entre les rives,« Keil-Sagawe 2012: 117), Algerian writer Habib Tengour presents the Algerian identity as a deeply migratory one. And this, too, has become a significant characteristic of many lives in a global age.

These few examples already suffice to illustrate that water is doubtlessly a very suitable medium for illustrating the atmosphere of tension that is so prevalent in a global environment. Thus, when Helen in Chinese-American writer Gish Jen's novel *Typical American* migrates from China to the United States and is faced with an abyss of cultural differences, she at some point has to accept »that she had indeed crossed a *violent, black ocean* [emphasis added by me, AC]; and that it was time to make herself as at home in her exile as she could.« (Jen 1991: 63) However, there are no guidelines available on how a state of feeling »at home in [one's] exile« could be achieved; nor is the likelihood of success in this matter in any way predetermined. It rather seems as if the waves of that

[2] »Natürlich […] liebte mein Bruder das Meer. […] Aber hier war das Meer dunkler, schwerer und salziger. Es hatte nichts Erotisches; es war wild und brutal.« (Dean 1994: 268)
[3] »Herrschende haben das Wasser als leicht zu bewachenden, tauglichen Gürtel zur Isolation immer schon in Dienst genommen.« (Müller 2003e: 174–75)

»violent, black ocean« that Helen just crossed still reached into her daily life; most certainly so whenever she is forced to realize that »what mattered in China was not necessarily what mattered here.« (Jen 1991: 81)

For one thing, Gish Jen's image of a »violent, black ocean,« which combines the key elements of violence and water, provides the title for my dissertation project; more importantly, it also delivers the coordinates along which I stride through the broad field of contemporary literature in the context of globalization. Not least because it is impossible to overlook the consistency with which the aspect of violence manifests itself as soon as the crossing of borders in a global age is investigated. In the same manner in which Beagle's fairytale culminates in violence when the last unicorn and the Red Bull clash in their fight of good against evil, conflicts of various sorts have become a common occurrence in contemporary social interactions. But such violent encounters rarely lead to an outcome similar to the last unicorn's experience of facing her opponent, which results in a victorious wave of unicorns that is, in an open analogy to the defeated bull's fiery nature, »boiling with rainbow light.« (Beagle 2008: 274) With their horns reflecting the scriptural symbol of peace, which was once set in the sky as a Godly promise never to drown mankind again, the unicorns part to go around the men-at-arms; and with this peaceful »ghost of a wave« (ibid.), the last unicorn's adventure reaches its fairytale end.

Reality, however, is no fairytale. And just as political scientist Samuel Huntington's popular prophecy of a ›clash of civilizations‹ must be criticized for its oversimplification and propagandistic zeal, the concepts ›good‹ and ›evil‹ cannot be applied to a world that is so much more complex than apodictic moral judgments. In the

face of such complexities, literature is a highly suitable medium for approaching our globalized world-society; for it is true that »we simply possess no other medium in which the nuances and the multiple shades of truth could be conveyed in all their lifelike richness […] equally or comparably well.« (Nemoianu 2010: 147) Nevertheless, Huntington is definitely correct in saying that it is religions, radiating with the multifaceted »rainbow light« of faith, which possess an especially explosive quality. The many fires that are started by religiously motivated disagreement, even in the supposedly secularized West, are a strong component of contemporary social challenges.

Therefore, the fiction I focus on in the course of my investigation is indeed a thoroughly realistic one that does not shy away from literarily addressing even the most intricate challenges of our times, with religious conflicts being one of those challenges. So when analyzing how contemporary literature innovatively expands traditional modes of narration, my main concern is how these new forms of writing follow the rhythms that are dictated by the »violent, black ocean[s]« of reality. By doing so, I identify the chosen literary texts as entirely congruent with the request of British author Ian McEwan's character Briony Tallis; for in McEwan's famous 2001 novel *Atonement*, Briony concludes – after reading English modernist Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves* three times – »that a great transformation was being worked in human nature itself, and that only fiction, *a new type of fiction* [emphasis added by me, AC], could capture the essence of the change.« (McEwan 2003: 265)

My textual analyses draw upon an extensive background of theoretical thought. Theories I address include works by Theodor W. Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Alain Badiou, Homi

Bhabha, Richard Dawkins, Frantz Fanon, Sigmund Freud, Francis Fukuyama, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Christopher Hitchens, Max Horkheimer, Immanuel Kant, Julia Kristeva, Jean-François Lyotard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Slavoj Žižek, and others. However, it is not the intention of this project to present an elaboration of a theoretical body of thought, in the course of which the focus shifts toward demonstrating an intellectual prowess that no longer takes the literary foundation of its existence seriously. Rather, I utilize the consulted theories primarily to contextualize the literary texts, while it is consistently the texts themselves that decide which themes and theories I address in the course of my analyses.

I take into account both implicit as well as explicit forms of violence, and dedicate each of the four chapters to a specific type of border crossing: first, I approach the act of crossing borders as a physical movement in the form of migration. Then, I outline how cultural borders are being crossed in a non-physical manner – namely, by way of interpersonal negotiation – whenever intercultural communication occurs. Furthermore, in the case of multicultural identities, the crossing of borders manifests itself as a state of constant internal self-negotiation, which I investigate in the third chapter. In the final chapter, I discuss the phenomenon of openly aggressive invasion by way of military combat.

Historically speaking, this investigation of border-crossings spans roughly fifteen years that vitally influenced the development of our contemporary society's »consciousness across world-time and world-space.« (Steger 2009: 15) In moving from the fall of the Iron Curtain to the public spread of the internet, and from the turn of the millennium to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, my

project moves along a chronological line of unquestionable significance. Due to the in fact non-linear mode of progression of global world-history, however, this chronology not only has to include a variety of additional, simultaneous global occurrences, but also has to be recognized as the very auxiliary construction that it truly is.

For one thing, with my text-focused approach, I wholeheartedly agree with David Dabydeen's statement that »the criteria for literary judgment should be derived from the works themselves and not from Plato and his footnotes.« (Dabydeen 2008: 29) At the same time, this approach also clarifies the necessarily interdisciplinary outline of my project; by taking into consideration philosophical, sociological, historical, theological, political, as well as aesthetic theories, I seek to do justice to literature's inherently multi-disciplinary condition. Clearly, sociologist Peter Beyer's dictum regarding the reach of religion also applies to literature – namely, in that both »claim relevance to virtually anything.« (Beyer 2006: 101) Therefore, a crossing of borders also constitutes the basic methodology of my project, which extends, for instance, into the areas of economics, history, international relations, linguistics, natural sciences, philosophy, political science, psychoanalysis, religious studies, sociology, theology, and war studies.

As a medium that actively reflects upon the social reality that influenced its emergence, literature simply cannot afford to uphold the principle of disciplinary separation; on the contrary, and in line with their postmodern condition, the literary texts that I analyze demonstrate literature's ability to »create spaces of fusion, blends, [and] collages.« (Doležel 2010: 5) It is certainly true that one cannot be an expert in everything. Yet due to its multidisciplinary nature, literature necessarily demands of its readers

openness toward areas outside their particular field of expertise. So by taking on the challenge of stepping outside my comfort zone in the confrontation with a very varied text corpus, I also fully embrace the nature of the field of comparative literature; for its object of investigation has never been »a clear and stable one, but a ›relational‹ object, […] dynamic and changing.« (Nemoianu 2010: 149)

The methodological decision to start with and from the literary texts themselves allows my project, due to the particular text selection upon which it is based, to open up a wide cultural scope. This enables my investigation, at least rudimentarily, to mirror the global reach of its major theme: the literary aesthetics that I address unfold in the context of various cultural horizons that include the countries of Algeria, China, France, Germany, Romania, Switzerland, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

This project thus seeks to treat the ocean as a commodity that truly does belong to everyone, »to migrants and exiles, […] to Blacks and Yellows and Whites«. (Dean 2003: 390)[4] In so doing, I follow a development that theorist Fredric Jameson, in his *Selected Writings on the Postmodern* (1983–1998), famously described as the ›cultural turn‹ in the humanities. (see, e.g., Kagel 2009: 18) Concurrently, however, I adhere to the most philological of methods – namely, to the method of conducting careful close readings. The recent trend in academia of strictly separating text-immanent analyses – like the ones typical of German Philology (*Germanistik*) – from explorations of cultural contexts – like the ones typical of German Studies – is a development which I call into question. On the basis of this dissertation, I argue that an investigation into the interactions between texts

[4] »Das Meer, das den Migranten wie den Exilanten, […] den Schwarzen wie den Gelben und Weißen gehört? Das Salzwasser, das aus dem gleichen Stoff ist wie Tränen?« (Dean 2003: 390)

and contexts is still the most enriching strategy when addressing contemporary literature; not least because literature, especially a postmodern one with a realistic outlook, is to be regarded as a major representative of our cultural and social life.

Therefore, when approaching contemporary literature in a global age, the employment of a multicultural frame of reference is essential. Of course, the extent to which I employ said frame remains subject to the sheer impossibility of discussing my topic exhaustively, as well as to my particular linguistic limitations. The latter compel me to reductively focus on authors writing in German, English, and French; this means that a vast ocean of linguistically foreign worldviews necessarily remains inaccessible to me. While this restriction certainly cannot turn into a virtue, it nonetheless contains a productive potential; for it leaves no doubt about the vital importance of linguistic factors in a world that turns more and more into a hypercomplex, single world-society.

The inevitable limitations of an individual mind underline the importance of exchange in a world that is driven by ongoing negotiations. This emphasis in turn also strengthens anew the relevance of the literary medium as such, irrespective – and in spite – of the well-known and fairly recent tendency to call the real-life value of literature into question. As a medium that is based upon language, literature mirrors the major processes of interaction that shape our lives.

On the basis of Michel Foucault's understanding of discourse as »an activity, of writing in the first case, of reading in the second and exchange in the third« (Foucault 1972: 228), I present the literary texts as veritable participants in and contributors to that overarching public discourse that constitutes our global reality. Significantly, it is in this

aspect that literature greatly differs from a unicorn after all; for even though both »are immortal« (Beagle 2008: 2), it is certainly *not* literature's »nature to live alone in one place.« (ibid.)

CHAPTER 1: MIGRATION

MOVING THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS: HERTA MÜLLER'S *THE PASSPORT* (*DER MENSCH IST EIN GROSSER FASAN AUF DER WELT*, 1986) AND GISH JEN'S *TYPICAL AMERICAN* (1991)

Which books would you take with you if you had to go live on a distant island? – When confronted with this popular question, German-Romanian author Herta Müller reacts in a rather unpopular way. Instead of presenting us with a well thought-out selection of book titles, she rejects the question altogether; namely, based on her evaluation of both the word ›island‹ and the formulation of ›having to‹ live on said island as being suspicious. Western intellectuals, she explains, »ask about free choice in a sentence that is grounded in a lack of freedom. They have their heads full of books, yet none of those ever succeeded at revealing any details about constraint to them.«[1] (Müller 2003e: 175) What Müller criticizes, then, is the intellectuality of a question of no real-life value. (see ibid.) Yet she does not stop with this negativity. Rather, she constructively utilizes her criticism by transforming it into artistic activity. In opposition to the scholarly realm that she regards as being removed from reality, Müller establishes a literary aesthetics that remains responsible toward the social reality to which it owes its existence. In so doing, she focuses on a thoroughly realistic kind of literature.

To begin my exploration with Herta Müller's writing clearly opens up a discussion on the role of literature within a violent reality of globalization. Furthermore, it also allows for an investigation into the ambivalence of the medium I chose to place as a constant point

[1] »Sie fragen nach freier Entscheidung mit einem Satz, in dem die Unfreiheit vorausgesetzt ist. Sie haben den Kopf voller Bücher, keines hat ihnen auch nur ein Detail der Unfreiheit begreiflich gemacht.« (Müller 2003e: 175)

of reference in the framework of my analyses. After all, Herta Müller herself is very familiar with the constraining character of islands and thereby with the fact that »emperors have always utilized water as an easily guarded, suitable belt of isolation.«[2] (Müller 2003e: 174–75)

Although she was never forced to live on an actual island turned prison – which became the fate of numerous social activists throughout human history (see Müller 2003e: 174) – she nevertheless grew up in a country in which »[e]verybody for themselves was an island, just like the country as a whole.«[3] (ibid.: 160) This was the case not just because communist Romania's borders were, under the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceauşescu, virtually impervious: »A country whose borders are protected by way of guns and dogs is an island.« (ibid.: 168; see also Rogozan 2010: 250) Yet in addition to the isolated existence within a totalitarian state, Herta Müller also experienced the isolating minority life of ethnic Germans in Romania. The region of Banat, in which Müller spent her childhood years, is now located in Western Romania. When the Banat Swabians first settled in this area in the eighteenth century (see Glajar 1997: 523; Milata 2007: 20; Bary 1990: 115), however, it still belonged to Austria-Hungary. It was with the empire's collapse by the end of World War I that the Banat region became a part of Romania (see Packi 2002: n.p.; Glajar 1997: 522–23); and after their geopolitical annexation, the Banat Swabians' fate would henceforth be bound to their status as an ethnic minority.

---

[2] »Herrschende haben das Wasser als leicht zu bewachenden, tauglichen Gürtel zur Isolation immer schon in Dienst genommen.« (Müller 2003e: 174–75)

[3] »Jeder für sich war eine Insel und das ganze Land noch einmal.« (Müller 2003e: 160)

Born in 1953 in Nitzkydorf, Herta Müller grew up in a traditional Banat Swabian village, before moving to the city to study German and Romance Philology at the University of Temeswar. (see Porter 2010: 492; Hoff 1998: 110) In describing her village as »the first dictatorship [she] knew«[4] (quoted in Marven 2005b: 396), Müller clearly set the stage for her first book publication *Nadirs* (*Niederungen*, Berlin 1984), which instantly earned her considerable success as a writer in Germany. Not only was this volume of short stories »awarded the prestigious Aspekte literary prize for debut« (Benea 2010: 233); it is also, to this day, one of the most influential books by »a German-language writer belonging to the German minority of another country.« (ibid.; see also Hoff 1998: 101) The author's success is without a doubt remarkable, and her receipt of the 2009 Nobel Prize in Literature is only the most obvious evidence thereof. (see Mihăilă 2010: 50; Spiridon 2013: 131) Herta Müller still counts as the most prominent representative of what has, since the 1980s, been labeled as ›the fifth German literature‹ – that is, the one that originates in Romania and thus complements the literatures »produced in East and West Germany, Austria and Switzerland.« (Benea 2010: 236) But this success did not come for free, and the real-world struggles that surrounded Müller's writing right from the start have become vital to her work's aesthetic orientation.

Before earning its acclaim in Germany, for example, *Nadirs* fell victim to Romanian censorship. The book version that appeared in Bucharest two years before its Berlin counterpart was hardly recognizeable as Müller's original work. (see, e.g., Eke 1991c: 107) All the more familiar, however, is her audience's reaction of indignation toward the socially critical tenor of her writing. For instance, Müller's short story »Das schwäbische Bad« (1981), which appeared in the *New Banat Newspaper* (*Neue Banater*

[4] »[D]ie erste Diktatur, die ich kannte.« (Herta Müller, quoted in Marven 2005b: 396)

Zeitung), had already elicited comparably negative reactions from her audience. (see Rüther 2013: 192; Eke 1991c: 114) It was thus merely an increase in outrage when the publication of *Nadirs* caused her environment to harshly accuse her of disloyalty to her own people and origin. (see Apel 1991: 26; Dascălu 2004: 51)

After finally being granted permission to immigrate into West Berlin in 1987, Herta Müller utilized her newly won freedom to elaborate on the theme of oppression and its consequences for the affected individuals, which runs through her oeuvre like a thread. After all, she had already set the stage accordingly in her first book publication. (see Hoff 1998: 101) While *Nadirs* is mostly narrated from the perspective of a child growing up in a Banat Swabian village, it is especially the sudden changes of perspective that indicate a deeper layer to the ›naïve‹ narration. (see also Stamm 2012: 100) The grandfather who pours spirit into the screaming child's ear to prevent a bug from crawling into its brain is just as indicative of a broader issue as is the mother who regularly hits her child for minor infractions. (see Müller 2010a: 17; 47) The issue at hand is nothing less than an adherence to backward traditions, narrow-minded superstition, and ethnocentrism within an isolated village community. (see also Glajar 1997: 524)

When Müller – thanks to a change in Romanian law in 2005 (see Vensky 2009: n.p.) – was eventually allowed to inspect the files that communist Romania's secret police *Securitate* had compiled about her, she was not surprised to find *Nadirs* commented on explicitly: »tendentious distortion of the realities in the country,« she read under the corresponding heading, »especially in regard to the rural setting.«[5] (Müller 2011b: 48) Müller convincingly concludes: »By the way in which they fought back, they

[5] »Tendenziöse Verzerrungen der Relitäten im Land, insbesondere im dörflichen Milieu.« (Müller 2011b: 48)

admitted recognizing themselves in the sentences.«[6] (ibid.: 114) Of course, the hardship she had to endure under Ceauşescu's *Securitate* was not in the least lessend by her first literary undertakings. Yet concurrently, this hardship reinforced the urgency of her work. Asked about the generally narrow thematic focus on oppression in her writing, Müller thus concedes that »it's the topic of all my books … I believe that literature always goes precisely there, where the damage to a person has been done.« (quoted in Mihăilă 2010: 52)

In *Nadirs*, it is left to the readers to imagine the village in question to be surrounded by water, enclosed by its very own »easily guarded, suitable belt of isolation.« However, in Müller's second book publication, which lies at the core of my analysis, water repeatedly becomes an explicit point of reference. With *The Passport* (*Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*, 1986), Müller goes beyond describing the constraints of a backward-oriented rural life in the region of Banat; for in the center of her narrative lies the act of leaving these constraints behind by way of emigration. The ambivalences inherent in any such experience of a migratory border crossing are exemplarily captured in the different qualities that the text ascribes to water. On the one hand, water is presented as a burden for the individual; so when the village priest enters his church to conduct a funeral, »[h]is step is heavy, as if his body was full of water.« (Müller 1989: 47) In contrast to this image of water's being a hindrance to any efficient forward motion, Müller also discusses another possibility. While observing the straws he just threw into the pond next to his mill, the protagonist Windisch also »looks at his moving reflection.« (ibid.: 9) In this

[6] »In der Art, wie sie sich wehrten, gaben sie zu, dass sie sich in den Sätzen wiederfinden.« (Müller 2011b: 114)

scenario, it is the water itself that grants movement to the otherwise-stationary individual; it is the reflection of his features that includes Windisch in the water's wavy restlessness, not his actual state of being as such.

Müller thus establishes a setting in which that imaginary aquatic border surrounding an oppressive living space also plays a vital role in fleeing said oppression. Müller decisively broaches the issue of migration from the perspective of border crossing, and leads us from Windisch's decision to emigrate directly to the day of his and his family's departure. (see also Bary 1990: 117) All ordeals that the Windischs have to endure over the course of the novel are linked to their master project of migration. In terms of content, this novel is therefore quickly summarized: after the miller Windisch's fruitless attempt to bribe the village's militiaman with sacks of flour, his daughter Amalie sleeps with both the militiaman and the village priest; this sexual service eventually proves effective and earns the Windischs their sorely needed passport. Upon obtaining their travel documents, the family immigrates into West Germany, and – after presenting us with a final visit of the Windischs to their former village – the narrative comes to an end.

What the emigrating Windischs leave behind is not just their Banat-Swabian home, but also a number of villagers who choose to stay despite the hardships of their Romanian environment. The profound difficulty inherent in the undertaking of migration is strongly reinforced by these villagers' choice to stay. After all, the fact that borders can indeed be crossed is clear to those village people despite their adherence to immobility. This becomes especially clear when Windisch and the night watchman talk about Baptists,

whose arrival in the village they anticipate. After Windisch supplements his fellow villager's explanation that »[t]his religion comes from America« with the statement that »[t]hat's across the water,« the night watchman matter-of-factly concludes that »[t]he devil crosses the water too.« (Müller 1989: 64)

On the one hand, this line of reasoning recognizes the crossability of borders. On the other hand, this acknowledgment also alludes to an animosity toward the unknown that lies beyond any border; for all that anyone ever knows, said unknown might as well be the devil. Considering that the act of migration, this one-way excursion into the unfamiliar, is inevitably tied to insecurities, it also becomes clear that the migratory experience as such contains a quality that cannot be addressed in universalizing terms. Even though the phenomenon of migration is commonly perceived as a collective enterprise undertaken by groups of people, it remains, at its very core, »a singular, subjective and unique experience which resists generalization.« (Krzyzanowski/Wodak 2008: 98) Herta Müller literarily answers to this sociological observation, in that the novel mostly confronts us with the protagonist's perspective.

The deeply existential relevance of migration to the migrants finds a significant image at the end of the novel. The picture that decorates the wall in the train compartment, in which the Windischs embark on their journey, shows the Black Sea. »The water stands still. The picture rocks. It's travelling too.« (Müller 1989: 88) Most striking here is the ocean's immobility, for it creates a paradoxical notion of moving stagnation. The Black Sea that actually borders on Romania is now captured, and thereby immobilized, in a picture. Evidently, then, the Windischs take their border with them. This suggests that

emigration is no clear-cut process; while the crossing of borders promises a way out of a situation of stasis, the Windischs cannot simply abandon their experience of living in an oppressive cultural environment. The »easily guarded, suitable belt of isolation« that surrounded their lives has turned solid through its being visually fixated in the moment; it has turned into a part of the migrants' identities.

Müller further underlines the impossibility of ever truly leaving one's home behind in the novel's final chapter. Having no title, this last chapter serves as an epilogue to a story of migration, and comes to undermine the previously suggested success of the emigrated Windisch family. In having her novel end with a description of how the Windischs visit their old home one more time, Müller exposes the complexity of the migration experience. Read like this, the novel also supports the skepticism that Müller voices in regard to the word ›home‹ (*Heimat*), since here it truly does appear as a word that »is always only used when something isn't there anymore.«[7] (quoted in Müller b 1997: 468) Concurrently, however, Müller acknowledges the indestructible nature of the concept of home when she argues that »[f]or saved victims, home is the place where they were born, lived for a long time, fled from and aren't allowed to return to.« (»[f]ür gerettete Verfolgte ist die Heimat der Ort, wo man geboren ist, lange gelebt hat, geflohen ist und nicht mehr hin darf,« quoted in Mallet 2012: 149) Whether it is still the current place of residence, or not: a once-internalized home leaves traces on the migrants' identity. The decision to emigrate is not easily made.

[7] »Ich mag das Wort nicht so. Ich bin bei dem Wort immer skeptisch, weil es immer dann gebraucht wird, wenn irgend etwas nicht mehr vorhanden ist.« (Herta Müller, quoted in Müller b 1997: 468)

1.1. Identity Frogs of Ethnocentrism

What the English title of Herta Müller's novel clarifies is the importance of the passport for the Windischs' emigration project. Without their passport, they would forever be forced to stay within the oppressive stagnation of their village community. As a consequence, the centrality of that travel document is established long before the plot becomes predictable. Early on, Windisch wants to enter the curch, but realizes that the »door is locked. Saint Anthony is on the other side of the wall. He is carrying […] a brown book. He is locked in.« (Müller 1989: 8) As insconspicuous as this scene might seem, it gains significance when Windisch later recalls his experience: »I wanted to go into the church and pray. The church was locked. I thought, that's a bad sign. Saint Anthony is on the other side of the door. His thick book is brown. It's like a passport.« (ibid.: 58) Not only by drawing an explicit comparison between the appearance of the brown book in the saint's hand and the passport, but also by interpreting the unattainability of the former as a »bad sign,« Windisch subordinates his whole existence to the power of this document.

In a situation of stasis that can only be overcome by the physical act of leaving, the passport surely becomes synonymous with progress. Placed in opposition to a village whose imaginary walls are paved with signs of death, it furthermore comes to be congruent with life; for allusions to death are numerous in the text. Windisch concludes, quite explicitly, about one of the sacks of flour that he transports to the militiaman: the damp »sack hangs behind me like a dead man«; whereas the narrative voice just compared that same sack merely to the state of »a *sleeping* [emphasis added by me, AC] man.« (Müller 1989: 12) Less explicitly, yet no less distinctly, Müller presents owls as a

symbol for the »ubiquity of death« (»Allgegenwärtigkeit des Todes,« Bary 1990: 118) in the scenery. When an owl is »looking for a roof« (Müller 1989: 15), it must indicate an upcoming death. Consequently, Widow Kroner »can't die« as long as the village owl »hasn't settled on any roof yet« (ibid.: 11); this is in fact just as consequent as Windisch's later establishment of a connection between his neighbor's being on her deathbed and the fact that the owl has finally »settled on a roof.« (ibid.: 36) In this village, the recurrence of death, as captured in the description of two funerals in the course of only about one hundred pages, causes the only discernible movement within an otherwise-static community.

It is the night watchman who, as a representative of those who have »fallen victim to [their] immobility« (Mallet 2012: 151), serves as the most evident illustration of the hopelessness that comes with such deathlike stasis. Windisch recognizes the fate of his fellow villager inscribed in his physical appearance: he »sees the end on the night watchman's cheeks.« (Müller 1989: 66) Later on, Windisch also sees how »[a] vein beats on the night watchman's neck. Time stands still.« (ibid.: 91) This ›time standing still‹ (*die stehende Zeit*) has rightly been described as a leitmotif of Müller's text. (see Mallet 2012: 152; Roberg 1997: 36) It is in fact so vital to this migration narrative that it follows the Windisch family all the way to the train station, where Windisch »sees the grey swathes of time standing still around the station platform.« (Müller 1989: 88)

With the atmosphere of time standing still, Herta Müller indeed dramatizes a thoroughly existential experience; and in so doing, she also invariably invokes questions of identity. In fact, she quite explicitly discusses an identity concept that is vital to the Banat Swaban

communities of both her novel and her childhood years. The night watchman puts it like this: »I dreamt of the dry frog. [...] I was dead tired. And I couldn't get to sleep. The earth frog was lying in bed.« (Müller 1989: 9) In *Nadirs*, Müller had already addressed that peculiar frog, which now also haunts *The Passport.* It is, the author explains, »an attempt to express a feeling – the feeling of being under surveillance. In the countryside, the German frog was the overseer, ethnocentrism, public opinion.«[8] (Müller 1991: 20)

In the course of the early Swabians' immigrating into and claiming of the region of Banat, »everybody brought a frog with them. Ever since they settled, they praise themselves for being Germans.«[9] (Müller 2010a: 103) With this, Müller describes a strategy that is typical of how the ethnic Germans deal with their minority status in Romania. While being placed in the position of a social outsider, it is the reinforcement of their ethnic identity that becomes the ethnic Germans' only weapon against Romanian oppression. Müller herself was introduced to the myth of her people's ethnic superiority early on: »Because we are the better ones, we are harassed – that's exactly how they explained it to me at home.«[10] (Müller 2003e: 163) Inevitably, such a line of argumentation leads to complementing the Romanian country's communist state ideology with a corresponding Banat-Swabian ideology (see ibid.) – namely, with the ideology of ethnocentrism.

[8] »Der deutsche Frosch aus den Niederungen ist der Versuch, eine Formulierung zu finden, für ein Gefühl – das Gefühl, überwacht zu werden. Auf dem Land war der deutsche Frosch der Aufpasser, der Ethnozentrismus, die öffentliche Meinung.« (Müller 1991: 20)

[9] »Jeder hat [...] einen Frosch mitgebracht. Seitdem es sie gibt, loben sie sich, dass sie Deutsche sind.« (Müller 2010a: 103)

[10] »Weil wir die Besseren sind, werden wir drangsaliert – genauso hatte ich es zu Hause erklärt bekommen. Parallel laufend zur staatlichen eine banatschwäbische Ideologie.« (Müller 2003e: 163)

The experience of not belonging is an acute problem for migrants of all ethnicities (see Krzyzanowski/Wodak 2008); yet in the case of ethnic Germans from Romania, it is even more acute. Herta Müller draws upon her own experience of immigrating into West Berlin when she points out that she was »perceived as a Romanian in Germany and as a German in Romania.« (quoted in Mihăilă 2010: 58) Evidently, for Germans from Romania, the problem of not belonging remains present even after migrating into their ›proper‹ German environment. Banat Swabians are thus caught in an in-between position, seeing as they are neither the one (German), nor the other (Romanian). From this it follows that their ethnocentric defense has to be directed in more than one direction.

For one, the idea of Banat-Swabian superiority is directly tied to the concept of ›Germanness‹ and thus clearly oriented against the Romanian majority. (see Böhm 2008: 199; Grün 2010: 53; Mallet 2012: 155) Hence, Müller confronts the readers with a strict separation between Germans and Romanians; in the village graveyard, for instance, »the graves of the Romanians« (Müller 1989: 36) are assigned their own specific area, clearly separated from the Banat Swabians. Furthermore, this ethnic separation influences the villagers' everyday behavior. This is evident in the frequency with which Müller has her characters employ the insulting term ›Wallachian‹ when referring to an ethnic Romanian.[11] So when the skinner admiringly talks about the erotic appeal of the Romanian women who live in the mountains surrounding the village, he cannot help but pity the fact »that they're Wallachians. They're good in bed, but they can't cook like our women.« (ibid.: 20) In terms of reliably supporting a household, ethnic German women are clearly presented as the better choice. Interestingly, the Banat Swabians also apply this opposition between ›German‹ and ›Romanian‹ to the natural landscape. When the

[11] Valentina Glajar made the same observation in regard to *Nadirs*; see Glajar 1997: 525.

prayer leader identifies a current downpour to be occurring »[o]ver the whole country,« Skinny Wilma decidedly contradicts: »Only in the Banat,« she says, and immediately adds that »[o]ur weather comes from Austria, not from Bucharest.« (ibid.: 47) Evidently, the historical Banat Swabians' belonging to the German-speaking part of Europe is still a matter of the village people's cultural awareness.

When Herta Müller describes her years in Romania as the »years of the frog« (Müller 1991: 29), as years in which the communist dictator's frog was joined by the German frog of her Banat-Swabian village (see ibid.), she refers to a situation of profound ethnocentrism on all sides. For the German minority, a constant reinforcing of their ethnic identity was surely a way of dealing with the economic hardships that the Romanian communist regime placed especially on rural communities – and especially on ethnic minorities. For consistent with the history of Communist countries, the proclaimed classless society was merely part of political rhetoric. (see Ronneberger 1977: 424) Only a selected few came to enjoy »amenities like ski and hunting resorts« (Kifner 1989: n.p.), whereas the majority of the population struggled with extreme poverty. (see Olaru 2004: 30)

In an attempt to pay off foreign loans that were calculated based on unrealistic expectations of Romania's projected ability to »repay through exports« (Deletant 1995: 322), Nicolae Ceauşescu had the food supply rationed in all of Romania, while exporting large quantities of meat and produce. (see Binder 1986: n.p.; Kifner 1989: n.p.) Müller decidedly places her novel into this harsh reality of Romanian life – not least in that she describes the Romanian officers' intrusion into Windisch's house as a rather common

occurrence. Windisch’s wife appears remarkably calm when she recalls the situation as follows: »four hundred kilos of maize and a hundred kilos of potatoes. They’ll take those later, they said. I gave them the fifty eggs right away.« (Müller 1989: 57) In her seminal work on *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1950), German-Jewish political writer Hannah Arendt identifies the creation of hardship for the subordinate people as the ruling power’s way to install their dictatorship: »The totalitarian ruler must, at any price, prevent normalization from reaching the point where a new way of life could develop.« (Arendt 1976: 391) By presenting the necessity of delivering food supplies to the state authorities as an ongoing one in the village, Müller confirms this theory.

So when the emigrated skinner sends a letter from Germany outlining the pickiness of his German neighbors in terms of food, the night watchman concludes that the Germans have »got it too easy.« (Müller 1989: 65) Furthermore, he also suggests that »[t]hey should come to Romania, then they’ll eat anything.« (ibid.) With this, Müller suggests that the ambivalence that ethnic Germans in Romania harbor toward their ›own‹ ethnic people in Germany is not exclusively due to the destruction that Germany’s Third Reich history caused in Romania. (see, e.g., Bary 1990: 115) It is also grounded in a lack of shared living experiences. Considering the vastly different living conditions of ethnic Germans in Romania and Germans in West Germany, the villagers in the novel hold on to their ethnocentric myth of Banat Swabian superiority even when dealing with Germans in Germany. First, it is one of the skinner’s emigrated relatives who claims that »[t]he worst Swabian woman [...] is still worth more than the best German woman from there.« (Müller 1989: 36) Then, it is the skinner himself who informs Windisch in writing that »[t]he worst one here is still worth more than the best one there.« (ibid.: 64) Adhering to

the only mode of opinion formation (*Meinungsbildung*) Windisch knows – namely, that of sustaining the myths that the village community perpetuates – Windisch concludes: »It's true about the women in Germany. [...] That's what the skinner wrote.« (ibid.) In that Herta Müller has her villagers hold on to their myth in an attempt to distance themselves from both Romanians and Germans, she succeeds at literarily drawing a picture of the Banat Swabians' utter isolation.

1.2. Visual Politics of Madness

Herta Müller indicates having always been skeptical of ideologies of any kind. However, migration in the age of globalization »has taken new forms and occurs on a scale not seen before« (Gebauer/Lausten 2010: 1); and along with the increasing number of people who migrate into cultural contexts different from their own comes a renewed urgency to articulate ethnic belonging. As a consequence, Müller clearly embraces the importance of ethnocentric considerations. So in addition to addressing the intricacies of backward-oriented ethnocentrism on the level of content, Müller turns the leitmotif of time standing still, which represents the stasis brought about by such backward-mindedness, into a matter of form as well. In total, the novel consists of forty-nine chapters, which carry titles that emphasize the text's unfolding around snapshots of details that do not extend into time. (see also Roberg 1997: 38; Eke 1991b: 88) This mechanism of placing a momentarily and oftentimes accidentally observed detail into the focal point of the readers' attention is, for example, illustrated by the fly that buzzes through the church during Widow Kroner's funeral service. Although not causally connected to the actual funeral scene at all, it is that fly that gives the corresponding chapter its title: namely,

»The Fly.« At the same time, this fragmentary condition of the text counteracts any impression of its acting as yet another ideology, which reinforces Herta Müller's anti-ideological stance.

Despite creating the impression of fragmentariness, Müller does achieve an overarching whole with her text. (see also Dawidowski 1997: 24) It is true, however, that she mostly resists utilizing traditional connective devices in the novel. She does so in favor of the narrative principle of parataxis, which abstains from synthesizing the parts by way of subordinating conjunctions, and which thereby consistently »suppresses causality.« (Marven 2005a: 96; see Roberg 1997: 38) Nonetheless, there is a distinct connectivity to be found – namely, on the microlevel of this novel: it is ingrained in Müller's employment of words. By using the same words repeatedly, yet in different contexts so as to refer to sometimes vastly different ideas, Müller equips her novel with a striking structural continuity.

In regard to the rather unexciting matter of tissues, for instance, Müller explains that »[t]he same tissue is never the same.« (»[d]asselbe Taschentuch ist nie das gleiche,« Müller 2003c: 88) The tissue we use during a crying spell has a different connotation than the one we use to wave goodbye, or the one we use to cover an open wound. (see ibid.) Thus there is, for example, the bitter ›snow‹ that the skinner's wife produces when beating some old eggs (see Müller 1989: 21), and also the similarly inconspicuous, though profoundly different, ›snow‹ that Windisch »spreads […] around his mouth with the tip of his finger« (ibid.: 22) during his shaving ritual. Yet suddenly, the word is robbed of its innocence, since in relation to Windisch's first wife Barbara, it signifies »[t]he snow in Russia [that] took her away, when it melted the second time.« (ibid.: 73)

The narrative strategy of illuminating words from different semantic angles doubtlessly succeeds at underlining reality's dependence on specific contexts; evidently, this is a situation to which ideologies, with their claim of superiority even – and oftentimes: especially – to actual contexts, cannot do justice.

Seemingly in response to the many commentaries on her preferred use of parataxis, Müller presents us with the following construction: »the horses drink from the river / because they see the sky in the water.« (»die Pferde trinken am Fluss / weil sie im Wasser den Himmel sehen,« Müller 2000: n.p.) Of course, the suggested causality in this argumentation is not convincing; the established connection between the animals' satisfaction of their physical needs and the reflection of the sky in the water below cannot hide its being forcefully construed. The linguistically anchored causal connection remains treacherous. I conclude that Müller thereby suggests that the task inherent in the deciphering of any kind of reality is to generate meaning without relying on potentially dishonest, ready-made syntheses. What has been called the »anti-totalitarian impulse of Müller's writing« (Bauer 2011: 144) is thus also expressed through the way in which her texts prove unsuitable for being inspected by precisely that »one-eyed Polyphem gaze of any ideology.« (»den einäugigen, polyphemischen Blick irgendeiner Ideologie,« Köhnen 1997a: 10) Müller decides against writing in an ideological manner that pacifies contradictions, and she cannot be read in such a way either. What follows from this aesthetic position is a literature that resists the prefabricated fairy-tale narratives of ideology, and instead feels responsible toward the oftentimes-ambiguous and always-multilayered real.

Müller presents us with an image that illustrates that reality consists not of one single truth, but rather of concurrent layers of truth. The »glass tear« (Müller 1989: 23) that the skinner's son Rudi gives as a present to Amalie later resurfaces as »a large tear out of each eye« (ibid.: 45) of Windisch's wife, who cries during Widow Kroner's funeral; and when the Windisch family visit their village after emigrating to West Germany, Windisch has »[a] tear of glass hang[ing] on his cheek.« (ibid.: 92) The material frailty of Rudi's glass tear is now ingrained in one of the many human tears in this novel that are shed in response to an experience of loss. The migrants' visit to the home they left behind demonstrates the pain that accompanies a loss of home, even when said loss is brought about by a desire to leave. With this unpacified accumulation of contradictory notions, Müller leads us deep into the core issues of this migration story; and these are contradictions that cannot be grasped by way of simplifying rationality.

Repeatedly, the scenery in the novel with which both the characters and the readers are confronted does not make any sense at all. The air of madness that Müller literarily evokes even shines through the most unexciting of comments – for example, when the wall clock's cuckoo figure is described as »the only living bird in the house.« (Müller 1989: 36) Living in isolated stagnation has caused the villagers to find indications of life where there in fact are none, while the matter-of-fact tone of the narrative voice's description does not allow for any doubts, either. Hence, the impossible becomes a fact, and the unreal becomes just as plausible as the real. In fact, overlaps between the real and the imagined are a very prominent feature of this novel. Mirrors are an especially suitable means of capturing this constellation. So when Windisch's wife assists her daughter in

dressing up for her appointment with the militiaman, it is true that »[t]he distinction between the bodies reflected in the mirror and the real bodies is blurred.« (Marven 2005a: 85) But I do not agree with reading this as »a lack of self-reflection [...] presented in the confusion of reality and reflected image.« (ibid.) Rather, I evaluate this obvious confusion as a reference to the atmosphere of mental and emotional confusion that Müller instills in her novel. Therefore, when »Windisch's wife presses her fingertip against the glass« to »squash[] the cabbage white on the mirror« (Müller 1989: 68), this does not serve to express thoughtlessness. Rather, it indicates the character's being placed in a reality of profound madness.

Probably the most unambiguous example of this atmospheric madness is the village's self-destructive apple tree. »Before the war,« we learn, said apple tree »had stood behind the church. It was an apple tree that ate its own apples.« (Müller 1989: 28) In fact, this tree is presented as so severely out of the ordinary that it did not even adhere to the rules of witching hour. Instead of presenting the assembled villagers with the expected spectacle at midnight, it was »[t]wo hours after midnight [when] the apple tree began to tremble.« (ibid.: 30) There are of course numerous interpretations of this apple tree in the secondary research literature. It has been read as yet another symbol of death (see Eke 1991b: 87), as a Godly sign to reveal this community's depravity (see Grün 2010: 59), and also as a symbol of oppression by the Romanian state, which robs its citizens of the very produce that keeps them alive. (see Bary 1990: 119) But even though most of these interpretations are plausible in their own right, it is the author's own implicit account of the matter that remains the most convincing one. In an attempt to describe the atmosphere in which she grew up, Herta Müller states: »We lived in this

region that consumed itself, until it consumed us too, until we died of ourselves.«[12] (Müller 2003b: 51) Certainly, living in the isolated and ethnocentric community that Müller literarily reinstates must be as destructive and insane as an apple tree consuming its own apples. The fact that the villagers themselves are not presented as adequately confused by this most confusing of occurrences shows that in such an environment, it is indeed »an insane consistency [that] rules the world.« (Arendt 1976: 392)

That surreal components are present in Herta Müller's writing has been widely proposed, even though Müller herself does not agree with this notion. (see Grün 2010: 46) Instead, Müller explains that »for [her], surreality is not something else than reality, but it is a deeper reality.«[13] (quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 18) By articulating those deeper layers of reality, she decidedly addresses »the curious contradiction between the totalitarian movements' avowed cynical ›realism‹ and their conspicuous disdain of the whole texture of reality.« (Arendt 1976: viii) Whereas ideologies »have always pretended to understand everything« (»haben immer vorgegeben, den Durchblick zu haben,« quoted in Müller b 1997: 469), Müller's feeling of being »ideology-damaged« (»ideologiegeschädigt,« ibid.) has caused her to fully embrace the inexplicable aspects of everyday life.

As a further consequence of her anti-ideological way of thinking, Müller abstains from utilizing elaborate theoretical frameworks in her writing. In comparison to the literary works by other authors that I will address in later chapters of this investigation, the lack of theoretical references in Müller's writing is striking. Nonetheless, Müller

[12] »Man lebte in dieser Gegend, die sich selber fraß, bis sie einen mitfraß, bis man an sich selber starb.« (Müller 2003b: 51)

[13] »Für mich ist Surrealität nicht etwas anderes als Realität, sondern eine tiefere Realität.« (Herta Müller, quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 18)

develops a deeply self-aware literary aesthetics. So in order to counter the concept of ideological systematization, she meets »the master narratives of totalitarianism« (Haines 1998: 115) not with theoretical reflections, but with the act of observation, which is to say: »with the randomness of untheorized experience.« (White 1998: 89) When viewed from this perspective, writing inevitably becomes an attempt to resist a reality of oppressive politics, as well as an attempt to claim a space outside of the sphere of state power. (see Stoekl 2013: 18; Düppe 1997: 167)

Herta Müller's is not an art of open political commitment, and she is not a self-proclaimed political author. (see also Bauer 2011: 131) This is already evident in her position on the *Action Group Banat* (*Aktionsgruppe Banat*), which was a group of young Romanian authors of German heritage that originated in the Banat metropolis Temeswar in 1972. (see Eke 1991a: 9; Packi 2002: n.p.; Milata 2007: 21) Even though the formation of any groups was forbidden in communist Romania, the *Aktionsgruppe Banat* centered around Richard Wagner managed to pursue their project of creating a renewed literary and political public sphere until 1975, when they were forced to separate. (see Dascălu 2004: 14; Eke 1991a: 9) Naturally, as a student of literature, Müller came in contact with the *Aktionsgruppe Banat*, and also became friends not just with her later husband Wagner, but also with other members of the group; however, she never formally joined. (see Eke 1991a: 10) Political activity as such seems not to have been of interest to Müller. Nonetheless, her work definitely serves the purpose of literarily capturing a reality that ought not to be forgotten; and this impetus makes her a political writer after

all. (see Rüther 2013: 194; Spiridon 2013: 146) It makes her focus on details appear as a subtle, yet nonetheless veritable, »micro-politics of resistance.« (Haines 1998: 116)

Her literarily embraced resistance is indeed closely connected to real-life experience. Müller herself puts it like this: »Literature is a bland word. I don't owe a single sentence to literature, but to lived experience.«[14] (Müller 2011b: 113) Her own evaluation of her relationship with the members of the *Aktionsgruppe Banat* is also based on an orientation toward everyday experience. For although she did not share in their openly political activity, Müller valued them highly as individuals: »Without them, I would have neither read nor written any books. But more importantly: these friends were indispensable to my life. Without them, I would not have borne the reprisals.«[15] (Müller 2011b: 23) Consistent with the author's focus on the real, it is precisely these reprisals that found their way into her texts. (see also Köhnen 1997a: 8) From this it follows that her characters, who necessarily engage with their social environment in everything they do, also always act – in reference to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's characterization of minor literature – deeply politically. (see Benea 2010: 248)

Herta Müller's focus on everyday details has also been evaluated in a negative way – inter alia, because it does not offer any suggestions for possible future improvements. (see, e.g., Bauer 2011: 135) Müller's reaction to this criticism is very reasonable and speaks to her truthfulness as a writer: »Literature cannot change anything. But it can – and be it in retrospect – invent a truth through language that shows what

[14] »Literatur ist ein fades Wort. Der Literatur bin ich keinen Satz schuldig, sondern dem Erlebten.« (Müller 2011b: 113)

[15] »Ohne sie hätte ich keine Bücher gelesen und keine geschrieben. Noch wichtiger ist: Diese Freunde waren lebensnotwendig. Ohne sie hätte ich die Repressalien nicht ausgehalten.« (Müller 2011b: 23)

happens in and around us when values derail.«[16] (Müller 2011b: 23) Once again, this conclusion is reminiscent of Hannah Arendt's address of totalitarianism. Although Müller, unlike Arendt, does not claim to want to understand the insane reality of totalitarianism, her impetus to literarily make it visible strongly resembles Arendt's explication of what ›understanding‹ can achieve. Therefore, I regard it as highly accurate to read Arendt's evaluation of political analysis also as a characterization of Herta Müller's writing: »It means […] examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on us – neither denying its existence nor submitting meekly to its weight.« (Arendt 1976: viii)

At the core of Herta Müller's aesthetic proposal lies an attitude of questioning: »One has to stop believing in what one sees.« (»Man hat sich den Glauben an das, was man sieht, abzugewöhnen,« Müller 2003d: 139) In order to literarily depict a constant state of distrust, she turns the transformation of the well-known into the foreign into an aesthetic strategy. (see Stamm 2012: 96; 98) The consequence is a »poetics of alienation« (»Poetik der Verfremdung,« ibid.: 102) whose major currency is images. (see Midgley 1998: 25; Schau 2003: 278) That focus on the visual aspects of reality is not only constitutive of Müller's prose writing, but is even more obviously employed in her collage poems. As a visualization of the inner workings of her writing, the collages are vital for an adequate examination of Müller's literary aesthetics; it is therefore indeed irrelevant that the critical opinions on the value of her collage poems are vastly divergent. (see Bauer 2011: 132) Not without reason, for instance, did Müller decide to include a number of collages

[16] »Literatur kann das alles nicht ändern. Aber sie kann – und sei es im Nachhinein – durch Sprache eine Wahrheit erfinden, die zeigt, was in und um uns herum passiert, wenn die Werte entgleisen.« (Müller 2011b: 23)

in her metapoetical work *The Devil Sits in the Mirror* (*Der Teufel sitzt im Spiegel*, 1991). This decision suggests that at the center of both her prose writing and her collage-constructions, we find a common core strategy: namely, the combining of fragmentary images and words into a whole that does not intuitively fit together, and that thereby continually challenges our desire to make sense of our environment.

In the case of her collages, Müller makes the internal contradictions and conflicts of the real-life environment to which her artwork is owed visible in that she creates short texts from words cut out of newspapers: »they fit together oddly; they are of different sizes, in different fonts.« (Malouf 2000: 180) Even though Müller utilizes expressions and invokes themes that are central to her writing, which suggests the creation of some sort of meaning after all (see Marven 2007: 129; Bauer 2011: 137), the images that garnish her collage texts remain indisputably odd: objects are cut in half, and vastly incongruent objects merge into one another, thus creating a scenery which, in its entirety, is nothing less than downright bizarre. Significantly, the accompanying texts hardly ever succeed at illuminating ›their‹ images satisfyingly. This playful approach to creating new visual realities based on the combining of heterogeneous images may indeed once more suggest a certain closeness to surrealist techniques (see Köhnen 1997b: 127) in Müller's work;[17] yet far more importantly, it also reinforces how strongly her writing is based on a preference for the visual.

[17] Due to the always-noticeable orientation and responsibility toward the real, even if it is a reality of profound madness, I strongly contradict the notion that Herta Müller's collage poems are comparable to Dada poetry. As I see it, what Romanian-French Dada artist Tristan Tzara sees in collages – namely »an event of chance encounters that affirms the […] arbitrary nature of truth, reality and art« (Bauer 2011: 136) – does not sufficiently apply to Müller's art. For a defense of the contrary opinion, see Eddy 2013: 156.

Interestingly, Herta Müller's focus on the visual is owed to the realistic orientation of her writing, which she explains as follows: »I often have the impression that everything consists of individual images. Even writing occurs by way of images.« (»Ich habe oft den Eindruck, alles besteht aus einzelnen Bildern. Auch das Schreiben vollzieht sich in Bildern,« Müller 1991: 83) Her treatment of her novels as veritable translations of those original thought-images into words refers to a far-reaching literary aesthetics. There has been widely articulated criticism in regard to the graphic intensity of her novels (see Roberg 1997: 27; Eke 1991c: 119–20); and this also holds true for *The Passport*, which has been called out on the stark contrast between a wealth of images and a concurrent relative lack of novelistic action which it displays. (see Roberg 1997: 40) Nonetheless, Müller stays true to her technique of writing out visual impressions; after all, even neuroscientists have long confirmed that any impression of having a complete image in front of our eyes is in fact based on our brain's work of synthesizing myriad unconnected single impressions. (see ibid.: 31)

Of course, this natural process of transforming the parts into a coherent whole also works in the other direction. As a matter of fact, Müller decidedly defends her »impression that looking closely means to dissect.« (»[d]er Eindruck, dass genaues Hinsehen zerstören heißt,« Müller 1991: 25) Exemplarily, she has Windisch demonstrate this process of dissection. In taking on the protagonist's perspective, we see that »[t]he night watchman steadies himself against the fence. His hands are dirty. His fingers are bent.« (Müller 1989: 41) From the neutral observation of the night watchman's »stead[ying] himself against the fence,« we suddenly arrive at an identification of his bodily weaknesses: the lack of cleanliness of his hands, as well as his crooked fingers.

Müller thereby novelistically expresses her notion that »when we closely look at people, even when they are close to us, we become ruthless. We dissect them. The detail becomes larger than the whole.« (Müller 1991: 25–26) Her ensuing conclusion that by focusing on the details that make up a person »we look into them« (»[m]an schaut in sie hinein,« ibid.: 26) also finds expression in her novel.

Even though there are no definite instructions provided as to how we should read the frequency with which Müller introduces glass objects into the plot (see Midgley 1998: 30), the transparency of glass suggests a connection to the novel's broader visual aesthetics. Already when he was a little boy, »Rudi's pockets were full of shards of coloured glass« (Müller 1989: 34); and later on, his collecting habits even intensify. When returning from the mental-health asylum to his village environment, he takes with him a trunk full of glassy human body parts: »The ears, the lips, the eyes, the fingers, the toes of glass Rudi brought home in a suitcase. He laid them on the floor. He laid them in rows and circles.« (ibid.: 38) Here, Müller presents us with an unmistakable image of the process of dissection brought about by looking closely at – which is to say: by »look[ing] into« – the human bodies around us.

The fragmented glass body that Rudi carries in his suitcase further suggests that any form of unity – bodily or otherwise – is as such profoundly deceptive. Müller vehemently binds this deceptive quality of what we perceive to be real back to the process of looking closely. Despite our having two separate eyes, she explains, we do not see two images, »but one single oversized image. Our eyes are positioned in a way that seamlessly integrates the rupture into the image«; and so it is only »[a]t the price of illusion [that]

our two separate eyes show us one single image.«[18] (Müller 1991: 76) As a result, our eyes inevitably »hide the rupture.« (»unsere beiden Augen verbergen den Riss,« ibid.: 77) It is indicative of the high level of metareflexion in *The Passport* that Müller has her protagonist focus the readers' attention on this circumstance as well. While observing how Amalie stands in front of the mirror, and how his wife aids her in getting ready for her appointment, Windisch undergoes a peculiar physical experience: »A red vein swells in the corner of Windisch's eye. It tears the tip from the lashes. A torn tip moves in the pupil of Windisch's eye.« (Müller 1989: 67) Here, the rupture has become an explicit part of the observing eye, namely, in that the »torn tip« has entered its pupil.

This embracing of the rupture (*Riss*) inherent in the images we see, however, neither serves to indicate the existence of »schizophrenic structures« (»schizophrene Strukturen,« Grün 2010: 109) in Müller's writing, nor does the rupture itself refer to »unassimilated traumatic events.« (Marven 2005b: 400) Following Müller's own account of the constellation in question, the rupture is a direct consequence of the mechanism of seeing, and therefore does not originate in a wounded condition of the human psyche. It is clear, however, that a totalitarian environment reinforces the workings of deception with which we are already faced when approaching the real. When a formerly familiar environment becomes subjected to the arbitrariness of a despotic state apparatus, it inevitably becomes treacherous, since potentially life-threatening penalties may arise from anything and anyone that crosses the individual's path. Thus, the principle of deceit that Müller so strongly emphasizes with the realistic orientation of her literary aesthetics

[18] »Mit beiden Augen sehen wir jedoch nicht zwei Bilder, sondern ein einziges übergroßes Bild. Unsere Augen liegen so, dass beim Schauen der Riss im Bild drin ist. […] Um den Preis der Täuschung zeigen uns unsere beiden voneinander getrennten Augen ein einziges Bild.« (Müller 1991: 76)

becomes visible at a different level, as well; for what is ineluctably invoked in such an environment is indeed a deep-rooted experience of ongoing alienation.

In order to capture the state-induced experience of alienation, Müller once more focuses on the visual aspects that this process involves. With her concept of the foreign gaze (*der Fremde Blick*), Müller found a way to render the experience of an oppressive atmosphere, which asks for constant alertness, comprehensible: »In a controlled state, every situation requires an intent registering from the individual. This registering has to be as exact as the observation and registration by the state.«[19] (Müller 2003d: 138) A gaze that constantly looks for the unexpected, which it expects to arise out of an intrinsically well-known setting, grows suspicious of its surroundings; and »in this everyday life, the foreign gaze originated.« (»[i]n diesem Alltag ist der Fremde Blick entstanden,« ibid.: 135) Therefore, the foreign is primarily an opposition to the familiar: »The unkown does not have to be foreign, but the familiar can become foreign.« (»Unbekanntes muss nicht fremd sein, aber Bekantnes kann fremd werden,« ibid.: 136)

Windisch, for example, demonstrates this alienating process when he »looks past Amalie's ear,« since this seemingly unobtrusive body part instantly becomes »part of what he can see. Reddish and creased like an eyelid.« (Müller 1989: 72) For one thing, this description shows how meticulously Windisch registers his environment, since he stays attentive to his daughter's ear at all times by integrating it into the rest of »what he can see.« Which is already an unexpected occurrence all by itself; after all, Windisch does not even specifically observe said ear, but rather »looks past« it. Furthermore, this

[19] »Im überwachten Staat verlangt jede Situation des Verfolgten ihre Registratur. Diese muss so genau sein, wie die Beobachtung und Registratur des Staates.« (Müller 2003d: 138)

passage demonstrates how a generally inconspicuous detail suddenly transforms into something foreign, how a common human ear suddenly becomes something »like an eyelid.« Without a doubt, that inconspicuous ear has turned into something thoroughly alien.

Interestingly, Müller's concept of the foreign gaze has been read inadequately on several occasions. One of the most common approaches to the foreign gaze consists in interpreting it as the consequence of a foreign eye that migrates into a foreign country. Yet as the author vehemently emphasizes, the foreign gaze has nothing to do with her immigration into Germany. (see Müller 2003d: 130) It is in fact just as disconnected from any migration experience as it is disconnected from any intentionally artistic concept. When literary critics identify Müller's peculiar gaze as »a characteristic of [her] art, a kind of handicraft that distinguishes writers from non-writers«[20] (ibid.: 144), they do not do justice to the author's actual aesthetic program. For her aesthetic program remains focused on and closely connected to a reality whose political condition necessarily brings about the effects of alienation that the writer later artistically reconstructs. As such, the foreign gaze is not an intentionally artistic technique per se, but rather the only adequate format for capturing the essence of a maddening reality.

Müller is very clear about the factual distance between her concept of the foreign gaze and any form of primarily aesthetic intention: »The foreign gaze has nothing to do with writing, but rather with biography.« (»Der Fremde Blick hat mit dem Schreiben nichts zu tun, sondern mit der Biographie,« Müller 2003d: 144) Müller plausibly explains

[20] »Zum Missverständnis, ich hätte den Fremden Blick seit ich in Deutschland bin, kommt noch ein Missverständnis der Literaturprofis dazu. Sie halten den Fremden Blick für eine Eigenart der Kunst, eine Art Handwerk, das Schreibende von Nichtschreibenden unterscheidet.« (Müller 2003d: 144)

that there is thus only one kind of ›art‹ that is inextricably linked with the foreign gaze – namely, »the art of living with it.«[21] (ibid.: 150) And as the first of Müller's novels to increasingly stress the political background of her writing (see Eke 1991c: 119), *The Passport* is a text highly suited to exemplifying what challenges such a life entails as well as demonstrating the inner workings of the literary aesthetics that the address of such a reality brings about.

1.3. The Realities of Totalitarianism

The novel's very first sentence unmistakably opens up the historical stage of this migration story: »Around the war memorial are roses. They form a thicket. So overgrown that they suffocate the grass.« (Müller 1989: 7) Clearly, this novel is set in postwar Romania, and it is especially the suffocating effect of the thicket of roses surrounding the corresponding memorial that refers to the lasting consequences of that war. Unobtrusively yet decidedly, Herta Müller includes numerous hints at and references to Romania's role in World War II. In order to understand the particular hardships of the Banat-Swabian community within this wider political context, it is first necessary to look at the involvement of Romania's ethnic Germans in Germany's Third Reich history.

As is to be expected, that history is long and intricate; what further complicates the issue is a still-prevalent lack of scholarly analysis of the fact that large parts of German-Romanians admired Adolf Hitler, as well as of their participation in the Holocaust. (see Böhm 2006: 22; Benz 2009: 11) While, among other things, the absence of statistical data makes the determination of exact figures in terms of the Holocaust in Romania difficult (see Benz 2009: 30), the support from a large number of German-

[21] »Die einzige Kunst, mit der er zu tun hat, ist, mit ihm zu leben.« (Müller 2003d: 150)

Romanians for Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist program is nonetheless indisputable. In fact, this support goes all the way back to the year 1922. After a business trip to Germany, Fritz Fabritius, an employee of *Sibiu's Savings Bank* (*Hermannstädter Sparkasse*), returned full of enthusiasm »for an unknown German politician named Hitler.« (»für einen unbekannten reichsdeutschen Politiker namens Hitler,« Milata 2007: 27) Encouraged by the National Socialist ideas he had heard in Germany, Fabritius founded the *German-Saxon Self-Help Club* (*Deutsch-sächsische Selbsthilfe*), which was oriented toward National Socialist tendencies itself. (see Böhm 2006: 5) Even though Fabritius' lobbying for Hitler's program merely laid the groundwork for the gradually intensifying progression toward National Socialism in Romania, his business trip in 1922 is generally seen as a first step in that direction. (see Milata 2007: 27) Socially disadvantaged in Romania because of their German ethnicity, a majority of German-Romanians embraced Fabritius' club and the ideological horizon it entailed. (see Böhm 2008: 202)

So when Hitler eventually initiated an extensive recruitment initiative in Romania between 1939 and 1940, »the German Romanians volunteer[ed] in droves for the SS.« (White 1998: 82; see also Milata 2007: 49) This reality also directly affected Herta Müller's family, since both her uncle and her father volunteered as Nazis in the Protection Squadrons. Whereas uncle Matz never returned from the Eastern Front, Müller's father returned in 1945 to henceforth lead his life as a truck driver and alcoholic. (see Porter 2010: 494)[22] Even though Müller says she noticed a peculiarity in her father's state of being, it was not until she attended university in the city that she was presented

[22] See also Mihăilă 2010: 51; Stoekl 2013: 16; Auffermann 2003: 12.

with historical facts about the Holocaust; and it was only then that she began to evaluate her father's drinking habits as a consequence of his criminal past. (see Glajar 1997: 526)

It is striking how Müller introduces the topic of the German-Romanians' commitment to the Nazi Protection Squadrons in *The Passport*. While the Windischs discuss the skinner's passion for stuffing dead animals, Windisch comes to the following conclusion: »He was never a hero. […] He just knackered animals.« (Müller 1989: 26) Interestingly, his wife further underlines the lack of heroism in their fellow villager by adding that »[h]e was never in the SS, […] only in the army. After the war he started hunting owls and storks and blackbirds again and stuffing them.« (ibid.) By having her characters regard the joining of the SS as a heroic deed, Müller clearly puts a distance between herself and her characters.

When she first read poems by Paul Celan at the age of sixteen, Herta Müller could hardly endure them; she realized then that »[t]he reason for Celan's escape from Romania is […] also his fear of [her] father.«[23] (Müller 2011b: 116) Especially Celan's *Death Fugue* (*Todesfuge*, 1948) confronted Müller with the cruelty of the National Socialist apparatus of destruction. By being a member of the SS, her father was »a part of that master from Germany whom Celan […] depicted.« (»ein Teil von diesem Meister aus Deutschland, den Celan […] gezeichnet hat,« ibid.: 93) As such, her father also comes to represent death, since, following Paul Celan's lead, »Death is a master from Germany.« (»der Tod ist ein Meister aus Deutschland,« Celan n.d.: n.p.) That Müller, despite her personal standpoint, has the Windischs take on an under-reflected point of view contrary

[23] »Ich hatte mit sechzehn, kaum in der Stadt, Gedichte von Paul Celan gelesen, ich habe sie fast nicht ausgehalten. […] Der Grund für Celans Flucht aus Rumänien ist somit auch seine Angst vor meinem Vater.« (Müller 2011b: 116)

to her own in regard to Nazi Germany is therefore to be evaluated as a distinct artistic strategy. For it is by abstaining from creating her characters as figures that automatically attract our sympathy that Müller has her literary work entail an honest social portrayal.

When Romania joined World War II on the side of the Axis Powers against the Soviet Union in 1941, this step was officially undertaken in order to regain the Romanian territories that the Soviet Union had annexed in the previous year. (see Olaru 2004: 13; Benz 2009: 13; Grothusen 1977: 7) Also, in Marshal Ion Antonescu, who was instated in 1940 (see Benz 2009: 15), the Romanian army had found a leader who strongly supported Germany's interests; to this day, the name ›Antonescu‹ remains inseparably connected to that destructive alliance. (see, e.g., White 1998: 83) Of course, the many rumors about Antonescu's alleged decision to spare the Jews – which led to the erroneous belief that even German-Romanian contentration camp guards were blameless (see Milata 2007) – do not hold up. In actuality, Antonescu only spared Jews of Romanian nationality that lived in the core area of the country, while he ruthlessly murdered the Jews in the newly won areas of Bukovina and Bessarabia. (see Benz/Mihok 2009: 9; Benz 2009: 17) Genocide definitely also happened on Romanian ground.

Whereas the initial actions of the Romanian army under Antonescu in the war seemed to be ›successful,‹ at least in relation to the results they were meant to achieve, it was due to a sudden change of course that the fate of Romania's ethnic German population worsened drastically. (see Packi 2002: n.p.) For when King Michael I entered a treaty of friendship with the invading Soviet troops, he committed to henceforth defending the country »against ›Germany or any other Power which might be associated

with Germany either directly or in any other way.‹« (Deletant 1995: 5; see also Olaru 2004: 13) So when the Red Army marched onto Romanian ground in 1944 (see Mayer 1977: 51), King Michael changed his mind and had Antonescu arrested and later executed as a war criminal. (see Benz 2009: 17; Grothusen 1977: 7) With that, Romania's alliance with Hitler's Germany came to an end.

Due to their status as ethnic Germans, the Banat-Swabian communities were also bound to feel repercussions from this change of alliance. For instance, Müller has the skinner express the then fast-developing anti-German sentiment by having him recall how surprised the Romanians in the asylum were about his son's German ethnicity: »At first the Romanians were amazed that there were still Germans after Hitler. ›Still Germans,‹ the manager's secretary had said, ›still Germans. Even in Romania.‹« (Müller 1989: 38) Purely based on their ethnic affiliation, the ethnic Germans were held responsible for the destruction caused by the Germans' waging war against the Soviet ally; of course, individual political views were not considered in this state-wide assignation of collective guilt. (see Spiridon 2013: 132) Herta Müller's grandparents, for instance, were not just labeled as »exploiters of the people« (»Ausbeuter des Volkes,« Müller 2003e: 161), but also consequently lost their land to the Romanian dispossessors. (see Porter 2010: 494) Following the realistic outline of her narrative, Müller has Windisch recall how after the war »came the expropriation.« (Müller 1989: 25)

In line with the theory of collective guilt, there also arose another, even farther-reaching consequence for the ethnic German population in Romania. In order to atone for their presumed guilt, and so as to make a forced contribution to the rebuilding of what

had been destroyed, ethnic German men and women were sent in masses to Soviet labor camps. (see Packi 2002: n.p.) Those who survived those five years of daily hard work, close to starvation in detrimental hygienic conditions, returned forever changed. Consistently, then, Windisch's village community is also still affected by that episode in their people's history. The skinner, for example, is unable to visit his son Rudi in the asylum again because he cannot bear to travel by train: »I can sense the end of the tunnel. I've got that from Russia,« he explains to Windisch, while he meaningfully »h[olds] his hand to his forehead.« (Müller 1989: 20) Judging from the skinner's physical display of discomfort – his soothingly touching his head – his memory must indeed be painful; the experience left an indelible mark on him. To have been exposed to mass transports in cattle wagons has severely limited the skinner's ability to move around freely. By way of literature, then, Müller comes to demonstrate just how real historical events truly are.

In Herta Müller's oeuvre, references to the Soviet labor camp years that the German-Romanians had to endure are numerous; not least because her mother, too, was deported to such a camp. (see Mihăilă 2010: 51) Yet to this day, Müller's most insistent account of this experience is her 2009 novel *Atemschaukel* (literally meaning: ›Breath Swing‹), whose English title is anticipated to read *Everything I Own I Carry With Me*. (see Porter 2010: 492) Based on conversations with German-Romanian writer and eyewitness Oskar Pastior, Herta Müller created a »poetic reflection on the deportation experience.« (Spiridon 2013: 147) After Pastior's unexpected death in 2006, Müller was left with a pile of notes, and with the task of transforming personal memories into a work of fiction; and she took on the challenge.

The resulting novel has been repeatedly criticized precisely because it addresses historical events »through ›secondhand‹ experiences.« (Spiridon 2013: 133) Yet, I argue, this sort of criticism misses the point. For what the transposing of factual experiences into the realm of literary fiction mainly allows for is the application of a very specific focus; and this focus is highly indicative of Müller's literary aesthetics. For instance, when she has the seventeen-year-old protagonist, an ethnic German from Romania with the name of Leo Auberg, narrate his deportation, Müller most intensely illuminates how human beings, at all times, remain subject to their human frailty. This frailty of human existence becomes evident when Leo quite literally loses his sense of self, as is obvious in his conclusion that the only things he really needs to survive are a bedframe and bread, whereas he needs »[n]ot even Leo Auberg«[24] (Müller 2011a: 143) anymore. Significantly, the only thing that Leo has with which to counter this experience of annihilation is a thoroughly human affirmation of love. Right before he left, his grandmother told him: »I KNOW YOU'LL COME BACK.« (»ICH WEISS DU KOMMST WIEDER,« ibid.: 14) And even though he asserts that he memorized this sentence »not deliberately« (»nicht absichtlich,« ibid.), it sticks with him throughout the years.

What Müller demonstrates here is how human beings, even in the most adverse of situations, adhere to a core of humanity, no matter how frail it is. Herta Müller also extends this principle of humanity beyond her literary work, staying true to it irrespective of outward conditions. Even though the German media tried to make a public spectacle out of Müller's discovery that her close friend Oskar Pastior had also been, at some point in his life, »an informant for the *Securitate*« (Porter 2010: 492), her shocked indignation

[24] »Nicht einmal den Leo Auberg brauche ich.« (Müller 2011a: 143)

quickly turned into empathic understanding. Not least because Pastior's homosexuality could have cost him his life in postwar Romania; Leo Auberg puts it like this: »Back then, shortly before the camp and after my return until 1968, when I left the country, every single rendezvous would have meant a prison sentence.«[25] (Müller 2011a: 9)

Müller also employs this focus on the frailty of human existence in *The Passport*. This time, it is especially Windisch's wife Katharina who comes to serve as an example; and despite her obvious flaws, it is precisely her thoroughly human condition that renders her difficult to judge. We learn that Windisch's wife, too, has served her time in a Soviet labor camp. For one thing, that labor camp experience turns into the foundation of the relationship between her and Windisch, since while Katharina had lost her partner Josef in the war, and »returned from Russia« (Müller 1989: 39) to an empty home, also Windisch's lover »Barbara had died in Russia.« (ibid.) In the face of a lack of options, the two left-over people come to share their sorrow in marriage. Even though »she spread her legs for a piece of bread« (ibid.) in Russia, Windisch initially reacts understandingly – namely, in thinking that »[s]he is beautiful, and hunger hurts.« (ibid.)

However, this acceptance of his wife's former decision to provide sexual services in exchange for food and clothing, which saved her life in a deadly environment, did not last long. Now, confronted with his daughter's being exposed to the same fate, Windisch's tone is spiteful; after Katharina criticizes his drinking habits, he replies with irony that »[w]horing is healthier.« (Müller 1989: 74) That his wife meets this remark with restrained anger, by »strik[ing] the table with her hand« (ibid.), may not achieve

[25] »Damals, kurz vor dem Lager und genauso nach meiner Heimkehr bis 1968, als ich das Land verließ, hätte es für jedes Rendezvous Gefängnis gegeben.« (Müller 2011a: 9)

anything in terms of changing Windisch's attitude; but it certainly mollifies the readers. Seen in the light of this angry reaction, her seemingly cold-hearted attitude in relation to her daughter's prostitution appears different. Her matter-of-fact statement that »›[i]t's not a question of shame now, [...] it's a question of the passport‹« (ibid.: 62) does not reveal a lack of humanity; rather, it shows the pragmatism of a human being who once was subjected to a political reality that forced them to make choices in opposition to what a privileged life of stability deems morally sound.

To claim that Katharina, unlike Windisch, is deficient in moral conscience is therefore not an accurate evaluation of the complex situation with which the novel confronts us.[26] It is an integral part of Herta Müller's realistic honesty that she remains sensitive toward the many shades of human behavior, especially of human behavior in the context of an oppressive political reality. Literature as one of the few media capable of glimpsing into a person's mind – even if ›only‹ by way of imaginary invention – thus becomes an especially valuable means of illuminating human truths that tend to remain hidden in situations of everyday normalcy.

When the German-Romanians were eventually dismissed from their labor camps, the general political situation in Romania had turned into precisely that atmosphere of suffocation that Müller puts at the very beginning of her novel. The reality of living under the state dictatorship employed by Nicolae Ceauşescu is explicitly addressed in the text when Amalie explains to her nursery school students that »[o]ur fatherland is called the Socialist Republic of Romania.« (Müller 1989: 52) With this factual statement, the character introduces the readers to a highly complicated political realm. Immediately

[26] For the contrary claim, see Bary 1990: 117.

after the forced abdication of King Michael on December 30, 1947, the Romanian People's Republic came into existence. (see Deletant 1995: 5; Mayer 1977: 52) The role of its leading organ was fulfilled by the Romanian Communist Party (*Partidul Comunist Român*, PCR) whose foundation had already occurred in the year 1921 (see Olaru 2004: 13; Ghermani 1977: 12); but it was not until the Red Army was present in Romania that it became possible for the Communist Party to gain control of the country. (see Olaru 2004: 14) With that, Romania's first years under communist oppression had begun, for now »the ruthlessly Stalinist dictatorship of [Gheorghe] Gherghiu-Dej« (White 1998: 83) sprang into action. This first communist phase lasted until Dej's death in 1965, after which Nicolae Ceauşescu – whom Dej had personally promoted ever since he had met him in 1936 in Doftana Prison, where they both served a sentence for communist activism (see Binder 1986: n.p.)[27] – took over.

Amalie refers to Ceauşescu's leadership thus: »Just as the father in the house in which we live is our father, so Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu is the father of our country.« (Müller 1989: 51) This information is significant insofar as it refers to the extensive personality cult around the communist leader, which is commonly regarded as one of the most striking characteristics of communist Romania. Ceauşescu's wife Elena was »viewed as the second-most influential person in the leadership« (Binder 1986: n.p.), and is thus described by Amalie as »the mother of our country« (Müller 1989: 51; see also Vensky 2009: n.p.); but it was Ceauşescu who sought to bundle the ideology of his politics into an admiration for his personality. (see Rogozan 2010: 254) Clearly, he earned the nickname of »Mao-Cescu« not without reason: the cult of personality around him »equaled, or even surpassed, those of Russia's Stalin, China's Mao, and

[27] See also Vensky 2009: n.p.; Olaru 2004: 28; Ghermani 1977: 11.

Yugoslavia's Tito.« (Binder 1986: n.p.) Just as vehemently, Ceauşescu committed to his politics. He employed a strictly Marxist-Leninist state theory, according to which a division of power is unnecessary because every act of the state leader is seen as a direct expression of the people's will. (see Mayer 1977: 152)

Authoritarian leadership as such was not a new principle in Romania at the time. King Michael's father Carol II had previously reigned with authoritarian power. (see Olaru 2004: 11) From this it follows that the daily experience of a single individual's rule, which was also the undeniable situation for the Romanian people under Nicolae Ceauşescu, is in fact positioned on a historical continuum. Müller acknowledges this constellation by equipping our Banat-Swabian village's past with a striking episode. Before the war, »His Majesty the King« was supposed to come by for a visit, yet when he arrived, he had fallen asleep; the sight that Müller literarily confronts us with after the village's band of musicians has left the train station without giving their planned concert appears innocent only on the surface: »A little girl who was to have recited a poem for the King when the march had finished [...] sat in the waiting room and cried.« (Müller 1989: 49) This scene demonstrates more than merely one among the many disappointments of any childhood. For just as the child's voice in *Nadirs* is far from naïve, this little girl also serves to introduce a much less harmless concept than one might presume. The fact that she is a child allows her to honestly display a reaction to the King's authoritarian rule that an adult character would have to hide. Her crying openly refers to the emotional and mental agony that arises from being subjected to authoritarian dictatorship.

In this scene, the political setting of the country is presented as directly relevant to the affected individuals' lives; and this leads us right back into the thematic core of Herta Müller's writing. For the word ›king‹ as such refers to a central concept in her work. In addition to frequently placing it in her collage poems, Müller keeps coming back to the various kings that she encountered over the course of her life. There is one king, for instance, who »stands for oppression, threat, fear« (Bauer 2011: 140), and another one who defiantly fights said negativity: »This lust for life that grows from the inside in opposition to all outward conditions is also a king. A recalcitrant king, I know him well.«[28] (Müller 2003b: 54) Herta Müller does indeed produce her literary texts not from the insides of an ivory tower, but from the insides of real life, thereby turning her work into »dedicated testimony.« (»engagierte[] Zeitzeugenschaft,« Hoff 1998: 96)

Confronted with the sometimes subtly, sometimes openly articulated threats by Romania's secret police, Herta Müller could no longer ask the question about her life's worth. She explains it like this: »Such a question can only come from the inside. If it is asked from the outside, one turns stubborn. Out of defiance, one starts to love life.«[29] (Müller 2003b: 54) Herta Müller had to embrace that defiant king in her because her environment asked her said question many times. Considering that »[p]olice terror is an intrinsic feature of totalitarianism« (Deletant 1995: 1), it is safe to say that Herta Müller has lived through one of the core experiences of totalitarian dictatorship. For just like any other person in communist Romania, and furthermore as an ethnic German with ties of

[28] »Auch diese, gegen alle äußeren Umstände innen wachsende Lebensgier ist ein König. Ein widerspenstiger König, ich kenne ihn gut.« (Müller 2003b: 54)
[29] »So eine Frage darf nur von innen kommen. Wenn sie von außen gestellt wird, wird man widerspenstig. Schon aus Trotz fängt man an, sein Leben zu lieben.« (Müller 2003b: 54)

friendship to the members of the *Aktionsgruppe Banat*, Herta Müller made herself highly suspicious to the ruling system simply by way of her existence.

The daily harassment and chicanery that Müller had to endure through Nicolae Ceauşescu's *Securitate* took on many forms, including interrogations and apartment searches. (see Mihăilă 2010: 51; Rogozan 2010: 251; see also Müller 2003-2: 25) The distress that was intentionally inflicted on her worsened considerably after her refusal to become a secret informant. This refusal was met by the secret police with the perfidious move of intentionally suggesting to her co-workers that the opposite were true: »Against attacks you can defend yourself, against defamation you're powerless.«[30] (Müller 2011b: 10) Naturally, the spreading of rumors within a social climate of already-profound distrust is a highly effective tool for isolating a person. In addition, Müller's struggles with the *Securitate* were obvious to her environment; before she was fired from her job as a translator in a machine factory, she was denied access to her office and had to do her work sitting on a staircase, visible to everyone. Inevitably, this strategy of public display catapulted her right into the social web of guilt by association, which cost her most of her friendships. Once again, Herta Müller's case serves as an affirmation of Hannah Arendt's claims; Müller's situation convincingly illustrates that »[t]otalitarian movements are mass organizations of atomized, isolated individuals.« (Arendt 1976: 323)

So when we learn that Rudi earned »a lot of money in the factory« due to his »good relationship with the man from the secret police,« who also »helped [the skinner's family] a lot with the passport« (Müller 1989: 38), this is no marginal information. Rather, this constellation unmistakably refers to »[t]he most important apparatus of the

[30] »Gegen Angriffe kann man sich wehren, gegen Verleumdung ist man machtlos.« (Müller 2011b: 10)

repressive regime.« (Olaru 2004: 19) Whereas Romania's secret police as an organ of political influence had been created after a peasant revolt in 1907, it was not until Ceauşescu's rise to power that the organization was assigned a function that clearly went beyond the activities typical of the secret services of any country. (see Deletant 1995: 13; Kifner 1989: n.p.) What Ceauşescu's *Securitate* apparatus eventually came to represent was the profound arbitrariness of a state system in which linear processes of a logical sequence no longer occur. Instead, the individual has to constantly stage their daily behavior so as not to attract any negative attention from the ruling eye.

The existence of »internal orders,« which »the authorities used to justify intervention in the public's daily lives« (Deletant 1995: 386), is meanwhile widely known. Müller also has Windisch face the necessity of behaving in a certain way so as to please obscure rules; for in the political system that the novel addresses, not even bribery brings about an agreed-upon outcome. (see also Mallet 2012: 157; White 1998: 85) The year before, the mayor told Windisch that he would only have to provide »[a]nother five deliveries [of flour], then the money at New Year. And at Easter you'll have your passport.« (Müller 1989: 16) Yet this rather clear – although morally questionable – process turns out to be far less reliable than anticipated: for now, as Windisch informs the readers, there have been »[t]welve deliveries since then, and ten thousand lei, and Easter is long past.« (ibid.)

In addition to the flour and the money, Windisch also has to make his daughter available to the village representatives of the Romanian state power. With this setup, Herta Müller not only literarily demonstrates how political oppression directly affects the lives of the

individuals living under it. Moreover, she also creates an atmosphere in her novel whose crushing effects on the characters is almost palpable. She achieves this by clarifying early on how important Amalie's sexual integrity is to the protagonist. In the course of the very first meeting between Windisch and the night watchman that we observe, Windisch volunteers the following information: »my Amalie is no longer a virgin either. […] I can't look her in the eye any more. There's a shadow in her eyes.« (Müller 1989: 10)

When his daughter was seven years old, Windisch anticipated that »Amalie will bring disgrace down on us.« (Müller 1989: 35) Not only did his past prophecy eventually fulfill itself; but the fact that this topic has been acute for Windisch for such a long time underlines the importance it carries. The assumption of Amalie's lost virginity must truly be significant to him; therefore, he takes the advice that the night watchman offers very seriously: »Watch how your daughter walks,« the night watchman suggests, »[i]f the toes of her shoes point outwards when she puts her feet on the ground, then it's happened.« (ibid.: 10) Windisch later makes precisely that observation himself: »›When she walks,‹ he thinks, ›Amalie's toes point outwards when she puts her feet on the ground.‹« (ibid.: 34) And again a little later, »Windisch sees that Amalie's toes point outwards as she puts her feet on the ground.« (ibid.: 69)

In that he consistently presents himself in a relation to Amalie that implies ownership, Windisch introduces *his* daughter as his last opportunity to defend his patriarchal authority. His feeling of entitlement toward his daughter's sexual integrity is in fact the only other indication of protest besides his repeatedly »feel[ing] the obstinate member below his navel.« (Müller 1989: 15) To keep Amalie from the actual figures of authority allows him to claim self-respect within a situation of political oppression that

has penetrated life in the village. After combatively kicking the mill door with his foot, Windisch announces his intention to preserve his last bit of dignity against the militiaman: »He may get flour, but he won't get my daughter.« (ibid.: 43) Irrespective of Windisch's determination, however, the novel's factual line of progression suggests to the readers early on that the village authorities will eventually get Amalie; just as they get any other woman in the village. For example, the joiner's wife is also sometimes »summoned to the priest because of the baptismal certificate, sometimes to the militiaman because of the passport.« (ibid.: 43)

So when Windisch finally has to submit to the inevitable, his patriarchal pride is severely injured. While standing in front of the mirror and looking at his own reflection, his body peculiarly merges with the body of the militiaman who is about to claim Windisch's position: »The militiaman's cap circles around the edge of the mirror. His epaulettes flash. The buttons of his blue jacket grow larger in the centre of the mirror. Windisch's face appears above the militiaman's jacket.« (Müller 1989: 71) The merger does not stop there, however; rather, even Windisch's face eventually merges with the militiaman's, and suddenly, »[t]he militiaman laughs between the cheeks of Windisch's large, confident face.« (ibid.) Indeed, the two figures have turned into one and the same person (see also Marven 2005a: 86); Windisch is no longer the patriarchal authority figure in his family.

Asked about the strictly hierarchical gender relations in her novel, according to which women are utilized as tools without any self-determination, Herta Müller instists that she is »no feminist. […] It simply is a reality that in dictatorships […] of course also

sexuality is abused.«[31] (quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 19) And in order to escape from this »dictatorial oppression and control within a static, corrupt, and confining socio-political landscape« (Mallet 2012: 148), the affected individuals have to physically remove themselves from the scene. Migration becomes the only option out of a situation of hopeless stagnation.

Herta Müller herself left Romania due to political reasons, too, as she eventually received death threats from state representatives of the Ceauşescu regime. (see Müller in Müller b 1997: 468; see also Beck 2003: 7) Yet even her departure for West Berlin in 1987 was no easy task. For one thing, German bureaucracy was confused by her being »both an ethnic German *and* a political refugee.« (Haines 1998: 112) As Müller so neatly puts it: »[f]or both options concurrently, there was no pre-printed form.« (»[f]ür beides zusammen gab es kein vorgedrucktes Formular,« quoted in Glajar 1997: 522) Furthermore, her travel documents were given to her on February 29, 1987, whereas the month of February of that year only had twenty-eight days. This last »mockery« (»Verhöhnung,« Auffermann 2003: 12) by the regime caused further delays for Müller after she finally arrived in her ethnic country. But even though she had fled the Romanian country that had been her home all her life, she nonetheless took something with her that would forever connect her to that ›home‹ she had left: Herta Müller took with her the basic parameters for the creation of a thoroughly realistic literary aesthetics.

[31] »Nein. Ich bin keine Feministin. […] Es ist nur eine Realität, dass in Diktaturen […] natürlich auch das Sexuelle missbraucht wird.« (Herta Müller quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 19)

1.4. Literary Aesthetics of Inevitability

Nicolae Ceauşescu and his wife Elena were publicly shot to death on December 25, 1989. It all began with a local protest in the city of Timişoara in the Western part of Romania. Because the Protestant minister László Tókés had openly criticized the mistreatment of the ethnic Hungarians in Romania, he was to be transferred to an isolated parish. The vigil that his followers held in front of his house the night before his transfer spontaneously turned into street fights, growing independent of Tókés' case. (see Vensky 2009)[32] Whereas the Romanian Army took the side of the people, the secret police stayed loyal to the regime. (see Olaru 2004: 33; Kifner 1989: n.p.) The quickly expanding uprising, which was soon labeled as the »people's revolution« (Deletant 1995: 387) by the Romanian media, caught the dictator by surprise when he returned from a visit to Iran. For the first time in his long reign as a tyrant, Nicolae Ceauşescu found himself powerless; his public defamation of the »hooligans« of Timişoara in the course of a television address only intensified the anger that had taken to the streets. (see Vensky 2009: n.p.) Now, the riots spread to Bucharest, which in turn made »[t]he presidential couple fle[e] in a helicopter.« (McNeil 1999: n.p.) Right after their escape, the National Salvation Front (*Frontul Salvării Naţionale*, FSN) – »a broad organization bringing together dissidents, revolution leaders, personalities and former party members like Ion Iliescu« (Olaru 2004: 34) – claimed control, caught the fleeing couple, charged them, among other things, with genocide, and sentenced them to death. (see ibid.: 33–34) The sentence was executed the very same day, after allegedly hundreds of volunteers had wanted to join the firing squad. (see Vensky 2009: n.p.)

[32] See also Olaru 2004: 33; McNeil 1999: n.p.; Ciuhandu n.d.: 3.

Ion Iliescu, who took power right after the dictator's death, was certainly not a democrat, either; for instance, he had protests against his presidential election violently beaten down. (see Ciuhandu n.d.: 5; Vensky 2009: n.p.) Yet even though the democratic development in Romania was slow, a multi-party system finally emerged, and Romania found a way out of its totalitarian isolation: it is now a part of both NATO (*North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, since 2004) and the EU (*European Union*, since 2007). (see also Ciuhandu n.d.: 5–6) Naturally, these significant changes in Romania's political reality could not undo any of the damage that had been done before, and so Herta Müller did not abandon the thematic focus of her work. (see also Glajar 1997: 536) In fact, the author rejects the concept of leaving core experiences behind altogether, since: »[w]hat we always think about isn't a memory. Nor is that which constantly imposes itself on us the past.«[33] (Müller 1991: 131–132)

In the context of my investigation, a very important aspect of these few days that confronted »Romania's megalomaniacal ruling couple« (McNeil 1999: n.p.) with a death sentence is Herta Müller's reaction to the scenario she observed on television. For even though she indicates that »[f]or fifteen years [she] wished him dead every day« (quoted in Haines 1998: 114), witnessing the dictator's execution did not bring her any satisfaction: »I couldn't stop weeping. I found it hard to watch a man being shot. And he was a man for the first time. He was unshaven, he had this fear in his eyes.« (ibid.) This concentration on the human core even of the seemingly inhuman, as well as her deep

[33] »Es ist nicht Erinnerung, woran man immer denkt. Auch nicht Vergangenheit, was sich so aufdrängt.« (Müller 1991: 131–132)

empathy for the human realities contained within a situation of crisis, are vital parameters of Müller's work.

Therefore, and in summary, I argue against the notion that Herta Müller's aesthetics primarily evolves from an intention to artfully alienate reality; instead, I evaluate her uncompromising focus on humanity as the single most important parameter of her aesthetics, which literarily unfolds around the thoroughly real consequences of an oppressive politics for the thoroughly human individuals that are exposed to it. Just as Müller herself evaluates surreality not as »something else than reality, but [as] a deeper reality« – which turns it into an inevitable component of any thorough address of the real – I regard the indisputable effects of alienation that are so typical of her writing as an inevitable consequence of Müller's thematic interest.

It is especially her personal experiences with interrogations through the *Securitate* that find their way into many of her texts. Although the interrogators' names change – for instance, from Hauptmann Pjele to Major Albu – Müller portrays the agonizing quality of the experience in a consistent way. Always, the police questioning drives the interrogated individual to the edge of reason; and, as discussed above, this atmosphere of madness is also central to Windisch's village life. From this it follows that the framework that Müller explicates in the form of the very first and the very last sentences of her 1997 novel *Today I'd rather not have met myself* (*Heute wär ich mir lieber nicht begegnet*) can be applied to the entirety of her work: it begins with the order to appear before the interrogator – »I'm summoned. Thursday, ten o'clock sharp« (»Ich bin bestellt. Donnerstag Punkt zehn,« Müller 1997: 7) – and ends with the already slightly lunatic conclusion of »[h]a, ha, don't go loopy.« (»[h]a, ha, nicht irr werden,« ibid.: 240)

As for the village portrayed in *The Passport*, one of the primary strategies that Müller has her characters employ so as not to succumb to their maddening environment is precisely that act of self-isolation that Hannah Arendt so accurately defined as one of the core aspects of totalitarian realities. In an environment in which everybody fends for themselves, the characters become disconnected from each other, which in turn reinforces their suffering. Herta Müller captures the existential importance of this process in that she equips the protagonist with a dream that is highly meaningful in this regard. In his dream, Windisch pictures himself »stand[ing] at the edge of a sunflower field.« (Müller 1989: 58) He yells that the bird that is flying through the empty sky above is blind, an act that is followed by the significant information that »[t]he echo of his voice returns as his wife's voice« (ibid.), which seemingly causes Windisch to shout back the following: »I'm not looking for you, because I know you aren't there.« (ibid.) This scenario clearly underlines that it is in fact not the bird, but the Windischs who cannot see – namely, they cannot see each other. Furthermore, the fact that the protagonist's voice returns as Katharina's renders it unclear whether the final conclusion of knowing the partner absent is truly articulated by Windisch, or whether it is articulated by the returning voice of his wife. The indecisiveness of the scenario demonstrates that the loneliness that Müller instills at the core of her characters' marriage is felt by both parties.

This loneliness is further underlined by acts of physical violence. Upon returning home late one night, and upon his wife's insultingly throwing the word »[f]ornicator« (Müller 1989: 41) into his face, Windisch instantly reciprocates the attack by turning it physical: »Windisch goes up to her. Windisch strikes her in the face.« (ibid.) This

violence appears as such an integral part of the couple's daily interactions that Windisch's wife reacts by »say[ing] nothing.« (ibid.) The novel offers numerous references to violence in this Banat-Swabian village community. There are, for example, the »black spots« that Windisch first identifies in the wall clock in the skinner's house (see Müller 1989: 18), which later resurface in the text as »a black mark« (ibid.: 50) on the cleaning woman's cheek; this transformation clearly underlines that domestic violence does not only occur in the Windisch household.

Significantly, an analysis of Müller's use of the »black spots« expression also confronts us with another problematic circumstance. For when Martin Chalmers decides to deviate in his English version from the German original's use of »black spots« (*schwarze Flecken*) to describe both the skinner's wall clock and the cleaning woman's cheek by switching from »black spots« to »a black mark,« he catapults us right into the intricate realm of translation. Certainly, the principle of having black discolorations resurface as such may stay intact in both the English and the German text. Nonetheless, the English version does not accurately reflect Müller's aesthetic strategy of positioning one and the same expression in different contexts so as to subtly direct the reader's attention to the many layers of truth. This is a significant observation, considering that in addition to the visual aspects of this aesthetics, its highly reflected employment of words has also been recognized as central to understanding Müller's work. In order to adequately address the problems of translation with which her writing confronts us, it is necessary to take a closer look at her approach to language.

The focus on language in Müller's oeuvre is not primarily to be understood as an aesthetic means for intentionally creating elaborated »linguistic artwork« (»sprachliche Kunstwerke,« Rogozan 2010: 251), which earned her the reputation of being a very linguistically aware writer. (see, e.g., Beck 2003: 7) Rather, at the foundation of Herta Müller's linguistic awareness lies the experience that language can and has been abused by the ruling authorities throughout human history. (see Müller 2001: 27) In fact, tyrannical dictatorships are famous for using words as they please, for modifying meanings at their discretion, in order to instill their ideologies into the social environment they oppress. (see also Herta Müller in Müller b 1997: 479) The author names as one very striking example in this regard her experience with Romanian censorship. In its Romanian version, *Nadirs* no longer contained the word ›Koffer‹ (*suitcase*): »[i]t had turned into a provocative word because the German minority's emigration should be treated as a taboo.« (»[e]s war zum Reizwort geworden, weil die Auswanderung der deutschen Minderheit tabuisiert werden sollte,« Müller 2001: 27) Certainly, language can easily turn into a means of power, which renders it susceptible to abuse. Yet at the same time, as Herta Müller's literary work illustrates, it can also act as a means of resistance. (see Rogozan 2010: 255) Inevitably, Müller finds herself in close proximity to the experience that was also articulated by Georges-Arthur Goldschmidt, who had to flee Nazi Germany as a young Jewish boy: »throughout my life, I've been exposed to a linguistic field that brings together highest poetry and absolute crime.« (»zeit meines Lebens war ich einem linguistischen Feld ausgesetzt, das höchste Poesie und absolutes Verbrechen in sich vereint«, Goldschmidt 2008: 58)

Herta Müller's particular linguistic horizon consists of three different languages: the German dialect of her Banat-Swabian village; the standard German she first encountered in school; as well as the Romanian language that surrounded everything (see Grün 2010: 41; Mihăilă 2010: 57), and that she started to learn when she was fifteen years old. (see Müller 2003a: 23; see also Müller in Haines/Littler 1998: 15) Having been exposed to such a linguistically intricate situation has greatly influenced Herta Müller's approach to language. For one thing, Müller has repeatedly been confronted with the criticism that, according to the established grammar rules of standard German, her German sentences – which appear to be at least partly owed to the Banat-Swabian dialect – are incorrect; even though for her, »they are correct like that, and they themselves demand to be like that.« (»für mich sind sie so richtig, und sie verlangen sich so,« Müller 2010b: 42) Furthermore, and more significantly, the Romanian language in Herta Müller's head and heart actively influences her understanding of German words as well.

This becomes especially obvious when looking at the protagonist Windisch. In his name, both German and Romanian converge, thereby anchoring the village's social atmosphere of distrust and mental suffering deep in the central character. In that Müller openly reveals the underlying linguistic strategy, she presents us with the disclosure of a concept that is constitutive of her work far beyond the Windisch character. So with regard to Windisch, Müller explains that in German, the term ›windig‹ (*windy*) is also used to describe persons who are dishonest: »When something is in the wind, it is due to a form of danger that comes from human beings.« (»Wenn etwas in der Luft liegt, hat das mit Gefahr zu tun, die von Menschen ausgeht,« quoted in Mallet 2012: 153) Certainly, Windisch's commitment to bribery does identify him as dishonest, and thereby as an

individual who had better be distrusted. Yet the fact that this character's dishonesty springs from the necessity of appealing to the village authorities simultaneously extends this circle of distrust to everyone involved: the state regime in communist Romania that reigns over the village authorities, the village authorities that terrorize the village, as well as the villagers whose well-being depends on their establishing a favorable position for themselves in relation to the oppressive system they face.

The protagonist's name also contains hints at the suffering that is inevitably imposed on the individual in such a social context; the hints are based on references to both the German and the Romanian ›Wind‹ (*wind*). In the Banat-Swabian dialect of her village, a windy day is described with the expression ›Der Wind geht.‹ (›The wind is going.‹) In standard German, the same expression is articulated as ›Der Wind weht.‹ (›The wind is blowing.‹) When she was seven years old, Müller reveals, this standard German version »sounded to [her] as if it [i.e., the wind, AC] would hurt itself.« (»das klang für mich […] als würde er sich weh tun,« Müller 2003a: 24) ›To hurt‹ is translated into German as ›weh tun,‹ and the morphologic correlation between the blowing (*wehend*) wind and this German verb of pain is evident. Additionally, the author was confronted with the corresponding Romanian version – namely, ›Der Wind schlägt, *vîntul bate.*‹ (›The wind is beating.‹) This image of a beating wind contains a moment of violence that does indeed suggest that in this linguistic scenario, »the wind didn't hurt itself, but it hurt others.« (»da tat der Wind nicht sich, sondern anderen weh,« ibid.) In conclusion, the violence inherent in a wind that draws its existence from a combination of the Banat-Swabian dialect, standard German, and Romanian, extends in all possible directions. The wind hurts itself as well as others, which brings about suffering for itself

and for its immediate environment. Müller reinforces the continuity of this implied state of multidirectional violence and suffering in that she has Windisch's erroneous observation that »[t]here isn't any wind« (Müller 1989: 65) be corrected by the night watchman: »There's always wind, even if one doesn't feel it.« (ibid.)

It is of course highly difficult, if not downright impossible, to capture, in any translation, the wealth of semantic allusions that is contained in the words of Herta Müller's German original. However, with this difficulty comes the danger of giving up on taking the original wording seriously. The aesthetic profundity of Herta Müller's writing is then neither made accessible, nor even suggested as existent to the non-German-speaking audience. Clearly, what Chalmers and the publisher also sought to circumvent with their English version is the economic challenge consisting in the fact that Herta Müller's prose, in its original state of aesthetic depth and linguistic intricacy, remains inaccessible »to cursory reading, to consumerism.« (»der flüchtigen Lektüre, dem Konsum,« Eke 1991a: 13) The ensuing focus on turning the novel into a marketable good is also evident when looking at how translator and publisher decided to entitle Müller's novel.

With the original title of her novel, Müller once more confronts us with the convergence of two linguistic concepts. (see also Benea 2010: 244) Whereas the German title is *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*, which literally translates as: »Man is a big pheasant in the world,« the English version directs the readers' attention right to the passport in this migration story. Even though the passport truly is, as Diana Benea has remarked, »the narrative trigger« of the text, I agree with the notion that »there is nevertheless something lost in the English translation of the title.« (ibid.) What is lost is,

once again, nothing less than an elaborated concept of multifaceted meanings based on the converging of two languages. Irrespective of the intended audience's linguistic background, the particular images that Müller's word choice elicits could and, I argue, *should* have been preserved in the English translation in order for it to count as a serious translation of Müller's original work rather than as the paper manifestation of a marketing strategy.[34]

Based on the notion that »[i]n every language there sit different eyes in the words« (»[i]n jeder Sprache sitzen andere Augen in den Wörtern,« Müller 2001: 15), Herta Müller looks at the pheasant of her novel's original title from a German as well as from a Romanian perspective. When the night watchman claims that »[a] man is nothing but a pheasant in the world« (Müller 1989: 9), he clearly refers to the Romanian understanding of the bird. Herta Müller explains that »the Romanian pheasant is a loser who can't handle his life, the bird that can't fly and that, because it can't fly and because it is rather big and heavy, gets hit by the hunter's bullet.« (»[d]er rumänische Fasan ist der Verlierer, der seinem Leben nicht gewachsen ist, der Vogel, der nicht fliegen kann, und der, weil er nicht fliegen kann und ziemlich groß und schwer ist, von der Kugel des Jägers getroffen wird,« quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 16) In opposition to this image of predestined failure, Windisch confidently states that »[a] man is strong, [...] stronger than the beasts.« (Müller 1989: 9) In that Müller has the protagonist oppose the negative image of the pheasant with a focus on strength and a reference to man's natural

[34] A considerable change to a text's title in the translation process is not an incident limited to *The Passport*. Müller's novel *Herztier* (literally: heart-animal), for instance, which owes its title to the author's Romanian neologism ›inimal,‹ combining animal (*animal*) with inimă (*heart*), has been turned into an English text entitled »The Land of Great Plums.« Considering the linguistic intricacy of Herta Müller's oeuvre, and further considering that her texts have been translated into twenty languages (see Auffermann 2003: 16), this may in fact be a rather common phenomenon.

superiority, she now also introduces a German understanding into the novel. For »[t]he German pheasant is the braggart, the self-confident, arrogant man.« (»[d]er deutsche Fasan ist der Prahler, der selbstsichere, arrogante Mensch,« quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 16) Interestingly, in accordance with Müller's personal favoring of the Romanian version (see ibid.), Windisch experiences a profound change in perspective. After seeing Amalie getting ready for her appointment, »Windisch says loudly: ›A man is nothing but a pheasant in the world.‹« (Müller 1989: 70) In an environment of political oppression, it seems, the Romanian pheasant, with its embodiment of failure, wins.

There is another aspect of Herta Müller's writing that is, admittedly, rather difficult to translate. Due to its close connection to the experience of totalitarian tyranny, her writing has incorporated a profound challenge of articulation. In her writing, Müller broaches the issue of an individual who increasingly recognizes »what one cannot say with words.« (»was man mit Worten nicht sagen kann,« Müller 2003c: 104) In contrast to the common assumption that silence acts as a »pause within speech« (»Pause zwischen dem Reden,« ibid.: 74), Müller establishes silence as a concept that does not interrupt the narrator, but that comes to actively interact with the articulated word. In the context of Herta Müller's writing, this constellation is unquestionably vital; after all, the author explains that her writing started in precisely such a situation of silence. It started when she was sitting on the staircase of the machine factory and drafted *Nadirs* in an attempt to come to terms with »more […] than one could say.« (»mehr […] als man sagen konnte,« Müller 2001: 18)

Whereas articulation commonly occurs as a successive presentation of thoughts, silence does not know of such a temporal progression. While, in articulation, »[e]very sentence only shows up when the previous one has disappeared«, silence confronts us with »everything at once, [for] everything that hasn't been said for a long time sticks to it.«[35] (Müller 2003c: 74) Viewed from this perspective, any moment of silence becomes an abyss of content; and so does, in fact, any act of articulation – since for every sentence that is being voiced, another one is left unspoken. Müller addresses this intricacy of underlying meaning in the interplay of articulation and silence in the context of the Windischs' final visit to their village. For what becomes obvious when they attend church service is that they cannot simply leave their agonizing past behind. Even if it is not straightforwardly articulated, the family still carries the morally questionable sacrifice of Amalie with them.

Upon their entering the church, »Skinny Wilma's eyes follow Windisch. Skinny Wilma lowers her head: […] ›They're taking communion and haven't confessed.‹« (Müller 1989: 92) Although she does not spell it out, it is clear what particular confession Skinny Wilma alludes to, and the accusing undertone of her seemingly factual comment is indisputable. In the context of the novel, it is unnecessary for this character to articulate the reason for her discontent because the readers already know that she refers to the Windischs' decision to submit their daughter to the village officials in order to receive their passport. (see also Mallet 2012: 161) All the words she does not articulate are contained in Skinny Wilma's silent gesture of lowering her head, which makes her silence instantly visible.

---

[35] »Jeder Satz kommt erst dann an die Reihe, wenn der vorherige weg ist. Im Schweigen kommt aber alles auf einmal daher, es bleibt alles drin hängen, was über lange Zeit nicht gesagt wird.« (Müller 2003c: 74)

The way in which Herta Müller presents the actual episode of Amalie's providing sexual services to both the militiaman and the village priest shows her to strengthen the aspect of silence also, since Amalie's silence during this ordeal is one of its most striking facets. (see also Mallet 2012: 160) Staying true to her belief that »[t]he articulated has to be careful with that which is not articulated« (»[d]as Gesagte muss behutsam sein, mit dem, was nicht gesagt wird,« Müller 1991: 19), Müller creates a literary text that succeeds at making the silence visible concurrently with that which it describes. By employing a narrative strategy of overlaps, Müller captures the agonizing quality of an event that cannot be accurately represented with words, but that rather presents itself as a comglomeration of images (see also Midgley 1998: 28) – which resists successive narration. When we observe Amalie packing for the upcoming move, the text reveals her memories. The psychic urgency of those memories is captured in the form of a present-tense narration in which the militiaman and the village priest overlap:

> »The militiaman unbuttons his tunic. ›Take your clothes off,‹ he says. A silver cross hangs beneath the blue tunic. The priest takes off his black cassock. He brushes a strand of hair from Amalie's cheek. ›Wipe your lipstick off,‹ he says. The militiaman kisses Amalie's shoulder. The silver cross falls in front of his mouth. The priest strokes Amalie's thigh.« (Müller 1989: 85)

Seamlessly, this description switches between the militiaman and the priest as main actors, whereas Amalie is completely annihilated as a participant. The tears she sheds while remembering those images are in fact her most ›articulate‹ reaction to these experiences. Unlike the readers, however, Windisch does not know about the connection between Amalie's memories and her tears, nor is he granted access to his daughter's

visual recollection. Therefore, his attempt at empathy is bound to appear ignorant: »›I know,‹ says Windisch, ›leave-taking is hard.‹« (Müller 1989: 86)

Nonetheless, Windisch does strike a nerve of this novel when he opens up the topic of longing for home, the topic of homesickness (*Heimweh*). At the same time, this also sadly illustrates how Amalie's sacrifice has always been bound to be not fully successful. Even though it brought about the desired outcome of the Windischs' receiving their travel documents, the family did not achieve complete happiness after their emigration. The characters' hope of not only fleeing their disadvantageous status as members of an ethnic minority in a communist country, but also of finding in Germany »a truer homeland« (Midgley 1998: 27), is not fulfilled. Their visit back ›home‹ clearly demonstrates that the Windischs never truly arrived in their ethnic country. (see also Grün 2010: 98)

Müller presents the protagonist in a manner which casts the undertaking of migration as an ambivalent one even before she has her characters actively embark on it. For after the skinner's family emigrates to Germany, they send a letter to the Windischs, whose content Windisch shares with the night watchman: »One thing is hard, says the skinner in his letter. An illness we all know from the war. Homesickness.« (Müller 1989: 67) Whereas the night watchman confidently proclaims that he »wouldn't feel homesick. [...] After all, you're among Germans there« (ibid.), Windisch is more sceptical; and when he finally holds the desired passport in his hands, he »rocks his head from side to side. ›It's a difficult step,‹ he says.« (ibid.: 87) This slight hesitation on the protagonist's part is enough to narratively suggest that what is to follow is a presentation of the

veritable tragedy of migration. For also in Müller's text, »the agony of migration eventually catches up with the expatriates.« (Mallet 2012: 163)

In order to further prepare the characters for the inevitable, then, the anticipation of homesickness has entered their environment. While saying their goodbyes, they are surrounded by the following landscape: »[a]round the white clouds the clouds are water. […] Around the pond only silent mountains. Grey mountain ranges heavy with longing for home.« (Müller 1989: 87) The sky turns into a reference to that aquatic belt of isolation that the family is about to cross, and the mountain ranges signify at what cost they will leave their village; thus, the »longing for home« is presented as an inevitable consequence of the Windischs' migration. The certainty of this development is also instilled in the characters themselves; it is highly significant in this regard that Müller has the last titled chapter of her novel end with Katharina's comment that »God willing, we'll come back for a visit next summer.« (ibid.: 89) At the time when she articulates this projection into the future, the Windisch family is already sitting in the train that will bring them to Germany. Clearly, this is a double-edged journey.

The Windischs do find material prosperity in their new environment (see also Mallet 2012: 171), but this does not alleviate their homesickness; instead, it makes them no longer fit in the old village they still long for. (see also Roberg 1997: 36) In their new state of being, the Windisch family lives in between two worlds. Their changed condition is presented as an unavoidable side-effect of living in a different country, as a result of their having »to blend in with a different value system.« (»sich in ein neues Wertesystem einfügen,« Bary 1990: 116) It is therefore consequent that Windisch's wife can only

conclude, upon looking at the formerly so familiar sloping red roofs of the village, that »[i]t's as if we never lived here.« (Müller 1989: 90)

The topic of identity is indeed of vital importance to this novel. It is no accident that Müller has her migration narrative culminate with this highly intricate issue of identity. After all, questions of identity not only are central to her novel, but also become vital in an increasingly global world in which migration occurs on an extensive scale. Meaningfully, Herta Müller is just as cautious with the term ›identity‹ as she is with the term ›home.‹ (*Heimat*) She even goes so far as to claim that she never uses it to describe herself because »[t]his is really a wooden word, as if actually woodcut.« (quoted in Mihăilă 2010: 57) What comes along with such a wooden – which is to say: rigid – understanding of identity is, as Müller puts it, a use of the term primarily »to evade one's inner self.« (ibid.) From this it follows that the author regards an individual's inner self as far from rigid and stable. In rejecting identity as an unalterable essence, she places an emphasis on identity as »cultural, performative and contingent.« (ibid.: 50) Depending on the specific environment in which they find themselves, then, a person's understanding of who they are changes; and the Windisch family demonstrates this situational approach to identity exemplarily. (see also Glajar 1997: 535–536)

Herta Müller further embraces the contextual character of identity in that she very decisively places her narrative focus on precisely those contexts. Her close observation of the artifacts that contribute to a particular spacial situation is therefore not at all an attempt to distract herself from the all-encompassing fear within a totalitarian country (see Rogozan 2010: 252); rather, it is owed to those artifacts' reliability. For instance, the

first-person narrator in *Today I'd rather not have met myself* also comes to a comparable conclusion: »Here, I only trust the artifacts, which don't change.« (»Ich traue nur den Gegenständen hier, die sich nicht ändern,« Müller 1997: 46) Hence, in the midst of Amalie's getting ready for her appointments with the village officials, Windisch directs his attention to her clothing: »Her slip is pink. White lace points show under Amalie's navel.« (Müller 1989: 67) Confronted with a looming personal failure in an atmosphere of all-encompassing oppression, the protagonist focuses on the least suspicious part of the situation – namely, the clothing. And yet, even that inanimate part of the setting is not as innocent as it might seem, since »the holes in the lace« suddenly appear to »run into one another« (ibid.: 67), thereby signifying the underlying emotional turmoil of the scene.

A core characteristic of Müller's writing is »to make close associations between people and objects.« (Eddy 2013: 158) This is not just true for her collage poems (see ibid.), but also for her prose texts. Müller explains that artifacts have always been important to her, mostly because of their close connection to the persons they belong to. In fact, she regards anyone's possessions as »[t]he outermost layer of a person.« (»[d]er äußerste […] Teil der Person,« Müller 2003a: 15) Because of the importance of such items, they are not simply a passive part of a particular situation, but always actively contribute to it. (see Müller 2010b: 26) In *The Passport*, the borderlines between inanimate objects and the human skin are repeatedly liquefied, which serves to illustrate Müller's claim that »artifacts can depict the condition, the feelings of a person.« (»Gegenstände können den Zustand, das Befinden der Person wiedergeben,« Müller 1991: 97) The pothole that Windisch encounters on his way to and from his mill, for example, is indeed more than

just a bump in the road; it quickly comes to represent a bump in the characters' lives (see ibid.), thereby referring to that much-deeper layer of desperation present in Windisch's village community. After all, »[e]very day when Windisch is jolted by the pot hole, he thinks, ›The end is here.‹« (Müller 1989: 7)

So when Herta Müller's writing confronts the readers with images of a sometimes-striking peculiarity, this is not owed to a »fragmentation of the whole [which] brings to the fore structures that undermine everyday perception.« (»die Auflösung des Ganzen lässt Dingstrukturen hervortreten, die die alltägliche Wahrnehmung verkehren,« Dawidowski 1997: 16) On the contrary, with her focus on the settings that surround her characters, Herta Müller guides her audience toward acknowledging a deeper truth; it is a truth that defies rigid categories and resists the embellishment employed by ideological narratives. For when artifacts suddenly, in the eyes of the characters and the readers, appear to change in a way that strikes us as alien, this certainly brings about an undermining of their presumed trustworthiness; and this is highly indicative of a precarious reality, which, it seems, the literary medium – with its ability to create images by way of words, and to make visible both articulation and silence – is especially well-equipped to address.

Herta Müller has not only written extensively, but also widely commented on her understanding of the role of writing in a world of ever-increasing complexities. (see, e.g., Düppe 1997: 156) The most striking feature of Herta Müller's evaluation of the writing profession is its brutal modesty; for what she most strongly emphasizes is that she does not regard writers to be »a special class of people.« (Eddy 2013: 180) In concluding that

»poetry is in the world« (»die Poesie ist in der Welt,« quoted in Müller b 1997: 470), she turns an act of potentially lofty supremacy into an occupation that is in fact firmly grounded in reality. In order to identify the poetic qualities that are already inscribed in the world, writers primarily have to act as observant witnesses to the realities that surround them.

This constellation, however, is not meant to suggest that literature, as a medium owed to and dependent on the real, could substantially change its surroundings. Müller is very clear in this regard as well: »poetry isn't pleasant. It isn't something that soothes. The more threatening and abysmal something is, the more strongly it comes through.«[36] (quoted in Müller b 1997: 474) Without soothing any kind of human agony, then, literature primarily serves the purpose of, literally, putting the agony into words and making it visible. I conclude that according to Müller, literature has to reveal even and especially those layers of reality that would otherwise remain concealed.

In that precise attempt to reveal that which would otherwise stay hidden, Herta Müller also came to find her topic. Confronted with her own experiences with and especially under a totalitarian regime, Müller indicates having »stumbled« on the writing profession without any such intent.[37] Yet confronted with the impossibility of articulating the horrors of her experiences, the only thing left to do with the inextinguishable desire to come to terms with what happened to and around her was to put it into writing. This constellation also renders it comprehensible why the author insists that it was in fact the topic that found her, and not the other way around: »The topic was imposed on me, I

[36] »Poesie ist ja nichts Angenehmes. Poesie ist nicht etwas, was gut tut. Je bedrohlicher und abgründiger etwas ist, um so starker kommt es hervor.« (Herta Müller, quoted in Müller b 1997: 474)

[37] »Für mich war es immer eine Arbeit, zu der ich gestolpert bin.« (Herta Müller, quoted in Müller b 1997: 475)

didn't choose it myself.« (»Das Thema wurde mir aufgezwungen, ich habe es mir nicht gesucht,« quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 14) Otherwise, Müller adds, she would not have had to write at all. (see ibid.: 24) Writing, it follows, has presented itself to Herta Müller as an inevitability.

Certainly, by claiming a direct connection between the real world and her literary oeuvre, Müller once more shows that her writing is indeed of a realistic kind. At the same time, this constellation confronts us with the question of biography. Obviously, Müller herself does not deny the influence that her personal biography has on her writing. Yet nonetheless, this »autobiographical undertaking« (»autobiographische[s] Unternehmen,« Schau 2003: 285) is not as autobiographical as one might assume. (see also Grün 2010: 30) Müller writes literature, not memoires. In openly borrowing Georges Arthur-Goldschmidt's term ›auto-fictional writing‹ (see Müller 2011b: 214), Müller establishes her literary work as an artistic address of the real, without turning it into a descriptive reproduction thereof. Her personal experiences provide the backdrop for her texts, but those experiences are »very much literarily modified.« (»sehr stark literarisch bearbeitet,« Herta Müller, quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 14)

Müller suggests an aesthetic concept for that literary modification of real experiences – namely, the concept of invented perception (*erfundene Wahrnehmung*). It is a reference to Jorge Semprun's statement that »[t]he truth of written memory has to be invented« (»[d]ie Wahrheit der geschriebenen Erinnerung muss erfunden werden,« quoted in Grün 2010: 31), which suggests that it is only by way of invented perceptions that one can truthfully write about memories. Müller concludes that remembered

memories always differ from the actual facts of the past they seek to preserve. (see ibid.) Therefore, it is inaccurate to view invented perception as a reference to an »arbitrariness of any perception« that indicates that we are profoundly stuck in a »delusion about the world.«[38] (Köhnen 1997a: 8) Rather, I argue, Herta Müller's concept of invented perception refers to the effort of translation that is necessary to transport real-world realities into the realm of literary fiction. Müller herself is quite clear about this process: »That which truly happened can never be directly captured with words. To describe it, it needs to be trimmed to fit into words, it has to be invented completely anew.«[39] (Müller 2003c: 86) In describing the greatest challenge that the act of literary invention faces, Müller also explains her preoccupation with the narrative creation of images. For what she regards as the most difficult aspect in any act of imaginative re-invention of reality is the human imagination's natural closeness to images: »I believe that the invented perception doesn't even like words. That that's the reason why it always takes so long for me to know how the sentence that I'm writing looks upon itself.«[40] (Müller 1991: 84)

That Müller takes her sentences seriously is owed to her wanting to make sure that »the invented does justice to the lived-through.« (»das Erfundene dem Erlebten gerecht wird,« Müller 2003-2: 27) Evidently, her understanding of imaginative invention abstains from integrating the idea of artistic freedom. For what she identifies as the most important aspect of any act of imagination is its believability: »The fictional reality needs to be believable in the course of its reception, too.« This, she continues, is why the real-

[38] »Zunächst ist damit die Willkür jeder Perzeption, die gestalthafte Ergänzung der Wahrnehmung als prinzipielle Täuschung über die Welt gekennzeichnet.« (Köhnen 1997a: 8)
[39] »Wirklich Geschehenes lässt sich niemals eins zu eins mit Worten fangen. Um es zu beschreiben, muss es auf Worte zugeschnitten und gänzlich neu erfunden werden.« (Müller 2003c: 86)
[40] »Ich glaube, die erfundene Wahrnehmung verlässt sich in ihrer Ganzheit auf Bilder. Ich glaube auch, dass die erfundene Wahrheit Worte gar nicht mag. Dass es deshalb so lange dauert, bis ich weiß, wie der Satz, den ich schreibe, sich selber sieht.« (Müller 1991: 84)

world experiences that drive her writing are so important to her literary aesthetics; »[she] need[s] this secure relation to the experiences«[41] (quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 15) in order to stay true to the facts at the core of her fiction.

When asked the standard question about why people write, Herta Müller openly embraces her personal approach: »I believe it [i.e., writing, AC] becomes […] a kind of reality, a way to deal with oneself.« (»Ich glaube, es wird zu einer […] Art Wirklichkeit, zu einer Art, mit sich selbst zurechtzukommen,« Müller 2010b: 7) Nonetheless, the literary aesthetics that follows from Müller's highly personalized approach to writing is more than just a self-centered therapeutic undertaking. The author identifies a clear intention in her writing that extends beyond herself: »Yes, every text has to have a wish« (»Ja, jeder Text muss ein Anliegen haben,« quoted in Düppe 1997: 159), which in turn equips the literary undertaking with meaning (*Sinn*). (see Müller 1991: 42)

So even though Müller does not want to speak of a specific duty of literature, writing does not occur in a vacuum: »Duty is maybe too strong a word. It [i.e., literature, AC] has meaning. Duty already aims at a particular outcome that should be achieved. I don't know whether that's possible when literature, from the outset, wants to do that. I doubt it.«[42] (Müller 2010b: 8) Evidently, Herta Müller is far too realistic a writer to assume that literary texts could bring about a predefined outcome in the real world; yet her writing remains unapologetic in that it is owed to a very decisive motivation. For

---

[41] »Ich brauche aber diese sichere Beziehung zu der Erfahrung. […] Die fiktionale Realität muss auch bei der Rezeption ihre Glaubwürdigkeit haben. Dafür ist diese Erfahrung wichtig.« (Herta Müller quoted in Haines/Littler 1998: 15)

[42] »Aufgabe ist vielleicht ein zu starkes Wort. Sie hat einen Sinn. Eine Aufgabe ist etwas, was schon auf eine Wirkung zielt, auf etwas, was erreicht werden soll. Ich weiß nicht, ob sich das einlöst, wenn das Schreiben sich das von Anfang an vornimmt. Ich bezweifle das.« (Müller 2010b: 8)

motivated by the intention to make the less-than-glamorous sides of a totalitarian reality visible, hers is a literary aesthetics that claims nothing less than a social responsibility in writing.

It is evident that Herta Müller's oeuvre addresses not just the Romanian totalitarianism that provides the backdrop for the author's personal experiences, but rather the phenomenon of dictatorship as such. (see also Rüther 2013: 188; Dascălu 2004: 56) Nevertheless, the consistency with which she claims that particular topic for herself has repeatedly been turned into an accusation of »artistic stagnation.« (Haines 1998: 122; see also Rüther 2013: 198) I agree with the observation that »Herta Müller has as a writer been unable to break free from her past.« (White 1998: 93) However, I disagree with the common tendency to evaluate this actuality as artistic weakness; it seems far more adequate to recognize and establish it as artistic inevitability. Herta Müller herself puts it like this: »Damages, one has to admit, are and remain bindings – necessary, boisterous and merciless.« (»Beschädigungen, das muss man sich eingestehen, sind und bleiben Bindungen – notwendig, ungestüm und gnadenlos,« Müller 2011b: 36)

But what ensues from this constellation is a literature that is – in opposition to the impression which an only superficial inspection of Müller's texts might suggest – far from backward-oriented. For in her pursuit of putting the images pertinent to our everyday perception into words, in making visible the silence that co-occurs with the openly articulated, Herta Müller creates a literary work whose narrative strategies are thoroughly innovative; and this makes Herta Müller's writing so interesting in the context of my investigation. Despite the prominent argumentation that seeks to distance Müller's

literary aesthetics from postmodernism due to its interest in social responsibility (see, e.g., White 1998: 93), I regard it as highly representative of postmodern writing as I understand it for the purpose of this investigation. With her employment of literary strategies that subvert a traditionally linear mode of narration, Müller not only thematically discusses the act of crossing borders in the form of migration. But by way of »her privileging of the detail and of the contingent over grand narratives and hierarchies« (Haines 1998: 122), Herta Müller indeed presents herself as a thoroughly postmodern writer. (see also Marven 2005a: 58; Dawidowski 1997: 24)

Clearly, she does not support a form of postmodernism that places randomness over substance, since her literary aesthetics always remains focused on and responsible to the real world. Due to its realistic and socially responsible outline, then, Herta Müller's aesthetics is no longer ›just‹ an inevitable consequence of the author's psychic disposition; rather, it has to be acknowledged as a valuable contribution to the landscape of a contemporary literature that takes on the challenge of addressing an increasingly complex environment. With that, Herta Müller's aesthetics also inevitably brings about another consequence: namely, the claiming of a real relevance of contemporary fiction.

Müller emphasizes this, for instance, by explaining that »words can do anything. They can bully and they can spare and they can occupy and they can drain somebody.«[43] (Müller 2010b: 51) It is only fitting, then, that the author treats language as an inevitably political means, because »it cannot be separated from what one person does to another.« (»sie lässt sich von dem, was Einer mit dem Anderen tut, nicht trennen,« Müller 2003a:

[43] »Wörter können alles. Die können schikanieren und die können schonen und die können einen besetzen und die können einen leerräumen.« (Müller 2010b: 51)

39) So in the case of Herta Müller, one could indeed replace the word ›reading‹ (*lesen*) with the word ›living‹ (*leben*), considering that the German versions of these terms differ from one another by only one single letter; just as there is only one letter added when ›schreien‹ (*screaming*) transforms into ›schreiben‹ (*writing*).[44] (see Müller 2011b: 80)

1.5. An American Story

To approach migration as an act of crossing over a body of water is a popular strategy in contemporary literature, and this observation also applies to Chinese-American writer Gish Jen's first novel *Typical American* (1991). Whereas Herta Müller invokes an *image* of an aquatic belt of isolation, Gish Jen refers to a factual aquatic border: namely, the Pacific Ocean, separating the Asian from the American continent. Therefore, this is also a body of water that separates two vastly different cultural horizons. So after arriving in New York City, Chinese character Helen – along with the other characters of this migration story – is eventually confronted with the actuality that »what mattered in China was not necessarily what mattered here.« (Jen 1991: 81) Inevitably, then, she can only conclude »that she had indeed crossed a violent, black ocean; and that it was time to make herself as at home in her exile as she could.« (ibid.: 63) With this acceptance of having to live in an exile, Helen sets the stage for a migration story that deals with the many challenges that arise from wanting to »make [oneself] at home« in a deeply unfamiliar environment.

The very first sentence of this novel already confirms this constellation, for this is not just any one story; rather, »[i]t's an American story: Before he was a thinker, a doer,

[44] »In meinem Fall könnte man statt LESEN immer LEBEN sagen, es ändert sich sowieso nur ein Buchstabe. So wie vom SCHREIEN zum SCHREIBEN nur einer dazukommt.« (Müller 2011b: 80)

or an engineer, [...] Ralph Chang was just a small boy in China, struggling to grow up his father's son.« (Jen 1991: 3) Evidently, by binding the notion of Americanness to a story that originates in China, Gish Jen puts the concept of what it means to be a ›typical American‹ up for discussion right from the start. With the help of the Chang family, whose members migrate from China to the United States, the author addresses the theme of migration in relation to how it affects the migrants' conceptions about both their culture of origin and their new culture. Consequently, the Pacific aquatic border indeed turns »into [a] site[] of crossing, thinking through, going beyond, and rethinking.« (Yang 2002: 170) In this, Jen joins a current trend in Asian-American writing (see ibid.), and so it seems only fitting that she has the Changs at some point wonder »[w]as this, finally, the New World? They all noticed that there seemed to be no boundaries anymore.« (Jen 1991: 126)

The tendency to liquefy conceptual boderlines is clearly captured in the novel's title. Although it was her editor who suggested »Typical American« (see Jen in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.), Jen quickly recognized the title to be highly appropriate for her book project. For one thing, this was the case because according to her personal experience, the phrase as such is employed frequently by Chinese immigrants trying to grasp their American surroundings. (see ibid.) Furthermore, Jen indicates that she likes the provocation which that phrase contains, as soon as it is turned into the designation for an originally Asian experience: »I was aware that to call a book about Chinese-Americans *Typical American* was provocative, and that felt good.« (quoted in Johnson 2004: 92) Jen's intent to confront her readers with a need to rethink the »stereotypical notions of Americans and

Chinese they may harbor« (Huang 1997: 61) is therefore unmistakably inscribed into this novel.

What thus becomes clear as well is Jen's resistance against fulfilling any desire of the public market for an easily-digestible presentation of Asian orientalism. (see López 2003: 80) Gish Jen is very adamant in her refusal to conform to the literary taste of her time: »I was damned if I was going to give them the exotic nonsense they thought they wanted.« (quoted in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.) She neither seeks to preserve her own Chinese heritage with this novel, nor does she pull her characters out of one of those stereotypical boxes commonly associated with Asian immigrants residing in the United States. (see Jen in Satz 1993: n.p.) This is already evident in the social standing of her characters, as the Changs do not leave behind a disadvantaged social environment in China. They initially do not intend to go to the United States so as to live their personal American Dream. Also, the Changs are neither indentured laborers, nor do they arrive in the United States illegally. (see Xiaojing 1999: 152) Instead, the protagonist Ralph Chang comes to the United States in the late 1940s primarily to complete his education with an engineering Ph.D., so as to then return to his homeland with a new set of skills to be employed in his Chinese life. With this setup, the novel decidedly argues against the popular conception that »you set foot in America and you become American instantly.« (quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.)

Since it refers to »Chinese-ancestry minority subjects of the US with varying connections to their land of origin« (Wong 2004: 33; see also Novas/Cao/Silva 2004: xiv), the term ›Chinese-American‹ also applies to Gish Jen. Because she is therefore an ethnic writer,

Jen has always been confronted with questions about her relationship to both the Chinese homeland of her immigrant parents, and the United States in which she was born: »the question[s] Who writes? and About what? are still very much with us.« (Jen 2013: 116) While Jen does not »mind it being used as a description of [her],« she very much minds the Asian-American designation »being used as a definition of [her].« (quoted in Johnson 2004: 93) Her reactions to these prevalent attempts to label her according to pre-defined categories of cultural belonging found entrance into a novel that decidedly addresses the fluidity of cultural affiliations. For when the Changs immigrate into the United States, they not only open up their Chineseness to an inclusion of American facets, but also come to actively contribute to and thus influence the American landscape around them. Gish Jen presents migration as a two-way street.

Over the course of five parts, each of which consists of a number of titled chapters, the readers are invited to follow the Chinese character Yifeng Chang, who is from a small town outside Shanghai, on his journey to New York City in 1947/48. Upon enrolling in his engineering program, Yifeng takes on the English name Ralph; he loses his legal immigration status first due to negligence on his part – »[a]nd the next thing Ralph knew, he was having visa trouble« (Jen 1991: 26) – and then due to political reasons, as he ends up stranded in the United States when the Communists take over China. Due to the changing Chinese-American political alliance, however, Ralph is suddenly allowed to become legal once more, and to settle in the U.S. indefinitely. Ralph's older sister Theresa, together with her Chinese friend Helen, follows him, attends medical school, and becomes a doctor.

Once the alliance between this Chinese trio is sealed with the marriage of Ralph and Helen, the adventure of immigration sets in definitively, as now the main characters have to find a way of dealing with the Western world around them. On the one hand, the novel presents the Changs' first successes: »how smart they were. Imagine that – that they could see, in a foreign country, what was what!« (Jen 1991: 68) On the other hand, the text also reiterates their near-downfall – namely, when »[t]he rags-to-riches archetypal story gets hold of the imagination of the professor-to-be.« (Chevereşan 2013: 118) This process of coming to terms with Western capitalism is what the immigrants first seek to fully embrace by running their own fried chicken place; accordingly, its literal breakdown eventually marks the end of this migration story.

Whereas the overarching linearity of this novel has been repeatedly pointed out in the corresponding secondary literature (see, e.g., Xiaojing 1999:153), Gish Jen in fact employs an original combination of narrative strategies. For one thing, her style mostly consists in presenting long successions of highly improbable events; for instance, Theresa not only moves unbeknownst to both her brother and the readers to the United States, but then also unexpectedly finds Ralph, whose experience of the hardships of his illegal status has turned him suicidal, sleeping on a park bench. Ralph's evaluation of this almost heroic appearance of his sister is certainly accurate: »Was miracle.« (Jen 1991: 46) Yet in the context of a reality-oriented contemporary literature, this is also a highly unbelievable event that calls into question the seriousness of this novel. Of course, the incident strengthens Ralph's assumption that »[a]nything could happen, this was America« (ibid.: 42); yet even if it is evaluated as a mere narrative device, this occurrence remains

questionable. Furthermore, the frequency with which Jen confronts us with such relatively improbable events strongly counteracts any traditional creation of narrative points of culmination. Instead, the readers are required to determine for themselves which events do and which events do not contribute to the particular line of progression which they identify as underlying this narrative oversupply of action.

In contrast to the many improbabilities contained in this aggregation of numerous events, however, Jen provides a psychologically very accurate depiction of the consequences of migration. This is, for example, evident in the fact that even the act of becoming a naturalized citizen of the United States does not lessen the ambivalences that the immigrants hold toward their new country of citizenship. Theresa puts it like this: »How dangerous a place, this country! A wilderness of freedoms.« (Jen 1991: 142) Because Ralph's eventual pursuit of financial gain turns into a severe threat to the integrity and lives of his family members, Theresa's concern finds a definite confirmation; at the same time, Jen plausibly claims that her novel has a realistic orientation.

Moreover, the author defends her novel's seriousness – for example, by way of a number of narrative previews. Unexpectedly, on one occasion, Jen has the narrative voice remark that »[y]ears later, they laughed to see the girls, Mona and Callie, in a three-legged race.« (Jen 1991: 52) By informing the readers about Ralph and Helen's future children so early on, the text establishes a continuity in the Chang family. Now, they no longer just appear as a short-lived and random invention; rather, this small community becomes the result of a veritable effort of creative imagination, as the Changs become the representatives of a well-thought-out work of fiction. Notably, this holds true even

without knowing about Gish Jen's 1996 publication of *Mona in the Promised Land*, which serves as the sequel to *Typical American* and is narrated mostly from the viewpoint of the Changs' youngest daughter Mona. (see also Feng 2010: 70)

The same original treatment of narrative principles applies to Gish Jen's approach to perspective. It is commonly agreed upon that Jen mostly presents the novel through the perspective of Ralph. (see, e.g., Feng 2010: 70) However, unsystematic changes in perspective occur very frequently in the novel. When the narrative focus explicitly moves onto Theresa, for instance, after stating that »we turn now to her story« (Jen 1991: 47), the corresponding chapter in fact suddenly transitions to a focus on Helen's perspective. Nonetheless, Gish Jen herself openly acknowledges that she intended to place Ralph in the center of her novel. This, as she explains, was mostly a technical choice:

> »When I started out to write this book, I thought that in order to fill 350 pages or whatever […] you would be better off with somebody active, somebody who does things. […] And it occurred to me that in this generation and culture men had a greater latitude than women and that therefore a male protagonist might make for a broader book.« (Gish Jen, quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.)

Yet this does not lead to placing the female characters into an only secondary position; for even though the women of that generation may have led less eventful lives (see Jen in Pearlman 1993: 42), Jen also wanted them »to be developed characters« so that the book would eventually be »about all of them.« (quoted in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.) Consequently, the women are positioned in the narrative as central characters, too. Irrespective of definite references to the prevalent »gender imbalance […] in the patriarchal family« (Feng 2010: 73), Jen has the character Helen experience a substantial

transformation. Whereas her generally sickly condition in China caused her environment to always take care of her and caused her to hang on to the life ambition of »stay[ing] home forever« (Jen 1991: 61), her new life in America requires independence and strength from Helen. Not only does she learn to cook herself (see ibid.: 57), but in her newly discovered inventiveness, she also becomes the glue that holds the family together: »She was her resourceful self, but she was also an instinctive counterweight to Ralph's activity – a fixed center.« (ibid.: 115) Aware of her importance to the family unit, then, Helen may know that »[t]he wife should obey the husband; this, according to the Three Bonds of Confucianism.« Yet, significantly: »Still she shuddered.« (ibid.: 259)

So even though Gish Jen does refer to a very traditional relationship between the genders, she also subtly undermines it. Further evidence is that Helen eventually even lets go of a cultural particularity – that fact that »the Chinese love to hold still« (Jen 1991: 61) – and volunteers to help Ralph at the chicken place; for »[o]nce she'd gotten used to the idea of leaving the house, of *going outside to work* she did not particularly mind the work involved.« (ibid.: 238) Without a doubt, Helen is a very important character in this migration story, as she exemplarily demonstrates that »mak[ing] oneself at home« in exile is truly possible. Jen states quite explicitly that not wanting to travel more than necessary is indeed a Chinese preference, which, for example, sets her apart from her Chinese family: »Every opportunity I had, I would go someplace, and my mother couldn't believe it. [...] And that's a big cultural thing.« (quoted in Pearlman 1993: 41)

What Gish Jen remarks in regard to her second book *Mona in the Promised Land* is certainly also true in regard to *Typical American*. For also in her first novel, Jen

decidedly contributes »to the process of boundary crossing, to painting pictures that are a little less black and white – a little more complicated.« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 229) By way of utilizing the literary medium, and by way of questioning what is commonly presumed to be »typical« of a certain culture, Jen participates in a discourse on cultural border crossings in the course of migration that is of indisputable relevance in a world of globalization. As such, she has repeatedly been regarded as part of a writing community that »engages with […] postmodern articulations of ethnicity.« (Partridge 2007: 165) Yet even though Jen, despite never explicitly referring to Homi Bhabha's popular concept, does undoubtedly engage with the hybridity model of culture (see ibid.), she does not create a theoretical excursus on sociological considerations. Gish Jen writes literature, not sociology. Moreover, she writes a literature that employs both a humorous tone and irony, both of which lighten the complexity of her topic, thus ensuring that her novelistic commentary – despite intentionally disappointing any hopes for exotic entertainment – remains accessible to a broad range of readers. (see also Xiaojing 1999: 154; Lee n.d.: n.p.; Feddersen 1997: 350)

Gish Jen's writing style quickly earned her public attention. Not only was *Typical American* shortlisted for the National Book Critics' Circle; ever since its publication, Jen has been generally regarded as »an important ethnic writer in the realm of Asian America.« (Wang 2004: 139; see also Lee 2000a: 215; Feddersen 1997: 349) More important than the numerous fellowships and grants that her novels and short stories won her, however, is probably the fact that Jen is also increasingly seen as important independent of her ethnic background. In being recognized as a serious writer in the »contemporary American literary landscape« (Matsukawa 1993: n.p.), the author seems

to increasingly realize her goal of no longer being reduced to her cultural and ethnic heritage. Being confronted with a wealth of cultural stereotypes is an experience that Jen had to share for a long time with her characters; so even though she rejects the impulse to regard her texts as autobiographical works, there exists a definite connection between her life and her literary theme: »The things that happen have not happened to me, but the nerve, or the nature of the conflict, is often something which I am familiar.« [*sic!*] (quoted in Johnson 2004: 89) It is evident, then, why her favorite quote about her novel was voiced by her mother, who, as she reached the end of the novel, delightedly exclaimed: »Ahh! So well written! […] And it's not about anybody!« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 225)

In being not about anybody in particular, the novel's scope extends far into the multifaceted and complex field of Asian-American writing as such. Whereas early Chinese writers in the U.S. primarily sought to explain Chinese culture to the general reader so as to improve American attitudes toward their Chinese culture (see Chen 2009: 379), Gish Jen does not pursue such an undertaking. Neither does she follow in the footsteps of second-generation Asian-American authors who tend to portray the Asian-American life as »›progressing‹ from an immigrant to a U.S. national identity.« (ibid.) Rather, Jen employs a very honest and realistic approach to both the Chinese and American cultures, and does not try to reconcile any ambivalences on either side of this cultural spectrum. In so doing, she definitely claims her spot within a field of interest that is growing more and more intricate. (see, e.g., Yang 2002: 142)

Not least due to the increased interest in multiculturalism and diversity on many higher education campuses in the United States (see Fugita 1994: 125), Asian-American literature has become an area of interest that is investigated from the perspectives of a multitude of primary fields of scholarship. While Asian-American studies as such emerged from the atmosphere of the 1960s civil rights movements (see Espiritu 1997: 2), it was mostly in the first decade of the twentieth century that the »[t]heoretical methodologies and thematic approaches in the study of Asian American literature [have] become increasingly diversified.« (Feng 2010: 15; see also Wong 2004: 29) Considering the inherent multidisciplinarity of the literary medium, this development appears highly understandable. Gish Jen's *Typical American* also confronts us with various themes drawn from different disciplines – such as history and sociology – that seamlessly merge together. Naturally, this once more speaks for the thoroughly realistic focus of this novel; for any serious approach to reality necessarily has to be as multidisciplinary as its object of investigation.

When looking at the relations between China and the United States, there is no shortage of intricacies; the story of migration from the Asian to the American continent is a long and complicated one. In fact, it goes all the way back to the Gold Rush of 1848, when the first Chinese came to the Sacramento Valley of California, which they quickly named »*Gam Saan*, which is Cantonese for ›Gold Mountain.‹« (Novas/Cao/Silva 2004: 10) In the 1860s, when the Central Pacific Railroad was constructed, the Chinese were also an integral part of the scene, since a large number of the indentured laborers were imported from China. (see ibid.: 17; Wang 2002: 73) Despite its early beginnings, however,

Chinese immigration into the United States seems to have repeatedly been subjected to the American struggle that arose from the »economic need for cheap and exploitable labor and the political need to constitute a homogeneous nation.« (Espiritu 1997: 9) Thus, by being both integrated and marginalized at the same time (see ibid.), Chinese individuals in the United States occupied a difficult standing from early on.

In 1882, with the enactment of the Chinese Exclusion Act, the United States Congress even went so far as to halt Chinese immigration in response to the demands by American labor unions. Significantly, this was »the first and only exclusionary federal immigration law in American history to target a specific nationality.« (Novas/Cao/Silva 2004: 30) After first being extended indefinitely, the act was repealed in 1943; yet even then, this was due more to an accidental twist in global politics than to a well-meaning approach to Chinese immigrants. With the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, the United States and China – which had been fighting Japanese troops on Chinese soil ever since the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 – suddenly had a common enemy, which necessitated a strong political alliance. This is why the Chinese Exclusion Act was repealed. (see Novas/Cao/Silva 2004: 39; Xiaojing 1999: 151)

Nonetheless, the immigration situation would remain complicated, and an especially relevant period for Gish Jen's novel is the late 1940s. Jen has the protagonist Ralph summarize the events like this: »Kingdoms rise up, kingdoms collapse. Whatever China went through in 1948 – whether she sadly fell or was gladly liberated – she did it, for an old lady, fast. It was an onstage costume change. Out of an acre of worn silk emerged a red, red comrade.« (Jen 1991: 22) Indeed, when the Communists took over

Manchuria in the fall of that year, they succeeded in making »300,000 Nationalist troops surrender[]« (Perkins 1999: 72) to their will; shortly thereafter, the Huai River Basin north of Nanjing also came under Communist control. (see ibid.) In addition to confronting her protagonist with these unexpected occurrences in his home country – »[n]ow that was no development; that shock was a shock« (Jen 1991: 22) – Jen also exposes him to the political consequences which that shock caused for Chinese nationals in the United States.

Due to a fast-growing fear of Communist China, the McCarran Internal Security Act was passed; this not only allowed the interrogation and internment of suspected Chinese Communists in the United States (see Novas/Cao/Silva: 2004: 46), but also had the effect that vast numbers of blameless »Chinese in America were forbidden to leave the U.S. for the sake of national security.« (Wang 2002: 74) Ralph, too, ends up stranded in the United States. However, in the case of Jen's character, the complex political developments in the background of the novel prove beneficial to his problem of being out of status. For when the Nationalists fell in 1949, »other Chinese students had become as illegitimate as he.« (Jen 1991: 58) With the 1952 enactment of the McCarran-Walter Act, also known as the Immigration and Nationality Act, the last ethnic and racial barriers to naturalization were eliminated. (see Novas/Cao/Silva 2004: 48) As for Ralph, his insistance that »[n]o, he wasn't a Communist« (Jen 1991: 58) finally allows him to return to university and continue to work toward his doctoral degree.

Significantly, this rather positive real-world political development does not bring about a happy ending in the novel; for the educational opportunities he is suddenly

offered once more do not simplify the complexities that Ralph is exposed to in the course of his immigration adventure. This is especially clear when looking at the very first meeting between Ralph and Helen. Ralph follows his sister Theresa into her room in the boarding house, and then suddenly, he realizes that in the room »stood a woman. And around her, China«, which causes him to »f[i]nd her so familiar.« (Jen 1991: 56) So although Ralph indicates having a strong belief in the patriarchal hierarchy of the traditional Chinese family, and later repeatedly claims his position at the top of that hierarchy (see also Tang 2009: 134), there is more to his domineering behavior. For when he instructs Helen how to breathe ›properly‹ after realizing that she holds her breath in her sleep, the readers are also informed »that what he wanted more than anything was to secure her. […] How attached he was already.« (Jen 1991: 70) Despite his thought that »[a]t home, the husband would command, the wife obey,« he comes to accept that »instead here he was, listening.« (ibid.: 69) Clearly, this is no simple patriarchal setup; it rather seems as though all the complexities of this migration adventure were inscribed into the marital relationship between Ralph and Helen. After all, »Theresa picked the English name Helen for her delicate friend. [I]t sounded like Hailan, her real name, Sea Blue.« (ibid.: 52) As such, Helen appears as a veritable personification of that »violent, black ocean« that the Chinese migrants first had to cross, and now have to come to terms with.

1.6 Negotiating China and/in the United States

One of the most striking aspects about Ralph Chang's »mak[ing] [him]self at home« in his exile is certainly his refusal »to be made an American citizen.« (Jen 1991: 23) It is, of

course, highly ironic that it is precisely this character, who first appears to remain closely attached to his homeland, who falls prey to the American Dream of material wealth. Yet in the early stages of his ›Americanization,‹ Ralph Chang primarily refers to a prevalent phenomenon when dealing with the United States as a popular country of immigration. For it is certainly accurate to discover in a large number of Americans an approach to the constant flow of immigrants into their country that is very much informed by American patriotism. It has been shown that many Americans believe »that immigrants came to the USA because they were converted to the great American way of life.« (Blair 1996: 30) Of course, those immigrants who decide to return to their homelands, for whatever individual reasons, do not fit into this box of »ideological ethnocentrism« (ibid.); as such, they are hardly ever discussed.

As a novelist, however, Gish Jen is aware of this constellation and rejects a simplifying ideological solution to the issue: »I actually think that most people are not dying to become American. […] As for the ones who stay here, a lot of them are quite ambivalent for a long time, if not forever.« (quoted in Johnson 2004: 93) The intricacy of the literary medium allows for the consideration of precisely such ambivalences and subtleties when addressing the consequences of migration. This is especially true for Jen's novel; very clearly so when she directs the readers' attention to immigrant realities on American soil that render it highly understandable why the migrants' relationship to their new environment is bound to remain ambivalent.

Several Asian Americans indicate that they are being perceived »as permanently foreign cultural Others who don't really belong in America.« (Kim 1994: 207) Also, the intense

stratification of American society does not, of course, leave its immigrant and ethnic communities unaffected. In actuality, racial discrimination is not the only thing from which Asian Americans have suffered throughout their long history in the United States (see, e.g., Shu 2005: 94); in addition, the economic and ethnic landscape in America is still influenced by persistent inequalities (see Espiritu 1997: 2) that substantially affect all kinds of social interactions. This becomes evident in the Chang family's interest in the thoroughly American sport of baseball, and, most especially, in the thoroughly American Yankees team. Impressed by the fan hysteria surrounding the teamwork of the New York Yankees, the Changs come to claim a comparably successful group designation for themselves: »›Team,‹ said Ralph. ›We should have name. The Chinese Yankees. Call Chang-kees for short.‹ ›Chang-kees!‹ Everyone laughed.« (Jen 1991: 127) Of course, Ralph's inclusion of the family name into the designation for this newly formed team reinforces the Changs' Chineseness as opposed to the Yankees' Americanness; by laughing, the family members indicate their understanding of the ambiguous twist in this construction.

I disagree with the notion that the Chang family undergoes a »transformation of […] Chang-kees into Yankees.« (Lee 1996: 114) Gish Jen clearly emphasizes that the Changs take the affirmation of their being different, which is indisputably noticeable in their self-description as Chang-kees, very seriously; she accomplishes this by having the Chang-kee buzzword resurface in the novel whenever the characters' loyalty to their intimate family circle is at stake. So when Ralph and Helen plan to move into a house and need Theresa's help with the mortgage payments, Theresa instantly replies with »[o]nce a Chang-kee, always a Chang-kee.« (Jen 1991: 140) His sister's comment brings about the

intended effect in Ralph, since »for a moment he was laughing, his heart full of family feeling, that tremendous, elemental solidarity.« (ibid.) Later as well, when Theresa finds herself forced to move away from Ralph, who severely disapproves of her love affair with his university colleague Old Chao, she holds on to her affiliation with the Chang-kee team. Yet this time, the formula serves to feed her guilty conscience, for she does not feel that she is living up to the virtue of familial loyalty: »Once a Chang-kee, always a Chang-kee. What an ugly woman she was!« (ibid.: 212)

In spite of its affirmation of the Changs' Chineseness, however, the construction of the Chang-kee concept as such remains indebted to the American model. This confirms that the Changs do indeed »simultaneously affiliate and disaffiliate with that national pastime and the national team whose name acts as a metonym for Americans as a whole.« (Lee 2000b: 66) The aspect of affiliation with the Americanness contained in Yankee baseball is, for instance, obvious in that they actually do gather »in front of their newly bought used Zenith TV« (Jen 1991: 128) to watch the ball games. However, even though they insist that they find staying at home and watching television »[m]ore comfortable [and] [m]ore convenient« (ibid.), the real reason for their retreat into the privacy of their home is a different one: »the one time they went to an actual game, people had called them names and told them to go back to their laundry.« (ibid.) Of course, the Changs' actual position within the American social hierarchy is of no interest to those who voice such an insult; rather, they rely on preconceived stereotypes that place the Chinese others into the low-end service sector. Such uninvited affronts, which deny them their right to actively participate in the American pastime of baseball, can only bring about a desire in the characters to disaffiliate themselves with the hostility around

them. Thus, they are also catapulted into that position of perennial outsiders that counteracts any notion of the United States serving as the model immigration country, in which anybody gets a fair chance to live the American Dream of equality and freedom.

An open embrace of ambivalences is very typical of Gish Jen's writing. She thereby subtly confirms that reality oftentimes does not conform to an either/or schema. Notably, this is true for the multifaceted group of Asian Americans as well. It may be true that »the vast majority of the American populace could hardly distinguish [between] these so-called Orientals in relation to their Asian origin and ethnic belonging.« (López 2003: 77) It is, however, just as true that there is no such thing as pan-Asianness; yet the mere existence of »Chinatowns, Little Tokyos, Korea-towns« (Lee 1994: 265) and other communities of ethnic particularity does not prove efficient in dismantling the myth of a homogeneous Asia. All the more efficient is the literary perspective that Jen employs to criticize such generalizing and, depending on the particular histories involved, also insulting approaches to an Asian other.

Of course, the fact of being different from others is inscribed into everybody's physical appearance. But in the case of Asian immigrants in a predominantly Western environment, the problem of being recognized as different is even more acute. Jen invokes this physically anchored outsider status rather clearly when Ralph's repeated failure to pass his driving test causes his driving instructor to remark that »[h]e had to open his eyes up when he looked so the inspector could tell. ›Here. Do this.‹ The instructor bugged his eyeballs. Ralph bugged his eyes out too.« (Jen 1991: 130) Interestingly, though, this suggested overcompensation for physical difference does not

bring about success for Ralph, as he flunks again. Significantly, success only occurs after he emancipates himself from his condescending teacher by pointing out that in China, he belonged to a respected family: »my father was government official. Scholar. […] My father was big shot. […] And I am his son. […] Thank you. I do not need any more your help.« (ibid.: 131) The reaffirmation of his ethnic pride, it seems, lets him pass the road test soon thereafter.

In addition to an insensitive view of the physical features of an ethnic other, however, there is also a severe cultural insensitivity involved in simply assuming that all persons of Asian heritage belong to a single pan-Asian community. When Ralph, Helen, and Theresa finally move into their house in the suburbs, where they proudly affirm to one another that »[a] lawn like this was America« (Jen 1991: 159), they are once more slapped with ignorance. Insensitively, their new neighbor Mr. Smith approaches them, asking, »[y]ou folks Japanese?« (ibid.: 158) to which the Changs matter-of-factly reply: »Chinese.« (ibid.) It does not make his statement any better, of course, that Mr. Smith reveals that he has been presuming precisely that – »[t]here you go. […] That's what I told Marianne.« (ibid.) On the contrary, to compare Chinese with Japanese contains an insult whose severity is deeply rooted in the history of the involved nations. In *Mona in the Promised Land*, Jen openly makes this cultural constellation a topic, at least from the Chinese perspective. There, a dispute unfolds between Helen and Mona because Helen is upset that Mona brings her Japanese classmate Sherman Matsumoto over to their house. Once Sherman has left, Helen »explains that World War II was in China too.« (Jen 1996: 15) While Mona, based on her Americanized upbringing, is mostly aware that »the

Japanese were on the wrong side, because they bombed Pearl Harbor« (ibid.), Helen's explanation goes beyond that American focus:

> »›What Napkin Massacre?‹ says Mona.
> ›*Nan*-king.‹
> ›Are you sure? In school, they said the War was about putting the Jews in ovens.‹
> ›Also about ovens.‹
> ›About both?‹
> ›Both.‹
> ›That's not what they said in school.‹
> ›*Just forget about school*.‹« (Jen 1996: 15)

Clearly, what Helen here alludes to is an experience of cultural trauma that has not been canonized in mainstream Western school curricula; yet to the members of the concerned cultural horizon, it is an innate knowledge that does not require the approval of textbooks. It is a kind of knowledge that asks for a considerable amount of cultural sensitivity from those who are not familiar with its underlying significance. However, it is highly indicative of Jen's emphasis on the aspect of having to continuously negotiate differences that she has Helen eventually step away from her decidedly anti-Japanese stance. Helen, once again in *Mona in the Promised Land*, resists her initial impulse and does not yell at the Japanese lady who drives on her lawn. Jen explains this development as follows: »Immigrants bring their ethnic grudges with them, but a lot of that stuff tends to lose its force.« (quoted in Johnson 2004: 95)

Nonetheless, what this Chinese-Japanese constellation convincingly underlines is that there is indeed no pan-Asian community. Even within »its assumed collectivity, Chinese America […] has never enjoyed a unified identity.« (Feng 2010: 12) Gish Jen addresses this further layer of complexity to her project of establishing her Chinese characters' individuality early on – namely, when she sends Ralph to Chinatown to find

himself a job after losing his legal status. He enters a Chinese restaurant and asks the first employee he sees to please bring him to the supervisor. Despite his Shanghainese mother tongue, Ralph, in an attempt to ensure effective communication, speaks Mandarin Chinese. What now follows is a scene whose subtle tragedy is as amusing as it is revealing: »›*What you say*?‹ the answer would come back; or at least that's what he guessed, not understanding a word of Cantonese.« (Jen 1991: 34) Without a doubt, Jen does indeed subvert »the tendency of non-Asians to assume an easy cohesiveness among diverse Asians and Asian Americans.« (TuSmith 1994: 23) Yet even more significantly, in this case, it is a Chinese character who falls victim to the same treacherous assumption. Feeling lost and isolated in an unfamiliar American environment, Ralph, it seems, frantically tries to identify the familiar in this vast ocean of unwelcoming foreignness. On the Asian continent, speakers of Mandarin, Shanghainese, and Cantonese »would not presume to be able to communicate with one another simply because they are Chinese.« (ibid.; see also Huang 1997: 64) Gish Jen unmistakably underlines this fact by having Ralph's communication attempt fail; and with this, any preconceived category of pan-Asianness is bound to dissolve as well.

Of course, a general impulse in any society is to simplify the complex realities on which it is based by organizing those realities according to clear-cut either/or categories. Yet such binary thinking not only reinforces the overarching system of superiority and inferiority (see Chen 2009: 108), which is questionable in and of itself, but also suggests that identities can be reduced to either/or essences. (see Espiritu 1997: 108; Tang 2009: 124) In the case of Asians in the United States, however, this essentialized approach is

already complicated due to a certain racial ambiguity that they embody. As both black and white, and/or as neither black nor white, Asians cannot accurately be described according to the two major racial categories in the United States. (see also Madsen 2006: 194) As non-whites, they become a representation of the ›Yellow Peril‹ that is presumed to lurk in the background as a military and economic threat to the United States. (see Espiritu 1997: 108–110)

Ironically, though, as non-blacks, they themselves may hold on to the corresponding racial bias commonly seen as an »exclusive prerogative of the ›majority.‹« (Chevereşan 2013: 119) Gish Jen is very adamant in her acknowledgement that »China's a pretty racist place. […] They definitely say things about blacks, for instance, that are at least publicly unacceptable in America.« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 219) The Chang family, too, voice their negative attitude toward African Americans when they exclaim in the face of their new environment that there are »[s]o many Negroes! Years later, they would shake their heads and call themselves prejudiced, but at the time they were profoundly disconcerted.« (Jen 1991: 65) Evidently, the Chang family experiences a development from a clearly held racial bias toward a more open and accepting point of view. So what Jen achieves with her address of the many issues inherent in binary categories is a distinct liquefying of categorical borderlines. The borderlines she undermines are not only the ones presumably separating skin colors, but also the ones that separate the ›good‹ people from the ›bad.‹ For in the same way that Jen hopes to show »that ethnicity is a very complicated thing, not a stable, unified thing« (quoted in Partridge 2007: 170), she also shows what an important factor ignorance plays when it comes to prejudiced stereotyping

of any kind; and as a concept founded in ignorance rather than ill-will, stereotyping »can be remedied over time.« (TuSmith 1994: 23)

Gish Jen leaves no doubt about her antipathy toward stereotypes; this holds true even when she is confronted with seemingly positive stereotypes about Chinese immigrants. It became a trend in the 1990s to portray Asian Americans as a »model minority« in the United States: »According to this stereotype, Asian-American students are Albert Einsteins […] especially in math and the sciences.« (Novas/Cao/Silva 2004: xx) Almost mockingly, it seems, Gish Jen counters this assumption with her Chinese character Chin, who is the focal point of the first-person narrator's attention in the short story that carries his name. So in »Chin,« the author presents us with a young Chinese schoolboy who is smart, but »not so much in math and sciences as in stuff like history and English« (Jen 1999: 105); and, in order to spell out the central idea behind this authorial decision, she has the narrator add: »How's that for irony?« (ibid.)

Jen applies the same strategy of undermining steretoypes by way of the condition of particular characters in *Typical American*. Theresa, for instance, is an exemplary counter-model to any image of stereotypical Asian femininity – the latter's embrace of frailty and submissiveness being commonly seen as opposing the independence and strong will of Western women. (see, e.g., Ghymn 1995: 2) Whether the cow's milk with which she was nurtured as a child is truly to blame, as her parents presumed, or whether this evaluation is just a sign of helplessness does not matter. Either way, »Theresa turned out a giantess – five seven!« (Jen 1991: 47) In addition to her physical appearance, which does not resemble an ideal female Chinese stature, not least because she also has »feet

that entered rooms before she did« (ibid.), it is also the career-orientation of this female doctor that opposes the general ideal of Asian femininity. (see also Huang 1997: 71)

Even though Jen is very keen on arguing against stereotypes, she is also aware »that fear of stereotyping has sometimes led to a discomfort with any assertion of cultural difference« (Jen 2013: 5); and thus she also argues against that kind of reductive attitude. As a matter of fact, she quite directly compares the American with the Chinese environment and vice versa, thereby outlining both similarities and differences. New York, for example, appears to the Changs to be »a lot like Shanghai, only newer. And with no rickshaws, and no one starving in public.« (Jen 1991: 132) It is true, however, that Jen discusses more differences between those two cultures than similarities, which starts at the rather innocuous level of personal habits. Helen is amazed to learn »that most Americans showered every day, first thing in the morning, for example« (ibid.: 77), since Helen herself is used to taking »occasional baths, in the evening.« (ibid.) Of course, Jen also discusses differences between the American and the Chinese cultures that extend all the way to the basic principles of the involved cultures. For instance, when Ralph understands that he is not going to achieve the material prosperity he had temporarily dreamed of because self-made millionaire Grover Ding has intentionally pulled him into a disadvantageous business deal, the principles of Western capitalism and of the Chinese communitarian culture are instantly put up for discussion. For eventually, »Ralph's anger was transformed, and he realized that he felt sorry for Grover too. ›*That man, he has no family. All he has is his empire, and so much money, he doesn't know how to spend it.*‹ He shook his head.« (ibid.: 250) Confronted with the failure of his American Dream, Ralph once again reaffirms his traditional Chinese values of communitarian loyalty.

Consistent with her intent to show more than one side of reality, Gish Jen confronts us with both stereotypes that Americans employ when dealing with Asians, and stereotypes that Asians rely on when looking at American society. (see also Huang 1997: 65) One of the harshest stereotypical notions about Chinese people that Ralph has to deal with is voiced by his highly unhelpful engineering professor Pinkus. In response to Ralph's seeking advice in regard to his visa trouble, Pinkus suddenly turns into a self-proclaimed expert on Chinese culture: »The best way to handle your problem is the honest way. I know, in China, everything's through the back door.« (Jen 1991: 37) A little later, he even intensifies his statement by angrily remarking that »[h]ere in America, what we have is morals. Right and wrong.« (ibid.: 40)

Interestingly, the negativity in Pinkus' analysis of Chinese culture finds an equivalent in the Chang family's employment of the expression ›typical American.‹ This expression does not primarily describe what the Americans around them do, nor does it indicate an »anxiety of enculturation« (Partridge 2007: 170) in Ralph, Theresa, and Helen. Rather, it becomes a means of distancing themselves from what they perceive to be inferior behavior; after all, Helen even found it confirmed in American newspapers that »Americans had degenerated since the War. As for why, that was complicated.« (Jen 1991: 67; see also Chevereşan 2013: 125) So what the readers are confronted with are exclusively negative evaluations of typicality: from typical American no-good, to typical American don't-know-how-to-get-along and typical American just-want-to-be-the-center-of-things, all the way to typical American no-morals and typical American just-dumb. (see Jen 1991: 67)

It speaks for the line of development in this novel that the Changs eventually let go of much of that negativity when looking at American society. At first, it is Theresa who suggests that »[*w*]*e're wrong to say* typical American.« (Jen 1991: 74) In emphasizing that the highly unreliable apartment manager Pete »was just a person, like them« (ibid.), Theresa is the first character to step away from the generalizing approach of stereotypes and instead consider the individuality of the person she faces. Later on, Ralph will join in on Theresa's changed way of thinking. While she explains that they used to cling to their negative mantra »*because we believed we were* good for nothing« (ibid.: 126), Ralph confirms: »*Everything looks different. It's true*.« (ibid.)

Notably, the Chang family's more positive evaluation of Americanness springs from a time in their lives when they have finally found their footing in America. According to Gish Jen, this is where one of the ironies of *Typical American* lies – namely, in »that ›typical American‹ is something they call other people, but by the end of the novel, they are the kind of people that others might call ›typical American.‹« (quoted in Johnson 2004: 93) Naturally, this development brings up the question of assimilation; not least because it cannot be overlooked that the Changs »are inexorably drawn into the culture« (Lim 1992: 135) that surrounds them. For one thing, they start to accept the arrangement of the American year according to a long line of sales events by casually chatting about »how coats were marked down on Columbus Day« (Jen 1991: 111), and they embrace the stereotypically American focus on all things ›fun‹ – »[y]es, we're having fun! We're having a great time!« (ibid.: 131) Yet this assimilation goes deeper, for both Ralph and Helen are also drawn into nothing less than the grand (American) project of self-

aggrandizement. They become infatuated with the promises of the American middle-class lifestyle, which consists of »cars, houses, fried chicken, baseball, and fashion.« (Wang 2002: 76; see also Huang 1997: 65)

Jen has Ralph explicitly employ the idea of self-aggrandizement by having him repeat over and over that »[a] man is what he makes up his mind to be.« (Jen 1991: 186) This pure power of the will is additionally supported by another facet so typical, it seems, of the American way of life. Ralph soothingly invites Helen to »*[r]elax. Have faith.*« (ibid.: 234) Inspired by the minister Norman Vincent Peale's all-time classic *The Power of Positive Thinking* (1952), Ralph even writes down »a statement to carry in his wallet: ›I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.‹ He could do anything! It was a matter of faith.« (ibid.: 88) This is certainly an interesting twist in perspective, considering how Ralph later, confronted with the ruins of his Chicken Palace, draws his impressive calmness from imagining that »[h]e was Confucius. He was Buddha.« (ibid.: 251) Central cultural paradigms of the West and of the East are being blended here; yet this is a strategy that serves to invoke not so much religious considerations, which are a theme that is largely missing in Jen's novel, but rather a vital American concept.

The author explains it like this: »Norman Vincent Peale […] sums up the connection. Historically we've always felt that we had this special connection with God, right? […] This has always been part of American culture. Religion and self-aggrandizement go hand-in-hand.« (quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.) So what Jen demonstrates is how the Chinese character Ralph is indeed thoroughly pulled into the mindset of his American exile. As for Helen, her passion is mainly for the social prosperity that is enacted and displayed in »the great American narrative of home-buying.« (Lee 2000b:

67; see also Chevereşan 2013: 131) While Helen indulges in the application of real-estate vocabulary (see, e.g., Partridge 2007: 174), Ralph's new passion proves more consequential for the family as a whole; this is true also because it will eventually cause them to lose their American house, in their American suburb full of American lawns. Ralph's passion is for »the all-American fried chicken franchise.« (TuSmith 1994: 21)

In the pursuit of opening his own chicken place instead of staying in his tenure-track position at the university, the protagonist finds support and encouragement in the shady personification of American capitalist industry, a man by the name of Grover Ding. Ironically, this self-made man is himself an Asian American (see, e.g., Chih-ming 2001: 109), yet he does indeed fit the stereotype of the American money hunter – much better than any other American in the novel, in fact. (see Huang 1997: 65) Ralph quickly becomes infected with Grover Ding's one-dimensional life and even begins lecturing to his two daughters that »[i]n this country, you have money, you can do anything. You have no money, you are nobody. You are Chinaman!« (Jen 1991: 199) Chineseness is here opposed to Americanness by being placed at the bottom end of a clear hierarchy. In his attempt to ›evolve‹ from his being a »Chinaman,« then, Ralph continuously morphs into Grover, whom he sees as a model American. (see also Partridge 2007: 176) Eventually, even »his voice had taken on new boldness; and with other small changes of manner, it became suddenly striking that he and Grover were both five four, more or less, with haircuts they sometimes slicked down.« (Jen 1991: 196)

During the Grover Ding episode, Ralph Chang also descends into shady business practices, for »[u]nderreporting made all the difference. They weren't rich, but by paying

less tax they became respectable.« (Jen 1991: 202) Undoubtedly, Gish Jen has her protagonist live through all the dangers that come with a life dedicated exclusively to financial gain. Jen novelistically portrays an unquestioning embrace of the American Dream as represented in »the hegemonic epic of the U.S. as the nation of limitless opportunity, freedom, and triumphant individualism.« (Lim 1992: 130) In an attempt to identify what »typical American« truly means, such considerations are certainly necessary; not least beacuse the famous can-do attitude of American individualism is historically anchored in the country's very beginnings.

Significantly, therefore, the protagonist is presented to the readers early on as a Chinese-immigrant version of Benjamin Franklin, who is, after all, »[t]he man who invented the American Dream.« (Powell 1997: n.p.; see also Wang 2002: 80) On the journey to the United States, young Ralph utilizes his time on the ship to write down a list of goals. The first goal that he writes down – namely, »I will cultivate virtue« (Jen 1991: 6) – bears a striking resemblance to the overall project that Benjamin Franklin pursued in his famous *Autobiography*. For in his personal life project, Franklin, too, »conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection« (Franklin n.d.: n.p.), which he intended to achieve by way of thirteen virtues. (see ibid.; see also Lee 2000b: 65) However, Ralph's great project fails, and with it his second goal of »bring[ing] honor to the family.« (Jen 1991: 6) Instead of staying true to the traditional Chinese virtue of honoring filial loyalty to the family, Jen has Ralph experience another ironic twist of fate, since for a moment it seems as though the protagonist comes to confirm his father's strict antipathy toward his son's moving to capitalist America: »›*Yi dai qing qing, qi dai huai*‹ – one generation pure, the next good for nothing.« (ibid.: 5)

However, Jen does not leave her protagonist to end as a failed character. After accidentally running Theresa over with his car, it is at her hospital bed that Ralph finds his way back to his familial commitment, and we leave the Chang family less prosperous, but unified anew; and this certainly is a positive outcome, after all. So in terms of the question of assimilation, Jen is very clear: »People always ask me whether I'm against assimilation or for it. I'm neither. It's simply a fact of life. It just happens.« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 219) Yet what her novel also suggests is a need to carefully assess that inevitable process of assimilation; for *Typical American* is, without a doubt, a highly critical account of pursuing the American Dream of individual prosperity (see also Pearlman 1993: 37; Wang 2002: 85); it is indeed »a Cautionary Tale, as contemplative as it is witty.« (Lee 1994: 273)

While it is surely true that Asian-American literature that deals with the ambivalences of Chinese immigration into the United States serves »to rethink the evolving relationships between the dominant and minority discourses« (Shu 2005: 101), I believe this to go beyond providing empowerment to »an Asian American reader« (Kim 1994: 207). For at the same time, the analytical pointing out of ambiguities puts both involved concepts of ethnicity up for discussion, since it deals with both American and Chinese attitudes. Consequently, such an undertaking reveals a process of ongoing cultural negotiations, which the crossing of a »violent, black ocean« inevitably requires of everybody involved.

Indeed, »this is decidedly *not* the typical immigrant story in which the ›tired and poor‹ reach the paved-with-gold streets and proceed to turn into Americans at the expense of their ethnic pride or racial identity.« (Pearlman 1993: 37) On the contrary,

Ralph's ruthless pursuit of monetary gain almost wrecks the close unity of the Chang-kees, and only after he negligently causes Theresa to fall into a coma does he realize that the American Dream of limitless self-aggrandizement truly is just that: a dream, unattainable due to its mythical condition. (see also Lim 1992: 136) But instead of Ralph then rejecting America altogether, Jen has him compare his plight one more time with his country of origin, since he suddenly realizes that »there were no guarantees. Even China, enormous China, had fallen, fallen, fallen, until it became a thing recalled. […] A misguided idea.« (Jen 1991: 271) In recognizing that in America, too, he had fallen prey to »[a] misguided idea,« Ralph eventually reaches a deeply disillusioned point of view. »It seemed to him at that moment, as he stood waiting and waiting, […] that a man was as doomed here as he was in China.« (ibid. 296) In furthermore realizing that he could not, in opposition to his faith in America as the Land of Opportunity, be whatever he set his mind to be, he concludes that »[a] man was the sum of his limits; freedom only made him see how much so.« (ibid.) Significantly, however, Jen counters this negative view with the positively evolving love-relationship between Theresa and Old Chao, explaining her novelistic choice like this: »That's one truth, and there's also this other truth. Possibilities despite the limits.« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 226)

What, then, does »typical American« truly mean? In *Mona in the Promised Land*, Gish Jen clearly undermines any preconceived concept of Americanness, in that she has Mona openly embrace the fluidity of cultural belonging: Mona decides to become Jewish. When her mother Helen confronts her about this seemingly odd choice, she confidently states that »Jewish is American. […] American means being whatever you want, and I

happened to pick being Jewish.« (Jen 1996: 49; see also Madsen 2006: 189) This tendency to characterize Americanness not as »what one becomes, but the very act of becoming« (Partridge 2007: 181) is also evident in *Typical American*. For also in her first novel about the Chang family, Gish Jen strengthens the aspect of ongoing cultural negotiations in various directions; she does so most obviously when having the protagonist Ralph remark that considering all its actual limitations, »America was no America.« (Jen 1991: 296)

From this it follows that over the course of the novel, the readers and characters are made to recognize that there are, in fact, two different Americas: »that carried in the mind and senses, […] and that which, subsequently, […] makes its call to assimilation.« (Lee 1994: 270) The migrants' fantasies about their country of immigration are not congruent with the actual conditions they encounter. (see also TuSmith 1994: 26) Rather, Americanness is just as dependent on being individually defined as is Chineseness. So what this novel underlines is the author's belief that »[c]ulture is not fate; it only offers templates, which individuals can finally accept, reject, or modify.« (Jen 2013: 7) There is, in actuality, nothing typical about individual modifications of cultural templates, and therefore it is precisely that non-typicality that is any culture's most typical feature. »How's that for irony?« (Jen 1999: 105)

1.7. Literary Aesthetics of Political Sensitivity

Even though Gish Jen insists that she is a novelist and not a scholar, there is a good deal of aesthetic reflection that goes into her writing. A rather obvious indication of Jen's dedication to aesthetic considerations is certainly the series of lectures that she gave in

2012 at Harvard University in the context of the institution's Massey Lectures. (see Jen 2013: ix) This is an interesting occurrence, considering how much Jen struggled with her choice to become a writer. For a very pressing problem she faced when pondering the writing profession was its ostensible lack of usefulness: »One of the hardest things about being a writer is you flagellate yourself with the idea that you could have done something else more practical.« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 218)

Gish Jen is the child of immigrant parents from Shanghai »who had worked hard to give their children the opportunities they were denied« (Smith 1999: 59), and who thus were very much focused on career stability. (see also Lee n.d.: n.p.) Therefore, the author first »went through bouts of being prelaw and premed, and was actually attending Stanford Business School when [she] had [her] road-to-Damascus moment.« (Jen 2013: 148) After realizing that the publishing business – to which she was referred by her Harvard professor Robert Fitzgerald, who recognized a proclivity for words in his student – did not interest her, she was then confronted with the fact that she absolutely hated business, too; consequently, she dropped out during her second semester of business school. (see also Smith 1999: 59; Johnson 2004: 89) She came to realize that her path would lead her toward the writing profession, and she enrolled in and eventually graduated with an MFA from the Iowa Writer's Workshop. (see Johnson 2004: 88; Lee n.d.: n.p.) Her parents, however, were initially far from supportive of their daughter's career choice, and her mother even stopped talking with her. (see also Smith 1999: 59) Only once a praising article about Jen's beginning career as a writer appeared in a local newspaper did her parents' suspicion make way for support; and Jen indicates that her

family has been supportive of her ever since. (see Jen in Lee 2000a: 225; see also Jen 2013: 149)

This rocky start to her career as a writer also had positive consequences. For one thing, her initial indecisiveness after dropping out of Stanford Business School led her to China, where she taught English at a coal-mining institute. Although this was not intended, Jen now looks upon her time in China as very influential on her later career as a novelist because it was in China that she consciously identified many of the cultural conflicts she grew up with: »In some ways, I didn't even know what my conflicts were until I went to China – what it means to be Chinese; what it means to be American; what it means to be Chinese American.« (Jen in Lee 2000a: 218)

Thus inspired to write *Typical American*, she was set on contributing not just to an understanding of Chinese immigration to the United States, but also »to the understanding of contemporary America.« (Chevereşan 2013: 133) Right from the start, the author embraced culture as a fluid concept; after all, as Jen points out, America itself »did start with a bunch of English people who decided they weren't English anymore. From the beginning, it has been about fluidity of identity.« (quoted in Wang 2004: 150) By a lucky twist of fate, Jen's flexible approach to reality found a broad audience, since the early 1990s were also the years in which multiculturalism gained ground as a serious field of investigation. This happened quite unexpectedly to Gish Jen, who indicates that she had already come to terms with the fact »that people like [her], i.e. Chinese-American people, would never be published in mainstream publications.« (quoted in ibid.: 91; see also Tang 2009: 127)

In the course of her career as a writer, Gish Jen came to modify her intial, rather negative, evaluation of the writing occupation. Even though literature may indeed lack in obvious practicality, there is a definite layer of meaning contained in it. For literature, with its ability to confront its readers with a number of different yet concurrent perspectives, is especially well equipped to effectively discuss even those topics that are commonly considered highly sensitive. (see also Chevereşan 2013: 124) By way of its ability to easily cross rigid categories of thought, literature can present a view of the real world that is just as varied as it truly is. Therefore, Jen allows herself to hope that »*Typical American* will be viewed not only as an immigrant story but as a story for all Americans, to make us think about what our myths and realities are.« (quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.)

One way of questioning those »myths and realities« that Jen employs is to confront her audience with how other people who are not born into the American realm of life see the world: »If you can see the terms in which other people think you begin to realize that your reality is not so absolute.« (quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.; see also Xiaojing 1999: 158) It is precisely this intention of confronting us with differing viewpoints, and therefore with the ongoing need for cultural negotiation in the context of migration, which motivates Jen to include multiple references to the Chinese language in her novel. The aspect of language, of this most vital means of interpersonal negotiation, demonstrates how existentially intertwined in their exile the immigrants eventually become; for Theresa suddenly realizes that »now she had English thoughts too – that was true also. They all did.« (Jen 1991: 123)

Moreover, Jen's linguistic excursions also outline how cultural particularities are deeply ingrained in the way people think. By way of a »mini Chinese lesson at the beginning of the novel« (TuSmith 1994: 24), for example, the readers are confronted with an approach to life that seems very foreign in the context of an American, can-do way of thinking. For whereas »[v]erbs in English are simple« (Jen 1991: 4), the Chinese language includes a distinction »between effort and result« (ibid.) which leads to a construction that is rather unfamiliar in an English-speaking context: in Mandarin, one can ›listen and hear,‹ but it is also possible ›to listen but fail to hear.‹ (see ibid.: 4) Similarly essential to a Chinese way of thinking is the concept of *xiang banfa*, of *thinking of a way*: »In a world full of obstacles, a person needed to know how to go around.« (ibid.: 27) Over and over again, we observe Ralph in situations that require him to xiang banfa – for instance, when the boredom of the academic tenure-track life in front of him causes him »to *xiang banfa* – to think of a way out of his predicament.« (ibid.: 185) Also, once the Chang-kees realize that Grover Ding has tricked them and that they will lose their ruinous Chicken Palace, the concept comes up; and when daughter Callie asks what they mean by that curious expression, Helen explains: »*Xiang banfa*. Find a way. […] That's what Chinese people like to say. We have to find a way.« (ibid.: 245) Significantly, when the daughter is not satisfied with this explanation, Ralph absentmindedly interjects that it is a »[t]ypical expression« before he goes »back to talking to Helen in Chinese.« (ibid.) Clearly, even in the process of acquiring a new typicality, namely, a mode of being »typical American,« the Chinese characters do not let go of their Chinese horizon. Gish Jen thereby succeeds in underlining once more the process of negotiation that is involved in »mak[ing] [one]self at home« in an exile.

Furthermore, however, Jen's explicit inclusion of references to the Chinese language horizon also brings up a challenge that is typical of contemporary literature in a global age. Namely, the challenge of plausibly addressing and presenting a de facto foreign language. For in spite of her Chinese heritage, Gish Jen makes no secret of her lack of linguistic competency in Chinese. Actually, the issue already begins with the myriad of Chinese languages that co-exist with one another. In the form of an »author's note« that precedes the first page of the novel, she asks the readers to »[p]lease note that, as there is no standard transliteration for Shanghainese, all Chinese phrases in this novel are given in Mandarin.« Yet this argumentation seems shaky, considering that Jen does not in fact speak Shanghainese herself at all. When she undertook her trip to China, she was also »supposed to be working on [her] Chinese, to little avail.« She continues: »I spoke very well when I was there. Now I'm back, and I can't speak a word.« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 219) Nonetheless, I doubt that Jen thereby confirms a common observation in Chinese readers, which is the observation that they are often »distressed at the lack of knowledge Chinese-American writers have about Chinese traditions.« (Wong 2004: 33) For even though Jen is not as familiar with the Chinese language system as she sets her characters up to be, she nevertheless knows more, I assume, than the ›average‹ Western reader. Jen clarifies: »I actually don't know that much. […] I put in the book what I know.« (quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.) This confidence in terms of the linguistic horizon that she does point out to us is certainly reassuring. Also, Jen utilizes a narrative strategy to reinforce her characters' thinking in Chinese that does not require her to actually know her characters' thoughts in Shanghainese/Mandarin/Cantonese. For whenever a character says something

in a Chinese language, as she clarifies in the beginning of the novel – »(This is in Shanghainese.)« (Jen 1991: 3) – the corresponding statements are written in English, and in italics. (see also TuSmith 1994: 24)

On the one hand, the unclear distinction between the different variations of the Chinese language in the novel, as well as the author's admitted lack of linguistic competency may strike some readers as questionable; and I agree with this. Still, however, due to Jen's decision to approach that linguistic complexity in the way she does, her novel is enriched with a layer of depth which humbly succumbing to linguistic limits would not have allowed. Even though her address of the linguistic realities of her characters has to remain imprecise, she succeeds in showing the presence of a complexity that might not be obvious otherwise. By so doing, the author contributes to sensitizing the readers to what lies beneath the surface of that »violent, black ocean« that the novel discusses. I conclude that in order to transcend the language barriers that have turned into an inevitable reality in an increasingly globalized world, literature has to resort to fictitious strategies that may not bring about a flawless copy of reality; but those strategies can nonetheless make visible what we would not see by ourselves. And becaue of this, I fully support the author's choice of not shying away from innovative ways of dealing with linguistic limitations. Gish Jen writes literature, not a language workbook.

Gish Jen's commitment to reality, her »practical […] approach to reality« (Pearlman 1993: 43), is evident throughout her oeuvre, and Jen's curiosity »about everything« (Gish Jen, quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.) is certainly identifiable in her writing. And even though her noticeable enjoyment of lining up one improbable event after the other occasionally

tends to undermine the seriousness of her fictitious composition, there is a considerable amount of aesthetic thought involved. It is this underlying aesthetics that renders even some of the author's more dubious statements about her own writing forgiveable; for otherwise, the work of an author who openly admits to »making the story more and more elaborate [because it] is just more and more fun« and because this method successfully »keep[s] [her] from being bored« (Gish Jen, quoted in Pearlman 1993: 45) could certainly not be considered a worthwhile object of investigation in the context of such a vast ocean of contemporary literature from which to choose.

So in actuality, the author's intuitive method of writing into the unknown without having a specific goal in mind is only half the story. For once the first draft is written, Gish Jen employs »a fair amount of analytical thinking. […] I write off into the darkness, but then I spend time reading over what I've written and trying to understand it. I try to understand why I wrote it, and where it might be going.« (quoted in Johnson 2004: 90; see also Gish Jen in Smith 1999: 60) This effort of analytical thinking is doubtlessly necessary because Jen has a very clear idea about the state in which her writing should end up: »Obviously, no one thinks it's good to be politically correct, but I think it's important to be politically sensitive.« (quoted in Smith 1999: 60) When looking at the many and oftentimes ambiguous layers of truth that are present in *Typical American*, it is evident that Gish Jen takes her literary aesthetics of political sensitivity very seriously.

In the context of multiculturalism, in which people can no longer »write whatever they want and then hide behind artistic licence« (Gish Jen, quoted in Smith 1999: 60), Gish Jen seeks to reaffirm the importance of representing a set of considerate morals. She

indicates having always liked books that »showed us how to live – they were moral books.« (quoted in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.) The topic of morality is also very prevalent in *Typical American*, for it is not only Ralph who temporarily digresses from the Chinese communitarian tradition in his worship of American capitalism. In the course of their »transition from one value system to another« (Xiaojing 1999: 153), all the main characters behave in a morally questionable way at some point. (see ibid.: 156)

Helen, for instance, falls just as badly for Grover Ding as does Ralph; and although her exchanges with Grover play out in the erotic realm, Helen, too, is primarily infatuated with what the millionaire's wealth represents: »A man with monogrammed shirts, a maid, a mansion, and all he wanted was to finger her belly button. She felt herself to be someone else, someone much prettier. A commanding presence.« (Jen 1991: 214) Clearly, Helen is neither interested in Grover Ding as an actual person, nor in the erotic pleasure he might offer her. Rather, Helen, who suddenly feels »much prettier« in the presence of so much power focused on her alone, is mostly interacting with her own vanity. (see also Huang 1997: 70)

Significantly, however, Jen's uncompromising belief in morals is no rigid category either. This becomes especially clear when looking at the affair between Theresa and Old Chao. At first, Jen presents this erotic entanglement as eliciting plain outrage from the Chang family; it is of course once again highly ironic that it is Helen who most judgingly exclaims that »*Chinese people don't do such things*« (Jen 1991: 168) – after all, she will prove herself wrong shortly thereafter. However, as for Theresa, her affection for her lover is depicted as honest, eventually leading to the rhetorical question of »[w]as she finally in love?« (ibid.: 297) Without a doubt, this relationship has quickly

left the abyss of short-lived erotic pleasure, and has instead turned into a constellation worth preserving. Evidently, Jen is an observing writer who is both committed and able to consider the many shades of human behavior without rigidly judging her characters prematurely.

Despite her upholding of moral responsibilities, Gish Jen does not try to avoid topics that she considers dangerous (see, e.g., Feng 2010: 70), like, for instance, the topics of racism and power relations; because, in their dedication to truth, »a writer's job is to write about these things.« (Gish Jen, quoted in Satz 1993: n.p.) Nonetheless, her personal moral stances remain clear at all times; they are, for example, captured in the irony she employs when describing some of her characters' most questionable actions, as well as in the eventual conclusion of the plot that brings the Chang-kees back together. Concurrently with openly embracing the ›danger‹ inherent in certain topics, she stays true to her belief in the profound morality of writing: »I know this is probably not the most critically sophisticated view but I'm not so interested in experimental writing unless it speaks to the limits of human knowledge, say – unless its concern is more human than formal.« (Gish Jen, quoted in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.) With this clear emphasis on thoroughly human concerns in a multicultural world, Gish Jen once more unmistakably establishes the realistic orientation of her literary aesthetics.

However, questions of form interest her as well, as she indicates quite clearly: »Dramatic form and structure definitely influenced my writing. For instance, I think it is no coincidence that my book is in five parts.« (quoted in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.) Irrespective of her extensive use of irony in the text, however, Jen argues against having

written a comedy; not least because there is no all-encompassing resolution in her novel. In fact, her novel is far too realistic to succumb to such a concept. Therefore, Gish Jen concludes that »a better way to put it is that it's tragic-comic.« (ibid.; see also Lee n.d.: n.p.) When she subsequently claims to have a deep interest »in complexity of tone« (quoted in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.; see also Feddersen 1997: 350), she further defends the significance of formal considerations. She upholds their importance »even though some people have found it ›problematic.‹« (quoted in Matsukawa 1993: n.p.)

As such, Gish Jen's writing serves as an illustration of how a realistically oriented literature considers both content and form as indispensable means for addressing an increasingly complex reality. Therefore, even the current tendencies in the study of Asian American literature, which »are calling for a turn away from cultural approaches towards the aesthetics of the text« (Madsen 2006: 185), eventually cannot do justice to their field of investigation. For a comprehensive consideration of contemporary literature necessarily asks that both the cultural and aesthetic aspects of a text be taken seriously. Gish Jen's writing is only one among multiple other examples that I will analyze and comment on in the course of my dissertation in order to underline precisely that comprehensive reach of contemporary literature in a global age.

In addition to the comprehensive reach of contemporary literature, Gish Jen's writing furthermore serves to underline another – and I argue: inherently literary – quality: namely, the embrace of a social responsibility that stems from the author's attempt to understand the world as it really is. Gish Jen openly admits her commitment: »I support social responsibility in writing. […] Most writers argue for artistic freedom. But to

imagine that your images have no effect on what happens in society and the way people see themselves is completely naïve.« (quoted in Lee 2000a: 223) Interestingly, Jen makes a claim for a substantial consequentiality of literature by recognizing that literature affects »what happens in society and the way people see themselves.« According to this understanding, the literary text comes to act as a serious participant in a social reality that largely depends on discourse; and I wholeheartedly agree with this view on the relevance of contemporary literature.

The way in which Gish Jen connects her understanding of the relevance of literature with her Eastern heritage is very interesting. Whereas the notion »that things – even literature – *should* be useful is a given for most Chinese« (Jen 2013: 95), Jen, in contrast to this Chinese actuality, regards Western art as having been »individualistic from the get go, at least in its literary manifestation.« (ibid.: 90–91) In rejecting a »non-instrumental« (ibid.: 96) understanding of literature, then, the author refers to the Chinese evaluation of an »interdependent self« (ibid.: 121) as being more desirable than »the individualism of American life.« (ibid.: 154) She explains:

> »There are more stories in the newspaper all the time now about immigrants from interdependent cultures who, when given a choice, choose to return, saying that they find America cold and unfeeling; and I'm sure that if he had had a choice, my father, likewise, would have returned.« (Jen 2013: 126)

This community-focused approach to literature and its effects on reality finds a clear extension in a globalized world. Jen convincingly argues that an underlying ambivalence about individualism is becoming an increasingly important topic, even in the United States. (see Jen 2013: 155) In having to maneuver through a social environment that consists of an ever-increasing number of vastly different others, it is impossible to

imagine oneself as a thoroughly independent self. In a global world, others become as inevitable as they become indispensable in successfully handling the processes of everyday life. The community aspect thus becomes a central principle per se, and it is no longer primarily a Western concept of self-making that opposes a »Chinese preoccupation with fulfilling familial and communal obligations.« (Huang 1997: 67) The opposition between in- and inter-dependence elicits questions that are no longer confined to particular cultural horizons. As a result, Gish Jen seems correct in stating that those questions – »because [she] asked them of the American context – have, despite their Chinese origin, ironically rendered [her] a distinctly American writer.« (Jen 2013: 135)

CHAPTER 2: INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

COMMUNICATION ACROSS SPACE AND TIME IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM: HUGO LOETSCHER'S *THE MANDARIN'S EYES* (*DIE AUGEN DES MANDARIN*, 1999)

»That animal, the unicorn, does not exist. It is pure imagination. A mythical creature.«[45] (Loetscher 2004b: 245) Unimpressed, the mandarin replies to this rather reasonable statement in a similarly reasonable fashion: »Dragons do not exist either. And yet, when they wake up from hibernation in springtime, and roar and beat with their tails, we hear thunder.«[46] (ibid.: 245) – What this short excerpt from the dialogue between the novel's protagonist Past and his communication partner reveals is a strong belief in fiction, on the mandarin's part. Significantly, however, reasonable Zurich senior Past is forced to share in this belief as well. After all, the driving force behind any novelistic action here is inseparably tied to fiction in that it is a question – asked three hundred years ago by said mandarin – that became available to present-day Past through a book: »CAN ONE SEE WITH BLUE EYES? The mandarin asked the question when he first encountered barbarians from Europe: lads with broad shoulders, a determined pace, men with full beards, brown and red hair, among them a blond with blue eyes.«[47] (ibid.: 7)

One night before his anticipated move into a retirement home, Past sits in his apartment in twentieth-century Zurich and looks at a book whose binding depicts the mandarin: the mandarin points his finger at European barbarians at the Imperial Court in

[45] »Dieses Tier, dieses Einhorn, gibt es nicht. Es ist ein Hirngespinst. Ein Fabelwesen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 245)

[46] »Es gibt auch keine Drachen. Aber wenn sie nach dem Winterschlaf im Frühling brüllen und mit dem Schwanz um sich schlagen, donnert es.« (Loetscher 2004b: 245)

[47] »KANN MAN MIT BLAUEN AUGEN SEHEN? Der Mandarin stellte die Frage, als er zum ersten Mal Barbaren aus Europa begegnete: breitschultrige Kerle, von festem Tritt, Männer mit vollen Bärten, braun und rothaarig, unter ihnen einer blond und dieser blauäugig.« (Loetscher 2004b: 7)

Beijing and asks his question. As a character of fiction within a work of fiction, therefore, the mandarin surpasses his literary partner in terms of fictitious intensity, which turns him into an embodiment of fiction as such. So when Past utilizes the mandarin's question as an opportunity to recollect what his own, blue-green eyes have seen in the course of their seventy years of existence, he is in fact addressing fiction itself:

> »CAN ONE SEE WITH BLUE-GREEN EYES? Past inquired thus. Not at the Imperial Court in Beijing, but in a European city like Zurich. […] Past asked the question a good three hundred years later. Not in an empire that was about to lose its middle, but in a continent that had already outlived its central position.«[48] (Loetscher 2004b: 7)

Clearly, Past is dealing with a form of fiction that originated in a globalized world, in which any national assumption of being the central point of the globe has lost its validity. This is certainly true for a Western concept of Eurocentrism to which cities »like Zurich« once adhered. Yet it is also true for an Eastern concept of Sinocentrism, whose long tradition is evident in the fact that China calls itself *zhongguo*, which translates as »Middle Kingdom.« (see Kissinger 2012: 3)

The novelistic dialogue between Past and the mandarin portrays an encounter between two very different characters: one is from the present, the other from the past, one from the West, and the other from the East. But both of them, irrespective of their different backgrounds, share the experience of a ground that is no longer reliable. In a world of globalization, the ground of international order is shifting.

---

[48] »KANN MAN MIT BLAUGRÜNEN AUGEN SEHEN? Dies fragte Past. Nicht am Kaiserlichen Hof von Peking, sondern in einer europäischen Stadt wie Zürich. […] Past stellte die Frage gute dreihundert Jahre später. Nicht in einem Reich, das dabei war, seine Mitte zu verlieren, sondern auf einem Kontinent, der seine Zentrallage hinter sich hatte.« (Loetscher 2004b: 7)

As one of the most prominent Swiss authors, together with Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt (see Sabalius 1995: 1), Hugo Loetscher (1929–2009) novelistically addressed the phenomenon of globalization throughout his career. (see also Dewulf 2005: 163) His numerous travels all over the world enabled this thoroughly cosmopolitan author to look at reality from various perspectives. This finds expression in a form of writing that may indeed be »different, because it has absorbed a lot of world.«[49] (Bhatti 2005: 148) Like a continuous thread, questions of geographical orientation, identity, and reflections upon the place and role of literature within all this run through Loetscher's most extensive projects. Hence it seems accurate to regard *The Mandarin's Eyes* (1999) as the thematic completion of a trilogy that began with *The Immune Man* (*Der Immune*, 1975) and its sequel *The Papers of the Immune Man* (*Die Papiere des Immunen*, 1986). (see Dewulf 2005: 170) The comparatively small amount of attention that Loetscher's end-of-the-century novel received, however, is rather surprising; not least because *The Mandarin's Eyes* is written in a way that decidedly mirrors its real-world environment, thus inviting reflections on literary aesthetics in general.

The Mandarin's Eyes has to be recognized as a highly relevant text for an investigation into the contemporary state of literature; and such an investigation is undoubtedly necessary. It cannot be forgotten, for instance, that Jean-François Lyotard, in his 1979 report on *The Postmodern Condition*, famously declared the principle of grand narratives to have failed: »Narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children.« (Lyotard 1984: 27) The same is true for unicorns. Nonetheless, Loetscher presents us with a novel whose characters – one way or another – fully embrace the principle of »fables, myths, [and] legends,« which is to say: the reliability of creative

[49] »Loetschers Schreiben ist anders, weil es sehr viel Welt aufgenommen hat.« (Bhatti 2005: 148)

imagination. What comes along with such an apparent belief in stories and narration is also the faith in a real relevance of contemporary fiction.

The novel is divided into two parts. While the second part largely adheres to the conventions of a novelistically portrayed dialogue, it is the internal organization of the first part that asks for further scrutiny. In addition to both parts' revolving around numerous untitled sub-chapters, the first part is also grounded in narrative strategies that create a sense of non-linearity; as such, they have been labeled ›postmodern.‹ The flash-like character of Past's »memory shreds« (»Erinnerungsfetzen,« Loetscher 2004b: 53) and »memory moments« (»Erinnerungsmomente,« ibid.: 366), for example, finds a formal equivalent in unexpected »changes of scene« (»Szenenwechsel,« ibid.: 152) that oppose a traditional mode of linear narration. Narrative style and tone keep changing as well, thereby mirroring the rapid changes of place as well as time of action. The result is an accumulation of narrative fragments which definitely succeeds in creating a »collage-feeling.« (»Collage-Gefühl,« Dewulf 2005: 175)

Eventually, however, what looks like arbitrariness turns out to be a very strategically arranged overarching narrative, which robs this novel of its alleged innocence. (see Altwegg 2000: n.p.) Yet rather than providing an obviously coherent narrative, Loetscher forces the reader into a mode of *active* perception. Because the bits and pieces that make up Past's life are not arranged chronologically, the reader is required to reassemble the narrative in the course of their reading. And a coherent whole is indeed available for reassembly, as becomes apparent in the novel's rather traditional narrative frame: the first sub-chapter of the first part and the last sub-chapter of the

second part present roughly the same scene. In both instances Past sits in his home in Zurich and confronts the mandarin's inquiry into the visual capability of blue eyes.

This combination of postmodern narrative strategies with elements of a more traditional narrative construction is further apparent on the level of content – namely, in that present and past enter into a dialogue with one another. As mentioned before, Past embodies the present, while the mandarin represents the past. Most importantly, this encounter does not leave its participants unaffected. The mandarin accidentally breaks one of his fingernails in Past's apartment and has to return into his book in that exact state; from then on, he has to point »with a finger whose nail was broken.«[50] (Loetscher 2004b: 376) Past, on the other hand, gets to keep the mandarin's paper fan that, as a fictitious vehicle of narration, not only awakens memories, but also creates stories. (see ibid.: 333)

Concurrently, the novelistic exchange between present and past also entails a glimpse into the future. Not without reason did Loetscher name his protagonist, who comes to represent the present, *Past*. When the present is localized in the past itself, there must lie something ahead of the current state of affairs; and this is precisely what Loetscher establishes as the motto of his novel. Thus, *The Mandarin's Eyes* has to be read as the novelistic explication of a theory of globalization: »Now that the world is coming together, its history begins.«[51] (Loetscher 2004b: 316) Staying true to the principle of reciprocity in terms of content and form, Loetscher utilizes his theory of globalization to also reflect on the role of fiction within the beginning history of a globalized world.

---

[50] »Er […] zeigte mit einem Finger, an dem der Nagel abgebrochen war, auf Pasts Gesicht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 376)

[51] »Jetzt, da die Welt zusammenkommt, beginnt ihre Geschichte.« (Loetscher 2004b: 316)

For vis-à-vis the shifting grounds of globalization, literature promises to provide a point of orientation in that it is, according to Loetscher's proposition, unceasingly relevant. Thus, in the turmoil of his company's unexpected shutdown, fiction turned into an object of durability for Past, who explains that »this picture with the unicorn was among the few things that I could take with me.«[52] (Loetscher 2004b: 312) While considering the mandarin's faithful take on mythical creatures, Past also comes to underline the continuity of fiction's relevance; eventually, he admits that in his youth, he used to feed dragons – »without ever having seen them.«[53] (ibid.: 307)

2.1. The Beginning of World History

With his theory, according to which history begins »[n]ow that the world is coming together,« Loetscher embraces an interactionistic concept of globalization. The focus of his attention lies on the various cooperations between the many parts of the globe; as a consequence, the manifold interactions between the particular and the universal, the local and the global, become vital. With that, Loetscher joins current globalization debaters in their claim that our world is continuously turning into a single whole. Although humankind has always lived on one single globe, this cohabitation now shows signs of developing into one shared world-society (see Dallmayr 2009: 722, and Robertson 2008: 92), thereby forming what Marshall McLuhan catchily described as a ›global village.‹ (see Robertson 2008: 88)

While sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein, who was among the first to write on globalization, used to connect globalization primarily with the spread of capitalism (see

[52] »Hier, dieses Bild mit dem Einhorn war eines der wenigen Dinge, die ich an mich nehmen konnte.« (Loetscher 2004b: 312)
[53] »Ich habe in meiner Jugend Drachen gefüttert, ohne sie je gesehen zu haben.« (Loetscher 2004b: 307)

Wallerstein 2008: 55; see also Dowd 2009: 11), it is now commonly accepted that globalization cannot be reduced to its economic dimension. Rather, it affects multiple levels of the lives of »people of both rich and poor countries.« (Dowd 2009: 115) That such a distinction between rich and poor is still possible has to do with the fact that the world still is – in opposition to the contrary assumption of *New York Times* columnist Thomas L. Friedman – not ›flat‹: globalizing forces did not flatten the earth in order to level »a playing field of global competitiveness.« (Ghemawat 2009: 319) Instead, there is a strong imbalance of power and influence among the different particularities of the world. The increasing interdependence of the world's particularities therefore confronts us with myriad challenges, and it becomes obvious that »[t]here is […] a plethora of problems to be found in the seemingly simple notion of globalization.« (Mazlish 2006: 21)

A clarification regarding the condition of the world's particularities is necessary. For in opposing the local with the global, a multitude of concepts potentially collide. The local »can be the family, the tribe, the state […] and the nation, each in contest with the other.« (Mazlish 2006: 66) The second part of Loetscher's thesis on globalization explains his understanding of the scope of the local and the global as follows: »Now that the world is coming together, its history begins. What happened so far, was local, while continents prove to be local.«[54] (Loetscher 2004b: 316)

In identifying contintents as local entities, Loetscher presents a concept of globalization that does indeed affect the entire globe – namely, in that it calls into

[54] »Jetzt, da die Welt zusammenkommt, beginnt ihre Geschichte. Was sich bisher abspielte, war lokal, wobei sich Kontinente als lokal erweisen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 316)

question the idea of geographical orientation. Multi-directional interactions between different continents cause those continents to lose their allegedly fixed position, which causes the global map to disintegrate. Interestingly, Loetscher considers this cartographic loss of orientation to be inevitable for a world that once turned out not to be a disk:

> »As long as Europe was placed in the center of the map, it was obvious where to find the West and where to locate the East. But once it was clear that the world is an orb, unambiguity was gone. Various terms […] fell victim to the rotation of the earth. Ever since, one could drive westwards in order to arrive in the East.«[55] (Loetscher 1988c: 37)

Viewed from this perspective, the exact location of the West and the East are dependent on »where one starts and in which direction one moves.«[56] (Loetscher 1988a: 258) In such a world, even China had to accept that it is in fact not »the whole universe, being acknowledged as under the heaven where the northern tip [is] separated by great desert, southern tip by tropical forest, western tip by high mountains, and eastern tip by the Eastern Chinese sea.« (Chun 2012: 24) In a world of globalization, there is no center anymore.

Loetscher's emphasis on the coming together of continents, and thereby on the aspect of an increasing intercontinental coherence, decidedly answers to Francis Fukuyama's proclamation of an *End of History*. (see Dewulf 2005: 170) At the same time, however, Loetscher opposes this proclamation with a contrary line of thought that asks for further

[55] »Solange sich Europa auf der Landkarte in der Mitte befand, war klar, wo der Westen lag und wo der Osten. Aber als sich herausstellte, dass die Erde rund ist, war es mit der Eindeutigkeit vorbei. Die Begriffe […] gerieten in Erdbewegung. Von nun an konnte man in Richtung Westen fahren, um nach Osten zu kommen.« (Loetscher 1988c: 37)

[56] »Er ereiferte sich, links sei nicht immer links, und der Ferne Osten könne im Westen liegen, das hänge davon ab, von wo man aufbreche und in welche Richtung man fahre.« (Loetscher 1988a: 258)

investigation. As is well known, Fukuyama defined history as »a single, coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all time.« (Fukuyama 2006: xii) At the core of this concept lies an understanding of history that already the philosopher Immanuel Kant had deemed plausible. In his philosophical essay on human history (»Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht,« 1784), Kant talks about nature's leading men toward a state of world citizenship (*Weltbügertum*), in which state alone humanity would be able to realize its full potential. (see Kant 1977a) Comparable thoughts were articulated by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Karl Marx, both of whom assumed the evolutionary historical process to come to an end once the ideal state of human existence is achieved. Yet whereas Hegel defined this ideal state as liberalism, Marx defined it as communism. (see Fukuyama 2006: 341) According to Fukuyama, the ideal state is liberal democracy, which he expected the majority of humanity to achieve by the end of the twentieth century.

When Loetscher opposes Fukuyama's thesis of an end of history with the contrary proclamation of its beginning, he adds an interesting twist to the concept. For what Fukuyama primarily presents as an *idea* of coherence turns into a factual coherence in Loetscher's presentation. A world that is coming together in the form of intercontinental cooperations and increasing interdependences – which no longer allows for the unambiguous fixation of points of orientation on a global map – is a world whose parts now truly do *cling together*. Evidently, Loetscher takes the term ›coherence,‹ especially its inscribed Latin meaning, very seriously.

Both Fukuyama and Loetscher understand history as a »collective singular.« (»Kollektivsingular,« Rohbeck 2004: 16) By doing so, they invoke an extensive tradition of historico-philosophical thinking, which springs from a »formation of philosophy« (»philosophische Formation,« Marquard 1982: 14) that proclaims a single world history with a single goal: freedom for all. (see ibid.) Reinhart Koselleck located the origin of this historico-philosophical notion in the eighteenth century, when René Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* robbed men of their religious securities, which caused eschatology to turn into a utopia. (see Koselleck 1959: 8) Yet despite its extensive traditional foundation, Loetscher's proposal is far from anachronistic.

The fragmentary mode of narration in the novel's first part counteracts the impression of being confronted with yet another historico-philosophical story of evolutionary progress. And while Fukuyama's theory raised doubts, especially in terms of its endorsed belief »that there is a broad historical trend toward liberal democracy« (Fukuyama 2006: 354), Loetscher's theory does not contain such an ideological constraint. Rather, the author presents a literary reaction to the historico-philosophical notion of the end of history that embraces a non-specified model for the future of humankind. The only set pillar of this thought experiment is its dependence on intercultural dialogue.

A closer inspection reveals that Loetscher's strategy of taking a globalized world's coherence at face value spares his novelistic project from an exposure to various other points of critique that Fukuyama's theory elicited. Among other things, Fukuyama predicted a decreasing relevance of »the old rules of power politics« within the »post-

historical world.« (Fukuyama 2006: 276) The contrary assumption, however, is rather prominent within present-day political circles. Certainly, Robert Kagan's neoconservative focus, which seeks to preserve the dominance of the United States as the one and only superpower above »several great powers« (Kagan 2009: 92), might be questionable; yet his assumption that national ambitions are far from extinct and that differing state systems will continue to exist in opposition to one another is highly convincing.

The observation that the international political system is facing a divide between »the democratic world and the autocracies« (Kagan 2009: 65) has been promoted by a number of theoreticians, but their approaches to the matter differ greatly. For instance, whereas Kagan seeks to unite the world's democracies in opposition to their autocratic counterparts, voices that predict the West's loss of predominance in the international order are becoming louder as well. Charles A. Kupchan, for example, agrees that »the international order forged by the United States and its European allies at the close of World War II seemed ready to encompass the globe.« (Kupchan 2012: 1) But he does not expect an end of history; instead, he underlines the existence of a turning point. Kupchan believes the emergent international system to be »populated by numerous power centers as well as multiple versions of modernity.« (ibid.: 74) He therefore assumes that what the encounter between democracies and autocracies will bring about is not political homogeneity, but rather »a global dissensus« (ibid.: 145) that needs to be negotiated on a day-to-day basis. This line of thought agrees strikingly with what Loetscher literarily addressed at the dawn of the new millennium.

Kupchan puts great emphasis on China as one of the many rising autocracies of our time. He regards China as »destined to become one of the world's leading powers over the course of the next two decades.« (Kupchan 2012: 93) He also proposes that a significant difference between China and the West lies in China's »communitarian culture,« which »has long privileged stability, solidarity, and communal welfare over personal gain.« (ibid.: 94) Of course, Kupchan wrote his pamphlet many years after *The Mandarin's Eyes* was published. Interestingly, though, by tapping into the debates on China's future global role, which were especially prominent in the face of the changing millennium, Loetscher seems to have literarily anticipated the corresponding political theory.

Instead of perpetuating the popularly employed millennium-rhetoric of fear, Loetscher chose a different route. By bringing Past and the mandarin together, he lets representatives of two radically different social systems enter into an open-minded conversation with one another. Rather than openly theorizing about the future of a world that is coming together, Loetscher uses his characters to novelistically portray a dialogic encounter between the West and the East, between liberal democracy and autocracy. Therefore, I argue, Loetscher's theory of globalization is not only a theory about the increasing importance of intercultural communication, but also a theory that is presented in a strictly novelistic way; and this is no side note. For by choosing the novelistic medium, the author identifies literature as nothing less than a significant participant in contemporary public discourse.

The scenario that literarily unfolds over the course of the novel is multifaceted, not least because the mandarin comes to represent both the China from the past, as well as the

China at the end of the twentieth century. As such, the mandarin embodies both an explicitly imperial autocracy and a communist one. In 1699, three hundred years before Past's time, China was ruled by the Qing Dynasty. (est. 1644, see Kissinger 2012: 33) It functioned according to an imperial system that unfolded around the Imperial Court in Beijing's Forbidden City. (see UNESCO n.d.: n.p.) By 1999, however, China had lived through a highly eventful history that irrevocably separated present-day China from its imperial predecessor.

In the nineteenth century, for instance, a major clash between the Chinese universe and expanding Western industrial powers that sought to expand their profit-oriented markets took place in the form of the Opium War. (see Kissinger 2012: 45–56) By the end of the nineteenth century, China's imperial system began to disintegrate, and with the collapse of our mandarin's Qing Dynasty in 1911 (see Yao 2000: xvii), it came to an end; now, China was »[a] […] Republic, deeply divided from its birth, [that] emerged into a dangerous international environment.« (Kissinger 2012: 87) Concurrent with the rule of the Nationalist Party, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP, est. 1921) continued to develop a form of »parallel social order« (ibid.), and by the end of World War II, both the Nationalist as well as the Communist Party's aspirations to central authority left China once more divided and caught in civil war. When the Nationalists eventually withdrew to the island of Taiwan in 1949, China united again, this time as the People's Republic of China (PRC) under Mao Zedong's communist rule. (see Kissinger 2012: 89–90; Chun 2012: 5) The oppression that followed in the pursuit of Mao's proclaimed Great Harmony is well known, and certainly found a point of culmination in the Red Guard's terror during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).

After Mao's death in 1976, Deng Xiaoping emerged as the predominant leader of the CCP (see Yang 2012: 49) and began to implement a program of economic reform that started opening up China to the outside world. (see Ren 1998: 98) Within a ›socialist market economy,‹ the efficiency of production is meant to be improved through an expansion of economic participation, while at the same time a mostly state-owned and state-managed economy is retained. (see Mueller 1998: 193) From this it follows that when Loetscher lets the Qing mandarin travel into the year 1999, said mandarin also comes to represent a China that celebrates »its fiftieth anniversary under communism.« (Dorn 1998: 7) Due to Deng Xiaoping's market reform, however, this communism seems to increasingly adapt in response to its globalized world-environment, which renders the future of China's position in the twenty-first-century world unclear.

In the same way that the real-world future of both China and the West is unclear, Loetscher confronts us with a work of fiction that addresses an unclear future. Unlike the corresponding theories of Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Fukuyama, Loetscher's literary proposal does not present a beginning of world history that is bound to progress toward a pre-defined *telos* of humanity. (see also Attali 2003: 34) Thus, it becomes unnecessary for Loetscher to speculate or call into question literature's reliability. It is also noteworthy that Loetscher does not openly favor one system over the other, even though his favoring of liberal human rights is evident in his writing. Yet in employing a narrative style of elaborate subtlety, the author abstains from propagandistic attacks; Loetscher writes literature, not politics. Therefore, the novel focuses on portraying what two radically different state systems do have in common: it is the opportunity to enter into a dialogue with one another. The coexistence of Western liberal democracy and Eastern communism

clearly refers to the presence of various versions of reality in a globalized world. Against this background, Loetscher utilizes his characters to literarily demonstrate the doability of communicative negotiation in a world that is coming together.

The term ›globalization‹ is hardly ever used in *The Mandarin's Eyes*, even though the concept's omnipresence within the novel is indisputable. It seems as though the phenomenon of globalization had lost its exceptional status, and that it had instead turned into an everyday occurrence. Hence, its explicit mentioning became obsolete. After all, our human history shows that globalization is by no means a novelty of the twentieth century. Among other things, China's possession of a number of highly valuable items in the early world of 1000 A.D. serves as a strong example here – because it was globalization that spread paper, the printing press, as well as the crossbow from China across the world. (see Sen 2008: 20) Yet despite its reliance on implicit allusions, Loetscher's novelistic address of globalization theories is thorough. Consequently, Loetscher also subtly addresses another very prominent theory of globalization: the theory of empire. (see also Lützeler 2005: 155)

The process of deterritorialization – in the course of which »the constraints of physical space lose their hold on social relations« (Lechner/Boli 2008: 4) – is indeed comparable to the dynamics of the Roman Empire. In Roman times, diverse entities shared the same space, and this space was not organized around a major missionary religion that tried to unite those particularities under a specific universal. (see Gorringe 2004: 239) Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri adopted this principle of a shared common space and applied it to twenty-first century society: »Our basic hypothesis is that

sovereignty has taken a new form, composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule. This new global form of sovereignty is what we call Empire.« (Hardt/Negri 2001: xii) However, even the assumption of such a coexistence under a shared logic of rule cannot ignore the many social frictions with which we are faced in a globalized world.

In fact, the presence of a multitude of conflicts motivated globalization theorists to underline those tensions by once more pointing out the »twofold process of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular« (Robertson 2008: 92); this once more stands for the dynamic exchanges between the particular and the universal. Loetscher adequately refers to this exchange when he has Past reflect on the story of »his Latin Ego« (»sein lateinisches Ego,« Loetscher 2004b: 274) Aemilius. While traveling through the Roman Empire, the somewhat disappointed Aemilius keeps encountering sameness wherever he goes. Eventually, he comes to identify man as nothing more than just the »variety of a variety« (»Varietät einer Varietät,« ibid.: 263), as an »individuum varietas varietatis.« (ibid.) Yet in keeping with the tenor of Loetscher's proposal, which does not suggest an upcoming single »logic of rule,« Past's Roman version, Aemilius, eventually has to attenuate his observation. So he concludes that »of course it is always the same, but there are differences.«[57] (ibid.: 262) Despite definite similarities between the countless human others in the world, those others will always be others in a vast ocean of human variation. Our globalized world is not a unified empire, just as no empire in history has, in fact, ever been truly unified; for »there are differences.«

---

[57] »Natürlich sei es immer das gleiche, doch es gebe Unterschiede.« (Loetscher 2004b: 262)

The coming together of a globalized world does not take place on a white page. Long before the world's particularities began to enter into a state of increased coherence, various local histories occurred. As such, Loetscher's proposed beginning of world history is also an end – namely, in that it is tied to an end, even if only a symbolic one. The novel presents the beginning of our globalized world history as tied to the end of the twentieth century. The change of the millennium that was about to happen in the novel's immediate social environment turned into an occasion for Loetscher to contemplate what had happened up to that point, and what might happen in the course of the new millennium.

Loetscher created his literary protagonist accordingly. Due to his thirty years' work experience in a Zurich cultural foundation (*Kulturstiftung*), Past got to spend most of his working life as a global traveler, treating his passport as a piece of paper that »allowed [him] to leave.«[58] (Loetscher 2004b: 8) So when Past, inspired by the mandarin's question, looks back at his personal history, the readers get to witness a twentieth-century life that was shaped by numerous encounters with different particularities. Interestingly, however, Past is set up to impersonate more than just an individual with a personal biography, since Past's biography is connected with the history – or: the biography – of humanity as such. (see also Altwegg 2000: n.p.)

Loetscher once made his readers follow »the Immune Man as a people through the centuries.«[59] (Loetscher 1988b: 16) In a similar fashion, we are now made to recognize Past as a representative of human history up until the year 2000, beginning with modern

[58] »Der Pass war [...] ein Papier, das erlaubte zu gehen; er hatte die Möglichkeit genutzt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 8)
[59] »Sie werden den Immunen als Volk durch die Jahrhunderte begleiten.« (Loetscher 1988b: 16)

man's prehistoric origins; even though, »[a]s an individual in a highly industrialized society, Past had never possessed the visual strength of his prehistoric ancestors.«[60] (Loetscher 2004b: 14)

Past's reminiscing about his »personal Stone Age« (»persönliche[] Steinzeit,« Loetscher 2004b: 51) is followed by recollections of the age of those people who used to build their houses on stilts. But significantly, it is especially present-day stilt-builders (*Pfahlbauer*) who receive a great deal of Past's attention. The description of his Brazilian friend Gil's village is revealing in this regard: »Houses built on stilts. […] People who didn't wear furs, but rather Jeans and T-Shirts.«[61] (ibid.: 29) Clearly, Past experiences what Reinhard Koselleck described as the »simultaneity of the non-simultaneous.« (»Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen,« Hoffmann 2005: 178) What common school books tend to list as aspects of prehistoric times manifests itself elsewhere as a »dreary and banal actuality.«[62] (Loetscher 2004b: 32) In undermining the idea of an all-encompassing linear progression of human history, Loetscher once more weakens Fukuyama's idea of history as »a single, coherent, evolutionary process, when taking into account the experience of all peoples in all time.« The constant crossing of borders in a globalized world doubtlessly increases the awareness of different ›human time zones‹ on this planet.

Nonetheless, Loetscher keeps underlining the coherence of those different zones – for instance, when he addresses the general concept of borderlines. At various points in

---

[60] »Als Individuum einer hochindustrialisierten Gesellschaft hatte Past nie die Sehkraft besessen, über die seine prähistorischen Vorfahren verfügten.« (Loetscher 2004b: 14)

[61] »Auf Stecken Stege und Behausungen […]. Menschen, die nicht Felle trugen, sondern Jeans und T-Shirts.« (Loetscher 2004b: 29)

[62] »Was einst das Schulbuch irgendwelcher Prähistorie zuwies, erlebte er anderswo als trist banale Aktualität.« (Loetscher 2004b: 32)

history, various borders seemed to be closing in, for example when Great Britain »retreated from being an empire onto an island in close proximity to Europe.«[63] (Loetscher 2004b: 40) In the meantime, however, national borderlines have become quite porous, allowing for a constant flow of goods and people all over the world. The global traveler Past is an ideal illustration of this circumstance.

Loetscher presents national borderlines as having been drawn with utter arbitrariness. Therefore, the secularized Past came to value a very particular form of grace: the »grace of geographical lines of longitudes and latitudes.«[64] (Loetscher 2004b: 174–175) This impersonal grace, with its foundation in pure chance, is the only plausible ›answer‹ to a question that is so certain of its actual unanswerability that it presents itself as a statement: »How does one person deserve, and another person not deserve to receive that grace.«[65] (ibid.: 175) Past fails to come up with an explanation, but his memories keep illustrating that the world is still a place in which a person can and does fall »victim to social circumstances, in which [they] are born, but for which they are not responsible.«[66] (ibid.: 356) Indeed, Past's world is not flat; instead, its wavy and uneven surface reaches deep into the realm of individual life opportunities.

When he is asked where he was born, Past takes the cultural foundation's translation debate into account by answering: »between Hazard and Chance.«[67] (Loetscher 2004b: 175) Loetscher does not take a side in said translation debate, which

---

[63] »Als Grossbritannien von einem Empire auf eine Europa vorgelagerte Insel umstieg.« (Loetscher 2004b: 40)
[64] »[E]ine Gnade der geographischen Längen- und Breitengrade.« (Loetscher 2004b: 174–175)
[65] »Womit hat der eine die Gnade verdient und der andere nicht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 175)
[66] »Opfer der sozialen Umstände, in die ein Mensch hineingeboren wird und wofür er nichts vermag.« (Loetscher 2004b: 356)
[67] »Auf die Frage nach seinem Geburtsort konnte er antworten: zwischen Hasard und Chance.« (Loetscher 2004b: 175)

unfolds around the question of whether or not the French word ›hasard‹ is identical to the English word ›chance.‹ The German ›Hasard,‹ which is to say: *Zufall*, however, can be translated into English not only as ›accidental occurrence,‹ but also as ›chance‹; yet even though the French-based German word *Chance* may still contain an accidental quality, *Chance* (in the sense of opportunity) and *Zufall* (in the sense of chance/accident) cannot be used interchangeably. As a consequence, to be born »between Hazard and Chance« (ibid.: 175) in a German-speaking context designates a birth place of an accidental nature (*Hasard*) that may even contain an opportunity (*Chance*). Put differently: Past, who was born in the industrialized, developed, and commonly considered wealthy nation of Switzerland, was lucky.

Unlike humans, nature has long known about the arbitrariness of borders. Animals seem to have always demonstrated a thoroughly global behavior, which is obvious when looking at those Austrian and Slovenian bears that once unrestrainedly marched onto Swiss territory, unimpressed by and disrespectful to national borderlines.[68] (see Loetscher 2004b: 16) A similar level of disrespect is displayed by the Korean rice that blooms in a bright green on both sides of the armistice line.[69] (see p. 182) Obviously, then, it is primarily humans who suffer from a loss of their »auxiliary lines of orientation.« (»Hilfslinien der Orientierung,« Loetscher 1988b: 161) Nature does not function within this human construction, but rather adheres to the πάντα ρει of both Heraclitus and Confucius (see Loetscher 2004b: 343) on a daily basis.

[68] »[Es] waren Bären im Anmarsch, von Österreich und Slowenien her, keine Grenzen respektierend.« (Loetscher 2004b: 16)

[69] »Auf dem einstigen Schlachtfeld wuchs Reis, diesseits wie jenseits der Waffenstillstandslinie; [...] und war auf beiden Seiten von gleich hellem Grün.« (Loetscher 2004b: 182)

Past seems to be accepting of nature's individualism, as he harbors a deep sympathy for Asia's Mekong River precisely because it »doesn't know of a middle.« As such, »[i]t annoys geographers and mocks politicians, in that it moves its banks with every rainy season, thereby also changing the path of adjacent borders.«[70] (Loetscher 2004b: 303) The underlining of nature's disregard for fixed lines is consistent with Loetscher's emphasis on an increasing intercontinental coherence. After all, the act of ›clinging together‹ does indeed liquefy the borderlines between formerly separated entities, as is exemplarily illustrated by any coastline: »To whom does the coast belong? To the land? To the water? [...] Does the water climb onto the land here. [...] Or is this the place where the land steps into the water.«[71] (ibid.: 357) This question cannot be answered, and therefore it has to answer itself by omitting the question mark, thus turning indistinctness into the only fixed factor in this equation.

While Loetscher addresses borders and borderlines of every sort under the perspective of their increasing opening up, his protagonist's recapitulation of 2000 years of human history nevertheless unfolds around a close. Repeatedly, Past addresses his own death, which he experiences as »a dying that made itself known as shyly persuasive, without being pushy.«[72] (Loetscher 2004b: 57) It seems as if Past were dealing with the only thing still able to amaze him – namely, »a death that occurs as if nothing were the

[70] »[E]in[] Fluss, der keine Mitte kennt, der die Geographen ärgert und die Politiker verspottet, indem er mit jeder Regenzeit seine Ufer verändert und die Grenzen verschiebt. Deshalb mag ich diesen Fluss.« (Loetscher 2004b: 303)
[71] »Wem gehört die Küste? Dem Land? Dem Wasser? […] Klettert hier das Wasser ans Land. […] Oder ist es die Stelle, wo das Land ins Wasser steigt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 357)
[72] »[E]in Sterben [...], das sich mit zurückhaltender Überredungskunst meldete, ohne gross zu drängen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 57)

matter.«[73] (Loetscher 2004a: 200) Past's personal end is as inevitable as anybody's. So New Year is not only his professional area of expertise (see Loetscher 2004b: 49); due to his own impending end, he also represents the end of a century. Past himself draws this connection and also involves the mandarin in his vision of his upcoming last meal – after all, a death that occurs in the process of dining has been deemed a desirable end in ancient China (see Österreichisches Institut n.d: n.p.):

> »Should the mandarin arrive without his chopsticks – cutlery is available, so that he can witness how one bites the dust. A final meal for an epoch and its society: an exitus that corresponds to the European end of a century, and a Chinese as an invited guest.«[74] (Loetscher 2004b: 199)

Past faces the inevitability of his own end with a calmness that stems from his literary role as a representative of the twentieth century. For as such, he is still in the position to anticipate a future because his personal end is not the end of humanity (see Moser 2005: 413), nor is it the end of human history. Consequently, Past is not crushed by the fact that his personal future is nothing more than an immediate one that no longer extends far ahead. (see Loetscher 2004b: 124) So at the end of his life, and at the end of the novel, we leave Past in a »light mood.« (»Leichtmut,« ibid.: 376)

The German word for ›gymnast‹ is *Leichtathlet*, consisting of the noun ›athlete‹ (*Athlet*) and the adjective ›light‹ (*leicht*), literally meaning a ›light athlete.‹ It is revealing that Past has always favored the first half of this German word, which consists of the adjective ›light.‹ He always wanted to become somebody who treads (*gehen*) lightly, and

---

[73] »Sollte er bereits gefunden haben, was ihn noch in Erstaunen zu setzen vermochte: ein Tod, der eintritt, als ob nichts wäre.« (Loetscher 2004a: 200)

[74] »Falls der Mandarin die Stäbchen nicht bei sich hat – Besteck steht zur Verfügung, um dabeizusein, wenn ein für allemal der Löffel abgegeben wird. Eine Abschlussmahlzeit für eine Epoche und deren Gesellschaft: ein Exitus, der dem europäischen Ende eines Jahrhunderts entspräche, mit einem Chinesen als Gast.« (Loetscher 2004b: 199)

thereby – according to the German verb's twofold meaning – also somebody who leaves lightly; Past always wanted to become a »light treader/leaver.« (»ein leichter Geher,« Loetscher 2004b: 127) Evidently, then, Past's wish comes true when he is presented as someone who is about to leave, about to die, but who does so with a light heart – namely, with a heart that is filled with *Leichtmut* (»light mood«).

Eventually, Past's gaze drifts off into the emptiness of his room and the mandarin's paper fan no longer awakens any memories. Nevertheless, said emptiness smells like sandalwood. According to the mandarin, the stories that his paper fan invents also smell like sandalwood. (see Loetscher 2004b: 333) Clearly, the emptiness in front of Past's eyes is not empty at all, but rather filled by an air saturated with stories; stories that are about to occur in a globalized world, whose history begins now that its continents are coming together.

2.2. A Realistic Dialectic in a Postmodern ›Grand Narrative‹

Even though Loetscher does not attempt to predict a specific *telos* of human history, the novel decidedly does address the world's future. Most significant about the protagonist's take on that future is its optimistic outlook. Naturally, Past is aware of »the classical idea of the world's continuous worsening.« (»die klassische Vorstellung von der ständigen Verschlechterung,« Loetscher 2004b: 139) Yet along with his awareness thereof, he also rejects it; because »[a]ll who were born into this world sooner or later reached the conclusion that a better life should be possible. And why should that which lies behind

them not also lie in front of them.«[75] (ibid.) As is obvious, Past turns around the line of progression of a presumed continuous worsening, in that the better state no longer appears as left behind, but rather as potentially lying ahead. Neither Loetscher nor Past therefore agrees with Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's assumption that humanity is to teleologically expect absolute suffering.[76] (see Rohbeck 2004: 20–21)

In their 1944 collection of philosophical fragments, entitled »Dialectic of Enlightenment,« Horkheimer and Adorno famously declare Hegel's idealistic take on world history – with its focus on an advent of freedom and justice – to be »a kind of idiocy.« (»eine Art Schrulle,« Horkheimer/Adorno 1969: 234) Accordingly, they identify the path of humanity to be leading into a new barbarian abyss that is tied to the aporetic mechanism of Enlightenment's self-destruction. When the individual loses its importance in the face of the technological advancements of its time, they conclude, Enlightenment objectively turns into insanity. (see Horkheimer/Adorno 1969)

Of course, the two philosophers wrote their texts during a time when Germany came to demonstrate how a technological apparatus of industrialized power is able to efficiently destroy millions of lives. The Holocaust shows how technology is able to be turned against the very beings that are responsible for its success. Despite its very specific historical context, the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* has become a fundamental theory in any present-day discourse on historico-philosophical thought that seeks to do justice to its multifaceted tradition. So the fact that Loetscher subtly yet decidedly refers

[75] »Alle, die in diese Welt geboren wurden, gelangten eines Tages zur Überzeugung, es müsse etwas Besseres geben. Und warum sollte das, was hinter ihnen liegt, nicht auch vor ihnen liegen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 139)

[76] It is not obvious to me how Gonçalo Vilas-Boas concludes from Past's addressing of »the classical idea of the world's continuous worsening« that Loetscher argues against a dominant discourse of optimism. (see Vilas-Boas 2002)

to Horkheimer/Adorno in his novelistic reflections upon a beginning of world history underlines two things: firstly, the vast intertextuality of Loetscher's writing becomes increasingly evident. Secondly, it speaks once more to the author's determination to illustrate the relevance of contemporary fiction in a world that is largely driven by public discourse.

In spite of his questioning the validity of Horkheimer/Adorno's theory about the world's continuous worsening, however, Past is not designed as a naïve character. On the contrary, he is well aware of the negativity and violence of the world in which he has extensively traveled. As a consequence, he has seen enough to know that »one can be victimized by politics that aren't one's business; it was enough to stand within the blast radius of a plastic bomb at the wrong moment.«[77] (Loetscher 2004b: 55) At the latest when »the trinity of water gun, rubber bullet, and tear gas« is supplemented »by Molotov cocktails and gas bombs«[78] (ibid.: 53), the brutality of this world becomes indisputable. The novel obviously confronts its readers with a humanity that can and should be substantially improved.

The country of Switzerland is, despite its commonly close-to-stainless reputation, included in Loetscher's social critique. In so doing, the author illustrates how his own extensive travel biography allows him to identify not just challenges in faraway lands, but also problems in his immediate environment. (see also Dewulf 1999: 195) Loetscher was born and raised in *Niederdorf*, which is the part of Zurich that borders on the Sihl River.

---

[77] »Past war damals zuviel herumgekommen, als dass er sich darüber gewundert hätte, Opfer einer Politik zu werden, die einen nicht betraf; es genügte, sich zu falscher Zeit im Zerstörungsradius einer Plastikbombe aufzuhalten.« (Loetscher 2004b: 55)

[78] »[D]ie Trinität von Wasserwerfer, Gummigeschoss und Tränengas [...] ergänzt durch Molotowcocktails und Benzinbombem.« (Loetscher 2004b: 53)

While it is the internationally renowned *Bahnhofsstrasse* that pulsates as a major population hub in Limmat-Zurich, Sihl-Zurich has its own urban aorta: the *Langstrasse*, which is also known as Zurich's red-light district.[79] Therefore, Loetscher was always confronted with the side of Zurich that will never make it onto the front page of a travel brochure. (see Loetscher 1988b: 69) But it did make it into this novel, as is clear when the protagonist confronts the problematic aspects of Swiss society without any hesitation.

Past's Zurich is a city in which the existence of »questionable professions« (»unseriöse[] Profession,« Loetscher 2004b: 190) has become an everyday banality. While butchers and similarly ›dirty‹ professionals were once forced to live outside of the city walls, this rule is no longer enforced; not just because it would affect a considerable number of »respectable citizens« (»respektable Mitbürger,« ibid.), but also because such a system is no longer practical, since some of those »respectable citizens« already live outside of the city center – namely, in the surrounding villa communities, »where they have to pay fewer taxes.«[80] (ibid.) From this example, it follows that the Zurich in question might indeed be home to a society in need of a heavy downpour. After all, Loetscher's Noah once matter-of-factly justified the building of his Ark with the questionable condition of his social environment: »I looked at this society and could only come up with one thought: let it rain.«[81] (Loetscher 1995: 17)

Switzerland owes a great deal of its international reputation to the fiscal discretion of its banking sector. It is therefore no accident when the social critic Loetscher invokes his

---

[79] For a literary contrasting of *Bahnhofsstrasse* and *Langstrasse* see also Loetscher 1989: 89.

[80] »[A]ber von denen wohnten bereits manche ausserhalb in den Villengemeinden, wo man weniger Steuern bezahlte als in der Stadt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 190)

[81] »Ich habe mir die Gesellschaft angeschaut, da fiel mir nur eines ein: regnen lassen.« (Loetscher 1995: 17)

country's stereotypical designation as a money heaven by letting his protagonist write a book entitled »A Revelation.« (»Eine Offenbarung,« Loetscher 2004b: 21) Not surprisingly, this title caused Past's book to be sold in religious bookstores, and most of us readers take part in this profound misconception. For it is only revealed seventy pages later that Past in fact wrote a book entitled »Revelation of Swiss Francs and Centimes.« (»Offenbarung auf Franken und Rappen,« ibid.: 91) What appeared to pertain to a realm of Godly transcendence is, in actuality, a down-to-earth critique of how Swiss banks tend to remain silent; and so Past demands information on the origin of all that Swiss money, down to the last centime. (see ibid.: 156) No matter how dirty, the protagonist requests that Switzerland's past be revealed, because every single revelation contains the potential »to turn dirt into humus,« and Past concludes that »from admitted corruption to admitted corruption, his country could become world-compatible.«[82] (ibid.: 49)

Without a doubt, world compatibility is a worthwhile goal; in a globalized context, it is also a necessary one. Just as the West has lost its central position on the globe, so, too, has Switzerland lost its central position within Europe. When the mandarin arrives in twentieth-century Zurich, he is thrilled to find himself once again in a presumed center, as Swiss missionary Hans In Gassen presented Switzerland to him as being positioned »in the middle of a continent, in its heart.«[83] (Loetscher 2004b: 244) But Loetscher dismantles this assumption as unsustainable. For instance, one's heart beats differently after spending only a few days in Vienna. (see Loetscher 1988c: 29) Austria, according to Loetscher, not only claims the same impressive mountain chains as its Swiss

---

[82] »Past bewertete jede Enthüllung als zukunftsweisend. […] Was ans Licht komme, habe die Chance (›er erlaube sich zu zitieren‹), dass aus Dreck Humus wird. Von eingestandener Korruption zu eingestandener Korruption werde sein Land weltkompatibel.« (Loetscher 2004b: 49)

[83] »Hans In Gassen hat mir von seinem heimatlichen Weltberg erzählt, dass er aus der Mitte eines Kontinents stammt, aus dem Herzen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 244)

neighbor; Vienna also competes for its heart location. The city is a constant reminder »that there also exists another Europe, an Eastern Europe, a Slavic one.«[84] (ibid.: 31)

The specific condition of Switzerland, however, tends to provide enough starting points for debates about its status as a special case. Its mere existence as a nation, as the factual unification of more than one culture, is oftentimes deemed the result of an extraordinary political act of will. (see Loetscher 1988c: 73) But Loetscher argues against his country's reputation as a special case because of its employing four official languages; he observes that »from a global perspective, multilinguality is far from special.«[85] (ibid.: 56) Furthermore, despite its political neutrality, which is occasionally defamed as »neutral parochialism« (»neutrale Engstirnigkeit«, Loetscher 2004b: 136), Switzerland has long since become an integral part of its global surroundings.

This becomes clear, for example, when looking at the thoroughly Swiss alphorn. Loetscher explains that while the Swiss may be able to yodel with their own breath, their alphorn complicates the matter, »because a real alphorn is wrapped in bamboo – but in which alpine valley does bamboo grow?«[86] (Loetscher 1988c: 75) As one of the earliest imports from Asia, the alphorn bamboo illustrates how Switzerland's partaking in global interactions has long affected even the most traditional of its local traditions. Indeed, Switzerland is no island (see Widmer 2003); but – Loetscher's texts leave no doubt about that – Switzerland certainly *exists*. The author consistently presents the Swiss section's motto at the 1992 EXPO (*Exposition Mondiale*) in Sevilla – »La Suisse n'éxiste pas« – as

[84] »[D]ass es auch ein anderes Europa gibt, ein östliches, ein slawisches.« (Loetscher 1988c: 31)
[85] »Weltweit gesehen ist die Mehrsprachigkeit alles andere als ein Sonderfall.« (Loetscher 1988c: 56)
[86] »Denn was ein richtiges Alphorn ist, wird mit Bambus eingewickelt – in welchem Alpental aber wächst Bambus?« (Loetscher 1988c: 75)

an unfounded rumor. Not only does his Immune Man insist on the fact that Zurich exists (see Loetscher 1988b: 162, 403, 413, 415); Past also comes to demonstrate that Switzerland truly is a globally perceived entity. Otherwise, he could not encounter those Japanese tourists who care enough to take pictures of the Swiss National Museum next to Zurich's main station (*Hauptbahnhof*). (see Loetscher 2004b: 107) Casually, then, Past sums up his creator's view on his Swiss homeland as follows: »It's a small country, big enough to cause confusion.«[87] (ibid.: 243)

Past rejects the popular topos of Switzerland's narrowness, in terms of both size and mentality, as articulated by Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt. Also Paul Nizon's attempt in 1970 to disassociate his ›narrow‹ country from any true destiny, based on its alleged lack of »ambitions to participate globally« (»Ambition auf weltgeschichtliche […] Partizipation,« Nizon 1990: 147), is invalidated by Loetscher. With a humorous tone that is typical of his writing, the author turns the presumed vice into a virtue – for instance, when Hans In Gassen presents the typically Swiss tendency to wait patiently yet passively as having led to the country's fame within the watchmaking business: »their destiny of being too late,« In Gassen explains to the curious mandarin, »turned the Swiss into exceptional watchmakers.«[88] (Loetscher 2004b: 309) This unambiguous hint – at the internationally famous *Swatch*, of course – underlines once more Switzerland's economic relevance, which is a distinct layer of its truly global condition.

Loetscher's literary address of his Swiss home country exemplarily illustrates the nature of the social critique that runs through the novel. While he does not euphemize or attempt

[87] »Es ist ein kleines Land, gross genug, um nicht drauszukommen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 243)
[88] »[D]as Schicksalhafte der Verspätung habe sie zu guten Uhrmachern gemacht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 309)

to whitewash the truly questionable, he also does not demonize; he does not partake in »negative yodeling.« (»[n]egatives Jodeln,« Moser 2005: 410) Therefore, Loetscher's oftentimes humoristic take on social critique can be identified as thoroughly realistic. This strategy of outlining what is truly there instead of inventing a better or a worse version of reality is also obvious when Loetscher discusses the world's possible future; and once again, Switzerland serves as an example.

It is the mandarin who opens up the corresponding discussion. Saying aloud the Swiss German word for kitchen cabinet, *Chuchichäschtli*, requires the speaker to master pronunciation skills that are so specific that they are usually unattainable for a non-native speaker of Swiss German. As a consequence, the word ›Chuchichäschtli‹ is humoristically yet in earnest considered to be an indication of true Swissness; the mandarin is therefore right in explaining that »whoever masters this word belongs to the Swiss people.«[89] (Loetscher 2004b: 241) So when the Mandarin explains what that word's syllables would mean if they were part of his fictitious Mandarin Chinese, he also comes to outline a possible future of Switzerland:

> »›Li‹ has so many meanings, for example ›village,‹ and ›Tschi‹ can mean ›pond,‹ so Past's home country would be a ›village with pond,‹ or a ›pond in a village;‹ but ›Tschi‹ is not only a ›pond,‹ but also a ›ritual,‹ so it would be a village turned ceremony; but what about ›Tschu,‹ which means ›to begin‹ and ›to leave.‹ Does it mean: ›This village is at the beginning‹? […] Or does it indicate the contrary, namely that its people would rather leave? But ›Li‹ could also mean ›profitable‹ and ›Tschi‹ not just ›pond‹ and ›ritual,‹ but also ›tooth,‹ so the country would be a ›profitable tooth‹ – but whatever these three syllables mean, the fourth one, the ›Tschäst,‹ remains inexplicable.«[90] (Loetscher 2004b: 241)

[89] »Wer dieses Wort beherrsche, der gehöre zum Volk oder zur Volksfamilie der Schweizer.« (Loetscher 2004b: 241)

[90] »Was ›Li‹ nicht alles bedeute, auch ›Dorf‹, und ›Tschi‹ ›Teich‹, also wäre das Schlüsselwort für Pasts Vaterland ›Dorf mit Teich‹ oder ›Teich im Dorf‹, aber ›Tschi‹ bedeute nicht nur ›Teich‹, sondern auch ›Ritual‹, also wäre es ein Dorf, das zur Zeremonie wurde, was aber solle das ›Tschu‹, das ›anfangen‹ und ›ausgehen‹ bedeutet. Heisst das: ›Dieses Dorf steht am Anfang‹? [...] Oder bedeutet es das Gegenteil, nämlich dass die Leute am liebsten weggehen würden? ›Li‹ könne aber auch ›profitabel‹ heissen und

According to the mandarin's explication, Switzerland could either uphold the myth of its being a special case, thus positioning itself not just as a small, but also an insignificant country in a globalized world; it could become a »village with pond.« Or it could choose the opposite course of action and accept its participation within the ›global village‹: it could take on the role of a participating »pond in a village.« In so doing, its negative reputation of being an insignificant »pond« would become a mere rumor. The »village turned ceremony« indicates that in the form of this future version of itself, Switzerland would not be that insignificant after all. The indecisiveness of the mandarin's translation illustrates that a decision has not yet been made as to which path Switzerland should follow. As such, Switzerland could stand at the beginning of history together with the rest of the world; or it could, depending on its choice, have reached its end. By giving up on its role as a global player, it would no longer be world-compatible, which would certainly cause its inhabitants to prefer to leave. As an abandoned country, Switzerland would then indeed have to face the end of its existence.

Opposite this possible scenario of human abandonment lies the image of Switzerland as a »profitable tooth.« Immediately, we are reminded of the wisdom tooth of Past's grandmother; when he was a little boy, Past's grandmother used to open her »golden mouth« (»Goldmund,« Loetscher 2004b: 158) so that her teeth could tell her grandson stories. Little Past was most impressed by her one wisdom tooth that, in accordance with its educated designation, consistently employed academe-speak when narrating its odyssey: »Now that's destiny, when one's experiences can only be narrated

---

›Tschi‹ nicht nur ›Teich‹ und ›Ritual‹, sondern auch ›Zahn‹, also wäre das Land ein ›profitabler Zahn‹ – was immer auch mit diesen drei Silben gemeint sei, unerklärlich bleibe die vierte, das ›Tschäst‹.« (Loetscher 2004b: 241)

with academic terminology.«[91] (ibid.: 159) Once again, Loetscher undermines Switzerland's alleged lack of destiny, as grandma's wisdom tooth did indeed have a destiny. Hence, the effort it puts into making its destiny appear even more serious by way of wrapping it in an elaborate linguistic garb becomes primarily an expression of the tooth's Swissness. It is the expression of a Swiss sorrow that Loetscher once evaluated as an absurdity insofar as it goes hand in hand with the »cynicism of accusing the country of having been spared from World War II.«[92] (Loetscher 1988c: 107)

So instead of cynically wishing to suffer through a disaster, the mandarin's translation proposes another option. For the tooth that Switzerland may one day stand for is »a profitable tooth.« Unfolding around a definite reference to Past's revelation book is the proposition that Switzerland might use its financial stability to become beneficial to its surroundings. The Swiss banking sector would then no longer cause scandals, but rather benefit the globalized world in which it participates. Yet just as a wish as such does not guarantee its fulfillment, the mandarin's linguistic digression presents a variety of possible futures for Switzerland, all of which appear as probable options. Therefore, the most meaningful syllable of Switzerland's initiation formula ›Chuchichäschtli‹ is ›Tschäst,‹ which »remains inexplicable.« Evidently, Loetscher stays true to his narrative strategy of not proclaiming a specific *telos* of history – neither of a global world history, nor of the history of Switzerland within this larger context.

[91] »Das ist Schicksal, wenn man dem Erlebten nur noch mit Fremdwörtern beikommt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 159)

[92] »Mit dem Vorwurf der Irrelevanz geht gerne Hand in Hand das Mitleid, dass wir so wenig Schicksal haben, ein Bedauern, welches im Zynismus gipfelt, dass man dem Land vorhält, im Zweiten Weltkrieg verschont geblieben zu sein.« (Loetscher 1988c: 107)

In abstaining from speculation, Loetscher's theory of globalization neither constitutes a »post-theistic theodicy with a futuristic hyper-optimism« (»post-theistische Theodizee mit futurisiertem Über-Optimismus,« Marquard 2007: 93), nor does it support the Frankfurt School's negative teleology. Rather, the focus on how reality presents itself contains an optimism that is realistic enough to expect a continuation of current challenges: »[i]f something lies ahead, it's not just the new lighting of a fire, but also the advent of new quarrels and hostilities.«[93] (Loetscher 2004b: 336) It follows that the New Year that Past is facing is expected to be not just grounds for celebration, but also a stage for the unfolding of new conflicts. Nevertheless, this proposal's decided rejection of the »classical idea of the world's continuous worsening« warrants the question of whether its optimism finally does create yet another grand narrative of human emancipation.

Past puts it like this: »Now that the world came together, one New Year won't be enough. It will be necessary to start anew more than once.«[94] (Loetscher 2004b: 331–332) This moment of repetition adds a distinct discontinuity to Loetscher's ›grand narrative.‹ Despite the coherence of its ›hero‹ – which is to say: our globalized world –, this narrative counteracts a linear and emancipatory understanding of history. By letting the projected historical course of the world unfold around repeated beginnings, the novel confronts its readers with a narrative incoherence. Once more, I propose, we are faced with a mode of postmodern fragmentariness. The formal condition of the novel's first part finds yet another equivalent on the level of content, since what Loetscher novelistically presents here is a ›grand narrative‹ that is decidedly postmodern and also

[93] »Wenn etwas bevorstand, dann nicht nur dass das Feuer neu entfacht wird, sondern auch neue Streitigkeiten und Anfeindungen werden ausgelöst.« (Loetschr 2004b: 336)
[94] »Jetzt, da die Welt zusammenkam, wird ein einziges Neujahr kaum genügen. Man wird nicht oft genug anfangen können.« (Loetscher 2004b: 331–332)

realistic: it may express a hope for emancipatory progress, but in describing what truly exists, it refrains from predicting it.

Loetscher's novelistic focus on reality as it presents itself also leads to another rejection of Horkheimer/Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The two philosophers disagreed with the common notion of an extensive »cultural chaos« and instead observed that »today's culture burdens everything with similarity.«[95] (Horkheimer/Adorno 1969: 128) However, Loetscher strengthens the notion of cultural chaos in that the words ›disorder‹ (*Wirrwarr*) and ›chaos‹ (*Chaos*) run like a thread through his novel. Both expressions refer to an environment whose global entanglement has created a social reality that mirrors Past's »internal disorder.« (»Wirrwarr im Innern,« Loetscher 2004b: 27) At the same time, when faced with his inner tumult, Past explicitly seeks »not to succumb to the existing chaos there« (»sich dem dortigen Chaos nicht auszuliefern,« ibid.: 255), which underlines the connection that Loetscher establishes between his novel's two key words.

In deviating from Horkheimer/Adorno's take on culture, Loetscher establishes his own dialectic. Meaningfully, he employs the original version of this philosophical term, according to which dialectic not only means »language as an organ of thinking« (»Sprache als Organon des Denkens,« Adorno 1973: 66), but also designates a concept with a dialogic foundation. Both Plato and Aristotle regarded διαλεκτική as a technique of conversation that is based on the asking and answering of questions. Unlike political debates that aim at a rhetorical domination of the opponent, dialectical conversations aim at synthesizing differences. (see Rehn 2000: 26)

[95] »Die soziologische Meinung, dass [...] die technische und soziale Differenzierung und das Spezialistentum in kulturelles Chaos übergegangen sei, wird alltäglich Lügen gestraft. Kultur heute schlägt alles mit Ähnlichkeit.« (Horkheimer/Adorno 1969: 12)

Significantly, then, the novelistic dialogue between Past and the mandarin begins not in the second, but already in the first part of the novel. Even before the mandarin puts the famous Time Traveler's theory into novelistic practice by treating time as »only a kind of Space« (Wells 2003: 4), he is an important participant in Past's disorderly memory excursions. He repeatedly becomes a point of reference in Past's reminiscing – namely, when Past addresses the factually still-absent mandarin in the form of literary apostrophes. This becomes obvious when Past offers the mandarin the paper bill that he had just found hidden in his book, even though »he [i.e., the mandarin, AC] didn't react.« (»dieser reagierte nicht,« Loetscher 2004b: 171) Nevertheless, Past seems to expect the mandarin's active participation in these thought excursions; for when he looks at his watch at around midnight, he also »glanced at the mandarin; it appeared as if he had nodded.«[96] (ibid.: 185)

In the midst of the narrative chaos of the novel's first part, the mandarin becomes the only pillar of orientation. As such, the mandarin not only serves as a constant »witness« (»Zeuge,« Loetscher 2004b: 153) to Past's memory flashes, but also comes to illustrate how, in a world of globalization, the existence of others is the only guaranteed parameter in a situation of profound disorder.[97] By definition, an other is a living reminder of non-identity (*Nichtidentität*); hence, to enter into a dialogue with an other does indeed elicit a consciousness of said non-identity, which is – in employing a free application of Adorno's terminology – one of the foundational aspects of any dialectic. (see Adorno 1973: 17) Additionally, Loetscher's dialectic does bring about a certain

---

[96] »Er sah auf seine Armbanduhr, es ging gegen zwölf; er warf einen Blick zum Mandarin; ihm war, als hätte der genickt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 185)

[97] In that, I disagree with Heisook Kim, who argues that »[o]ne thing seems to be obvious. That is, in this world of globalization, there cannot be ›others.‹« (Kim 2006: 59)

synthesis of the differences between the interacting others – namely, in that their dialogue keeps revealing their shared horizon of experiences. (*Erfahrungshorizont*)

Staying true to the realistic orientation of his dialectic, however, the author does not pretend to even out any differences, and the discovered non-identity remains intact. So he once more avoids submitting to an ideological constraint, as »identity is the primordial form of ideology.« (»Identität ist die Urform von Ideologie,« Adorno 1973: 176) However, Loetscher's is a dialectic that decidedly does address the topic of aesthetics, which eventually places it at a considerable distance to Adorno's program of a »Negative Dialectic.« (see Adorno 1973: 10) By confronting the world that surrounds them, Past and the mandarin negotiate the role of fiction within the societal context that surrounds the novel. Furthermore, according to this aesthetic model, the dialogical technique of negotiation is not just illustrated by the literary characters, but also reaches into the realm of the novel's real environment; it also involves the readers.

In the same way that Past confronts a literary mandarin who lives in a book, the readers get to confront the literary character Past who lives in a novel. In addition to the literarily portrayed dialogue, then, it is a dialogue between reader and book, which also means a dialogue between reader and author, which provides the foundation for this literary aesthetics. Loetscher's aesthetics of dialogue in a globalized world, his realistic dialectic, presents the principle of a dialogic negotiation as a multidimensional undertaking. Every act of reading unfolds around the principle of reciprocity; the letters on the page are not just an inactive given; rather, they confront us with problems, elicit questions, and maybe even offer answers. So it seems that in our role as readers, we are

like Past, who is not irritated by the fictionality of his communication partner. Like Past, we repeatedly glance at our book and expect it to nod.

It is consistent with Loetscher's realistic dialectic that both Past and the mandarin share the experience of disorder and chaos: »What followed was ›The Time of Disorder.‹ Up to the point where we didn't realize anymore that we lived in disorder. Disorder can only exist as long as there is something that's orderly. The time of disorder was my time. ›It's mine, too,‹ interrupted Past.«[98] (Loetscher 2004b: 248) The fact that it is Past who interrupts this explanation of a situation of social disorder, and not the mandarin, is unexpected. Therefore, this short passage succeeds in underlining the long history of globalization, which once more counteracts the notion of its being a product of the twentieth century. Even more significantly, in addition to the literary individuals' shared horizon of experiences, Past and the mandarin also share certain paradigms of culture, even though their cultural backgrounds are substantially different. So when the mandarin reveals that his favorite play from the Chinese shadow theater is »The Chaos Box« (»Die Chaosbüchse,« Loetscher 2004b: 289), Past immediately draws a parallel to the corresponding story in the Western tradition:

> »›A Chinese Pandora's box? A box that contained all of the plagues? Pain, desperation, apathy …‹
> ›Out of the chaos box crawled five poisonous animals: a scorpion, a centipede, a snake, a toad, and a lizard … why shouldn't the sting of a scorpion be called a plague?‹
> ›Only hope remained inside. And all this happened because a woman, a Greek, an all-talented beauty, opened the box out of curiosity.‹

[98] »Es folgte die ›Zeit des Wirrwarrs‹. Bis zu dem Punkt, dass wir nicht mehr realisierten, dass wir im Wirrwarr lebten. Wirrwarr kann es nur geben, soweit es sich von etwas abhebt, das kein Durcheinander ist. Die Zeit des Wirrwarrs war meine Zeit. ›Es ist auch meine‹, unterbrach ihn Past.« (Loetscher 2004b: 248)

›In our myth, it was a man. Maybe it is the same person.«[99] (Loetscher 2004b: 289)

This passage illustrates a striking similarity between a piece of Western and Eastern cultural knowledge; after all, this myth's actor »maybe […] is the same person.« Also, the mere existence of these mythical explanations for the origin of plagues in different cultures shows that all people, from all cultures, are affected by misery; so what this passage indicates is the focus of Loetscher's program of intercultural dialogue: it is a focus on the participants' shared experience of being human. Although the negativity of this passage is hardly overlooked, it is not the description of an exclusively negative occurrence, as »Past thought it most convincing that everything began with chaos.«[100] (Loetscher 2004b: 140)

Based on this conviction, Past comes to draw a connection to a spiritual-philosophical universe that is constitutive of any intellectual mandarin from the Imperial Court in Beijing: as Confucianism did indeed begin with a chaos. In the midst of the turbulences of the Spring and Autumn period (770-476 BCE), in which the social order of the Zhou dynasty was crumbling opposite the power aspirations of numerous feudal lords (see Ni 2002: 4), Confucius and his followers rose to revive traditional values, »both as a reaction against disorder, and as a remedy for correcting chaos.« (Yao 2000: 170) A closer look at our two characters shows that this connection is far from random.

[99] »›Eine chinesische Pandorabüchse? Eine Büchse, in der alle Plagen drin waren? Der Schmerz, die Verzweiflung, die Apathie …‹ / ›Aus der Chaosbüchse krochen fünf giftige Tiere: Skorpion, Tausendfüssler, Schlange, Kröte und Eidechse … warum sollte der Stich des Skorpions nicht einer Plage gleichkommen?‹ / ›Nur die Hoffnung blieb verpackt. Und dies alles, weil eine Frau, eine Griechin, eine Schönheit, eine Allbegabte, aus Neugierde die Büchse öffnete.‹ / ›Bei uns war es ein Mann. Vielleicht ist es die gleiche Person.‹« (Loetscher 2004b: 289)

[100] »Past leuchtete am ehesten ein, dass alles mit einem Chaos begann.« (Loetscher 2004b: 140)

For even though it is a Daoist priest that captures those evil demons with his chaos box (see Simon 1986), it is Confucius who said that »[t]hose who know are not perplexed.« (The Analects 9/29, translation[101] according to Ni 2002: 73) Interestingly, schoolboy Past, unable to read the writing on his school's blackboard without squinting his eyes, used to be nicknamed »the perplexed Chinese.« (»perplexer Chinese,« Loetscher 2004b: 173) The fact that his nickname stays with him emphasizes how deeply Past is tied to the mode of perplexity. Past seems to have accepted this fact, since when co-worker Miss Loyleen from the cultural foundation later asks him whether he knew his nickname, he can nod amusedly: »the Perplexed Man.«[102] (ibid.: 371) Therefore, the word ›perplexed‹ has to be added to the list of this novel's key terms.

Most importantly, this analysis moves Past and the mandarin even closer together. Now, they no longer just have a specific cultural myth in common; the two characters also overlap. Both of them live in a time of disorder, in a time of perplexing chaos. And while the mandarin, among other things, represents the past, Past, by way of his nickname, comes to represent aspects of the mandarin. Their adherence to the principle of reciprocity is indisputable. Just like *The Analects*, as »a compilation of Confucius' (551–479 BC) and his disciples' teachings« (Yeo 2008: xvi), literally designate a »categorized conversation« (ibid. 56) with no clear order, Past and the mandarin cannot decide on the exact order of their conversation; neither of them can convincingly prove who actually started it.

[101] Of course, translation matters vitally here. Yet even if one favored an English translation of this Confucian saying that does not rely on the word ›perplexed,‹ the *quality* of perplexity as such remains.

[102] »Miss Loyleen fragte: Ob er seinen Spitznamen kenne. Belustigt nickte Past: der Perplexe.« (Loetscher 2004b: 371)

Past believes that the mandarin initiated their dialogue, as is obvious when he asks: »Why all these questions by the mandarin?«[103] (Loetscher 2004b: 221) But the mandarin, too, thinks that he was invited into this conversation, for he takes his vocabulary lists with him when climbing back into his book »[i]n case somebody should again address me. Later, in another time of disorder.«[104] (ibid.: 365) This seems to be a real possibility; after all, the intense chaos of the characters' social environment of disorder does indicate that this is just the beginning. And while the exact future of our globalized world is not outlined in Loetscher's realistic dialectic, literature has its definite place in it: »Tseng Ts'an once said, ›Great Man uses the books to bring together friends, and through friendships he bolsters up Manhood-at-its-best.‹« (The Analects 12/24; Ware 1955: 81)

2.3. Confronting the Other: West Meets East and Vice Versa

In a world of globalization, the ubiquitous presence of alterity is a fact. (see Agossavi 2003: 31) As a consequence of such constant confrontations with other versions of being human, cultural familiarities lose their reliability. (see Wiegerling 2006: 96) It is therefore not surprising that a popular approach toward alterity lies in its identification as a threatening negative. At the same time, however, the non-identification with an other also allows for a distinct awareness of what we consider our own. As living illustrations of who we are not, others aid us in defining ourselves. Nonetheless, such definitions are not neutral, because the other tends to be regarded as an »inferior opposition[]«[105]

[103] »Was sollte die Fragerei des Mandarins?« (Loetscher 2004b: 221)

[104] »Falls jemand wieder einmal das Wort an mich richtet. Später, in einer andern Zukunft des Wirrwarrs.« (Loetscher 2004b: 365)

[105] »Der/das Andere sind einzig nachgeordnete und minderwertige Oppositionen.« (Jentsch 2006: 21)

(Jentsch 2006: 21) to the self, which itself is an other to another self. Thus, the hierarchy of human value extends in various directions, but it tends to stay true to its key principle: the self gains its value from adhering to civility opposite a barbaric other. (see Bude 2005: 201)

Based on their presumed inability to speak as accurately as the Greeks, the ›barbarous‹ non-Greeks were named according to their linguistic inaccuracy. But the »bla-bla, bara-bara« (Kristeva 1991: 51) sounds of their rough language did not turn them into barbarians because of their foreign nationality; rather, the deprecative designation was meant to underline the savageness of their existence. As such, the semantic horizon that is tied to the term ›barbarian‹ provides an ideal stage for illustrating the antagonism that is inherent in any encounter between others. Unsurprisingly, Loetscher turns that stage into a foundation of his novelistic drama – of the novelistically presented dialogue, to be understood as an intersubjective endeavor between the key characters – on various occasions.

Yet the most significant aspect of those scenarios is how Loetscher repeatedly undermines the negativity of the barbarianism concept. This is already evident when looking at the mandarin's question, which functions as the impetus of any novelistic action. Notably, »the mandarin asked the question when he first encountered barbarians from Europe.« (Loetscher 2004b: 7) So when the mandarin asks if blue eyes are capable of seeing based on his own personal experience of having »jet black« (»tiefschwarze,« ibid.: 153) eyes, he demonstrates two things. On the one hand, he seems to strengthen the antagonistic opposition between his self and the European others; those others appear to him so different that he quite literally questions their ability to perceive the world around

them: »CAN ONE SEE WITH BLUE EYES?« (ibid.: 7) In addition, the barbarian designation is connected with ugliness in the mandarin's view. We not only learn that the mandarin finds blue eyes ugly (see ibid.: 251); concurrently, the mandarin also states that »the Huzan, a barbarian tribe in the North, have blue eyes.«[106] (ibid.)

On the other hand, the mandarin neutralizes the deprecating aspect of his initial question when he claims that it springs from an honest curiosity »to see, if only for once, what blue eyes see. Novelties, unknown matters.«[107] (Loetscher 2004b: 251) The mandarin's generally positive attitude toward the barbaric other becomes furthermore evident in his interaction with the Europeans. For in the case of those European barbarians, their designation as ›brutes‹ is justified: after having been welcomed to the Forbidden City, missionary Hans In Gassen »climbed onto a stone lion in front of the Portal of the Highest Harmony, gave it a kick with his heels, and said ›Moo.‹«[108] (ibid.: 307) The mandarin saves this »Swiss barbarian« (»schweizerische Barbar,« ibid.: 308) from torture with the argument that »a barbarian from Europe […] is not always master of his senses.«[109] (ibid.) Even though the mandarin's defense is clearly founded in the negativity of the barbarianism concept, it nonetheless illustrates a considerable amount of good will on the mandarin's part; when looking at In Gassen's display of cultural insensitivity, a reference to the missionary's ›savageness‹ is indeed appropriate.

By approaching the Chinese others as barbarians, whose cultural particularity elicited his mockery, Swiss missionary Hans In Gassen turned into an uncivilized brute

[106] »Die Huzan, ein Barbarenstamm im Norden, sind blauäugig.« (Loetscher 2004b: 251)
[107] »[D]ie Neugierde, einmal zu sehen, was blaue Augen sehen. Neues, Unbekanntes.« (Loetscher 2004b: 251)
[108] »Gleich nach der Begrüssungszeremonie setzte er sich vor dem Portal der Höchsten Harmonie auf einen Löwen, trieb ihn mit seinen Schenkeln an und machte Muuh.« (Loetscher 2004b: 307)
[109] »[E]in Barbar aus dem Westen sei seiner Vernunft nicht immer mächtig.« (Loetscher 2004b: 308)

himself. What Loetscher articulates here is once more the importance of the principle of reciprocity. The mandarin's curiosity has to be embraced by both parties; both sides need to be willing to take on their other's perspective, so as »to see, if only for once, what blue eyes see« – or, in arguing from In Gassen's Western starting point, to discover what view the »jet black« eyes of the mandarin have to offer.

In unfolding under a title that refers to the particularity of an Eastern other, Loetscher's novel puts this reciprocal principle into practice. Even though the novel's protagonist is the Western senior Past, all the endeavors of this protagonist remain bound to the eyes of an other; in fact, this novel only became possible because of an other's particularity – namely, the mandarin's eyes, which awakened a curiosity in their bearer toward another particularity. Thus, the novel not only argues for the necessity of intercultural dialogue in a world of globalization, but also, with its multidimensional title, illustrates how the participants in any dialogic undertaking come to overlap.

In a context of globalization, the various overlaps between selves and others have taken on a complex form. Cultural particularities do not simply co-exist as neighbors within a shared physical space, but also merge into a net of interwovenness. (see also Dewulf 2005: 169) This interwovenness – in the course of which the foreign turns into an everyday experience of the self and vice versa – becomes especially obvious within the realm of culinary enjoyment. When Loetscher's narrative voice reiterates a conversation about food decisions, the familiarity of once-foreign menus is distinctive: »Do we go to

the Greek? Moussaka again? Always those aubergines. Your Italian doesn't offer that many varieties either.«[110] (Loetscher 2004b: 193)

In fact, the formerly foreign Greek food has become such an integral part of the non-Greek speaker's gastronomical experience that they sigh with boredom at the possibility of having to face those well-known moussaka aubergines one more time. Even the various options that the Italian kitchen has to offer are already fully explored and promise nothing more than a culinary repetition. Furthermore, the text illustrates how the cultural horizon that produced certain culinary products finds its way into the vocabulary of our Europe-based speakers. While the first speaker announces that »meals with coconut milk need to be enjoyed where palmtrees grow« (Loetscher 2004b: 193), the second one illustrates how terms like ›restaurant‹ and ›car‹ casually transform into representatives of the foreign culture: »*The oasis* [emphasis added by me, AC] is too far away for lunch – and where should we park *our camels* [emphasis added by me, AC]?«[111] (ibid.) Read literally, without taking the cultural translation that occurred here into account, this scenario would confront us with a problem that is highly unlikely to be encountered in the Zurich of any time period.

The term ›hybridity‹ that Homi Bhabha coined to refer to those »›in-between‹ spaces« (Bhabha 2010: 2) in which »difference is neither One nor the Other« (ibid.: 313) also refers to a mode of self-identity that is bound to some integration of otherness, as the abovementioned examples from the culinary realm demonstrate. But our globalized

[110] »GEHEN WIR ZUM GRIECHEN? Schon wieder Moussaka? Ewig diese Auberginen. So viele Varianten bietet Euer Italiener auch nicht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 193)

[111] »Gerichte mit Kokosmilch muss man dort geniessen, wo Palmen wachsen. Für ein Mittagessen liegt mir die Oase nicht am Weg – und wo die Kamele parken?« (Loetscher 2004b: 193)

world-society presents a situation that is also ›hybrid‹ insofar as its overlapping particularities retain their particularness. (see Puff 2004: 57) As such, the global interwovenness of cultures cannot automatically bring about a state of multicultural harmony. However, while the conflict potential of any culturally hybrid situation is contained and extensively addressed in Loetscher's social critique, the author counters his own critique with a very particular tenor.

Repeatedly, Loetscher emphasizes those aspects of a hybrid whole that allow for the discovery of the similar within the foreign. (see also Zeller 1990: 74) For »[w]hat should be the matter with blue-green eyes. Didn't they have the same light sources like the others: the sun and neon tubes, candles and fire, light bulbs and stars.«[112] (Loetscher 2004b: 225) At the end of the day, the light sources for any eyes are universally applicable. Thus, it is highly consistent with the presented model of a realistic dialectic when Loetscher has his protagonist read the scientific mechanism of visual perception in a programmatic way: »Eyes register the world upside down.«[113] (ibid.: 219) When the mandarin begins with his own eyes and asks from there what other eyes can see, all eyes that are involved »register the world upside down.« From this it follows that an exchange with others about their respective upside-down might eventually allow for a negotiation of a visual representation of the world as it actually is. This possibility is further strengthened by Past's conclusion that his blue-green eyes oftentimes only saw »thanks to blue, brown, sea-green or whatever-colored«[114] (ibid.: 226) eyes. In a world that overflows with images, two eyes are not enough to capture everything. Therefore, Past's

[112] »Was sollte los sein mit Augen, die blaugrün waren. Hatten sie nicht die gleichen Lichtquellen wie die andern: Sonne und Leuchtstoffröhren, Kerzen und Feuer, Glühbirnen und Sterne.« (Loetscher 2004b: 225)
[113] »Die Augen nehmen die Welt wahr, wie sie auf dem Kopf steht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 219)
[114] »Seine blaugrünen Augen hatten gesehen dank blauer, brauner oder meergrüner oder sonst welcher.« (Loetscher 2004b: 226)

view of the world oftentimes has to depend on the view of those eyes that did the actual viewing for him. A significant amount of Past's knowledge relies on – medial, written, narrated – presentations by others. It holds true, then, that Loetscher cannot say »I« without thinking of a »You.«

In a world of myriad differences, Loetscher emphasizes that the mere presence of differences as such is not a problem. The Immune Man once pointed out that the actual problems arise from turning those differences into a basis for value attributions. (see Loetscher 1988b: 252) The co-existence of different others in a globalized world is therefore not presented as a reason for pessimism. On the contrary, in the papers of the Immune Man, it reads »that the cities of tomorrow are those that are inhabited by others that are as different from one another as possible.«[115] (Loetscher 1988a: 189) According to the author's underlying argumentation, this »tomorrow« is not just an inevitable occurrence within a chronological logic of time succession, but also becomes a desirable goal; a tomorrow of enriching differences is an improvement over a today of dead sameness. Staying true to the realistic orientation of his literary program, however, the author once again considers the advent of new challenges. Conflicts are to be expected at the early stages in the development of cities teeming with differences. As a consequence, the Immune Man concludes:

> »[A]s soon as those cities will have left all discrimination behind, they'll be envied by the cities that may be proud of their calmness but that'll have to discover how empty they are, because they're inhabited only by identical people.

[115] »[D]ass die Städte von morgen die seien, in denen möglichst Verschiedene zusammenleben.« (Loetscher 1988a: 189)

There can never be enough differences in one place.«[116] (Loetscher 1988a: 189–190)

Consequently, if the richness of tomorrow's cities depends on their bringing together a great variety of otherness, selves and others become interdependent entities, thus mirroring the coming together of the world's continents on a smaller scale. It is the transition between the novel's two parts that novelistically demonstrates the necessity of an other in the pursuit of a rich and thereby successful future; and it does so by springing from the failure of a single self.

In the last sub-chapter of the first part, Past is sitting »undisturbed [...] in front of his notebook.«[117] (Loetscher 2004b: 229) Despite his undivided focus on the computer game *Shanghai*, Past arrives at the *game over* stage long before reaching any significant result. So in reminiscence of former colleague Miss Loyleen's explication that a new world primarily means »*to have a second chance*« [English in the original] (ibid.: 203), he decides to claim that second chance for himself; because »[d]oesn't everybody have the right to get a second chance? The second round yielded a better, yet not a good result.«[118] (ibid.: 229–230) Evidently, Past fails to constructively utilize his second chance; that is, he loses the game again: »no more moves, the display field announced *rats*.«[119] (ibid.: 230) As an indication of the end, the digital ›rats‹ solidify Past's failure in the game. At

[116] »[W]enn diese Städte einmal alle Diskriminierungen hinter sich hätten, würden sie von den Städten beneidet, die sich zwar ihrer Ruhe rühmen konnten, aber die entdecken müssten, wie arm sie sind, da in ihnen nur lauter Gleiche wohnen. Es könne nie genug Anders- und Verschiedenartiges zusammenkommen.« (Loetscher 1988a: 189–190)

[117] »Ungestört sass Past vor seinem Notebook.« (Loetscher 2004b: 229)

[118] »Hat nicht jeder das Recht auf eine zweite Chance? Die zweite Runde brachte ein besseres, aber kein gutes Resultat.« (Loetscher 2004b: 229–230)

[119] »[K]eine weiteren Züge möglich, das Warnfeld annoncierte *rats*.« (Loetscher 2004b: 230)

the same time, they also cause him to embrace the end of his novel's first part: »He let it be.«[120] (ibid.: 230)

Significantly, the digital rats' disappearance now provides the basis for the appearance of the ultimate other. After all, the mandarin is himself »born under the sign of the rat«; as such, he is »familiar with the accusation of being fidgety. ›It's the disquietude of curiosity.‹«[121] (Loetscher 2004b: 346) It is this curiosity that stands at the beginning of the mandarin's time travel, and consistently, he makes himself known to his communication partner by way of a fidgety yet »muffled scratching and knocking. As if a mouse or a rat were looking for an exit«[122] (ibid.: 234); meaningfully, these rodent noises accompany Past in his office all the way through his memory excursions in the first part. Now, at the beginning of the second part, the ›rat‹ finally finds an exit and, in the form of the mandarin, enters into Past's present-day world.

In the very moment Past gives up on his hope to successfully handle the *Shanghai* game by himself, the Eastern expert climbs out of his book and clarifies the matter; because eventually, it is the mandarin who explains the game's idea to Past. While Past sought to pair off the picturesque tokens in a random process of trial and error, the mandarin discovers the hidden logic; for what the tokens depict are in fact the Chinese symbols of the four cardinal directions. »The mandarin understood: one had to find a second East to the East, and another South to the South, so that two tokens came together

[120] »Er liess das Spiel sein.« (Loetscher 2004b: 230)

[121] »Er sei im Zeichen der Ratte geboren, er kenne den Vorwurf, er sei unruhig: ›Es ist die Unruhe des Neugierigen.‹« (Loetscher 2004b: 346)

[122] »Nach wie vor ein dumpfes Kratzen und Klopfen. Als suche eine Maus oder eine Ratte einen Ausweg.« (Loetscher 2004b: 234)

that could be eliminated as a pair.«[123] (Loetscher 2004b: 361) The major cardinal directions, which are eliminated in the course of the game, are of course highly reminiscent of a globalized world's disorder. And it strengthens Loetscher's dialectical program that in such a situation of chaos, it is the exchange with an other that promises a new sense of understanding. It is therefore consistent that the *Shanghai* game's victor is required to undermine once-sound terms like ›North,‹ ›East,‹ ›South,‹ ›West,‹ and ›center‹: »Victory was achieved when any balance around a middle was gone, when on the horizon no sun rose behind a tree, and when no bird returned to its nest at night, when there was enough space for a dragon that spit fire.«[124] (ibid.: 362) The dragon, which is the symbol of the Chinese New Year, appears as a consequence of the abolition of outdated cartographic concepts. The message is clear: now that the world is coming together, a multitude of potentially colliding perspectives has to be taken into account; and to that end, interactions among others are necessary. Only then can the history of a coherent world truly begin.

The mandarin's climbing out of his book at the beginning of the second part contains a definite moment of surprise; and yet, neither of the two characters involved seems to be surprised by this occurrence at all. Casually, we learn that »[t]he imperial official snorted. […] He clung to the dog-ear of the book binding.«[125] (Loetscher 2004b: 234) This thoroughly peculiar scenario, in which the mandarin furthermore asks Past for a

---

[123] »Der Mandarin begriff: Man müsse zum einen Osten einen zweiten suchen und zum Süden einen anderen Süden, so dass sich zwei treffen, die als Paar weggeschafft werden können.« (Loetscher 2004b: 361)

[124] »Gewonnen war das Spiel, wenn jede Ausgewogenheit von Mitte weg war, wenn am Horizont hinter keinem Baum eine Sonne aufging und am Abend kein Vogel in sein Nest zurückkehrte, wenn Platz gemacht wurde für einen Drachen, der Feuer spie.« (Loetscher 2004b: 362)

[125] »Der kaiserliche Beamtete prustete […]. Er klammerte sich an das Eselsohr des Schutzumschlags.« (Loetscher 2004b: 234)

backscratcher (see ibid.: 234), is not presented as a peculiarity. Unspectacularly, then, the mandarin definitively leaves his book, only accompanied by another factual description: »The mandarin climbed out of the dust jacket.«[126] (ibid.: 235)

Over fifteen years earlier, Herbert Rosendorfer's mandarin had meticulously planned his time travel. Even though he did not foresee the exact destination of his travel adventure, his mathematical calculations allowed him to move exactly one thousand years into the future. (see Rosendorfer 2009: 8) Loetscher's mandarin, on the other hand, leaves his book vehicle only after feeling addressed and invited to do so by Past; he did not consciously »fl[i]ng [himself] into futurity.« (Wells 2003: 22) As such, his surprise at ending up in another ›middle kingdom‹ (see Loetscher 2004b: 244) appears genuine. Yet this is the only surprise there is on the mandarin's part, just as the only surprise for Past lies in the fact that the mandarin speaks German. (see ibid.: 234) The readers, however, are left baffled by this whole scene, in which the fictitious mandarin seamlessly merges with the reality of the larger fictitious frame around him.

The same is true for the mandarin's departure, which is not presented as special either; it also does not appear to be planned. While Rosendorfer's Kao-tai had to wait several months for his time compass to bring him back into his own time (see Rosendorfer 2009: 204), our mandarin does not know where his next adventure might lead him. His departure from Past's apartment is only directed by the conventional end of witching hour: »›One o'clock. The mandarin stood up. […] He placed the book on top of the banana carton, and climbed back into his book jacket.«[127] (Loetscher 2004b: 365)

---

[126] »Der Mandarin kletterte aus dem Schutzumschlag.« (Loetscher 2004b: 235)

[127] »›Ein Uhr.‹ Der Mandarin hatte sich erhoben, kreuzte die Arme auf der Brust, machte einen Kotau und schüttelte den Kopf. Er bettete das Buch zuoberst auf die eine Bananenschachtel und kletterte danach in seinen Schutzumschlag.« (Loetscher 2004b: 365)

What both the arrival and departure of the mandarin illustrate is how, in a world that is coming together, the way in which interactions with others play out may not always be planned; which further underlines Loetscher's claim that the actual future of our globalized world is unforeseeable. The mandarin thus clearly serves as an example of a literature that unfolds around the unforeseeability of said future. So even though indeed »[m]ost of it [does] sound like lying« (Wells 2003: 19), I argue with H. G. Wells' Time Traveler that »[i]t's true – every word of it, all the same.« (ibid.)

When the mandarin's mother was pregnant with him, we learn, »she dreamed of a unicorn; it announced a son, a unicorn with scales and an oxtail.«[128] (Loetscher 2004b: 246) It follows that the mandarin is at least somewhat of an expert on unicorns. As a consequence, it is the mandarin who plausibly explains how that unicorn made it onto Past's otherwise strikingly precise map. He bases his explanation on a similar phenomenon within his own cultural horizon: »When the first Chinese sailed westwards around Southern China, they sighted sea monsters, winged hounds and fish with five heads. Those who travel far away want to see monsters. What else could they talk about at home.«[129] (ibid.: 246) To actually undertake a journey, however, might reveal that the »fables, myths, [and] legends« one encounters are in fact »fit only for women and children«: the winged hound or five-headed fish might turn out to be a unicorn, »[a] beautiful and elegant creature, with a single horn like a diadem.«[130] (Loetscher 2004b: 245) Therefore, what the mandarin illustrates with his rising up from his book-grave for

[128] »Als meine Mutter mit mir schwanger ging, träumte sie von einem Einhorn; es verkündete einen Sohn, ein Einhorn mit Schuppen und einem Rinderschwanz.« (Loetscher 2004b: 246)
[129] »Als die ersten Chinesen Südchina umschifften und westwärts segelten, haben sie Seeungeheuer gesichtet, geflügelte Hunde und fünfköpfige Fische. Wer weit wegfährt, will Monster sehen. Wovon soll er sonst zu Hause erzählen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 246)
[130] »Ein schönes Tier, ein elegantes, ein einziges Horn wie ein Diadem.« (Loetscher 2004b: 245)

the duration of witching hour is that not every ghost that haunts us at night is necessarily an evil monster.

But just as real as nightly monsters oftentimes appear to be, are the negative emotions they elicit. At the turn of the century, a Western discourse about the future role of China in a globalized world decidedly played into such a fear – namely, the fear of an ever-growing and ever-expanding China. After the ›four little dragons‹ (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan) in the 1970s, and the ›three small tigers‹ (Indonesia, Malaysa, and Thailand) in the 1980s (see Weggel 2006: 446), it was now China's turn to utilize the 1990s for rapid economic progress. China's economic growth under the reform program of Deng Xiaoping »has been a miracle« (Lin 1998: 39) which turned the country into a highly influencial factor in Asia. (see Lange 2004: n.p.) As a serious economic competitor, however, China also came to be present in the Western mind mainly as a fear-inducing threat. (see Bode 2005: n.p.)

China's communist state system certainly does not line up with Western values of a liberal democracy. Also, its willingness to undermine the Western pricing standards within the realm of its globally reaching ›made in China‹-economy is neither fair play toward its competitors, nor are the sub-standard labor conditions of the Chinese workers acceptable. (see also Navarro 2008) Inevitably, the relation between the West and the East is bound to contain a respectable amount of conflict potential. Nevertheless, any form of Western fear-speak tends to quickly transform into an elaborate anti-propaganda that demonizes the Chinese other altogether; which usually has the effect that the

agitating argumentation, in its lack of a differentiated line of reasoning, comes to be undermined as well.

Loetscher weakens China's threatening aspect with the help of the mandarin. The fear factor that especially the contemporary version of the mandarin's country provokes is captured in the monstrous dragon depicted on his silk dress: »The body of a snake with gold-plated scales, a head with round eyes and the mouth of a horse, two fibrous beards hanging down from the flews, across a flat forehead the antlers of a deer. Threateningly, the dragon erected its claws and lay in wait.«[131] (Loetscher 2004b: 87–88) Without a doubt, this dragon is indeed a threatening creature; why else would it need to be lying in wait. But crucially: »it didn't attack.« (»er sprang nicht,« ibid.: 88) So what Loetscher presents here is a New Year, as represented by the Chinese dragon, that may not start with an abandonment of prominently upheld fears of the other, but that nonetheless contains a potential not to lead into battle. So »[d]id it [i.e., the dragon, AC] wait for a more convenient moment?«[132] (ibid.: 88) Will it attack after all? Maybe; but maybe not. By ending the corresponding sub-chapter with this unanswered question, Loetscher establishes the ambivalence that is inherent in this scenario as a valid option in itself.

As mentioned above, Loetscher utilizes his novel primarily to underline what others do have in common: their being human. Such a focus on a shared humanity allows for the discovery that »the skin of the other may reveal one's own skin, and one's own skin may

[131] »Ein Schlangenleib von vergoldeten Schuppen, ein Kopf mit Kugelaugen und einem Pferdemaul, von den Lefzen hingen zwei fasrige Bärte, über der flachen Stirn nach hinten das Geweih von einem Hirsch. So bedrohlich der Drache die Adlerkrallen stellte, er lag auf der Lauer.« (Loetscher 2004b: 87–88)
[132] »Wartete er auf einen günstigeren Augenblick?« (Loetscher 2004b: 88)

reveal the skin of the other.«[133] (Loetscher 2004b: 350) Past and the mandarin are set up to make that exact discovery. After their experiment of rubbing each other's palms, the result is an indisputable similarity between the two hands, because both »had taken on a reddish color.«[134] (ibid.) Interestingly, when he lets his characters recognize their shared humanity, Loetscher also introduces the Eastern concept of *ren* into the Western setting of his novel. While the »humanistic facet of Confucianism« (Chun 2012: XII) is widely recognized as having influenced Western Enlightenment thinkers (see ibid.), Loetscher novelistically demonstrates the actual practicability of the involved concept; so what he offers with and in his novel is a transcultural ideal of humanity (*Humantiätsideal*) that is tied to its literary medium as much as it is tied to the realm of real-world activity that said medium addresses.

Even though there is no consensus on how ›ren‹ should be accurately translated into English, suggestions like ›benevolence,‹ ›human-heartedness,‹ and ›altruism‹ (see Ni 2002: 27) all include that reference to a skin of similarly reddish color that asks to be discovered. Just like any dialogue, then, *ren* cannot be achieved without the inclusion of at least one other, which is consistent with the fact that »many descriptions of *ren* that Confucius offered were about interpersonal relations.« (ibid.: 28) The pursuit of *ren*, which aims at the perfecting of one's humanity, goes hand in hand with a participation in human interactions that foster the cultivation of *ren*. Confucianism offers a concept for this, too: as a »holy ritual or sacrificial ceremony« (ibid.: 52), *li* »is the body of external behavior patterns that allow *ren* to be applied and manifested publicly.« (ibid.)

---

[133] »Es könnte sich erweisen, dass unter der Haut des andern die eigene zum Vorschein kommt, wie unter der eigenen die Haut des andern.« (Loetscher 2004b: 350)

[134] »[D]ie Prüfstellen waren sich ähnlich, sie hatten sich rötlich verfärbt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 350)

A very prominent area of social interaction that offers itself to the application of ceremonial behavior patterns is the realm of food and drink: »By serving and dining with respect and appreciation, in a proper setting, the mere physical nourishment becomes a ceremony, and thereby becomes human.« (Ni 2002: 55) While the mandarin is climbing out of his book, Past's teakettle is warming up on the stove, and the water is already boiling. Therefore, it seems only natural that Past invites his unexpected guest to a cup of tea. Yet a closer look at the unfolding scene clarifies that this is more than a casual after-travel refreshment to the mandarin; it is a veritable »tea ceremony« (»Teezeremonie,« Loetscher 2004b: 236), an opportunity to apply *li* and thereby cultivate *ren*.

In the same way that Past embraces the unexpected opportunity to act as an inviting host, the mandarin embraces the opportunity to behave as an appreciative guest. And so, in the course of observing Past (see Loetscher 2004b: 236), he begins to imitate his host's every move: »because Past fiddled about, the mandarin carefully spilled a few drops onto the table, too; he did it like Past with an apologetic gesture.«[135] (ibid.) Of course, this scene is humoristic in its own right, and it certainly succeeds in securing the Western reader's sympathy for this peculiar Chinese character who treats the accidental spilling of tea as a serious ritual. More importantly, however, the mandarin's efforts to adhere meticulously to what he sees as the proper rules of this unfamiliar tea ceremony refer not only to an encounter between two representatives of different cultural backgrounds. In addition, those efforts also indicate a willingness to accommodate the other, even when the foreign customs may have a perplexing effect on the unaccustomed outsider.

---

[135] »[D]a Past kleckerte, verschüttete auch der Mandarin mit Bedacht einige Tropfen auf dem Tisch; er tat es wie Past mit einer entschuldigenden Geste.« (Loetscher 2004b: 236)

Once again, we are confronted with the novel's key term of perplexity. Past's attempt to clarify this word's spelling to the mandarin is revealing: »Past put an ›x‹ at the end of ›perplexed‹: ›x also means something unknown, something that is yet to be defined.‹«[136] (Loetscher 2004b: 277) Both characters recognize the quality of that x in their own situation. Past, for instance, longs for understanding, and is thus highly pleased to recognize the mandarin as somebody who does not understand, either: »›Oh, sometimes I just don't understand.‹ That's when Past jumped up and gave the mandarin a hug: ›Now I believe you. »Not to understand,« what an expression.‹«[137] (ibid.: 239–240) What Past and the mandarin share is not only their humanity, but also the experience of being perplexed humans. With that, the path is paved for yet another overlap between the two characters.

While it was first Past who, based on his nickname »the perplexed Chinese« (Loetscher 2004b: 173), came to embody aspects of the mandarin, it is now the mandarin who embodies aspects of Past. As a perplexed man, Past describes himself as exceptionally good at shaking his head – in disbelief and confusion. (see ibid.: 240) Significantly, however, it is the mandarin who practices this quality of Past, as expressed in the ritualistically employed formula »[h]e crossed his arms over his chest, kowtowed and shook his head.«[138] (ibid.: 277) As such, the mandarin adheres to the principle of *ren*, which involves a respectful treatment of others, in spite of his perplexity. In performing

[136] »Past setzte ans Wortende von ›Perplex‹ ein ›x:‹ ›x steht auch für etwas Unbekanntes. Für eine noch zu bestimmende Grösse.‹« (Loetscher 2004b: 277)
[137] »›Ach, manchmal komme ich nicht draus.‹ Da sprang Past auf und umarmte den Mandarin: ›Jetzt glaub ich Ihnen. »Nicht drauskommen,« was für ein Wort.‹« (Loetscher 2004b: 239–240)
[138] »Er kreuzte die Arme auf der Brust, machte einen Kotau und schüttelte den Kopf.« (Loetscher 2004b: 277) See also pp. 292, 301, 365.

the ritual kowtow, which is »the act of prostration, with the forehead touching the ground three times« (Kissinger 2012: 34), the mandarin is as respectful toward the foreign other as he can be, according to the customs of his own culture. Considering that Loetscher makes his mandarin cross his arms over his chest in preparation for the kowtows, the kowtows' actual practicability remains questionable. Yet even if our mandarin's kowtows are mere bows that leave the practitioner on his feet, Loetscher still succeeds in conveying the respectfulness that acts as the foundation of this transcultural interaction.

Loetscher's interweaving of his characters presents the self as part of the other, and the other as part of the self. Indeed: »Loetscher's categorical imperative is to obliterate categories.«[139] (De Weck 2005: 62) The mandarin puts it like this: »There are more similarities between peoples than one generally assumes.«[140] (Loetscher 2004b: 255) It follows that what is needed in the pursuit of *ren* within any situation of intercultural communication is the establishing of a common ground that is founded in the shared humanity of the communicators.

Significantly, the mandarin's Qing Dynasty itself was an environment that had to establish a common ground among different peoples. As a »result of military invasion by the peoples of Manchuria« (Smits n.d.: n.p.), it was considered by the ethnic Han Chinese to be a barbarian dynasty, although a well-governed one. In response to the resistance of their subordinate people, the Manchu emperors invested a considerable effort into studying the Chinese language and culture, thus seeking to improve their reputation and rise in respectability. (see ibid.) A similar phenomenon took place over the course of the

[139] »Loetschers kategorischer Imperativ ist es, Kategorien zu verwischen.« (De Weck 2005: 62)
[140] »Es gibt mehr Völkerverbindendes, als man annimmt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 255)

early European attempts to spread Christianity in China. Loetscher's mandarin refers to his Swiss missionary Hans In Gassen as a valuable aid in resolving the chaos around him; therefore, the chaos of twenty-first century Switzerland causes him to sigh: »I feel like I once more need a missionary. Why does man want to understand?«[141] (Loetscher 2004b: 261) The actual historical situation of the Christian mission in China, however, led right back into chaos and left behind renewed enmities; as such, it warrants a closer look.

Despite China's generally isolated existence, European Jesuit missionaries arrived in the ›middle kingdom‹ in the sixteenth century, which also constitutes one of the first notable contacts between West and East. (see Gernet 2000: 261) In order to improve the Jesuits' acceptance by the Chinese people, famous Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), who was also responsible for the earliest introduction of Confucianism to Europe (see Yao 2000: 2), »deliberately adapted Christian teachings to Chinese customs and culture.« (ibid.: 239) Also, whereas the Manchu emperors still sought to establish their authority by requiring all males to adapt their hair to Manchu style – which consisted in shaving some hair at the top and wearing the rest in a long, braided ponytail (see Smits n.d.: n.p.) – the Jesuit missionaries changed their own styling. The missionaries put on »Confucian clothes and [grew] their hair long. In this way they created a new image of ›Scholars of the West.‹« (Yao 2000: 1) Indeed, the Catholic Jesuits' strategy was promising.

Yet in 1704 and 1715, the Pope expressed his dissatisfaction with the custom of allowing Chinese converts to perform Confucian rites and to uphold their ancestor worship. The consequence of the ensuing split between the Chinese Imperial Court and

[141] »Mir ist, als bräucht ich wieder einen Missionar. Warum will der Mensch drauskommen?« (Loetscher 2004b: 261)

the Roman Church was a decree by Qing Emperor Kang Xi, issued in 1720: it stated that »from now on it is not necessary for Westerners to engage in religious activities in China, and we forbid it.« (quoted in Yao 2000: 241) The Rites Controversy in Rome, which resulted from the Catholic Church's unwillingness to accommodate the Chinese converts' otherness, turned a remarkably successful and harmony-oriented undertaking into a failure. Consistent with this historical reality, our mandarin's attitude toward that Swiss missionary whom he appears to have truly valued started out as an open-minded skepticism: »But the thing with God, who's only one, yet at the same time three – I wanted to know what I'm getting myself into.«[142] (Loetscher 2004b: 238) The Rites Controversy, however, turned the mandarin's openness to further information into a rejection of the Christian religion altogether. Poignantly, he puts his standpoint into the following rhetorical question: »How should we, how should the Son of Heaven take their heaven seriously, when they didn't even agree with each other.«[143] (ibid.: 309)

The failure of the early Christian mission in China is significant not because a conversion to Christianity as such is to be deemed universally desirable, but rather because it refers to a very particular challenge that is inherent in any religion – that is, religion's requirement of exclusivity. Despite the early Chinese converts' substantial conversion, their concurrent adherence to their cultural particularity turned them into ›insufficient‹ Christians in the eyes of the Catholic Church. Due to its very particular internal functioning, religion is therefore to be regarded as an exceptionally challenging factor when it comes to any intercultural communication between others.

[142] »Doch die Sache mit Gott, der nur einer ist und zugleich drei – ich wollte wissen, auf was ich mich da einlasse.« (Loetscher 2004b: 238)
[143] »Wie sollten wir, wie sollte der Sohn des Himmels ihren Himmel ernst nehmen, wenn sie sich selbst über ihn nicht einig waren.« (Loetscher 2004b: 309)

2.4. Religious Universalism Re-evaluated

It is certainly justified to define human beings as »animals suspended in webs of significance they themselves have spun« (Gorringe 2004: 3), which is a statement that aims to distinguish humans from animals and raise them above their animalistic nature. Therefore, I reject the contrary line of argumentation that uses our postmodern reality as grounds for defining culture as »the name for all those things we practice without really believing in them, without ›taking them seriously.‹« (Žižek 2003: 7) By opening any newspaper nowadays, it becomes clear that cultural belonging is indeed taken seriously, that holding on to different cultural values can still turn actual strangers into potential enemies. It is furthermore indisputable that references to religious belonging present themselves as some of the most passionately defended statements within any wider discussion of culture. As such, beliefs cannot generally be characterized as »disavowed/displaced« (ibid.) in our times.

Loetscher's novel underlines the importance of the religious factor in that it confronts it irrespective of its protagonist's secularized condition. That Past did grow up within a predominantly Christian society becomes evident on various occasions; just as evident, however, is Past's skeptical attitude toward this religion. For instance, little Past once befriended two very specific devil-boy statues: the one that stuck out his tongue, untouched by the Holy Bible's many warnings, »and especially the one that grinned as if he had actually listened to the sermon.«[144] (Loetscher 2004b: 64) Furthermore, grown-up Past utilizes the story of original sin that he learned in Sunday school to first introduce

[144] »Past hatte sich mit dem angefreundet, der den Gläubigen die Zunge herausstreckte, und erst recht mit dem, der grinste, als hätte er der Predigt zugehört.« (Loetscher 2004b: 64)

the theory of the world's continuous worsening which he so decidedly rejects. In the beginning, he remembers, there was »paradise, out of which man was evicted into a world of suffering, from which only death provided a release.«[145] (ibid.: 139)

Concerning the role of religion today, the presented conclusion is just as disillusioned as the protagonist's attitude is critical. In the course of a discussion in the cultural foundation, the question of whether one should turn cannons into church bells so as to promote world peace is answered by the question of »whether that would make any difference: just as many people had been killed by church bells as had been killed by cannons.«[146] (Loetscher 2004b: 137) Undeniably, this novel is written from a secularized perspective; as such, Past, too, got to live his adult life with even less religious activity than those »four-wheel-Christians who only go to church three times, for baptism, wedding and funeral, and never by foot; the first time, they are carried, then they ride in a carriage, and finally in a coffin.«[147] (ibid.: 169) Consequently, Past's religious focus lies elsewhere – inter alia, in the fruitless attempt to decide during the TV screening of news reports from Northern Ireland »whether those who ran after their attack were Catholics or Protestants.«[148] (ibid.: 53) In addition to Past's critical approach toward the teachings of Christianity, the novel presents religion as a basis for violent conflicts of various sorts.

---

[145] »Im Religionsunterricht und von der Kanzel herab war er belehrt worden, dass am Anfang das Paradies war, aus dem der Mensch vertrieben wurde in die Welt des Jammertals, von dem nur der Tod erlöse.« (Loetscher 2004b: 139)

[146] »Ob man Kanonen nicht in Glocken umgiessen solle, ging die Debatte weiter, ob das einen Unterschied ausmache: man habe mit Glocken genauso viele Menschen getötet wie mit Kanonen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 137)

[147] »[D]ie Vierräderchristen, die nur dreimal in die Kirche gingen, für Taufe, Hochzeit und Beerdigung, und zwar nie zu Fuss, das erste Mal werden sie getragen, nachher nehmen sie die Kutsche und zum Schluss den Sarg.« (Loetscher 2004b: 169)

[148] »Oder wenn er bei Nachrichten aus Nordirland zu unterscheiden versuchte, ob die, welche nach ihrem Wurf flohen, Katholiken oder Protestanten waren.« (Loetscher 2004b: 53)

Furthermore, of course, religion becomes a topic due to the mandarin's condition as a literary character who reports about his ›first-hand‹ experiences with the early Christian mission in China. That those missionary undertakings were indeed unsuccessful at the time is reflected by the fact that the mandarin's ›beyond,‹ from which he fled into his book, was not the Christian purgatory, but rather an Asian underworld that seems to combine beliefs from the Buddhist, the Daoist, as well as the Chinese folk traditions. Presumably after passing by the various dungeons of hell (see Mullen n.d.: n.p.) in the aftermath of an elaborate death trial, the mandarin – unwilling to take the risk of being reincarnated as an animal – »fled back over the bridge of silence.«[149] (Loetscher 2004b: 237)

Interestingly, neither the mandarin's experiences during his death trial nor his path through the many sections of hell are addressed in the novel, even though his having to drink the »tea of forgetfulness« (»Tee des Vergessens,« Loetscher 2004b: 237), which he spits out after the first gulp, strongly suggests that he did progress through all those stages. This lack of detail is a striking inconsistency within Loetscher's narrative style; yet it is an inconsistency whose existence also makes this novel an honest one. Rather than simplifying the Eastern other, Loetscher stays true to his strategy of utilizing his characters as mere paradigms of West and East. So where an accurate depiction of the complex Eastern culture would require a scholarly report, the Western author abstains from potentially turning details into a lie. Loetscher writes literature, not a textbook.

The author counters his lack of inside knowledge about the addressed foreign religious customs with a religion in which he is an expert: namely, with a literary one. For after escaping from his underworld, the mandarin found a painter who would let him

[149] »Ich bin über die Brücke des Schweigens zurückgeflohen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 237)

»cross over into the small eternity of a picture.« (Loetscher 2004b: 238) Eventually, that picture would be transferred into a book, Past's book, and so the mandarin can present the culmination of his afterlife as follows: »[o]ne day I arrived in the light of a dust cover.«[150] (ibid.) In the very moment the mandarin stepped into »a book grave« (»ein Buchgrab,« ibid.), he transformed into a literary paradigm of infinite durability and universal validity.

When he visits his earthly grave, the mandarin contentedly notices that it is positioned so as to face toward the South. According to Chinese tradition, whoever ranks higher is assigned the location that faces in a southward direction. (see Fähnders 2011: n.p.) It follows that the novel fully embraces its mandarin's social belonging, which leads right into old Beijing's Imperial Court; and with that, it also leads once more to Confucianism. As early as 140 BCE, during the Han Dynasty, access to a career in the Chinese state system required applicants to pass exams on canonical Chinese texts. Even though said exams were not necessarily based on Confucius' teachings as compiled in *The Analects* (see Ess 2003: n.p.), it was nonetheless Confucius who re-established the ancient classics as the basis for a »transformation of the person and preparation for public service.« (Ni 2002: 5) Not surprisingly, it was also under the Han Emperors (est. 200 BCE, see Ess 2003: n.p.) that Confucianism first became China's official state philosophy.

Loetscher's embrace of Confucianism seems to be unrelated to the fact that there have been recent attempts by the Chinese regime to promote Confucianism again – ironically enough »in part to counter the rapid increase of Christianity« (Yang 2012: 77)

---

[150] »[I]ch durfte in die kleine Ewigkeit eines Bildes hinüberwechseln. Kam später in ein Buch mit Seiten. [...] Eines Tages kam ich ans Licht eines Schutzumschlags. Und jetzt also hier.« (Loetscher 2004b: 238)

– after its official condemnation under Mao's rule. (see: Fähnders 2011: n.p.) Rather, the reason seems to lie in the educational core of Confucianism, which proves to be remarkably in line with Loetscher's novelistic draft of a literary ›religion.‹ Yet Confucianism, which is »first concerned with life rather than death and with humans rather than with spirits« (Yao 2000: 153), offers no speculations regarding an afterlife. In *The Analects*, Confucius proclaims that »[y]ou cannot know about death before you know about life« (11/12, Ware 1955: 72); thus, the mandarin had no other choice than to arrive in the underworld of Chinese folk beliefs.

It is generally disputed whether Confucianism is a religion or rather a philosophy. (see Ni 2002: 1) Regardless of its exact designation, it remains a thought edifice that largely corresponds with Loetscher's literary aesthetics. Confucianism's focus on an immanent heaven, for example, brings about an emphasis on man's accountability. And this is an integral part of any dialectic aesthetics that seeks to identify conversations among others as the basic means to negotiate a globalized world's chaos. In order to enter into a constructive exchange with the unknown, all involved participants must live up to the responsibility that comes with such an undertaking. They must be convinced that their moral actions, that the Way (*dao*) they choose to embrace, will have an influence – be it positive or negative – on their reality.

Also, there is no consensus regarding the exact constitution of the Confucian Heaven (*tian*). (see Yao 2000: 140) It nevertheless holds a central position within Confucianism. This is, for example, apparent in the fact that any ruling Chinese dynasty would only be accepted by the people as long as it was believed to have »the Mandate of Heaven.« (Kissinger 2012: 91) The only thing that is consensually established about that

Heaven, however, is its profound difference from the transcendent heaven of the Christian God: *tian* is immanent in that it shows itself »in regular patterns of discernible social and natural events, and [in that] it could be affected by the moral undertakings of the people.« (Ni 2002: 12) Contrary to any concept of predestination, the ability of human conduct to »affect the will of Heaven [...] leads to the sense of being responsible for one's own destiny.« (ibid: 14) Self-cultivation on the basis of education is thought to allow for a manifestation of virtue, which in turn directly affects »real life.« (ibid: 15)

The strong focus on immanence in Confucianism leads to a great number of differences when compared to Christianity. Just as China appears in history as a »permanent cultural phenomenon« (Kissinger 2012: 5), Confucianism confronts us with the »absence of an initial creative act.« (Ames 2010: 43) Instead of assuming the power of an other-wordly God, »[t]he classical Chinese believed that the energy of creativity resides in the world itself.« (ibid: 37) Within this worldly self-dynamic, it is not a personal God who becomes the point of reverence, but rather »a sacred relation between Human and Heaven, which is equivalent to the universe.« (Chun 2012: 23) This profoundly different outline of the two discussed belief systems further underlines the paradigmatic character of the two main literary figures in Loetscher's novel. Past and the mandarin, both of whom do not carry actual names, come to represent highly differing concepts. By doing so, they not only bring together West and East, Switzerland and China, Christianity and Confucianism, but also illustrate the concept of radical difference as such.

Nonetheless, there are certain points of contact between Confucianism and monotheistic religions. There is, for instance, a closeness between the Confucian concern

with ›how to become good‹ and »the question ›how to be saved‹ in many other religious traditions« (Yao 2000: 157) – the major difference here being, of course, that the answer for the followers of Confucianism can only be found exclusively in themselves. Based on its aiming at an immediate human reality, it appears accurate to define Confucianism as »a humanistic religion« (ibid.: 46), or as »a religious humanism.« (ibid.: 155) Loetscher's utilization of the famous Eastern belief system in order to discuss the basis of humanity that is shared by all others is also supported by the prominent notion that »[t]he values that Confucius taught are not ›Confucianism,‹ they are universal.« (Ess 2003: n.p.)

The aspect of universalism is central to Loetscher's take on religion. When comparing different religions to one another, the author consistently seeks to emphasize aspects that those religions have in common. Thus, his observations not only lead him into the aggressive realm of soccer games, in the course of which religious differences are transcended by a common goal, when »Christians commit fouls for Muslims, and Muslims fouls for Christians.«[151] (Loetscher 2004b: 47) Loetscher also comments on the inter-religiously shared experience of victimization on the basis of religious beliefs, because »not just those who called themselves Christians had been exiled, but also Jews and Muslims; but the Chinese, Hindus and Indians didn't have a better fate either.«[152] (ibid.: 139)

Furthermore, the aspect of universalism is also central to various religions. I have already mentioned the notion that regards the values proclaimed by Confucius as universal. Considering that the second half of our equation is represented by Past and his

[151] »Christen begingen für Muslime Fouls und Muslime solche für Christen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 47)
[152] »Vertrieben worden waren […] nicht nur die, die sich Christen nannten, ebenso Juden wie Muslime; aber den Chinesen, Hindus und Indios war es […] nicht anders ergangen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 139)

Christian socialization, it is time to look into the discourse on the Christian religion's take on universalism. Although the proposals I will discuss were published years after *The Mandarin's Eyes*, the following analysis promises to reveal some basic parameters that need to be taken into consideration when evaluating religion's role in a globalized world. It also suggests once more that our novel has literarily dealt with some core issues of our contemporary existence, before they made it into the corresponding theological and philosophical discourses.

In 2008, K. K. Yeo undertook an experiment similar to the one in Loetscher's novel, when he established »that the difference between Confucius and Paul is the difference between China and the West.« (Yeo 2008: 35) With that, he enters into an area of discourse that has established the letters of Saint Paul with their address to various different others as a foundation for discussing the notion of Christian universalism. In the center of this universalism lies God's grace, which unexpectedly – on the road to Damascus (see Badiou 2003: 17) – turns »persecutor into proclaimer« (Bird 2008: 16), *Saulus* into *Paulus*; and it is the same grace that later constitutes the center point of this ›least apostle's‹ preaching. The experience of being called by God is the only event in the Pauline biography that Paul himself repeatedly underlines and recalls, and it is the connecting piece between Paul's individual history and the collective one of Christianity. (see Agamben 2005: 14)

The Letter to the Galatians, the first and second Letters to the Corinthians, as well as the Letter to the Romans are unequivocally believed to be of Pauline origin (see Brisebois 1986: 59); and they exemplarily illustrate central concepts of Pauline theology,

at whose core lies the triad ›*sola gratia*, *sola fide*, *solus Christos*,‹ which is to say, the idea of »salvation through faith in Christ.« (ibid.: 98) Consequently, Paul sees as his main mission the propagation of faith in Jesus as savior of humanity. In taking up his preaching of the gospel, Paul notably addresses »Greeks and Nongreeks« (Rom. 1:14), which undoubtedly displays a certain universalist claim in Paul's theology.

Yet even though »[t]he shared concern of the Analects and Galatians lies in their concern for the formation of a community rule that leads to freedom, integrity, and harmony« (Yeo 2008: 88), there remains an insurmountable difference between Confucius and Paul. Yeo, »as a Chinese Christian« (ibid.: 253), tries to identify a shared common ground between the two in that he conflates their respective ethics »to construct a *political ethics that is theological*.« (ibid.) Eventually, however, Yeo fully returns to Paul's core mission of faith when he concludes that Paul's universalism, whose ethics parallel Confucian thought, finds expression in the apostle's concept of being ›in Christ‹: »It is a concept that transcends the biases and limitations of words and cultural perceptions.« (ibid.: 324) But being ›in Christ‹ has no meaning outside of a Christian context, just like the Christ-event as such does not have any significance outside of a Jewish context. But in order to be truly universal, any concept of universalism has to be applicable independent of specific contexts. Paul's presumed universalism is therefore not just any universalism; it is, and remains, a *Christian* universalism.

Two of the most prominent thinkers within the current discourse on a Pauline revival, Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, both attempt to abstract from content in Pauline theology. Significantly, both do so based on their observations of contemporary society. What

Žižek calls »today's tolerant liberal multiculturalism« (Žižek 2003: 96) is described by Alain Badiou as »cultural […] relativism.« (Badiou 2003: 6) Furthermore, Badiou correlates postmodernism's denial of any universal basis with a »progressive reduction of the question of truth.« (ibid.) In rereading the letters of Saint Paul, he seeks to address the Pauline concept of universalism as a counter-model to this reduction of truth, which turns Paul into a thinker of »the universality of truth« (Caputo 2009: 2); a universality that causes the truth for one to become the truth for all. (see ibid.)

It is important to notice that both Badiou and Žižek are interested in the conceptual structure of Pauline thought, not in its specific religious focus that brought about a movement called »Christianity.« Badiou even goes so far as to state that he »never really connected Paul with religion« (Badiou 2003: 1); and the specific content of Paul's message is not considered relevant. (see ibid.) In his attempt »to refound a theory of the Subject« (ibid.: 4), Badiou treats Paul as a »subjective figure of primary importance« (ibid.: 1) because Paul tried to answer the same question that is plaguing Badiou – namely: »What are the conditions for a *universal singularity*?« (ibid.: 13)

The fact that Paul's social context was the multiculturalism of Tarsus in Cilicia explains his need to include a universalist claim in his theology. A message that wants to overcome differences among its recipients has to aim at something that is shared by all different identity groups, which consequently generates the idea of a/the universal. Yet in spite of his repeatedly addressing both Jews and Greeks in his letters, Paul's all-inclusivity is not as clear-cut as one might presume. Already Dale B. Martin observed that Paul »repeats more than once that the blessings of the gospel are ›to the Jew first‹

and only *then* to the Greek (Rom. 1,16; 2,9–10).« (Martin 2009: 98) This Jewish primacy is tied to Paul's self-characterization as a former convinced Pharisee, which causes him to hold on to his Abrahamitic heritage. Slavoj Žižek therefore explicitly reads Paul on the basis of his Jewish context. Instead of assuming that Paul had left behind his Jewish position, he credits him with arguing from *within* this position. (see Žižek 2003: 10) This is insofar a convincing approach as the Christ-event does not have any meaning unless it is seen in the context of Jewish belief. (see Caputo 2009: 4)

But this upholding of God's bond with his chosen people inevitably calls any universalist reading of Pauline thought into question, as the core of its argument remains Judaism. Consequently, Paul's intention is in fact not to »declare the nondifference between Jew and Greek« (Badiou 2003: 57); the aim is rather to incorporate the non-Jewish others into the Jewish self, which Paul seeks to accomplish by extending the scope of this self without letting it turn into something non-Jewish. Paul's mission therefore shows itself to be focused more on conversion than on difference-embracing universality; which naturally generates another notion of universalism than the one suggested by Badiou and Žižek. Actually, Badiou himself points at the central aspect here – namely, that monotheism necessarily has to address all: »Monotheism can be understood only by taking into consideration the whole of humanity. Unless addressed to all, the One crumbles and disappears.« (ibid.: 76) So it is, above all, the principle of monotheism that generates Paul's universalist approach. That same principle deprives Christianity of any primacy as a religion of universalism, because addressing all is a feature that every monotheist religion possesses.

The abovementioned arguments considered, Paul's message creates the impression of exclusion rather than universalism, and the assumption that Paul's universalist paradigm undermines the opposition between different identity groups (Jews and Greeks) proves to be illusory – a view that is, for example, supported by John D. Caputo's evaluation of Paul's dictum – that there is neither Greek nor Jew – as follows: »That is exactly what we want St. Paul to say, we being contemporary democratic, fair-minded pluralists.« (Caputo 2009: 1) But, Caputo continues: »He did not affirm the alterity and diversity of Mediterranean culture. He took it for a culture of idol worshippers.« (ibid.) Paul's God who addresses all is still the Christian God.

Loetscher clearly undermines the dominant position of the Christian God within a globalized world's multitude of gods. Due to the many founding mothers that come together in a context of multiculturalism, for instance, Past considers a revision of Mother's Day. He believes that it should be transformed from a celebration of one's personal mother into a celebration of the founding mother of all. »For reasons of presentability, she best be a many-breasted one. […] That way everybody should find their teat, but one was already reserved for Maria lactans, the Christian Virgin, nursing her child.«[153] (Loetscher 2004b: 330) When the Christian Occident's *Maria lactans* becomes not only just one influential mother among others, but also just a daughter of a universal mother, the predominance claim of the religion with which she is associated cannot be sustained. Once again, Loetscher focuses on the shared within the different. In terms of religions, he hypothesizes about a shared primordial mother (*Urmutter*); all

[153] »Doch sollte an diesem Datum nicht bloss die leibliche Mutter gefeiert werden, sondern aller Urmutter. Der Anschaulichkeit wegen am besten eine vielbrüstige. [...] Da dürfte jeder seine Zitze finden, eine allerdings war bereits besetzt für die Maria lactans, die christliche Jungfrau, die ihr Kind stillt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 330)

religions, in one way or another, stem from that part of man's humanity that longs for nurturing.

The strong association between Pauline universalism and its religious core mission causes a profound problem for readings of Paul like the ones by Badiou and Žižek because those readings are based on the exact opposite: namely, on disconnecting Paul from his religious framework. By decontextualizing Paul's concept, another concept is evoked; but the difficulty is that this new concept lacks any content. Badiou, who focuses on truth as the central point of Pauline thought, defines this truth as »faith working through love (Gal. 5,6).« (Badiou 2003: 92) But because there are no longer any specific (religious) ideas to which this faith could refer, it has to remain an empty, pure – and hollow – faith as such.[154] The ensuing notion that we are all the same in that we are different does not solve the problems that are brought about by a coexistence of differing truths that are universalizable only insofar as they share an inner core concept of truth. To declare that what is true »must be true for all« (Caputo 2009: 7) may show clearly why such a paradigm of truth has to step back from specific content(s), but it does not facilitate the overcoming of boundaries between different particularities.

Badiou's response to the existence of those boundaries is also problematic. On the one hand, he denies dialectic in Paul and insists that »[t]he universal is not the negation of particularity« (Badiou 2003: 110); however, since »*the fact is* that there are Greeks and Jews« (ibid.: 98), his suggestion for an approach to those differences leaves the main

[154] Dale B. Martin already noticed »the *absence* of content to their truth« (Martin 2009: 95) with regard to Badiou and Žižek; but it is not evident to me why he also includes Paul into those who »proclaim a truth without content,« (ibid.) as the content of Paul's truth is exactly that which Badiou describes as a fable, namely the Christ-event.

issues unaddressed: »Differences can be transcended only if benevolence with regard to customs and opinions represents itself as *an indifference that tolerates differences*.« (ibid.: 99) The most striking feature of this proposal is that it makes parallel two profoundly different concepts – indifference and tolerance, in my judgment, can never go together. To think of indifference as a tolerating power is to mistake it for something it is not. While tolerance goes along with an active acceptance of the other irrespective of its otherness, indifference functions without any such activity because being indifferent means, above all, not to care. When it comes to personal convictions and beliefs, there is much more at stake than »customs and opinions,« since it is *identities themselves* that are called into question by the existence of other/differing identities. As soon as the whole being is involved, pursuing the apathetic way of indifference is no longer an option, and an »indifference that tolerates differences« shows itself to be a theoretical concept that cannot be put into practice.

Loetscher takes the caring quality of tolerance into account when he reflects upon that better world that might lie ahead in the new millennium. What he hopes for is »[a] paradise that tolerates cultural customs and preferences, whether they concern eternally grazing cattle or eternal worship, a timeless sofa of lust and a garden with rivers made of milk and honey, [...] or a Garden of Eden.«[155] (Loetscher 2004b: 139) What Past imagines here is nothing less than a universal paradise that accommodates all versions of afterlife, including – but not limited to – the Happy Hunting Ground of the Native Americans, China's custom of ancestor worship, the Muslim heaven of milk, honey, and

[155] »Ein Paradies, das auf Volksgewohnheiten und Vorlieben Rücksicht nahm, ob es um ewig weidende Rinderherden ging oder um ewige Anbetung, um ein zeitloses Lustsofa und einen Wonnegarten mit Flüssen, in denen Milch und Honig fliesst [...], oder um einen Garten Eden.« (Loetscher 2004b: 139)

beautiful women, as well as the Christian Garden of Eden. It would be a heavenly world in which religions peacefully coexist with one another.

The sole basis on which this could happen is a concept introduced by Loetscher that might be able to transcend all expected enmities and conflicts. For to »tolerate[] cultural customs and preferences« is no smooth undertaking; where innermost truths are confronted with the existence of numerous alternatives, a form of tolerance is required that can take the insult and nonetheless continue striving for peace. It is the mandarin who states the logic that lies in having to remember, in the course of any new beginning, »the Goddess of Mercy.«[156] (Loetscher 2004b: 336) As a concept that is highly reminiscent of the religious principle of grace, mercy is an ethical parameter that appears in all religions, just as ethics lie at the core of every religion. (see also Bourne 2008: 176) So in addition to being established on a universal quality of religion as such, Loetscher's concept – unlike the aforementioned theories of Yeo, Badiou, and Žižek – lets particular religions retain their content. The aim is not to strip religions of their particularities in order to turn them into universally applicable, though eternally hollow, entities. Rather, Loetscher insists on the necessity of mutual understanding among fundamentally different others, which is made possible by the active application of graceful tolerance.

The need to focus on mutual understanding is underlined by numerous theoreticians who advocate what Raimundo Panikkar put into the neat concept of *imparative philosophy*, based on the Latin word ›imparare,‹ *to learn*: »a philosophy dedicated to learning through dialogue« (Dallmayr 2009: 733), which is strikingly similar to Loetscher's literary

[156] »Daher leuchtete es mir ein, dass man bei einem Neuanfang zugleich der Göttin der Barmherzigkeit gedenkt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 336)

dialectic. The fact that »[w]e can be human in very different ways« (Gorringe 2004: 222) is the underlying observation of all kinds of dialogue, but the aspect of being human is what all participants in a dialogue share. And it is exactly this notion of shared humanity that brought about manifold discussions regarding the idea of universal ethics.

A very convincing suggestion in regard to a possible definition of the essence of being human comes from American philosopher Richard Rorty, who proposed that all human beings are characterized »by the capacity for sympathy.« (Bretherton 1996: 258) This sympathy makes people aware of the »frailty of others« (ibid.) based on an awareness of their own frailty. Loetscher addresses this notion, as well, although in a rather peculiar way.

Young colleague Angelo once showed up in the cultural foundation with a T-shirt whose print assigned the word ›shit‹ to various religions: »The Protestant heard: ›There wouldn't be any *shit* if I worked harder.‹ Because the representative of the Vatican had laughed, the Protestant read him the Catholic avowal: ›If there's *shit*, I deserve it.‹« Obviously, ›shit‹ is presented as an all-inclusive, »universally democratic« word. And so »the Daoist concludes: ›*Shit* happens,‹ while the follower of Confucianism teaches: »Confucius says that *shit* happens.‹«[157] (Loetscher 2004b: 325–326) The negativity of the shared experience being introduced is explicit. This passage doubtlessly succeeds in underlining that all people of all religions are affected by suffering, no matter how this concept needs to be adapted to fit into their individual religious frameworks. Once again,

[157] »Der Protestant vernahm: ›Es gäbe keinen *shit*, würde ich härter arbeiten.‹ Da las der Protestant dem Vatikan-Vertreter, der gelacht hatte, das katholische Bekenntnis vor: ›Gibt es *shit*, habe ich ihn verdient.‹ […] Es wurde beim *shit* an alle gedacht. Es ist ein demokratisch-allmenschliches Wort. Der Taoist stellt fest: ›*Shit* passiert nun einmal,‹ während der Konfuzianer lehrt: ›Konfuzius sagt, dass *shit* nun einmal passiert.‹« (Loetscher 2004b: 325–326)

Loetscher does not attempt to even out differences. Rather, he focuses on the universal human experience of negativity, which asks for ethics that are all-inclusive.

An establishment of universal ethics, as opposed to forcing any religion's allegedly universal claim into a concept it cannot sustain, neither requires the abolishment of religions nor supports the intention to convert the religious other. Instead, it makes dialectic negotiations of differences a necessary mode of everyday interactions. And in the course of such negotiations, Loetscher proposes, literature plays a vital part; not least because it is a medium of language, which is the main vehicle for interacting with others. Confucian sage-king Yao put it like this: »Who does not know the value of words will never come to understand his fellow-men.« (The Analects 20/3, Ware 1955: 125)

2.5. An Intellectual's Faith in Paper: Deconstructing the Ivory Tower

It is remarkable how many of the compiled sayings in *The Analects* pertain to *The Book of Poetry*. This collection of around 300 poems that Confucius selected from over 3000 (see Yao 2000: 59) is certainly a major point of reference within the educational system of Confucianism. In a system of thought that aims to preserve old knowledge rather than create new truths, literature's role as a container of cultural tradition becomes especially valuable: »I transmit but I do not create; I am sincerely fond of the ancient.« (The Analects 7/1; Ware 1955: 50) Consequently, Loetscher's mandarin also expresses such a fondness of past times when he says that »as a mandarin among mandarins, I always voted against annihilating the old.«[158] (Loetscher 2004b: 309) As one such

[158] »[A]ls Mandarin unter Mandarinen bin ich dafür gewesen, die Bisherigen und mit ihnen das Bisherige nicht einfach zu streichen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 309)

personification of »the old,« Past joins in the mandarin's determination to preserve what lies behind, as is evident in his reaction to the mandarin's statement: once more, »Past jumped up and gave the mandarin a hug.«[159] (ibid.) The characters' generally positive attitude toward traditionality corresponds to Loetscher's proposal of a highly traditional ideal of humanity (*Humanitätsideal*) that seeks to reactivate a focus on *ren*.

In fact, Loetscher puts literature's capability to preserve valuable paradigms from the past right into action; for what he accomplishes with his novel is twofold. Firstly, he counters the societal disorder and chaos of his globalized environment with a work of fiction that promotes a concept that embraces tradition, and thus embraces the past. Secondly, however, and at the same time, that work of fiction also embraces the societal disorder and chaos of a globalized environment. Loetscher thereby establishes the relevance of contemporary literature in line with the Confucian concept of education: »If, while being a student of the past, a man also understands the new things which surround us, he may be used as a teacher.« (The Analects 2/11; Ware 1955: 26) The only difference is that it is not »a man« that comes to take on the educator's role in this literary aesthetics, but rather literature itself.

Past once experienced the instructive capacity of literature on a sightseeing trip to a slaughterhouse in Chicago. Only »[t]hanks to a writer, in remembrance of his reading« was Past able to realize »what his eyes did not register by themselves.« His eyes »stayed focused on the cowboy hat and a lasso that was hanging on a stick next to a saddle, and found the theme photogenic. Rarely had he noticed before how analphabetic eyes are

[159] »Da sprang Past auf und umarmte den Mandarin.« (Loetscher 2004b: 309)

without proper guidance.«[160] (Loetscher 2004b: 190) It was literature that allowed Past's eyes to look beyond the photogenic theme and become aware of the ›other‹ reality at the location: »A cow that climbed onto another one skid, fell down, and was trampled to death in its own excrement by those that fled, chased from behind, forward into a captive bolt.«[161] (ibid.) In order to live up to the task of providing »proper guidance,« literature, according to Loetscher, has to take a critical stand in addressing the world; only then can it hope to reveal reality's sometimes-ugly truths despite man's preference for believing in invented beauty.

Literature is also a medium of mediation between cultures. Not without reason did Ch'en K'ang declare that »[i]f you don't study *The Poems* you won't be able to carry on a conversation.« (The Analects 16/13; Ware 1955: 108) As containers of cultural particularities, works of fiction allow for insights into foreign truths that may otherwise, without literary guidance, remain inaccessible. Loetscher's novel provides the stage for an interaction between West and East, Switzerland and China, that would, for various reasons, not have been able to occur outside of the literary realm. One of those reasons lies in a profound challenge inherent in any intercultural dialogue, which Loetscher fictitiously solves by having his mandarin speak German.

---

[160] »Dank eines Schriftstellers, in Erinnerung an seine Lektüre, sah Past in dem ausgestorbenen Schlachtgelände, was die Augen von sich aus nicht bemerkten. Die hielten sich beim Cowboyhut und einem Lasso auf, das an einem Pfahl neben einem Sattel hing, und fanden das Sujet fotogen. Selten war ihm so bewusst geworden, wie analphabetisch Augen sind, wenn man sie sich selbst überlässt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 190)

[161] »Eine Kuh, die auf eine andere kletterte, rutschte, glitt aus und wurde im eigenen Kot von denen zu Tode getrampelt, die von hinten gejagt nach vorn dem Todesbolzen entgegenflohen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 190)

Significantly, this is the only aspect that elicits a sense of wonder in Past: »He was surprised; the mandarin spoke German.«[162] (Loetscher 2004b: 234) Apparently, to share the same linguistic basis in the face of a globalized »language confusion« (»Sprachenwirrwarr,« ibid.: 345) appears far more peculiar than an over-300-year-old mandarin who climbs out of a book. On the one hand, this is definitely surprising in itself; on the other hand, however, it once more emphasizes the underlying realistic condition of this novel, into which the mandarin's German language skills certainly do not fit. For the reality is that, as a medium of language, as a cultural product that is made up of words, not even the most insightful literature can satisfactorily overcome linguisctic restrictions. Just like ›real‹ conversations, literary conversations also require a shared linguistic basis to make mutual understanding possible. Loetscher confronts this problem when he lets his characters stumble upon exactly such a language gap. When the mandarin opens up his heart to Past in the form of a self-written poem, his German explication of the sinographs reads as follows:

> »From mouth to mouth, therefore an old story. A man is leaning against a tree, sure, he's taking a rest. In one hand a stick; he's a father. Above his head a line, the sky, and no space in between. There's tweeting, because a bird is depicted along with a mouth. Footprints, […] where there's little stone, I mean, in the sand. […] In front of all this a creature, […] a child. Another creature, […] a woman, she listens, her ear's a door behind sounds. Water in connection with eyes. […] A heart with closed windows, and the woman carries the heart itself in her hands. Yes, that's it. What about you?«[163] (Loetscher 2004b: 360)

[162] »Er wunderte sich; der Mandarin redete deutsch.« (Loetscher 2004b: 234)

[163] »Von Mund zu Mund, demnach eine alte Geschichte. Ein Mann lehnt an einem Baum, klar, er ruht sich aus. In der Hand einen Stock; er ist ein Vater. Über seinem Kopf ein Strich, der Himmel, und keine Leere. Zwitschern, weil ein Vogel zusammen mit einem Mund abgebildet ist. Fussabdrücke […], wo wenig Stein, ich meine, im Sand. […] Davor ein Wesen, […] ein Kind. Ein anderes Wesen, […] eine Frau, sie horcht, ihr Ohr eine Tür mit Tönen davor. Wasser in Verbindung mit Augen. […] Ein Herz mit geschlossenen Fenstern, und das Herz selber trägt die Frau in den Händen. Ja, das wär's. Und Sie?« (Loetscher 2004b: 360)

Even though this passage does display poetic characteristics, it is a far cry from appearing as a poem. Furthermore, Past struggles with the actual meaning of these images turned words just as much as we readers do; and the novel does not present us with any version of a negotiated meaning. We are denied access to the mandarin's soul based on our unfamiliarity with his linguistically particular way of constructing meaning. This is a significant conclusion, considering that the African colleague from Past's cultural foundation also once stated that in his culture, poems used to be regarded as x-rays for many centuries. (see Loetscher 2004b: 216)

The mandarin's German skills, therefore, are an inventive trick. This fictitious act is necessary to educationally outline the author's hope of what could happen in the course of an encounter between culturally different others, provided their language base is strong enough to allow for such an encounter. However, the novel is too realistic to completely ignore the factual difficulties of the portrayed scenario. Loetscher may regard unicorns as highly valuable inventions, but he displays a deep awareness of their being unicorns, which is to say: products of imagination, mythical creatures. As such, Past and the mandarin do struggle with the linguistic conveyance of meaning in their conversation. Which is also captured in Past's repeated efforts to adapt his German to what he presumes to be the principle of the mandarin's »Language of a Hundred Flowers.« (»Sprache der Hundert Blumen,« Loetscher 2004b: 292–293)

Literature cannot overcome language restrictions. But it can and, in the case of Loetscher's novel, does suggest attitudes that might lead to constructive intercultural interactions irrespective of the ever-present limitations on both sides. What Loetscher novelistically presents here is an ideal of humanity (*Humanitätsideal*) in the form of a

literary aesthetics that assigns to literature a responsibility toward human beings. With its emphasis on a *ren*-oriented attitude rather than on potentially excluding content-parameters, that responsibility consists in a thoroughly secular transcendence of cultural particularities.

As a literary aesthetics, Loetscher's program inevitably has to face the accusation of lacking any active program-character. Confucius says that »Great Man seeks to be slow of speech but quick of action.« (The Analects 4/24; Ware 1955: 37) It is evident that literature, as a primarily discoursive medium of written speech, cannot live up to this expectation of ›greatness.‹ Loetscher does not provide any concrete suggestions as to how his ideal of humanity (*Humanitätsideal*) could be globally achieved and implemented. Thus, the author has his Immune Man ask directly: »How does one act without becoming active?«[164] (Loetscher 1988b: 445) Loetscher's answer is constitutive for the whole of his literary work, for the answer is that one writes. Yet writing, too, is commonly suspected to be just as passive as overt passivity. So obviously, it is necessary to make an addition to this concept of literary action, in order to make it truly plausible. Confucius asks: »why continue to employ« a man who »is able to recite all three hundred of *The Poems*« (The Analects 13/5; Ware 1955: 83) when he is at the same time unsuccessful in government positions and on missions he is sent on. The question reads as a rhetorical one, which illustrates that *The Analects*, too, present literature as a medium that is oriented toward reality. And while Friedrich Nietzsche asked in 1873 that history be investigated only with a focus on life (see Nietzsche 2005: 17), Hugo Loetscher now establishes a concept of literature that does the same.

---

[164] »Wie handelt man, ohne dass man etwas unternimmt?« (Loetscher 1988b: 445)

Literature does not free one from responsibility, but it marks the beginning of a different kind of responsibility (see Loetscher 1987: 39); a writer's responsibility – for which Loetscher coined the essentially untranslatable term ›*Behaftbarkeit*‹ – is that »[t]hey have to stand behind what they write, they have to feel responsible for what they declare.«[165] (Frühwald 1999: 43) In line with a *littérature engagée* according to Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus (see Siegrist 2005: 389), Loetscher claims that there is a »secular responsibility« (»säkulare Verantwortung,« Loetscher 1994: 10) in literature, which he found exemplarily demonstrated by Jesuit António Vieira's »Sermon to the Fish« (*Die Predigt des heiligen Antonius an die Fische*). Significantly, Vieira gave said sermon on June 13, 1654, in an attempt to defend the Native Americans against unjustified land claims made by Portuguese colonialists. What was articulated in response to a cultural clash in the seventeenth century – which also happens to be the century of our mandarin – proves just as valid in the face of constant cultural clashes in a global age.

Like his »elective relative« (»Wahlverwandter,« Stäuble 2005: 270) Vieira, Loetscher, too, sees himself not as a social revolutionary, but rather as a social critic. (see Loetscher 1994: 26) Accordingly, when looking at the world as it is, with all the aspects that invite critique, Past concludes that no new world could ever create a bigger disorder than the one that already exists. At least, he states, any new disorder would eventually be »our very own«:

> »A world in which nobody suffers from anything they didn't cause; no disadvantages because of ethnicity or gender; not having to be victimized due to biological limitations or a social environment into which a human is born through

[165] »Er müsse einstehen für das, was er schreibt, sich verantwortlich fühlen für das, was er verkündet.« (Frühwald 1999: 43)

no fault of their own – only having to take on what we actually caused, and that fully responsibly.«[166] (Loetscher 2004b: 356–357)

Even though clear-cut instructions are still absent from Loetscher's idealistic program, his literary aesthetics nevertheless clearly defines the role of literature within this wider frame of reference. For what is true for the undertaking of critique according to Michel Foucault is also true for literature according to Hugo Loetscher: it is »an instrument, a means that leads to a future or a truth.«[167] (Foucault 1992: 8–9) Literature functions as a medium of discourse that serves to reveal real-world correlations; it is used to awaken and sensitize the readers to what lies beneath the surface of reality.

The mandarin's paper fan, with its function of awakening memories and inventing stories, does indeed present itself as such a narrative »instrument.« Yet it is not accurate to mistake it for a fictitious embodiment of any presumed gracefulness of narration.[168] The motive depicted on the paper fan initiates a contrary line of argumentation: »On a distant mountain a man, gazing at the moon, down in the valley a peasant who pulls his ox onto the right path.«[169] (Loetscher 2004b: 333) To affect the reader requires a strenuous pulling by the writer. Furthermore, this endeavor is not guaranteed to bring about success, as otherwise the peasant's ambition would not have to be presented more

[166] »Grösser als der jetzige kann der Wirrwarr, den wir schaffen, nicht sein. Aber es wäre unser ureigener: Eine Welt, in der keine und keiner an etwas leidet, wofür er oder sie nichts kann, keine Nachteile wegen einer Rasse oder weil als Frau geboren, nicht seiner natürlichen Bedingtheit wegen Opfer sein müssen und ebensowenig Opfer der sozialen Umstände, in die ein Mensch hineingeboren wird und wofür er nichts vermag – nur für das geradestehen müssen, wofür einer etwas kann, und dies völlig belangbar.« (Loetscher 2004b: 356–357)

[167] »[E]in Instrument, Mittel zu einer Zukunft oder zu einer Wahrheit.« (Foucault 1992: 8–9)

[168] In that I disagree with Heinz Schafroth, who regards the mandarin's paper fan as an »utopia of narration.« (»Utopie des Erzählens,« Schafroth 2005: 408)

[169] »Auf einem abschüssigen Felsen ein Mann, den Mond betrachtend, unten im Tal ein Bauer, der seinen Ochsen auf den rechten Weg zerrt.« (Loetscher 2004b: 333)

humbly at the end of the novel: »Past opened the paper fan: a man on a distant mountain gazes at the moon; down in the valley, a peasant *tries* [emphasis added by me, AC] to pull his ox onto the right path.«[170] (ibid.: 376) Once more Loetscher's take on literature is realistically informed, as he clearly does not overestimate literature's real-world power. This places his literary aesthetics firmly on the ground of reality; the literary undertaking takes place »down in the valley.«

The pulling of the ox – which itself is a reminder of that slaughterhouse whose truth Past's eyes could only register »thanks to a writer« – additionally establishes a violent quality. In order to pull the resisting ox onto the right path, there must be a battle; and this leads us back to the beginning. For what this »battle fought [...] with a typewriter« (»Kampf [...] mit der Schreibmaschine,« Loetscher 1988b: 417) asks from its ›warriors‹ is the belief that fiction is truly able to influence reality. This creates a credo that the Immune Man explains to his sister like this: »In the meantime, you have children, your future walks and argues and whines, yet mine isn't made of flesh; it's made of paper, and I believe in paper.«[171] (Loetscher 1988b: 174) This universal secular faith in paper, which Loetscher positions opposite any religious faith of exclusivity, is also an everyday reality for his protagonist.

Early on, we learn that more happens in Past's head than in his chest, »also in matters of emotions.« (»auch was Empfindungen betraf,« Loetscher 2004b: 26) Because he keeps referring to himself as an intellectual, he has to face the same suspicion that the Immune

[170] »Past klappte den Fächer auf: Ein Mann auf einem abschüssigen Felsen betrachtet den Mond, unten im Tal *versucht* [Hervorhebung von mir, AC] ein Bauer, seinen Ochsen auf den rechten Weg zu zerren.« (Loetscher 2004b: 376)

[171] »Du hast inzwischen Kinder, Deine Zukunft läuft und streitet und plärrt, meine ist nicht aus Fleisch, sondern aus Papier, und ich glaube an Papier.« (Loetscher 1988b: 174)

Man had to face before him; the suspicion that »he's deficient in feelings.« (»es mangle ihm an Empfindungen,« Loetscher 1988b: 241) However, such an understanding of intellectualism is not supported by Loetscher, and so the author has Past remember that his Thai girlfriend Puy once located a person's soul in their head because »if the soul sat in the chest, it would be blind, [but] in the head, the soul has eyes.«[172] (Loetscher 2004b: 36) Thinking and feeling, therefore, are interwoven activities for an intellectual, according to Loetscher's proposal.

The same claim is upheld in Confucianism. Not just *The Poems* »stir emotions« (The Analects 8/8; Ware 1955: 57) in addition to arousing minds (see ibid.: 111); also the overarching concept of the Confucian tradition as such always involves the student's heart. (see Ni 2002: 86 and Chun 2012: 53) It is an intellectualism that goes beyond mere intellectualism, for »it takes an all-rounded cultivation, most importantly, ren or human-heartedness, to be free.« (Ni 2002: 73) That this notion initiates a lifelong process is also underlined by the implications of Confucianism's main vehicle of action. For while ›xue‹ is oftentimes translated as ›learning,‹ it is in fact »not an achievement verb. One may *xue* but not necessarily obtain anything.« (ibid.: 81) The lifelong requirement of studying, even without any guarantee of success, turns Confucianism into a veritable way of life. (see Yao 2000: 11) Loetscher's literary aesthetics and Confucianist thought both hold on to the core belief »that goodness can be taught and learned.« (ibid.: 26) The means of transportation for that belief is, in both cases, books.

The focus on achieving real effects in real people is underlined in Loetscher's aesthetics by the fact that the writer-reader interaction is depicted on the mandarin's paper fan as

[172] »Sässe die Seele in der Brust, wäre sie blind, im Kopf hat die Seele Augen.« (Loetscher 2004b: 36)

the strenuous interaction between the peasant and his ox. The third figure in this constellation therefore refers to a contrasting concept, which eventually comes to be undermined: the »man on a distant mountain [who] gazes at the moon« (Loetscher 2004b: 376) is too far removed from the scene »down in the valley« (ibid.: 333) to actually participate in it. Obviously, the dreamy gaze of a man in an elevated position, who neglects what is happening below him, alludes to the ivory tower. Popular rumor has it that this academic realm is, above all, an intellectual haven of self-sufficient abstractness. Certainly, intellectuals may indeed be unable »to distinguish between different kinds of grains,« which is a belittling accusation with which Confucius' opponents confronted him.[173] (Yao 2000: 16) Nevertheless, Loetscher decidedly does assign value to intellectualism.

This becomes evident in his protagonist's self-declaration as someone who belongs to the intellectual social stratus and who values his intellectuality. Indeed, it seems as if Jean François Lyotard had proclaimed the death of intellectualism too early; for in his role as an intellectual, Past does defend a human universal, while his author's message is too extensively grounded in contemporary discourse to appear as nothing more than a lone voice in the wilderness. (see Lyotard 1985: 10, 13) The Immune Man defines intellectuals as »people who want to live by their intellect and appeal to that intellect in others.«[174] (Loetscher 1988a: 401) With that, Lyotard's claim of a separation between intellectuals and writers is also undermined.

[173] For comments on Confucius' failed political career, see Ess 2003: n.p.
[174] »Menschen, die Kraft ihres Intellekts leben wollen und bei andern an diesen Intellekt appellieren.« (Loetscher 1988a: 401)

However, Loetscher does address the negative implication that may accompany Past's designation as an intellectual. He does so by discussing the counter-concept of the academic mandarin. After all, Past's communication partner truly is a member of the »traditional elite of educated officials in old China.« (»traditionelle Elite von gelehrten Beamten im alten China,« Ringer 1987: 15) Consequently, it is the mandarin who comes to activate the questionable aspects of the tradition behind his professional affiliation (see also Altwegg 2000: n.p.) – for instance, when he cannot understand »[s]ince when the receiving of a salary necessarily involves the completion of actual work.« (»[s]eit wann Gehalt notwendigerweise auch Arbeit bedeute,« Loetscher 2004b: 311).

Academic mandarins do not simply serve as an opposition to the idea of the French *intellectuel* (see Beilecke 2005: 51); more importantly, they embody the less-favorable version of intellectualism. Secure behind the walls of their institutions, academic mandarins are the ones who do not deem it necessary to contribute to the society beneath them. The traditional intellectual's alleged arrogance is captured in the mandarin's signet: »›A crane on a mountain, staring into the sun,‹ my signet: ›an official of high rank who sees everything.‹« Yet this mandarin is meant to deconstruct the negativity of intellectualism, and so he sighs about the expectations of his profession: »If only it had been like that.«[175] (Loetscher 2004b: 281) The mandarin's honesty undermines the intellectual arrogance he is set up to address.

Eventually, Loetscher enhances the status of intellectualism – as the term for a life lived on the basis of intellectuality – in that he proposes a very specific understanding of

[175] »›Ein Kranich auf Felsen in die Sonne blickend,‹ mein Siegel: ›Ein Beamter in hoher Stellung, der alles sieht.‹ Wenn dem nur so gewesen wäre.« (Loetscher 2004b: 281)

intellectualism. In the case of Loetscher's concept, intellectuality is primarily defined as such due to its inseparable connection to another quality: the quality of immunization. As might be expected, it was the Immune Man who first demonstrated how immunization is achieved. In his childhood, the Immune Man at some point changed his common emotional reaction to one of his father's many angry tantrums; instead of succumbing to a paralyzing fear, the boy switched off his emotions, which allowed him to replace his angst with a mode of rational registering. His conclusion reads similarly rationally: »The Immune Man took part in his own procreation. An intellectual was born in the kitchen.«[176] (Loetscher 1988b: 48)

In *The Mandarin's Eyes*, the need to numb one's emotions and to take on an attitude of neutral registration is presented as a real one. Especially the media are shown as those tireless illustrators of human suffering that they truly are. What the television screen reveals are scenes of violence on an unbearable scale, and Past can only ask rhetorically: »Wouldn't he have preferred to just look away?«[177] (Loetscher 2004b: 225) Irrespective of Past's personal preference, he is described as »too much of an enlightened contemporary not to know about the foraging practices of others.«[178] (ibid.: 110) Yet when medial witnessing turns into an indication of enlightened world-citizenship, the medially induced overflow of information also becomes inevitable. Therefore, Immanuel Kant's famous 1783 definition of Enlightenment as »man's emergence from his self-imposed nonage«[179] (»Ausgang des Menschen aus seiner selbst verschuldeten

[176] »Der Immune hatte sich an seiner eigenen Zeugung beteiligt. In der Küche war ein Intellektueller auf die Welt gekommen.« (Loetscher 1988b: 48)
[177] »Hätte er nicht am liebsten weggeschaut?« (Loetscher 2004b: 225)
[178] »[E]in zu aufgeklärter Zeitgenosse, als dass er nicht über die Nahrungssuche der anderen unterrichtet gewesen wäre.« (Loetscher 2004b: 110)
[179] Translation by Mary C. Smith. Found on: ›http://www.columbia.edu/acis/ets/CCREAD/etscc/kant.html.‹ (31 August 2013)

Unmündigkeit,« Kant 1977b: 53) requires an addendum. Otherwise, the new notion of Enlightenment that is connected with potentially crushing media consumption might render us ›nonaged‹ once more: it might incapacitate our intellects. This is certainly also true for the reason that the internet, as a virtual embodiment of our »Wonderfully Wide World« (»Wunderbar Weite Welt,« Loetscher 2004b: 369), has become an everyday reality. Most notably, the internet is a reality in which a single typo can send us all the way across the globe; for example, when we intend to write ›ch‹ but erroneously type ›ci,‹ and thus do not arrive in Switzerland, but at the Ivory Coast. (see ibid.: 369) Along with the ceaseless exposure to that global net's violence, everyday media consumption might indeed drive us into madness.

For this very reason, Loetscher introduces his novel's key concept of disorder based on a media analogy. In imitation of the flood of images presented by televisions, Past experiences an »internal confusion« (»Wirrwarr im Innern,« Loetscher 2004b: 27): »Behind his forehead there was a stage, it was a ghetto, prison, brothel and a stadium, a dog house and a homeless shelter, a market and a school room. [...] Horror and gag and comic strip.«[180] (ibid.: 26) The mandarin is therefore right on point when he asks whether the television receptors are »stars of disorder« (»Sterne des Wirrwarrs,« ibid.: 293); the answer is of course ›yes.‹ In another constellation of history, it was Eve's bite into an apple that constituted man as man; for it was this first human disobedience which caused the Godly authority to conclude discontentedly: »Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil.« (Gen. 3:22, King James Version) For Past, too, the bitten apple becomes constitutive of his state of humanity. Yet now, it is »the Apple logo of his

[180] »Hinter der Stirn tat sich eine Bühne auf, sie war Getto und Gefängnis, Bordell und Stadion, Hundehütte und Obdachlosenheim, Marktplatz und Schulstube. [...] Horror und Gag und Comicstrip.« (Loetscher 2004b: 26)

laptop« that turns into Past's »credo of somebody who doesn't understand.«[181] (Loetscher 2004b: 221) In the situation of global disorder and chaos, which the media incessantly forces us to acknowledge, it is only the act of immunization that is able to preserve the capacity of our intellects.

To define Loetscher's concept of immunization as the contemporary token of intellectual Enlightenment requires a clarification. It has become a popular line of argumentation to compare the author's concept with Rüdiger Safranski's proclamation of the necessity of a filter and immune system. (see, e.g., Dewulf 2005: 163) Yet unlike Safranski, who argues for keeping globalization at a distance (see Safranski 2003: 118), Loetscher stresses the need to remain able to intervene. That Loetscher's immunization is action-oriented is also evident in its description as an immunization »that [...] left the hands free for a moment, so that one could act at all.«[182] (Loetscher 1988b: 241) Intellectuality that allows action, as an indication of successful immunization and therefore as the bearer of Enlightenment, has an undoubtable value in Loetscher's program. As an intellectuality beyond the ivory tower, it allows for an approach to our world's violent disorder, which the mandarin – in an analogy to a saying by Confucius' most famous follower Menzius (see Fähnders 2011: n.p.) – presents as embodied by bamboo: »They say that bamboo is laughing. Maybe it laughs because it bends but doesn't break.«[183] (Loetscher 2004b: 328) Past, carried by the humoristic tone in Loetscher's writing, did not break either.

---

[181] »Past fasste das Apple-Markenzeichen seines Powerbooks als persönliches ›Credo von einem, der nicht drauskommt‹ auf.« (Loetscher 2004b: 221)

[182] »Also musste der Intellekt für eine Art der Immunisierung sorgen, die nicht stumpf machte, die aber für den Moment die Hände frei liess, um überhaupt agieren zu können.« (Loetscher 1988b: 241)

[183] »Man sagt vom Bambus, dass er lacht. Vielleicht liegt das Lachen darin, dass er sich beugt und nicht bricht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 328).

»Shall I tell you what knowledge is? It is to know both what one knows and what one does not know.« (The Analects 2/17; Ware 1955: 27) That this Confucian statement is highly similar to a corresponding thought by Socrates not only illustrates this thought's culturally universal scope. It also hints at a difficulty that affects nearly all people of all cultures in all times; yet it especially applies to those who choose to live by their intellects within a globalized world environment. Intellectuality is inseparably tied to knowledge, which is evident; and Horkheimer/Adorno have already located man's power in knowledge. (see Horkheimer/Adorno 1969: 9) Inevitably, then, contemporary intellectualism has to take on the challenge of unmanageable mountains of knowledge like never before. It is Past's former workplace, the cultural foundation, which illustrates this situation. In addition to bringing together people from various cultures, thus functioning as a melting pot of multiculturalism, the foundation also springs from its founder's knowledge-gap paranoia.

Horkheimer/Adorno defined paranoia in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as a trait of the half-educated (see Horkheimer/Adorno 1969: 205); and this is exactly what the cultural foundation's ›big boss‹ noticed himself to be. Significantly, it is only thanks to the unicorn picture that Past could preserve a photocopy of the only document he and his colleagues ever got to see from their largely anonymous employer: »I put the copied paper behind this picture and stuck it into the frame, that way I could smuggle it out of the office. Message in a bottle, from the unicorn.«[184] (Loetscher 2004b: 316) What the document reveals is the autobiography of a man who felt like he could never compensate

[184] »Was uns zugespielt wurde, war ein kurzes Dokument, angeblich von ihm verfasst. Ich hab das fotokopierte Blatt hinter diesem Bild in den Rahmen geklemmt, so gelang es mir, es aus dem Büro zu schmuggeln. Flaschenpost vom Einhorn.« (Loetscher 2004b: 316)

for his lack of education. Behind every word lurked »an episode or a person whom [the boss] didn't know anything about«[185] (ibid.: 323), and the non-knowledge became threatening. Following the advice of his psychiatrist, the boss eventually founded an organization for himself as well as for the rest of humanity, »so that they know what they could know about.«[186] (ibid.: 323)

Yet there is not only a lot to know in this world that is coming together; there is even more to know, since many occurrences worthy of being known are taking place at the same time. Past defines this phenomenon of simultaneity as follows: »Not hierarchy, but co-existence. It doesn't matter what once was in the center, and what on the outskirts. Sorry that I don't accept a Middle Kingdom.«[187] (Loetscher 2004b: 355) Not surprisingly, the cultural foundation's main goal is therefore owed precisely to this experience of simultaneity: the foundation seeks to establish a calendar of celebrations and remembrance days for the new millennium. (see ibid.: 50)[188] However, the attempt to create a calender that »is just and acceptable to every latitude« (»der jedem Breitengrad gerecht wird und ihm zugemutet werden kann,« ibid.: 311) is a highly complicated undertaking; the many local histories that the calendar reformers have to take into account confront them with insurmountable contradictions.

Even the Gregorian calender, which is commonly regarded as a successful project, illustrates that the designing of a shared timespace can never garner total agreement. For even though this calendar may be globally recognized, there still exist

[185] »Hinter dem simpelsten Wort vermutete ich eine Episode oder eine Person, von der ich keine Ahnung hatte. Ich fühlte mich von Unwissen bedroht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 323)
[186] »[E]in Stiftungskatalog auch im Dienst der anderen, damit sie wissen, wovon sie eine Ahnung haben könnten.« (Loetscher 2004b: 323)
[187] »Keine Hierarchie, sondern ein Nebeneinander. Hinfällig, was einst Zentrum und Rand ausmachte. Entschuldigung, dass ich kein Reich der Mitte akzeptiere.« (Loetscher 2004b: 355)
[188] »Wie sieht im nächsten Jahrtausend der Fest- und Gedenkkalender aus.« (Loetscher 2004b: 50)

different ways of telling time. (see Herzog 2002: 17) Loetscher's novel reflects this reality in that Past himself comes to experience the parallelism of incongruent timetables. Close to February, he undertakes one of his New Year's business travels; so when his conversation partners look at him sympathetically, he has to explain: »Because of the Lunar New Year, New Year's celebration in Mongolia.«[189] (Loetschr 2004b: 201) So in the end, to reduce globalization to a graspable dimension by way of temporal synchronization proves unfeasible. Loetscher does not suggest an alternative for the fallible idea of synchronizing the simultaneous; but he nonetheless demonstrates what literature can do, for it is the unicorn that allows for the preservation of the document by the foundation's boss. The message is clear: fiction may not be able to directly solve the pressing problems of a globalized world disorder, but it can turn into a valuable and, as such, worthy-of-preserving point of reference. Thus, literary excursions allow us to know about one more aspect among all those aspects we could know about.

Loetscher's novel displays a profound unwillingness to predict the future confidently, which is grounded in its particular condition. As a realistic work of fiction, it cannot succumb to the speculative mode of divination. Loetscher evaluated António Vieira's abstention from calculating a tomorrow as a token of honesty, of which he would have robbed himself »if he had replaced hope with speculation.« (Loetscher 1994: 63) Loetscher stays true to this principle of honesty as well. Yet what he includes in his program of a literary education, into his literary aesthetics, is fiction's ability to »also

[189] »Wegen des Mondjahres, Neujahrsfest in der Mongolei.« (Loetscher 2004b: 201)

narrate the intermissions. The gaps and blanks. It reminds us of what didn't happen.«[190] (Loetscher 2004b: 339) As such, the mandarin's paper fan is also equipped to consider the gaps that lie ahead; not speculatively in the sense of anticipating what might happen, but rather in a mode of fictitiously exploring what *could* happen.

Loetscher utilizes his novel as a literary space for fictitious experimentation (*Versuchsanordnung*; see also Zeller 2005: 42) in order to suggest one such possible future scenario. In accordance with the underlying optimism of his approach to reality, Loetscher chooses to weaken an additional, also very prominent panic in the context of the change of the millennium: namely, the deep fear of a breakdown of major computer systems. (see Newnham 1998: n.p.) Instead of evaluating such a computer crash as the disaster it was proclaimed to be, Loetscher has Past and the mandarin negotiate an alternative. Based on the notions that »[n]ot everything we type makes sense«[191] (Loetscher 2004b: 347) and that »[n]ot much is worth saving«[192] (ibid.: 348), the two partners in communication redefine the upcoming New Year as a veritable »celebration of deletion.« (»Löschfest,« ibid.: 364)

So whereas Horkheimer/Adorno anticipated a catastrophic *tabula rasa* brought about by man's »capacity to destroy« (»Vernichtungsfähigkeit,« Horkheimer/Adorno 1969: 235), Past and the mandarin's idea of *tabula rasa* contains an opportunity: »[a] new beginning. A cleansing.«[193] (Loetscher 2004b: 314) It is the mandarin who illustrates the celebratory act of deletion:

---

[190] »Der Fächer erzählt auch die Pausen. Die Lücken und Leerstellen. Er erinnert uns an das, was nicht geschah.« (Loetscher 2004b: 339)
[191] »Nicht alles, was man eintippt, hat Sinn.« (Loetscher 2004b: 347)
[192] »Nicht viel ist es wert, gespeichert zu bleiben.« (Loetscher 2004b: 348)
[193] »Ein Neuanfang. Eine Bereinigung.« (Loetscher 2004b: 314)

> »He put everything into the recycle bin, the mandarin beamed, it became very fat, close to bursting, a potbelly, he emptied it, created space for future matters: ›I understood. You mark everything and then ›del-del.‹ [...] Table cleared. Celebration of deletion. The computer has drunk from the Tea of Forgetfulness.‹«[194] (Loetscher 2004b: 364)

The memory of Past's laptop dies with the mandarin's deletion experiment. (see Loetscher 2004b: 368) Confronted with the flickering on the computer screen, Past thinks he notices »a unicorn, pursued by a dragon, chasing from cloud to cloud, and drowning in between the waves where it seeks shelter.«[195] (ibid.: 366) Yet there is no shelter to be found in the digital storage area of knowledge. When the problem of overflowing knowledge is viewed from this perspective, an erasure of all the clutter promises relief. Therefore, nobody mourns this loss of data, not even Past himself, because: »What actually died? His works were saved elsewhere.«[196] (ibid.: 367) There is no accusation in Past's conclusion that it was »thanks to the mandarin« (»dank dem Mandarin,« ibid.: 368) that he had to let some of his documents go. Evidently, Loetscher does not support the attempt to control knowledge-gap paranoia by way of digitally accumulating even that which does not make sense, and that which is not worth saving. As an alternative, he introduces literature. Literature does not seek to create »walking [...] encyclopedias« (»wandelnde [...] Enzyklopädien,« Nietzsche 2005: 36), as is clear based on the unicorn's inability to survive in the uncontrollable ocean of digitized knowledge clutter. So the important works of Past, it seems, are saved between two book covers; they are made of paper.

---

[194] »Er habe alles in den Papierkorb getan, der Mandarin strahlte, der sei dick geworden, zum Platzen dick, ein Dickbauch, er habe ihn geleert, habe Platz geschaffen für Zukünftiges: ›Ich bin drausgekommen. Alles schwarz markieren und dann ›del-del.‹ […] Tischlein abgedeckt. Löschfest. Der Computer hat vom Tee des Vergessens getrunken.‹« (Loetscher 2004b: 364)
[195] »Past war, als jage ein Einhorn, gehetzt von einem Drachen, von Wolke zu Wolke und ertrinke zwischen Wellen, wo es Zuflucht sucht.« (Loetscher 2004b: 366)
[196] »Was war gestorben? Seine Arbeiten waren woanders gespeichert.« (Loetscher 2004b: 367)

Loetscher's aesthetics of a literary dialectic is primarily an intellectual aesthetics that seeks to intellectually affect intellects. As such, it has a deep dependence on the readers, which Loetscher articulates like this: »Even though the writer has to write in some ground under their feet by way of language, it is the Other who decides whether that ground is reliable.«[197] (Loetscher 1999b: 67) Just as it was the mandarin's dream to travel into the West, »literature knows the dream of acting through words.«[198] (Loetscher 1999a: 17) As we know, the mandarin's dream came true thanks to a book. Whether literature's dream will come true as well is to be decided by its readers.

What Loetscher proposes as literature's major means of action toward this end is an upholding of its program of literary education. In the upcoming *Imperium Humanum*, literature, with its freedom from disciplinary constraints, could reach a reconciliation between all that »which did not come together in terms of science, philosophy and theology«; it could be the screwdriver that will tighten »the screw [...] that makes contact between all the things one was thinking and speculating about.«[199] (Loetscher 2004b: 364) Furthermore, Loetscher's novel, in applying an optimistic focus on reality, embraces the *memento vivere* that Friedrich Nietzsche once established as the desirable opposition to the hopelessness of the medieval period's antithetical concept. (see Nietzsche 2005: 77)

---

[197] »Sosehr es vom Schreibenden abhängt, dass er sich mit Sprache Boden unter den Füssen erschreibt, ist es der andere, der darüber entscheidet, ob dieser Boden tragfähig ist.« (Loetscher 1999b: 67)

[198] »[K]ennt die Literatur den Traum, einmal mit dem Wort wirken zu können.« (Loetscher 1999a: 17)

[199] »Wenn er an die intellektuelle Auseinandersetzung seiner Jahrzehnte dachte, an den kaum überblickbaren Ausstoss von Ideen und Meinungen, an das, was an Wissenschaft, Philosophie und Theologie nebeneinanderherging und nicht zusammenkam, schien es ihm weder dienlich noch dringlich, mit weiteren Sätzen und Thesen aufzuwarten, gesucht war einer, der mit dem Schraubenzieher die Schraube anzog, die den Kontakt herstellt zwischen all dem, woran man am Denken und Spekulieren war.« (Loetscher 2004b: 364)

The novel thereby also confirms that »[t]he *telos of humanity* cannot lie at the end, but only *in its best representatives*.«[200] (emphasis in original; Nietzsche 2005: 92) It is only consequent, then, that all that is left in the end is the mandarin's paper fan. At the end of Past's life story, which marks the beginning of our global world history, the narrative instrument turns into a means of comfort, just like the two white flowers that the Time Traveler once left behind in his office: it serves as a »witness that [...] gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of Man.« (Wells 2003: 115)

[200] »[D]as *Ziel der Menschheit* kann nicht am Ende liegen, sondern nur *in ihren höchsten Exemplaren*.« (Nietzsche 2005: 92)

CHAPTER 3: DEFINING THE SELF

IDENTITY FORMATION IN A POST-COLONIAL WORLD: MARTIN R. DEAN'S *MY FATHERS* (*MEINE VÄTER*, 2003) AND HABIB TENGOUR'S *THIS PARTICULAR TARTAR 2* (*CE TATAR-LÀ 2* / *BESAGTER TARTAR 2*, 1997–1998)

»We are talking about ghosts.«[201] (Dean 2003: 93) Matter-of-factly, protagonist Robert identifies a fictitious dimension in that »more or less imaginary community« of distant relatives that suddenly surround him »with their ghostly similarity.«[202] While visiting with a great-aunt, the forty-year-old Swiss dramaturge experiences a first ›real‹ encounter with his familial origin; for it was not until after the death of his stepfather Neil that he could set out to look for his biological father Ray, whom he finds – like his great-aunt – in London. So while Ray has lost his ability to speak and thus can no longer serve as a witness to the reality of his son's story of origin, it is great-aunt Luna Sinanan who introduces Robert to the existence of relatives he had never heard of before.

Throughout the novel, these ghosts keep haunting us, in the sense that the ›reality‹ that the protagonist and the readers are facing is made up of stories. »So much kinship, so many stories« (»Soviel Verwandtschaft, so viele Geschichten,« Dean 2003: 94), Robert concludes at some point, and leaves no doubt about his awareness of the ubiquity of narration in his literary world. The great importance that Martin R. Dean places on stories within the overarching story of the novel constitutes a framework that perfectly fits the professional affiliation of the protagonist. Moreover, such a focus confronts us with a theoretical concept that strengthens the aspect of narrative construction on a continuum

[201] »Wir reden über Gespenster.« (Dean 2003: 93)
[202] »Eine mehr oder weniger imaginäre Gmeinschaft von Grossonkeln, Cousins und Couscousins, die mich mit ihrer gespenstischen Ähnlichkeit umstellen.« (Dean 2003: 92–93)

from biology to culture, from nature to nurture. Or, as Dean once put it: »blood relations are imagination and can only be verified by way of stories.«[203] (Dean n.d.b: n.p.)

Nonetheless, Dean does not ignore the biological factors that contribute to our human reality. This becomes clear when looking at Robert's situation of cultural heritage. Both Neil and Ray are Indians from Trinidad, but his ongoing desire to »discover who [he] is«[204] (Dean 2003: 17) reveals that the shared cultural horizon of his two fathers is not enough for Robert to accept Neil as his only father. Even though it is eventually »stories, […] lies and legends that ›create‹ a father«[205] (ibid.: 19), it is the gene pool he shares with Ray that provides the basis for Robert's lifelong obsession with similarites that stem from blood relation. Following the psychological dictum that »in a torn-up soul, there is no resting«[206] (Dean 1998: 29), the character has no other choice but to succumb to that internal necessity of gene-based self-discovery which his author set him up to embody.

Swiss author Martin Rolf Dean was born in 1955 to a Swiss mother and an Indian father from Trinidad. While he grew up in Menziken in the canton of Aargau, it is now Basel-Stadt that serves as the main location of his professional life. Without a doubt, Dean has long earned considerable recognition as an author in literary circles (see Jacobsen 1999: 192); yet his level of popularity beyond this group of specialists is less substantial than the quality of his writing would suggest. (see also Kunisch 2003: n.p.) Still, he looks back

[203] »Verwandtschaften sind Einbildung und können nur mit Geschichten beglaubigt werden.« (Dean n.d.b: n.p.)
[204] »Sie alle wollten ihren Vater kennenlernen, um herauszufinden, wer sie sind.« (Dean 2003: 17) See also Sandberg 2006: 156.
[205] »Oder sind es die Erzählungen, Fiktionen, Lügen und Legenden, die einen Vater ›errichten‹?« (Dean 2003: 19)
[206] »In einer zerklüfteten Seele ist keine Ruhe.« (Dean 1998: 29)

at over three decades of literary productivity that repeatedly unfolded around questions of identity. His hitherto most extensive work, the 2003 novel *My Fathers* (*Meine Väter*), is also dedicated to that »heavy topic of identity.« (»schweres Identitätsthema,« Wegelin 2011: n.p.) Most striking about this novel, which won its author the Friedrich Schiller Prize (*Auszeichnung der Schweizerischen Schillerstiftung*, 2003), is its far-reaching scope in terms of both location and addressed time frame. In regard to this scope, it decidedly surpasses Dean's earlier novel *The Guyana Knot* (*Der Guayanaknoten*, 1994), in which the author had already experimented with comparable strategies of narrative extension. (see Jacobsen 1999: 109)

In sending his character on a quest to explore his familial origin, Dean presents a story that is as individual as only biographies can be. At the same time, he puts theoretical concepts into play that concern questions of identity as such; which makes this story as generally applicable as only literature can be, identifying it as being »addressed to no one, and to all.« (»an niemanden und an alle adressiert,« Dean 2002: n.p.) Consequently, there is a definite level of metareflexivity in Dean's text, at which the author literarily reflects upon the ›nature‹ of literature within a multicultural context of globalization. This, however, was mostly overlooked by the reviews that accompanied the novel's publication, as well as by the few textual analyses that followed at a later point. Instead, the novel was mainly read as the depiction of an adventurous journey (see Schimmang 2003: n.p.; Sandberg 2006: 170; Kunisch 2003: n.p.), supplemented with ingredients from the author's biography. (see Vilas-Boas 2008: 63)

The autobiographical aspects of Dean's novel are of course indisputable. For instance, the character's stepfather Neil is clearly modeled after the author's stepfather Dinanath Nato Dean. This is not only true because of them having (middle) names that begin with the same letter, but also because both the fictitious and the real Trinidad-Indian share the experience of immigrating into Switzerland. Furthermore, just as his protagonist sets out to find his biologocial father Ray, forty-year-old Martin R. Dean set out to find his biological father Ralph, whom his mother had left in Trinidad in 1958. (see Dean 2011b: n.p.) Once again we find a shared first letter, in addition to the literary character's last name ›Randeen‹ being a free yet distinct onomatopoetic rearrangement of ›Martin R. Dean.‹ Far more significantly, however, Ray Randeen and Ralph also share the coordinates of a story: for Dean, too, found a father in London who had lost his ability to speak, and thus buried the son's past in silence. (see ibid.: n.p.; Dean 2002: n.p.)

Notwithstanding these parallels, it is too simple to classify the protagonist Robert as Martin R. Dean's literary alter ego, as has been repeatedly suggested. (see, e.g., Sandberg 2006: 168) Certainly, the author did equip his novel with key ingredients from his personal life experience, at the core of which lies the desire for a story of origin, which, however, is faced with the speechlessness of its chief witness. So when the oral transmission fails, the never-told story moves into the realm of the written word. What ensues from this change of narrative modes, however, is neither a literary autobiography, nor even primarily the biography of a literary character. Rather, I propose, it is a literary exploration of the concept of multicultural identity, a narrative that investigates the core processes of identity formation in a post-colonial world.

Based on the notion that »fathers keep on rumbling inside a man, even when they are absent, unwelcome, or hated«[207] (Dean 2002: n.p.), Dean takes the readers on a journey that leads from Basel to London, from London to Sils-Maria in the Swiss region *Oberengadin*, and from Sils-Maria to the Caribbean island community of Trinidad and Tobago. But when Robert eventually travels with his speech-impaired father Ray back to their cultural homeland, it is not an attempt to make up for the time they never got to spend together as father and son.[208] Instead, Dean has his protagonist long and look for a sense of identity in a globalized world whose connectivity has not overcome the reality of cultural differences. Dean put it like this: »The borders have moved into the individuals. To narrate their stories is a challenge of contemporary literature.«[209] (Dean 2010b: 7)

The Caribbean has long been regarded as an exemplary location for the investigation of multicultural identities. (see Ryan 1972: 3; Deosaran 1981: 199; Szeman 2003: 70) As an area of outstanding agricultural fertility (see Brereton 1979: 16), the island group in close proximity to South America fell victim to the earliest days of European colonialism. (see Booker/Juraga 2001: 1) As for Trinidad, Christopher Columbus is said to have ›discovered‹ its Trinity Hills during his travel to the New World in 1492, and claimed it for Spain. (see Meighoo 2003: 4; Oxaal 1982: 2; Brathwaite 1995: 309) What followed was a rapid decimation of the island's native population; the constant overworking to which they were exposed led to a nearly complete destruction of the Amerindian peoples by the eighteenth century, which necessitated the importation of new labor forces. (see

[207] »Väter rumoren im Mann weiter, selbst wenn sie absent, unerwünscht oder verhasst sind.« (Dean 2002: n.p.) For a psychoanalytical confirmation of this claim, see Blos 1987: 245.
[208] For a contrary line of argumentation, see Vilas-Boas 2008: 64.
[209] »Die Grenzen sind in die Subjekte gewandert. Ihre Geschichte zu erzählen, bildet eine Herausforderung für eine gegenwartshaltige Literatur.« (Dean 2010b: 7)

Brathwaite 1995: 309; Liverpool 1998: 25; Heuman 2006: 14) With the Spanish Crown's issuing of a »*cedula de poblacion* in 1783, a law allowing foreign settlement on the island by friendly Catholic nations« (Scher 2007: 109), the Europeans opened Trinidad up to an increasingly complex situation of multiculturalism, as the early French settlers brought with them their slaves from Africa. This multicultural intensification by way of slave-importation was continued by the British, who wrestled the island from Spain in 1797, and eventually unified Trinidad and the smaller island of Tobago into a single ›Crown Colony.‹ (see Meighoo 2003: xxi)[210]

After the complete abolition of slavery in 1838, the British government was faced with a labor shortage once more. As a consequence, the British imported indentured laborers from across the globe between 1845 and 1917. Among those contracted laborers from India, China, Portugal, Syria, and Lebanon, the East Indians were by far the largest ethnic group. (see Hintzen 2006: 20)[211] Leaving their home country – that is, the British colony of India – behind on a fixed-term contract to work on a specific plantation, the Indians entered a social stage of already-complex ethnic diversity. While the poor conditions in India at the time forced many of the contracted laborers into this journey which they would not have otherwise undertaken, the early indentured Indians still hoped to return to their home country some day. (see Bush 1997: 44; Mohammed 2006: 43) Yet when the sugar market grew depressed toward the end of the nineteenth century, the laborers were given the option of buying land instead of being repatriated. Many Indians accepted this deal (see Mohammed 2006: 44) and thus began to claim and to defend their membership in the Caribbean island's cultural landscape.

---

[210] See also Brereton 1979: 1, 8; Neptune 2007: 3; and Scher 2007: 109.

[211] See also Liverpool 1998: 26; Ryan 1972: 5; Brereton 1979: 2, 8, 10; and Oxaal 1982: 2.

In 1962, Trinidad and Tobago gained its independence from Great Britain (see Heuman 2006: 162), and the result of its long colonial history was – and is to this day – a multicultural setting made up of »imported European, African, and East Indian cultural traditions.« (Booker/Juraga 2001: 4) So what the early European settlers left behind was a profoundly confusing interplay of different cultures. (see Oxaal 1982: 35) Dean exemplarily captures this cultural complexity when he points out the contradictory ethnic designation of Trinidad's Indian population. Whereas they once immigrated from East India into a region called the West Indies, they are now called West Indians themselves, which turns them into »West-Indian East Indians, or East-Indian West Indians.« (»westindische Ostinder oder ostindische Westinder,« Dean 1994: 234)

What Martin R. Dean attempts with his novel is nothing less than to work through those cultural complexities. That this novel is set up to be more than a literary (auto)biography becomes further evident through the fact that many of the character names, in some way or another, show up in the history of Trinidad and Tobago. Robert's paternal grandmother Olive, for instance, is a descendant of the high-caste family of the Sinanans – a name with a possible connection to Dean's personal biography, on which he, as far as I can see, did not comment in any of his texts. Significantly, however, the name ›Sinanan‹ does show up in the history of the island. Not only are the brothers Mitra and Ashford Sinanan to be found as influential Hindu players in the island's real-life politics (see Figueira 2007: n.p.; Allahar 2006: 159), but when repeated debates about the Constitution of Trinidad and Tobago took place in the fifties, it was »[t]he Sinanan Committee«, which was »appointed to advise on the feasibility of further constitutional

reform.« (Ryan 1972: 97) That the personal history of the protagonist is that strongly linked with the political history of Trinidad and Tobago demonstrates a definite realistic ambition in this novel.

What has been negatively criticized as aspects of a »leisurely-decorative realism« (»betulich-dekorative[r] Realismus,« Kunisch 2003: n.p.) rather appears as an inevitable consequence of the author's intent to present a work of fiction that relates to its real-world context. It is true, however, that Dean occasionally replaces a style of elaborated narration with a ›flat‹ recapitulation of Trinidadian history. But considering the manifold intricacies of that history, such a narrative choice is certainly reasonable. After all, »Trinidad is a country with too much history, it is impossible to ever grasp it completely.«[212] (Dean 2003: 249)

The confusing potential of Trinidad's history as well as of the multicultural setting it entertains is clearly reflected in Dean's novel, also on the level of form. It is therefore not only its overly dense and intricate plot – which is largely presented in the form of literary ellipses, flashbacks, and previews – that makes the reading of this novel a confusing undertaking. (see also Reinacher 2003: n.p.) Organized in three parts, each consisting of several sub-chapters, the novel confronts us with a narrative progression in which the unfolding of the story in the present also brings about an increasing revelation of past occurrences. (see Honold 2008: 138)

While the first part is narrated mostly in present tense by the protagonist Robert in the role of first-person narrator, the second part begins to employ a multitude of narrative voices. The stories of Ray and Neil, for instance, are narrated by a voice that moves in

[212] »Trinidad ist ein Land mit zuviel Geschichte, man kann es nie ganz ausloten.« (Dean 2003: 249)

and out of its heterodiegetic position; it repeatedly abandons its position of neutral observation in order to present the perspectives of various characters. In addition to the ensuing narrative polyphony, Dean also has his characters undertake phantasmatic excursions; these episodes oftentimes merge seamlessly with the ›actual‹ story. Evidently, such an inclusion of fiction within the fictitious framework of the novel decidedly adds to the depth of the text's metareflexive dimension.

In the face of this narrative complexity, the readers are eventually compelled to share Robert's impression of »being stuck in an intricate maze, in which I am the only one who doesn't know the exit.«[213] (Dean 2003: 355) We are forced to join Robert in abandoning his initial belief that the discovery of biographical facts »means, for the first time, mainland.« (»[d]as bedeutet zum ersten Mal Festland,« ibid.: 95) Instead, we come to agree with the first-person narrator in Markus Werner's novel *Mainland* (*Festland*, 1996), who identifies »balance [to be] just a symptom of cluelessness.« (»Gleichgewicht [ist] nur ein Symptom der Ahnungslosigkeit,« Werner 1996: 136)

In employing such narrative versatility, Dean turns his novel into an illustration of what he defines the most recent literature to be – namely, »a literature of frontier crossers. This is also true […] for matters of style.« (Dean 1993: 541) When he furthermore designates »[a] playful handling of tradition, fiction within fiction« (ibid.: 542) as »postmodern methods, insofar as we mean by ›postmodern‹ the playing with models,« (ibid.: 543) Dean clearly agrees with one of the most prominent writers in the context of postcolonial studies. After all, in his famous collection of essays on *The Location of Culture* (1994),

[213] »Ich habe das Gefühl, in einem weitverzweigten Labyrinth zu stecken, wo ich der einzige bin, der den Ausgang nicht kennt.« (Dean 2003: 355)

Homi Bhabha decidedly argues against an understanding of ›postmodern‹ as indicating sequentiality or polarity. Rather, he regards the term as indicative of a transformation of »the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment.« (Bhabha 1994: 6) Bhabha is certainly right in emphasizing that postmodern forms of writing should not be reduced to questions of fragmentation. (see ibid.) Nonetheless, a certain amount of fragmentariness in postmodern narratives is inevitable, since fragmentariness is the logical consequence of any literary experiment that no longer exclusively adheres to a traditional mode of linear narration. The results are narratives that are as multidirectional and complex as the topics they confront.

Irrespective of the confusion that Dean's novel embodies, however, it underlines how even such a highly ›excentric‹ narrative still strives for coherence: since Dean presents – although not in a linear way – a plot that eventually does turn out to be a meaningful whole. As difficult as its re-assembly in the course of reading might be, the author's intent to provide the readers with one single overarching narrative is indisputable. We are faced with a narrative construction of meaning within a context of multidirectional contingencies.

3.1. A Psychoanalytic Setting

It was Jacques Lacan who once pointed out a fact whose obviousness he did not deem a valid excuse for its being ignored: »psychoanalysis has but one medium: the patient's speech.« (Lacan 2006: 206) Based on the claim »that speech constitutes truth« (ibid.: 209), psychoanalytic anamnesis is tied precisely to that function of speech, to its being able »to reorder past contingencies by conferring on them the sense of necessities to

come.« (ibid.: 213) At the core of psychoanalysis lies the importance of creating a narrative, of creating truth by way of narrating coherence. Interestingly, Lacan differentiates between reality on the one hand, and truth on the other; because in psychoanalysis, we witness »the birth of truth in speech, [which] brings us up against the reality of what is neither true nor false.« (ibid.: 212) This implies a highly individualistic understanding of reality that is dictated by a mode of perspectivity. It follows that ›solid‹ facts deliver only the most basic of coordinates for the stories they invoke, while those stories always remain subject to particular perspectives. As such, speech in psychoanalysis, »even if it is destined to deceive, […] relies on faith in testimony.« (ibid.: 209)

Dean embraces this principle of testimony not only by testifying to his protagonist's experiences in the form of the novel he establishes around him; he also does so by presenting a novel that is largely made up of witness reports. At the same time, he leaves no doubt about his awareness of the frailty of testimony, of the profound unreliability of witnesses. For instance, when uncle Basdeo attempts to recall in what year Robert's parents lived together in their house in Trinidad, he states: »Must have been 1957, *if I'm not mistaken* [emphasis added by me, AC]«[214] (Dean 2003: 210) – yet mistaken he is. This time, the readers even see the certainty of the character's error in writing. Only a few pages before Basdeo's statement, we learn that the first article Ray Randeen wrote for the *Trinidad Chronicle* was published on February 15th, 1956. (see ibid.: 202) The narrator also lets us know that Ray started to work as a reporter several months *after* Robert's mother had left him. (see ibid.: 205) Basdeo's calculation therefore misses the ›factual reality‹ by at least one year. However, this does not bring about a

[214] »Muss 1957 gewesen sein, wenn ich nicht irre.« (Dean 2003: 210)

devaluation of testimony. On the contrary, Robert's unquestioned acceptance of his uncle's information is indicative of a concept that favors the individual relevance of testimony over facts. So what Dean establishes with his novel is a concept according to which the narrative process of identity formation is grounded in the principles of fiction. Thus, what he claimed to be true for blood relations also becomes applicable to identities: they »are imagination and can only be verified by way of stories.« (Dean n.d.b: n.p.)

Dean's novelistic employment of the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis is evident in the frequency with which dreams – mostly dreams of the protagonist – are interspersed in the text. This appears far from coincidental, considering that Sigmund Freud himself indicates having written his ground-breaking *Traumdeutung* (1900) in reaction to his father's death, to the »most significant event, the most drastic loss in the life of a man.«[215] (Freud 2003: 12) In fact, the novel's very first paragraph is a clear reference to the core conflict of Western psychoanalytic discourse (see Blos 1987: 243–44): waiting at the airport in Basel, ready to embark on the journey to his biological father in London, Robert reads in a newspaper that »[a] boy had killed his father.« (»[e]in Junge hatte seinen Vater getötet,« Dean 2003: 9) Instantly, the text invokes that famous darkest side of father-son relationships, which exposes the adolescent boy to feelings of »rivalry, jealousy, envy, […] aggression, and the wish to remove the fatherly opponent.«[216] (Blos 1987: 246)

[215] »[A]ls meine Reaktion auf den Tod meines Vaters, also auf das bedeutsamste Ereignis, den einschneidendsten Verlust im Leben eines Mannes.« (Freud 2003: 12) See also Heim 1997: 1026; Blos 1987: 252.

[216] »Rivalität, Eifersucht, Neid, Konkurrenz, Aggression und den Wunsch, den väterlichen Widersacher aus dem Weg zu räumen.« (Blos 1987: 246)

With the Oedipus constellation at its very beginning, this is more than the story of »a father seeking his father.« (»[e]in Vater sucht seinen Vater,« Vilas-Boas 2008: 67) It rather presents itself as the story of a father needing to take on the role of the son once more. This becomes obvious through the fact that the eye injury he accidentally suffered at the hands of his four-year-old daughter turned into »a fateful sign« (»ein Wink des Schicksals,« Dean 2003: 22) for the protagonist. In finding his journey justified by this incident, Robert demonstrates a desire to finally process his own oedipal conflict, in order to be able to start seeing clearly in his role as a father. As a consequence, and before it expands into the realm of multiculturalism in a post-colonial setting, Dean's novel originates at the level of an individual's psyche.

Throughout his life, Robert idealized his absent father: »[f]or forty years, I assumed him to be a kind of fairytale prince with a silver stick«[217] (Dean 2003: 9), he concedes. In his role as a theater professional, he has repeatedly seized the opportunity to act on this wistful obsession with father figures; his belittling evaluation of this tendency as »a quirk« (»ein Tick,« ibid.: 54) does not, of course, lessen its psychic urgency. For instance, Robert's directorial influence made Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's Nathan even »more wise and powerful« (»den habe ich noch weiser und gewaltiger gemacht« ibid.: 53) than the Enlightenment drama had set him up to be. The literary space thus not only allows for an addressing of existentially vital topics, but also provides a stage for zooming in on – and thereby ›enlightening‹ – core dynamics of human reality too often taken for granted.

[217] »Vierzig Jahre lang war ich in der Meinung gewesen, er sei eine Art Märchenprinz mit einem silbernen Stöckchen.« (Dean 2003: 9)

While a certain tendency to idealize the father is an integral part of any son's internal existence (see Blos 1987: 245), Dean portrays an idealization of a different quality. This is plausible not least because the absent father is never in danger of disappointing the son's expectations. Inevitably, the absentee turns into an all-powerful ghost: »I called him shadow father.« (»Ich nannte ihn den Schattenvater,« Dean 2003: 75) Indeed, such a father is hardly more than the shadow of a real person; yet in his unquestionable power, he remains impressive at all times. It is only consequent, then, that Robert holds a grudge against his stepfather Neil precisely because he »was never dominant, never powerful« and »certainly not fear-provoking«; therefore, Robert concludes, Neil could »hardly live up to the inner idea of my shadow father.«[218] (ibid.: 75)

In 2002, Martin R. Dean gave a speech in Basel entitled »About Fathers.« (»Über Väter«) In the course of this speech, he exemplarily illustrates the concept he has his character embrace in the form of a »shadow father.« This becomes especially evident when he reveals his understanding of the future role of men in Western society. According to Dean, the new role of a man »cannot consist in surrendering all power positions imbued with an auratic fascination to ambitious women, so as to simply play the cat-feeding castrate at home.«[219] (Dean 2002: n.p.) Of course, this statement is highly questionable, not just because it still adheres to an order of hierarchic gender divisions. Significantly,

[218] »Auf jeden Fall hat der Mann, bei dem ich aufgewachsen bin, mein Stiefvater Neil, kaum diesem inneren Bild meines Schattenvaters entsprochen. Neil war nie dominant, nie mächtig und nicht grossgewachsen – schon gar nicht furchterregend.« (Dean 2003: 75)

[219] Es »kann die neue Rolle des Mannes kaum darin liegen, alle mit auratischer Faszination besetzten Machtpositionen an bewegte Frauen abzutreten und zuhause nur noch den katzenfütternden Kastraten zu geben.« (Dean 2002: n.p.)

however, with his reference to an »auratic fascination,« Dean proposes a concept of ›manliness‹ whose power is generated by its belonging to the realm of imagination. Concurrently, this constitutes an underlining of the power of imagination as such; and with this, Dean leads us right back into the domain of psychoanalysis.

The theoretical framework of psychoanalysis is of course strongly invoked by the title of his »Über Väter« speech. For the German word ›über‹ is not only translatable as ›about‹ but also as the ›super‹ in the Freudian concept of the superego; (*Über-Ich*) thus, it indicates an address not just to fathers, but also to super-fathers (*Über-Väter*). Next to the reasonable ego (*Ich*) and the emotional id, (*Es*, see Freud 1923: n.p.) the superego (*Über-Ich*) is to be understood as a direct consequence of an individual's earliest identification with parental idols. As an internalization of the fatherly authority into the self, it also borrows the father's character. (see Freud 1923: n.p.; Freud 1924: n.p.) According to this take on family relations, as is well known, fathers – be they physically present or, as Dean proposes, mere »shadow fathers« – are of vital importance to a person's psychic development. So when he has Robert meet the ›real‹ counterpart of his father-imago, Dean eventually invents nothing less than a literary exploration of the human self.

At the beginning of this exploration of self lies the acknowledgement of its imaginative tendencies, »since a direct comparison between image and original hardly ever favors the latter.«[220] (Werner 1996: 58) In London, Robert encounters neither the sorcerer he had wished for as a child (see Dean 2003: 36) nor the well-respected citizen of upperclass British society he conjured up at the Trinidadian Embassy. (see ibid.: 24) In reality, old

[220] »[D]enn der Vergleich von Bild und Original fällt selten zugunsten des letzteren aus.« (Werner 1996: 58)

and lonely Ray, the unsuspicious inhabitant of a state-financed retirement home, carries his arm in a sling, mostly depends on a wheelchair, and regularly wets his pants. In recognizing him to be physically afflicted (see ibid.: 26), Robert has to witness »the gap between [his] shadow father and the real Ray« (»die Lücke zwischen dem Schattenvater und dem wirklichen Ray,« ibid.: 75) grow deeper every day.

Nonetheless, and in accordance with the psychoanalytic outline of this father-son drama, Robert cannot resist the urge to attempt identification with his father. Given Ray's physical condition, Robert has to take on the position of being physically afflicted himself: »instinctively, I begin to limp a little. As soon as I limp, the walking cane conforms to my gait. [...] In front of shop windows with mirrors I stop, so as to check on my new look. I pull my hair straight back, just like Ray must have done in the fifties.«[221] (Dean 2003: 76) This experiment remains unfulfilling. Because there is another, an inevitably humiliating dimension to this process of identification, which is most evident in Robert's embarrassement opposite Ray's lack of bladder-control: he feels »as if [he himself] had been the one to wet [his] pants.«[222] (ibid.: 138) Obviously, the weakness of the fatherly body becomes an existential affliction for the son as well.

The importance of the corporeal dimension in any father-child-relationship has long been established by developmental psychology. At the core of the corresponding research on fathers (*Vaterforschung*) lies the discovery that fathers have a particular way of treating their children. By way of emphasizing ›difference‹ when interacting with daughters and ›similarity‹ when interacting with sons, fathers become important

[221] »[I]nstinktiv beginne ich leicht zu hinken. Sobald ich hinke, passt sich der Stock meinem Gang an. [...] Vor Schaufenstern mit Spiegeln mache ich halt, um mein neues Aussehen zu kontrollieren. Ich ziehe meine Haare mit der Hand glatt nach hinten, wie Ray es in den fünfziger Jahren gemacht haben muss.« (Dean 2003: 76)

[222] »Sein Versagen ist mir peinlich. Als hätte ich mir selber [...] in die Hosen gemacht.« (Dean 2003: 138)

resources in the development of a child's gender-identity. (see Seiffge-Krenke 2001: 51) It is evident, then, that Ray's physical weakness serves as a blow to Robert's perception of his own manliness, which is inseparably tied to matters of body.

The perceived blow to his manliness, as embodied by Ray, is all the more significant because Robert has always struggled with his own corporeality. Throughout his life, we learn, Robert met stressful situations with an escape into illness. (see Dean 2003: 25) This, however, seems to indicate more than »[h]ypochondriac capers.« (»[h]ypochondrische Kapriolen,« ibid.: 11) Rather, Dean establishes a concept of self according to which any sense of identity remains tied to a physical existence. In the case of Robert, there was no physical interaction with a father who could have supported the son's developing a corporeal certainty. Therefore, Robert turned into an adult who is unsure of himself.

At some point, Robert argues that his earliest experience of abandonment forced him to rigidly concentrate on himself, because »a body gets lost when it is no longer discussed.« (»[e]in Körper geht verloren, wenn er nicht mehr besprochen wird,« Dean 2003: 377) This insistence on an ongoing discussion of his body also served as a way of creating a physical relationship with his stepfather Neil, who happens to be a doctor; without the ailments, stepfather and stepson have nothing to say to each other. (see ibid.: 378) Still, the undertaking remains mostly unsuccessful, since Neil is portrayed as one of the protagonist's two »fathers that both ran off in their own capricious way.«[223] (ibid.: 377) What Robert is left with at the end of his youth is an idealized image of an absent

[223] »Alleingelassen von Vätern, von denen jeder auf seine kapriziöse Art davonrannte.« (Dean 2003: 377)

father, a stepfather that remains out of reach, and the impression of never having been »a father's son. A mother's son, certainly, but that's something else.«[224] (Dean 2011: 271)

The witnessing of Ray's physical weakness thus brings about an aversion in Robert that seems impervious to feelings of caring and understanding: »His suffering is repulsive. My empathy doesn't find access to his opaque body, opaque also for my sympathy.«[225] (Dean 2003: 141) This lack of sympathy lets Robert appear cold at times, most obviously so when his reaction to Ray's falling out of his wheelchair is an outcry of hatred, articulating that he does »not want a father. Not this one.«[226] (ibid.: 60) Notably, however, both empathy and sympathy are emotions that aim at an Other. Thus, considering that Robert is primarily on a journey to himself, his feelings of aversion toward this so highly insufficient »father puppet« (»Vaterpuppe,« ibid.: 100) become understandable in their own right.

While Robert does live through rare moments of happiness about having finally found his biological father (see Dean 2003: 37), most of his emotions toward Ray are highly ambivalent, with a strong tendency to regard Ray as a burden. (see ibid.: 157) Nonetheless, Robert does participate in the »father-child-game« (»Vater-Kind-Spiel,« ibid.: 63) with Ray that puts the son into the role of the father. (see also Schimmang 2003: n.p.) In instances of temporary emotional maturation that allow him to step away from his adolescent desires, Robert acts as his father's caregiver. As such, he also comes to take on the father's task of accentuating the ›child's‹ gender identity. Dean has his

[224] »Ich hatte nie in meinem Leben das Gefühl, der Sohn eines Vaters zu sein. Ein Muttersohn, gewiss, aber das ist etwas anderes.« (Dean 2011: 271)

[225] »Sein Leiden ist abschreckend. Meine Empathie findet keinen Zugang zu seinem opaken Körper, opak auch für meine Sympathie.« (Dean 2003: 141)

[226] »Plötzlich bricht's aus mir heraus: Ich hasse ihn! Ich will keinen Vater. Nicht diesen.« (Dean 2003: 60)

characters enact this constellation almost explicitly, namely by way of hygiene measures: at the end of Robert's initial inhibition to washing his father's private parts lies the observation that Ray's body, in its severe emaciation, could as well be the body of a boy. (see Dean 2003: 139)

In interacting with Ray, Robert repeatedly finds himself talking to his father in the same way in which one would talk to a child, »in this language that misses the addressed body by an inch.« (»mit dieser Sprache, die den angeredeten Körper um Handbreite verfehlt,« Dean 2003: 31) Once more, Dean erects a psychoanalytic connection here: this time between the function of speech in the analytic process, and his own novelistic – and as such necessarily language-based – focus on corporeality. Jacques Lacan argued for precisely this connection in defining speech to be »a gift of language, and language is not immaterial. It is subtle body, but body it is. Words are caught up in all the body images that captivate the subject; they may ›knock up‹ the hysteric, be identified with the object of *Penisneid*.« (Lacan 2006: 248)

Given the importance of the bodily aspect in matters of identity that Dean establishes, along with the close connection between body and language in Lacanian terms, it comes as no surprise that Ray's loss of speech affects Robert substantially. Robert articulates one of his most urgent wishes as follows: »How much would I've loved to hear my name out of Ray's mouth. What intonation, I wonder, would he use to pronounce it?«[227] (Dean 2003: 46) But instead of having this wish fulfilled, Robert's already-insecure corporeal existence has to endure yet another blow by not being called

[227] »Wie gerne hätte ich meinen Namen nur einmal aus Rays Mund gehört. Mit welcher Intonation, frage ich mich, würde er ihn aussprechen?« (Dean 2003: 46)

into being by the father. The hopelessness of the situation can of course not lessen Robert's vital desires. So where reality does not allow for a fulfillment of his needs, he repeatedly consults the realm of imagination to ›work through‹ the situation. If we follow Sigmund Freud and conceive of dreams as wish fulfillments, it is especially one of the protagonist's daydreams that stands out as significant in this regard:

> »One morning, I imagine, we secretly break out of the Thomas More Asylum, without saying goodbye to anybody. [...] We jump, run, trot, and dance along the Thames River under bushy clouds. [...] Ray is hungry. He drums on his belly and we enter a fine Indian restaurant. [...] Then we sit down at the table, blow our noses into the napkins, and chatter away.«[228] (Dean 2003: 81–82)

What is striking about this dream is how the dreamer focuses on bodily aspects: there is a physical prowess in both participants that allows for jumping, running, trotting and dancing. Also, it is a physical sensation in Ray, a hunger that is located in the belly he drums on, which causes them to enter the restaurant. Yet even more significant is how this line of corporeal occurrences seamlessly leads into the realm of spoken language, namely when father and son, without any inhibition, »chatter away.«

Notably, however, this imaginative excursion takes place within the framework of a highly self-aware novel. As such, it eventually comes to expose itself quite explicitly as the fictitious product of the dreamer's imagination. In the course of their imagined conversation, Robert suggests an excursion he and his father could have undertaken if they had met sooner: »Or we could have travelled to Trinidad by ship. [...] Just like I did when I was a little boy. Can you remember?« (Dean 2003: 83) The answer that Robert

[228] »Eines Morgens, stelle ich mir vor, büxen wir heimlich aus dem Thomas More Asylum aus, ohne jemandem adieu zu sagen. [...] Wir hüpfen, springen, trotten und tänzeln unter buschigen Wolken der Themse entlang. [...] Ray hat Hunger. Er trommelt auf seinen Bauch, und wir betreten ein feines indisches Restaurant. [...] Dann setzen wir uns zu Tisch, schneutzen in die Servietten und reden drauflos.« (Dean 2003: 81–82)

imagines Ray to give is revealing: »I wasn't there.«[229] (ibid.) Interestingly, the protagonist of this novel, Robert, who is shown to believe in the ›reality‹ of another fictitous character, his father Ray, reveals that other fictitious character to be aware of his own fictitious condition. This multilayered take on fiction, I propose, serves a twofold purpose: In addition to illustrating this novel's metareflexive dimension, it reveals the power of fiction within the reality that the novel literarily confronts. Based on this claim of the power of imagination, Dean shows how even an *imagined* father is sufficient enough to initiate the intricate process of the Oedipus complex that does not stop at simply desiring a father. Rather, it harbors the wish to take on the father's place »because one admires him, wants to be like him, and because one wants to get him out of the way.«[230] (Freud 1928: n.p.)

The first hint at the yet-to-be-named Oedipus complex was articulated by Sigmund Freud in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess on October 15, 1897, on the basis of William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* drama. (see Blos 1987: 252) Also, later on, Freud repeatedly refers to this literary son who ought to avenge his father's death yet finds himself incapable of doing so – due to his own wish to kill the father, and the ensuing »feeling of guilt that petrifies him.« (»Schuldgefühl, das ihn lähmt,« Freud 1928: n.p.; see also Heim 1997: 1027)

As a dramaturge, Robert is no stranger to this drama of the human psyche; he even explicitly indicates never having liked the passivity of the doubt-ridden Hamlet. (see Dean 2003: 53) However, this dislike seems to be mainly based on the existential

[229] »›Oder wir hätten mit dem Schiff zusammen nach Trinidad fahren können,‹ sage ich. ›So, wie ich es als kleiner Junge schon einmal gemacht habe. Kannst du dich erinnern?‹ ›Ich war nicht dabei,‹ sagt Ray energisch.« (Dean 2003: 83)

[230] »[M]an möchte an Stelle des Vaters sein, weil man ihn bewundert, so sein möchte wie er und weil man ihn wegschaffen will.« (Freud 1928: n.p.)

importance it entails. Robert himself does experience Hamlet's guilt, which is also the guilt of Oedipus. While he hardly wants to replace the frail and im-potent Ray, it is necessary to remember that Ray is the only ›real‹ embodiment of his »shadow father« Robert will ever get. Therefore, the physical condition of Ray turns into the fulfillment of the son's wish to kill his father, as becomes obvious in his question: »Why do I experience Ray's state, his frailty, as the cause for a guilt I have to shoulder?«[231] (ibid.: 158) Conscious of the less-than-obvious logic of this emotional constellation, a logic that only makes sense in the context of Freudian psychoanalysis, he continues: »Why do I have the underlying feeling of having set out to kill my father, when I only want to know and save him?«[232] (ibid.) It is indicative of the profound ambivalences in any oedipal constellation when Robert repeatedly steps away from wanting to save his father and embraces the contrary readiness to avenge the child Ray once abandoned. Like Hamlet, he says in a sudden identification with the Shakespearian anti-hero, he secretly carries a dagger with him at all times. (see ibid.: 23, 69)

Hamlet is of course not the only character in world literature to famously carry »a dagger in [his] robe.« (»einen Dolch in [s]einem Gewand,« Dean 2003: 69) In 1798, the German poet Friedrich Schiller opened his canonical ballad »The Hostage« (»Die Bürgschaft«) with the following lines: »The tyrant Dionys to seek, / Stern Moerus with his poniard crept.«[233] (vs. 1–2) A parallel between these opening lines of the ballad and the Freudian

---

[231] »Warum empfinde ich Rays Zustand, sein Gebrechen, als Ursache einer Schuld, die ich auf mich zu nehmen habe?« (Dean 2003: 158)

[232] »Logisch wäre doch das Gegenteil. [...] Warum habe ich unterschwellig das Gefühl, ich sei ausgezogen, meinen Vater zu töten, wo ich ihn doch nur kennen und retten will?« (Dean 2003: 158)

[233] »Zu Dionys, dem Tyrannen, schlich / Damon, den Dolch im Gewande.« (Vs. 1-2) Translation by Anonymous, 1902. Found on: ›http://germanstories.vcu.edu/schiller/hostage_dual.html‹. (last accessed on 8 December 2013)

father concept is certainly present in Dionys' designation as the patriarchal tyrant. Yet even more significant, I suggest, is the conclusion of said ballad. Deeply touched by the faithfulness between Moerus and his friend, each of whom is willing to give his life for the other, Dionys eventually exclaims: »Truth is no dream! – its power is strong. / Give grace to him who owns his wrong! / 'Tis mine your suppliant now to be, / Ah, let the band of love – be three!«[234] (vs. 137–140) Opposite a seemingly unbreakable group of two, the ruler takes on the position of the third; in the new group of three, he then no longer acts as a tyrant, but rather as the now-indispensable third element. This constellation is highly reminiscent of psychoanalytic takes on the role of the father opposite a symbiotic connection between mother and child. From a psychoanalytic perspective, it is the father who comes to »dissolve that ›body for two‹« (»diesen ›Körper für zwei‹ aufzulösen,« Seiffge-Krenke 2001: 52) and thus aids the child in breaking free from its early dependency on the mother. (see Blos 1987: 244)

What Martin R. Dean emphasizes in this context is once again the power of language, as he regards language to be the element that eventually opens up the mother-child body. According to Dean, the father acts as the first stranger »in the phase of triangulation« (Dean 2002: n.p.) by way of introducing into the child's life ›father-words.‹ (*Vaterworte*) Suddenly, the exclusivity of ›mother-words‹ (*Mutterworte*) is undermined by the introduction of ›foreign noise.‹ (*Fremdgeräusche*; see ibid.) Based on this vital importance of language in the process of individualization, Dean reveals a special interest in how sons, whose absent fathers do *not* call them by their names, find a

[234] »Und die Treue, sie ist doch kein leerer Wahn – / So nehmet auch mich zum Genossen an: / Ich sei, gewährt mir die Bitte, / In eurem Bunde der dritte.« (Vs. 137–140) Translation by Anonymous, 1902. Found on: ›http://germanstories.vcu.edu/schiller/hostage_dual.html‹. (last accessed on 8 December 2013)

way into language.[235] (see ibid.) Robert, faced with a speechless and physically afflicted father, has to find another way of continuing his search for a body that might help him explore himself. And so his path leads him into an arena that is far from foreign to psychoanalytic thought.

Robert's short yet intense affair with Ray's nurse Navira – a British woman of Indian heritage – has generally been underestimated in critical commentaries. If looked at from the perspective of identity formation, however, it becomes clear that Navira acts neither as a simple erotic comforter (see Vilas-Boas 2008: 67) nor as an excuse for the inclusion of a »dull love story« (»fade[] Liebesgeschichte,« Mazenauer 2003: n.p.) into the novel. In fact, she provides Robert with an opportunity to explore himself in a way that is inseparably tied to corporeality; and with that, Navira comes to temporarily replace Ray. Even though the actual relationship that unites the lovers is of course not identical to the one Robert desires to have with Ray, both relationships are governed by the same principles. As a woman, Navira acts as a counterpart to Robert, which identifies her as an exemplary embodiment of Dean's ›foreign noise.‹ The passion they share, however, also moves her closer to Robert. Consistently, Robert experiences her as being »close and foreign at the same time« (»nah und fremd zugleich,« Dean 2003: 52): she is positioned at the exact same intersection of proximity and distance as is Ray; but contrarily to him, Navira actively allows Robert to search for the similar within the foreign. Robert himself

[235] »Deswegen interessiert mich, was vaterlose Söhne sind, wie vaterlose Söhne zu(m) Wort kommen.« (Dean 2002: n.p.)

puts it like this: »Navira supports me in discovering my own skin color anew. She does it differently than Ray.«[236] (ibid.: 107)

Robert's erotic involvement with Navira is outlined as an experiment that springs from an initial moment of curiosity: »I look at her and wonder how it would be to fall in love with Indian Navira.«[237] (Dean 2003: 50) In seizing the moment, Robert sets out to put his hypothetical thought into action. Whereas his Swiss wife Leonie, with her blond hair and white skin, always inevitably turns him into »the dark one« (»de[n] Dunkle[n],« ibid.: 51), the familiarity of Navira's skin tone allows him to perceive himself not on the basis of differences, but by way of a similarity he is so eager to explore. This constellation is particularly obvious when, during their first sexual encounter, it is not the intimate sensation as such that excites Robert. Instead, it is the glance into the mirror »that melts us together into a double-being.« (»der uns zu einem Doppelwesen verschmilzt,« ibid.: 72) The protagonist's conclusion of this episode, meaningfully narrated under the title »In front of Mirrors« (»Vor Spiegeln«), reads accordingly: »I touch your skin and feel like I'm touching myself!«[238] (ibid.: 73)

The self-centeredness of Robert's intimate undertaking is also evident in his regarding Navira to be ›Indian‹ even though she declaredly has nothing in common with the stereotypes of Indian femininity. (see Dean 2003: 84) Irrespective of the imaginative basis of his perception, Robert experiences his intimacy with her as »the exploration of a new continent« (»d[ie] Erforschung eines neuen Kontinents,« ibid.: 140) – a continent that, despite its newness, is central to Robert's understanding of self. Dean's underlining

[236] »Aber Navira hilft mir, meine eigene Hautfarbe neu zu entdecken. Sie tut das anders als Ray.« (Dean 2003: 107)
[237] »Ich schaue sie an und frage mich, wie es wäre, wenn ich mich in die indische Navira verlieben würde.« (Dean 2003: 50)
[238] »Ich berühre deine Hand und habe das Gefühl, mich selber anzufassen!« (Dean 2003: 73)

of the cultural dimension here is highly convincing, not least because he has Robert grow up in a cultural environment that constantly places him into the position of not fitting in. Robert's physical appearance, the dark color of his skin, does not embody the white ›Swissness‹ of his country of citizenship; in Switzerland, Robert appears as Indian as can be.

3.2. From Switzerland to Trinidad and Tobago

At the beginning of the novel's second part, Robert, Navira, and Ray travel to the hotel *Waldhaus* in Sils-Maria, a small community nestled in the Swiss alps. On the surface, they do so in order to meet with the only visitor Ray ever had in his retirement asylum, a man by the name of Selwin Baragan. This »Swiss excursion« (»Schweizer Reise,« Mazenauer 2003: n.p.) has repeatedly been called a superfluous addendum to the main story line. (see, e.g., Vilas-Boas 2008: 68) But such a negative evaluation seems unjustified, as Dean strategically utilizes this episode for a first explicit expansion of his novelistic exploration of identity formation. For whereas Robert experiences the trip into this stereotypically Swiss mountain-setting as a journey back into his childhood (see Dean 2003: 106), we eventually see ourselves confronted no longer just with psychoanalytic matters, but now also with questions of national identity.

Opposite Navira, Robert identifies himself as »a ›milkcow boy‹ from Switzerland.« (»ein Sennenbub aus der Schweiz,« Dean 2003: 51) This is a striking self-description, as the protagonist's physical appearance certainly does not match the picture of a traditional Swiss ›Sennenbub.‹ And irrespective of the humoristic aspect in Robert's statement, the author provided him with a childhood filled with the seriousness of his not

fitting in; his classmates, for example, used to call him »little Negro.« (»Negerchen,« ibid.: 181) Consequently, the protagonist was always made aware of his multicultural heritage, which combined two radically different cultures. Ray once made the following observation about Switzerland: »This strange country in the heart of Europe was the complete opposite of Trinidad. Clean instead of dirty, wealthy and self-confident instead of poor and dependent.«[239] (ibid.: 213) As for his son Robert, those contradictions became an integral part of his cultural identity. Indeed, what Dean has his protagonist demonstrate in the course of this Swiss episode is nothing less than what it means for the individual when »[t]he borders have moved into [them].« (Dean 2010b: 7)

Even though Switzerland has never had colonies, it nonetheless is to be considered »a country of immigration,« (»ein Einwanderungsland,« Dean 2003: 175) and »the Swiss have always connected their identity search with the question of foreigners.«[240] (ibid.: 176) With this, Dean opens up a clear dimension of social criticism (see Vilas-Boas 2008: 73) – namely, in that he has his character address problematic aspects of Swiss society. (see Dean 2010b: 1) For instance, Robert openly articulates his feeling of being a social outcast when he points out the rejecting glances our Indian-looking trio attracts from Swiss train passengers. (see Dean 2003: 107) This strongly underlines that the racist »duels with glances« (»Blickduelle,« Dean 1990: 36) are not confined to the Parisian métro (see ibid.), and are as such not the result of a single country's questionable politics.

[239] »Dieses merkwürdige Land im Herzen Europas war das pure Gegenteil von Trinidad. Sauber statt schmutzig, reich und selbstbewusst statt arm und abhängig.« (Dean 2003: 213)
[240] »[D]ie Schweizer [haben] ihre Identitätssuche stets mit der Ausländerfrage verknüpft.« (Dean 2003: 176)

The Swiss people's defense of their ›Swissness‹ thus becomes an occasion to address challenges that are inseparable from questions of nationality as such.

When the travellers stop at a restaurant on their way to Sils-Maria, it is a poster by the rightwards-leaning Swiss People's Party (SVP, *Schweizerische Volkspartei*) that provides the political background for the scene: »Do you want to become foreign in your own country?« (»Wollt ihr fremd werden im eigenen Land?« Dean 2003: 177), it reads; hence it provides an ideal ground for Robert's accusation of Swiss xenophobia. Shortly thereafter, Dean has his protagonist suggest an understanding of social belonging that is not dependent on national borderlines: »how can one protect the home (*Heimat*) when it belongs to everybody. Everybody has a home for themselves, and one can't take that away from them.«[241] (ibid.: 178) While this is an interesting thought, Dean does not elaborate on it any further. So instead of continuing in this line of arguing for an individualistic concept of social belonging, Dean returns to the purely critical tone of his argumentation. The crowning culmination of this criticism is the protagonist's conclusion that »the boat is always full« (»[i]mmer ist das Boot voll,« ibid.: 178) – that is, a literal reference to Switzerland's immgration politics during World War II. Based on this boat analogy, Governor (*Bundesrat*) Eduard von Steiger sought to ›justify‹ the rejection of Jewish asylum seekers at the Swiss border. As a small life boat, he argued, Switzerland simply could not afford to take on more passengers, but should instead strive to save the ones already taken in. (see Schweizer Geschichte n.d.: n.p.) This is not the first instance in which Martin R. Dean criticizes Switzerland's shielding itself from Auschwitz' »moral topography.« (»moralische Topographie,« Muschg 1997: 10)

[241] »[W]ie kann man die Heimat schützen, da sie doch jedermann gehört. Jeder hat eine Heimat für sich, die kann man ihm doch nicht wegnehmen.« (Dean 2003: 178)

While visiting the installation of Minitature Switzerland in Melide near Lugano, for instance, Dean muses about the portrayed image of Switzerland in the following way: »Miniature Switzerland was spotless and sterile; no wind of history, no storm of catastrophe and revolution. Cliché had become reality here, and instilled a feeling of intimacy.« (Dean n.d.c: 157) That the cliché-turned-fact instills »a feeling of intimacy« in the observer indicates that Dean finds more than just a few grains of truth in said cliché. To turn Switzerland's having been spared from Europe's catastrophic Third Reich history into a lamentation about the absent »wind of history« and »storm of catastrophe« is a highly popular undertaking among Swiss literary intellectuals. As such, also Dean reaches a rather common dead-end rather quickly here. For while this way of argumentation certainly succeeds at expressing dissatisfaction with Swiss political attitudes and choices, it is also highly non-constructive.

Nonetheless, Dean's novelistic criticism does remain very sensitive to some of the core issues at stake here. In regard to assimilating the foreign to a degree that makes it fit into a national concept based on ›Swissness,‹ for instance, Robert concludes: »How can one teach a Turkish woman to play the alp horn, how a war veteran from Kosovo to handle a trash bag!«[242] (Dean 2003: 179) Obviously, this is no question; the exclamation point that replaces the question mark indicates the impossibility of what this structural question asks for. There will always be aspects of any culture that make it impenetrable to those who have not been socialized within it. This is of course especially true in regard to the

[242] »Wie bringt man einer Türkin das Alphornblasen bei, wie einem kriegsversehrten Kosovo-Albaner den richtigen Umgang mit einem Kehrichtsack!« (Dean 2003: 179)

famous Swiss trash bag that causes regular arguments even amongst the ›Swissest‹ of Swiss citizens to this day.

In the course of his musings, Robert draws another interesting conclusion. While thinking about how even his stepfather Neil could not avoid being negatively affected by unattainable requirements of blending in, he admiringly states that Neil never fought back. Instead, »whenever he was attacked, he smiled back, like Gandhi.«[243] (Dean 2003: 179) This comparison between Neil and the leading figure of the Indian National Movement occurs twice in the novel. On the second occasion, it is owed to Neil's »ability not to regard himself as too important.« (»das Vermögen, sich selber zurückzunehmen,« ibid.: 379) This comparison is significant especially because it is positioned at a peculiar intersection between two cultures, whether or not this peculiarity was intended by the author.

Certainly, non-violence and humility were declared factors of Mahatma Gandhi's approach to politics. Yet at the same time, the principle of Satyagraha, as a form of *actively* passive peacefulness, is not identical to the passive resignation Neil represents. While Gandhi aims at »achiev[ing] Purna Swaraj or complete freedom« (David 1973: 249), Neil aims at being left unbothered in his outsider status. Naturally, these two attitudes do share certain traits; but they are supported by different concepts. Therefore, by inaccurately referring to his Indian heritage as in opposition to his Swiss environment, Robert exposes himself as being positioned in between these two cultures. He neither fully identifies himself with the Swiss, nor does he fully appropriate the Indian one; because he is evidently unable to grasp core concepts of Indian cultural history beyond their popular – and insufficiently portrayed – perception.

---

[243] »Nie hat er sich gewehrt; hat man ihn angepöbelt, so lächelte er zurück, wie Gandhi.« (Dean 2003: 179)

Throughout his literary life, an obvious indication of Neil's insufficient ›Swissness‹ was his inability to speak Swiss German without an accent. Certainly, this may have increased »the doctor's magical aura« (»die magische Aura des Arztes,« Dean 2003: 189), but it also always exposed the man's being different. Robert, on the other hand, grew up with this variation of the German language that regularly causes Germans to »poke[] gentle fun at the way« (Dean n.d.c: 156) its speakers sound. His impeccable Swiss German is thus presented as his only weapon in defending his belonging to Swiss society.

During Robert's verbal explosion in the restaurant, during his moral sermon about the xenophobia found in Swiss politics, two policemen approach the travelers' rental car in the parking lot. The ensuing conversation between the officers and Robert as the leader of our trio of ›foreigners‹ is not only entertaining, but also meaningful in regard to Dean's take on the power of language. After the officers address him in broken English, Robert mockingly comes up with his own »rare mixture of Urdu and Swahili.« (»eine[] rare[] Mischung aus Urdu und Suaheli,« Dean 2003: 179) Among themselves, the officers speak Swiss German, and the following conversation takes place:

> »Hey, ask them where they're coming from,« says the taller officer. »They're just cruising around here, goddammit.«
> »Those lads surely can't even drive. D'you want me to call for backup?«
> »Hergarati bumarang,« I yell frightenedly.
> »Did you see, this one craps his pants out of fear. Does he have a gun, did you check goddammit son of a bitch. If he has a gun, we're screwed.«[244] (Dean 2003: 180)

[244] »Frog si mol, woheer sie eigentli chöme,« sagt der längere Beamte. »Dije charre do eifach im züüg ume, gottverdammi[sic!].« / »Die sieche[sic!] chönne sicher gar niit fahre. Solli no a streife[sic!] afordere?« / »Hergarati bumarang,« rufe ich erschrocken. / »Hesch gseh, der shiist jo et Hose for angscht. Het er e waffee[sic!], hesch emol gluegt gopferdammi hueresiech. Wenn de a waffe het, denn hämmers gschenk.« (Dean 2003: 180)

Eventually, to prevent the situation from escalating, Robert hands over his driver's licence, which also displays his home address in Basel-Stadt. Calmly, and in immaculate Swiss German, he adds: »We'd like to drive on now, 'cause it's freakishly cold.«[245] (Dean 2003: 179) Instantly, the three travelers are back in their car, accompanied by the goodbye-waving of the two police officers who are visibly »delighted that there's one Swiss person more in the world.« (»erfreut darüber, dass es einen Schweizer mehr auf der Welt gibt,« ibid.) With this scene, Dean identifies language as a highly important factor when it comes to demonstrating and claiming social belonging. So even though Dean does not further elaborate on this aspect in his novel, it certainly underlines Dean's take on the importance of narrative strategies in the process of identity formation.

The Swiss episode in the novel's second part is not limited to questions of national identity. This is already indicated by Martin R. Dean's choice of location. After all, Sils-Maria was the temporary »place of work of that terrible philosopher who first proclaimed God's death.« (»Wirkungsstätte des furchtbaren Philosophen, der erstmals Gottes Tod verkündete,« Dean 2003: 154) Not only did Friedrich Nietzsche write his 1886 work *Beyond Good and Evil* in Sils-Maria, but his philosophical text also contains theses that aid in further expanding the psychoanalytic setting of Dean's identity narrative.

Dean's references to Nietzschean thought are borne by Selwin Baragan. The dubiousness of this character is already evident in his paradoxical construction as a God-fearing Nietzsche-admirer, as is obvious in his describing his concern for Ray as his »first step toward God.« (»erster Schritt zu Gott,« Dean 2003: 169) Also, Dean creates Baragan as a character of many shades by providing him with an ethnic origin that remains

[245] »Mer würde gärn wiiterfahre, s'isch nämli sauchalt.« (Dean 2003: 179)

confusing to the protagonist: »His freckled skin and his posture, his accent-free English, all of this appears thoroughly British«[246] (ibid.: 149), while his name could be Armenian, Turkish-Cyprian, or Persian. (see ibid.) The difficulty of clearly labelling Baragan certainly strengthens this character's primary function as a bearer of theoretical concepts.

After quoting Friedrich Nietzsche's poem »Sils-Maria« from his work *The Gay Science* (*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882) on their way to the famous Surlej-Mountain (*Surlej-Fels, Zarathustrastein*) – where Nietzsche once sat »waiting, waiting – but for nothing, beyond good and evil«[247] (Nietzsche n.d.: n.p) –, Baragan cheerfully establishes the connection that Dean utilizes to expand once more his psychoanalytic focus: »Also the most intense opponent of Christianity didn't really have a father. He and Jesus are both fatherless.«[248] (Dean 2003: 157) Instantly, the door that leads into the realm of Christianity is opened. Indeed, this seems a highly fruitful area for Dean's investigation into intricate father-son constellations, not least because the position of the father remains hard to assign within the structure of the Holy Family of Jesus, Maria, and Joseph/God/the Holy Ghost. (see Koschorke 2001: 21) For just like Joseph, Neil, too, finds himself in a peculiar outsider-position to his patchwork-family. Yet while this setting to some degree mirrors his protagonist's familial situation, Dean does not elaborate on such parallels. Instead, he shifts his novelistic focus to the power dynamics within the Christian faith that cause Nietzsche to define it as an act of all-encompassing submission: »Christian faith is, from the beginning, a sacrifice: a sacrifice of all freedom,

[246] »Seine laubfleckige Haut und seine Körperhaltung, sein akzentfreies Englisch, das alles wirkt sehr britisch.« (Dean 2003: 149)
[247] »Hier sass ich, wartend, wartend – doch auf nichts, jenseits von Gut und Böse.« (Nietzsche n.d.: n.p.)
[248] »Auch der heftigste Widersacher des Christentums hatte eigentlich keinen Vater. Jesus und er sind vaterlose.« (Dean 2003: 157)

of all pride, [...] at the same time [it is] enslavement and self-mockery.«[249] (Nietzsche 1980: 66)

In his aforementioned speech *Über Väter*, Dean interprets Nietzsche's anti-Christian sermon as a rebellion against his preacher father. (see Dean 2002: n.p.) Consequently, he lets Baragan argue in the same way. According to him, Ray's atheism is owed to his own rebellion: »Ray,« Baragan explains, »seems to have sufferd so badly under his father, the powerful Budri, that he later couldn't accept anyone in the superior position anymore.«[250] (Dean 2003: 154) By reading Nietzsche in this light, the philosopher is introduced as compatible with Sigmund Freud's approach to religion, inasmuch as in both models, the figure of the father remains vital. Especially in his last completed work, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939; see Heim 1997: 1026; Perelberg 2010: 84), Freud examines the importance of the father in matters of religious belief. Martin R. Dean does not comment on Freud's statement »that religious phenomena are to be understood only on the model of the neurotic symptoms of the individual.« (Freud 1967: 71) Rather, Freud's *Moses* becomes an implicit point of reference mainly because it argues that religion, at least the monotheistic version as developed by the Egyptian Moses, is the result of »the longing for the father that lives in each of us from his childhood days.« (ibid.: 140) Freud reasons that in recognizing Moses – who took on a group of strangers to equip them with laws (see ibid.: 73) – as a great man, his followers also came to recognize in him »traits of the father.« (ibid.: 140) Dean's explication of his personal atheism reads accordingly: »I

[249] »Der christliche Glaube ist von Anbeginn Opferung: Opferung aller Freiheit, alles Stolzes, […] zugleich Verknechtung und Selbst-Verhöhnung.« (Nietzsche 1980: 66)
[250] »Ray hat offenbar so unter seinem Vater, dem mächtigen Budri, gelitten, dass er später niemanden mehr in der übergeordneten Position ertragen hat.« (Dean 2003: 154)

never seized the opportunity to become the son of a heavenly father. How could I have wanted to turn myself into even more of a son, when I already had two fathers.«[251] (Dean 2002: n.p.)

It appears that the author turned his own atheism into a basis for designing his protagonist as an atheist also. On the one hand, I evaluate this narrative choice as insufficiently elaborated in the context of the Freudian theory that Dean invokes, considering how much effort he puts into confirming the »longing for the father« in his protagonist. On the other hand, Robert's refusal of an all-encompassing father figure also serves once more to underline the ambivalent emotional situation he finds himself in on this journey to the self. Either way, it remains questionable that Dean introduces the aspect of religion without utilizing the connections it opens up to move his novel forward. Overall, Dean's addressing of Christianity remains suspended in mid-air; it confronts us with interesting thoughts, yet does not substantially add to the novel's main arguments. The same is true for the general topic of religion. Apart from a mostly unreflected and matter-of-fact mention of his characters' religious lives, Dean abstains from establishing questions of religion as a serious dimension to his novel. So even though Dean's is a text with an indisputable theoretical horizon, the author repeatedly does not live up to the expectations of theoretical discourse he elicits in the reader.

Far more convincing is Dean's elaboration on Friedrich Nietzsche's very own take on the Oedipus myth, which the philosopher laid down in the following statement: »The problem of the value of truth approached us, – or was it us who approached the problem?

[251] »Sohn eines himmlischen Vaters zu sein, diese Möglichkeit habe ich für mich nicht in Anspruch genommen. Wie hätte ich mich auch noch mehr zum Sohn machen wollen, da ich bereits zwei Väter besass.« (Dean 2002: n.p.)

Who is Oedipus? Who sphinx?«[252] (Nietzsche 1980: 15) The multidirectional questions that Nietzsche addresses in the course of his investigation into the concept of truth become a highly productive reference for the progression of the novel; and once again, Dean has the corresponding discourse introduced by Selwin Baragan. Just as questionable as his ethnic origin is Baragan's professional affiliation. Whereas his business card reads »Selwin Baragan, Optician« (Dean 2003: 95), we later learn that he is neither an optician nor anything else with certainty (see ibid.: 363); Baragan's actual profession remains unclear. Nonetheless, Dean's connecting him with the realm of optometry does serve a clear purpose. In his self-introduction, Baragan puts it like this: »Glasses, people's visual capabilities have always interested me.«[253] (ibid.: 151) Evidently, as soon as a person's visual take on reality is at stake, questions of perspectivity surface. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche indicated that his philosophical considerations concerned exactly that: »life's optics of perspectivity.« (»die Perspektiven-Optik des Lebens,« Nietzsche 1980: 26)

By declaring popular evaluations to be »mere preliminary perspectives, [...] maybe even owed to a specific angle« (»nur vorläufige Perspektiven, [...] vielleicht noch dazu aus einem Winkel heraus,« Nietzsche 1980: 16), Nietzsche claims any belief in »immediate certainties« (»unmittelbare Gewissheiten«) to be nothing more than signs of »moral naivety.« (»moralische Naivetät,« ibid.: 53) Viewed from this perspective, then, truth is no longer an absolute entity. It comes to be replaced by a multitude of perspectives, which inevitably identifies »non-truth as a condition of life« (»Unwahrheit als Lebensbedingung,« ibid.: 18); also, such an addressing of the multidimensionality of

[252] »Das Problem vom Werthe der Wahrheit trat vor uns hin, – oder waren wir's, die vor das Problem hin traten? Wer von uns ist hier Oedipus? Wer Sphinx?« (Nietzsche 1980: 15)
[253] »Die Brillen, die Sehschärfen der Menschen haben mich immer interessiert.« (Dean 2003: 151)

life defies the inherently moral categories of ›good‹ and ›evil.‹ To grasp a thoroughly uncertain reality requires a different approach.

Interestingly, Nietzsche identifes in moralists an aversion to »the tropical man« (»der tropische Mensch,« Nietzsche 1980: 117) precisely because the tropics cannot be reduced to one single perspective of ›truth.‹ The ensuing questions are vital to Dean's novel: »But why? In favor of ›temperate zones‹? In favor of ›temperate men‹? The moral ones? The mediocre ones?«[254] When looking at the Caribbean's long colonial history, it is hard to overlook how its prevalent power structures were based on constructions of a moral supremacy that favored the European settlers. It is also clear that this colonizing strategy is hardly indicative of any truth; rather, it remains tied to the colonizers' perspective. It follows that a Caribbean setting has to be deemed highly suitable for questions of concurrent perspectives that oppose rigid divisions of moral consequences. Also, based on its entertaining a profound ethnic diversity that is made up of the sum of perspectives of the ethnic groups it encompasses, the Caribbean is an exemplary setting for an exploration of the concept of multicultural identities.

Significantly, Dean not only novelistically elaborates on Nietzsche's theory of »life's optics of perspectivity«; he also addresses the role of literature within the exploration of that perspectivity. It is interesting that Baragan's first statement in the novel consists in declaring »cyberspace and hypertext and virtuality« (»Cyberraum und Hypertext und Virtualität«) to be »new forms of transcendentality.« (»neue Formen der Transzendentalität,« Dean 2003: 145) However, the author's critical view of the world

[254] »Warum doch? Zu Gunsten der ›gemässigten Zonen‹? Zu Gunsten der gemässigten Menschen? Der ›Moralischen‹? Der Mittelmässigen?« (Nietzsche 1980: 117)

wide web – whose »plenty of information doesn't make us smarter« (»die Fülle von Informationen macht uns nicht klüger,« Dean 2010: n.p.) – seems to contradict the perspective of his character. Based on his novelistic work, I suggest that Dean favors the internet's paper version: capturing our multilayered reality by way of writing requires narrative strategies that leave its ›magic‹ intact; thus, literature does not share in the logic of an online ›magic‹ that consists in an »instant disenchantment of the world.«[255] (ibid.)

Although Dean does not establish his thoughts on online virtuality as a serious layer of this novel, he does utilize them to provide us with at least some first indications of a literary aesthetics that does not doubt its object's value for our human existence. As a medium that narratively turns contingencies into necessities, literature creates a different kind of transcendence. Once, we learn, Neil worked in a movie theater; it was then and there that he »had learned that the cinema was a place of seduction, violence, and tears.«[256] (Dean 2003: 267) The same can be said of literature. Therefore, and based on Dean's highly aware employment of ›postmodern‹ narrative strategies, some of which are reminiscent of the cinematic techniques of movie making, Neil's conclusion on his cinema also applies to literature: it is »a holy temple.« (»eine heilige Stätte,« ibid.: 267)

3.3. Brown Skin, Many Masks

When Robert eventually decides to travel with Ray to Trinidad, to the only place »where Ray's past is located« (»wo Rays Vergangenheit liegt,« Dean 2003: 197), Dean has his characters enter a stage that allows for yet another expansion of his novel's psychoanalytic outline. This theoretical expansion becomes obvious when Robert's

---

[255] »Der Zauber des Internets besteht in der Sekundenschnellen Entzauberung der Welt.« (Dean 2010: n.p.)
[256] »Neil hatte gelernt, dass das Kino ein Ort der Verführung, der Gewalt und der Tränen war.« (Dean 2003: 267)

personal history seamlessly merges with the history of ›his‹ island. (see Vilas-Boas 2008: 69; Honold 2008: 141–142) Whereas the novel's title so far found a reflection in Robert's thinking of Neil and Ray as »my two fathers« (»meine beiden Väter,« Dean 2003: 13), the Caribbean island-setting allows for an inclusion of many ›fathers‹ into this concept of fatherhood. While immersing himself in Trinidadian culture, Robert muses: »The sound of music fills the air. [...] In close proximity, waves are beating in the harbor. I think of *my fathers* [emphasis added by me, AC] in the heat of the nights, of excitement, of their youthful, angry determination.«[257] (ibid.: 300)

This connecting of an individual with a collective understanding of fatherhood can be evaluated as opening up a realm that is as far-reaching as the ocean, whose waves are ceaselessly beating in its background. At the same time, Dean also establishes another water analogy, which claims that both understandings are inseparable. In the confrontation with the many confusing narratives of past events that make up his personal story of origin, Robert at some point frustratedly sighs: »Why can't you narrate orderly for once. [...] You're always meandering.«[258] (Dean 2003: 355) In that the winding movements of a river become a metaphor to describe the mode of narration lying at the core of this novel, Dean establishes the non-linearity of water as reminiscent of both the stories around his protagonist's ancestral fathers, and the protagonist's individual identity narrative. Certainly, depending on the particular perspective we apply, the Atlantic Ocean that separates the Caribbean islands and the European mainland from one another may also be regarded as the only thing that connects those two so totally different worlds.

---

[257] »Das Dröhnen von Musik lädt die Luft auf. [...] Ganz in der Nähe klatschen Wellen an die Hafenmohle. Ich denke an meine Väter in der Hitze der Nächte, an Aufregung, an ihre jugendliche, wütende Entschlossenheit.« (Dean 2003: 300)

[258] »Könnt ihr nicht einmal ordentlich erzählen. [...] Dauernd mäandert ihr rum.« (Dean 2003: 355)

Whereas Sigmund Freud's father concept strictly refers to a Western setting of family relations, Jacques Lacan proposes a different approach to the father: »[W]e must recognize the basis of the symbolic function which, since the dawn of historical time, has identified his person with the figure of the law.« (Lacan 2006: 230) In identifying the father as a »symbolic function« representing the law, Lacan's approach allows for an expansion of psychoanalytic thought beyond the confines of family structures. Instantly, then, psychoanalysis becomes applicable to a colonial setting, in which the father »is not [the] biological parent, but the […] white master.« (Britton 2002: 85) Furthermore, when the power dynamics inherent in father-son relationships unfold within the power dynamics between colonizers and colonized, the aspect of the third element is also to be understood differently. Instead of it being directly introduced into an individual's life in the form of a father figure, the individual faced with a multicultural setting has to define the third element themselves, by way of defining their particular location in between at least two competing cultures.

In reading French-Caribbean psychiatrist Frantz Fanon's 1952 investigation into the »psychology of colonialism« (Fanon 2008: 16) entitled *Black Skin, White Masks*, Homi Bhabha put it like this: »›Black skin, white masks‹ is not a neat division; it is a doubling, dissembling image of being in at least two places at once.« (Bhabha 1994: 64) What occurs in an individual's being positioned »in-between the black body and the white body« (ibid.: 89) is a veritable »spacialization of the subject.« (ibid.: 71) Of course, Homi Bhabha's concept of the third dimension so crucial to negotiating identity is not limited to the colonial stage. With his focus on the performative core of identity, Bhabha

locates that dimension wherever »difference is neither One or the Other but *something else besides, in-between*.« (ibid.: 313) Martin R. Dean is familiar with Bhabha's concept; this is for example evident when he states, in the form of an umarked quotation, that he is highly interested in the »hybrid forms of living of immigrants. […] This is where a third version evolves.«[259] (Dean quoted in Fairunterwegs 2011: n.p.)

Even though Frantz Fanon derived his observations from the French Antilles, the neurosis of colonialism – according to which »the black man [remains] slave to his inferiority, and the white man […] slave to his superiority« (Fanon 2008: 41) – has also been identified in the British Caribbean. Without a doubt, what we are faced with is a social sphere that is layered according to color, ethnicity, and culture. (see Deosaran 1981: 200)[260] Dean embraces this intricate situation of the British Caribbean. With subtle irony, for instance, he has Robert admire Trinidad's General Hospital as »an elongated building whose beautiful, balanced architecture […] is reminiscent of the blessings of Britain's colonial era.«[261] (Dean 2003: 329) Of course, that era can hardly be understood as blissful to the involuntary recipients of its ›blessings.‹ Not without reason does Robert find his long-lost father in a retirement home called »Thomas More Asylum.« Poignantly, Robert regards this as the most suitable place for Ray, since »[i]n this Thomas More Asylum reside the last losers of Britain's colonial history.«[262] (ibid.: 30) Indeed, Trinidad has hardly anything in common with the island state of Utopia that Englishman Thomas

---

[259] »Mich interessieren [...] die hybriden Lebensformen von Immigranten. […] Dabei entsteht etwas Drittes.« (Dean quoted in Fairunterwegs 2011: n.p.)

[260] See also Allahar 2006: 147; Meighoo 2003; and Tsuji 2008: 1165.

[261] »Rechts nun das General Hospital, ein langgestrecktes Gebäude, dessen schöne, ausgewogene Architektur und teilweise noch gut erhaltene Fassade an den Segen der britischen Kolonialzeit erinnert.« (Dean 2003: 329)

[262] »In diesem Thomas More Asyl sitzen die letzten Verlierer von Britanniens Kolonialgeschichte.« (Dean 2003: 30)

More so colorfully described in 1516. (see Kovce 2013: n.p.) Satire or not (see ibid.; Kristeva 1991: 116), More's *Utopia* presents a veritable counter-model to Trinidad, where tyranny and exploitation have long been established as consistent parameters of its existence. After all, what the white Prosperos did with the native and later imported subordinate people in Trinidad and Tobago was to turn them into Calibans, creatures »not honoured with / [a] human shape.«[263] (Shakespeare 1969: 16, I.2.283–284) So what Frantz Fanon attempts with his *Black Skin, White Masks* is essentially to re-humanize Caliban, which means »to liberate the black man from himself.« (Fanon 2008: 61)

The application of psychoanalysis to non-Western settings will always require a high level of self-reflection and awareness. Otherwise, any such endeavor remains susceptible to »imposing European norms on the rest of the world.« (Britton 2002: 2) But if applied in a reflected manner, it can be a helpful strategy in gaining an understanding of the non-Western Other. This may bring us much closer to that Other than any shyness in matters of utilizing the theoretical concepts with which we are familiar ever could. Therefore, I argue that Western theory does not necessarily »exoticise, capture and Calibanise the black subject.« (Dabydeen 2008: 35) As for Fanon, he is highly aware of the particular cultural setting he addresses under the perspective of Western psychoanalytic theory. This is especially clear when he declares that »the Oedipus complex is far from being a black complex.« (Fanon 2008: 130) Nonetheless, and most certainly from a Western perspective, his psychoanalytic framework allows for a quite plausible analysis of the

[263] On the popularity of references to William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (1610/11) in the course of investigations into Caribbean-European relations, see Neptune 2007: 5–6.

psychological phenomenons that might occur in an individual who is socialized within a different ethnic ›main‹ culture.

Based on the idea of a collective unconscious, which consists in »the myths and archetypes« that »are permanent engrams of the species« (Fanon 2008: 165), Fanon concludes that »[s]ubjectively and intellectually the Antillean behaves like a white man.« (ibid.: 126) This is owed to the assumption that the Antillean black man, socialized in a context dominated by white European culture, »has the same collective unconscious as the European.« (ibid.: 168) Although this is an understanding of the unconscious that largely depends on internalization, the person of color's resulting distrust toward »what is black in [themselves]« (ibid.) nonetheless adds the aspect of repression that eventually identifies this as a Freudian concept.[264] On the other side of this ›neurotic‹ state of affairs, according to Fanon, lies the negrophobia of the Whites that turns the Antilleans into »sexual beasts« (ibid.: 135) – that is, a constant threat to the socially established white supremacy – and it is this area of sexuality that Dean, staying true to the major playing field of psychoanalysis, once more establishes in his novel.

Frantz Fanon argues that a white woman's love is desired by the black man because her love proves the black man's worthiness of white love, and thus his *being* white. (see Fanon 2008: 45) In having his character Ray demonstrate said psychological mechanism, Martin R. Dean novelistically reconstructs the theoretical constellation of *Black Skin, White Masks*. Significantly, Ray's only concrete memory is tied to the white US-American actress Rita Hayworth, who visited the island in the 1950s. When Robert asks

[264] In this I disagree with Celia Britton, who argues that »an unconscious created by internalization *rather than repression* is not strictly Freudian.« (Britton 2002: 36)

his father, »[d]o you know the song ›Trinidad Lady‹? Or ›I've been kissed before‹?,« Ray silently replies in an unmistakably affirmative manner: »Suddenly, his eyes sparkled excitedly.«[265] (Dean 2003: 59) In the course of Dean's presenting us with Ray's story, it becomes clear that Rita Hayworth is more to Ray than an imagined replacement of the Swiss Helen who left him. Rather, she acts as a symbol of theoretical consequence, and at some earlier point in his life, Ray himself put it like this: »she possessed a sparkle that only specific, very few white women displayed. Unimaginable to possess such a woman. She belonged to no one, or to all.«[266] (ibid.: 205) As a public figure who plays into the fantasy of millions from her cinema screen, the figure of Rita Hayworth turns into the ultimate personification of the desirable white woman.

It speaks for Dean's consistency when it is once more a father-son constellation that provides the backdrop for his theoretical explications. In this case, it is Ray's father Budri, himself deeply entangled in the island's politics, who articulates the issue at stake. Angrily, Budri accuses his son of writing »like a nigger«: »[you] slobber over a white whore and ridicule me in front of my Indian clientele.«[267] (Dean 2003: 233) Clearly, the infatuation with white women is classified as a black phenomenon here, thus referring back to Frantz Fanon's study. At the same time, however, Budri's statement also hints at the problematic aspects inherent in this analogy. For when it comes to the duality of black and white, Trinidad's Indian population is positioned in between these two ends of the ethnic spectrum. Furthermore, there is also a twist in Dean's proposed concept, which is

---

[265] »Kennst du den Song ›Trinidad Lady‹? Oder ›I've been kissed before‹? Auf einmal funkeln seine Augen aufgeregt.« (Dean 2003: 59)

[266] »[S]ie besass einen Glanz, den nur bestimmte, ganz wenige weisse Frauen hatten. Undenkbar, so eine Frau zu besitzen. Sie gehörte niemandem oder allen.« (Dean 2003: 205)

[267] »›Du schreibst wie ein Nigger,‹ herrschte ihn sein Vater Budri an, ›schwärmst für eine weisse Nutte und machst mich vor meiner indischen Klientel lächerlich.‹« (Dean 2003: 233)

more than a mere reproduction of Fanon's theory. So instead of presenting the Indian man's desire for the white European woman as an attempt to confirm his own ›whiteness,‹ the author lets his protagonist consider another explanation.

In thinking about his father's preference for white women, Robert concludes that »sleeping with them meant the conquest of something forbidden, the gaining of power over the race of the oppressors.«[268] (Dean 2003: 141) In this concept, the overpowering of the white oppressor is presented as more vital than physically morphing into the white oppressor. This is highly indicative of the Indian population's peculiar position between seeking to reassure themselves of their Indianness on the one hand, and desiring the power to establish themselves as an integral part of Trinidadian culture on the other hand. Again, it is Budri who explicates the Indians' particular position in the cultural setting of Trinidad, namely in referring to his own ancestral forefathers: »it's always been the world of my fathers, old India, that provided me with support, character and strength. [...] [W]e're emigrants, but our roots lie in our faith, our customs and our history.«[269] (ibid.: 326)

As soon as they arrived on the island, the Indian indentured laborers were exposed to significant hostility from the colored population. (see Bush 1997: 9) The introduction of an indentured labor system in 1845 is suspected to be owed more to the white planters' wish »to depress wages and reassert their control over labour than any apparent labour shortage.« (Reddock 1994: 27; see also Deosaran 1981: 208) Furthermore, the newly

[268] »Mit ihnen zu schlafen bedeutete die Eroberung von etwas Verbotenem, den Gewinn von Macht über die Rasse der Unterdrücker.« (Dean 2003: 141)
[269] »[E]s war stets die Welt meiner Väter, das alte Indien, das mir Halt, Charakter und Festigkeit gab. [...] wir sind Auswanderer, aber unsere Wurzeln liegen in unserem Glauben, unseren Sitten und unserer Geschichte.« (Dean 2003: 326)

freed African slaves regarded estate field laborers as inferior per se. (see Oxaal 1982: 37; Allahar 2006: 148) The instant inferiority status of the Indian workers is also evident in their being designated as ›Coolies,‹ that is, individuals »constantly laboring in a slavish manner.« (Bush 1997: 9; see also Oxaal 1982: 37) Notably, however, this hostility went in both directions, as the Indians, too, looked down on the island's ex-slaves: they »regarded the Blacks as untouchables and polluted as they ate the flesh of pigs and cattle.« (Mohammed 2006: 43)

Life on the sugar and cocoa plantations heavily affected the Indian laborers' traditional customs. For instance, it brought about a flattening out of the Hindu caste system, since members of different castes were forced to live close together. (see Ryan 1972: 23) The plantation context also encouraged many Indians to abandon their Hindu or Muslim backgrounds and convert to Christianity instead – not least because there was no space for the dietary practices of either religion, and because »their faiths were ridiculed.« (Bush 1997: 84–85) Concurrently, however, life on the plantations also fostered a separation between the African and Indian populations, since even when they did not live on their plantations, the indentured laborers were obligated to stay physically close together. The result was villages of »boring houses, no individual aberrations, […] religious flags in the forecourt, the Indian community all by itself.«[270] (Dean 2003: 249)

But plantation life also brought the African ex-slaves and the Indian indentured laborers into a comparable position, since for both groups »[e]vil came from the white man. The

[270] »[L]angweilige Häuser, keine individuellen Abweichungen, [...] religiöse Flaggen im Vorhof, die indische Gemeinde unter sich.« (Dean 2003: 249) See also Brereton 1979: 189.

oppressor, bully, and rapist.«[271] (Dean 2003: 253) Dean's description of the life of Robert's ancestors on Trinidad's plantation estates agrees with the corresponding literature on the topic. Especially Indian women were known to suffer from the working conditions, as they were placed at the lowest end of the plantations' social hierarchy – in terms of both assigned tasks and earned wages. Based on the ineradicable dependence of female wage laborers on men, voluntary as well as forced relationships with the white plantation officials were nothing out of the ordinary. (see Reddock 1994: 39–44) It is thus noteworthy that the mobilization of women's organizations in India, which regarded said plantation practices as »bringing international disrepute on Indian womanhood« (ibid.: 45), played a major role in the fight for the abolition of the indentureship system. (see ibid.)

The eventual abolition of the indentureship system in Trinidad, however, did not undo the separation between the different ethnic groups of the island. Therefore, racial stereotypes still play a frequent role in everyday interactions (see Deosaran 1981: 220); the same is true for the distrust between members of different ethnicities, which German poet Heinrich von Kleist exemplarily dramatized in his 1811 novella *Die Verlobung in St. Domingo*. In the midst of the massive Haitian slave rebellion of 1791 (see Heuman 2006: 77), »when the Blacks murdered the Whites« (»als die Schwarzen die Weissen ermordeten,« Kleist 2008: 160), Kleist has his love story between Haitian mestiza Toni and Swiss army officer Gustav von der Ried fall victim to racist assumptions. Dying at the hands of her mistaken lover, Toni exclaims: »you shouldn't have distrusted me!« (»du hättest mir nicht misstrauen sollen!« Kleist 2008: 192) Thereby, she also paves the way

[271] »Das Böse kam vom weissen Mann. Dem Unterdrücker, Schläger und Vergewaltiger.« (Dean 2003: 253)

for a closer look at the Caribbean social setting that still struggles with its colonial history: »The more complicated the postcolonial inheritance, the more intricately and confusingly does racism bloom.«[272] (Dean 1990: 12)

This is a racism that goes in all directions, and when Robert arrives in Trinidad, he certainly comes to share the impression that Dean already articulated in *The Guyana Knot*: »He arrived in an inverted world, [...] where the Blacks were the racists.«[273] (Dean 1994: 156) After getting off his pirate-taxi (see Oxaal 1982: 31), for example, Robert instantly feels uncomfortable – because »[t]here's nobody there, except once more a few dozen Blacks, who apparently never wash themselves, never change their clothes.«[274] (Dean 2003: 293) It remains of course questionable whether the protagonist attracts their unfriendly glances due to his clean clothes, as he presumes. (see ibid.) It appears more likely that what this scene presents is not envy for material goods, but rather a suspicion toward ethnic difference.

The difficult position of Trinidad's Indian population is further underlined by their generally being excluded from the concept of creolization. While this term is indeed associated with many different interpretations (see Mohammed 2006: 41), there is a certain tendency to define Caribbean culture based on said concept. Most commonly, ›creolization‹ not only designates »a process by which differing cultures shed some traits and adopt[] others from other sections« (La Guerre 2006: 104), but also focuses on »the

[272] »Je komplizierter das nachkoloniale Erbe, desto verschlungener und verwirrender treibt der Rassismus seine Blüten.« (Dean 1990: 12)

[273] »Er war in einer verkehrten Welt gelandet, [...] wo die Schwarzen die Rassisten waren.« (Dean 1994: 156)

[274] »Es ist kein Mensch da, ausser wiederum einigen Dutzend Schwarzen, die sich offenbar nie waschen, nie die Kleider wechseln.« (Dean 2003: 293)

intersections between the cultures of Africa and Europe.« (Shepherd 2006: 33; see also Brereton 1979: 1) Opposite the established distinction between Afro-Creoles, who consist of the descendants of former African slaves, and White creoles, who consist of the descendants of plantations owners (see Hintzen 2006: 10), the Indians remain the third element in a system based on two: »Indians are not located on the same cultural continuum as Africans and Whites.« (Misir 2006: xxii)

It is therefore hardly surprising that Carnival, as one of the most central events in Trinidad's cultural life, as an »intrinsic part of the island's identity« (Schäffner 2002: 186),[275] also sprang from the European and African cultures. When the French planters brought their Carnival celebrations with them onto the island in the eighteenth century (see Scher 2007: 109; Scher 2002: 468; Bush 1997: 104), the official celebrations consisted mainly of masked balls at the houses of the white elite. (see Scher 2007: 109; Heuman 2006: 175) While the nature and extent of African slave involvement in these early upper-class festivities remains disputed (see Scher 2007: 109; Liverpool 1998: 31), the Africans clearly took over the event after emancipation; and under its new leadership, Carnival changed into the energetic collective outbreak of emotion it is to this day. (see Heuman 2006: 175)[276] As a symbol of freedom (see Liverpool 1998: 25), it became »a constituent element of popular culture.« (Schäffner 2002: 189) It is thus accurate that Robert comes to realize »that below the chaos of Carnival, the bloody cries of revolution were lurking.«[277] (Dean 2003: 385)

[275] See also Scher 2007: 112, and Scher 2002: 461.
[276] See also Scher 2002: 468; Scher 2007: 110; Liverpool 1998: 35.
[277] »[J]etzt wird mir klar, dass unter dem Tamtam des Karnevals die blutigen Revolutionsrufe lauerten.« (Dean 2003: 385)

The importance of Carnival to Trinidadian cultural life is also evident in its duration. Even though the actual celebration begins with the Catholic season of Lent and lasts until Ash Wednesday (see Scher 2002: 461), the preparations for these three days of festivity begin long before, and occupy large parts of the Trinidadian year. (see ibid.) The fact that Carnival represents »the anti-thesis of ›Indian-ness‹« (Bush 1997: 105) for many Trinidad-Indians further strengthens the observation that the island's Indian population is positioned at a peculiar place within this multicultural setting. Consequently, Dean has his protagonist observe this cultural opposition that Carnival creates in Trinidad. While on a sightseeing tour with his uncle Basdeo, Robert notices the energy of the Afro-Creoles in preparation for ›their‹ big festivity: »Out of the black youth's ghettoblasters comes a combination of Calypso, Hip-Hop, and Reggae. They dance while they walk. […] In the parks, small groups assemble to practice their steel drums for Carnival.« (Dean 2003: 273) In stark contrast to this festive mood, he remarks about his fellow Trinidad-Indians: »[c]ompared to this, the Indians appear paralyzed.«[278] (ibid.)

Although the common concept of creolization in Trinidad excludes the Indians as active participants in the process, their cultural in-between position is further complicated by the fact that »the Indians in Trinidad today are not an isolated entity.« (Bush 1997: 56) As is usually the case when addressing questions of cultural identity, the roles in question are far from clear-cut. Hence Ray's father Budri, the proud Trinidad-Indian, cannot be consistent in his accusing his son of writing »like a nigger« because of his infatuation with »a white whore.« (Dean 2003: 233) He may attempt to separate himself from the

[278] »Aus den Gettoblastern der schwarzen Jugendlichen wummert der Verschnitt aus Calypso, Hip-Hop und Reggae. Sie tanzen beim Gehen. [...] In den Parks versammeln sich kleine Gruppen, um für den Karneval auf ihrer Steeldrum zu üben. Dagegen wirken die Inder wie gelähmt.« (Dean 2003: 273)

African as well as the white European elements in the surrounding cultural melting pot, but the author has him fail at this separation. For one thing, Ray accuses his father of hypocrisy when he devalues the white actress, because »if Rita had stood in front of him, he would've never called her a ›whore,‹ but would've incessantly kissed her hand.«[279] (ibid.: 234) Such an anticipated courting-behavior certainly underlines a desire in Budri to be recognized as worthy of white female affection himself, which leads us back to Frantz Fanon.

As such, Budri is also clearly presented as wanting to be part of the white elite, thereby confirming Fanon's claim that »it sometimes happens that you get Blacks who are whiter than the Whites.« (Fanon 1964: 144) While Pierre Bourdieu emphasized the aspect of internalization of »structures, [and] schemes of perceptions« (Bourdieu 2007: 190), Dean strengthens the aspect of appropriation (see ibid.: 190) in his character's attempt to become part of the white group whose habitus he mimics. For instance, Budri openly associates with Whites in the Country Club; as soon as an Englishman approaches him, he jumps up, grabs the white man's arm, and »jokingly and whisperingly they dance[] over to the parrot cages.«[280] (Dean 2003: 262) But no matter how strategically Budri interacts with the white elite, the narrative voice keeps him in an inferior position, since the »Englishmen, Canadians, and other Whites« in the elitist Country Club talk to each other in a mode of quietude that is unattainable for »Blacks or Indians.«[281] (ibid.: 260)

[279] »Wäre Rita vor ihm gestanden, er hätte sie keineswegs ›Nutte‹ genannt, sondern unentwegt ihre Hand geküsst.« (Dean 2003: 234)
[280] »Budri schnellte hoch, hakte sich gekonnt [bei ihm] unter, und scherzend und flüsternd tanzten sie zu den Papageienkäfigen.« (Dean 2003: 262)
[281] »Engländer, Kanadier und andere Weisse lümmelten in tiefen Stühlen und unterhielten sich leise. [...] Sie unterhielten sich so gedämpft, wie es Schwarze oder Inder nie gekonnt hätten.« (Dean 2003: 260)

Throughout the novel, the Indian Budri's position between the African and White cultures remains difficult to pinpoint. His Indian pride alternates with white elitism, and his aversion against the African Creoles is counteracted by a narrative voice that turns both the Indian and African cultures into an overarching culture of non-Whites. Naturally, the specific constellations, perspectives, and ›masks‹ that collide in this ethnic diversity are manifold. It also holds true that »the West Indies is not a nation and the Caribbean is at best a region.« (Allahar 2006: 146) The result is a social situation whose multidirectional tensions find a reflection even in the island's natural landscape, which Dean had one of his earlier characters articulate as follows: »Of course [...] my brother loved the sea. [...] But here, the sea was darker, heavier, and saltier. There was nothing erotic about it; it was wild and brutal.«[282] (Dean 1994: 268)

3.4. PNM and Black Power, 1970

Considering the difficult position of the Indian population in Trinidadian culture, it is unsurprising that Trinidad and Tobago's national movement of the 1950s was not an Indian movement. When Oxford-educated historian Dr. Eric Eustace Williams – popularly called »The Doc« (Oxaal 1982: 19) – officially launched the People's National Movement (PNM) on January 24, 1956 (see Meighoo 2003: 36), it was indeed a man »reputed [...] for the liberal arts« (Shakespeare 1969: 8, I.2.73) who came to power; yet this particular intellectual ›Prospero‹ was black.

Although there had been strikes and riots by Trinidad's working population throughout the twentieth century, neither the First-World-War climate nor the American

[282] »Natürlich [...] liebte mein Bruder das Meer. […] Aber hier war das Meer dunkler, schwerer und salziger. Es hatte nichts Erotisches; es war wild und brutal.« (Dean 1994: 268)

occupation during World War II were environments conducive to protests of political consequence. (see Heuman 2006: 139; 141; 175)[283] So when Doc Williams pushed forward with his political career as the leader of the People's National Movement, he became the leader of the first originally Trinidadian party ever to gain the approval of a politically significant majority. And after the project of establishing a larger Caribbean political unit – the West Indies Federation (1958–1962) – had failed (see Szeman 2003: 15; 109), Williams also led Trinidad and Tobago into independence: on August 31, 1962, the parliament was formally opened. (see Oxaal 1982: 174)

Eric Williams' program of strengthening the underprivileged working class' political and social standing in Trinidad and Tobago had always been oriented toward achieving a multi-ethnic harmony; this was true even at said program's earliest stages – in other words, when it was still run under the People's Educational Movement. Mainly focused on the »question of church versus state control of education« (Oxaal 1982: 97), Williams summarized his principles on May 18, 1955, for the *Guardian* as follows: »I see in the denominational school the breeding ground of disunity; I see in the state school the opportunity for cultivating a spirit of nationalism among West Indian people and eradicating racial suspicions and antagonisms growing in our midst.« (quoted in Oxaal 1982: 105) When this educational movement eventually transformed into the People's National Movement, Williams announced that he would stay true to his intent to »cultivate[] a spirit of nationalism among West Indian people.« Expert opinions agree that he wanted to present himself as the national leader of a multiracial party. (see Meighoo 2003: 27; Ryan 1972: 112) As a highly complex series of political events, the

[283] For further information on the American occupation, see also Neptune 2007: 1, and Oxaal 1982: 81.

PNM's public activism therefore provides an ideal ground for Martin R. Dean to address the question of nationalism once more. Yet this time, the nation in question is not Switzerland, constantly defending its rootedness in Swiss exclusivism, but the Caribbean island of Trinidad and Tobago, commonly perceived as lacking in rootedness; after all, »there is nothing ›authentic‹ about its socio-culture and very little that has not originated from abroad.« (Hintzen 2006: 9) As such, and in the face of the deadly violence roaming the streets during Carnival, Robert very poignantly supports this impression: »I wonder if the fact that people here don't have any roots contributes to their quick dying.«[284] (Dean 2003: 388)

Martin R. Dean has various characters narrate to the protagonist their view of the island's complex history, which is full of twists and turns. Thus, in staying true to the underlying strategy of testimony, the author unfolds a narrative collage of information that brings together various perspectives on the presented political issues. As for Doc Williams and his PNM, it is Robert's uncle Basdeo who provides a short outline of one of the charismatic public figure's major undertakings: »At Woodford Square, Williams gave lectures in the fifties and thus talked the people onto his side.«[285] (Dean 2003: 329; see also Oxaal 1982: 3)

Even though the famous lectures on various scholarly subjects at ›Woodford University‹ were mass events of impressive proportions (see e.g. TT Guardian 2011: n.p.), Williams' understanding of himself as a multiethnic leader did not mirror the real

[284] »Ich frage mich, ob die Tatsache, dass Menschen hier keine Wurzeln haben, zum schnellen Tod beiträgt.« (Dean 2003: 388)

[285] »Am Woodford Square hat Williams in den fünfziger Jahren Vorlesungen gehalten und damit das Volk auf seine Seite geredet.« (Dean 2003: 329)

circumstances of his social field of action. In his *History of the People of Trinidad and Tobago*, which he presented to the ›nation‹ on the first day of independence (see Cudjoe 2011: 332), it is especially the following paragraph of his conclusion that is meaningful in this regard: »There can be no Mother India. [...] [N]o Mother Africa. [...] [N]o Mother England and no dual loyalties. [...] The only Mother we recognize is Mother Trinidad and Tobago and a Mother cannot discriminate between her children.« (quoted in ibid.: 332) In recognizing the questionable expectation of starting over on a nonexistent common ground, Robert convincingly doubts this statement's validity, because »how can one possibly forget the grandmothers India, Africa?« (»wie kann man die Grossmütter Indien, Afrika [...] denn nur vergessen?« Dean 2003: 302)

With his novelistically articulated doubting of Williams' suggestion, Dean seems to agree with the notion that cultural hyphenation is the most appropriate goal to aim for when trying to establish a common ground of social interaction in the multicultural island community. (see Tsuji 2008: 1168) Even the suggestion of integrating the many co-existing cultures into one overarching Trinidadian culture confronts its supporters with the question of what is to be integrated into what, and why in this particular direction (see Misir 2006: xxii) – clearly, the issue of cultural supremacy remains acute in any concept of integration. However, even the route of cultural hyphenation is paved with obstacles; for in seeking to argue for a tolerant mode of cultural interaction, exchange, and cooperation (see Misir 2006: xxii), the problem of the island community's de facto adherence to multidirectional cultural and ethnic oppositions is left unresolved.

In this case, it is Selwin Baragan who puts the issue into words by stating that »[i]t was a mistake that the English gave the island […] to the Blacks, to Eric Williams, and not to the Indians.«[286] (Dean 2003: 148) The opposition between Trinidad's people of African and those of Indian heritage was not alleviated by the national movement. Dean underlines this opposition further by addressing the ethnic heritage of Williams himself, which is not as clear-cut as one might presume. When consulting with Trinidad genealogist Professor Shamsuu Dahan (see ibid.: 221), Robert learns that Williams is in fact a descendant of the wealthy – and most notably: white – de Boissière family. (see TT Guardian 2011: n.p.) So even though the exact family relations of Eric Williams remain unclear, Dean's professor is certainly right about one thing: namely, »that the first black president of Trinidad wasn't even that black.« (»dass der erste schwarze Präsident von Trinidad gar nicht so schwarz war,« Dean 2003: 304) From an Indian point of view, this discovery certainly moves the People's National Movement closer to a mode of European supremacy – the very issue Trindidad's Indian population has always been confronted with. Thus, Eric Williams' People's National Movement must appear to a majority of Indians as the black equivalent of a thoroughly white mode of action.

This is not just the case because the party gained its victories most clearly in the country's predominantly black urban areas (see Oxaal 1982: 116), but also because it owed a great deal of its success to its supporting the feeling of ›Negro pride.‹ (see Deosaran 1981: 209) Significantly, the strongest opponent to the PNM was the Indian-dominated People's Democratic Party. (PDP, see Oxaal 1982: 116; Deosaran 1981: 210) At the head of the PDP stood Indian sugar-trade unionist Bhadase Maraj (see Meighoo

[286] »Es war ein Fehler, dass die Engländer die Insel [...] den Schwarzen, also Eric Williams, und nicht den Indern übergeben haben.« (Dean 2003: 148)

2003: 23), who also served as the leader of the Hindu religious organization of Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha. (see Deosaran 1981: 210; Meighoo 2003: 39; Bush 1997: 77) Quickly, the PDP came to be regarded as the political core of the Hindu community, and thereby as »the vehicle of an Indian ›nationalist‹ movement which paralleled the Negro-dominated People's National Movement.« (Ryan 1972: 139; see La Guerre 2006: 109)

By inventing Ray's father Budri, »judge Randeen« (»den Richter Randeen,« Dean 2003: 229), to be »a friend of Bhadase« (»ein Freund von Bhadase,« ibid.), Dean irrevocably anchors the fate of his protagonist in the politics of Trinidad and Tobago. For this is the arena in which the first oedipal drama of this novel plays out. Consequently, Dean clarifies early on that Ray and Budri are also opposed in matters of politics. On a leisurely excursion under the subtitle »Ocean« (»Meer«), Ray confronts his father with his political friend's shady reputation as both a public leader and private individual. (see Oxaal 1982: 93; Kambon 1995: 237) In response to Ray's accusation against the powerful Hindu leader, Budri only states calmly that »[w]ithout Bhadase, the black doctor couldn't even reign. Everybody in this country knows it.«[287] (Dean 2003: 317) When Ray furthermore recognizes »that Budri even resembled Bhadase« (»dass Budri Bhadase sogar ähnlich sah,« ibid.: 317), the oedipal constellation is set up: while the son longs for closeness to his father – »Ray would've liked to touch him, to put his hand on his arm«[288] (ibid.: 318) –, he also experiences a substantial amount of aggression toward the father-body that resembles a questionable figure of political power. As is typical of this psychoanalytic setting, the power of the father appears insurmountable. Dean

[287] »Ohne Bhadase kann der schwarze Doktor gar nicht regieren. Das wissen alle in diesem Land.« (Dean 2003: 317)

[288] »Ray hätte ihn gerne angefasst, hätte ihm gerne die Hand auf den Arm gelegt.« (Dean 2003: 318)

underlines this psychic truth in that both Budri and Ray confront the ocean; yet while the strong Budri »stands fearlessly in front of the wall of waves that approached him«[289] (ibid.: 325), Ray's strength does not suffice to defy the ocean. Instead, »the power of the wave« (»die Wucht der Welle,« ibid.: 327) violently throws him off his feet.

Upholding the realistic orientation of his novel, Dean narratively follows Trinidad's historical course of events; and when he eventually addresses the Black Power revolution of 1970 that arose in opposition to the PNM, he no longer diverts in any way from the oedipal drama of Western psychoanalysis. As a consequence, Lennox, the former ambassador to Trinidad, whom Robert first meets in London and later again in Trinidad, explains Eric Williams' political situation as follows: he »was stuck in his role as super-father. And he was afraid of losing his power.«[290] (Dean 2003: 355) This father analogy works well insofar as the Black Power revolution is indeed regarded as a personal attack against Eric Williams, as »the boldest challenge to his authority as Prime Minister.« (TT Guardian 2011: n.p.)

When several Carnival bands in 1970 focused on politically charged themes, it was clear that the mood in the country had changed. (Bush 1997: 68; Meeks 1995: 137) Now, the criticism of the still-prevalent discrimination against non-Whites in business (see Pasley 2001: 25) as well as the growing discontent with the Prime Minister's increasing Caesarism (see Ryan 1972: 179) was openly articulated. Especially by passing the Industrial Stabilization Act in 1965, which severely limited the working class' right to protest (see Pasley 2001: 25), the government had distanced itself from the labor

[289] »Wie ein Möbelschrank stand er furchtlos vor der Wellenwand, die auf ihn zurollte.« (Dean 2003: 325)
[290] »Williams war gefangen in seiner Rolle des Übervaters. Und er hatte Angst, die Macht zu verlieren.« (Dean 2003: 355)

movement it once promised to support. In furthermore referring to the PNM elite as »Afro-Saxons« (Hanchard n.d.: n.p.), the colored workers strongly expressed their growing disillusionment with PNM leadership. (see Pasley 2001: 26; Millette 1995: 63) Interestingly, this designation supports Dean's notion of a certain parallelism between the modes of action of the predominantly black PNM and white European supremacy. It thereby also opens up another line of allegiance, namely in that African-Creoles and Indians suddenly appear to stand on the same side, as Selwin Baragan puts it: »not only the Blacks were discriminated against, but also the Indians.«[291] (Dean 2003: 165; see also Pasley 2001: 25) As is to be expected, however, the situation is once again highly complex and cannot be disentangled by a simple change of loyalties.

In spite of, for instance, the accusation that Williams had always ignored the needs of the Indians (see Ryan 1972: 192), Bhadase Maraj strongly opposed the Black Power movement. (see Dean 2003: 355; see also Kambon 1995: 236–237; Deosaran 1981: 214) Thus, with Budri on the side of Bhadase and Williams, and Ray on the side of the accusing people, Dean utilizes Trinidad's Black Power revolution to provide his characters with an ideal stage for executing their highly complex tragedy. At the same time, Dean continually reverses his strategy of expanding his novel's character-centered individualistic focus so as to encompass the thoroughly realistic sphere of national politics. Now, politics become personal; which of course also underlines that politics per se are an inherently personal matter that cannot be ignored in any negotiation of cultural identity.

[291] »Diskriminiert wurden ja nicht nur die Schwarzen, sondern auch die Inder.« (Dean 2003: 165)

Between February 6th and April 2nd, 1970, thousands of already-discontent protesters took to the streets (see Millette 1995: 59; Pasley 2001: 24), further agitated by the one-year anniversary of the racism incident at Sir George Williams University in Canada. (see Meeks 1995: 140–141; Bush 1997: 68–69; Gordon 2011: n.p.) As for young Ray, he is mainly agitated by a very personal constellation; finally, his oedipal rage against Budri is offered a meaningful outlet. Given the complex political horizon of this constellation, protagonist Robert once again has to put up with a collage of information, rather than with straightforward answers in his quest for a coherent narrative of his father's – and thus his own – history. What the collectively reconstructed witness reports about the Black Power events do have in common, however, is their repeated focus on the sustained separation between African-Creoles and Indians. Despite the movement's major slogan ›Indians and Africans Unite‹ (Bush 1997: 70), and even though many East Indians did show support for Black Power (see ibid.), the majority of them »refused to be categorized as Black.« (Parmasad 1995: 316; see also Meeks 1995: 155) This attitude was reinforced when Stokely Carmichael, the Trinidad-born but US-based creator of the term ›Black Power‹ (see Meeks 1995: 156), committed the mistake of explicitly excluding Indians from Black Power during a public lecture in Guyana. (see Ryan 1995b: 37–38; Bush 1997: 73)

Dean has uncle Basdeo's friend, African-Creole car mechanic Winston, enthusiastically remember his participation in the Caroni March of March 12, 1970. It was »a 33 mile march from Port of Spain through Caroni to Couva. Thousands of Africans were mobilised for this journey through the predominantly Indian heartland of the country.«

(Kambon 1995: 236) In accordance with the intentions of the National Joint Action Committee (NJAC), which consisted of various political organizations and was at the forefront of Black Power (see Pasley 2001: 25; Kambon 1995: 216), Wins explains: »With that march, we wanted to show the Indians that we're on the same side. […] Indians are brothers.«[292] (Dean 2003: 354) Dean further embraces this wish for a colored brotherhood in that his fictitious black character Winston finds a historical namesake in Winston Leonard, notably one of the *Indian* speakers at Couva. (see Kambon 1995: 237) This intertwining of reality and ficition in the Winston character can certainly be read as a subtle hint at the author's support for the political goal of multi-ethnic brotherhood that this inherently multi-ethnic character introduces. Yet it serves another purpose as well. For such an overlap between the literary medium and the reality it reflects upon not only demonstrates a literary quality to real-world events, but also claims a real-world relevance for the literary medium. And with that, Dean seems to second Friedrich Nietzsche's rhetorical question of »[w]hy shouldn't the world that c o n c e r n s u s –, be a fictious invention?«[293] (Nietzsche 1980: 54)

However, Dean does not downplay the limitations of such an idealistic wish for multi-ethnic brotherhood. Accordingly, he confronts us with another concept of brotherhood that is also supported by his characters. Lennox, for instance, concludes that at the very core of Black Power, »black stood against black« (»Schwarz stand gegen Schwarz,« Dean 2003: 351); and uncle Basdeo confirms that »[s]till, it was, overall, a war between brothers.«[294] (ibid.: 351) It will also amount to a personal war between son

[292] »Mit diesem Marsch wollten wir den Indern zeigen, dass wir am gleichen Strick ziehen wie sie. [...] Inder sind Brüder.« (Dean 2003: 354)
[293] »Warum dürfte die Welt, die u n s e t w a s a n g e h t –, nicht eine Fiktion sein?« (Nietzsche 1980: 54)
[294] »Trotzdem war's im grossen und ganzen ein Bruderkrieg.« (Dean 2003: 351)

and father, since Ray joins the opposition forces. Again it is Wins who brings up the central first event in this matter, when he – again enthusiastically – remembers how the 750-man Trinidad regiment »refused to take up arms against their ›black brothers‹ and took over the army base at Teteron Bay on the North Western tip of the island.« (Meeks 1995: 168) Wins recalls that they »had a Ray Randeen among the troops at Teteron« (»hatten einen Ray Randeen bei den Truppen in Teteron,« Dean 2003: 347) and adds that he greatly admired said Randeen. In adhering to the realistic claim of the novel, however, the narrative voice instantly follows with the somewhat disillusioning comment that Wins simply »doesn't let go of his theatre.« (»lässt sich nicht von seinem Theater abbringen,« ibid.: 348) The objective accuracy of Winston's perspective is thereby instantly called into question.

If we followed Winston's enthusiasm, Robert would eventually be presented with the super-father he dreamed of his whole life. For according to Wins, Ray's decision to actively support Black Power was owed to an almost heroic idealism: »The man believed in the overcoming of racial borders.«[295] (Dean 2003: 351) Indeed, in the confrontation with this possibility, Robert suddenly sees »a totally different Ray. A character that I know from my post-1968 dreams. Also in our high schools, revolutionary heroes were celebrated.«[296] (ibid.: 353) However, the cautionary narrative voice is more plausible, since even Lennox questions the plausibility of Robert's dreams by proposing an

---

[295] »Er hatte eben diesen Idealismus. [...] Der Mann glaubte an die Überwindung der Rassenschranken.« (Dean 2003: 351)

[296] »Mir erscheint auf einmal ein ganz anderer Ray. Eine Gestalt, wie ich sie aus meinen nachacht-undsechziger Träumen kenne. Auch auf unseren Gymnasien wurden die Revolutionshelden abgefeiert.« (Dean 2003: 353)

alternate version of truth: »Ray suffered severely under his father. I suspect he joined the rebels to oppose his father.«[297] (ibid.: 351)

The historical end of Trinidad and Tobago's Black Power revolution is far less dramatic than the consequences it brings about in the novel. In reality, the troops at Teteron Bay surrendered their weapons (see Ryan 1995a: 13), and the government's declaration of a state of emergency on April 21, 1970, led to the arrest of most of the opposition leaders, which in turn brought the movement to a halt. (see Bush 1997: 71) Even the ensuing evaluations of the upheaval are not necessarily groundbreaking; for example, the recognition »that East Indians and Blacks could not unite under a common racial banner« (Hanchard n.d.: n.p.) was far from new in the context of Trinidadian history. Considerably more important, also and especially in terms of Dean's novelistic project, is the claim that »the Black Power movement did set the stage for a thorough questioning of the elite's position.« (Pasley 2001: 37) For this is the exact stage on which the novel's Goliath – that is, Budri – comes to fall; it is also the stage where Ray, who allegedly threw the fateful stone, turns from hero to criminal.

Although this seems somewhat out of character, it is the enthusiastic Wins who first brings up the dark dimension to Ray's personal drama: »Oh God, if he hadn't killed his father, he might've become our Prime Minister. A hero –.«[298] (Dean 2003: 348) Faced with a possible murder, Robert instantly loses the idealistic view of his father, who can no longer be one of the »revolutionary heroes« he celebrated in high school. Lennox,

---

[297] »Ray hat sehr schwer an seinem Vater gelitten. Meine Vermutung ist, dass er deswegen zu den Rebellen ging, um gegen seinen Vater anzutreten.« (Dean 2003: 351)

[298] »Mein Gott, hätte er nicht seinen Vater umgebracht, wäre er vielleicht Premier geworden. Ein Held –.« (Dean 2003: 348)

who witnessed the incident firsthand, explains to Robert and the readers that on April 21, 1970, he joined Budri for political negotiations with Bhadase Maraj. When they leave their venue, Budri is hit with a stone; while Bhadase takes off with his bodyguards, »Budri, large like a mountain,« (»Budri, gross wie ein Berg,« ibid.: 359) drops to the ground.

The vital importance of the incident in question generates a debate in which the characters' different perspectives clash, in which the individual testimonies do not agree with one another. While Basdeo for example tries to argue that the occurrence »was an accident« (»war ein Unfall,« Dean 2003: 349), Winston insists that »Ray did indeed throw the stone, because he supported our campaign, the Black Power revolution.«[299] (ibid.: 350) It remains unclear whose description of the event is accurate, as the witnesses cannot even agree on whether the incident occurred in front of the parliamentary building, or the movie theater. (see ibid.) Nonetheless, Robert's emotional investment in the accuracy of the narratives with which he is confronted is existentially high. Accordingly, uncle Basdeo, siding with his nephew, eventually demands to hear »the truth, the whole truth.« (»die Wahrheit, die ganze Wahrheit,« ibid.: 361)

It is indicative of Martin R. Dean's concept of narrative construction that the subsequent elaborations on that so-important ›truth‹ do not provide satisfying answers. For instance, Lennox seeks to calm Robert by admitting not to know who threw the stone – »it could've been Ray, but also somebody else« (»es könnte Ray gewesen sein, aber auch jemand anderes,« Dean 2003: 359); yet his subsequent argument undermines his good

[299] »Ray hat tatsächlich den Stein geworfen, weil er für unsere Sache, die Revolution der Black Power war.« (Dean 2003: 350)

intentions: »Even if Ray should've thrown the stone – what I personally don't believe –, he surely never wanted to kill his father. It was an accident, an affective event.«[300] (ibid.: 359) Evidently, his having considered the affect theory severely undermines his alleged disbelief in Ray's action. In addition, Lennox later comes back to the statement that Budri was fatally injured »by a stone-throw of his son.« (»von einem Steinwurf seines Sohnes,« ibid.: 361) Selwin Baragan, who was present at the political negotiations as one of Eric Williams' advisers, also »keeps the secret« (»hält dicht,« ibid.: 361), as Lennox recalls: »He testifies that it was an accident.«[301] (ibid.) What immediately follows the incident is Ray's physical and mental breakdown that leads to him being sent to a mental health institution. On that day, »[h]e lost his father, his job, his memory, and his speech.« (»[e]r verlor seinen Vater, seinen Job, sein Gedächtnis und seine Sprache,« ibid.: 360) Also, as Basdeo silently adds, »[h]e lost his son.« (»[e]r verlor seinen Sohn,« ibid.) Consistent with the novel's psychoanalytical frame, the protagonist answers to this overwhelming testimonial ›evidence,‹ which suggests his father to be a murderer, with a physical reaction: »A pain […] pulls right through me.« (»Ein Schmerz […] zieht durch mich hindurch,« ibid.)

Despite his decisive return to the individual level of his characters, however, Dean does not simply abandon the connection between the individual and political spheres he opened up. So on the final day of the Black Power revolution, as we learn from Baragan, »a picture of a man who had lost his memory ran in all the newspapers.« (»das Bild eines Mannes [ging] durch alle Zeitungen, der sein Gedächtnis verloren hatte,« Dean 2003: 167) Ray's photo became the visual depiction of a fateful historical day. As a »symbol

[300] »Selbst wenn Ray den Stein geworfen haben sollte – was ich persönlich nicht glaube –, so hat er doch seinen Vater nie und nimmer töten wollen. Es war ein Unfall, der im Affekt geschah.« (Dean 2003: 359)
[301] »Er bezeugt, dass es ein Unfall war.« (Dean 2003: 361)

for the forgetting that the Williams government imposed in terms of the events« (»Symbol des Vergessens, das die Regierung Williams über das Geschehen […] verhängte,« ibid.: 168), Ray even turned into a kind of »popular hero« (»Volksheld,« ibid.) after all; at least »until one forgot him, too.« (»bis man dann auch ihn vergass,« ibid.) Robert, however, does not share in this forgetting; and neither does the narrative he constructs around the story of his father.

Most striking about the narrative that the readers continually unfold in the course of their reading is its profound uncertainty. Naturally, literary critics tend to favor straightforward versions. Yet neither the claim that Ray loses his speech after an attack by skinheads in London (see Reinacher 2003: n.p.), nor the conclusion that Ray did throw that fatal stone (see Honold 2008: 144), is unambiguously established in the text. What we are confronted with is the unreliability of testimony, and a novel that seeks to reconstruct – by way of the written word – the story of origin that the speech-impaired father can no longer tell. Even the protagonist comes to realize that he will never know »for certain whether Ray is a murderer.« (»mit letzter Sicherheit, […] ob Ray ein Mörder ist,« Dean 2003: 363)

The only certain thing that Robert will take with him from this journey to the self is a family tree. Asked why he is so interested in the stories said imaginative tree potentially carries, and whether he truly believes in such stories (see Dean 2003: 309), Robert answers with an aesthetic statement: »Maybe it's those stories that prevent us from becoming totally estranged on this planet.«[302] (ibid.: 309) Following the dictum that

[302] »Vielleicht sind es diese Geschichten, die uns davor bewahren, auf diesem Planeten vollends fremd zu werden.« (Dean 2003: 309)

»it have always been trees that connect the earth with the sky«[303] (ibid.: 310), Dean has his protagonist embrace a literary aesthetics of in-betweenness: since what lies between a reality of facts and the imaginative wanderings of fiction are the narratives we invent in order not to become »totally estranged on this planet.« Martin R. Dean shares this experience with his protagonist – namely, in that his investigations into his own story of origin also led to speculations that undermined his attempts at establishing for himself a certainty of self (*Selbstvergewisserung*). Thus, Dean suggests that the gaps can only be filled by »writing up one's biography.«[304] (»Erschreiben der Biografie,« Dean 2010b: 8) What follows from this suggestion is nothing less than a literary aesthetics that identifies the mode of imaginative invention as lying at the core of our human existence.

3.5. The ›Knowledge‹ of Literature

It is remarkable how little we eventually know for sure in this novel, considering how the protagonist's ›wanting to know‹ (*Wissenwollen*) runs as the only reliable thread through all the twists and turns of this highly complex plot. Still believing in the existence of one single ›true‹ perspective, Robert informs his wife Leonie and the readers in the very beginning that he intends to stay in London »[u]ntil I know everything.« (»[b]is ich alles weiss,« Dean 2003: 41) This thirst for knowledge in the protagonist is highly significant. For one thing, it identifies Robert as a veritable son to his stepfather Neil, and thus it shows him to carry on his stepfather's legacy after all. Given that the protagonist never quite accepted Neil as his ›real‹ father, it is certainly meaningful that both characters value, above all, knowledge. Neil, however, locates that knowledge in another field of

[303] »Und Bäume waren es seit jeher, die die Erde mit dem Himmel verbanden.« (Dean 2003: 310)
[304] This strongly contradicts Beatrice Sandberg's conclusion that memories and stories are insufficient to construe a sense of identity. (see Sandberg 2006: 169)

investigation: »Also poetry and literature were superfluous. Humans, [Neil] was sure of it, live for science, and work to gain new insights.«[305] (ibid.: 313) Although the theater professional – and notably: the protagonist of a novel – necessarily has to distance himself from regarding the fictitious realm as »superfluous,« he is just as much interested in »gain[ing] new insights« as is the literary philistine Neil.

The legacy of wanting to know, passed on from Neil to Robert, mirrors the mode of continuation that Dean most obviously establishes between Budri and Ray. Again, the legacy in question is passed on from father to son, yet in this case, it is a destructive force: what Ray carries with him is nothing less than a legacy of violence. Just as his father Budri both emotionally and physically abused his son, we learn that Ray later lays hands on the baby Robert. In so doing, he certainly crushes his mother's wish that her son might never become as violent as his father, while at the same time intricately confirming her outcry that »[h]is blood is contaminated by the Randeens.«[306] (Dean 2003: 283) After a heated dispute with Helen, Ray »took the pillow and pressed it onto the child's head, whose crying instantly turned into wheezing. He stayed like this for a long time.«[307] (ibid.: 288) Notably, this incident was the reason why Helen left Ray; yet Robert, unlike the readers, will never know about this.

In keeping his protagonist in a position of not knowing, Dean clearly identifies his literary text as being aimed at its readers, not its characters. This automatically shows the literary medium to reach beyond the literary realm: thus, it partakes in the thoroughly ›practical‹ focus of science. Also, Dean utilizes his establishing of the mode of legacy to

[305] »Auch die Poesie und die Literatur waren überflüssig. Der Mensch, dessen war [Neil] sich sicher, lebt für die Wissenschaft und arbeitet, um neue Erkenntnisse zu gewinnen.« (Dean 2003: 313)
[306] »Verseucht ist sein Blut von den Randeens.« (Dean 2003: 283)
[307] »Er nahm das Kissen und presste es auf den Kopf des Kindes, dessen Weinen sofort in Röcheln überging. So verharrte er lange Zeit.« (Dean 2003: 288)

underline once more the importance of narrative construction in the process of identity formation. Significantly, the legacy of knowledge-thirst that the protagonist embodies only becomes evident by way of interpreting this novel, just as the major incident of the legacy of violence that Ray inherited from Budri is only revealed to the readers. In that the readers are invited to comment on this fictitious identity narrative, they not only enter into a conversation with the literary text; by so doing, they also create a narrative about the narrative. It is therefore a double-process of narrative construction here that brings to light what the character himself cannot realize. This constellation doubtlessly emphasizes the significance of narratives when it comes to »gain[ing] new insights.« Based on Dean's theory that both literature and science target a comparable outcome, then, literature is presented as a nothing less than a veritable science of the human condition.

Robert's ›inherited‹ thirst for knowledge also gains importance due to the particular kind of knowledge at which it aims. Robert was always aware of having a biological father somewhere, »[b]ut this knowledge was abstract, I didn't have any pictures of that man.«[308] (Dean 2003: 132) Clearly, abstract knowledge does not suffice here; and by having his protagonist set out to find the concrete pictures he is lacking, Martin R. Dean once again agrees with Friedrich Nietzsche. When stating that it is hard to learn what a philosopher truly is, Nietzsche explains that »it cannot be taught: one needs to ›know,‹ from experience.«[309] (Nietzsche 1980: 147) Dean literarily answers to this theory in that the novelistic path of the protagonist not only provides the literary character with new experiences: rather, in accordance with Dean's take on the real relevance of literature, it

[308] »Nur war dieses Wissen abstrakt, mir fehlten die Bilder von diesem Mann.« (Dean 2003: 132)
[309] »Was ein Philosoph ist, das ist deshalb schlecht zu lernen, weil es nicht zu lehren ist: man muss es ›wissen,‹ aus Erfahrung.« (Nietzsche 1980: 147)

also allows the readers to participate in that experience. After all, it is the readers who continually (re-)construct the narrative.

Of course, the autobiographically inspired aspects of this novel remain indisputable; and Dean also openly embraces them. According to the author, the gap that the absent father creates in the son »can generate a creative potential.« (»kann ein kreatives Potential aus sich entlassen,« Dean 2002: n.p.) Furthermore, he suggests, whoever is not initiated into the world by way of father-words has to utilize »their own word« (»das eigene Wort,« ibid.) to call themselves into language and thus into being. (see ibid.) So just as Franz Kafka famously turned his father into a continuous text, Dean consciously chooses his personal background to function as the foundation of his novel. He even questions whether a stable relationship with his father(s) would have pushed him toward writing at all. (see ibid.) Yet even though the problematic family constellation in his personal background does »generate a creative potential« for Dean, he does not stop at this personal level, but rather expands it into a broader literary aesthetics:

> »Sentences have to be wrestled from hatred, from self-hatred, or from an all-encompassing love that brings about self-annihilation. As a reader, I want to notice that something is at stake for the writer, be it convention, good taste, the commonness of acceptance, themselves. No matter how much the writer lies or swindles, the commitment between us must be even.«[310] (Dean 1990: 98)

In the same way that the readers invest themselves in identifying an overarching narrative in the novel, the writer has to match that investment. In the case of this novel, Dean draws his commitment from his very own father-search, his very own identity narrative.

[310] »Sätze müssen dem Hass, dem Selbsthass oder der bis zur Selbstauflösung gehenden Liebe zu allem abgerungen sein. Als Leser will ich merken, dass einer beim Schreiben etwas aufs Spiel setzt, die Konvention, den guten Geschmack, die Geläufigkeit der Akzeptanz, sich selbst. Und wenn er noch so lügt oder schwindelt, die Spieleinsätze zwischen ihm und mir müssen stimmen.« (Dean 1990: 98)

Obviously, then, there is a lot at stake on the writer's part here. In that, and irrespective of how much he »lies or swindels« within his work of fiction, Dean's literary aesthetics is, at its very core – and most significantly despite, or maybe: because of the multidimensionality of truth – an aesthetics of honesty.

Central to Martin R. Dean's aesthetics is the message that stories do affect people. As a consequence, what Dean eventually presents with this novel is a story of maturation by way of narratives. In the course of his explorations, Robert comes to terms with the insecurities inherent in his identity narrative. Sure, when he learns of Ray's sudden death after a stroke, the son once more reacts like a child: »He just took off without saying goodbye. He let me down. No word, not a single useful sentence on this notepad.«[311] (Dean 2003: 387) Yet what he comes to realize, and what Dean has the readers realize as well, is that there are plenty of useful sentences to be found on the notepad of this novel. In accordance with his claim that it is necessary to »writ[e] up one's biography,« Dean turns the novel into the exact identity narrative he had Robert set out to find.

The emotional development of the protagonist mirrors this constellation. A shift in Robert's need to ask questions is, for example, evident when he describes Ray's state of mind like this: »We've been in Trinidad for three weeks now, and nothing seems to get through to him completely any more, not even my constant, annoying questioning.«[312] (Dean 2003: 328) In describing his habit of questioning as »constant, annoying,« Robert does not, of course, clarify whose perspective he seeks to portray. But there is an

[311] »Er ist einfach abgehauen, ohne adieu zu sagen. Er hat mich im Stich gelassen. Kein Wort, kein brauchbarer Satz auf diesem Block.« (Dean 2003: 387)

[312] »Nun sind wir seit drei Wochen in Trinidad, und nichts scheint ihn mehr ganz zu erreichen, nicht einmal meine ewige, lästige Fragerei.« (Dean 2003: 328)

ambiguity in perspective that certainly allows for the assumption that the lifelong constancy of his existential dependence on questions of origin has turned it into an ›annoyance‹ for himself. Read like this, Dean presents us with a highly original version of the highly traditional *Bildungsroman* genre. So when Robert anticipates early on that, after meeting his biological father, »[s]omething new will start in my life« (»[e]twas Neues in meinem Leben wird anfangen,« ibid.: 25), he is right; yet in a different way than he expected. Instead of finding clear-cut answers to unanswerable questions, the process of confronting the many different and inconclusive narratives which those questions bring about allows him to eventually move on with his life. After having sustained a lifelong father-obsession, this is indeed »[s]omething new.« The conclusion in his educational message (*Lehrbrief*) that Johann Wolfgang Goethe's Wilhelm Meister so famously discovers for himself is thus also applicable to Robert; because finally, »nature has let go of [him].« (»die Natur hat [ihn] losgesprochen,« Goethe 2003: 521)

Before the protagonist reaches his mature state of acceptance toward the unreliability of testimony, however, Dean violently exposes him one last time to his »ghosts of the past« (»Gespenster[] der Vergangenheit,« Dean 2003: 343), whose existential haunting provided the initial impetus for this novel. Certainly, when Robert does not get to write his intended report on Trinidad's Carnival, but ends up in the hospital with a mysterious infection instead, we are confronted with more than just another »hypochondriac caper« of his. This final episode is positioned at the center of the psychoanalytic conflict at hand. Not without reason, for instance, is the photographer whom Robert meets with in preparation for his Carnival report called David. (see ibid.: 365) With this subtle

reference to the major oedipal confrontation between Ray and Budri, in the course of which the giant is taken out by a stone, the stage is set for Robert's intense work-through of his own oedipal conflict. This psychoanalytic ›working through‹ occurs almost explicitly. In the course of his illness-induced fantasizing about his ghosts – that is, within an episode of fiction within the fiction – Robert dreams that the doctors surgically remove his »father-spot« (»Vaterstelle,« ibid.: 381), but: »I'm allowed to talk, to keep talking, they didn't forbid that.«[313] (ibid.) It seems accurate to expect a certain psychotherapeutic effect on the protagonist from this episode. And indeed, faced with the possibility of his own death, Robert claims to forget »Ray's horrible story that I still cannot believe. In the neon light of a bright fear of death, the ghosts fade.«[314] (ibid.: 374) Now, Robert comes to terms with a story of origin that is far from clear-cut, and thus lets go of his obsession. He comes to understand that faced with a world full of perspectives, the ability to accept the multidimensionality of ›truth‹ is imperative.

It is also meaningful that Robert's temporary illness keeps him from attending Carnival. His being excluded from the island's central cultural event suggests that Robert does not belong to that community of his heritage. As such, from his hospital bed, he not only comes to witness the excessive violence that breaks loose during the festivities (see, e.g., Dean 2003: 368); it also appears as if, on another level, that violence were also directed against him: he is violently denied access to his culture of heritage. Therefore, and at the end of his hallucinations and suffering, Robert recognizes that what he longs for is in fact his Swiss community, his Swiss home. (see also Sandberg 2006: 170) »Home, that's what I most long for currently. I need closeness without deceptive

[313] »Ich darf reden, immerzu reden, das hat man mir nicht verboten.« (Dean 2003: 381)

[314] »Vergesse Rays furchtbare Geschichte, an die ich immer noch nicht glauben kann. Im Neonschein greller Todesangst verblassen die Gespenster.« (Dean 2003: 374)

kinship.«[315] (Dean 2003: 390) Evidently, Dean returns to his individualistic take on existential matters. Even though his novel indisputably underlines the importance of questions of cultural heritage, the final episode proposes that there are no prescriptive methods for defining one's cultural location. Rather, it is up to the individual to continuously work on their own identity narrative.

As for Robert, his identity narrative is the only thing left from this adventure. What remains of Ray is a handful of ashes in an urn. The father's corporeality that was so important to the self-concept of the son has literally disintegrated. In response to Leonie's suggestion that he sprinkle Ray's ash into the sea, Robert muses: »So the sea, the last great promise? Ray's dispersion into endlessness? […] The sea that belongs to migrants and exiles, […] to Blacks and Yellows and Whites? The salt water made of the same substance as tears?«[316] (Dean 2003: 390) Of course, this philosophical digression provides ample room for interpretation. For instance, just as the ocean's constant movement appears endless, there are countless versions of identity narratives; and the potentially agonizing rules and processes of their construction apply to all people, irrespective of their ethnic backgrounds.

Yet even though these are surely valid conclusions, Dean stays true to his theory of multiperspectivity and leaves the opened-up questions unanswered. This lack of answers – or: answerability – is mirrored by the physical disappearance of Ray's remains. Before it comes to any form of ›burial,‹ the urn is stolen. (see Dean 2003: 395)

[315] »Zu Hause, das sei mir zur Zeit der sehnsüchtigste Ort. Ich brauche Nähe ohne trügersiche Verwandtschaft.« (Dean 2003: 390)

[316] »Also das Meer, das letzte grosse Versprechen? Rays Zerstreuung ins Endlose? [...] Das Meer, das den Migranten wie den Exilanten, [...] den Schwarzen wie den Gelben und Weissen gehört? Das Salzwasser, das aus dem gleichen Stoff ist wie Tränen?« (Dean 2003: 390)

Significantly, Dean uses this occurrence to demonstrate his protagonist's emancipation from depending on his father's physical presence. This is especially obvious in Robert's rhetorical question directed at the urn before its loss: »Would you know what roles I should work on in the future? Certainly no more father-roles, but roles of sons that have become fathers themselves?«[317] (ibid.: 394) Without a doubt, the narrative circle comes to a completion here. In the end, the protagonist lets go of his role as the son, and embraces his own fatherhood.

Dean once defined childhood as both a blessing and a curse. He claimed that it is a state of being that »exists all our lives, and that this land of childhood […] hesitates for a long time before it disappears.«[318] (Dean n.d.a: n.p.) Robert confirms his author's notion about the persistence of childhood when, after the distinct display of emotional maturation, he returns to a fond childhood memory. While daydreaming, he remembers a day he once spent at the beach with his mother and Ray, where they all were happy just to be together. He concludes: »This is the beginning of that Sunday that will always remain in my head. A festive Sunday, on which the world radiates with orderliness.«[319] (Dean 2003: 396)

It is evident that Dean does not suggest that childhood memories be abandoned in the course of a narratively guided emotional maturation. Instead, he adheres to his basic theoretical method and turns the existential importance of childhood memories into a farther-reaching aesthetical statement: »Simplicity and childlike innocence […] are not

---

[317] »Wüsstest du, welche Rollen ich in Zukunft bearbeiten soll? Sicher keine Vaterrollen mehr, sondern Rollen von Söhnen, die selber Väter geworden sind?« (Dean 2003: 394)

[318] »[W]ie jeder Künstler weiss, [...] dass das Kindsein nicht nur Segen, sondern auch Fluch ist, dass es ein Leben lang dauert und dass dieses Kindheitsland [...] lange zögert, ehe es untergeht.« (Dean n.d.a: n.p.)

[319] »So ist der Anfang dieses Sonntags, der in meinem Kopf immer bestehen bleibt. Ein festlicher Sonntag, an dem die Welt vor Aufgeräumtheit strahlt.« (Dean 2003: 396)

the origin, but the goal of artistic work; they have to be created.«[320] (Dean n.d.a.: n.p.) Dean also offers a picture for how literature may aid in narratively re-establishing that early state of an orderly existence; and by positioning it at the very end of his novel, Dean definitely emphasizes its centrality within the wider framework of his metareflexive considerations.

The end of that particular Sunday that Robert remembers is also the end of the novel: »Then, we will sit in the shade under the trees, my mother's skirt will glitter like a thin cover of snow on the grass, Ray's uniform jacket will hang like a flag from the tree. Me in between.«[321] (Dean 2003: 397) The peculiar time structure of this last memory of the protagonist, which surrounds the past event with future expectation, strongly suggests that this is no end after all. Or, as Dean put it in yet another unmarked quotation of Homi Bhabha: »the question about one's own locality can never be fully answered, but it can always be narrated anew.«[322] (Dean 2010b: 5) The medium most suitable for such a continuous narration, I conclude, is a literature that takes the multiperspectivity of its real-world context into account. Therefore, the ›ending‹ of Dean's novel puts up for discussion nothing less than the future of literature. In having his novel end with the word ›in between‹ (*dazwischen*), Martin R. Dean confronts us with yet another reference to Homi Bhabha's take on the in-between location of identity. Of course, this is a very consequent line of progression, considering that throughout the novel, Dean opens up many third dimensions: from the father as the third element in a body of two in

---

[320] »Einfachheit und kindliche Unschuld [...] sind nicht der Ursprung, sondern das Ziel künstlerischer Arbeit; man muss sie herstellen.« (Dean n.d.a: n.p.)

[321] »Dann werden wir im Schatten unter den Bäumen sitzen, der Rock meiner Mutter wird wie eine dünne Schneedecke auf dem Rasen glitzern, Rays Uniformjacke wie eine Fahne am Baum hängen. Ich dazwischen.« (Dean 2003: 397)

[322] »Selbstredend lässt sich die Frage nach der eigenen Verortung nie abschliessend beantworten, aber sie lässt sich immer wieder neu erzählen.« (Dean 2010b: 5; see also Dean 1990: 11) See Bhabha 1994: 73.

psychoanalysis all the way to the hybrid realities of national, cultural, and ethnic identities. In the novel's last sentence, then, in this one decisive reference, all the ›thirds‹ in Dean's novelistic project are united into the overarching concept they represent.

Friedrich Nietzsche claimed that humans invented the concept of good conscience »so as to experience their soul for once as simple.« (»um seine Seele einmal als einfach zu geniessen,« Nietzsche 1980: 235) What Dean's complex novel demonstrates is that the author agrees with the philosopher's claim about life's factual non-simplicity. It also demonstrates how literature, as a narrative medium that is not bound to one single perspective, is ideally equipped to confront the readers with what Nietzsche designated as »life's optics of perspectivity.« Naturally, such an approach to human reality confronts us with myriad ambivalences, thus also placing their literary representation onto a stage built on ambiguity. Dean offers a meaningful image for how to think of the constant in-between location in which he positions the »holy temple« of literature, for on one occasion, uncle Basdeo explains to an amazed Robert why there is a Hindu temple erected in the ocean at Waterloo: after not receiving the legal permission to build his temple on the ground, an Indian merchant »moved his architectonic prayer fifty meters out into the sea. Since the sea is not for sale.«[323] (Dean 2003: 275) Because it does not belong to anyone, the ocean – and, I propose with Dean, a contemporary literature that lives up to its potential – becomes potentially open to all.

From this it follows that Dean's aesthetics agrees with Bhabha's approach to the aspect of literature's inclusiveness: »To live in the unhomely world, to find its

[323] »So verlegte er sein architektonisches Gebet fünfzig Meter ins Meer hinaus. Denn das Meer kann man bekanntlich nicht kaufen.« (Dean 2003: 275)

ambivalencies and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction […] is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity.« (Bhabha 1994: 26–27) Both the ocean and literature are inclusive media. In addition, this water analogy once more underlines the fluidity of categories that constitute a literature that seeks to represent more than one truth. This strongly agrees with Dean's understanding of literature as a means of enlightenment: the literary overstepping of familiar categories inevitably confronts the readers with a feeling of foreignness, and it is the ability to tolerate said foreignness that Dean regards as »part of an enlightened personality.« (»Teil einer aufgeklärten Persönlichkeit,« Dean quoted in Fairunterwegs 2011: n.p.) This outlining of literature's enlightening value clearly aims at an *active* literary aesthetics.

It is therefore consistent when, within Martin R. Dean's literary aesthetics, the literary medium goes beyond enacting a globalized world's ambivalences and ambiguities. I conclude that what Dean finally emphasizes is that literature not only enacts conflicts as well as gives a voice to the marginalized, but also itself participates in the process of identity formation that it dramatizes. Thus, literature is more than a realm of theoretical reflection, created by and located within a »space of writing.« (Bhabha 1994: 68) After all, Dean already establishes literature as a ›solid‹ participant in the discourse it puts up for discussion when he emphasizes the importance of corporeality within a psychoanalytic identity concept.

The central thought in this regard is provided by Navira, whose physical presence is, as I argued, of profound existential importance to the protagonist. Confronted with the pitfalls of the world wide web's online virtuality, she concludes: »Now I know that it's

important where I am. I mean it's important that not just my mind travels somewhere, but that the body goes there, too. I want to be in the midst of it all.«[324] (Dean 2003: 171–172) A literature that is »in the midst of it all« not only sustains »that *perspective of depth* through which the authenticity of identity comes to be reflected« (Bhabha 1994: 68); it does not stop at »interrogat[ing] the third dimension that gives profundity to the representation of Self and Other – that depth of perspective that cineastes call the forth wall« (ibid.); it does not stop at providing the readers with what »literary theorists describe […] as the transparency of realist metanarratives.« (ibid.) A literary text that functions as the very identity narrative upon whose condition it reflects, and that thereby exposes its readers to the experience of narrative (re)construction, is just as much actor as it is audience. As audience, it metareflexively observes itself within the discourse it addresses; as an actor, it actively steps onto its own stage. Understood like this, the transcendence of that »holy temple« of literature consists in the very literal transcending of the fourth wall of any stage.

Evaluated from this perspective, our dramaturge protagonist's professional affiliation is more than fitting. It certainly gains a profound layer of depth in that it supplements the prose narration of its novelistic environment with performative aspects of a drama. In the course of presenting us with his (meta-)reflections on these two major literary genres, Martin R. Dean proposes a literary aesthetics that establishes contemporary literature as nothing less than a thoroughly tangible participant in public discourse. It was not without reason that the German writer Bertolt Brecht, who coined the term ›epic theater‹ (*episches Theater*) in 1926, later shifted his focus from ›epic‹ to

[324] »Jetzt weiss ich, dass es darauf ankommt, wo ich bin. Ich meine, es ist wichtig, dass nicht nur mein Geist irgendwohin reist, sondern dass der Körper dabei ist. Ich will mittendrin sein.« (Dean 2003: 171–172)

›dialectic.‹ The character of exchange between actors and audience brought about by an erasure of the fourth wall by way of alienation effects (*Verfremdungseffekte*) becomes evident in such a shift. It also serves to underline how an exchange that is carried by such effects of alienation – which is to say: how any discourse – is inevitably bound to what Bhabha described as a feeling of ›unhomeliness.‹ It is a feeling that is a rather common experience in a globalized world whose borders are constantly shifting.

3.6. Tartars: Then and Now

Algerian writer Habib Tengour's literary Tartar character is no stranger to that feeling of ›unhomeliness‹ that lies at the heart of multicultural identities. In the very first stanza of his short text *This Particular Tartar 2* (1997–1998), we encounter the main persona »waiting beside a side road.« (Tengour 2010: I) This choice of location indicates that this particular Tartar lacks the security of a socially established existence: »He would rather wait here than beside the highway with cars rushing by at full speed. They splatter you with mud without a thought.« (ibid.) By retreating from the highway of a society that thoughtlessly turns him into the target of their mud-splattering, this particular Tartar reveals that he does not feel he belongs to his social environment. Yet instead of utilizing the side road in front of him to flee his cultural dislocation, he choses to »squat[] and mop[e] there for a while.« (ibid.) Later on, he even starts to »doze[] on his roadside« (ibid.: VII), thus displaying not just a weary acceptance of his non-belonging, but also an establishing of himself in the midst of it.

Confronted with a Here he does not fit into, and a There he does not actively pursue, this particular Tartar appears forever stuck in his in-between position. Despite the tragic aspects inherent in this particular outline, however, »[h]e isn't dramatizing his

situation; there's nothing unusual about it.« (ibid.: VIII) Surrounded by such an air of normalcy, he instantly turns into the universal figure of the migrant. (see also Knipp 2009: n.p.) Even the text's preliminary motto – »Assez! Machin, machin! Qui n'a pas ses misères?« (Henri Michaux, quoted in Tengour 2009b: 78) – underlines a certain universality inherent in the text's upcoming portrayal of human suffering.

What this particular Tartar definitely shares with any migrant of his time is the condition of living in a world that is deeply affected by globalization. For it is the process of globalization that brought about a situation in which traditional settings seamlessly merge with contemporary practices. Our thoroughly »anti-heroic and pitiable« (»anti-héroique et pitoyable,« Maraini 2003: 227) protagonist even comes to observe this peculiar situation himself: »Each time that he goes back to his homeland, it hits him in the face. Nothing resembles what he had imagined in his wanderings.« (Tengour 2010: V) Apparently, the reality of his country of origin no longer matches the archaic pictures he connects with the culture he left behind.

For one thing, the principles of a capitalist market economy have undoubtedly reached the traditions of this particular Tartar's culture, as becomes obvious when the narrative voice matter-of-factly informs us that »[d]uring the month of Ramadan, prices will rocket.« (ibid.) Moreover, the traditional ways of living with which our Tartar seems familiar have transformed into spaces of an obviously modern lifestyle. The *Square of the Camels* has turned into »an open market well-stocked with the latest goods: Suits ›Made in London,‹ Italian shoes, American jeans, […] Parisian perfumes and cosmetics.« (ibid.) The process of globalization has reached even the most unlikely of areas, and it remains

difficult indeed »to explain the concentration of so many upscale brand names in such a reduced area.« (ibid.) So even though the increasingly global »spectacle of the world disgusts him« (Tengour 2010: VII), our Tartar's migratory journey most likely fell into the category of exactly those »movements [that] are controlled regularly.« (ibid.: X) Which also indicates that the »disorderly expansion« (ibid.: II) of present-day migrants is not so disorderly after all, but that it rather constitutes the order of a new era of global history.

The fact that our protagonist is not given a name, but is instead exclusively ›identified‹ based on a designation for an ethnic group, further underlines the universality of the presented situation. And yet, we are not confronted with just any one Tartar. What Tengour literarily puts up for discussion is indeed the story of *this particular* Tartar, the story of an emigrated Algerian whose mature age now makes traveling difficult for him. (see Tengour 2010: VII) While settling down in his Parisian exile, he therefore tends to limit his traveling to the act of »nomadis[ing] around the Kremlin.« (ibid.: III) By embodying this specific cultural constellation, the character clearly mirrors his author's cultural background, which is further reinforced by this particular text's genesis in both Algerian Constantine and French Paris. (see Tengour 2009b: 106/107) Consequently, it also is a specific cultural past that Tengour installs in the backround of this particular Tartar's poetic portrayal. Truly, this is not just any one Tartar, but he is indeed one of those »invaders from the East whom they [i.e., the French, AC] called, without distinction, Tartars.« (ibid.: I)

Most striking about the history of this particular Tartar's people is the way in which it is introduced to the reader. Throughout the text, Tengour upholds an interwovenness of past and present that reveals his character to be caught in between different time zones. This becomes evident early on: while he is »waiting beside a side road« (Tengour 2010: I), this particular Tartar brings about the narrative comment that »[i]n the old days« (ibid.) a Tartar would have caused gigantic traffic pileups simply by scaring his contemporaries with his presence. Even in his present-day French exile, the Tartar »has heard it said that the Tartars were *the scourge of God* [emphasis added by me, AC].« (ibid.: III) With this reference to the violent hordes of Mongolian ruler Genghis Khan, and the Turkish people that joined his army in the thirteenth century, Tengour opens up the realm of a highly intricate history. It is a history full of wandering peoples, old and renewed enmities, and ever-changing allegiances. The narrative strategy of having different dimensions of time overlap therefore appears as the most accurate vehicle for portraying the complexity of a historical constellation that thrives on such overlaps.

In the old days of this particular Tartar's people, »[t]he brawniest men let go of the steering wheel or braked any which way just at the sight of an ebony mare or a bright-colored banner fluttering.« (Tengour 2010: I) Of course, the absurdity of a literal reading of this passage is evident. The times of the riding Mongolian conquerors were not the times of automobiles and steering wheels. Rather, I propose, this constellation serves to underline how the Tartars historically earned themselves a fear-inducing reputation, kept alive by their contemporaries, that still accompanies them even now in the course of their »disorderly expansion« in a globalized context. So »[l]ong after the days and the seasons, and the people and the countries« (Rimbaud 2005: 341), their past still meddles with their

present. The Tartars' migratory expansion in the twentieth century is perceived by their social environment as a continuation of their past: »The Tartars, at the time of their disorderly expansion, had hecatombs. When they seized a city, they cut everyone's head off, with no exceptions.« (Tengour 2010: II) While this comment refers to the bloody conquests undertaken by the leaders of the Mongolian Empire, it also alludes to a reputation of ruthlessness that obviously survived that Empire's breakdown.

Tengour presents an oral tradition that not only ›says‹ that the Tartars were once »the scourge of God,« but also still says that »[t]hose who converted to Islam, after the defeat of Khan Hulagu, lost nothing of their spirit.« (Tengour 2010: II) Indeed, the defeat of Ghengis Khan's grandson Khan Hulagu by the Muslims did not erase the Turkish peoples' presence in world history. Under the new leadership of Muslim conqueror Timour-Leng (Tamerlane), they set out to re-establish the Mongolian Empire, yet this time under the »bright-colored banner« of Islam. Acknowledging these circumstances, the narrative voice identifies the Tartars as still being »the scourge of God, […] even if their chieftains no longer terrorize nations. What insurgent commander would come up to the ankle of Timour-Leng?!« (ibid.: III) In accordance with this line of argumentation, the Muslim Tartars are still associated by their social environment with the terrors of their violent history.

Of course, »fear only lasts for a while!« (Tengour 2010: I) Nonetheless, the Tartars have always functioned as containers for cultural inscriptions (see also Knipp 2009: n.p.), which is evident in the group designation that was once imposed on them. Within an occidental realm of thinking, the designation ›Tartar‹ inevitably evokes associations with

the Greek *τάρταρος*, the infernal underworld of Greek mythology. Not without reason, for instance, did Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) design an *Inferno* that localizes Mohammed in the eighth of the nine circles of hell. (see Said 2003: 69) It follows that by placing this particular Tartar into his particular civilizational past, Tengour invokes a Western apprehension that is owed to the fact that »[u]ntil the end of the 17th century the ›Ottoman peril‹ lurked alongside Europe to represent for the whole of Christian civilization a constant danger.« (ibid.: 59) Without a doubt, the Tartar Other who is exclusively addressed by way of this particular group designation not only appears as someone who is different, but also as someone who is potentially diabolic in their differing.

Although »[r]ecovering from the old fanfares of heroism – which still attack our heart and our head« (Rimbaud 2005: 343), the Tartar image – be it »an ebony mare or a bright-colored banner fluttering,« or the Rimbaldian »flag of red meat over the silk of the seas« (ibid.) – remains active in the Western mind. As an emotionally burdened phantasm, the early Tartars' frightful glories – »(but they do not exist)« (ibid.: 341) – still constitute the reality of how their present-day successors are perceived. Tengour plausibly puts it like this: »the imaginary carries considerable weight in the affirmation of identity.« (Tengour 2012b: 274) So even though this particular Tartar »is not the best example of his people« (Tengour 2010: II), and even though he seems like »a good fellow« (ibid.: VIII), the narrative voice insists: »But he's still a Tartar!« (ibid.) As such, he also becomes a subject of interest to the Western researcher who still has to come to terms with the fact that »[n]o one could describe a Tartar precisely.« (ibid.: I)

In that he has a sociologist explicitly identify himself in the text, the author places his poetic text in the midst of postcolonial discourse. After all, the Orient was also important to the occidental West because it was »the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies.« (Said 2003: 1) With his 1978 study *Orientalism*, Edward Said presents what is commonly seen as one of the earliest and most influential contributions to postcolonial theory (see Slemon 1995: 48; Szeman 2003: 24),[325] and Tengour's reference to that seminal work is clear. While Said defines the Orient as »a semi-mythical construct« that draws upon clichés and »demeaning stereotypes« (Said 2003: xxii), Tengour now literarily places a representative of the Orient into that exact position. For suddenly, there emerges out of the text a clear ›I‹ that claims a very particular relation to the Tartar character:

> »The city planning bureau asked *me* [emphasis added by me, AC] to interview him in the context of a study on gypsies and other travelers.
> This particular Tartar distrusts sociologists. I think he confuses us with social workers.
> My interview was limited to brief questions/answers.
> I didn't succeed in getting a serviceable life story out of him.
> I had read up on the Tartars beforehand, to help me establish contact.
> He didn't appreciate my empathy.« (Tengour 2010: VIII)

The relation that we are faced with here is a relation of profound imbalance. From the perspective of the talking sociologist, the Tartar turns into an object of investigation, which the educated Western researcher can »read up on […] beforehand.« Naturally, the Tartar's distrust in sociologists is unlikely to be lessened by the fact that he is not taken seriously. Instead of questioning their own position, the Western sociologist regards the Tartar's resistance to being turned into a researchable object as an indication of

[325] Graham Huggan also identifies *Orientalism* as the most influential book of Said's highly productive career. (see Huggan 2008: 196)

ungrateful non-appreciation. They regard this particular Tartar as opposed to even the most ›empathic‹ of approaches. Following this line of reasoning, the researcher is bound to assume that there is something morally wrong with this and all other migrants; because clearly, the particularity of this Tartar is of as little interest to the sociologist, as was the actuality of ›the‹ Orient to the early Orientalists. Just as Said identified the Orient as the result of Western mythical construction, Tengour has this particular Tartar morph into a personification of the Western myth of the migrant as such. As a de-humanized sociological object, then, this particular Tartar appears to the Western eye as a representative not just of the ethnic Tartars of his cultural heritage, but of »gypsies and other travelers« as well.

Eventually, and consistent with the non-reflective role they are set up to represent, the sociologist concludes: »A Tartar is good for nothing.« (Tengour 2010: IX) Significantly, this sentence forms a stanza all by itself. That it is positioned in the text as an independent comment certainly succeeds at underlining its importance; considering that it contains the most explicit articulation of a Western degradation of the Eastern Other, this structural decision is certainly comprehensible. At the same time, this textual arrangement that places the summarizing culmination of mythologizing ignorance in a rather peculiar position also demonstrates once more the peculiar position of the main character: he is caught in between his particularity on the one hand, and a certain universality of ›the‹ migrant experience on the other hand.

The statement on the Tartar uselessness finds a definite continuation in the first sentence of the following stanza: »Like all the Tartars.« (ibid.) This continuation implies an opening up of the specific uselessness that is bound to this particular Tartar, toward a

general uselessness that is said to be typical of »all the Tartars.« Yet a closer look reveals that this transition in fact already occurred, since it is not this particular Tartar that »is good for nothing,« but rather »*a* [emphasis added by me, AC] Tartar.« The indefinite article illustrates that in this encounter between West and East, our Tartar was never meant to act as a particular individual. It appears as if the sociologist put him into the position of any one migrant the very moment he decided to »read up on the Tartars beforehand.« Nonetheless, this does not stop the sociologist from letting this particular Tartar – based on his particular nonchalance, and in spite of the researcher's »guilty conscience« (ibid.) – shoulder the blame for an encounter whose very setup never allowed for its success:

> »A Tartar is good for nothing.
>
> Like all the Tartars.
> His nonchalance annoys me. My attempts to bring him out of his shell were a failure in the end.
> In fact it's he who avoids all contact.« (Tengour 2010: IX)

In his French exile, this particular Tartar's individuality, as seen from a Western point of view, fully dissolves within his outsider status. Confronted with the elaborated social system in front of him, the Algerian cannot help but notice his affliction »of never being able to become a Frenchman.« (Kristeva 1991: 39) In response to his social non-belonging, this particular Tartar not only spends his days mostly »alone« (Tengour 2010: VII), but also gesturally manifests his isolated solitude by meeting his environment with »averted eyes.« (ibid.: VIII) It is only »by chance,« we learn, that occasionally »his gaze lights up.« (ibid.: II)

The author is no stranger to his particular Tartar's experience; and just like his literary character, he abstains from »dramatizing his situation.« Unexcitedly, he explains: »I am Algerian. A fact that's not at all extraordinary. After all, Baudelaire was French!« (Tengour 2012b: 263) – Habib Tengour was born in 1947 in Mostaghanem (see Joris 2012: 7), a seaport in northwestern Algeria. In his early teens, he moved to France with his parents (see ibid.; see Sabra 2012: 7), where the major part of his education took place in Paris. (see Arnaud 2003: 28) After successfully going through academic training in sociology and anthropology in France, Tengour decided to return to Algeria to do military service. Afterward, he »taught at universities in both countries« (Joris 2012: 7) and continues to live between France and Algeria. (see Sabra 2012: 7; see Joris 2012: 7) In addition to sociological research studies (see Ranaivoson 2012: 72), he also produced a substantial number of literary publications over the course of now almost four decades. (see Sabra 2012: 7)

Although Tengour is recognized as having »emerg[ed] over the years as one of the Maghreb's most forceful and visionary francophone poetic voices of the post-colonial era« (Joris 2012: 7), the concrete parameters of his public recognition remain complicated. For one thing, his literary work is mainly read and discussed in a European context (see Yelles 2003: 8); literature, as Tengour himself puts it, »does not correspond to a need« (Tengour 2012b: 277) in his Algerian country of origin. As such, the Algerian text indeed »remains hopelessly lonely and ignored in its proper environment« (»reste désespérément solitaire et ignoré dans son propre environnement« (Yelles 2003: 7); the same is true for its author. Furthermore, however, even Tengour's popularity within the Western scholarly realm is mainly localized outside the ›mainstream‹ of literary criticism.

I therefore agree with Mourad Yelles' claim that Tengour, in a paradoxical fashion, remains both unknown and famous at the same time. (see ibid.: 5)

The lack of attention that Tengour's literary work currently attracts is surprising. All the more so because this writing possesses a quality that renders it highly suitable for expressing the core conflicts of multicultural identities. By way of having cultures, epochs, and languages merge (see Zlitni Fitouri 2012: 1), he presents a literary oeuvre that deviates from traditional and established forms of narration. (see Yelles 2003: 9) His desire »to invent narrative possibilities beyond the strictures of the Western/French lyric tradition, in which his colonial childhood had schooled him« (Joris 2012: 7) is also evident in *This Particular Tartar 2*.

Structured in the form of ten untitled chapters or parts, this text is based on a multidimensional mode of writing that leads to its remaining undecidedly located in between prose and poetry. Consequently, this short literary work has attracted descriptions that lean in both directions: as a »prose-poem« (»Prosa-Gedicht,« Knipp 2009: n.p.), it seems to depend mostly on its lyrical aspects; as a prose text with moments of lyrical flare (»lueurs lyriques,« Maraini 2003: 222), its lyrical aspects seem to function as a mere addition to a solid prose foundation. Without a doubt, this text refuses to be classified as either one or the other. (see Ali-Benali 2012: 59) By furthermore alluding to literary and cultural traditions of both the Arabic and the Occidental world (see ibid.: 60), Tengour places his Tartar into a literary space that is highly complex for multiple reasons.

The fact that the text is based on a seamless montage of literary genres and cultural horizons makes it successful in mirroring the social position of its main character, who adapts to his environment in a similarly polymorphous way. (see Maraini 2003: 227) In addition, it claims that the question of identity formation in a post-colonial setting lies at the core of the author's literary aesthetics. Not only is ›identity‹ generally recognized as one of the central issues in Habib Tengour's life and work (see, e.g., Yelles 2012: 43); also Tengour himself calls it his major interest. Interestingly, however, and in contrast to Martin R. Dean's literary aesthetics, Tengour does not combine this with a need to explore cultural origins: »For me, the question of identity lies at the heart of my work as a writer. It does not, however, arise as a quest for origins, […] but rather as the recognition/acknowledgment of oneself at the end of the ordeal of writing.« (Tengour 2012b: 281)

Whereas said »quest for origins« stands at the beginning of Martin R. Dean's understanding of identity formation, Tengour establishes »the ordeal of writing« as independent from any such quests. He thereby places the current condition of the investigated self in the center of his narrative undertaking right from the start. Still, both authors see the written text as central to an exploration of the self: it acts as the narrative that continuously unfolds in the course of a search for origins in the case of Dean, and presents itself as an undertaking that involves cultural origins only insofar as they are inscribed into the self that is to be narratively identified in the case of Tengour.

Naturally, cultural origins and specific cultural constellations are inseparable from any identity narrative. Yet unlike Dean, Tengour does not aim to ground his identity narrative in an explicit re-narration of cultural history; so whereas Dean repeatedly turns

his literary work into an explicit presentation of historical realism, Tengour's references to historical contexts remain subtle at all times. According to Tengour, the literary text is not to be mistaken for a »scientific discourse on social phenomena.« (»discours scientifique sur les phénomènes sociaux,« Tengour 2012a: 51) Rather, he focuses on demonstrating how the consequences of those phenomena have left their mark »in the memory and on the body« (»dans la mémoire et sur le corps,« ibid.) of the affected individuals. The literary text comes to address the reality of a physical existence whose history and cultural origins have inscribed themselves into the individual and which is thus to be acknowledged as only one of many dimensions that constitutes identity. In the case of the Tartar character, that particular dimension reaches deep – yet, and this is vital, always *implicitly* – into Algerian colonial history. For just like the Caribbean islands which Dean turned into the stage for his literary work, this North-African region, too, had to live through an extensive period of European occupation.

3.7. Postmodern Nomadism in an Interior Exile

The relationship between Algeria and France stretches all the way back to the French revolution in 1789, when it was allegedly Algeria's wheat exports that sustained the French people in their striving for liberty, equality, and fraternity. (see Messaoudi a 1997: 8) When the French seized the city of Algiers in 1830 (see Stone 1997: 29), however, that relationship took a significant turn: with the French invasion, »130 years of ruthless colonial rule had begun.« (Messaoudi b 1997: 151) After roughly fifteen years of internal resistance, in 1847, the military leader Emir Abdelkader ben Mahieddin (1807–1883) had to accept his defeat by the French invaders. (see Messaoudi a 1997: 8–9) From then on,

the Algerians were to merge with the landscape of their home country, thus turning into, as Frantz Fanon put it, »the *natural* background to the human presence of the French.« (Fanon 1963: 250) Even though there is a definite amount of angry irony inherent in Fanon's statement, it is nonetheless accurate. Not least because from the earliest days of French colonial rule, the religion of Islam as well as the Islamic civilization it entailed was regarded as a »source of identity« (Gharib 1997: 70) for the Algerian people. As such, it was also regarded as a major obstacle to the French endeavor. (see Messoudi a 1997: 7) Consequently, the French strategically implemented a program of de-culturation that sought to replace Islamic civilization with the ›superior‹ French model. (see Messaoudi b 1997: 151; Stone 1997: 145)

Of the three Maghrebian colonies under French rule, Algeria is not only the largest one (see Donadey 2001: vii); it also looks back at the longest colonial history. Whereas both Tunisia and Morocco gained their independence from France in 1956 (see Tarwater 2005: n.p.), the French occupation of Algeria lasted until 1962. (see Stone 1997: 29) After eight bloody years of war (1954–1962), the Évian Accords finally allowed the Algerian people to reclaim their sovereignty. (see Donadey 2001: x) During the conference in Évian, south of the Lake of Geneva, French general Charles De Gaulle requested that the French agree with Algeria's independence. (see Jung 2012: n.p.) However, the effort that the French leadership had put into their program of anti-Islamization was evidently substantial. Even to this day, France and its culture remain an important factor in the Algerian cultural environment. It is not just that the French language – even after several decades of government-led initiatives to re-Arabize Algerian life – retains its presence in Algeria insofar as even the illiterate have »some

knowledge of, or competence in, French.« (Stone 1997: 19) Moreover, large parts of the Algerian elite still spend a considerable amount of their time in France. (see ibid.: 253)

Habib Tengour is thoroughly aware of the colonial history of his Algerian home country. In fact, his early move to France was owed to his father's activities as an Algerian nationalist (see Arnaud 2003: 29) who was incarcerated at some point because »the French put nationalists who wanted independence for Algeria in prison.« (Tengour 2001: 205–206) Nonetheless, Tengour's grandfather certainly sought to ease the adolescent's transition into their new French exile by insisting that »[n]ot all French are the same.« (ibid.: 210) This non-judgemental approach to a situation of colliding positions is noticeable in the author's *Tartar* text insofar as it abstains from articulating political accusations. Instead, Tengour stays true to his claim that »[t]he poet is responsible to poetry.« (Tengour 2012b: 263) Far from regarding the writer's responsibility to be that of an *intellectuel engagé* who acts as the artistic voice of a particular group (see Tengour 2012a: 119), Tengour insists that the writer's personal attitudes should have nothing to do with their particular »aesthetic practice.« (»pratique esthétique,« ibid.)

Of course, this deliberate separation between politics and poetics is not to be mistaken for a lack of political conviction on the part of the author. Quite the contrary is true, and Tengour is very clear about where his allegiance lies: as an Algerian and son of a nationalist father, he sides with the nationalist fighters. Based on a direct reference to Frantz Fanon's sympathies with the Algerian nationalists during their war of liberation, Tengour presents his choice as a simple one that did not require any second-guessing.[326]

---

[326] »Les *damnes de la terre* et les prolétaires portaient l'avenir du monde. Le choix était d'autant plus simple qu'étant algérien et fils d'ouvrier, il n'y avait pas à tergiverser.« (Tengour 2012a: 121)

Following the line of argumentation of Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Tengour seems to agree with the claim that colonialism »is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.« (Fanon 1963: 61) Consequently, he evaluates the violence of the Algerian national movement that led into the war of liberation as the decisive factor that allowed »for the birth of the Algerian nation.« («la naissance de la nation algérienne,« Tengour 2012a: 35)

This take on violence as a liberating force is a clear recourse to Fanon's observation that also decolonization, in having to beat its colonial enemy with the same weapon, »is always a violent phenomenon.« (Fanon 1963: 35) In addition to assigning a liberating force to violence, however, Tengour also identifies the always-violent state of colonialism to be responsible for an ongoing »*culture of violence*« (»*culture de violence*,« Tengour 2012a: 31) in Algeria. This claim is plausible; Algerian history truly does read like a long line of changing power constellations whose only constant factor is violence. Interestingly, when commenting on those different chapters of Algeria's history, Tengour presents contemporary globalization as the latest chapter on that same continuum of violence. After combatting the French colonial system, Tengour explains, the Algerian people had to face decades of internal imperialism, and currently, they have to keep defending their sovereignty against the process of globalization.[327] (see Tengour 2012a: 31) It is therefore consistent when Tengour has his literary Tartar concede that the »spectacle of the world disgusts him.« (Tengour 2010: VII) It certainly does not leave anyone unaffected, just as Algeria's war of liberation did not leave anyone involved

[327] »Depuis 1830, les Algériens ne cessent de clamer haut leur souveraineté (identité) face au système colonial, puis à l'impérialisme et aujourd'hui à la mondialisation.« (Tengour 2012a: 31)

unaffected. As such, the consequences of the Algerian war of liberation also provide one building block of our Tartar character's identity.

Many of the scars that the Algerian war of liberation caused in the involved nations are at least partly owed to the many directions in which it unfolded. Because eventually, French stood against Algerian, Algerian against Algerian, and French against French (see Dugge 2012: n.p.):

> »[T]he conflict was principally between the *pieds noirs* (Algerians of French descent) who wanted to remain in their native land under French protection, and the indigenous Muslims. [...] The war also involved feuds and disputes between rival Muslims and between the *pieds noirs* and the French authorities. Acts of barbarism were committed on all sides.« (Stone 1997: 37)

In our *Tartar* text, the habitualness of said multidirectional aggression is, for instance, captured in the calm commentary that »[t]he Tartars squabble all the time. They never lack an excuse to stab each other in the back.« (Tengour 2010: VI) Furthermore, and even more significantly, we learn that »[b]efore going to bed, the women rub their necks with a tasteless oil.« (ibid.: V) When Tengour presents the preparation for a quick and smooth decapitation as a nightly ritual in wartime Algeria, he decidedly also acknowledges the barbarian aspects of any ›liberating‹ violence. In addition, the text puts into scene the ubiquity of this violence by presenting the Tartar as distrustful not just toward sociologists, but also toward any representatives of law enforcement: »He wants nothing to do with the cops. He knows how the police work.« (ibid.: III) This statement subtly echoes the meanwhile well-established fact that the French army did not abstain from systematical torture to try to silence Algerian nationalists. (see also Donadey 2001: xi)

However, the ubiquity of violence in Algeria did not end with the country's independence in 1962. Therefore, the Tartar's distrust in the ruling authority and its officials may also allude to the situation *after* independence – namely, when the hoped-for democracy turned into a de facto military dictatorship. (see Dugge 2012: n.p.) The war for independence was largely led by the Algerian liberation army, the *Armée de Libération Nationale* (ALN), as well as by its political party, the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN). (see Stone 1997: 36) Yet after independence, the armed forces did not let go of the legitimacy that their involvement in the liberation war had earned them. (see ibid.: 129) Instead of installing a system of democracy, the FLN established itself as the ruling party in a one-party system, while it forced all other parties to dissolve. (see Gharib 1997: 77) After all the fighting for independence, the country was forced to function under yet another form of imperialism; yet this time, it was a military imperialism with a »socialist orientation.« (Messaoudi a 1997: 19; see also Sabra 2012: 10)

In order to understand the civil war of the 1990s that would terrorize the country for almost a decade, it is necessary to look at the political orientation of the FLN a little closer. For one thing, it needs to be taken into account that, paradoxically, »Algerian nationalism was born abroad, [...] within French communist circles.« (Messaoudi a 1997: 12) This not only explains, at least partly, the dominance of French culture and Marxism in Algeria after independence, but also accounts for the increasing secularization of the national movement, which led it away from its initial Arab-Islamic intentions. (see ibid.) So when the FLN distanced itself from Islam, that major factor of Algerian civilization was reduced »to a moral effort.« (ibid.: 18) This desacralization of Islam not only paved

the way for its being politicized later on in the form of Islamic terrorism (see Shah-Kazemi 1997: 160); furthermore, it also created a constitution whose loose blending of socialism and residual Islamic elements was intended to appeal to all of society, while it »in fact was rejected by all.« (Stone 1997: 3) The social basis for a situation of increasing tension was therefore already in place when Algeria celebrated its independence.

Under Chadli Bendjedid, whose presidency lasted from 1979 to 1992 (see Stone 1997: 43), the opposition to the FLN and its one-party system made itself increasingly heard. Especially in the 1980s, the silenced islamists began to loudly voice their point of view. (see Tengour 2012a: 33) The increasing social inequalities eventually led to the »Black October« uprising, to the riots of October 1988. (see Martinez 2000: 2; Sabra 2012: 12; Stone 1997; 64) It is commonly claimed that after independence, these public demonstrations were not just the most significant social upheaval in Algeria, but more importantly, that they also marked »a turning point in the country's history.« (Stone 1997: 65) At first, the efforts of the protesters seemed to be successful, since the Chadli administration made amendments to the Constitution that allowed for the establishment of a multi-party system. (see ibid.: 68; Sabra 2012: 12) As a consequence, twenty-eight Islamist preachers came together in 1989 to found the Islamic Salvation Front, the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS), a radical nationalist party, which was legalized in the same year. (see Stone 1997: 163, 166; Gharib 1997: 82) With its focus on Islam as the only option for a truly nationalist Algeria, it soon came to be recognized as the major opponent to the FLN and received substantial support from those who had suffered under decades of FLN oppression.

The old leadership, however, was once again unwilling to let go of its established position. When initial indications leading up to the 1991 elections suggested an upcoming victory for the FIS, the elections were cancelled. The Islamists were declared a prohibited force in Algeria and thus went, fully armed, into hiding. (see Sabra 2012: 12) But even the eventual decapitation of the FIS leadership could not deter the Islamists from adhering to their political mission. (see Martinez 2000: 72) So it was not without reason that the next ten years came to be known as the »*décennie noire*, the black decade« (Stone 1997: 94; see also Dugge 2012: n.p.): in the course of this raging civil war, »terror swept the country as fundamentalist Islamic-led forces, as well as the national army and police, killed hundreds of innocent villagers.« (Donadey 2001: xiii) Only in 1999 did the armed war reputedly end. (see Sabra 2012: 17) However, the FIS remains an outlawed party, and the FLN continues to hold great power within Algeria's now alleged multi-party system. Also, the officially declared state of emergency that sprang from the outbreak of the Algerian Civil War was not lifted until 2011, which clearly demonstrates the vast dimensions of this country's political turmoil. (see BBCNews 2013: n.p.) In 2005, the Algerian people voted in favor of a law penned by president Abdelaziz Bouteflika (in office since 1999) which grants amnesty to former Islamist fighters. Although this law was meant to pacify the war-torn country (see Sabra 2012: 17; Dugge 2012: n.p.), Algeria's long and violent history has left an indelible mark on its people. Even to this day, Algerian society is faced with ongoing violence, as is for example evident in the many news reports from the region that cover Islamic terrorist attacks led by al-Qaeda, which aim, among other things, to defeat Algeria's de facto military government. Coupled with this politically intricate situation is a profound lack of

perspectives; the generation of young Algerians repeatedly voices the desire »to board a ship, cross the Mediterranean Sea, and begin a new life.« (»ins Boot zu steigen, das Mittelmeer zu überqueren und ein neues Leben anzufangen,« Dugge 2012: n.p.)

The young Algerians' wish to fulfill themselves somewhere else seems like the echo of that colonial history that placed the Algerian people in the midst of two cultures, since both the Algerian and the French culture continue to contribute to Algerian identity. So »[w]ho is this Maghribian? How to define him?« (Tengour 2012b: 257) Habib Tengour answers his own question as follows: »the Maghribian is always elsewhere. And that is where he fulfills himself.« (ibid.: 258) Interestingly, this evaluation matches the implications of the word ›Maghrib,‹ as Pierre Joris points out, since Hans Wehr's *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* gives the following associations for its root: »›to go away, depart, absent oneself.‹ […] ›to be a stranger; to be strange, odd, queer, obscure.‹ […] ›to […] exile, expatriate.‹« (Joris 2012: 8) The continuous cultural oscillation between West and East, between the French Occident and Maghrebian Algeria, which is representative of so many Algerian biographies, is also engrained in the wider geographical area's designation. For even the early Arabs, who came »from the East […] named this region the Maghreb, which means the place where the sun sets, the West.« (Donadey 2001: viii)

Tengour alludes to these notions of his Algerian home country in that he creates his literary character as someone who is not just a stranger, but who also seems »to absent [him]self« on a constant basis: »This particular Tartar is alone.« (Tengour 2010: VII) In the French original, this information about the Tartar's loneliness is provided to the

readers by way of a single line in the midst of multi-line stanzas. Visually disconnected, the Tartar's loneliness puts itself into practice. Thus, content is portrayed by way of form, and the concept of the Arabic word for exile, ›Ghorba,‹ is turned into a text. For what is typical of any ›ghrîb‹ is that they are lost in their new environment, and that they now have to exist without any familiar connections.[328] (see Tengour 2012a: 56)

The timelessness of our Tartar character's loneliness, which is introduced as something that simply »is,« exemplarily demonstrates Tengour's embracing of the image of an »interior exile.« (»métaphore d l'exil intérieur,« Maraini 2003: 227) Although this particular Tartar could find and »meet other Tartars,« even if it entailed »walk[ing] for miles« (Tengour 2010: III), he chooses not to: »He doesn't hang around with them much. Combination of circumstances. It's not that he isn't one of them. He doesn't think he's different.« (ibid.: IV) Clearly, this yielding to any kind of »circumstances« whatsoever illustrates a substantial amount of weariness in this character, which comes to replace any active striving for or true desire for company; the Tartar's situation of exile has turned into a veritable state of being.

In his 2003 poem »The distant island« (»L'Ile au loin / Die ferne Insel«), Tengour has the narrative voice explain to Odysseus that »no path will ever lead back into the harbor.«[329] (Tengour 2009a: 110/111) This poetic conclusion serves as a twofold reference. Firstly, it presents the country of Algeria, whose Arabic name is al-Djazā'ir, literally: »the islands« (see Joris 2012: 12; see also Sabra 2012: 8), as a place of origin that does not allow for an

[328] »Le ›ghrîb‹ c'est celui qui est perdu ailleurs, dans un monde étranger. La ›Ghorba‹ est l'exil comme perte de l'identité et abandon des repères familières.« (Tengour 2012a: 56)

[329] Translation by me, based on the French original: »[M]ais il n'est plus question de retourner au port.« / »[D]och es führt kein Weg in den Hafen zurück.« (Tengour 2009a: 110/111)

actual return. (see Sabra 2012: 8) Habib Tengour may still identify himself as an Algerian (see Tengour 2012b: 263), but he left the port of Mostaghanem behind. Inevitably, then, the child's intuitive merging with the Ithaca of its earliest days had to yield to the intellectual journey of the adult writer. Also, this is an infinite journey, as Tengour explains, whose infinity turns into a veritable responsibility: »There will never be an end / but the wanderings don't free us from detaching ourselves / so as to reflect.«[330] (Tengour 2009a: 112/113) Secondly, as already implied, the left-behind harbor that can never be reached again invokes the myth of the Greek seaman Odysseus, whose odyssey plays an important part in Habib Tengour's oeuvre. Not least, it appears, because Ithaca, that island of the hero's deepest longing, eventually turns out to be no longer the home that Odysseus once left behind.

The importance of Odysseus and his wanderings for Tengour is already evident in the title of the author's first published book from 1976, since the sound of *Tapapakitaques* is instantly reminiscent of »the father and the island of Ithaca.« (Joris 2012: 11; see Sabra 2012: 7) Throughout his career, Tengour kept coming back to this mythical odyssey. (see Ranaivoson 2012: 78; see also Abdel-Jaouad 2003: 62) This unquestionably demonstrates that the topic of home and intimate belonging has always been central to the author's aesthetic concept. At the same time, Tengour establishes Odysseus as »a kind of alter ego of the modern Algerian, [as] the eternal migrant in between the shores.« (»une sorte d'alter ego de l'Algérien modern, l'éternel migrant entre les rives,« Keil-Sagawe 2012: 117) The Algerian identity thus presents itself as a deeply migratory identity, and the constant oscillation between at least two different cultures

[330] »[Ç]a n'aura jamais de fin / mais l'errance ne dispense pas de se poser dans un coin / et de réfléchir.« / »Ein Ende wird es niemals geben / doch Unterwegssein befreit nicht davon sich abzusondern / und nachzudenken.« (Tengour 2009a: 112/113)

turns into a way of living in its own right. (see ibid.) Looked at from this point of view, Algerian writers do indeed appear to be »postmodern nomads with hybrid identities.« (»postmoderne Nomaden mit hybriden Identitäten,« Sabra 2012: 26)

Additionally, Tengour repeatedly puts great emphasis on Odysseus' self-introduction as *Nobody* during the Cyclops episode, »which allows him to adopt all the personas necessary for his ruses.« (Tengour 2012b: 281) When looking at Tengour's oeuvre, which so stubbornly resists any clear categorization, the author's sympathy for this crafty seaman becomes all the more understandable: for just as Odysseus takes on different personae, Tengour artistically liquefies borders of genre, time, language, and culture in his writing. In »The distant island,« it reads like this: »The world's borders continually recede.«[331] (Tengour 2009a: 110/111) The concept of rigid borderlines continually loses plausibility in a context of globalization, and in staying true to his utilization of the water analogy, Tengour continues as follows:

> »It is never the same Scamander
> but the city
> surrounded / plundered
> The eardrum bursts
> and the images overlap on the surface of the water«[332] (Tengour 2009a: 112/113)

Certainly, the Trojan river Scamander, like any other river, never rests in place, but instead succumbs to the eternal flow of its liquid substance. Yet in addition to embodying

[331] »Les limites de la terre ne cessent de reculer.« // »Die Grenzen der Welt weichen fortwährend zurück.« (Tengour 2009a: 110/111)
[332] »Ce n'est jamais le même Scamandre / mais la ville / assiégée / mise à sac / Le tympan éclate / et les images se superposent à la surface de l´eau.« // »Es ist niemals derselbe Skamander / doch die Stadt / umzingelt / ausgeplündert / Das Trommelfell platzt / und die Bilder überlagern sich an der Oberfläche des Wassers.« (Tengour 2009a: 112/113)

an allusion to Heraclitus' famous dictum of πάντα ρει, this particular river is also placed in a very particular location. Inevitably, the violent occurrences of past times that once left the city »surrounded / plundered« invoke images of the Trojan War, whose battle noises make »[t]he eardrum burst[]« in present tense. What the surface of the water captures and reflects, then, are those images of a past time that are forever ingrained in the city's reality. Of course, what is true for Troy holds true for Algeria as well, since the Algerian War of Independence and the ensuing Civil War left indisputable marks on Algerian reality; their capacity to still make »eardrum[s] burst[]« cannot be overlooked. It follows that a writing that seeks to do justice to the complexity of this region is bound to imitate those exact reflections of the water, because this is the only way to accurately represent the multidimensional »images [that] overlap on [its] surface.«

The artistic result of such an undertaking cannot be anything less than postmodern through and through; or so one would think. Interestingly, though, Habib Tengour decidedly rejects the notion of postmodernism. In the course of his rather harsh evaluation of postmodern texts, he not only terms them »pseudo-constructions« (Tengour 2012a: 64) but also characterizes their general style as »inflated and redundant, using intertextuality like a palimpsest of trash, so as to bluff an academic criticism [...] in regard to the complexity of their authors.«[333] (ibid.) However, his negative evaluation of the term ›postmodern‹ cannot change the fact that Tengour's writing does indeed agree very well with the narrative mode of border crossing that I seek to designate with that same term. Therefore, this disagreement is very valuable in the context of my investigation: because it underlines the importance of working from within a particular

[333] »[C]es pseudo-constructions postmodernes au style alambiqué et redondant, usant de l'intertextualité comme d'un palimpseste de pacotille pour bluffer une critique universitaire […] avec la complicité de leurs auteurs.« (Tengour 2012a: 64)

literary text, and of gaining a particular concept from precisely that effort of reading. The opposite process, that of trying to make any text fit into an »inflated and redundant« concept, is indeed likely to yield nothing more than »pseudo-constructions«; and, as Tengour's harsh evaluation indicates, it may discredit an otherwise highly fruitful term. I therefore argue, on the basis of Tengour, that any approach to contemporary literature needs to be geared, above all, to taking it seriously. We need to promote a desire to take literature at face value not with the intention of pleasing and »bluff[ing]« an academic circle of critics, but so as to uncover its unceasing relevance in a world of ever-growing complexity. The rest is terminology.

3.8. The ›Honesty‹ of Literature

Martin R. Dean's protagonist Robert is faced with an identity narrative that, due to the speechlessness of its chief witness, initially resists articulation. In a comparable fashion, Habib Tengour's poetic character is also set up to encounter a certain kind of speech ›impairment.‹ Yet the speechlessness that this particular Tartar has to deal with does not depend on a specific individual. Rather, it is ingrained in the social structures of both his country of origin and his French exile. For the linguistic situation of the Algerian is far more complex than a situation of linguistic non-belonging within their chosen exile, which Julia Kristeva articulated as follows: »between two languages, your realm is silence.« (Kristeva 1991: 15) Instead, for our particular Tartar, said silence is already part of the social reality of his native environment. Algeria is a country of many languages; instead of uniting its people under one national language, it is dominated by »linguistic plurality.« (»pluralité linguistique,« Tengour 2012a: 32)

For one thing, there is the well-established conflict between the language of the colonized and the imported one of the colonizers. What Frantz Fanon observed in regard to the French Antilles is certainly also applicable to the colonial situation in Algeria: the more the colonized Algerian assimilates the French language, the more French – and the higher in social status – they become. (see Fanon 2008: 2) Therefore, this particular Tartar »has never had the right to speak. Not even to spell his name.« (Tengour 2010: IV) Growing up in colonized Algeria, this particular Tartar's mother tongue – which »is ancient« and whose »lexicon is rich and varied« (ibid.: VI) – had to submit to the French language of the colonizers. The ancient, rich, and varied Arabic language was reduced to private use; inevitably, the spread of colonialism came to contradict his ancestors, who believed, »[i]n olden times, […] they were the sole speakers in the world.« (ibid.: IV) Notably, Arabic was not declared the official national language of Algeria until 1963 – that is, the year *after* independence. (see Messaoudi a 1997: 26)

Interestingly, by translating the French original's passé composé construction of »[i]l n'a jamais eu droit à la parole« with the English present perfect of »[h]e has never had the right to speak,« the translator Marilyn Hacker extends Tengour's ›jamais‹ into the present time. This translational decision is highly convincing, also because it opens up the reality of linguistic oppression within this particular Tartar's French exile as well. Because now, in his new Parisian ›home,‹ he »doesn't make use of it [i.e., his Arabic mother tongue, AC] daily. He lives elsewhere, with other constraints. He is respected because he keeps his word.« (Tengour 2010: VI) Clearly, these »other constraints« of his French environment include the invisibility and absolute insignificance of our Tartar's mother tongue; how else could he be able to have earned his new fellow citizens' respect

based on his »keep[ing] his word.« In reading the French expression »tenir parole« literally, in the sense of not giving away one's speech, in keeping it for and to oneself, this particular Tartar's silence translates into a sense of honest – or at the very least disillusioned – acceptance of his perennial outsider status.

In addition to the evident linguistic opposition between Arabic and French, Algerian society is also built on a linguistic constellation of far greater complexity. The two native ethnic groups of the Arabs and Berbers, for example, speak their own particular languages. (see Stone 1997: 7) Furthermore, there is a considerable discord between the written and the spoken versions of both French and Arabic. The Arabic of the Algerian native speakers comes as close to standard Arabic as Swiss German comes to standard German (see Sabra 2012: 11) – which indicates a significant distance between these language variations. Consequently, Tengour concludes that »be the written form Arabic or French, the problem of the break with the languages spoken by the people, the mother languages, remains. The language of writing is always a putting into form, a translation. Writing escapes the tongue.« (Tengour 2012b: 281) This translational rupture inherent in any form of writing certainly adds to the marginal amount of attention that Tengour's writing attracts in Algeria, a situation which is therefore not solely owed to the fact that book literature »does not correspond to a need« (Tengour 2012b: 277) in Algerian society.

Significantly, stories as such are a central part of the traditional environment in which the author grew up. In addition to the hagiography narratives of the marketplace storytellers of Mostaghanem (see Tengour 2012b: 270), it was especially Tengour's

grandfather who introduced him to the existential vibrancy of stories. The man who »barely knew how to read« (Tengour 2001: 202), Tengour recalls, came to tell a story to his grandson »[e]very night [...] so that nightmares would not disturb [his] sleep.« (Tengour 2012b: 270) Consistently, then, an affinity for the poetic arts and an awareness of the very real effects of stories prove to be indicative of our Tartar character as well. All the more crushing, therefore, is the necessity of keeping silent with which his French exile confronts him. Considering the existential injury that this silence is bound to inflict, Tengour has his literary character react in a comparable fashion to how Dean had his protagonist react in the face of the inarticulable. He has him experience a physical symptom:

> »Snatches and remnants trot around in his head.
> All at once, he feels ill.
> It's because of a prickly
> ball that every Tartar
> has at the base of his throat
> or his chest.« (Tengour 2010: III)

Both the French original and the German translation offer an expression for »[s]natches and remnants« that more specifically refers to the speech-based origins of that sickening »prickly ball.« By translating Tengour's French »bribes« as »Satzfetzen« (shreds of sentences), Regina Keil-Sagawe alludes to the construction of »bribes de phrase,« which anchors the Tartars' physical affliction in their speechlessness. This is certainly accurate, mainly because of the decisiveness with which the author constructs that realm of culturally imposed silence around his character. Furthermore, the painful bodily spot that stems from this imposed silence is located in every migrant's *throat*: where the voice remains imprisoned, physical pain ensues. Moreover, the close connection between

language/speech and identity that Tengour opens up with his Tartar's physical condition is also underlined by the alternate location of that »prickly ball« that the narrative voice suggests. For if it does not sit in the migrant's throat, we learn, then it is positioned in even closer proximity to that pulsating organ commonly perceived to house a person's deepest emotions – it sits in their chest. It is highly consistent, then, when Tengour binds this particular Tartar's realization of the hardships of exile to yet another form of silence:

> »It sometimes happens that, for weeks at a time, he stumbles over an expression. He can't recall the tender phrases whispered over a cradle. He asks himself how exactly you congratulate a newlywed, and how you express condolences to a close friend or to a mere acquaintance.
> He rummages through all the crannies of his memory.
> That's when he realizes just how crushing exile is.« (Tengour 2010: VI)

This form of silence stems from a literal loss of words, and thus indicates a substantial detachment from once-internalized linguistic patterns of social interaction. In that it is described as a »crushing« consequence of exile, this linguistic forgetting illustrates how deeply any human sense of self and cultural belonging remains tied to language.

Clearly, Habib Tengour is thoroughly aware of the importance of words when it comes to any concept of identity. As a consequence, he establishes a literary aesthetics that – indeed maybe as an echo to the nightly stories he used to hear from his grandfather (see Ali-Benali 2012: 59) – evolves around the existential significance of stories, be they orally transmitted or disseminated on paper. While there is nothing to be done about the necessity of translating one linguistic register into another in the course of writing, Tengour employs a style of writing that nonetheless seeks to allude to the oral tradition of his earliest childhood days. This strategy of referring to Arabic poetry and faith (see

Sabra 2012: 7) is especially evident in Tengour's take on the poetic medium as such. Whereas »[t]he political narrative is a discourse that veils the real,« he explains, »the poetical narrative is the real itself.« (Tengour 2012b: 280) Thus, Tengour stays true to his claim that literary texts aim at revealing how social phenomena leave their mark »in the memory and on the body« of individuals. It follows that the literary text turns into a veritable »philosophy of unveiling« (»philosophie du dévoilement,« Tengour in Yelles 2012: 53), which Tengour regards as put into practice not just by German Romanticists like Novalis and Friedrich Hölderin, but also in *Tasawwuf*. (see ibid.) As the designation for the inwardly oriented aspects of Islam, *Tasawwuf* is central to the Islamic mysticism that is commonly known as Sufism. (see Grieger n.d.: n.p.)

The importance of Sufism for the Islamic civilization of Algeria is substantial. In contrast to the French colonial forces, Sufism »represented the last energy, [...] the most deeply rooted dimension of Muslim society.« (Benaissa 1997: 56) As such, it »played an important, perhaps indispensable, part in upholding the basic ethos of Islam in society as a whole.« (ibid.: 66) Since Mostaghanem is regarded as a center of Islamic mysticism in Algeria (see Sabra 2012: 7), Habib Tengour is of course very familiar with this popular culture of his native environment. Throughout his career, Tengour keeps referring to the early influences that Sufism and his home town's popular culture had on him: »The traditional poetry of Mostaghanem, which is sung, is a mystical poetry.«[334] (quoted in Yelles 2012: 51) The confrontation with that mystical poetry of Sufism reveals itself when Tengour emphasizes that a poetic text needs to offer itself to at least internal recitation; because, as he states in reference to Arthur Rimbaud, »[w]hat's a poem that

[334] »J'ai grandi dans le soufisme. [...] La poésie traditionelle de Mostaganem qui est chantée est une poésie mystique.« (Tengour, quoted after Yelles 2012: 51)

cannot be heard or read or seen in all respects, without any add on.«[335] (Tengour 2012a: 123) Maybe not just »in all respects,« but rather literally *dans tous les sens*, namely »with all senses.«

In addition to formal analogies to Islamic cultural traditions of Mostaghanem, Tengour also decidedly provides references to corresponding ideas, and this particular Tartar serves as a compelling example of his author's practice of cultural intertextuality. According to Habib Tengour, the popular culture of his country of origin allows for entertainment in a person's youth, yet expects every one to prepare for death once a certain level of maturity is achieved; because within this cultural thought pattern, »death becomes the logical conclusion« of life. (»[l]a mort devient la conclusion logique,« Tengour 2012a: 59) In regard to this cultural concept of different developmental stages, our Tartar character is clearly placed in close proximity to the conclusion of his earthly journey. This is not only evident based on his being described as »stiff with rheumatism« (Tengour 2010: II), which doubtlessly implies him to be of a mature age; it is also ingrained in the way he is portrayed to lead his life. This particular Tartar's daily actions agree with the author's explanation that this traditional »wandering toward a withdrawal from the world is discernible in minuscule details of daily conduct.« (»[c]e cheminement vers le retrait du monde se perçoit à des détails infimes dans le comportement quotidien,« Tengour 2012a: 59)

So when this particular Tartar »delights in a bowl of chickpeas with olive oil« and even »orders two on melancholy days« (Tengour 2010: X), this humble pleasure

[335] »Et qu'est-ce qu'un poème qui ne se laisse pas entendre ou lire ou voir pleinement dans tous les sens, sans ajout. Rimbaud le savait.« (Tengour 2012a: 123)

indicates more than just a form of »black humor« (»humour noir,« Maraini 2003: 227) illustrating the hardships of his migrant existence. Rather, we are confronted with a veritable cultural concept; for even in the process of a logical withdrawal from the world, Tengour clarifies, small pleasures are allowed: »Sometimes, the old migrant allows himself a small delight: in the evening, he'll drink a white coffee with two pieces of sugar.«[336] (Tengour 2012a: 59) Therefore, it is not a problem that our Tartar's cherished chickpeas only giggle in their German version, according to which they are called »Kichererbsen« – literally, »giggling peas.« A giggle is not required for them to signify this cultural concept of small delights on a journey toward death. Also in the scanty state of being that the French expression »poix chiches« – literally, »meager peas« – assigns to them, these chickpeas turn into a serious delight.

Nonetheless, the Tartar's humble culinary amusement does of course contain a moment of indisputably tragic melancholy. The challenges of his outsider existence are deeply ingrained in his daily conduct, which is also evident in his taste for alcohol. For even though he claims that »[h]is culture is solid« (Tengour 2010: V), our Tartar »drinks a lot. […] Alcohol calms him down.« (ibid.: VIII) The apologetic comment of »[h]e's not a drunkard« (ibid.), which is positioned in between the revelation of his drinking habit and the explication of the toxin's calming effects, is of course far from convincing. Because not only does our Tartar drink regulary »so as not do get depressed« (ibid.); he also keeps going until, »sometimes,« the »alcohol makes him dizzy.« (ibid.) Evidently, Tengour applies the concept of life's logical progression, which he finds ingrained in

[336] »Parfois le vieux migrant s'autorise un petit plaisir: il va prendre un café au lait le soir avec deux sucres.« (Tengour 2012a: 59)

Algerian popular culture, not to just any kind of life, but indeed to an existentially displaced one.

After stating this particular Tartar's lack of appreciation in regard to his supposed empathy, the sociologist concedes that »[a]ccording to him [i.e., the Tartar, AC], Tartars are not travelers. / They move by necessity.« (Tengour 2010: VIII) Considering the mass flight of Algerian intellectuals during the first years of the Civil War (see Sabra 2012: 13; see also Martinez 2000: 119), this is a plausible statement. Poets and thinkers fled the country just as quickly as »all those who criticized the government just as intensely as they criticized the power-seeking Islamists.« (»all jene[], die an der Regierung ebenso viel auszusetzen hatten wie an den nach der Macht greifenden Islamisten,« Knipp 2009: n.p.)

Our Tartar character's closeness to the poetic arts is not just implied by his conclusion that »all in all, Tartar poets take unnecessary risks.« (ibid.: VII) More significantly, it is his approach to the world around him that reveals him to »court the muse« (ibid.: IX); and even though this »makes him seem innocuous in the neighborhood« (ibid.), the Tartar's passion for poetic expression also reveals him to be an outstandingly perceptive individual. Within a social context where linguistic articulation has become impossible for him, he shifted his energies from active articulation toward active perception: »This particular Tartar listens. He is good at listening.« (ibid.: IV) The text itself addresses this shift in the Tartar's participatory mode as follows:

> »He would really like to open his heart. He doesn't know how.
> He listens. He hears everything.
> He's aware when words make no noise.

> Talk's intensity does not escape him.
> He distinguishes poetry from prose. Its characteristics seem evident to him.« (Tengour 2010: IV)

Not only does this passage identify the poetic realm to be an affair of the heart; it also underlines how astonishingly developed are the linguistic skills of an individual whose access to speech-based communication has been limited. Aware of both the flowing progression of noiseless poetry, and a speech that has an intensity indicative of literary prose, this particular Tartar's poetic capabilities are clearly superior to those of his readers. After all, the distinguishing of »poetry from prose« in this literary text is far from »evident« to probably most of us readers.

Tengour creates a highly poetic character whose literary talent eventually even turns out not to be limited to attentive perception. For when he »dozes on his roadside,« we learn, »[h]e makes up stories to pass the time.« (ibid.: VII) While being positioned in an outsider realm of social non-belonging, this particular Tartar resorts to the comforting properties of literature: »He recites Portuguese poetry out loud. He has never been to Portugal, but he used to spend a lot of time on construction sites in Paris.« (ibid.) As an example of the migrant figure as such, this particular Tartar with his particular cultural background recognizes the Portuguese workers' »depression [that] they called *Saudade*« in himself; for both the Portuguese migrants and the Algerian, therefore, »[t]he mark of exile [i]s indelible.« (ibid.) In the case of this particular Tartar, exile presents itself as just as indelible as its acceptance was inevitable. The inter- and transcultural language of literature thus turns into the only factor of orientation in a globalized world of shifting cultural affiliations. In that this particular Tartar furthermore honestly concedes that the poetry he hears »isn't always clear« (ibid.: IV), he indicates that he deals with a literature

that stays closely connected to the intricacies of its social environment. Narratives thus may not be able to directly solve any factual difficulties, but in the process of identity formation, they become an indispensable source of psychological resources; for in a reality of globalization, unclarities become the foundation of any identity concept.

Evidently, the literature with which Habib Tengour confronts us is a literature that decidedly reacts to its global context. Even though Tengour insists that »[t]he poet must obliterate themselves. / So as to not suffocate the poem«[337] (Tengour 2012a: 46), the contemporary literary practice even of an ›invisible‹ author draws its stimuli from an increasingly complex context of globalization, of migratory and multicultural realities. When Tengour refers to the influences of Surrealism according to André Breton to describe his preferred method of multilayered writing (see also Arnaud 2003: 28), he concludes that said Surrealism is »a way of writing just as much as it is an existential adhesion.« (»un modèle d'écriture qu'une adhésion existentielle,« Abdel-Jaouad 2003: 39) Clearly, there is a considerable amount of realism ingrained in this »*[p]sychic automatism*« that »*proposes to express […] the actual functioning of thought*« (Tengour 2012b: 259), since no thought ever takes place in a vacuum. As such, Tengour's writing has repeatedly been declared to transcend a ›pure‹ form of Surrealism (see, e.g., Maraini 2003: 228), and I strongly suggest opening up the discussion to considerations of postmodern traits in Tengour's writing as well. After all, this suggestion finds support in Tengour's own claim that »[f]orm is never devoid of content, it is worked through by its content. […] Form permits content to reach its goal.« (Tengour 2012b: 283)

[337] »Le poète doit s'effacer. / Pour ne pas étouffer le poème.« (Tengour 2012a: 46)

In the context of the multicultural actuality of our present times, any reality-oriented content is bound to bring about a formal reaction of considerable complexity. Hence, the polyphony of narrative voices in Tengour's text (see also Abdel-Jaouad 2003: 39) does justice to a world of colliding perspectives:

> »When the words hit hard, he sighs.
> It's shocking!
> He can't control himself as well as he thought.« (Tengour 2010: IV)

It has to remain unclear who is shocked by the Tartar's groaning. It may be the Tartar himself, who subsequently admits to have overestimated his level of self-control. Yet it may just as well be the aversive sociologist, whose voice is the only one that eventually makes use of clearly identifiable self-references in the form of ›me‹ and ›I.‹ This polyphony runs through Tengour's text as the only continuous thread within a multitude of addressed epochs, cultures, and languages, which all together create the complex reality of our Tartar's Parisian exile. It therefore refers not just to a »plurality of the Maghreb« (»pluralité du Maghreb,« Abdel-Jaouad 2003: 43) but, as I conclude, also to the plurality of a multidimensional reality that no longer allows for clear-cut and preconceived concepts of identity.

Tengour once said that »writing is true only in as much as it is form and fiction. As such it can investigate the real in order to lay bare its mechanisms, or at least to make it accessible to the imagination.« (Tengour 2012b: 283) This peculiar concept of truth, which embraces imagination as one of its major contributors, is highly reminiscent of Friedrich Nietzsche's assessment of lying in everyday life: »we have always been used to

lying. Or, to […] put it more pleasantly: one is far more of an artist than one knows.«[338] (Nietzsche 1980: 114) So in opposition to any »scientific discourse on social phenomena,« literature is able to endure the ambivalences inherent in any such social phenomenon; even more significantly: it thrives on them. With ease, the literary medium incorporates the Sufi ideal of »[b]e[ing] in the world, but not *of* it« (Benaissa 1997: 47) into its very core. The fact that literature can honestly ›lie‹ without pretending otherwise makes for its unbreakable integrity. As a consequence, Tengour equips his character, who distrusts the globalized »spectacle of the world [that] disgusts him« (Tengour 2010: VII), with another kind of trust – namely, with a noticeable confidence in the reality of literature. Only by way of this aesthetic shift, it seems, is it possible that »[t]his particular Tartar perseveres, waiting …« (ibid.: X)

[338] »[W]ir sind von Grund aus, von Alters her – ans L ü g e n g e w ö h n t. Oder, um es tugendhafter und heuchlerischer, kurz angenehmer auszudrücken: man ist viel mehr Künstler als man weiss.« (Nietzsche 1980: 114)

CHAPTER 4: INVASION

RELIGION, WAR, AND THE POLITICS OF NARRATION. IAN MCEWAN'S *SATURDAY* (2005)

Henry Perowne said he would buy the fish himself.[339] In fact, it is the prospect of buying those »salty items[] that make[s] him leave the bed at last and walk into the bathroom« (McEwan 2006: 55); and getting up is definitely a good decision. After all, Perowne's famous fish stew is to play an important part in that evening's family gathering, not least because it is the very thing his family will gather around. Thus, he cannot afford to be cheap when it comes to the ingredients. Nonetheless, it is with a certain level of discomfort that one learns that the monkfish tails alone »cost a little more than [Perowne's] first car.« (ibid.: 128) The fact that Perowne is far from done after purchasing monkfish, however, illustrates more than just his wealth: as becomes obvious at the fishmonger's, Perowne is not only rich, but also a real fish expert. His shopping list reveals a very complex dinner outline that also integrates prawns, clams, mussels, and skates, thus showing this exotic fish stew to be a highly ›multicultural‹ one as well. (see also Thraikill 2011: 195) That he himself identifies its preparation as »one of the simpler tasks ahead« (McEwan 2006: 55) furthermore underlines the ease with which Perowne interacts with exponents from across the global map.

Significantly, this is not just true in terms of cooking. On his way through twenty-first century London, Henry Perowne crosses paths with various cultures; and for the most part, he stays unmoved by this fact. So in addition to casually noticing the Indian

[339] For comments on the similarities between Ian McEwan's *Saturday* and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* see for example Thraikill 2011: 173; Impostato 2009: n.p.; Wally 2012: 103; Green 2010: 58; Rader 2010: n.p.; Bennett 2008: 229; Girard 2008: 37, 40; Marcus 2009: 95; and Kakutani 2005: n.p.

hostel (see McEwan 2006: 3, 59), he is confronted with a Nigerian girl (see ibid.: 8), »two Asian lads in tracksuits« (ibid.: 59), a »Chinese couple« (ibid.: 77), an American anesthetist (see ibid.: 101), three women in black burkas from a Muslim country (see ibid.: 124), »two West Indians and two […] Middle Easterners who might be Turks« (ibid.: 147), as well as two Russians who are at first mistakenly thought to be a Chechen and an Algerian. (see ibid.: 184) Of course, this is a rather unexciting observation in the age of globalization. It is just as unexciting as the fact that Perowne's awareness of that »abundance *from the emptying seas* [emphasis added by me, AC]« (ibid.: 127) does not stop him from actually buying the fish. Clearly, in the twenty-first century world that this novel portrays, globalization has become just as normal as the (cultural and environmental) challenges that come along with it.

On the other hand, Perowne seems to be substantially more affected by a very personal challenge, to which his trip to the fishmonger's offers at least some temporary relief. When he enters the fishmonger's, the purchase of fish is the only thing left standing between him and his weekly visit with his dementia-stricken mother in her retirement home. (see McEwan 2006: 125) Perowne's relationship with his mother, who used to be a »country champion swimmer« (ibid.: 38), is depicted as highly ambivalent. Yet it remains unclear whether the son's failure to live up to his mother's expectations of him following her lead and becoming a successful swimmer, too, added to that tension. It is only clear that Perowne never enjoyed being catapulted into the position of live fish himself: »Submersion in another element, every day, […] was what she wanted and thought he should have. Well, he was fine with that now, as long as the other element wasn't cold water.« (ibid.: 39) Obviously, Henry Perowne is not the type of person who

is pleased by the roughness of wild water. However, the existence of this personal challenge of Perowne's as such is nothing out of the ordinary, either. Some form of intra-familial tension seems to be part of the standard emotional inventory of modern man in contemporary Western society.

What follows from all this is that this could be a very common Saturday. And yet, it is more than that; which is true not just because this particular Saturday constitutes the background for an Ian McEwan novel. No, this particular Saturday, firmly rooted in the ›real‹ world (see McEwan in Lynn 2006: 143), is memorable in its own right: it is February 15, 2003, the day of the worldwide protests against the U.S.-led war in Iraq. The anti-war mass protest in London provides the backdrop for all of Perowne's undertakings on this day. (see also Girard 2008: 40) As a consequence, it becomes immediately obvious what kind of border crossing is being discussed here: namely, the military invasion of another country, the aggressive intervention by way of combat, which takes place in the middle of the »violent, black ocean[s]« of political agendas.

Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, which won its author the James Tait Black Memorial Prize from the University of Edinburgh (see Impostato 2009: n.p.; Groes 2009a: 1), is an ambitious project. A multitude of topics is involved when addressing the intricate issue of Iraq, and McEwan did not shy away from this complexity. Based on his desire to write a contemporary novel that was set in present-day London, the broader topical framework imposed itself on him:

> »Slowly I began to think, if I'm writing this London novel and it's in the present and about the present, then it needs to be about what was going on. And what was

> going on was the post-invasion of Afghanistan and the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq.« (quoted in Miller 2005: n.p.)

In taking on this thematic challenge, which was owed to the author's feeling a responsibility toward the present (see Groes 2009a: 11), McEwan created a novelistic contribution to a contemporary discourse that rejects the confines of disciplinary boundaries. It is therefore more than true that *Saturday* goes »all the way from the medical to the military realms« (McEwan 2007b: n.p.); and in between, it also confronts questions of religion and religious radicalism, diplomacy and its failure, cultural conflicts between the West and the East, evolutionary biology, cognitive science – and the place of literary aesthetics in view of all this. Unquestionably, the author of this novel is no longer the ›Ian McAbre‹ of the literary »world of pornography, incest, sado-masochism and infanticide« (McCrum 2005: n.p.) of his early career. (see also McEwan in Begley 2002: 92) Present-day McEwan has come a long way since his first short story collection *First Love, Last Rites* was published in 1975, a book which quickly earned him the reputation of writing shock literature.

Although McEwan has admitted to sometimes feeling unable to escape his early label, (see McEwan in Begley 2002: 92; Zalewski 2009: n.p.), it is very improbable that he would again be deprecatingly called a »chronicler of comically exaggerated psychopathic states of mind.« (McEwan, quoted in Haffenden 1985: 173) It rather seems as if nowadays the Western world itself were caught in a »comically exaggerated psychopathic state[],« with the only difference being that said state no longer appears »comically exaggerated.«[340] Therefore, when Zadie Smith describes the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, as »a McEwanesque incident« (Smith 2005: 110), one can only

[340] I suggest this in opposition to Mario Rader's contrary opinion. (see Rader 2010: n.p.)

agree: »[b]ecause the burst of the irrational into the rational was [his] *modus operandi* anyway.« (ibid.)

4.1. Setting the Stage for a Rational Mind

In *Saturday*, it is the field of neurosurgery that provides the main character's rational system of thought. Hence it comes as no surprise when the novel's very first sentence introduces its protagonist's professional affiliation right after the first mentioning of his name: »Henry Perowne*, a neurosurgeon* [emphasis added by me, AC], wakes to find himself in motion.« (McEwan 2006: 1) It is of course impossible to overlook the literary allusion to Gregor Samsa's magical metamorphosis – and thereby to a Kafkaesque world of irrationality – in this opening. (see Groes 2009b: 103) Thus, its very first sentence already reveals that the connection between literature and (ir)rationality is a foundational pillar of this novel. Obviously, the neurosurgeon's belief that rational people can live without stories is deeply undermined by his being parallelized with one of the most famous characters in world literature.[341] And yet, Henry Perowne, with his declared aversion against literature, sees himself as »living proof« (McEwan 2006: 67) for just that; which is more than a simple ›postmodern joking‹ (see Thraikill 2011: 183) on McEwan's part. Rather, the question of the significance of stories is immediately placed at the core of this novelistic contribution to the twenty-first century world.

In the world of *Saturday*, the clash between rationality and irrationality makes its way into the politics of war that build the novel's constant frame of reference. For the

[341] McEwan repeatedly identified Franz Kafka as an important influence on his own literary development. (see McEwan in Remnick 2007: 160) He even wrote a »pastiche of Kafka, after reading his story called ›Lecture to an Academy.‹« (McEwan, quoted in Casademont 1989: 55) Said pastiche can be found in his second short story collection, *In Between the Sheets* (1978).

name ›Perowne‹ is not only yet another literary allusion,[342] but also a bearer of explicit political history: Stewart Henry Perowne was a diplomat who, during and after World War II, was stationed in the Middle East so as to help support British imperial interests in the region. (see Wells 2010: 116) Based on its political dimension, then, the combination of this name with the medical profession also immediately opens up questions of rational thinking in politics, since neurosurgery's scope of action is the human organ of thought, the physical seat of reasoning.

A neurosurgeon's workspace is the human brain, where biochemistry dictates the moods of its subjects, and neurotransmitters lead them onto a path of rationality or, in the presence of countless possible irregularities, irrationality. To be confronted with a clash of both states of mind is, for a neurosurgeon, inevitably part of the job. Therefore, to face biologically imposed human aberrations on a daily basis must have a disillusioning and rationalizing effect on the surgeon. Eventually, the miracles of human ingenuity along with the darkest abyss of human nature boil down to the intactness of white and gray matter, and the level of functioning of the central nervous system.

Indeed, Henry Perowne is an individual with both feet firmly on the ground. Strikingly, he is presented as such right from the start; which also clarifies why Perowne's age is not revealed until page five, where he is quite casually identified as a forty-eight-year-old: it is part of a narrative strategy that emphasizes with purpose. Most important at the beginning of the novel are the circumstances of its protagonist's waking up, his awakening to the role as the main character of this novel. The first one and a half

[342] Sebastian Groes explains how the name can be identified as being taken from the Great War tetralogy *Parade's End* (1924–28) by Ford Madox Ford. (see Groes 2009b: 105)

pages are dedicated not only to how Henry »materialise[s] out of nothing, fully formed, unencumbered« (McEwan 2006: 1), but also to how he, as already quoted, »wakes to find himself in motion.« (ibid.) This spares his feet the necessity of being explicitly placed on the ground, since they appear to have been grounded long before Perowne gains consciousness.

Yet despite the obvious similarities with that other literary awakening to a peculiar state of being that is not based on any preliminary steps, we do not witness the birth of yet another Gregor Samsa. On the contrary, the motion in which Perowne finds himself is one of pleasant limb control, marked by a strength that is presented as uncommon even for him: »the movement *is easy, and pleasurable* [emphasis added by me, AC] in his limbs, and his back and legs feel *unusually strong* [emphasis added by me, AC].« (McEwan 2006: 1) In fact, his movement flows so smoothly that Perowne briefly wonders if he might still be dreaming. But his uncertainty does not last long, and he reaches the conclusion that »he's entirely himself, he is certain of it, and he knows that sleep is behind him: to know the difference between it and waking, to know the boundaries, is the essence of sanity.« (ibid.: 2) In accordance with his instantaneous materialization, the concrete beginnings of Perowne's consciousness are neither clear nor relevant. (see ibid.: 1) His certainty about his own existence, on the other hand, is essential: because it marks the end of a narrative process that created, in this case, a thoroughly sane character. As such, it marks the beginning of the narrative.

The first few pages also disclose the strategic coordinates of this narrative, since the description of his very first movement already shows how Perowne remains subject to an

omniscient narrator. In spite of the novel's being mainly focalized through Henry's eyes, the hierarchy of heterodiegetic narration stays intact and confronts the reader with an unusual combination of narrative styles. Free indirect style has been widely identified as the main mode of narration in *Saturday* (see, e.g., Green 2010: 62; Ferguson 2007: 44), and this is surely justified. Nonetheless, free indirect discourse – or: internal focalization, according to Gérard Genette (see Genette [2]1998: 227) – does not commonly allow for a clear distinction between the narrative voice and the character thoughts that are being vocalized. (see Guillemette/Lévesque 2006: n.p.) But how else, if not based on an omniscient narrator,[343] could Perowne's early morning strength be classified as »unusual«? After all, there is substantial effort put into presenting an existence that jumps right »out of nothing,« which renders it unable to claim any frame of reference.

The presence of a narrative omniscience becomes all the more indisputable when Perowne moves »with no decision made, no motivation at all« (McEwan2006: 2) – always controlled by the will of his authorial creator – to a bedroom window and notices an anomaly in the sky; it is then and there that the plot begins to unfold. And even though the narrator's comment on Henry's observation of the sky gives it significance, it also puts the protagonist into his subordinate place by underlining that »[h]e doesn't immediately understand what he sees, though he thinks he does.« (ibid.: 12) What the reader is confronted with here is a very self-aware work of literature that does not hide that its protagonist is a literary creation, a pawn within the wider concept of the novel.

[343] Susan Green mentions that »McEwan's use of free indirect discourse manipulates the border of narrator and character voice to create the effect of the reader simultaneously inhabiting Henry's mind while remaining critical and more knowing than him« (Green 2010: 62); but she does not draw any further consequences from that observation. Sebastian Groes, however, also notices and points out McEwan's narrative mode, which uses »the restrictive third person discourse combined with the use of free indirect style.« (Groes 2009b: 105) A similar conclusion can be found in Wells 2010: 111.

Perowne, too, displays a significant amount of self-awareness. As »[a]n habitual observer of his own moods« (McEwan 2006: 4), he applies rationality (observation) to commonly less rationally experienced states of emotion (moods). In the case of »Henry Perowne, a neurosurgeon,« the professional affiliation does indeed clarify the character's state of being: Perowne almost compulsively analyzes everything, including himself (see Ruge 2010: 71), with the eye of the neurosurgeon. So he presumes, with regard to his own inexplicable mental elation, that »[p]erhaps down at the molecular level there's been a chemical accident while he slept.« (McEwan 2006: 4) Maybe that is true; maybe it is not. Either way, it is his elated mood that eventually brings Perowne to said bedroom window and makes him gaze into the cold February morning.

The temperature does not bother him at all. He is »as immune to the cold as a marble statue.« (McEwan 2006: 3) To compare Perowne with a marble statue once more emphasizes this character's organized – which is to say: rationally critical – frame of thought. Just as marble remains unaffected by cold temperatures, it is also able to stand upright independently due to its rigid internal structure. In that, marble statues mirror a coral reef, whose organization Perowne prefers to the unpredictable act of seafaring, which declaredly »doesn't much interest him.« (ibid.: 4) Instead, he looks at the city in front of him and identifies it as »a success, […] a biological masterpiece« (ibid.: 3), in which there are »millions teeming around the accumulated and layered achievements of centuries, *as though around a coral reef* [emphasis added by me, AC], […] harmonious for the most part, nearly everyone wanting it to work.« (ibid.)

However, to compare Perowne with a marble statue also already announces the shift in perception that is about to occur. The contradictory picture of an emotionally elated marble statue contains the potential to make its own foundation crumble; and crumble it does. After several minutes in the cold, Perowne's »elation is passing and he's beginning to shiver.« (McEwan 2006: 12) It is striking that he notices the aforementioned anomaly in the sky right when he turns around to reach for his dressing gown. In his attempt to protect himself from the cold to which he is no longer immune, he realizes that something is different. There is »some new element outside, […] smeared across his peripheral vision by the movement of his head.« (ibid.) Proving the narrative voice correct, Perowne does not immediately understand and thus keeps changing his opinion about what he sees.

Unlike Mrs. Dalloway, who feels, »standing there at the open window, that something awful was about to happen« (Woolf 1925: 3), Henry Perowne lacks such a prescient feeling of doom.[344] Rather, he resorts to science in an attempt to identify that strange »fire in the sky« (McEwan 2006: 13) as a meteor (see ibid.: 12), and then as a comet. (see ibid.: 13) But even astronomy cannot prevent the looming doom from striking; and the moment it strikes is textually marked very clearly, when – out of nowhere – another emotional condition seizes Perowne. This time, the irrational quality of that particular emotion is much stronger than the internal structure of rational composure: »*Horrified*, [emphasis added by me, AC] he returns to his position by the window.« (ibid.: 13) Finally, Henry Perowne's marble has crumbled.

[344] Johannes Wally points at yet another literary window scene when he outlines the parallel between Perowne's window gazing and its predecessor in *Atonement*, in which »Briony witnesses a scene through her window, which to her is confusing and inapprehensible and sets off the train of misinterpretations which lead to the false accusation of Robbie.« (Wally 2012: 111)

Comparable to its literary predecessor in German Romanticism, this marble statue's existence has to succumb in the confrontation with a form of organized faith. Yet while Joseph von Eichendorff's 1819 novella *The Marble Statue (Das Marmorbild*) confronts its pagan marble Venus with institutionalized Christianity, the protagonist of *Saturday* is confronted with the radical version of a different monotheistic religion: namely, with a specific branch of Islamist fundamentalism. By 9/11 at the latest, the radicalization of this fundamentalist movement entered Western consciousness in the form of jihadist terror, and crashing planes became its symbol. To the contemporary reader, Perowne's instantaneous horror is therefore not surprising, considering that he just realized the ›meteor-comet‹ to be a plane on fire, quickly approaching Heathrow airport.

Unlike in Eichendorff's concept, the defeat of the statue in McEwan's novel initiates an anthropogenesis. Henry Perowne, robbed of his marble constitution, is no longer inexplicably elated due to a possible molecular accident. Instead, he becomes a ›veritable‹ person who is no longer immune to their surroundings. In accordance with these inverted conditions, it is not an »old, devout song« (»ein altes frommes Lied,« Eichendorff 2008: 47) that conquers the marble here, but rather »a low rumbling sound, gentle thunder gathering in volume« (McEwan 2006: 13), and it »tells [Perowne] everything.« (ibid.) The rumble and thunder truly are telling in this case, as they are accompanied by another sound, whose addition leads to the following scenario:

> »Above the usual deep and airy roar is a straining, choking banshee sound growing in volume – both a scream and a sustained shout, an impure, dirty noise that suggests unsustainable mechanical effort beyond the capacity of hardened steel. […] Something is about to give.« (McEwan 2006: 14)

This antagonism between the mechanics of »hardened steel« and the mythical angel of death is a stark one. It is unexpected that the rational and science-oriented Perowne should associate the failing of technology with the magical and supernatural realm of a banshee. Nonetheless, the specific context of this combination renders it understandable, since it linguistically mirrors what it refers to in the world beyond letters: the airplane, whose mechanical failure creates the unusual banshee sound, represents the attack on secularized (rational) thought by religious (irrational) zeal.

Even though jihadist terror is not congruent with the religion of Islam (see Ibrahim 2001: n.p.), it is nonetheless a religiously motivated movement. As such, it does, like any other form of religiously motivated zeal, refer to a realm of the supernatural that tends to oppose scientific evidence. So for a moment it seems as if, in the face of »unsustainable mechanical effort,« the shouting of religious conviction is sustained, and the secularized West's victory over its gods – a process that Max Weber famously called the ›disenchantment of the world‹ – must fail along with the »hardened steel« on which it is based. The horrifying failure of technology, accompanied by that uncanny »banshee sound,« refers to the dyad of fear and death that has become the all-too stable currency of jihadist terror.

Obviously, this opening scene at the window shows Perowne to be very easy to impress through fear. It is therefore inaccurate to describe Henry as being »so without […] angst, that he seems less a person than a secular emblem.« (Impostato 2009: n.p.) Quite the contrary is true: as soon as Henry Perowne loses the immunity of a marble statue, he transforms into a ›true‹ person of his time, fully aware that »London, his small

part of it, lies wide open, impossible to defend, waiting for its bomb.« (McEwan 2006: 286) Consequently, Perowne – already anticipating, it seems, the 2005 London bombings of 7/7 (see Reid 2009: n.p.; Wells 2010: 26, 123) – will later also conclude his Saturday in this exact state of ›chilling‹ awareness: »At the end of this day, this particular evening, he's timid, vulnerable, he keeps drawing his dressing gown more tightly around him.« (McEwan 2006: 287)

After his literary anthropogenesis, Henry Perowne, the neurosurgeon, is no longer »unencumbered.« From now on, he carries around the memory of the social disaster that explains his sudden horror. Instantaneously, his feet reveal themselves to be grounded in the post-9/11 Western world. The novel's being written in present tense therefore indeed »stresses the actuality of its political context« (Wally 2012: 103);[345] and *Saturday*'s belonging to the genre of realistic fiction[346] is reflected by both the protagonist's extensive use of medical terminology (see Heber 2008: 2; Knapp 2007: 126), as well as the time setting of its narrative structure.

4.2. Literature's Empathic Duty: There's Only Love

September 11 was of course not the first human disaster in history, and it will not be the last one, either. McEwan explicitly warns against »treating [it] as the only and most spectacular event of human cruelty.« (quoted in Whitney 2002: n.p.) Both world wars, including the Holocaust, are among the examples the author mentions for that purpose. (see McEwan in Smith 2005: 133) Yet 9/11 possessed a quality that was bound to leave a

---

[345] For further comments on McEwan's use of present tense, see also Puschmann-Nalenz 2009: 198; Head 2007: 192.
[346] See also Zalewski 2009: n.p.; Seaboyer 2005: 23; Root 2010: 60.

lasting impression on our contemporary Western mind. Henry Perowne illustrates the nature of that impression while cooking his fish stew.

At some point, he notices that »[o]ne of the skates has arched its spine, as if to escape the boiling.« (McEwan 2006: 182) But there is no escaping, and in the process of pushing it back down, Perowne breaks its »vertebral column, […] right below T3.« (ibid.) Although repulsive in its raw cruelty, the situation is familiar. Just as the skate is boiled and broken in its own element, American society was victimized on its own soil. No attempt to rationalize the intrusive nature of such an attack can undo its disquieting effect. Quite the contrary is true, for Perowne's attempt to rationalize the barbaric foundation of his fish stew by way of medically localizing the skate's fracture only underlines the profound uneasiness on his part. It is an uneasiness that has also captured Perowne's culture, whose contemporary discontents now also have to take into account the constant threat of yet another terrorist attack.

Justifiably, Perowne cannot help but think of these days as »[b]affled and fearful« (McEwan 2006: 3) when he stands at the window on that Saturday morning and overlooks his small part of London. Despite its being »harmonious for the most part« (ibid.), Perowne is right in concluding that only »*nearly* [emphasis added by me, AC] everyone want[s] it to work« (ibid.), since it is undeniable that a certain minority lacks this desire. September 11 became the tragic symbol of this imbalance of aspirations in Western consciousness. McEwan, too, had to acknowledge this. Immediately after the terrorist attacks, he wrote in the *Guardian*: »We also knew, though it was too soon to wonder how or why, that the world would never be the same« (McEwan 2001b: n.p.);

which holds true beyond the realm of air transportation, whose stakeholders only prosper »so long as nerves hold steady and no bombs or wreckers are on board.« (McEwan 2006: 14)

Perowne describes his hospital's new zero-tolerance policy toward obstreperous patients as another »American import, and not a bad one.« (McEwan 2006: 251) Still, in spite of his initially positive evaluation, he notices a downside to such vehemence. After all, »there's always the danger of chucking out a genuine patient; head injuries, as well as cases of sepsis or hypoglycemia, can present as drunkenness.« (ibid.) Clearly, the exclusion of bad guys can pose a major hindrance to good ones as well. Interestingly, though, in his musings about some of those ›bad guys‹ and their radical Islamism, Perowne eventually has to renounce his first assessment of them as being exclusively driven by »the purity of nihilism« (ibid.):

> »But that's not quite right. Radical Islamists aren't really nihilists – they want the perfect society on earth, which is Islam. They belong to a doomed tradition about which Perowne takes the conventional view – the pursuit of utopia ends up licensing every form of excess, all ruthless means of its realisation.« (McEwan 2006: 34)

No debate concerning any form of utopia can be nihilistic.[347] As soon as utopia is up for discussion, the debate becomes satiated with content. Yet this only complicates the situation, because if need be, said content will be defended with its proponents' lives. History provides various examples for the mechanism in which people die for what they believe in. However, contemporary society has witnessed a new element enter the stage –

[347] In this respect, I contradict – thereby agreeing with McEwan – Erik Martiny, who claims that the novel's villain, Baxter, »comes to represent the figure of the nihilistic terrorist.« (Martiny 2009: 167)

namely, when present-day suicide fighters turned the intuitive valuing of human life upside down. In that they consciously choose the way of ›martyrdom,‹ their death becomes a necessity for the fulfillment of the jihadist mission; and motivated by their certainty »that there is a life – a better, more important life – elsewhere« (McEwan 2006b: 36), they assent to their task with joy.

So what is one to do in the face of such an invincible opponent? Henry's early-morning reaction to the burning plane in the sky speaks of a profound weariness that even wins out over his feeling of horror. Eventually, he »straightens and *quietly* [emphasis added by me, AC] unfolds the shutters to mask the sky.« (McEwan 2006: 17) Along with the victory of a muting weariness, something else happens here: by closing the blinds, by choosing to look away in that very moment, Henry Perowne turns into a literary anti-hero. Nonetheless, he cannot prevent the literary dimension of his existence from surfacing, and so he finds himself facing a deep moral dilemma:

> »He feels culpable somehow, but helpless too. These are contradictory terms, but not quite. […] Culpable in his helplessness. Helplessly culpable. He loses his way, and thinks again of the phone. By daylight, will it seem negligent not to have called the emergency services?« (McEwan 2006: 22)

This passage remains unclear in regard to Perowne's wish not to appear to have behaved negligently. For although he might be motivated by concerns about public opinion, he could also be focused on his very own reasoning »[b]y daylight.« In that case, the only person he will have to answer to is himself. I suggest that his feeling culpable favors this second, more private version. As is obvious, Perowne bases culpability on a neglect of responsibility; and in that particular moment, his responsibility consists in calling for

help. Strikingly, this responsibility is not based on any kind of active wrongdoing on Perowne's part, but instead grows out of his witnessing the potential suffering of other human beings. In order to reach his sense of a helpless culpability, Perowne first had to execute what McEwan characterizes as the main purpose of literature. Henry Perowne had to imagine what it would feel like to be someone else: »[p]lastic fork in hand, he often wonders how it might go – the screaming in the cabin partly muffled by that deadening acoustic, the fumbling in bags for phones and last words.« (McEwan 2006: 15)

The 9/11 terrorists, on the other hand, failed »to grasp the simple truth that other people are as real as you.« (McEwan 2003: 38) Consequently, McEwan identifies their main shortcoming as »a failure of the imagination« (McEwan 2001a: n.p.):

> »If the hijackers had been able to imagine themselves into the thoughts and feelings of the passengers, they would have been unable to proceed. It is hard to be cruel once you permit yourself to enter the mind of your victim. Imagining what it is like to be someone other than yourself is at the core of our humanity. It is the essence of compassion, and it is the beginning of morality.« (McEwan 2001a: n.p.)

According to McEwan, novels tap into the human reservoir of cognitive psychology, in terms of which »we have […] a theory of mind, a[n] understanding of what it means to be someone else. Without this understanding, as psychopathology shows, we would find it virtually impossible to form and sustain relationships.« (McEwan 2005a: 5; see also McEwan in Noakes 2001: 85) As a consequence, the human capacity for imagination generates an obligation for empathic sensitivity. And this empathic duty creates a social

responsibility,[348] which in turn leads to questions of morality that provide the playing field for literature. As early as 1995, McEwan defined fiction as »a deeply moral form in that it is the perfect medium for entering the mind of another« (quoted in Louvel et al. 1995: 70); and he concluded that »it is at the level of empathy that moral questions begin in fiction.« (ibid.)

By imagining the terrified passengers' »fumbling in bags for phones and last words,« Henry Perowne at least implicitly touches upon the only thing, according to his inventor, that the 9/11 victims could put up against all that cruelty: love. For those »last words« that they all said into their cell phones, from inside the towers as well as the airplanes, were always the same three words. *I love you*. »There is only love, and then oblivion. Love was all they had to set against the hatred of their murderers.« (McEwan 2001a: n.p.) Thus McEwan is right in describing the emotional bequest of September 11, somewhat counterintuitively, as »an expression of love.« (quoted in Whitney 2002: n.p.) Perowne seems to confirm this legacy by not forgetting about his social responsibility, which leaves him culpable even in his helplessness.

Obviously, Perowne is very much aware that the problem will not go away just because he excluded it from his field of vision. So just like his authorial creator, Perowne believes in a reality that exists independently of the individual who experiences it. McEwan explains it like this:

[348] It follows that to compare McEwan's understanding of social responsibility with Emmanuel Levinas' ethics of Otherness – which defines the absolute foreignness of another person as the reason for infinite responsibility toward them – cannot do justice to McEwan's concept. For a contrary argumentation, see Amiel-Houser 2011/2012; Wells 2007: 120; Wells 2010: 14.

»I don't hold with the sort of postmodern relativist view that the only truth is the one an individual asserts. I do believe there are realities that await our investigation. In that sense I'm an objectivist. I also believe from biology that through perception, cognition, we have to construct the world.«[349] (McEwan, quoted in Roberts 2010a: 189)

Much of what happens in the world today is perceived through the media. It is therefore consistent when Perowne immediately draws a parallel between his mode of perception on that Saturday morning and the way reality entered the consciousness of large parts of humanity on the day of the terrorist attacks: »the scene *construed from the outside, from afar like this* [emphasis added by me, AC], is also familiar. It's already almost eighteen months since half the planet watched […] *the unseen captives* [emphasis added by me, AC] driven through the sky to the slaughter.« (McEwan 2006: 15) Indeed, we all witnessed death on that day, yet »we saw no one die« (McEwan 2001b: n.p.) on our TV screens. »No blood, no screams, no human figures at all, and into this emptiness, *the obligating imagination* [emphasis added by me, AC] set free.« (McEwan 2006: 15) It was our human imagination, the carrier of that moral obligation to empathic sensitivity, which had to construe the reality of an unseen horror. – In the same way, it is Perowne's imagination that will make him suspect the mussels he throws into the boiling water to suffer: »If they're alive and in pain, he isn't to know.« (ibid.: 181) They remain silent throughout their agony. Yet still, the possibility of said agony entered the cook's mind; his »obligating imagination« forced him to take it into consideration.

Even though Perowne sees the ubiquity of news screens (see also Rader 2010: n.p. and Girard 2008: 51) as a constant »invasion, [an] infection from the public domain«

[349] One of McEwan's own characters later describes the constructivist aspect of this view as »squiffy«; namely, physicist Michael Beard in *Solar*: »People who kept on about narrative tended to have a squiffy view of reality, believing all versions of it to be of equal value.« (McEwan 2010: 148)

(McEwan 2006: 109), the compulsive consumption of news updates has become »a condition of the times.« (ibid.: 180) Consequently, as long as Perowne's witnessing the burning plane has not found its way into those news reports, it is nothing more than »an unreliable subjective event.« (ibid.: 29) Therefore, it is the news that will eventually present him as well as the readers with what really happened. We learn that the burning plane was a Russian cargo plane from Riga, flying toward Birmingham, and »[a]s it passed well to the east of London a fire broke out in the engine. […] Neither of the two-man crew is hurt.« (ibid.: 35)

Clearly, Perowne's imagination played tricks on him that Saturday morning. But even though his »sense of having behaved […] laughably« (McEwan 2006: 55) will make him feel embarrassed, his misinterpretation of the situation succeeds in underlining the challenge of a reality that constantly asks for interpretation.[350] Henry Perowne's literary condition lets him illustrate the constant need for imaginative action. Because in spite of his consciously choosing a rational approach to the world, imagination is an integral part of his daily undertakings: his »[p]atients would be less happy to know that he's not always listening to them. He's a dreamer sometimes.« (ibid.: 19; see also Takolander 2009: 57) He obviously also leans toward the creative when it comes to cooking; how else could the thoroughly rational Perowne enjoy the »relative imprecision and lack of discipline« (McEwan 2006: 181) in the kitchen. In fact, he only draws »the broadest

[350] In that, I disagree with Johannes Wally, who sees Perowne's interpretative failure as an implicit criticism of his worldview. (see Wally 2012: 116) Rather, the problem of misinterpretation shows itself to be deeply rooted in Perowne's time. For this is a time that stretches man's capacity for interpretation well beyond its limits by always allowing for yet another strike of insanity.

principles« (ibid.) from a recipe, while anything beyond that prescriptive foundation remains subject to the notions of his imagination.

It follows that Caroline Lusin may be right when she identifies McEwan's children's book, *The Daydreamer* – which is, more precisely, »a book for adults about a child in a language that children could understand« (McEwan 2000: 9) – as a »poetological manifesto.«[351] (Lusin 2009: 138) After all, ten-year-old Peter Fortune wakes one morning »from troubled dreams to find himself transformed into a giant person, an adult.« (McEwan 2000: 135) What the transformed protagonist learns from his Kafkaesque experience is that life does not end with the beginning of adulthood: »There were adventures ahead of him.« (ibid.: 143) Imagination, the cornerstone of any literary undertaking, is inseparable from human life, and as such not restricted to childhood. Yet there are different forms of imagination. Perowne muses that »even despotic kings […] couldn't always dream the world to their convenience. It's only children […] who feel a wish and its fulfillment as one; perhaps this is what gives tyrants their childish air.« (McEwan 2006: 39) In addition to having an infantile air around them, despotic rulers also exercise an imagination that breeds tyranny; which harshly opposes the poetics of a literary imagination that seeks to empathize with the reality it addresses.

The thoroughly material nature of his profession forces Perowne to interact with the material – which is to say: real – world on a daily basis. Consequently, he regards any form of the supernatural as a »recourse of an insufficient imagination, a dereliction of duty, a childish evasion of the difficulties and wonders of the real.« (McEwan 2006: 66) Most striking about Henry Perowne, however, is the fact that he confronts those

---

[351] Yet I strongly disagree with Caroline Lusin's attempt to read *Saturday* »as a (day-)dream of its central character.« (Lusin 2009: 146)

»difficulties and wonders of the real« with shameless joy; he knows how to embrace »his overgenerous share of the world's goods.« (ibid.: 74) But his happiness goes far beyond the possession of material goods. Perowne also lives in a genuinely happy marriage, is the father of two marvelous children (see Impostato 2009: n.p.), and feels a sense of deep personal satisfaction with his profession: »Henry can't […] deny the egotistical joy in his own skills, or the pleasure he still takes in the relief of the relatives when he comes down from the operating room like a god, an angel with the glad tidings – life, not death.« (McEwan 2006: 23)

Henry de Montherlant once said that happiness writes white (see Amis 1987: 50), and Leo Tolstoy denounced happy families as being too identical with one another to provide an earnest basis for literature. (see Thraikill 2011: 181) Yet these are exactly the notions McEwan seeks to challenge. With Henry Perowne, McEwan decided to turn happiness into literature, thus creating a different kind of ›shock‹ for his audience (see McEwan in Cook/Groes/Sage 2009: 130): »I thought, if I'm going to write about an anxious world, it would be more interesting to put a very happy man into it.« (McEwan, quoted in Miller 2005: n.p.)

Perowne carries around the legacy he is meant to deconstruct in the form of his white medical coat. Nonetheless, his experiences do show up on the page. Obviously, then, they are not completely written in white ink. For even though the wearing of said coat brings Perowne a lot of joy, it is obvious that in an imperfect world, there can be no perfect happiness. And so he thinks, after »barely hav[ing] touched a non-medical book« (McEwan 2006: 4) in over a decade, that »he's seen enough death, fear, courage and

suffering to supply half a dozen literatures.« (ibid.) No matter what, the novel's realism stays realistic; but it does so without turning miserable. McEwan presents a realism that finds happiness in the midst of a profoundly unfair world.

In addition to the cruelty of nature that mercilessly inflicts sickness and suffering upon innocent people, Perowne also has to confront a social context of anxiety. McEwan explains that in the First World, »we have all the pleasures and yet we're looking behind our back. And the reason I wanted to make Perowne a wealthy man is because […] that's what the first world is.« (quoted in Smith 2005: 123) So when Perowne decides to close the blinds and avert his eyes from the possible disaster, he is no longer just a single individual. McEwan turns Perowne in that very passage into a literary icon of a wealthy and privileged First World that prefers to mind its own business, but that can no longer do so. Consequently, the attentive reader begins to expect that even Henry Perowne, living in a mirror of the bigger political picture, will have to live through an intrusion by that »other« world; and it must certainly be horrifying.

4.3. An Intrusion of Irrationality – 9/11, *Mise en Abyme*

The center of Henry Perowne's life consists of the members of his family. While Perowne's relationship to his dementia-stricken mother Lily in her retirement home, as well as to his father-in-law – the once-celebrated poet John Grammaticus – is rather tense, the inner core of his familial connections is made up of pure love. Love for his successful attorney wife Rosalind; for his eighteen-year-old son Theo, the aspiring blues musician; and for his poet daughter Daisy, the Oxford student who currently resides in Paris, but will join her family for the fish stew that night in order to celebrate the

publication of her first volume of poetry. Each of these family members adds an important piece to the whole that makes up Henry's way of life.

Unsurprisingly, it is this way of life that is about to come under attack. Just as the ›American way of life‹ came under attack on September 11 (see Phillips 2012: n.p.), the novel sets up Perowne and his family for a personal tragedy. Their dinner gathering on that Saturday will provide the basis for the family's being victimized in their own home. Indeed, McEwan confronts the Perownes with their personal September 11. (see Ross 2008: 78; Wells 2010: 119)

The political context of the novel is furthermore underlined by the location of Perowne's house, since its position on Fitzroy Square creates an unmistakable parallel to a very specific geographical concept. Whenever Perowne watches the personal dramas that unfold in the city square, he understands that »[p]assions need room, the attentive spaciousness of a theatre.« (McEwan 2006: 59) Significantly, city squares are not the only areas of human interaction that can be designated as a theater. In the aftermath of 9/11, it was especially *military* theaters that became the center point of attention. And so Perowne hypothesizes, while looking at the city square in front of him, that

> »this could be the attraction of the Iraqi desert – the flat and supposedly empty landscape approximating a strategist's map on which fury of industrial proportions can be let loose. A desert, it is said, is a military planner's dream. A city square is the private equivalent.« (McEwan 2006: 59)

Also, the proximity of the Post Office Tower emphasizes the parallel that this narrative setting establishes: »When he was little, Theo liked to ask whether the tower would hit the house if it fell their way, and was always gratified when his father told him it most

certainly would.« (McEwan 2006: 202) However, on that day, no towers need to fall, as the implications of this literary arrangement are already obvious.[352] When he utilizes the attack on Henry Perowne's way of life as a mirror for the socio-political theme that functions as the novel's outer frame, McEwan applies an artistic technique whose definition goes back to the nineteenth century.

In 1893, French writer André Gide famously wrote in his journal how much he liked to find the theme of a work expressed once more on the level of its characters.[353] Based on this strategy, which creates a relation of similarity between the elements of an artwork and the artwork in which those elements are contained, the technique of *mise en abyme* confronts the audience with a decisive level of »auto-citation.« (Académie de Toulouse: n.p.) Clearly, *Saturday* fulfills this requirement. It is a highly complex work of art addressing a highly complex societal situation, while it concurrently reflects on its own status as a work of art doing just that. Yet the depth – or, maybe more accurately, the abyss – of *Saturday's* metareflexivity goes even deeper than Daisy's recitation, toward the end of the novel, of »Dover Beach« by Matthew Arnold. McEwan is not satisfied with the commonly accepted use of *mise en abyme* in literature, which rests on the presentation of a piece of literature (here: the poem) within the piece of literature (here: the novel) so as to underline that work's metareflexive dimension.[354]

I already pointed out that Perowne sees himself as the »living proof« (McEwan 2006: 67) for the ›fact‹ that one can live without literature. Given that he himself is a literary character, this argumentation is, of course, not convincing. On the contrary, by

[352] For further elaborations on the Telecom Tower's significance in British history, see Wells 2010: 114.
[353] See Gide, quoted in Académie de Toulouse: n.p.: »J'aime assez qu'en une oeuvre d'art on retrouve ainsi transposé, à l'échelle des personnages, le sujet même de cette oeuvre.«
[354] Thus, I do not understand how Helga Schwalm can seriously claim that there is an »absence of metafictional […] reflections« (Schwalm 2009: 180) in *Saturday*.

way of his failure to prove the insignificance of literature within his own existence, Perowne produces the countereffect of underlining the literary quality of certain real occurrences. In defending a reality that is, in fact, fiction, Perowne initiates a process of mirroring that stays loyal to its basic task of mutuality. Now it is no longer just the novel's outer theme that is being mirrored on the inner level of its characters; the literary core of the novel also finds a mirror – namely, in the literary quality of its outer theme.

Several years ago, after looking over one of his daughter's reading lists, Perowne vehemently rejected said list's focus on the supernatural in the form of ghosts and magical metamorphoses: »When anything can happen, *nothing much matters* [emphasis added by me, AC]. It's all kitsch to me.« (McEwan 2006: 67) Daisy contradicted him just as vehemently by pointing out that »[i]t's literature, not physics.« (ibid.) Much later, Perowne drastically turns his own statement upside down. When he sees how the two street thugs enter his house, he realizes: »[w]hen anything can happen, *everything matters* [emphasis added by me, AC].« (ibid.: 214) With this turn in perception, Perowne assigns a literary quality to that highly significant incident of the home invasion. Now, speaking with Daisy, »it's literature.«

The underlying theatricality of life's prose – which is to say: life's potential to turn into a drama – is also expressed in McEwan's approach to literary genres. The overarching structure of this novel consists of five parts, which is bound to evoke associations with the five acts of the classical drama. Naturally, the novel's five parts do not fully adhere to the dramatic pattern that Gustav Freytag depicted in 1863, and that rests on a long

tradition reaching all the way back to Aristotle. Nonetheless, the parallels are quite noticeable.

The first part, with its narrative creation of the protagonist as well as Perowne's witnessing of the burning plane, clearly presents itself as the novel's exposition. Not only does it confront us with the basic parameters of Perowne's personality, but it also establishes the novel's societal context, and with that, its broad thematic span.[355] In a similarly accurate fashion, one can identify in the novel's second part the classical intensification of dramatic tension, for it is then and there that Perowne's encounter with the street thug Baxter occurs. Even though the specific nature of its ensuing consequences cannot yet be predicted at that moment in time, it is self-evident that said encounter will have some sort of sequel. It is, after all, positioned in the middle of an Ian McEwan plot. The dramatic knot is mercilessly tightening, which is furthermore emphasized by the emotional intensity of Perowne's squash game following the Baxter incident.

By the third part at the latest, however, McEwan's ›dramatic‹ structure begins to deviate from its traditional model. Instead of presenting a point of culmination followed by a moment of peripety, the third part of *Saturday* presents itself in a rather quiet and linear mood: Perowne buys some fish, returns home, takes a shower, visits his mother, returns home, and attends his son's music rehearsal. Also differing from the literary tradition, the actual catastrophe of the home invasion as well as its resolution by way of the Arnold poem – that highly improbable and as such thoroughly traditional *deus ex machina* (see also Tournes 2009: n.p.) – take place in the fourth, not the final part. There

[355] Because just like Moses Herzog – the protagonist of Saul Bellow's novel *Herzog*, who provides the epigraph for *Saturday* (see also Ruge 2010: 76) – Henry Perowne has to illustrate »what it means to be a man. In a city. In a century. In transition.« Also, Moses Herzog's first presented thought matches Perowne's societal background: »If I am out of my mind, it's all right with me.« (Bellow 1964: 1) For further information on the role of this epigraph, see Tournes 2009: n.p.; Groes 2009b: 105.

is no moment of retardation to be found in part four. Instead, Perowne and Theo's overpowering of Baxter appear to bring the main plot to an end; and with that, the dramatic knot has been disentangled.

Yet even if one decides to regard Perowne's operating on Baxter in the fifth part as more of an addendum to than component of a traditional story line, it still represents a point of culmination. For this is where Perowne draws his conclusions about this dramatic day, by way of which he defines the role of literature in contemporary society; and this is what this deeply metareflexive novel is all about. So the plot does lead to a form of Aristotelian catharsis, even though this ›aesthetic cleansing‹ has to remain a novelistic one: it occurs *after* the fact, by way of the protagonist's narrated thinking.

McEwan's intertwining of the novelistic and the dramatic genre implies that the world cannot be accurately approached with only one ›pure‹ genre. Reality does not abandon its complex nature when it steps through its fictitious mirror. This is especially true when said mirror is provided by a form of fiction that declaredly carries an obligation to the real. As Perowne so neatly put it: »The times are strange enough. Why make things up?« (McEwan 2006: 65) Therefore, I suggest that McEwan's *Saturday* represents a work of art that answers to Briony Tallis' request for »a new type of fiction« (McEwan 2003: 265), thus joining the author's most famous novel *Atonement* in being »a book about, as well as a work of, imagination« (Childs/Tredell 2006:141):

> »She [i.e., Briony Tallis, AC] had read Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* three times and thought that a great transformation was being worked in human nature itself, and that only fiction, *a new type of fiction* [emphasis added by me, AC], could capture the essence of the change. To enter a mind and show it at work […] – this would be an artistic triumph.« (McEwan 2003: 265)

Water becomes the point of reference for Briony in her anticipation of a kind of fiction that would be able to enter a human mind; and just as self-willed waves cannot be held in place, the literary tradition of formal restrictions has to be expanded into a plane whose surface is in constant movement. It is only then that a new form of writing in a ›mode of waves‹ can begin to follow the rhythms that the »violent, black ocean[s]« of reality dictate.[356]

Perowne eventually did find that satisfying »submersion in another element.« (McEwan 2006: 39) But his chosen element is very different from the »cold water« (ibid.) that his champion-swimmer mother favored. It is an element that requires the presence and warmth of another human being: »Sex is a different medium,« Perowne explains, »refracting time and sense, a biological hyperspace as remote from conscious existence as dreams, or as water is from air.« (ibid.: 52) The importance of Perowne's utterly monogamous[357] relationship with his wife Rosalind becomes all the more clear when looking at the specific circumstances of its beginnings.

»Many years ago he fell in love with her in a hospital ward, *at a time of terror* [emphasis added by me, AC].« (McEwan 2006: 24) The terror they were facing back then was »a calamity – certainly an attack on *her* whole way of life.« (ibid.: 41) The rhetoric of 9/11 that drives this statement is quite obvious. In the case of Rosalind, a brain tumor

[356] This formally hybrid way of addressing the world is not uncommon for McEwan. The dramatic five-part structure, for example, is also a feature of his Booker Prize winning novel *Amsterdam* (1998), whose final part – more conventionally, one might say – culminates in the two main characters murdering each other under the cover of consensual suicide.

[357] Sex and love go hand in hand for Perowne, because by some inexplicable »stroke of luck, […] the woman he loves is also his wife.« (McEwan 2006: 39) And due to the binding force of that love, »it's familiarity that excites him more than sexual novelty.« (ibid.: 41)

pressed on her optic nerve and threatened her with blindness. Perowne, in the early stages of his medical career, assisted her in the preparation for the surgery. In turn, the young law student allowed him to witness the beauty of medicine for the very first time: her »beautiful face […] was reassembled without a single disfiguring mark.« (ibid.: 46) It was then that Perowne »was falling in love with a life.« (ibid.) The life of a neurosurgeon, that is. And »[h]e was also, of course, falling in love.« (ibid.) Obviously, the major elements of McEwan's literary aesthetics are assembled in the relationship between Henry Perowne and Rosalind. This is reflected not just in their love's springing from a time of terror that attacked a specific way of life, but also in Rosalind's feelings after the home invasion, as those feelings mirror what McEwan identified as the universal emotional reaction to the September 11 attacks. When Perowne asks her what she felt besides terror, she explains: »You. There was you. […] Still there. After all the years. That's what I hung on to. You.« (ibid.: 278)

Actually, Rosalind's addition of literary aesthetics into this relationship is explicit. Due to her poet father, their marriage placed Perowne's decidedly non-literary life into a context of literature or, more accurately, poetry. It does not matter that a poem's »balanc[ing] itself on the pinprick of the moment« (McEwan 2006: 129) is still a challenge for the progress-driven neurosurgeon, or that »[e]ven a first line can produce a tightness behind his eyes.« (ibid.) The mere fact of having married into a literary family forced Perowne to repeatedly face the incomprehensible. His chain of thought when he finds himself in Rosalind's arms on that Saturday morning reveals that he is at least getting accustomed to the ways of a literary perspective. For when he describes the loving embrace of his wife as »a simple daily consolation, almost too obvious, easy to

forget by daylight« (ibid.: 50), he immediately wonders: »Has a poet ever written it up? Not the single occasion, but its repetition through the years. He'll ask his daughter.« (ibid.) In order to notice the quality of said moment, in order to recognize its core as poetic material (see ibid.: 129), Perowne himself had to balance his perception »on the pinprick of the moment.« He had to take on the role of a poet. For this is the only way, in literature and in life, to identify a universal ›truth‹ within the particular experience – that is, not stopping at »the single occasion,« but instead acknowledging »its repetition through the years.«

However, to ask his daughter Daisy about a matter of poetry appears to be a good idea. Daisy has always held the reins in terms of her father's literary education. The refinement of Perowne's sensibilities (see McEwan 2006: 57) fully depends on »his literate, too literate daughter.« (ibid.: 4) Strikingly, the first literary text that Daisy put on her father's reading list was Franz Kafka's »Metamorphosis.« (see ibid.: 135) Perowne's reception of that text is rather telling, in that it reflects his specific state of being: »He liked the unthinking cruelty of that sister on the final page, riding the tram with her parents to the last stop, stretching her young limbs, ready to begin a sensual life. A transformation he could believe in.« (ibid.: 134–135) Biological development, we learn, is what Henry Perowne puts his faith in.

He is certainly right to believe in biological transformations. For now, it is his daughter who experiences just that, and who is »ready to begin a sensual life.« Even to Perowne, who has difficulties with understanding poems, Daisy's poetry volume proves that »[h]er boat, of whatever size, is launched upon the transatlantic currents.« (McEwan

2006: 209) She is no longer a child, but a young woman who travels along the ups and downs, »the currents,« of adult life. The obvious poetic quality of Perowne's conclusion once more underlines how, in Perowne's life, literature and science – in this case: biology – tend to merge.

Perowne's son Theo adds another kind of artistic depth to his father's life. When he attends his son's band rehearsal and feels the music flood through his body, Perowne's consciousness soars into a realm beyond the real: »he discovers that the song is not in the usual pattern of a twelve-bar blues. There's a middle-section *with an unworldly melody* [emphasis added by me, AC] that rises and falls in semitones.« (McEwan 2006: 175) At the same time, the melody's lyrics encourage the listener to embrace happiness, thus underlining Perowne's general approach to life: »Baby, you can choose despair, / Or you can be happy if you dare. / So let me take you there, / My city square, city square.« (ibid.)

Music allows Perowne to experience aesthetic pleasure even when it does not contain any lyrics at all; while he is working in the operating theater, for example, eighteenth-century works by Johann Sebastian Bach play in the background. (see McEwan 2006: 21) The independence of musical pleasure from the existence of words allows for a different aesthetic experience than the one offered by literature. Still, McEwan claims that there is a deep connection between the two:[358] »Perhaps more than any other art form, music consistently delivers satisfaction and formal perfection that are only ever found in the best poetry.« (quoted in Roberts 2010a: 194)

[358] Music therefore plays an important role in several of McEwan's texts; see, e.g., Friesen 2009. Especially in his Booker Prize novel *Amsterdam* (1998), composing becomes a »metaphor for creativity in its purest sense.« (McEwan, quoted in Khandekar 2008: 177)

So just as the meaning of poetry with its balancing »on the pinprick of the moment« is often far from self-evident, the statement made by Perowne's dementia-stricken mother that day needs an approach that goes beyond the logic of linguistics. Significantly, it is his son's music that enables Perowne to finally understand what his mother articulated. What he first sadly identified as a sign of her irreversible »[m]ental death« (McEwan 2006: 169) suddenly gains meaning: »I can't manage all them plates without a brush, but God will take care of you and see what you're going to get because it's a swimming race. You'll squeeze through somehow.« (ibid.: 171–172) In its inaccessibility, this statement surely makes a poetic gesture. Nevertheless, when Perowne feels himself being swept away by the semitonal movements of the song's chorus, he suddenly »knows what his mother meant. He can go for miles, he feels lifted up.« (ibid.: 177) It is the realm of aesthetics that allows the rational Perowne to embrace a kind of ›religious‹ experience in which »God will take care of you.«

Concluding from these observations, it becomes possible to identify a very specific ›dramatic‹ culmination in the third part of *Saturday* – namely, a culmination of aesthetics. Perowne sums up his aesthetic experience during Theo's band rehearsal as follows:

> »There are these rare moments when musicians together touch something sweeter than they've ever found before in rehearsals or performance, beyond the merely collaborative or technically proficient, when their expression becomes as easy and graceful as friendship or love. This is when they give us a glimpse of what we might be, of our best selves, and of an impossible world in which you give everything you have to others, but lose nothing of yourself.« (McEwan 2006: 176)

With this aesthetic preview of a humanity that would be held together exclusively by friendship and love, Perowne experiences nothing less than a secular epiphany. And this

marks a ›peripety‹ in its own right, even though it is not dictated by dramatic action. Rather, this peripety consists in a glimpse of what has to remain an »impossible world« but can be experienced within the aesthetic realm: »And here it is now, a coherent world, everything fitting at last.« (McEwan 2006: 177)

4.4. New Atheism and Religious Zeal

Ian McEwan identifies himself as an atheist who believes »that no part of [his] consciousness will survive [his] death.« (McEwan 2006b: 36) Nonetheless, he is fully aware that to this day, religious belief plays an important part in the lives of countless people around the globe, and that there is no significant change to be expected in that regard. (see McEwan 2006c: n.p.) Consequently, Perowne hypothesizes that »the human disposition is to believe. And when proved wrong, shift ground. Or have faith, and go on believing« (McEwan 2006: 154) – which leads to a cultural legacy of belief that keeps reproducing itself. »Over time, down through the generations, this may have been the most efficient: just in case, believe.« (ibid.) It is in his state of concern when confronted with the burning plane that Perowne seems to prove his hypothesis himself: »Is the under-carriage down? As he wonders, he also wishes it, or wills it. *A kind of praying* [emphasis added by me, AC]?« (ibid.: 17) Yet the moment passes, and Perowne returns to his defense of rational reasoning. He denies the possibility of being in prayer because »[h]e's asking no one any favours.« (ibid.) With that, Henry Perowne shows himself to be an exemplary representative of the New Atheist Movement.[359]

---

[359] Counting as the ›founding texts‹ of this movement are the following: neuroscience graduate student Sam Harris' *The End of Faith* (2004), philosopher Daniel Dennett's *Breaking the Spell* (2006), evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins' *The God Delusion* (2006), and political journalist Christopher Hitchens' *god is*

One of New Atheism's main accusations against religion is its indisputable potential to create social conflicts. As is to be expected, Perowne, too, observes how differing belief-systems collide. In his immediate environment, it is a Falun Gong couple, »keeping vigil across the road from the Chinese embassy« (McEwan 2006: 123), that reminds him of that reality. When Master Li Hongzhi introduced Falun Gong as an elaborated form of Qigong in 1992, its focus was placed »not on healing or supernormal abilities, but on self-cultivation.« (Lemish 2008: n.p.) Although it could never be documented that the spiritual movement of Falun Gong posed a threat to the ruling communist regime, state persecution followed quickly. (see ibid.) Totalitarian thinking of whatever kind cannot accept concurrent belief systems.

It is telling that McEwan chose to utilize the peaceful practice of Falun Gong in his address of a totalitarian system. In referring to the Falun Gong emblem, McEwan awakens a very specific association in the Western mind; after all, it is a Swastika that lies at the core of said emblem, placed once in the middle of the disk and four times in its outer layer. Even though Li Hongzhi emphasized that this »ceaselessly rotating« (Falundafa n.d.: n.p.) Swastika is not to be confused with the German National Socialists' annexation of the millennia-old »wheel of light« (ibid.), the fylfot cross in Western consciousness is tainted with the cruelties of the Holocaust. It irrevocably became the identifying symbol of an ideology that was no less ›spiritual‹ in its origins than the Swastika it stole from ancient cultures.

---

not Great (2007). (see Bradley/Tate 2010: 1; Wally 2012: 96) In the context of Ian McEwan's writing, the focus of this study will lie on Christopher Hitchens.

It is generally accepted that Germany's National Socialism goes beyond mere technics of political power. (see Hildebrand 2003: VIII) The occult foundations of the National Socialist ideology are indisputable. Not only did Alfred Rosenberg articulate the National Socialist program in an explicitly myth-oriented work;[360] Adolf Hitler himself was also obviously drawn to occultism.[361] Hannah Arendt, along with other commentators on ideology, may have refused to acknowledge a religious layer in twentieth-century German Nazism (see Poewe 2006: 8), but no ideology becomes reality all by itself. For that to happen, a total devotion to the task is needed; and it is highly convincing to argue that »[t]his is[,] where faith comes in.« (Tal 2004: 17)

The many parallels between National Socialist ritualism and the ritualism of religions of redemption (*Erlösungsreligionen*) (see Reiter 1996; Voegelin 2006, 1996), for example, further strengthen the theory that there was more to National Socialism than politics. The spiritual foundations of Nazi Germany have to be taken just as seriously as its leaders' obvious thirst for political power. Consequently, McEwan's reference to the Swastika-symbol not only serves as an illustration of the collision potential of different belief systems, but also emphasizes the inherent totalitarian moment in any ideological edifice – be it politically and/or religiously motivated.

When McEwan addresses conflicts that arise from a situation of contradicting belief systems, he of course does not tread on unknown terrain. Samuel Huntington's prophecy

[360] Namely, in his *The Myth of the Twentieth Century. An Evaluation of the Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontations of Our Age*. Original: *Mythus des XX. Jahrhunderts. Eine Wertung der seelisch-geistigen Gestaltenkämpfe unserer Zeit*, see Piper 2005: 17.
[361] Hitler was, for example, a regular reader of the *Ostara* magazine by Guido List, who as early as 1898 promised his secret occult society the arrival of a leader who would bring about the so-long-desired Germanic world domination. (see Hesemann 2004: 110)

of a looming »clash of civilizations« still rings in the ears of Western society. And while civilizations are made up of various aspects, Huntington identified religion as being the most influential one among them. (see Huntington 1996a, 1996b) In a functionally differentiated society (according to Niklas Luhmann; see Beyer 2006: 3), only religion »claim[s] relevance to virtually anything.« (Beyer 2006: 101) The consequence of this all-encompassing relevance of religion was a re-sacralization of society: »Faith and family, blood and belief, are what people identify with and what they will fight and die for« (Huntington 1996c: 67) – even the New Atheists, in their contrary intention of defending a purely rational thought system, quickly became religiously zealous as well.

Most prominently, perhaps, journalist Gary Wolf labeled their undertakings as a desire to initiate a veritable »war against« that dangerous »curse of faith.« (Wolf 2006: n.p.) Wolf is right in that although the term ›New Atheism‹ does not designate a uniform school of thought (see Wally 2012: 96), the central works of this contemporary revival of the atheist principle do share a common trait. Even if one wants to assign that trait to a legitimate form of passion (see Dawkins 2008: 18–19; 320), it is impossible to overlook that those texts in their passionate vehemence do indeed resemble »something of a philosophical mirror image of the belief system [they] reject[].« (Bradley/Tate 2010: 4)

In an interview with Gary Wolf, Richard Dawkins openly admits to being »quite keen on the politics of persuading people of the virtues of atheism.« (Wolf 2006: n.p.) The ›conversion‹-seeking impetus of Christopher Hitchens' program, on the other hand, is mostly found in the wording of his sentences. Not least when he insists in his *god is not Great. How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007) on the danger posed by »people of faith

[who] are in their different ways planning your and my destruction.« (Hitchens 2007: 13) This linguistic intensity, directly aimed at a ›you,‹ expresses an attack on faith that intends to turn the addressed ›you‹ into a faithful adherant of atheism.

Christopher Hitchens and Ian McEwan were connected by a friendship that lasted several decades. (see Impostato 2009: n.p.; Zalewski 2009: n.p.) So when looking at McEwan's 2007 Stanford University lecture entitled »End of the World Blues,« which was included in Hitchens' essay collection *The Portable Atheist* (2007), both men appear to share various ideas, most prominently the idea of an empty sky: »there will be no one to save us but ourselves« (McEwan 2007a: 365), reads the final conclusion of McEwan's lecture turned essay. Even if there were a God, McEwan explains, the saviors of humankind could still only be human themselves; because, as history illustrated on various occasions, the Godly ›savior‹ in the sky is a »reluctant intervener« (ibid.) in the face of human suffering.

He did not reach his state of atheism easily, McEwan concedes. Rather, he used to »dabble[] around the edges of all kinds of belief.«[362] (quoted in Whitney 2002: n.p.) Eventually, however, the century-old problem of theodicy defeated his doubts and turned him into an atheist. But McEwan does not stop at rejecting the existence of God. In »End of the World Blues, « he even goes so far as to point out that psychiatrists regard intense religiosity as one of the identifying characteristics of psychosis.[363] (see also Bradley/Tate

[362] A closer look at McEwan's earlier works strongly supports this claim of his. Especially the novel *Black Dogs* (1992) emphasizes the contradicting voices of the rational and the mystical that both paved McEwan's path. In writing down his late mother-in-law's memoir, narrator Jeremy presents the clash of two fundamentally different worldviews by way of his in-laws: »Rationalist and mystic, […] scientist and intuitionist, Bernard and June are the extremities, the twin poles along whose slippery axis my own unbelief slithers and never comes to rest.« (McEwan 1999: xxiii)

[363] McEwan confronted this issue already in his 1997 novel *Enduring Love*. As a sufferer of de Clerambault syndrome, which causes the afflicted individuals to believe in a reciprocated love when in fact they are

2010: 17) Following in the footsteps of Sigmund Freud, who linked religion »to an infantile neurosis« (Wally 2012: 108), McEwan, in *Saturday*, also defines the state of being religious as a mentally pathological one. As a consequence, Perowne explicitly draws upon psychiatric terminology to think about religiosity.

While standing at the window and observing the burning plane, Perowne briefly considers the possibility that there is »an external intelligence which wants to show or tell him something of significance.« (McEwan 2006: 16) But such a train of thought would only be relevant to him »[if] [he] were inclined to religious feeling« (ibid.: 16), which he apparently is not, as is textually indicated by the use of the conditional. Within the literary universe of *Saturday*, it is eventually only the author, »with [his] absolute power of deciding outcomes, [who] is also God.« (McEwan 2003: 350) Due to his lack of supernatural inclination, Perowne explains his standing at the window in that exact moment in time as an »arbitrary matter.« (McEwan 2006: 16) He then goes on to mentally articulate that »[t]he primitive thinking of the supernaturally inclined amounts to what his psychiatric colleagues call a problem, or an idea, of reference.« (ibid.) Now that he has drawn directly on the field of psychiatry, his conclusion reads accordingly: at the far end of the spectrum of supernatural thinking, he explains, »like an abandoned temple, lies psychosis.« (ibid.: 17)

On the one side, the »abandoned temple« immediately evokes the picture of a building of religious worship. According to Perowne, however, such a temple only resembles psychosis when it is abandoned. It follows that an ›inhabited‹ temple would not automatically bring about mental derangement. Such a reading implies that McEwan

---

stalking their ›chosen ones,‹ the highly religious character Parry reinforces McEwan's point of view that religiosity and psychosis are situated along the same continuum. (see also Wally 2012: 112)

acknowledges that the content of religious belief does not necessarily lead to human aberration, and that he does not condemn religion in general. In an interview, McEwan confirms this suspicion when he states that religion as such »is a morally neutral force« (quoted in Whitney 2002: n.p.), and that »now and then, people rise up and perform terrible things in its name, just as people perform extraordinarily fine, courageous things in its name.« (ibid.)

On the other side, however, there exists a different kind of temple. Namely, the type of temple Perowne has to deal with on a daily basis, since *anatomical* temples, with their placement in the human skull, are directly connected to the workspace of a neurosurgeon. In this case, psychosis presents itself as an abandonment of reason, whose physical seat is the human brain; which is a reading that is highly consistent with Perowne's favoring of scientific explanations. Consequently, it is more than accurate to identify an affinity to New Atheist thought in *Saturday*. Yet McEwan lets his text unfold around ambiguities that have no place in New Atheist thinking. Therefore, I regard it as highly questionable to classify McEwan as »the leading exponent of the New Atheist novel.« (Bradley/Tate 2010: 12)

Irrespective of their differences, Christopher Hitchens as well as McEwan kept emphasizing that their thought exchange truly was a mutual one. Thus, Hitchens explicitly mentions McEwan in his *god is not Great* in the very beginning, in the form of a paratextual dedication that presents his book as being written »[f]or Ian McEwan.« Such an explicit dedication asks for a further examination of Hitchens' project. His book's title, ›god is not Great,‹ with its peculiar and provocative capitalization, is a direct

counterstatement to the Iraqi flag, which still reads »*Allahu Akbar* – God is great.« (BBC News 2008: n.p.) In the meantime, the three stars on the flag that represented the Ba'ath Party's ideological pillars – ›unity,‹ ›freedom,‹ and ›socialism‹ – have been removed, and the inscription's lettering has been changed into Kufic script so as to no longer resemble Saddam Hussein's handwriting. (see: ibid.) But the dictator's introduction of said religious inscription in the 1990s has not been undone.

Obviously, there is a strong contradiction between Saddam's supposedly secular regime with its focus on a pan-Arab socialism (see Deggerich 2003: n.p.) and his inscribing the Iraqi flag with a religious statement. To fully exclude religion from Saddam's rule remains, indeed, difficult. (see World Net 2006: n.p.) Therefore, Hitchens' book title not only creates an allusion to contemporary Iraq and its flag; Hitchens also seems to present an intentional reference to the Iraq of Saddam Hussein. In so doing, he undeniably supports the upholding of a mental connection that is very prominent – albeit mostly inaccurate – in Western thought: namely, the connection between Iraq, Saddam Hussein, Islamist terrorism, and September 11.[364] McEwan, however, shows himself to be far more differentiated in his approach to religion and terror.

Despite his all-too-human thirst for disastrous news (see McEwan 2006: 154), Perowne remains ambivalent toward the circulating rumor that the plane's »pilots are radical Islamists. One's a Chechen, the other's Algerian.« (ibid.) It does not sound plausible to Perowne that their main goal was to demonstrate that war on an Arab nation would prompt an immediate terrorist reaction. (see ibid.) Even though Perowne experienced

[364] See also Bradley/Tate 2010: 5: »In many ways, […] the single defining political context for the New Atheism was the al-Qaeda terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.«

sheer horror that morning when he saw the burning plane, he still attempts to distinguish between the religion of Islam and extremist Islamic terrorism.

Or so it seems, at least in terms of his initial reaction to the statement of the airport official who seeks to deny the rumor of »a Koran found in the cockpit.« (McEwan 2006: 126) At first, Henry appears to agree that the existence of a Koran in and of itself would not carry any significance, since »[i]t is […] hardly an offence.« (ibid.) With his comment of »[q]uite so« (ibid.), Henry reacts in the affirmative. Yet the underlying tone of his reasoning has to raise doubts about his undivided support: »[t]he secular authority, indifferent to the babel of various gods, will guarantee religious freedom.« (ibid.) The detectable sarcastic layer to these words is further intensified by the fact that Henry at the same time »snaps open his [car's] door« (ibid.), since the act of *snapping* indicates a certain amount of aggression. At the very least, it hints at that undeniable internal paradox of any concept of religious freedom.

McEwan, who declaredly supports people's free choice in regard to their own faith (see McEwan in Whitney 2002: n.p.), points out that »only the secular spirit can guarantee those freedoms and it's the secular spirit that [religions] contest.« (quoted in Smith 2005: 124) Only the secular spirit remains unaffected by the fact that religions, with their general distinction between the believing in-group and the rest of humankind, can never fully embrace the existence of other belief systems while staying true to themselves. Therefore, McEwan is right in his observation that »[a] variety of sky-god worshippers with their numerous, *mutually exclusive* [emphasis added by me, AC] certainties […]

appears to be occupying more and more of the space of public discourse.« (McEwan 2006c: n.p.)

Ironically, though, the public discourse around those two pilots and their alleged religious affiliation crashes. Because eventually, it turns out that the pilots »are not […] Chechens or Algerians, they are not Muslims, they are Christians, though only in name, for they never attend church and own neither a Koran nor a Bible. Above all, they are Russians and proud of the fact.« (McEwan2006: 184) The religious hysteria of Perowne's secular London society is defeated in the very moment its opponents prove to be secular non-church-goers themselves; and with that, »the story has collapsed.« (ibid.) All this illustrates that McEwan's novelistic approach allows for a significantly higher level of fine-tuning than Hitchens' journalistic manifesto.

»[I]n general I feel better, […] and you will feel better too, I guarantee, once you leave hold of the doctrinaire and allow your chainless mind to do its own thinking.« (Hitchens 2007: 153) Irrespective of this very confident statement, Hitchens, too, shows himself to fall victim to a doctrine that keeps his mind in chains. The propagandistic zeal, the basically religious agenda of his genre forces him to misrepresent facts so as to defend his own standpoint; which is hardly classifiable as a form of independent and critical thinking.

This becomes especially graspable when looking at Hitchens' approach to the New Testament. Instead of treating the Bible as a source of an extensive Christian cultural tradition that has to be approached in its own right and way, Hitchens comes to the following conclusion: »Either the Gospels are in some sense literal truth, or the whole

thing is essentially a fraud.« (Hitchens 2007: 120) This is a highly problematic argumentation in the context of sacred texts. Such a statement does not differentiate between a devotional and a historical-critical approach to the Bible. And this is a very basic distinction, considering that it is part of every first-semester divinity school curriculum.

In order to outline his belief that the New Testament is nothing more than a collection of fraudulent texts, Hitchens begins to present the many contradictions that are ingrained in the Gospels. After underlining the contradictory accounts of the life of Jesus, he concludes that the historical Jesus is an invention, that »there was little or no evidence for the life of Jesus« (Hitchens 2007: 127) – at the same time ignoring the long tradition of the quest for the historical Jesus, whose beginnings reach back into the early eighteenth century. (see Johnson 1999: 48) Hitchens accuses Christians of committing the error of »assuming that the four Gospels were in any sense a historical record.« (Hitchens 2007: 111). Granted, it is without a doubt inappropriate to mistake the Gospels for strictly historical sources. Yet Hitchens does exactly the same thing, since it is just as inappropriate to reject the existence of a historical Jesus simply due to the non-historicity of the Gospels.

Furthermore, Hitchens displays a substantial interpretive selectivity when dealing with the scholarly voices he summons to support his case. One of the most striking examples is Hitchens' reference to the theologian Bart Ehrman. It is true that Ehrman concludes in a factual manner that the Gospels »were written decades after the life of Jesus by unknown authors who had inherited their accounts about him from the highly malleable oral tradition.« (Ehrman 2009: 13) But very differently from Hitchens, Ehrman

goes on to acknowledge the legitimacy of the historical-critical method, which allows for the establishment of a historical Jesus, even though that historical Jesus is not identical to the Jesus of faith as portrayed in the Gospels.

Of course, Hitchens' reaction to church-father Tertullian's famous statement *credibile est, quia ineptum est*, which grants believability on the basis of absurdity, is comprehensible: »It is impossible to quarrel seriously with such a view.« (Hitchens 2007: 71) Reason is bound to fail when set up against arguments of faith. Ironically, however, Hitchens illustrates this fact himself in his attempt to demonstrate how rational reasoning and a general form of organized faith clashed as early as 399 BC – namely, in the trial of the Greek philosopher Socrates.

Hitchens confidently declares that »[i]t does not matter at all to me that we have no absolute certainty that Socrates even existed.« (Hitchens 2007: 255) So while he severely criticizes the New Testament for its proclaiming faith in a ›character‹ whose historical existence Hitchens finds doubtful, the application of the same strategy works perfectly fine when said character is Socrates and not Jesus. Philosophy, according to Hitchens, »does not deal in ›revealed‹ wisdom« (ibid.) and therefore does not need to demonstrate the reality of its early representatives. Yet this, too, is an assumption that may be believed or not. Eventually, it is a question of faith, and I am convinced that logical reasoning would not be able to make Hitchens shift his ground.

McEwan once identified »religious zeal, political zeal, [as] a highly destructive force. People who know the answer and are going to impose it on everybody else […] are terrifying people.« (quoted in Whitney 2002: n.p.) Unlike Hitchens, McEwan does not

take on traits of those »terrifying people« himself because his literary medium lets him fully embrace the ambiguities of life. As such, he stays true to his belief that said life does not »organize[] itself around any single principle. It's a religious impulse to only grasp one thing, one explanation.« (quoted in Smith 2005: 127–128)

4.5. A Darwinist Religion

At the fishmonger's, Henry Perowne wonders: »what are the chances of this particular fish, from that shoal, off that continental shelf ending up in the pages, no, on this page of this copy of the *Daily Mirror*? Something just short of infinity to one.« (McEwan 2006: 128) Yet instead of assuming the existence of a higher power that would turn coincidence into a matter of fateful providence (see ibid.), Perowne indulges in the pleasure of such randomness and concludes that »the pickiness of pure chance and physical laws seem[s] like freedom from the scheming of a gloomy god.« (McEwan 2006: 129) Similarly, he does not believe »that an all-knowing supernatural force ha[s] allotted people to their stations in life.« (ibid.: 73–74)

Thus, the »vigour and thoroughness« (McEwan 2006: 73) of the street cleaner he encounters on that Saturday catapult Perowne into an uncomfortable position, since he perceives them as »a quiet indictment.« (ibid.) The futility of that man's never-ending and »underpaid urban-scale housework« (ibid.) evokes not only a feeling of guilt in the privileged observer, but also an awareness of the lack of a reason for their respective fates: »For a vertiginous moment Henry feels himself bound to the other man, as though on a seesaw with him, pinned to an axis that could tip them into each other's life.« (ibid.) Since they are not owed to anything other than chance, the lives of both of these strangers

could have turned out differently; the fact that they did not is, in Perowne's view, owed to the contingency of a world without God.

A society's state of bliss is not shared equally by all its members, and it is that social inequality around which a city's social stratums are organized. Inequality has created sensory strips in the urban landscape that mirror the sensory strip of the human brain, which the neurosurgeon has to circumvent at all costs. Indeed, it still impresses Perowne »[h]ow much time he has spent making routes to avoid these areas, *like bad neighbourhoods in an American city* [emphasis added by me, AC].« (McEwan 2006: 262)

Among the social dramas that unfold on the stage of Fitzroy Square, Perowne also gets to observe the case of two outcasts, a boy and a girl, who fell into the clutches of street drugs. When observing them from his window, he determines that both are in their late teens and imagines that he recognizes traits of Daisy in the girl's face (see McEwan 2006: 58); as soon as »[t]hat connection [is] made, he watches more closely.« (ibid.) Naturally, the doctor's eye is quick to diagnose a drug addiction in the girl's compulsive scratching of herself. But his ability to pinpoint her peculiar behavior by way of a medical diagnosis does not comfort Perowne in any way. His situational analysis is rather disconcerting:

> »It troubles him to consider the powerful currents and fine-tuning that alter fates, […] the accidents of character and circumstance that cause one young woman in Paris to be packing her weekend bag with the bound proof of her first volume of poems before catching the train to a welcoming home in London, and another young woman of the same age be led away by a wheedling boy to a moment's chemical bliss that will bind her as tightly to her misery as an opiate to its mu receptors.« (McEwan 2006: 63–64)

The assumption of »accidents of character and circumstance« contradicts the idea of a grand design, which by definition does not allow for any form of accident. As a consequence, »the powerful currents and fine-tuning that alter fates« cannot be assigned to a Godly creator. In that respect, McEwan lets his protagonist agree with Richard Dawkins, an evolutionary biologist and another leading voice of the New Atheist Movement, who openly articulates a profound suspicion toward the concept of design in the aftermath of Darwin's explication of evolution. (see Dawkins 2008: 139; 2006a: 9; 2006b: 13)

In accordance with Charles Darwin's theory, Perowne supports an understanding of predestination that differs greatly from Calvin's religious version. While contemplating what divides his family »from the various broken figures that haunt the benches« (McEwan 2006: 281), Perowne reasons that it cannot all be based on »class or opportunities – the drunks and junkies come from all kinds of backgrounds. […] Some of the worst wrecks have been privately educated.« (ibid.) It follows that if the reasons for the many inequalities of life are not exclusively due to outward parameters like »class or opportunities,« they have to be found at least partly *within* the individual: »Perowne, the professional reductionist, can't help thinking it's down to invisible folds and kinks of character, written in code, at the level of molecules.« (ibid.)

Interestingly, this view seems to contradict Perowne's earlier socio-political convictions. The fact that Perowne once disagreed with Grammaticus, who used to be a »fan of Mrs. Thatcher« (McEwan 2006: 200), indicates that at some point in his life,

Perowne rejected the Conservative Party's liberal take on economics.[365] (see Jones 2010a: 63) Yet with his focus on genetics, Perowne agrees with the Thatcherian claim that social inequality is an inevitable reality of human existence. (see Dorey 2001: 5) Accordingly, Perowne's contemplations of his society conclude with the observation that »[n]o amount of social justice will cure or disperse this enfeebled army haunting the public places of every town.« (McEwan 2006: 282) Work is then no longer mainly an indication of just social opportunities, but becomes »the ultimate badge of health.« (ibid.: 24; see also Wells 2010: 117)

Even in Perowne's world, destinies are written in advance.[366] But unlike those who believe in a religious form of predestination, the neurosurgeon does not assume such life instructions to be written on the sheets of a Godly game plan. Rather, the individual's specific destiny is ingrained in its every cell; not by way of the flowery words of a scriptural language, but in the form of a genetic code that comprises only four letters: A, C, G, and T. What Henry Perowne, the »professional reductionist« (McEwan 2006: 281), fully embraces here is the concept of biological determinism.

Healthy genes may not be enough to guarantee a person wealth and happiness, but unhealthy ones certainly have the potential to wreck it all. As such, a person's genetic code »claim[s] relevance to virtually anything« (Beyer 2006: 101); and this is a relevance of religious reach. Perowne's opponent, street thug Baxter, fully embodies this concept of a biological determinism. The fact that Baxter's racial identity is left out of how he is

[365] A critique of Thatcher-England can also be found in McEwan's 1987 novel *The Child in Time*, which is »set in an imaginary London of the near future during the reign of an oppressive right-wing government, clearly based on that of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.« (Wells 2010: 18; see also Garrard 2009: 695)

[366] On the implicit parallel between this formulation and Biblical discourse, see also Knapp 2007: 134.

textually presented (see Wells 2010: 112; Wells 2007: 126) has to be evaluated as a distinct emphasis on his fate's gene-dependence. For to illustrate this correlation, along with the various implications that accompany it, is this character's main purpose.

The dramatic consequences of the rather trivial collision between Perowne's silver Mercedes and Baxter's red BMW are already hinted at when the latter is introduced as »a flash of red [that] streaks in across [Perowne's] left peripheral vision« (McEwan 2006: 81), which is a clear parallel to that morning's »fire in the sky.«[367] (ibid.: 13) Just as the First World experienced an intrusion by a profoundly different universe, Perowne's First-World comfort is about to be intruded on by a social sphere that greatly differs from the one he inhabits. Interestingly, it is the fact that Perowne drives an upscale vehicle, a visible sign that he belongs to the upper class of society, which makes the police officer wave him through a street that is, due to the anti-war protest in the background, closed to traffic. Therefore, in the ensuing confrontation between the over- and the under-privileged character, both have a reasonable argument. Perowne's »the rules of the road aren't suspended« (ibid.: 89) is just as valid as Baxter's »I didn't need to be looking, did I? The Tottenham Court Road's closed. You aren't supposed to be there.« (ibid.)

Irrespective of Perowne's non-belonging, however, he immediately finds himself in the midst of a scenario that is dominated by people whose lives embody the raw rules of nature much more strongly than does his usual environment. Tellingly, Baxter, the »short fellow in the black suit« (McEwan 2006: 84), is surrounded by a »general simian air.« (ibid.: 88) His followers – »comatose« (ibid.: 89) Nark and tall Nigel with his »long mournful face of a horse« (ibid.: 84) – are also consistently described in animalistic

[367] See also Wells 2007: 126; Wells 2010: 114.

terms. (see also Wells 2007: 126) Henry Perowne, the neurosurgeon, finds himself in the center of a clash between social spheres. He is trapped in a veritable »urban drama.« (McEwan 2006: 86) The distinctly dramatic nature of this incident becomes all the more clear when, »[a]t the sound of a trumpet, […] the four men turn to watch the march.« (ibid.: 90)

It is in this very moment of their collective choreography that Perowne »suddenly understands« (McEwan 2006: 91) the cause for the many peculiarities he identified in ape-like Baxter, whose distinctive gait (see ibid.: 84) and general restlessness (see ibid.: 88) are complemented by »poor self-control, emotional lability,« and an »explosive temper.« (ibid.: 92) These behavioral traits alone are already »suggestive of reduced levels of GABA among the appropriate binding sites on striatal neurons.« (ibid.) But it is only at the cue of the trumpet that Perowne notices Baxter's inability to change the position of his eyes »from one fixation to another« (ibid.: 91); like a pigeon, it seems, he has to move his whole head to scan the crowd. With the confirmation of Perowne's diagnosis, Baxter comes to illustrate »biological determinism in its purest form.« (ibid.: 94) If one parent has Huntington's Disease, there is a fifty percent likelihood for their children to have it too: »[t]he misfortune lies within a single gene, in an excessive repeat of a single sequence – CAG.« (ibid.)

The group's demand for an horrendous amount of cash »has a boyish, make-believe quality.« (McEwan 2006: 90) But Baxter's attack on Perowne tears down any kind of superiority (see ibid.: 91) the neurosurgeon might have clung to so far: »the blow that's aimed at Perowne's heart and that he dodges only fractionally, lands on his sternum with

colossal force.« (ibid.: 92) Obviously, the threat of physical harm to Perowne is very real. The laws of the street demand that »honour is […] satisfied by a thorough beating« (ibid.: 93–94), and it is in this thoroughly desperate situation that Perowne decides to share the result of his »intellectual game of diagnosis« (ibid.: 91) with Baxter.

By way of this »shameless blackmail« (McEwan 2006: 95), doctor and patient are joined »together […] in a world not of the medical, but of the magical. When you're diseased it is unwise to abuse the shaman.« (ibid.) Perowne is of course aware of the hopelessness of Huntington's Disease. Nonetheless, in his attempt to save himself from Baxter's violence, he plays into that realm of the magical when he offers Baxter a (useless) referral to a colleague of his who probably does not even exist. Somewhere within the human disposition, there is a binding site for hope, whose high receptivity diverts Baxter from his current emotional state long enough for Perowne to leave the stage. In an obvious analogy to the war that is looming in the scene's background, Nark and Nigel walk away, too: »[t]he general has been indecisive, the troops are deserting, the humiliation is complete.« (ibid.: 98)

Even without this final humiliation, however, Baxter's case would be enough to seemingly oppose the mantra that haunts Perowne upon waking on that Saturday morning. At first, the sleepy Perowne cannot situate the sentence he keeps hearing in his head, and suspects the bathroom radio of »play[ing] that same phrase, until he begins to sense a religious content as its significance swells – *there is grandeur in this view of life*, it says, over and again.« (McEwan 2006: 53) But it is not the bathroom radio; instead, Perowne is experiencing »[t]he luxury of being half asleep« and thus of »exploring the fringes of psychosis in safety.« (ibid.: 55) Importantly, this phrase of religious

significance that keeps playing in Perowne's head is taken from the last paragraph of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* (1859).

Once, when Perowne and Daisy walked along a river, »his daughter quoted to him an opening verse by her favourite poet« (McEwan 2006: 54), Philip Larkin: »If I were called in / To construct a religion / I should make use of water.« (ibid.) The four stanzas of Larkin's poem »Water« (1954) underline, above all, the constant movement that is caused by the fluidity of water:

> »If I were called in
> To construct a religion
> I should make use of water.
>
> Going to church
> Would entail a fording
> To dry, different clothes;
>
> My litany would employ
> Images of sousing,
> A furious devout drench,
>
> And I should raise in the east
> A glass of water
> Where any-angled light
> Would congregate endlessly.« (Larkin 1964: 20)

The opening statement of the first stanza is followed by three stanzas that, together, create one long sentence that is mostly structured by commas. Thus, the agitation of water that is captured content-wise finds a formal correlation. The fact that this long sentence ends with the adverb ›endlessly‹ furthermore expresses the internal continuity of the process that is being poetically addressed here. In terms of punctuation, the semicolon at the end of the second stanza is relevant insofar as it is by way of this semicolon that the

poet opens up an opposition between the ›old‹ religion of »[g]oing to church« and his own, new, religion – »[*m*]*y* litany« [emphasis added by me, AC] – that would be based on water and that is elaborated in the poem's final two stanzas.

Like wild water, this religion cannot be imprisoned in a man-made building, and so an adherance to the old ways of religion »[w]ould entail a fording« to dryness. Also overstepping a terminological borderline, this religion pacifies a strong antagonism in that devotion can suddenly be furious, and a »furious […] drench« – by way of an alliteration that is not interrupted by a comma[368] – suddenly devout. The glass of water that is raised by the speaker in the East, and that invites »any-angled light« to its endless congregation, mirrors the sun's reach into all four cardinal directions. Without a doubt, what the lyrical voice in Larkin's poem describes is a religion of nature. Perowne fully embraces this Larkinian pattern when he describes his own religion; for his would be a religion of nature, too. »[I]f he ever got the call« (McEwan 2006: 54), he would make use of evolution:

> »What better creation myth? An unimaginable sweep of time, numberless generations spawning by infinitesimal steps complex living beauty out of inert matter, driven on by the blind furies of random mutation, natural selection and environmental change, with the tragedy of forms continually dying, and lately the wonder of minds emerging and with them morality, love, art, cities – and the unprecedented bonus of this story happening to be demonstrably true.« (McEwan 2006: 54)

Larkin's litany of a »furious devout drench« finds an equivalent in Perowne's »blind furies of random mutation,« whose blindness reflects the poet's liturgical images of an uncontrollable sousing; because a wild overflow of water, too, obeys only the ›rules‹ of randomness. The lifeless drought of institutionalized worship, and thus the »different

[368] As opposed to the alliteration in the second stanza: »dry, different.«

clothes« that are to be worn in church, have no room in either of these two religions. On the contrary: coming from Perowne's approach, »inert matter« is continuously transformed into »complex living beauty,« just as Larkin's religion allows for a congregation that is endless due to its being owed to the laws of life itself.

Based on his sharing Perowne's belief in the Darwinist theory of evolution, Ian McEwan establishes a literary aesthetics in which natural sciences and art merge. (see also Green 2010: 58) He defines us human beings as »the beneficiaries and victims of our nature« (McEwan 2005b: n.p.), and underlines that our »collective nature is still a source of wonder – why else write fiction?« (ibid.) In 2002, the author articulated the driving force behind his literary explorations as follows: »The question is how much our evolutionary past explains us to ourselves. My guess is, more than we previously liked to think, and a little less than the exponents of the ›just so‹ stories of evolutionary psychology would want.« (quoted in Begley 2002: 102) In understanding literature with its profound interest in the human condition as a form of much needed anthropology (see McEwan 2005a: 18), he finds the ways in which »people are similar at least as interesting as the ways in which they vary«[369] (quoted in Begley 2002: 102); and »[t]his is an area in which novelists and biologists should have a lot to say to one another.« (ibid.)

In Henry Perowne's profession, science and literature share the stage of life on a daily basis. Most notably so when the great topics of literature present themselves as

[369] Briony, too, realizes a similarity between human beings and is overwhelmed by the complexity that this fact carries into the social realm: »For example, did her sister really matter to herself, was she as valuable to herself as Briony was? […] If the answer was yes, then the […] social world[] was unbearably complicated, with two billion voices, and everyone's thoughts striving in equal importance and everyone's claim on life as intense, and everyone thinking they were unique, when no one was. One could drown in irrelevance.« (McEwan 2003: 34)

being driven by molecular dynamics: »Who could ever reckon up the damage done to love and friendship and all hopes of happiness by a surfeit or depletion of this or that neurotransmitter?« (McEwan 2006: 92) Yet the parallels between science and literature go beyond the field of psychiatry. Not only does McEwan elaborate on the role of the human imagination and of intuitive hunches in science (see McEwan 2006a: xv), but he also mentions how James Watson once described Rosalind Franklin's spontaneous reaction to the model of the DNA molecule: instantly, »she ›accepted the fact that the structure was too pretty not to be true.‹« (ibid.) Also in science, it follows, aesthetics do have their righteous place.

It is noteworthy that the rational Perowne draws the greatest satisfaction in his work from his »respect[ing] the material world, its limits, and what it can sustain – consciousness, no less. […] If that's worthy of awe, it also deserves curiosity; the actual, not the magical, should be the challenge.« (McEwan 2006: 66) The by-product of this scientific curiosity with its aesthetics of the real is, as McEwan describes it, an optimism that can only be found in the sciences, while the humanities tend to require their intellectuals to be pessimists. (see McEwan in Gormley 2005: 141) The author puts it like this: »Science is an intrinsically optimistic project. You can't be curious and depressed. […] And science is often quite conscious of intellectual pleasure, in a way that the humanities are not.« (McEwan 2007b: n.p.)

The conscious intellectual pleasure for Perowne lies within the wonders of the human brain, as despite »all the recent advances, it's still not known how this well-protected one kilogram or so of cells actually encodes information, how it holds

experiences, memories, dreams and intentions.« (McEwan 2006: 262) Evidently, even by binding the ›more‹ of human nature – which is to say: that part of the human condition that appears to exceed its physicality – back to its cells, it still cannot be grasped. Perowne may agree with his authorial creator that »[t]here is no evidence for an immortal soul« (McEwan 2012: n.p.), but the mystery remains: »Could it ever be explained, how matter becomes conscious?« (McEwan 2006: 262) Perowne strongly believes that one day »the journey will be completed.« (ibid.: 263) And »[t]hat's *the only kind of faith* [emphasis added by me, AC] he has.[370] There's grandeur in this view of life.« (ibid.)

4.6. Empire and the Costs of Invasion

When Henry Perowne buys his fish and sees all those »crabs and lobsters« in their »tangle of warlike body parts,« he rationally concludes: »It's fortunate […] that sea creatures are not adapted to make use of sound waves and have no voice. Otherwise they'd be howling from those crates.« (McEwan 2006: 127) The sea creatures' silence acts as a protective shield that spares the consumers from having to acknowledge their product's suffering. Of course, Perowne is aware that there are pain receptors »in the head and neck of rainbow trout« (ibid.), and he would »never drop a live lobster into the boiling water«; nonetheless, »he's prepared to order one in a restaurant. The trick, […] the key to human […] domination, is to be selective in your mercies.« (ibid.: 128)

It seems that a comparable selectivity is needed when it comes to the ›crates‹ of human war. For warfare's focus on the accomplishment of a mission, on the victorious

[370] Based on this sentence, I do not agree with Graham Hillard's evaluation that »McEwan opens the door to something […] less than faith, perhaps, but at piece with it.« (Hillard 2010: 143) As I see it, McEwan underlines a different kind of faith. At the same time, I do support Matt Ridley's claim that »McEwan's interest in the human mind make[s] him a scientist« (Ridley 2009: viii) – because in this belief system, science provides the foundation.

domination of an opponent, requires that human lives are ventured in a merciless manner. Yet there is a profound difference: Perowne is able to turn his gaze away from the silent torture toward the dead fish, toward the »eviscerated silver forms with their unaccusing stare.« (McEwan 2006: 127) The eviscerated human forms in the military theater, however, always constitute an accusation to those who cause or witness them.

Virginia Woolf's war survivor Septimus exemplarily illustrates this not only by hallucinating that his dead friend Evans is still around (see Woolf 1925: 105) but also by feeling disgusted at his lack of emotion about his friend's death: »He had not cared when Evans was killed; that was worst.« (ibid.: 137) His survivor guilt does not let go of him and will eventually cost his life, since »[h]e had committed an appalling crime and been condemned to death by human nature.« (ibid.: 145) Septimus, who is officially healthy – »Dr. Holmes said there was nothing the matter with him« (Woolf 1925: 34) – is in fact fatally wounded. Military confrontations in the battlefield are not free. The soldiers always have to pay the price for their country's warfare, and it always leaves them injured; if not physically, then by all means psychologically.[371] Perowne displays an awareness of the high emotional costs of war when he reasons that »[i]t's not a visionary age. The streets need to be clean. Let *the unlucky* [emphasis added by me, AC] enlist.« (McEwan 2006: 74)

Henry Perowne, too, leaves the stage injured. His clash with Baxter was nothing less than a warlike encounter, even though the final combat is yet to come. Accordingly, he bases his quick escape on a military technique that is as old as time and that found entrance into

---

[371] Jonathan Shay and other clinicians who work with returning war veterans repeatedly underline that post-traumatic stress *disorder* should in fact be considered an *injury*; see Shay 2002: 4; 149. For more information on the complex nature of combat-induced PTSD, see Figley/Nash 2007.

Sun Tzu's famous treatise *The Art of War*: »If the enemy leaves a door open, you must rush in« (Tzu 2012: 87) – or, in the case of our literary character: rush *out*. Henry Perowne, the neurosurgeon, is not a trained soldier; he »simply doesn't know how to be reckless.« (McEwan 2006: 221) A civilian cannot take up this fight; it needs a warrior, and Perowne is unable to imagine himself to be one. (see ibid.) Nevertheless, he does get wounded, which becomes obvious in his squash game right after the incident. In addition to the ball that creates an oppressive and »echoing rifle-shot crack« (ibid.: 103), Perowne openly annexes military terminology when he feels that he »has *a duty* [emphasis added by me, AC] to others to survive« (ibid.); it is this mutual responsibility among brothers and sisters in arms that holds their units together and keeps them effective as fighting tools.

What Perowne experiences is more than a »mild shock.« (McEwan 2006: 103) At the latest when »unwanted thoughts are shaking his concentration« (ibid.: 106) and the picture »of Baxter in the rear-view mirror« (ibid.) negatively affects his ability to play, the flashback-character of those intrusive thoughts becomes evident. McEwan puts his protagonist through just such a wave of uncontrollable emotional rollercoastering as if it were based on a psychological textbook on PTSD symptoms and the haunting quality of flashbacks, which follow their own unsystematic rules. Suddenly, Perowne is attacked by »a dozen associations. Everything that's happened to him recently occurs to him at once. He's no longer in the present.« (ibid.: 107)

Also exemplarily, he undergoes »gathering self-hatred« (McEwan 2006: 107) when the shamefully experienced helplessness turns into an indication of worthlessness: »It's at moments like these in a game that the essentials of his character are exposed:

narrow, ineffectual, stupid – and morally so.« (ibid.: 108) In accordance with the infamous rage of many war veterans, who had to replace »the emotions of fear or embarrassment or shame with the emotion of anger« (Shay 2002: 64), Perowne eventually »draws his remaining energy from a darkening pool of fury.« (McEwan 2006: 108) In the morning, »Perowne, dressed for combat on court, imagine[d] himself as Saddam, surveying the crowd with satisfaction.« (ibid.: 60) By the afternoon, he has become – by way of empathy turned literature – one of those »unlucky« ones who would ultimately have to pay the price for ridding the dictator of his perceived supremacy.

Ian McEwan's upbringing as an »army brat[]« (McEwan 2002: 36)[372] sensitized him early to the military realm, and it found a definite place in his writing.[373] His military background also made him grasp the real-world consequences of political actions early on. Interestingly, McEwan identifies the 1956 Suez Crisis as his personal epiphany in that regard. Stationed in Libya at the time and placed in an armed camp that was meant to protect British military families, eight-year-old McEwan realized »that political events were real and affected people's lives.« (McEwan, quoted in Malcolm 2002: 1)

The Suez Crisis was a highly significant occurrence in political history because it completed the »transfer of power from the British to the American empire.« (McEwan, quoted in Begley 2002: 98) While Great Britain, accompanied by France and Israel, marched against Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalization of the Suez

[372] For more information on Ian McEwan's childhood as the son of an army sergeant, see Felch/Schmidt 2008: 133; Childs/Tredell 2006: 2; Wells 2010: 22.
[373] In *Atonement*, McEwan also clearly addresses the symptoms of combat PTSD, as becomes obvious in the first sentence of the second part, when Robbie's mind ›goes crazy‹ by focusing on and being haunted by a leg in a tree: »There were horrors enough, but it was the unexpected detail that threw him and afterward would not let him go.« (McEwan 2003: 180)

Canal, Washington had not been informed. For this reason, the United States refused to aid in the operation, which consequently failed. (see Jones 2010a: 317–318) Thus, the Suez Crisis marked »[t]he most serious Cold War crisis in the alliance.« (Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 25) In 2003, however, this earlier crisis found a contemporary equivalent: namely, when the dispute between the United States and Europe over the invasion of Iraq led to a temporary breakdown of transatlantic diplomacy. (see ibid.: 2) Like the Suez Crisis, the Iraq crisis brought about harsh accusations of empire-like behavior on the part of a nation; yet this time, the focal point of the political debates was the United States.

The United States has always been a nation that was built on war, and its military power is what has made it so influential in world politics throughout history. (see also Grossman 2008: 142; Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 24) Naturally, the profound »differences in political culture« (Gordon/Shapiro 2004:56) between the U.S. and Europe caused each party to take a very different stand on the issue of Iraq. The Bush administration was determined to invade Iraq and have the operation of »[s]hock and awe« (NBC News 2003: 1) executed despite the UN's opposition; and this could be nothing less than infuriating to Europe.

On September 20, 2001, George W. Bush had announced that »[e]very nation, in every region, now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists.« (Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 63) Both France and Germany strongly supported Bush's launch of Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) (see ibid.: 79) because the military strike in Afghanistan was largely seen as a justifiable »response to the September 11 attacks.« (Jones 2010b: 87) The war against the ruling Taliban, which had allowed al-

Qaeda to build and sustain terrorist training camps in Afghanistan (see Gannon 2011: xvi; Wildman/Bennis 2010: 69), made sense even to less war-focused European governments.

But the situation was different at the time of Bush's January 29, 2002, State of the Union address. His outlining of an ›axis of evil‹ and the announcement that the U.S. would not »permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons« (Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 66) was mostly met with suspicion by the transatlantic allies. Eventually, Bush's plan to invade Iraq resulted in decisive opposition by the administrations of Jacques Chirac and Gerhard Schröder,[374] as well as the majority of the European public. Not only was Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan about to be sacrificed for Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) (see Zakheim 2011: 1),[375] but also the exact motivation for the United States wanting to invade Iraq and end Saddam Hussein's dictatorship remained unclear.

The rumors, of course, were numerous; and the most popular one from a European point of view was definitely the United States' interest in Iraq's oil reserves. But McEwan, among others, plausibly doubts that oil was the main reason for America's military operation, since the war eventually cost them more money than was ever to be won. (see McEwan in Miller 2005: n.p.) The fact that the United States looks back at a long history

[374] For further information on the difficult political entanglements within Europe that complicated the situation for both Europe and the United States, see Gordon/Shapiro 2004.

[375] Consistent with Afghanistan's reputation for being a ›graveyard of empires‹ (see Wildman/Bennis 2010: 13; Jones 2010b: xxxiv), the American intervention remained unfinished. The resources that were shifted to Iraq (see Gannon 2011: xx) could not be invested in reconstruction and nation-building. (see Zakheim 2011: 227; Jones 2010b: 315) Also, »[t]he US war in Afghanistan has not been able to bring justice to those responsible for September 11« (Wildman/Bennis 2010: 2), as they simply slipped across the border into Pakistan. (see Jones 2010b: 100) It was not until 2011 that Osama bin Laden was found and killed by a Navy SEAL operation in Abbottabad, Pakistan. (see Bergen 2012: 26) So what looked like a promising intervention turned out to be a thirteen-year ordeal with no definite success: »All combat operations led by American forces will cease in summer 2013, when the United States and other NATO forces move to a ›support role‹ whether the Afghan military can secure the country or not.« (Sanger 2012: n.p.)

of rather unstable relationships with and involvement in the Middle East does not simplify the analysis. The administration under president Jimmy Carter, for example, armed, trained, and funded Islamist Mujahideen groups – one of whose leaders was Osama bin Laden – to fight against the Afghan government so as to »weaken Soviet influence in the region.« (Wildman/Bennis 2010: 55) And in the 1980s, under Ronald Reagan, the U.S. supplied the government of Saddam Hussein with various types of weapons to be used in the Iran–Iraq War, in order to create »a counterweight to Iran.« (Atwood 2010: 209)

This earlier connection between Iraq and the U.S., however, did not stop either of them from openly engaging in hostile confrontations with one another. In 1991, the U.S. under President Bush Sr. initiated Operation Desert Storm to stop Iraq from annexing Kuwait in its attempt to unify Greater Arabia against the West. (see Atwood 2010: 219) From then on, UN inspection teams were regularly sent out »to rid the nation of WMD« (Atwood 2010: 222); and this was also when the obstruction of said inspection teams began. The obstruction then led the United States and Great Britain to launch Operation Desert Fox in 1998, which consisted of »four days of air and missile strikes against targets deemed crucial to Saddam Hussein's grip on power«; this was »the largest attack against Iraq since the 1991 Gulf War.« (Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 42) It is noteworthy that just like in 2003, the U.S. had failed to reach consensus in the UN but decided to act nonetheless. (see ibid.) So when the United States, supported by Great Britain under Prime Minister Tony Blair, opened fire on Iraq on March 19, 2003, history seemed to have just repeated itself.

Perowne's attitude toward the invasion of Iraq is excruciatingly ambivalent. (see also Tournes 2009: n.p.) In regard to a possible threat from weapons of mass destruction, he never makes a clear statement, thus illustrating the complexity of the literarily discussed issue. Instead of taking a stand, he muses that Tony Blair »might be sincere and wrong« (McEwan 2006: 143) in his demonstrated belief in Saddam's WMDs. After all, the PM had already been »sincere and wrong« a few years ago: when Henry met him at an art exhibition, Blair mistakenly assumed the neurosurgeon to be one of the artists. (see ibid.: 146)

While UN Chief Inspector Hans Blix reported increasing cooperation from Iraq and thus created the »impression that he's rather undermined the case for war« (McEwan 2006: 4–5), the U.S. persisted in proclaiming a threat from Iraq-based WMDs. In fact, however, there was only one thing certain in terms of the WMD case – namely, that no one could know for sure whether those weapons did or did not exist.[376] Any reasoning for or against their existence tended to be owed to a corresponding political agenda. Daisy, in her passionate anti-war stance, demonstrates how quickly the WMDs could appear as well as vanish as an argument in the course of a political discussion:

> »The speech she gives is a collation of everything she heard in the park. […] [Perowne] hears again the UN's half-million Iraqi dead through famine and bombing, […] the death of the UN, the collapse of the world order if America goes it alone, […] *Saddam backed into a corner unleashing his chemical and biological weapons – if he has them […]* – [emphasis added by me, AC] and when the Americans have invaded, they won't be interested in democracy, they won't spend any money on Iraq, they'll take the oil and build their military bases and run the place like a colony.« (McEwan 2006: 191)

[376] See also Frank P. Harvey, who argues that »everyone was wrong about the larger WMD case, regardless of ideological persuasion.« (Harvey 2012: 191)

In spite of an expression of doubt regarding the existence of WMDs – »if he has them« – Daisy does utilize the possibility of their existence to make her case against war: to militarily force Saddam into a corner would cause him to unleash his chemical weaponry. Of course, Daisy's anti-war arguments as such are valid. The suffering of Iraq's civilian population in the course of an invasion had always been as certain as the suffering of the soldiers who would have to execute the military operation. Nevertheless, her intense focus on the destructiveness of the unilateral approach of the United States is striking. In Daisy's view, the United States would destroy the political world order, cause great suffering for the civilian population without cleaning up their mess, take the oil, and use Iraq as a base for military installations in the Middle East.

Daisy's decidedly anti-American view was indeed a popular one among the European public, as the multitude of mass protests illustrated. Consequently, in the course of their discussion, Perowne easily gets his daughter to change her opinion about the WMDs. With the intention of underlining the United States' unacceptable political behavior, Daisy eventually concludes that »there's nothing linking Iraq to nine eleven, or to Al-Qaeda generally, and *no really scary evidence of WMD* [emphasis added by me, AC].« (McEwan 2006: 196) Again irrespective of the validity of her arguments, Daisy's approach to the WMD case is revealing: from taking the possibility of their existence into account, Daisy changes course toward a rejection of their reality. She does so in order to argumentatively prove the U.S. wrong; in so doing, Daisy Perowne is talking politics.

The squash game between Henry and his American anesthetist colleague Jay Strauss confronts the reader with an anticipation of combat in Iraq, as the friendly opponents »gather themselves for the final battle.« (McEwan 2006: 114) All morning, Perowne has

»been in some form of combat.« (ibid.) The squash court presents itself as a civilian version of the battlefield, with its »clean white walls and red lines« in which the »unarguable rules of gladiatorial combat« (ibid.: 57) are acted out. In addition, the squash game also functions as a literary enactment of the political disagreement between Europe and the United States.

Perowne, who had already »lost last week's game against Jay Strauss« (McEwan 2006: 57) has to admit to himself that »[i]t's pointless pretending not to care about the score.« (ibid.) The result of his emotional involvement is a heated competition that is accompanied by numerous arguments, most of which, notably, are about the game's established rules. In accordance with McEwan's occasional lack of narrative subtlety, Perowne articulates his experience as follows: »They've never had anything like this before. Is it possibly about something else?« (ibid.: 117) This is a rhetorical question; after all, it is certainly no accident that the »completely bald« (ibid.: 102) Jay Strauss, who »works out for more than an hour each day, and looks like a wrestler« (ibid.), resembles the stereotype of the American soldier: »Anxious patients can believe this squat American will lay down his life to spare them pain.« (ibid.) Also, the anesthetist's opinion is, evaluated from a European point of view, thoroughly American:

> »He's a man of untroubled certainties, impatient of talk of diplomacy, weapons of mass destruction, inspection teams, proofs of links with Al-Qaeda and so on. Iraq is a rotten state, a natural ally of terrorists, bound to cause mischief at some point and may as well be taken out now while the U.S. military is feeling perky after Afghanistan. And by taken out, he insists he means liberated and democratized.« (McEwan 2006: 101–102)

Interestingly, whenever he is confronted with his American colleague's pro-war attitude, Perowne, who elsewhere repeatedly seems to lean toward supporting the war himself,

changes his mind: »[w]henever he talks to Jay, Henry finds himself tending towards the anti-war camp.« (McEwan 2006: 102; see also Tournes 2009: n.p.) In arguing that the U.S. military's »feeling perky after Afghanistan« should be utilized to invade the »rotten state« of Iraq, Strauss makes a case for the invasion of Iraq that is totally removed from 9/11 and a terrorist threat. In so doing, the novel's American character is set up to confirm the base assumptions for Daisy's distinct anti-war attitude: »these extremists,« Daisy continues in the discussion with Perowne, »the neocons, have taken over America. Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz. Iraq was always their pet project. Nine eleven was their big chance to talk Bush round.« (McEwan 2006: 196) Indeed, to call Iraq the »pet project« of the neoconservatives does agree with a popular theory about the underlying motivation for the U.S. to invade.

When George W. Bush took office, a group of former officials of his father's administration submitted a manifesto to the new president that aimed at strengthening an American supremacy in the world. The manifesto argues in favor of a »unilateral global hegemony by the world's only superpower« (Atwood 2010: 222); and Iraq is on the list of countries the U.S. needs to gain control over. (see ibid.) Even more tellingly, said manifesto »cautioned that this program could probably not be implemented ›absent a new Pearl Harbor.‹« (ibid.: 224) Just as the Japanese attack on the American military bases in Hawaii in 1941 provided a much-needed reason for the U.S. to enter World War II (see ibid.: 124),[377] it almost became automatic in pro-war statements to claim a connection

[377] Arthur Sulzberger, a publisher of the *New York Times*, wrote in 1941 about Pearl Harbor that when Japan refused to accept an ultimatum along with economic restrictions it could not possibly accept: »We did not go to war because we were attacked at Pearl Harbor. I hold rather that we were attacked at Pearl Harbor because we had gone to war.« (quoted in Atwood 2010: 126)

between the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Saddam Hussein's reign in Iraq.[378] However, this is a connection that has yet to be made convincingly.

With his readiness to change the tendency of his political opinion in order to oppose Jay Strauss, Perowne personifies a dynamic that is highly reminiscent of the broader political debates in the novel's background. For those debates, too, could never quite shake the air of mainly unfolding around questions of power within the transatlantic community. Even worse: be it the distribution of secret letters across the ocean to express support,[379] or the renaming of French fries to ›Freedom fries‹ to take revenge for denied support (see Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 171–172) – at times, the diplomatic crisis over Iraq threatened to reduce a serious conflict to a political circus. And even though Perowne may not be completely sure in terms of his attitude toward the upcoming invasion of Iraq, his opinion is decidedly anti-circus.

The London mass protest, with its »rattles and trumpets, funny hats and rubber masks of politicians – Bush and Blair« (McEwan 2006: 60), is obnoxious in Henry's eyes. The carnival-like cheerfulness of this gathering seems severely out of place to Perowne, who would expect the protesters' implicit support for »continued torture and summary executions, ethnic cleansing and occasional genocide« (ibid.: 69) to bring about an atmosphere of somberness. (see ibid.) Instead, he encounters an atmosphere of First-

[378] In fact, in 2010, »as many as 4 in 10 Americans still believe[d] Saddam Hussein's regime was directly involved« (Razon 2010: n.p.) in 9/11. The anthrax attacks along the East Coast shortly after 9/11 certainly strengthened that perception. (see Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 94)

[379] The Wall Street Journal printed the »Letter of Eight,« which was a statement of support for the United States, signed »by leaders from Britain, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Denmark, Portugal, and the Czech Republic.« (Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 128) Neither Germany nor France had been asked to sign and reacted with anger. (see ibid: 131) A number of Central and Eastern European countries were also irritated because they had been consciously excluded from the undertaking, as well. In response, the »Vilnius 10« submitted their own letter of support. (see ibid.: 132)

World self-importance; and what is true of his author also applies to Perowne: it is the »Not in My Name« banner that appalls him the most because »[i]ts cloying self-regard suggests a bright new world of protest, with the fussy consumers of shampoos and soft drinks demanding to feel good, or nice.« (ibid.: 71; see also McEwan in Miller 2005: n.p.) But the reality of war leaves no room for feeling good or nice. Perowne is well aware of this when he outlines that both going to war as well as not going to war will have consequences:

> »For or against the war on terror, or the war in Iraq; for the termination of an odious tyrant and his crime family, for the ultimate weapons inspection, the opening of torture prisons, locating the mass graves, the chance of liberty and prosperity, and a warning to other despots; or against the bombing of civilians, the inevitable refugees and famine, illegal international action, the wrath of Arab nations and the swelling of Al-Qaeda's ranks.« (McEwan 2006: 185)

There is simply no ›good‹ and ›nice‹ way into this »future [that] no one can read.« (McEwan 2006: 147) Although Perowne understands the protesters' fear of provoking violent anti-Western reactions from Arab nations, it does not make him completely reject the idea of war: »Self-interest is a decent enough case, but Perowne can't feel, as the marchers themselves probably can, that they have an exclusive hold on moral discernment.« (ibid.: 73) He does not believe in being exclusively right; and with that, McEwan novelistically articulates an insurmountable ambivalence toward the Iraq crisis. The author is substantially more ambivalent than he was in his 1983 libretto *Or Shall We Die?*, which was written in the face of an open consideration of a nuclear war, »in which Europe would serve as a battleground for the two major powers.« (McEwan 1983: 7) Back then, McEwan mainly argued for the implementation of the womanly principle of gentleness into politics. But in terms of Iraq, he resists the »religious impulse to only

grasp one thing, one explanation.« (quoted in Smith 2005: 128) The issue is too complex to be solved by any one single formula.

Eventually, and in accordance with what he has identified as the first duty of literature, McEwan lets his protagonist do the only thing that a literary character in a reality of warfare is able to do: Henry Perowne, the neurosurgeon, returns to the principle of empathy. Yet even this is a complicated undertaking because Perowne does not stop at experiencing a soldier's emotional hell in the aftermath of combat; no, in addition to empathizing with the soldiers, he also feels drawn to the other side of this human equation: »Ever since he treated an Iraqi professor of ancient history for an aneurysm, saw his torture scars and listened to his stories, Perowne has had ambivalent or confused and shifting ideas about this coming invasion.« (McEwan 2006: 60–61)

Miri Taleb, a man in his late sixties and a professor in the field of ancient civilizations, has his own particular attitude toward the war in Iraq. As someone who lived and suffered under Saddam's dictatorship, in a country that was »built on oil and blood« (Deggerich 2003: n.p.), Taleb is not concerned with the American motivation for war. Rather, the past that McEwan assigned to this character makes him concentrate on the positive consequences for the Iraqi people: »Now the Americans are coming, perhaps for bad reasons. But Saddam and the Ba'athists will go.« (McEwan 2006: 63) Miri Taleb succeeds in making Perowne empathically think himself into another person once more,[380] since, based on his encounter with the Iraqi professor, Perowne believes the

[380] And this is truly this character's purpose. It therefore indicates a lack of understanding of the applied narrative strategy when Miri Taleb is mockingly reduced to »a star witness for the prosecution in Henry's case for war.« (Bradley/Tate 2010: 30)

humanitarian argument for an invasion to be »the only case worth making.« (ibid.: 68) In actuality, however, no one ever made it in earnest.

Of course, Perowne does realize that Blair's switching from a focus on WMDs to humanitarian reasons after Hans Blix' field report is unconvincing: »A clever point, the only case to make, but it should have been made from the start. Too late now. After Blix it looks tactical.« (McEwan 2006: 182) On the American side, Paul Wolfowitz even went so far as to openly acknowledge that improving the lives of Iraqi citizens was, by itself, »not a reason to put American kids' lives at risk.« (quoted in Gordon/Shapiro 2004: 166) Still, Perowne sticks to his empathy-driven reasoning; and this is also how Henry and Jay find a way to end their squash competition peacefully: they do so by focusing on their shared profession of relieving human suffering.

After mentioning one of their patients, »Perowne says, ›I think we can help her.‹« (McEwan 2006: 119) Strauss picks up on his colleague's attempt at parting in peace, and, »[u]nderstanding him, [he] grimaces, raises a hand in farewell, and the two men go their separate ways.« (ibid.) What this scene underlines is Henry's belief that if a consensus on the issue at hand has to be construed, the construction should be based on morally justifiable humanitarian arguments. If human suffering is to occur no matter what, it should at least occur for the purpose of alleviating human suffering elsewhere. Truly, this is »not a visionary age. […] Let the unlucky enlist.« (ibid.: 74)

With his eventual return to empathy, Perowne lives up to Daisy's expectations of how »an educated person living in […] a mature democracy« (McEwan 2006: 193) should behave: »making guesses about the future is what you do sometimes when you make a

moral choice. It's called thinking through the consequences.« (ibid.) However, Perowne does not pretend to be able to overcome his ambivalence. While Daisy harshly criticizes his indecisiveness, Perowne is set up to take a different route. His is the route of literary aesthetics, which he takes by assigning a very specific value to his point of view: »if he hadn't met and admired the professor, he might have thought differently, less ambivalently, about the coming war.« (ibid.: 72) As it turns out, it is Perowne's ability to empathize that caused his ambivalence regarding the contemporary state of the world. It follows that if empathic imagination is literature's main duty, and that this same empathy leads to an ambivalence that is unable to simplify the complexity of real-world issues, then it becomes literature's main purpose to reflect upon that complexity.

According to McEwan's novelistic outline of a literary aesthetics, it is not literature's responsibility to offer solutions. Rather, its purpose is to provide a stage for »thinking through« a multitude of aspects, thus illuminating ›the abyss‹ of reality; and reality's depth most certainly is abysmal. Once, it was »convenient to think biblically, to believe we're surrounded for our benefit by edible automata on land and sea.« (McEwan 2006: 128) Yet in a time of scientific discoveries, in which scriptural explanations have lost their plausibility, we cannot think like that anymore. Because »[n]ow it turns out that even fish feel pain.« (ibid.) Indeed: »This is the growing complication of the modern condition, the expanding circle of moral sympathy« (ibid.) – and it is also where literature enters the scene.

4.7. Literature's Moral Duty: There's Only Life

Eventually, Perowne gets to finish up his fish stew, with »his mood enhanced by wine and three glasses of champagne on an empty stomach.« (McEwan 2006: 208) This biochemically improved mood marks Perowne's withdrawal into private contentment: »Nothing matters much. Whatever's been troubling him is benignly resolved. The pilots are harmless Russians, Lily is well cared for, Daisy is home with her book, those two million marchers are good-hearted souls, Theo and Chas have written a fine song.« (ibid.) Yet even though it is »statistically improbable that terrorists will murder his family tonight« (ibid.), a terrorist invasion of his home is about to happen. In a world of profound insecurities, the reliability of statistical predictions has dissolved. Perowne's withdrawal into the privacy of his privileged life does not spare him from having to address that other, less privileged, world. Thus, McEwan novelistically articulates a rejection of choosing the private path in the face of public turmoil.

When Baxter and Nigel violently enter his house, holding Rosalind at knife-point, Perowne realizes that what happens on the public stage cannot be dismissed as insignificant. In that moment, everything comes together: »Of course. As Theo said, on the streets there's pride, and here it is, concealing a knife. When anything can happen, everything matters.« (McEwan 2006: 214) Suddenly, »[i]t makes sense. Nearly all the elements of his day are assembled.« (ibid.: 213) Establishing the literary foundation on which the upcoming scenario will be acted out, Perowne again employs the literary technique of empathy: »Perowne tries to see the room through [Baxter's] eyes, as if that might help predict the degree of trouble ahead.« (ibid.) Yet the abundance of wealth he

sees only allows for the hypothesis that »[t]he scale of retribution could be large« (ibid.), thus underlining said technique's inherent potential to fail.

In fact, this family gathering was placed on a literary territory right from the start, in that it was meant to be an opportunity for the two family poets to reconcile, after Grammaticus had accused his granddaughter's first prize-winning poem of unoriginality. In the competitive world of literary invention, the stain of plagiarism is potentially ineradicable;[381] and it was certainly a harsh enough accusation to wound the poets' relationship. Yet Grammaticus' response to her first volume of poetry, *My Saucy Bark*, is enthusiastic (see McEwan 2006: 140), and the expectation is that »[a]t dinner tonight the reconciliation will be sealed.« (ibid.: 141) It follows that when violence enters the Perownes' house, it also steps onto a literary stage; because literature, this setup seems to suggest, is bound to address questions of violence.

Including a hint at the dangers of U.S. unilateralism in relation to Iraq, the Perownes quickly find themselves under the control of their terrorists: »They were overrun and dominated by intruders because they weren't able to communicate and act together.« (McEwan 2006: 238) However, »the weighted curve and compact swell of her belly and the tightness of her small breasts,« indicating that she is »almost beginning her second trimester« (ibid.: 226), eventually prevent Baxter and Nigel from raping Daisy. In consideration of the new life she is carrying, the plan of sexually utilizing Daisy to

[381] Ian McEwan, too, had to suffer the accusation of plagiarism: In regard to *Atonement*, »he was accused of plagiarizing the wartime memoir *No Time for Romance*, published in 1977 by Lucilla Andrews about her experience as a nurse in a London hospital during the Second World War.« (Wells 2010: 26; see also Nicklas 2009a: 13; Alden 2009: 57) However, instead of succumbing to the weight of this accusation, McEwan constructively acknowledges »a point of convergence between the arts and science« – namely, in that both disciplines consist, at their very core, in an »all too human pursuit of originality in the face of total dependence on the achievement of others.« (McEwan 2012: n.p.)

demonstrate power is unacceptable even to the street thugs. Significantly, Baxter's ensuing indecisiveness causes him to combine two of the central ingredients of McEwan's literary aesthetics: driven by the factor ›life,‹ he turns to literature. Noticing her volume of poetry, his »improvised performance« (ibid.: 221) results in Baxter urging Daisy to »[r]ead one. Read out your best poem.« (ibid.: 227)

Because she wants to avoid an increase in the situation's sexual tension through one of her hypererotic poems, Daisy follows her grandfather's advice and chooses »one [she] used to say for [him].« (McEwan 2006: 228) When Daisy begins to recite, the »literary philistine« (Wally 2012: 105) Perowne does notice the unfamiliarity of the lines: »[t]hey are unusually meditative, mellifluous and willfully archaic. She's thrown herself back into another century.« (McEwan 2006: 228) But just like Baxter, with whom he now has something in common for the very first time (see also Knapp 2007: 140), Perowne does not recognize Matthew Arnold[382] in Daisy's words.

With its focus on interpersonal relationships in the face of a retreat of »[t]he Sea of Faith« (Arnold 1908: 226), Arnold's »Dover Beach« (1867) plays right into the novel's major topics. In the last two stanzas, the poem presents a Godless world of »neither joy, nor love, nor light, / Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain« (ibid.: 227), in which »ignorant armies clash by night.« (ibid.) The poem's proposal to »be true / To one another!« (ibid.) strongly resembles McEwan's dictum that in a world where God no longer intervenes, »[t]here is only love.« (McEwan 2001a: n.p.) Strikingly, however, the poem – just like Larkin's »Water,« of which only the opening line is quoted in *Saturday* – is not included in the text itself. Instead, »it is presented only through its momentous

[382] On the references to Matthew Arnold throughout *Saturday*, see Groes 2009b: 109; Head 2007: 182.

impact« (Tournes 2009: n.p.), while it is the protagonist's understanding with which the readers are confronted.

Upon hearing it the first time, Perowne imagines Daisy's to be the narrative voice, and he can see her standing on a terrace, overlooking a beach, watching those melancholy waves that bring »[t]he eternal note of sadness in.« (Arnold 1908: 226) She is joined by her lover, whom Perowne has yet to meet, »and before they kiss she tells him that they must love each other and be faithful, especially now they're having a child.« (McEwan 2006: 229) But when Baxter makes her repeat ›her‹ poem, the scene in Henry's mind has changed. Rather than two lovers on a terrace, there is now a window, and »he sees Baxter standing alone, elbows propped against the sill, listening to the waves ›bring the eternal note of sadness in.‹« (ibid.: 230) Now it is »through Baxter's ears that he hears the sea's ›melancholy, long withdrawing roar.‹« (ibid.) Indeed, the poem »generates […] compassion and empathy in Perowne for Baxter and his plight« (Weidle 2009: 67); by so doing, the poem prompts the literary character Perowne once more to carry out literature's empathic duty.

In realizing the musical dimension of poetic language (see Root 2010: 73), Henry also realizes that »[t]he poem's melodiousness is at odds with its pessimism.« (McEwan 2006: 230) In 2006, McEwan identified »lyric poetry [to] be a kind of happy parallel« to the natural sciences' »expression of wonder at the living and inanimate world that does not have an obvious equivalent in […] cultural studies.« (McEwan 2006a: xvi) In spite of the pessimism that is so prevalent in the humanities (see ibid.), McEwan has always seen that paradox in »any work of art: it will finally have something optimistic in it because it is an

expression of desire or will or energy.« (quoted in Haffenden 1985: 183) Consistent with this claim that there is an inherent optimism in art, Daisy's presentation of »Dover Beach« will eventually lead back to life, since the poem also affects Baxter's state of mind.

Suddenly, he appears elated (see McEwan 2006: 230), making Perowne wonder: »Could it happen, is it within the bounds of the real, that a mere poem of Daisy's could precipitate a mood swing?« (ibid.: 229) As the novel suggests, Baxter's sudden manic hyperactivity, which makes him definitively change his mind about the intended rape of Daisy (see ibid.: 231), does lie within those »bounds of the real.« Ecstatically, Baxter keeps repeating »[y]ou wrote that. You wrote that. […] It's beautiful. And you wrote it.«[383] (ibid.) The human brain, that still not fully understood lump of conscious matter, is part of those »wonders of the real« (ibid.: 66) whose mechanisms cannot yet be reliably predicted.

So at first, it was Daisy's carrying of a new life that made Baxter reach helplessly for her volume of poetry; but now, it is the poem that ignites a hunger for life in Baxter. This »nineteenth-century poet […] touched off in Baxter a yearning he could barely begin to define. That hunger is his claim on life, on a mental existence.« (McEwan 2006: 288) It is also his weakness and will allow for his defeat. When Baxter follows Perowne up the stairs with a childlike »eagerness and trust« (ibid.: 235) so as to collect the nonexistent documents from a nonexistent American clinical trial that Perowne promised

[383] Maria Takolander evaluates this line of events as ironic, as »enacting Arnold's nightmare of working-class anarchy as well as his hopes that literature could help ward off a violent attack on middle-class privilege.« (Takolander 2009: 58) Such a reading – one that assigns direct transformative power to literature – is, however, too simplistic, as my following elaborations will underline.

to get him into, Nigel deserts his commander for the second time. Consequently, Theo and Perowne succeed in overpowering their enemy and push him down the stairs.

The poem certainly did precipitate a mood swing in Baxter, which eventually helped free the Perownes from under his control. Nevertheless, I argue against the notion that this scene is about the »transcendental power of poetry.« (Kosmalska 2011: 272) Also, *Saturday* is considerably more complex than any »fable of the power of fictional representation to […] tone down the violence of the real world.« (Tournes 2009: n.p.) In fact, McEwan himself concedes that »[w]e know in our hearts that the very best art is entirely and splendidly useless.« (McEwan 2005b: n.p.)[384] After all, the poetically initiated transformation remains bound to its literary medium: it is a novelistically presented transformation that happens *within* a novel.

Therefore, it is more plausible to read this episode as an underlining of the unpredictable nature of the subjective aesthetic response. (see Head 2007: 189; see also Takolander 2009: 58) This not only leads back to the human mind with its »wonders of the real« that are, according to McEwan's aesthetic concept, miraculous enough to replace any form of religious faith. But it also emphasizes that in this concept, literature is not equipped to offer definite solutions; which holds true even within the novel, since Perowne's moral ambiguities in regard to Baxter are not resolved through the Arnold poem. On the contrary, »Henry himself is undergoing a shift in sympathies; the sight of the abrasion on Rosalind's neck hardens him. […] [H]is anger grows, until he almost begins to regret the care he routinely gave Baxter after his fall.« (McEwan 2006: 239)

[384] For more information on McEwan's decidedly activist involvement in the feminist and antinuclear movements in the 1970s and 1980s, see Wells 2010: 28.

Yet when Perowne receives the phone call from Jay Strauss wanting him to operate on Baxter, whose fall down the stairs necessitated a trip to the operating theater, he is forced to make a moral choice. So even though he could easily excuse himself from this surgery (see Bennett 2008: 228), he explains to Rosalind: »I have to see this through. I'm responsible.« (McEwan 2006: 245) Perowne's feeling of guilt due to his use of medical knowledge to save himself from Baxter finally needs to be confronted. In spite of Rosalind's assurance that »it wasn't an abuse of authority. They could have killed you« (ibid.: 277), Perowne does not let go of his feeling of responsibility: »If I'd handled things better this morning, perhaps none of this would've happened.« (ibid.: 246) According to McEwan, Perowne lives through a common dilemma of rational individuals: he »tr[ies] to save his own skin, and then start[s] to fret about it – because he's trying to live a moral life.« (quoted in Wells 2010: 130) In addition to a general desire for moral authenticity, however, Perowne also feels »intrigued by [Baxter], by his hopeless situation, and his refusal to give up hope.« (McEwan 2006: 113) Obviously, the lost man's hunger for life deeply touched the privileged man.

It may be true that Perowne's decision to conduct the surgery on Baxter springs from his wish »to atone for his feelings of superiority.« (Puschmann-Nalenz 2009: 200) Henry thought he detected an »accusation of betrayal« (McEwan 2006: 236) in Baxter's eyes while he was falling down the stairs: »He, Henry Perowne, possesses so much; […] and he has […] given nothing to Baxter who has so little that is not wrecked by his defective gene.« (ibid.) But by inventing Baxter as »a special case« (ibid.: 217), as a figure that is doomed by his genetic defect, McEwan also questions the basic distinction

of good vs. evil: »Where there's no God, it's difficult to give much intellectual credence to evil as an organizing principle in human affairs, as a vaguely comprehended supernatural force.« (quoted in Begley 2002: 101) And when evil loses its plausibility as a category of human existence, it is no longer an option to distinguish between ›worthy‹ and ›unworthy‹ life; all that is left is life as such.[385] This generates a responsibility toward life that makes up the foundation of any moral society.

McEwan once reasoned that the fact »[t]hat this span is brief, that consciousness is an accidental gift of blind processes, makes our existence all the more precious and our responsibilities for it all the more profound.« (McEwan 2006b: 36) In the face of a lack of any final supernatural justifications, he concludes that »[w]e may have no purpose at all except to continue.« (McEwan 2010: n.p.) Back in 1987, he even articulated an explicit aesthetics of life:

> »You grow older, you have children, and you want the world to go on, and you want it more and more passionately. You can indulge in all kinds of recklessness in your twenties, but as you get older you do begin to reckon up what you love in the world. It begins to shape itself into – can we call it an aesthetic? – I suppose so.« (McEwan, quoted in Amis 1987: 50)

The upholding of responsibility toward life in a moral society found an exemplary expression in »one of the oldest binding documents in history« (Tyson 2011: n.p.) – namely, in the Hippocratic Oath. In the meantime, the Declaration of Geneva has largely replaced the classical oath of medicine. Nonetheless, the doctor's responsibility of morally justifiable conduct still lies at the foundation of the profession. Developed in the

[385] Johannes Wally outlined the parallels between *Saturday* and Michael Schmidt-Salmon's study *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (*Beyond Good and Evil*, translation by me, AC), which »overtly partakes in the New Atheist discourse.« (Wally 2012: 96)

aftermath of the Nürnberg trials in 1947, the declaration was intended to function »as a reaffirmation of the intrinsic ethic of the medical profession.« (Jones 2006: n.p.)

Strictly speaking, Perowne did violate one of the Geneva Declaration's pledges: »I will not use my medical knowledge to violate […] civil liberties, even under threat« (World Medical Association 2006: n.p.), it reads in the most actual version of the declaration. So in agreeing to operate on Baxter, Perowne essentially returns to the doctor's oath, in that he does not permit any considerations of circumstances »to intervene between [his] duty and [his] patient.« (ibid.) After all, the doctor is required to »make these promises solemnly, freely and upon [their] honour.« (ibid.) Obviously, the human individual is more than »a selfish machine, programmed to do whatever is best for its genes as a whole.« (Dawkins 2006b: 66) As ›moral animals,‹ humans organize their social life according to a different frame of reference.[386] It is the same frame of reference that brings about artifacts of aesthetic expression.

Adhering to the metareflexive setup of *Saturday*, Perowne's operating on Baxter leads again back to literature, in that the operation is »really […] about writing, about making art.« (McEwan, quoted in Smith 2005: 122) After losing himself completely in the task at hand (see McEwan in Remnick 2007: 172) to the extent that »[e]ven his awareness of his own existence has vanished« (McEwan 2006: 266), Perowne is »delivered into a pure present, free of the weight of the past or any anxieties about the future,« and he embraces this »feeling of clarified emptiness, of deep, muted joy.« (ibid.)

[386] See also Bennett 2008: 222: »The novels suggest that rationality alone is insufficient and must be tempered with other forms of thinking and understanding the world.«

Only after this thoroughly aesthetic experience does the surgeon arrive at a mindset that allows him to face the »too many contradictory impulses« (McEwan 2006: 271) he feels in terms of Baxter. He chooses to feel for his patient's pulse, even though this is an unnecessary undertaking; it is »[s]imple, a matter of primal contact. […] In effect, he's holding Baxter's hand while he attempts to sift and order his thoughts and decide precisely what should be done.« (ibid.) However, in doing so, Perowne is far from »Christlike.« (Impostato 2009: n.p.) His ensuing decision not to press charges is not identical to a miraculous healing of the sufferer: »By saving his life, […] Henry also committed Baxter to his torture. Revenge enough.« (McEwan 2006: 288) The artistic experience in the operating theater allowed him »to sift and order his thoughts,« and at the end of his considerations there remains a conclusion that is freed from personal emotions and interests – in that respect, it is a rational one. Even Perowne himself »believe[s] that it's realism: they'll all be diminished by whipping a man on his way to hell.« (ibid.)

Naturally, this is not to be construed as a demand to »forgive« the terrorists by upholding the notion that evil does not exist as a supernatural force in a Godless world. No, Perowne explicitly rejects the aspect of forgiveness because »he's not the one to be granting it anyway.« (McEwan 2006: 288) Also, the idea of evil as a concept may be rejected, but the reality of evil deeds cannot. On the contrary, a moral society is dependent on orienting itself within a framework of right and wrong. McEwan, too, argues that an intrusion of irrationality into a rational world creates a complicated situation: »how do you defeat a vile opponent without becoming a little vile yourself?«

(quoted in Lynn 2006: 144) Perowne's experiences seem to suggest that it cannot be done. Yet his reasoning after the intrusion demonstrates that literature can at least aid in »see[ing] […] through« the consequences.

At Cambridge, they certainly do not teach »the benefits of good marching order.« (McEwan 2003: 249) So the relevant question remains: What do »the poets know about survival? About surviving as a body of men.« (ibid.) Indeed, the most intuitive answer that comes to mind is: not much. The concrete teaching of practical survival skills calls for clear-cut instructions, which literature, as a medium of public discourse, is not equipped to provide. The same is true for the overarching issue of war, since the decision on whether the invasion of Iraq is just or unjust is eventually left to the readers.[387] (see also Kosmalska 2011: 269; Schwalm 2009: 182)

Nevertheless, there is a specificity to literature that constitutes its value; because significantly, it is narratives that shape our human existence. Perowne and Rosalind demonstrate this exemplarily when they discuss and recapitulate their Saturday later that night. The horrific experience turns »into a colourful adventure, a drama of strong wills, inner resources, new qualities of character revealed under pressure.« (McEwan 2006: 276) It turns into a narrative that resembles the many heroic stories from the warzone; thus, it illustrates the accuracy of the observation that »[n]o soldier ever threw himself on a grenade for the laws of thermodynamics, […] but has done so for a story.« (Shay 2002:

[387] While writing his novel *Solar* (2010), McEwan answered the question of what art could do in the context of climate change as follows: »I don't think it can do much. And I don't think it can do much about climate change. I suppose it can reflect the problem and pose the problem in terms that might be useful to people. […] But no, when I'm writing this novel I don't think I'm going to save the world, that's for sure.« (quoted in Roberts 2010a: 191)

242) As such, it is also narratives that grant us at least a glimpse into the wondrous human mind.

Literature may not be able to solve the world's issues, but it does, by way of a morally motivated empathic imagination, present as well as think through various scenarios. Based on this partaking in the public discourse, literature is far from being »politically impotent.« (McEwan 2003: 297) Yet a novel that wants to uphold its literary status cannot provide its readers with »reasoned advocacy« (Crick 2001: 101), which is rightly seen as one of the cornerstones of political writing. Still, like economists, writers are also »taken seriously outside academia.« (ibid.: 103) This is certainly true for McEwan, »whose works have received both popular and critical acclaim.« (Head 2007: 2) It is again Rosalind and Perowne who demonstrate the root of a realistic literature's public relevance, since eventually, »[t]hey can't avoid for much longer the figure of Baxter at the centre of their ordeal – cruel, weak, meaningless, *demanding to be confronted* [emphasis added by me, AC].« (McEwan 2006: 276) Literature may not resolve, but it most certainly confronts.

Perowne's Saturday began by the bedroom window, which is where it also comes to an end. The neurosurgeon's last empathic act consists in summoning up »a middle-aged doctor« (McEwan 2006: 286) from a hundred years ago. (see also Childs/Tredell 2006: 149) If confronted with the horrors of history that lay ahead of him, that doctor »would not believe you.« (McEwan 2006: 286) Of course, this window scene can be read as a final acknowledgement of the general turmoil that humanity has seen over the decades; but it also functions as a reference to a literary work McEwan greatly admires: »I don't

think Joyce wrote anything more beautiful than the ending of ›The Dead.‹« (quoted in Remnick 2007: 170; see also Wally 2012: 103; Groes 2009b: 105)

Indeed, Gabriel Conroy's famous speech during the Misses Morkan's annual Christmas dance is also reminiscent of McEwan's aesthetics as outlined in *Saturday*: »But we are living in a skeptical and, if I may use the phrase, a thought tormented age: and sometimes I fear that this new generation […] will lack those qualities of humanity […] which belonged to an older day.« (Joyce 1993: 364) In kissing Rosalind, at one with his author as well as Matthew Arnold (see Knapp 2007: 141), Perowne returns to those inherently literary »qualities of humanity« when he thinks: »[t]here's always this. […] And then: there's only this. And at last, faintly, falling: this day's over.« (McEwan 2006: 289)

CONCLUSION

»We are not always what we seem, and hardly ever what we dream. Still, I have read, or heard it sung, that unicorns when time was young, could tell the difference 'twixt the two – the false shining and the true, the lips' laugh and the heart's rue.« (Beagle 2008: 40) When Schmendrick the Magician confronts the last unicorn with the myth of the unicorns' omniscience, this also applies to contemporary literature; for it is indeed nothing more than a myth. With their original address of what Friedrich Nietzsche calls »life's optics of perspectivity« (»die Perspektiven-Optik des Lebens,« Nietzsche 1980: 26), the investigated literary texts prove to be far too realistic to turn literature into a container of any kind of ›objective‹ truth and knowledge. Rather, in confronting a multidimensional reality that presents »the false shining and the true« as overlapping states, whose identification oftentimes remains impossible, the literary texts establish themselves in the midst of countless ambiguities that are indicative of our global age. So what I discuss over the course of this dissertation are indeed thoroughly realistic texts that aim at realistically commenting on their respective topics.

In the case of German-Romanian author Herta Müller, this focus on reality becomes obvious in the fact that her texts are – irrespective as well as inclusive of the fictitious aspects that constitute their literary status – lived-through and subsequently re-invented testimonies to the oppressive reality of Nicolae Ceauşescu's communist Romania. And like so many others, this is a reality whose consequences for the individual can be undone neither by abandoning its real-life stage through migration, nor by its reaching a historical

end. As for Chinese-American writer Gish Jen, it is especially her psychological accuracy in describing the experience of migration that allows her texts to embrace the ambiguities of stereotypical either/or categories, with which any act of physically crossing a cultural border inevitably confronts us.

By grounding his literary proposal for the future of humankind in the new millennium on a thoroughly realistic kind of optimism, Swiss author Hugo Loetscher abstains both from creating yet another futuristic utopia and from supporting the Frankfurt School's negative teleology. Rather, the author counters – also through addressing the numerous challenges of everyday interactions in a globalized world – the outdated mode of historico-philosophical speculation with an embrace of intercultural dialogue as the most vital form of contemporary border crossing. In that he thus establishes the need for ongoing negotiations as the only fixed parameter in an otherwise unclear future, Loetscher truly presents his literary proposal as a thoroughly realistic contribution to the social environment it portrays.

Likewise, Swiss author Martin R. Dean's novel displays a profound literary realism – namely, when the author presents identity – especially a multicultural one, whose establishment requires the individual to incorporate multiple cultural borders right into their core – as a concept that asks for continuous re-narration; it cannot be bound to any one simplifying formula. Furthermore, in that he connects the psychological realities of his characters with the highly intricate political history of Trinidad and Tobago, Dean leaves no doubt about the real-world focus of his writing. Even more explicitly, Algerian author Habib Tengour defines »the poetical narrative [a]s the real itself« (Tengour 2012: 280), which causes him to create a narrative that consists, among other things, in a

seamless montage of the French and Maghrebian cultural horizons that contribute to the condition of the post-Civil War Algerian. This immediately turns Tengour's text into a plausible discussion of the process of identity formation in a post-colonial world.

In regard to British author Ian McEwan, the realistic claim of his writing is most obvious in the choice of his topic. Yet by taking on the intricate issue of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, he not only addresses a political topic of indisputable relevance to the international community in the twenty-first century; by writing his novel in present tense, he also grounds deep within the structure of his narrative the actuality of the context on which he literarily comments. Of course, it is also the material nature of his profession as a neuroscientist that forces the protagonist to interact with the material – that is, the real – world every day; and by consistently introducing the readers to the workings of his protagonist's mind, McEwan clearly invites his audience to actively confront said reality, as well – namely, by way of the literary medium.

On the basis of their emphasis on the real, the investigated texts also share a belief in literature's responsibility toward that social reality that not only surrounds it, but to which it also owes its existence. In that »[f]orm permits content to reach its goal« (Tengour 2012: 283), then, this literature is dependent on narrative strategies that succeed at mirroring the core qualities of our contemporary experience. Due to the multidimensional condition of a globalized world-society, this can only be achieved by expanding the traditional mode of linear narration with alternative forms of narration. In Herta Müller and Gish Jen, we are faced with a complex merging of languages, images, and cultural horizons, which creates literary texts of considerable depth. Interestingly, though to a

different extent, this applies to the writing of both authors, even though Herta Müller's literature, unlike that of Gish Jen, remains inaccessible to the superficial and cursory reading called for by economically driven interests in a text's marketability. Habib Tengour's text also draws its originality from presenting us with an overlap of the dimensions of language, culture, and time. Additionally, Tengour's text consistently resists any clear-cut identification as either prose or poetry, and rather establishes its existence at the intersection of the two genres.

Ian McEwan, too, utilizes literary genres in a very original way – namely, in that he creates a novelistic equivalent of the five-act structure of the classical drama. When the protagonist conducts surgery on his opponent in the fifth part, this is where he draws his conclusions about this dramatic day, by way of which he also defines the role of literature in contemporary society; and this is what this deeply metareflexive novel is all about. So the plot eventually does lead to a form of Aristotelian catharsis, even though this ›aesthetic cleansing‹ has to remain a novelistic one: it occurs *after* the fact, by way of the protagonist's narrated thinking. What this narrative strategy suggests is that the world cannot be accurately approached with only one ›pure‹ genre, and that reality does not abandon its complex nature when stepping through its fictitious mirror.

Different genres – »[h]orror and gag and comic strip« (Loetscher 2004: 26) – are also referenced in Hugo Loetscher's novel, whose originality is furthermore evident in the author's highly strategic employment of a fragmentary mode of narration that is grounded in literary ellipses, flashbacks, and previews; by the end of this highly complex accumulation of narrative fragments, the narrative whole is to be reassembled by the readers over the course of their reading. The same holds true for Martin R. Dean's very

extensive novel with its highly intricate plot, which extends into the present at the same time as it extends into the past, so as to eventually, by the end of the last part, offer to the readers an overarching narrative whole.

From this it follows that the investigated texts, in regard to the narrative strategies they employ – and specifically *not* in terms of any presumed line of chronological progression – present themselves as thoroughly ›postmodern.‹ Considering once again that those narrative strategies remain owed to the texts' focus on their thoroughly real social surroundings, this is an understanding of postmodernism that cannot do without claiming its kinship to realism. Inevitably, then, this brings about a peculiar overlap between tradition (realistic narration) and innovation (postmodern texts) already on the level of terminology. At the same time, this peculiarity paves the way for a serious reinvigoration of the discussion on postmodern writing. For in its reality-based re-activation of traditional modes of narration in combination with its employment of innovative narrative modes that grow out of the complexity of its globalized world-environment, this form of postmodern writing generates nothing less than serious literary contributions to contemporary public discourse.

Considering the narrative strategies with which the investigated literary texts address a multitude of real-world topics – out of which multitude this dissertation can only present a small excerpt – the particular role of literature as a medium of discourse in our contemporary society becomes immediately evident. For one thing, literature appears as the only medium that truly can and does »speak of just anything« (Foucault 1972: 216); as a deeply language- and therefore speech-based medium, it presents itself, borrowing

the Foucauldian term, as the ultimate »object of desire« (ibid.) within a world that thrives on discoursive interactions. Moreover, and most importantly, literature consistently undermines »the three great systems of exclusion« (ibid.: 219) that Michel Foucault famously identifies to be »governing discourse.« (ibid.)

The discussed literary texts demonstrate that writers do not refrain from openly using »prohibited words« (Foucault 1972: 219), for instance, even though it remains part of a writer's responsibility to argue in a differentiated way, displaying what Gish Jen catchily describes as political sensitivity. As a matter of fact, literature – as a veritable »philosophy of unveiling« (»philosophie du dévoilement,« Habib Tengour in Yelles 2012: 53) – has always proven to be especially well equipped to address the forbidden, and contemporary postmodern texts also stay true to that literary legacy. In regard to »the division of madness« (Foucault 1972: 219), literature claims a very particular position: for as a highly self-aware medium grounded in inventive acts of the human imagination, literature can afford to keep imagining; that is,, it can afford to ›lie‹ without having to pretend otherwise. This not only makes for its unbreakable integrity, but also grants the literary medium access to virtually any kind of discourse in which it chooses to participate.

As a medium of profound inclusivity, then, literature does not stop at commenting on real-world topics but also actively contributes to the discourse that surrounds those topics; for literature certainly does affect »the way people see themselves.« (Gish Jen, quoted in Lee 2000: 223) In describing the real-world environment that they are seemingly set up just to mirror, literary texts de facto contribute to how *homo narrans* perceives said reality. (see Koschorke 2013: 22; 9) Literature contributes to the

perception and thus creation of reality by way of transforming contingencies into narratives, thereby confirming the Lacanian dictum »that speech constitutes truth.« (Lacan 2006: 209) Contemporary postmodern literature, like unicorns, may still not be equipped to definitively distinguish between »the false shining and the true, the lips' laugh and the heart's rue,« but its narrative condition, which is deeply rooted in a self-aware realistic orientation, certainly allows it to approach this challenge in a genuinely literary – which is to say: thoroughly honest – way.

So it holds true that literature does not present us with answers to those complex questions that inevitably surface in a global world. Yet literature nonetheless acts in the name of a »will to truth« (Foucault 1972: 219) – why else would it need to exist in the first place? As such, it always remains true to the task of reinforcing the simultaneity of various, and oftentimes contradicting, ›truths.‹ Among the chosen texts, it is Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005) that most directly confronts the fact that literature, in its state as a medium of discourse, is not equipped to provide clear-cut instructions on how to live life and make decisions; consequently, any literary text that wants to uphold its fictitious status cannot provide its readers with the partisan advocacy found in political writing.

Nevertheless, the selective readings of this investigation clearly demonstrate that postmodern writers are by no means »hesitant to undertake any political action« (Doležel 2010: 7), and they do not abstain from addressing politically charged topics. As aesthetic contributions to public discourse, postmodern literary texts as I understand them here take their declared responsibility toward the real far too seriously to neglect reality's political dimensions. Even the writers' adherence to a clear distinction between their

personal attitudes and their particular »aesthetic practice« (»pratique esthétique,« Tengour 2012a: 119) is not to be mistaken for political impassivity on the writer's part. It merely indicates that as a non-propagandistic medium, contemporary postmodern literature also takes its condition as a participant in discourse too seriously to succumb to zealous political activism. This constellation of non-political politics – or: political non-politics – is especially evident in Herta Müller. Concurrent with her personal decision not to join the political formation *Aktionsgruppe Banat*, Müller decidedly opposes the master narratives of ideology with a literary aesthetics of untheorized observation; this brings about a veritable micropolitics of antitotalitarianism that does not need to propagandistically call for specific steps of action.

In a comparable way, Hugo Loetscher, over the course of his literarily presented social criticism, leaves no doubt about his personal standpoint in terms of his Swiss home country's more dubious characteristics, such as, for instance, the financial discretion of its banking sector. Yet Loetscher's writing is too subtle to turn into political agitation. Significantly, such a subtle way of literarily demonstrating rather than authoritatively instructing requires the readers to employ an equivalent method in terms of their reading: they are never to forget that they are autonomous individuals who need to independently find their own position in relation to the literary proposal, while not expecting to be presented with easily digestible instructions on how to do so. What working with literary texts thus achieves is to expose readers to the necessity of thinking and arguing critically; a necessity that seems to be increasingly losing its popularity in the contemporary landscape of higher education.

When looking at the current situation of higher education in the United States, there can be observed a striking decline in the interest in literary studies; as a newly »dispensable component« (Kagel 2009: 12) of the global curriculum, the reading and discussion of literary texts increasingly has to make way for the examination of other forms of social reality. This is, to say the least, disquieting. Of course, it is certainly true that literature cannot substantially change people, just as the last unicorn has to explain to Schmendrick that she »cannot turn [him] into something [he is] not. […] [She] cannot turn [him] into a true magician.« (Beagle 2008: 60) This is all the more true in terms of literature, for the endeavor of literary commentary does indeed consist in its having »to say *finally*, what has silently been articulated *deep down*. It must […] say, for the first time, what has already been said, and repeat tirelessly what was, nevertheless, never said.« (Foucault 1972: 221) Irrespective of these limiting – which is to say: text-bound – parameters of literary analysis, it is in having to identify and interpret the argumentation inherent in the literary text that the reader has to apply those precise skills necessary for maneuvering through a world that is driven by discourse. For in such a discoursive environment, it is not primarily factual information that guarantees constructive interactions, but rather a procedural competency in analysis and argumentation; it is strategies of discourse.

Consequently, the unquestionable value of the literary medium, both in and outside of academia, grows directly out of its focus on that discourse-driven reality that it references. Just as Herta Müller continually emphasizes that she does not »owe a single sentence to literature, but to lived experience« (Müller 2011: 113), which in turn constitutes the significance of her literary aesthetics, Gish Jen also eventually comes to undermine her own doubts about the practical usefulness of the writing profession:

namely, in that she, by way of writing, demonstrates how literature in fact mirrors as well as contributes to the thoroughly real processes of cultural negotiation in a global age. And just as Martin R. Dean establishes narration as the basic parameter in any process of identity formation, which presents it as indispensable to our human existence, Habib Tengour likewise reinforces the thoroughly practical, life-oriented, value of literature: the author shows the Tartar character, due to his poetic inclinations, to be an outstandingly perceptive individual who, solely thanks to his poetic core, may stand a chance of someday understanding that »spectacle of the world [that] disgusts him.« (Tengour 2010: VII)

At the latest when Hugo Loetscher has his protagonist admit that in his youth, he used to feed dragons »without ever having seen them« (Loetscher 2004: 307), the author's faith in a real relevance of fiction becomes indisputable. In that he furthermore parallelizes his literary aesthetics with Confucian thought, he also paves the way for moral considerations within the literary medium; for both Loetscher and Confucius confront us with the claim that books play an important part in fostering ›goodness‹ – or human-heartedness (*ren*) – in people. Even though our world is too complex to allow for an application of the always-reductive categories of ›good‹ and ›evil,‹ any moral society is dependent on orienting itself within a framework of right and wrong. Similarly, Ian McEwan also claims that literature is of indispensable value in the fostering of morals: in its ability to enter the mind of other human beings, albeit imagined ones, literature lays the groundwork for empathic imagination; and, as the author puts it himself, »it is at the level of empathy that moral questions begin in fiction.« (quoted in Louvel et al. 1995: 70)

Whereas German idealist Johann Gottlieb Fichte once argued that »the University exists not to teach information but to inculcate the exercise of critical judgment« (Readings 1996: 6), Bill Readings, the late professor of comparative literature at the University of Montréal, is undoubtedly right in observing a shift in academia's (self-)perception in the age of globalization; this shift renders its precise place in society currently unclear. While the general movement away from promoting a »national cultural mission« (ibid.: 3) towards the less-defined and, admittedly, potentially empty concept of ›excellence‹ appears to be an attempt to do justice to academia's increasingly multicultural real-world environment, it seems ironic that Wilhelm von Humboldt's educational ideal of generating autonomous world citizens (*Weltbürger*) should fall victim to that shift as well. Considering, as this dissertation argues, that the reading and discussion of literary texts according to the philological tradition is an ideal means of contributing to that once-valued educational goal of cultural literacy – and, by extension: world-citizenship – it seems just as ironic that literary-studies departments are met with budget cuts and the accusation of not equipping their students with any relevant skills.

In the 1980s and 1990s in the United States, there occurred a development away from German Philology (*Germanistik*) and toward the establishment of the broader field of German studies, which can be understood as an interdisciplinary expansion of its philological predecessor. (see Berman 1989: 160) On the one hand, I wholeheartedly support the expansion of the relatively narrow cultural focus typical of any national literature, and thus strongly argue for an increased venturing into the field of intercultural exchange as manifested in the area of comparative literature. On the other hand, however, it is especially this cultural turn's tendency to devalue the literary results of cultural

production relative to other media – such as film – and disciplines – such as history, sociology, and others – that I find questionable.

In this regard, I even contradict Martin Kagel, who argues for an inclusion of literary analysis into the cultural studies curriculum, as long as it is not permanently established as a central parameter of cultural education. Mainly for two reasons, this argumentation remains unconvincing. For one thing, as is also evidenced by the literary analyses in this investigation, the language-based literary medium is especially well equipped to confront its readers with the basic strategies and processes that shape their reality: namely, with the basic strategies and processes of discourse. Secondly, literature, due to its inherently multidisciplinary condition, does not lose its significance in a multi- and inter-disciplinary curriculum, but rather finds its relevance underlined anew. For even though literature is not set up to provide expert knowledge in particular disciplines, it can nevertheless present us with an idea of reconciliation between all that »which did not come together in terms of science, philosophy and theology«; with its inimitable ability to embrace the many shades of a multidimensional reality, literature could indeed act as the screwdriver that will tighten »the screw […] that makes contact between all the things one was thinking and speculating about.« (Loetscher 2004: 364)

In fact, and in conclusion, contemporary postmodern literature as I define it here possesses three core qualities that make it an indispensable component of any global curriculum that seeks to live up to the real-life usefulness it promises to its ›consumers‹: firstly, contemporary postmodern literature displays a realistic orientation that grounds its relevance in the thoroughly real world which we need to negotiate on a daily basis.

Secondly, it employs innovative forms of narration that not only mirror the multidimensionality of a globalized world-environment, but whose complexity also demands that the readers apply discourse strategies over the course of their reading – the competent application of which is also called for in the ›real‹ world that the literary medium references. Thirdly, literature's multidisciplinary condition allows for the thinking through of syntheses in which reality, in the face of ever-increasing complexities, is forced to replace overarching concepts with myriad areas of expert specialization.

Viewed under this perspective of reasoned analysis, it also becomes evident why any defense of the literary medium is, or at least should be, obsolete. Literature's relevance is and remains obvious to anybody willing to seriously consider it. Of course, it holds true that logical reasoning is hardly equipage enough for successfully tilting at bureaucratic windmills. The future of literary studies is thus currently just as unclear as is the general position of academia in the twenty-first century. Yet considering the narrative progression of real-world contingencies, there is at least one certainty involved: namely, that this is a development whose real-life relevance we cannot elude – for, as Schmendrick the Magician explained to the last unicorn, »[y]ou're in the story with the rest of us now, and you must go with it, whether you will or no.« (Beagle 2008: 151)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

Beagle, Peter S. *The Last Unicorn*. 1968. New York, NY: Penguin Group, 2008.

Berman, Russell A. »Die Literaturwissenschaft und die Debatte um den Postmodernismus.« *Germanistik in den USA. Neue Entwicklungen und Methoden*. Franz Trommler, ed. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1989. 147–164.

Beyer, Peter. *Religions in Global Society.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

Dabydeen, David. »Teaching West Indian Literature in Britain.« *Writers of the Caribbean Diaspora. Shifting Homelands, Travelling Identities.* Eds. Jasbir Jain and Supriya Agarwal. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 2008. 26–43.

Dean, Martin R. *Meine Väter. Roman*. München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003.

— *Der Guayanaknoten. Roman*. München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1994.

Doležel, Lubomír. *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History. The Postmodern Stage*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

Foucault, Michel. »The Discourse on Language.« 1971. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. A. M. Sheridan Smith, transl. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

Frank, Søren. »Four Theses on Migration and Literature.« *Migration and Literature in Contemporary Europe*. Mirjam Gebauer and Pia Schwarz Lausten, eds. München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2010. 39–57.

Jen, Gish. *Typical American. A Novel*. New York, NY: Random House, 1991.

Kagel, Martin. »Introduction.« *The Meaning of Culture. German Studies in the 21st Century*. ibid. and Laura Tate Kagel, eds. Hannover: Wehrhahn Verlag, 2009. 11–29.

Keil-Sagawe, Regina. »›Odysséennes‹ – ou de l'écho féminin dans l'oeuvre de Habib Tengour. Sept esquisses pour un entretien.« *Expressions maghrébines* 11.1 (2012): 117–130.

Koschorke, Albrecht. *Wahrheit und Erfindung. Grundzüge einer Allgemeinen Erzähltheorie*. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2013.

Lacan, Jacques. »The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis.« 1953. *Écrits. The first complete edition in English*. Transl. Bruce Fink, Héloïse Fink, and Russell Grigg. New York / London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. 197–268.

Lee, Rachel. »Gish Jen.« *Words Matter. Conversations with Asian American Writers*. King-Kok Cheung, ed. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000. 215–232.

Loetscher, Hugo. *Die Augen des Mandarin*. 1999. Zürich: Diogenes, 2004.

Louvel, Liliane, Gilles Ménégaldo, and Anne-Laure Fortin. »An Interview with Ian McEwan.« 1995 *Conversations with Ian McEwan*. Roberts, Ryan, ed. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010. 67–78.

McEwan, Ian. *Atonement*. 2001. New York: Anchor Books, 2003.

Müller, Herta. *Immer derselbe Schnee und immer derselbe Onkel*. München: Karl Hanser Verlag, 2011.

— »Die Insel liegt innen – die Grenze liegt außen.« *Der König verneigt sich und tötet*. München: Karl Hanser Verlag, 2003. 160–175.

Nemoianu, Virgil. *Postmodernism & Cultural Identities. Conflicts and Coexistence*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2010.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. »Jenseits von Gut und Böse.« 1886. *Friedrich Nietzsche. Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe, Band 5*. Eds. Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari. Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980. 9–243.

Readings, Bill. *The University in Ruins*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996.

Steger, Manfred B. *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Tengour, Habib. »›Postcolonial‹ Narrative and Identity.« *Exile is my Trade. A Habib Tengour Reader*. Ed. and transl. Pierre Joris. Boston, MA: Black Widow Press, 2012. 278–284.

— »L'ivresse de la muse et l'implacable rougeur de Caïn.« *Dans le Soulèvement Algérie et Retours. Jalons. Essais.* Paris: Éditions de la Différance, 2012. 119–122. [2012a]

— »This Particular Tartar.« Transl. Marilyn Hacker. *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Summer 2010): 122–131. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.vqronline.org/articles/2010/summer/tengour-tartar/‹.

Yelles, Mourad. »›Personne, voilà mon nom.‹ Jeux de masques et fictions identitaires chez Habib Tengour.« *Expressions maghrébines* 11.1 (2012): 43–55.

CHAPTER 1: MIGRATION

MOVING THROUGH IMAGES AND WORDS: HERTA MÜLLER'S *THE PASSPORT* (*DER MENSCH IST EIN GROSSER FASAN AUF DER WELT*, 1986) AND GISH JEN'S *TYPICAL AMERICAN* (1991)

Primary Literary Texts

Celan, Paul. »Todesfuge.« 1948. *celan-projekt.de* n.d. Web. 2 April 2014. ›http://www.celan-projekt.de/todesfuge-deutsch.html‹.

Jen, Gish. »Chin.« *Who's Irish? Stories*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999.

— *Mona in the Promised Land*. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

— *Typical American. A Novel*. New York, NY: Random House, 1991.

Müller, Herta. *Atemschaukel*. 2009. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2011. (2011a)

— *Niederungen. Prosa*. 1984. München: Karl Hanser Verlag, 2010. (2010a)

— *Im Haarknoten wohnt eine Dame*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2000.

— *Heute wär ich mir lieber nicht begegnet*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997.

— *Herztier*. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1994.

— *The Passport*. Martin Chalmers, transl. London: Serpent's Tail, 1989.

— *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*. Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1986.

Non-Fictional Texts by Herta Müller and Gish Jen

Jen, Gish. *Tiger Writing. Art, Culture, and the Interdependent Self*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Müller, Herta. *Immer derselbe Schnee und immer derselbe Onkel*. München: Karl Hanser Verlag, 2011. (2011b)

— *Der König verneigt sich und tötet*. München: Karl Hanser Verlag, 2003.

— »In jeder Sprache sitzen andere Augen.« Müller 2003: 7–39. (2003a)

— »Der König verneigt sich und tötet.« Müller 2003: 40–73. (2003b)

— »Wenn wir schweigen, werden wir unangenehm – wenn wir reden, werden wir lächerlich.« Müller 2003: 74–105. (2003c)

— »Der Fremde Blick.« Müller 2003: 130–150. (2003d)

— »Die Insel liegt innen – die Grenze liegt außen.« Müller 2003: 160–175. (2003e)

— »Dankrede anlässlich der Verleihung der Carl-Zuckmayer-Medaille. Die Chancen waren etwa halb und halb.« *Herta Müller. Eine Würdigung. Carl-Zuckmayer-Medaille des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz.* Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel Verlag, 2003. 21–27. (2003-2)

— *Heimat ist das was gesprochen wird. Rede an die Abiturienten des Jahrgangs 2001.* Blieskastel: Gollenstein, 2001.

— *Der Teufel sitzt im Spiegel. Wie Wahrnehmung sich erfindet*. Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1991.

Interviews and Conversations with the Authors

Haines, Brigid and Margaret Littler. »Gespräch mit Herta Müller.« Haines 1998: 14–24.

Johnson, Sarah Anne. »Gish Jen. Writing off into the Darkness.« *Conversations with American Women Writers.* ibid. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, 2004. 88–95.

Lee, Rachel. »Gish Jen.« *Words Matter. Conversations with Asian American Writers*. King-Kok Cheung, ed. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000. 215–232. (2000a)

Matsukawa, Yuko. »MELUS interview: Gish Jen.« *MELUS* 18.4 (1993). *Academic OneFile*. Web. 15 March 2014. ›http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA14878616&v=2.1&u=tel_a_vanderbilt&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=8c6c081949c5332ada4040e3d2f5d53d‹.

Müller, Herta. *Lebensangst und Worthunger. Im Gespräch mit Michael Lentz. Leipziger Poetikvorlesung.* 2009. Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010. (2010b)

Müller, Wolfgang. »›Poesie ist ja nichts Angenehmes:‹ Gespräch mit Herta Müller.« *Monatshefte* 89.4 (Winter 1997): 468–476. (Müller b: 1997)

Pearlman, Mickey. *Listen to Their Voices. Twenty Interviews with Women Who Write*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1993.

Satz, Martha. »Writing about the things that are dangerous: a conversation with Gish Jen.« *Southwest Review* 78.1 (1993). *Academic OneFile*. Web. 15 March 2014. ›http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA13471926&v=2.1&u=tel_a_vanderbilt&it=r&p=AONE&sw=w&asid=c43ce62d247419e029ccff5acf8f2db3‹.

Secondary Literature on Authors and Texts

Apel, Friedmar. »Schreiben, Trennen. Zur Poetik des eigensinnigen Blicks bei Herta Müller.« Eke 1991: 22–31.

Auffermann, Verena. »Laudatio auf Herta Müller.« *Herta Müller. Eine Würdigung. Carl-Zuckmayer-Medaille des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz.* Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel Verlag, 2003. 11–19.

Bary, Nicole. »Grenze-Entgrenzung in Herta Müllers *Prosaband Der Mensch ist ein grosser Fasan auf der Welt*.« *Germanica* 7 (1990): 115–121.

Bauer, Karin. »Collage and Non-Identity in the Work of Herta Müller.« *Literatur für Leser* 34.2 (2011): 131–144

Beck, Kurt. »Wir ehren Herta Müller.« *Herta Müller. Eine Würdigung. Carl-Zuckmayer-Medaille des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz.* Frankfurt am Main: Brandes & Apsel Verlag, 2003. 7–9.

Benea, Diana. »Identity Debates in and beyond Herta Müller's German and Anglo-American Reception.« Rodica Mihăilă and Dana Mihăilescu, eds. *Romanian Culture in the Global Age.* Bukarest: Editura Universitatii, 2010. 233–250.

Brandt, Bettina, and Valentina Glajar, eds. *Herta Müller: Politics and Aesthetics.* Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013.

Chen, Fu-Jen. »Postmodern Hybridity and Performing Identity in Gish Jen and Rebecca Walker.« *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 50.4 (2009): 377–396.

Chevereşan, Cristina. »Asian-Americans in New York: Two Men's Adventures in Immigrant-Land.« Arcadia 48.1 (2013): 116–134.

Chih-ming, Wang. »Writing on the Slash: Experience, Identification, and Subjectivity in Gish Jen's Novels.« *Sun Yat-sen Journal of Humanities* 13 (2001): 103–117.

Dascălu, Bogdan Mihai. *Held und Welt in Herta Müllers Erzählungen*. Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2004.

Dawidowski, Christian. »Bild-Auflösung: Einheit als Verlust von Ganzheit. Zu Herta Müllers *Niederungen*.« Köhnen 1997: 13–26.

Düppe, Stephan. »Geschicke der Schrift als Strategien subjektiver Ohnmacht. Zu Herta Müllers poetologischen Vorlesungen *Der Teufel sitzt im Spiegel*.« Köhnen 1997: 155–169.

Eddy, Beverley Driver. »›Wir können höchstens mit dem, was wir sehen, etwas zusammenstellen.‹ Herta Müller's Collages.« Brandt/Glajar 2013: 155–183.

Eke, Norbert Otto, ed. *Die erfundene Wahrnehmung. Annäherungen an Herta Müller*. Paderborn: Igel Verlag Wissenschaft, 1991.

— »Augen/Blicke oder: Die Wahrnehmung der Welt in den Bildern. Annäherung an Herta Müller.« ibid. 1991: 7–21. (1991a)

— »›Überall, wo man den Tod gesehen hat.‹ Zeitlichkeit und Tod in der Prosa Herta Müllers. Anmerkungen zu einem Motivzusammenhang.« ibid. 1991: 74–94. (1991b)

— »Herta Müllers Werke im Spiegel der Kritik (1982–1990).« ibid. 1991: 107–130. (1991c)

Feddersen, R. C. »From Story to Novel and Back Again: Gish Jen's Developing Art of Short Fiction.« *Creative and Critical Approaches to the Short Story*. Noel Harold Kalyor, Jr., ed. Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1997.

Glajar, Valentina. »Banat-Swabian, Romanian, and German: Conflicting Identities in Herta Müller's ›Herztier.‹« *Monatshefte* 89.4 (Winter 1997): 521–540.

Grün, Sigrid. *»Fremd in einzelnen Dingen.« Fremdheit und Alterität bei Herta Müller*. Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2010.

Haines, Brigid, ed. *Herta Müller*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1998.

— »›Leben wir im Detail:‹ Herta Müller's Micro-Politics of Resistance.« ibid. 1998: 109–125.

Hoff, Dagmar von. »›Ein Platz für die Moral?‹ Herta Müller, ihre Texte und das poetische Moment.« Haines 1998: 96–108.

Huang, Betsy. »The Redefinition of the ›Typical Chinese‹ in Gish Jen's *Typical American*.« *Hitting Critical Mass* 4.2 (Summer 1997): 61–77.

Köhnen, Ralph, ed. *Der Druck der Erfahrung treibt die Sprache in die Dichtung. Bildlichkeit in Texten Herta Müllers*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997.

— »Vorwort.« ibid. 1997: 7–12. (1997a)

— »Über Gänge. Kinästhetische Bilder in Texten Herta Müllers.« ibid. 1997: 123–138. (1997b)

Lee, Don. »About Gish Jen.« n.d. Web. 30 April 2014. ›http://www.pshares.org/read/article-detail.cfm?intArticleID=4925‹.

Lee, Rachel. »Failed Performances of the Nation in Gish Jen's *Typical American*.« *Navigating Islands and Continents: Conversations and Contestations in and around the Pacific. Selected Essays*. Cynthia Franklin, Ruth Hsu, and Suzanne Kosanke, eds. Honolulu, Hawai'i: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000. 63–79. (2000b)

Lee, Robert A. »Imagined Cities of China: Timothy Mo's London, Sky Lee's Vancouver, Fae Myenne Ng's San Francisco and Gish Jen's New York.« *Hitting critical mass* 4.1 (1996): 103–119.

— »Eat a Bowl of Tea: Asian America in the Novels of Gish Jen.« *Yearbook of English Studies* 24 (1994): 263–280.

Mallet, Michel. »Dort wo die Zeit stehenbleibt: (Im)mobile Identities in Herta Müller's *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*.« Born, Erik, and Yael Almog, eds. *Neighbors and Neighborhoods: Living Together in the German-Speaking World*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012. 148–165.

Malouf, David. »Herta Müller's Collage-Poems.« *HEAT magazine* 15 (2000): 179–182.

Marven, Lyn. »›So fremd war das Gebilde:‹ The Interaction between Visual and Verbal in Herta Müller's Prose and Collages.« Julian Preece, Frank Finlay, Ruth J. Owen, eds. *New German Literature. Life-writing and dialogue with the arts*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007. 123–141.

— *Body and Narrative in Contemporary Literatures in German. Herta Müller, Libuše Moníková, and Kerstin Hensel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005. (2005a)

— »›In allem ist der Riss:‹ Trauma, Fragmentation, and the Body in Herta Müller's Prose and Collages.« *The Modern Language Review* 100.2 (April 2005): 396–411. (2005b)

Midgley, David. »Remembered Things: The Representation of Memory and Separation in *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan auf der Welt*.« Haines 1998: 25–35.

Mihăilă, Rodica. »Questions of Identity in the Globalizing World. The Case of Herta Müller's Novel Prize.« ibid. and Dana Mihăilescu, eds. *Romanian Culture in the Global Age*. Bukarest: Editura Universitatii, 2010. 49–60.

Partridge, Jeffrey F. L. »Beyond Multicultural. Cultural Hybridity in the Novels of Gish Jen.« *Beyond Literary Chinatown*. ibid. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2007. 165–190.

Porter, Anna. »The Lonely Passion of Herta Müller.« *Queen's Quarterly* 117.4 (Winter 2010): 489–495.

Roberg, Thomas. »Bildlichkeit und verschwiegener Sinn in Herta Müllers Erzählung *Der Mensch ist ein großer Fasan in der Welt*.« Köhnen 1997: 27–42.

Rogozan, Mihaela. »Spuren der Grenze in Herta Müllers Diskurs des Alleinseins.« *Caietele Echinox* 19 (2010): 250–258.

Rüther, Günther. *Literatur und Politik. Ein deutsches Verhängnis?* Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013.

Schau, Astrid. *Leben ohne Grund. Konstruktion kultureller Identität bei Werner Söllner, Rolf Bossert und Herta Müller*. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2003.

Smith, Wendy. »Gish Jen: ›The book that hormones wrote.‹« *Publishers Weekly*. June 7, 1999. 59–60.

Spiridon, Olivia. »From Fact to Fiction. Herta Müller's *Atemschaukel*.« Brandt/Glajar 2013: 131–152.

Stamm, Ulrike. »Ästhetik der Befremdung und die Logik der kindlichen Wahrnehmung im Werk Herta Müllers.« Ernest W. B. Hess-Lüttich, Corinna Albrecht, Andrea Bogner, eds. *Re-Visionen. Kulturwissenschaftliche Herausforderungen interkultureller Germanistik.* Frankfurt am Main et al.: Peter Lang, 2012. 93–105.

Stoekl, Allan. »Herta Müller. Writing and Betrayal.« Brandt/Glajar 2013: 15–19.

Tang, Weimin. »Translating and Transforming the American Dream: Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* and Gish Jen's *Typical American*.« *China Abroad*. Elaine Yee Lin Ho, and Julia Kuehn, eds. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2009. 123–137.

TuSmith, Bonnie. »Success Chinese American Style: Gish Jen's *Typical American*.« *Proteus: a Journal of Ideas* 11.2 (1994): 21–26.

Wang, Chih-ming. »›An Identity Switch‹: A Critique of Multiculturalism in Gish Jen's *Mona in the Promised Land*.« Brada-Williams/Chow 2004: 139–154.

— »›An Onstage Costume Change:‹ Modernity and Immigrant Experience in Gish Jen's *Typical American*.« *NTU Studies in Language and Literature* 11 (December 2002): 71–96.

White, John J. »›Die Einzelheiten und das Ganze:‹ Herta Müller and Totalitarianism.« Haines 1998: 75–95.

Xiaojing, Zhou. »Becoming Americans: Gish Jen's *Typical American*.« *The Immigrant Experience in North American Literature. Carving Out a Niche*. Katherine B. Payant, and Toby Rose, eds. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999. 151–163.

Resources on Theoretical, Socio-Political, and Historical Contexts

Arendt, Hannah. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. 1950. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1976.

Benz, Wolfgang, and Brigitte Mihok. »Vorwort.« *Holocaust an der Peripherie. Judenpolitik und Judenmord in Rumänien und Transnistrien 1940–1944*. ibid., eds. Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2009. 9–10.

Benz, Wolfgang. »Rumänien und der Holocaust.« ibid./Mihok 2009: 11–30.

Binder, David. »The Cult of Ceausescu.« *nytimes.com* 30 November 1986. Web. 10 March 2014. ›http://www.nytimes.com/1986/11/30/magazine/the-cult-of-ceausescu.html‹.

Blair, John G. »Asian American Writing as Culture Studies: The Difference that Distance Makes.« *Hitting critical mass* 4.1 (1996): 27–37.

Böhm, Johann. *Nationalsozialistische Indoktrination der Deutschen in Rumänien 1932–1944*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008.

— *Hitlers Vasallen der Deutschen Volksgruppe in Rumänien vor und nach 1945.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2006.

Brada-Williams, Noelle, and Karen Chow, eds. *Crossing Oceans. Reconfiguring American Literary Studies in the Pacific Rim.* Noelle Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2004.

Ciuhandu, Gheorghe. »Romania: From Revolution to European Integration.« n.d. Web. 10 March 2014. ›http://www.ii.umich.edu/UMICH/ces/Home/Resources/Michigan Paper Series/Ciuhandu_Romania_from_Revolution.pdf‹.

Deletant, Dennis. *Ceauşescu and the Securitate. Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965–1989.* Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995.

Espiritu, Yen Le. *Asian American Women and Men. Labor, Laws, and Love*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1997.

Feng, Pin-chia. *Diasporic Representations. Reading Chinese American Women's Fiction*. Berlin: LIT Verlag Dr. W. Hopf, 2010.

Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography*. 1793. Web. 10 May 2014. ›http://www.ushistory.org/franklin/autobiography/page38.htm‹.

Fugita, Stephen S. »Asian American Studies: Contemporary Social Science Views.« Ng/Yung/ibid./Kim 1994: 125–130.

Gebauer, Mirjam and Pia Schwarz Lausten. »Migration Literature: Europe in Transition.« *Migration and Literature in Contemporary Europe*. ibid., eds. München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2010. 1–8.

Ghermani, Dionisie. »Die Rumänische Kommunistische Partei.« Grothusen 1977: 11–41.

Ghymn, Esther Mikyung. *Images of Asian American Women by Asian American Women Writers.* New York, NY: Peter Lang, 1995.

Goldschmidt, Georges-Arthur. *Die Faust im Mund. Eine Annäherung*. Brigitte Große, transl. Zürich: Ammann Verlag, 2008.

Grothusen, Klaus-Detlev, ed. *Südosteuropa-Handbuch II: Rumänien*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977.

— »Vorwort.« ibid. 1977: 5–7.

Kifner, John. »Upheaval in the East; Army Executes Ceausescu and Wife for ›Genocide‹ Role, Bucharest Says.« *nytimes.com* 26 December 1989. Web. 10 March 2014. ›http://www.nytimes.com/1989/12/26/world/upheaval-east-army-executes-ceausescu-wife-for-genocide-role-bucharest-says.html‹.

Kim, Elaine H. »Asian American Literature.« Ng/Yung/Fugita/ibid. 1994: 207–209.

Krzyzanowski, Michal, and Ruth Wodak. »Multiple Identities, Migration and Belonging: ›Voices of Migrants.‹« *Identity Trouble. Critical Discourse and Contested Identities*. Carmen Rosa Caldas-Coulthard, and Rick Iedema, eds. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 95–119.

Lim, Shirley Geok-Lin. »When the West is One: Undoing and Re-Doing the Hegemony of U.S. Culture in Diasporic Writing by Chinese American Women.« *Cahiers Charles V: Lire En Amérique* 1992: 129–138.

López, Ferdinand M. »Rice Talk: Discoursing Asian American Literature.« *Unitas: a Quarterly for the Arts and Sciences* 76.1 (2003): 76–97.

Madsen, Deborah L. »Artefact, Commodity, Fetish: The Aesthetic Turn in Chinese American Literary Study.« *Wen pu xi* 2006: 185–197.

Mayer, Franz. »Staat – Verfassung – Recht – Verwaltung.« Grothusen 1977: 42–197.

McNeil, Donald G. Jr. »Romania's Revolution of 1989: An Enduring Enigma.« *nytimes.com* 31 December 1999. Web. 10 March 2014. ›http://www.nytimes.com/1999/12/31/world/romania-s-revolution-of-1989-an-enduring-enigma.html‹.

Milata, Paul. *Zwischen Hitler, Stalin und Antonescu. Rumäniendeutsche in der Waffen-SS.* Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2007.

Ng, Franklin, Judy Yung, Stephen S. Fugita, Elaine H. Kim, eds. *New Visions in Asian American Studies. Diversity, Community, Power.* Pullman, WA: Washington State University Press, 1994.

Novas, Himilce, Lan Cao, and Rosemary Silva. *Everything You Need to Know about Asian-American History*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2004.

Olaru, Stejărel. »The Communist Regime and its Legacy in Romania.« *Contemporary History. Romania. A Guide through Archives, Research Institutions, Libraries, Societies, Museums and Memorial Places*. ibid. and Georg Herbstritt, eds. Berlin/Bukarest: Stiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur, 2004. 11–49.

Packi, Elisabeth. »Das Banat und die Banater Schwaben.« 2002. Web. 10 March 2014. ›http://www.kulturraum-banat.de/Banat/Banater-Schwaben/Banater-Schwaben.html‹.

Perkins, Dorothy, ed. *Encyclopedia of China. The Essential Reference to China, Its History and Culture.* New York: Roundtable Press, 1999.

Powell, Jim. »Benjamin Franklin. The Man Who Invented the American Dream.« 1 April 1997. Web. 10 May 2014. ›http://www.fee.org/the_freeman/detail/Benjamin-franklin-the-man-who-invented-the-american-dream‹.

Ronneberger, Franz. »Sozialstruktur.« Grothusen 1977: 413–425.

Shu, Yuan. »Globalization and ›Asian Values:‹ Teaching and Theorizing Asian American Literature.« *College Literature* 32.1 (Winter 2005): 86–102.

Vensky, Hellmuth. »Das Ende der Ceauşescu-Herrschaft. Die blutigste Episode der Wendezeit.« *zeit.de* 15 December 2009. Web. 1 March 2014. ›http://www.zeit.de/wissen/geschichte/2009-12/Ceausescu-diktatur-rumaenien/seite-2‹.

Wong, Sau-ling C. »When Asian American Literature Leaves ›Home:‹ On Internationalizing Asian American Literary Studies.« Brada-Williams/Chow 2004: 29–40.

Yang, Lingyan. »Theorizing Asian America: On Asian American and Postcolonial Asian Diasporic Women Intellectuals.« *Journal of Asian American Studies* 5.2 (June 2002): 139–178.

CHAPTER 2: INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

COMMUNICATION ACROSS SPACE AND TIME IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM: HUGO LOETSCHER'S *THE MANDARIN'S EYES* (*DIE AUGEN DES MANDARIN*, 1999)

Primary Literary Texts

Loetscher, Hugo. *Der Buckel. Geschichten*. 2002. Zürich: Diogenes, 2004. (2004a)

— *Die Augen des Mandarin*. 1999. Zürich: Diogenes, 2004. (2004b)

— *Die Papiere des Immunen*. 1986. Zürich: Diogenes, 1988. (1988a)

— *Der Waschküchenschlüssel oder Was – wenn Gott Schweizer wäre*. 1983. Zürich: Diogenes, 1988. (1988c)

— *Der Immune*. 1975. Zürich: Diogenes, 1988. (1988b)

— *Noah. Roman einer Konjunktur*. 1967. Zürich: Diogenes, 1995.

— *Die Kranzflechterin*. 1964. Zürich: Diogenes, 1989.

Rosendorfer, Herbert. *Briefe in die chinesische Vergangenheit. Roman.* 1983. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009.

Wells, H. G. *The Time Machine*. 1895. New York: Random House, 2003.

Non-Literary Texts by Hugo Loetscher

»Literatur und Journalismus.« *Für den Tag schreiben. Journalismus und Literatur im Zeitungsland Schweiz. Eine Anthologie*. Ed. Charles Linsmayer. Zürich: Weltwoche-ABC-Verlag, 1999. 11–23. (1999a)

»António Vieira – Porträt eines Gewissens.« *Die Predigt des heiligen Antonius an die Fische. Übersetzt von Georges Güntert.* António Vieira. Zürich: Diogenes, 1994. 7–67.

Vom Erzählen erzählen. Poetikvorlesungen. Mit Einführungen von Wolfgang Frühwald und Gonçalo Vilas-Boas. 1988. Zürich: Diogenes, 1999. (1999b)

»Das Weiss des Papiers.« *Die Kirchen der Dichter. Wo Literatur zum Bekenntnis wird.* Ed. Hanno Helbling. München/Wien: Hanser, 1987. 33–41

Secondary Literature on Hugo Loetscher and *The Mandarin's Eyes*

Agossavi, Simplice. *Fremdhermeneutik in der zeitgenössischen deutschen Literatur. An Beispielen von Uwe Timm, Gerhard Polt, Urs Widmer, Sibylle Knauss, Wolfgang Lange und Hans Christoph Buch*. St. Ingbert: Röhrig, 2003.

Altwegg, Jürg. »Der Mensch lebt noch im Holozän. Evolutionsroman: Hugo Loetschers ›Die Augen des Mandarin‹.« *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 4 December 2000. Web. 31 July 2013. ›www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/rezensionen/belletristik/rezension-belletristik-der-mensch-lebt-noch-im-holozaen-113123.html.‹

Bhatti, Anil. »Für Hugo Loetscher, vom Rande aus geschrieben.« Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 138–152.

De Weck, Roger. »Lust des Erzählens, Zucht des Erzählens.« Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 52–63.

Dewulf, Jeroen, and Rosemarie Zeller, eds. *In alle Richtungen gehen. Reden und Aufsätze über Hugo Loetscher*. Zürich: Diogenes, 2005.

Dewulf, Jeroen. »Transkulturelle Neujahrsgrüsse. Globalisierung, Hybridität und Postmoderne im Werk von Hugo Loetscher.« Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 163–182.

— *Hugo Loetscher und die »portugiesischsprachige Welt«. Werdegang eines literarischen Mulatten*. Bern: Peter Lang, 1999.

Frühwald, Wolfgang. »Am Anfang aller Entdeckungen.« *Vom Erzählen erzählen. Poetikvorlesungen.* 1988. Hugo Loetscher. Zürich: Diogenes, 1999. 35–46.

Lützeler, Paul Michael. »Deutschsprachige Literatur über die ›Dritte Welt‹: Hugo Loetscher im Kontext.« Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 153–162.

Moser, Samuel. »Der perplexe Chinese.« Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 410–413.

Sabalius, Romey. *Die Romane Hugo Loetschers im Spannungsfeld von Fremde und Vertrautheit*. New York / Bern: Peter Lang, 1995.

Schafroth, Heinz. »Hommage für den Mandarin.« Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 407–409.

Siegrist, Christoph. »Literarische Möglichkeitsräume.« *In alle Richtungen gehen. Reden und Aufsätze über Hugo Loetscher.* Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 387–406.

Stäuble, Eduard. »Ein Mann des Wortes.« Dewulf/Zeller 2005: 267–270.

Vilas-Boas, Gonçalo. »Mit den Augen von Past die Weltgeschichte erleben. Zum Roman ›Die Augen des Mandarin‹ von Hugo Loetscher.« *Perspektivensuche. Zur Darstellung von Zeitgeschichte in deutschsprachiger Gegenwartsliteratur.* Ed. Edgar Platen. München: Iudicium, 2002. 197–211.

Zeller, Rosmarie. »Der unzeitgemässe Zeitgemässe.« *Schweizer Monatshefte* 2 (2005): 40–42.

— »Ein Intellektueller als Grenzgänger. Zu Hugo Loetschers ›Immunen‹.« *Germanica* 7 (1990): 67–76.

Resources on Theoretical, Philosophical, Socio-Political, and Religious Contexts

Adorno, Theodor W. *Negative Dialektik. Jargon der Eigentlichkeit*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973.

Agamben, Giorgio. *The Time That Remains. A Commentary on the Letter to the Romans. Translated by Patricia Dailey*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Ames, Roger T. »The Confucian Worldview: Uncommon Assumptions, Common Misconceptions.« *Asian Texts – Asian Contexts. Encounters with Asian Philosophies and Religions.* Eds. David Jones and E. R. Klein. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010. 30–46.

Art, Robert J., and Robert Jarvis, eds. *International Politics. Enduring Concepts and Contemporary Issues.* 9th ed. New York: Pearson Education, 2009

Attali, Jacques. *Brüderlichkeit. Eine notwendige Utopie im Zeitalter der Globalisierung*. Stuttgart: Freies Geistesleben, 2003.

Badiou, Alain: *Saint Paul. The Foundation of Universalism. Translated by Ray Brassier*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003.

Beilecke, François, Hans Manfred Bock, Katja Marmetschke, eds. *Der Intellektuelle und der Mandarin. Für Hans Manfred Bock.* Kassel: Kassel University Press, 2005.

Beilecke, François. »Netzwerke und Intellektuelle. Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zur politischen Rolle eines zivilgesellschaftlichen Akteurs.« ibid./Bock/Marmetschke: 2005. 49–65.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. 1994. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Bird, Michael F. *Introducing Paul. The Man, His Mission and His Message*. Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2008.

Bode, Britta. »Wie China den Westen das Fürchten lehrt.« *welt.de* 13 February 2005 Web. 31 July 2013. ›http://www.welt.de/print-wams/article122994/Wie_China_den_Westen _das_Fürchten_lehrt.html‹.

Bourne, Edmund J. *Global Shift. How a new worldview is transforming humanity*. New Oakland: Harbinger Publications, 2008.

Bretherton, Charlotte. »Universal Human Rights: Bringing People into Global Politics?« *Global Politics. An Introduction.* Eds. Charlotte Bretherton and Geoffrey Ponton. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher, 1996. 247–273.

Brisebois, Mireille. *Saint Paul. Introduction to St Paul and his letters*. Middlegreen: St Paul Publications, 1986.

Bude, Heinz. »Dabeisein und Dazugehören.« Beilecke/Bock/Marmetschke: 2005. 199–208.

Caputo, John D. »Introduction. Postcards from Paul: Subtraction versus Grafting.« *St. Paul among the Philosophers.* Eds. John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. 1–23.

Chun, Shan. *Major Aspects of Chinese Religion and Philosophy. Dao of Inner Saint and Outer King.* Berlin/Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 2012.

Dallmayr, Fred R. »Globalization: Curse or Promise?« 2001. Love 2009: 722–737.

Dorn, James A., ed. *China in the New Millennium. Market Reforms and Social Development.* Washington, D.C.: Cato Institute, 1998.

— »Introduction – China in the New Millennium.« Dorm 1998: 1–8.

Dowd, Douglas: *Inequality and the Global Economic Crisis*. New York: Pluto Press, 2009.

Ess, Hans van. »Ist China konfuzianisch?« *China Analysis* 23 (May 2003). Web. 3 August 2013. ›www.chinapolitik.de/resources/no_23.pdf.‹

Fähnders, Till. »Welcher Konfuzius darf es sein?« *faz.net* 1 April 2011. Web. 3 August 2013. ›http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/ausland/modernes-china-welcher-konfuzius-darf-es-sein-1609686.html.‹

Foucault, Michel. *Was ist Kritik? Aus dem Französischen von Walter Seitter*. Berlin: Verlag, 1992.

Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man.* 1992. New York: Free Press, 2006.

Gernet, Jacques. »Christian and Chinese Visions of the World in the Seventeenth Century.« *Facing Each Other. The World's Perception of Europe and Europe's Perception of the World*. Ed. Anthony Pagden. Aldershot: Variorum, 2000. 261–278.

Ghemawat, Pankaj. »Why the World Isn't Flat.« Art/Jarvis 2009: 319–324.

Gorringe, Timothy J. *Furthering Humanity. A Theology of Culture*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2004.

Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Herzog, Marktwart. »Zeitordnung, Kalenderreform und religiöse Identität.« *Der Streit um die Zeit. Zeitmessung – Kalenderreform – Gegenzeit – Endzeit* Eds. ibid. and Karl Bayer. Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2002. 9–18.

Hoffmann, Arnd. *Zufall und Kontingenz in der Geschichtstheorie*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2005.

Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno. *Dialektik der Aufklärung. Philosophische Fragmente.* 1944. Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1969.

Jentsch, Tobias. *Da/zwischen. Eine Typologie radikaler Fremdheit*. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2006.

Kagan, Robert. *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*. 2008. New York: Random House, 2009.

Kant, Immanuel. »Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht.« 1784. Weischedel 1977: 31–50.

— »Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?« 1783. Weischedel 1977: 51–61.

Kim, Heisook. »Dominant Culture and Patriarchy: Philosophy of Difference and Inter-Culturalism.« *Dominanz der Kulturen und Interkulturalität. Dokumentation des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Interkulturelle Philosophie.* Ed. Raúl Fornet-Betancourt. Frankfurt am Main: IKO-Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2006. 59–70.

Kissinger, Henry. *On China*. 2011. New York: Penguin Group, 2012.

Koselleck, Reinhart. *Kritik und Krise. Ein Beitrag zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt*. Freiburg im Breisgau/München: Alber, 1959.

Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. Leon S. Roudiez, transl. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Kupchan, Charles A. *No One's World. The West, the Rising Rest, and the Coming Global Turn.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Lange, Kai. »China greift bald in Europa zu.« *manager-magazin.de* 25 August 2004 Web. 31 July 2013. ›http://www.manager-magazin.de/finanzen/geldanlage/a-314818.html‹.

Lechner, Frank J., and John Boli, eds. *The Globalization Reader.* 3rd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2008

— »General Introduction.« Lechner/Boli 2008: 1–5.

Lin, Justin Yifu. »The Current State of China's Economic Reforms.« Dorn 1998: 39–74.

Love, Nancy, ed. *Dogmas & Dreams. A Reader in Modern Political Ideologies.* 3rd ed. Washington: CQ Press, 2009.

Lyotard, Jean-François. »Das Grabmal des Intellektuellen.« *Grabmal des Intellektuellen. Aus dem Französischen von Clemens-Carl Härle.* Peter Engelmann, ed. Graz: Böhlau, 1985. 9–19.

— *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. 1979. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, transl. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Marquard, Odo. *Skepsis in der Moderne. Philosophische Studien*. 1993–2007. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2007.

— *Schwierigkeiten mit der Geschichtsphilosophie. Aufsätze*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982.

Martin, Dale B. »The Promise of Teleology, the Constraints of Epistemology, and Universal Vision in Paul.« *St. Paul among the Philosophers. Edited by John D. Caputo and Linda Martín Alcoff.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. 91–108.

Mazlish, Bruce. *The New Global History.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

Mueller, Milton. »China's Telecommunications Sector and the WTO: Can China Conform to the Telecom Regulatory Principles?« Dorn 1998: 193–203.

Mullen, Chris. »Courts of Hell.« (n.d.) Web. 22 August 2013. ›http://www.fulltable.com/vts/h/hc/hc.htm.‹

Navarro, Peter. *The Coming China Wars. Where They Will Be Fought. How They Can Be Won.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, 2008.

Newnham, David. »The millennial meltdown.« *guardian.co.uk* 30 December 1998. Web. 31 July 2013. ›http://www.guardian.com/world/1998/dec/31/millennium.uk2.‹

Ni, Peimin. *On Confucius*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Learning, 2002.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*. 1873. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2005.

Nizon, Paul. *Diskurs in der Enge. Verweigerers Steckbrief. Schweizer Passagen. Herausgegeben und mit einem Vorwort versehen von Peter Henning*. Ed. Peter Henning. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1990.

Österreichisches Institut für China- und Südostasienforschung. »Himmel & Hölle.« n.d. Web. 20 August 2013. ›http://ww.china-kultur.at/content/index.aspx?CatalogItemID=24064.‹

Puff, Melanie. *Postmoderne & Hybridkultur.* Wien: Passagen Verlag, 2004.

Rehn, Rudolf. *Sprache und Dialektik in der Aristotelischen Philosophie*. Amsterdam: B. R. Grüner, 2000.

Ren, Zhou Dun. »A True Market Economy for China.« Dorn 1998: 95–100.

Ringer, Fritz K. *Die Gelehrten. Der Niedergang der deutschen Mandarine 1890–1933.* München: Klett-Cotta, 1987.

Robertson, Robert. »Globalization as a Problem.« Lechner/Boli 2008: 87–94.

Rohbeck, Johannes. *Geschichtsphilosophie zur Einführung.* Hamburg: Junius, 2004.

Safranski, Rüdiger. *Wieviel Globalisierung verträgt der Mensch?* München: Hanser, 2003.

Sen, Amartya. »How to Judge Globalism.« Lechner/Boli 2008: 19–24.

Simon, Rainald. *Das Chinesische Schattentheater. Katalog der Sammlung des Deutschen Ledermuseums Offenbach am Main*. Leipzig: Gutenberg, 1986.

Smits, Gregory. »China's Qing Dynasty and its Collapse.« (n.d.) Web. 20 August 2013. ›http:www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/g/j/gjs4/textbooks/175/ch4_main.htm.‹

UNESCO. »Imperial Palaces of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in Beijing and Shenyang.« n.d. Web. 3 August 2013. ›http://whc.unesco.org/pg_friendly_print.cfm?cid=31 &id_ site=439&.‹

Wallerstein, Immanuel. »The Modern World-System as a Capitalist World-Economy.« Lechner/Boli 2008: 55–61.

Ware, James R., transl. *The Sayings of Confucius*. New York: Penguin Books, 1955.

Weggel, Oskar. »Neue Generationen übernehmen die Macht: China.« *Die Welt heute*. Ed. Peter Glotz. Hamburg: Zeitverlag Gerd Bucerius, 2006. 446–450.

Weischedel, Wilhelm, ed. *Immanuel Kant. Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik 1. Werkausgabe Band XI*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1977.

Widmer, Urs. »Insel Schweiz.« *Wir sind eigenartig, ohne Zweifel. Die kritischen Texte von Schweizer Schriftstellern über ihr Land*. Ed. Klara Obermüller. Zürich: Nagel & Kimche, 2003. 267–272.

Wiegerling, Klaus. »Dominante Kultur und Information.« *Dominanz der Kulturen und Interkulturalität. Dokumentation des VI. Internationalen Kongresses für Interkulturelle Philosophie*. Ed. Raúl Fornet-Betancourt. Frankfurt am Main: IKO-Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation, 2006. 95–113.

Yang, Fenggang. *Religion in China. Survival & Revival under Communist Rule*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Yao, Xinzhong. *An Introduction to Confucianism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Yeo, K. K. *Musing with Confucius and Paul. Toward a Chinese Christian Theology*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2008.

Žižek, Slavoj. *The Puppet and the Dwarf. The Perverse Core of Christianity.* Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2003.

CHAPTER 3: DEFINING THE SELF

IDENTITY FORMATION IN A POST-COLONIAL WORLD: MARTIN R: DEAN'S *MY FATHERS* (*MEINE VÄTER*, 2003) AND HABIB TENGOUR'S *THIS PARTICULAR TARTAR 2* (*CE TATAR-LÀ 2* / *BESAGTER TARTAR 2*, 1997–1998)

Primary Literary Texts

Dean, Martin R. *Ein Koffer voller Wünsche*. Salzburg/Wien: Jung und Jung, 2011.

— *Meine Väter. Roman*. München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2003.

— *Monsieur Fume oder Das Glück der Vergeßlichkeit*. München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1998.

— *Der Guayanaknoten. Roman*. München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1994.

— *Außer mir. Ein Journal*. München/Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1990.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang. *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*. 1795. Stuttgart: Philipp Reclam, 2003.

Kleist, Heinrich von. »Die Verlobung in St. Domingo.« 1811. *Heinrich von Kleist. Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*. 2nd ed. Ed. Helmut Sembdner. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2008. 160–195.

Rimbaud, Arthur. »Barbarian.« 1886. *Compete Works, Selected Letters. A Bilingual Edition. Transl. Wallace Fowlie. Ed. Seth Whidden*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

Schiller, Friedrich. *Die Bürgschaft*. 1798. Web. 31 October 2013. ›http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/3352/162‹.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tempest*. 1610/11. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969.

Tengour, Habib. »This Particular Tartar.« Transl. Marilyn Hacker. *The Virginia Quarterly Review* (Summer 2010): 122–131. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.vqronline.org/articles/2010/summer/tengour-tartar/‹.

— »L'Ile au loin / Die ferne Insel.« 2003. *Seelenperlmutt. Lyrik französisch-deutsch.* Ed. and transl. Regina Keil-Sagawe. Berlin: Hans Schiller, 2009: 108–113. (2009a)

— »Ce Tatar-là 2 / Besagter Tatar 2.« 1997-1998. *Seelenperlmutt. Lyrik französisch-deutsch.* Ed. and transl. Regina Keil-Sagawe. Berlin: Hans Schiller, 2009: 78–107. (2009b)

Werner, Markus. *Festland. Roman*. 2nd ed. Salzburg/Wien: Residenz Verlag, 1996.

Non-Fictional Texts by Martin R. Dean and Habib Tengour

Dean, Martin R. »Die Sehnsucht nach Einfachheit.« n.d. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http:///www. mrdean.ch/content.php?p-1-5‹. (n.d. a)

— »Eine Rüssellänge voraus. Indien und Globalisierung.« n.d. Web.17 September 2013. ›http://www.mrdean.ch/content.php?p-1-5‹. (n.d. b)

— »Das andere Leben.« *mimsuisse.ch. Geschichten zur Migration* 1 October 2011. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.mimsuisse.ch/udb/MIM_002_Dean_d.pdf‹. (2011b)

— »Grosseweitewelt.« NZZ December 2010. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.mrdean.ch/content.php?p-1-34‹.

— »Fremd Gehen.« germanistik.ch February 2010. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.germanistik.ch/publikation.php?id=Fremd_Gehen‹. (2010b)

— »Über Väter. Predigt.« 2002. Web. 10 October 2013. ›http://www.offenekirche.ch /info/DeanPredigt02.asp‹.

— »Leaving the Frontiers Behind.« Transl. Ellen and Ernest H. von Nardroff. *Literary Review* 36.4 (Summer 1993): 538–544.

— »The Blue Elephant.« Transl. Michael Robinson. *Frank* 18 (n.d.): 156–163. (n.d. c)

Tengour, Habib. *Dans le Soulèvement Algérie et Retours. Jalons. Essais.* Paris: Éditions de la Différance, 2012. [2012a]

— »Une furieuse histoire.« Tengour 2012a: 29–35.

— »Opération jumelles.« Tengour 2012a: 43–47.

— »Une commande d'écriture.« Tengour 2012a: 51–59.

— »Ces choses tombées dans la hauteur du ciel.« Tengour 2012a: 63–67.

— »L'ivresse de la muse et l'implacable rougeur de Caïn.« Tengour 2012a: 119–122.

— »La trace dans le texte.« Tengour 2012a: 123–124.

— »The Belly is Still Fecund.« Joris 2012: 273–274. [2012b]

— »In the Valley of the Unfinished.« Joris 2012: 275–277. [2012b]

— »›Postcolonial‹ Narrative and Identity.« Joris 2012: 278–284. [2012b]

— »The Master of the Hour« (excerpt). 2007. Joris 2012: 270–272. [2012b]

— »Undesirable Witness.« 1996. Joris 2012: 263–265. [2012b]

— »Maghribi Surrealism.« 1981. Joirs 2012: 257–262. [2012b]

— »Childhood.« Sebbar 2001: 199–211.

Secondary Literature on Authors and Texts

Ali-Benali, Zineb. »Habib Tengour: le monde est un fauteuil en simili-cuir. Le poème, cette traversée des mondes.« *Expressions maghrébines* 11.1 (2012): 59–69.

Fairunterwegs. »Lesereise: Fair unterwegs mit Martin R. Dean, Schriftsteller, Journalist und Essayist in Basel.« *fairunterwegs.org* 29 June 2011. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.fairunterwegs.org/aktuell/news/article/lesereise-fair-unterwegs-mit-martin-r-dean-schriftsteller-journalist-und-essayist-in-basel.html‹.

Helbling, Brigitte. »Warum weint Ray? Der Schweizer Schriftsteller Martin R. Dean scheitert auf ganzer Linie an seiner Vätersuche.« *Berliner Zeitung* 30 June 2003. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/archive/der-schweizer-schriftsteller-martin-r--dean-scheitert-auf-ganzer-linie-an-seiner-vaetersuche-warum-weint-ray-,10810590,10097374.html‹.

Honold, Alexander. »Globalität in der Schweizer Literatur. Martin R. Dean's Roman *Meine Väter* zwischen Indien und Engadin.« *Periphere Zentren oder zentrale Peripherien? Kulturen und Regionen Europas zwischen Globalisierung und Regionalität*. Eds. Wilhelm Amann, Georg Mein und Rolf Parr. Heidelberg: Synchron, 2008. 137–146.

Jacobsen, Dietmar. »Von der Geschichtsmächtigkeit zur Geschichtenmächtigkeit: Traditionsbrüche und Neuansätze in den Romanen Martin R. Deans.« *Literatur für Leser* 22.2 (1999): 102–111.

Joris, Pierre, ed. *Exile is my Trade. A Habib Tengour Reader*. Transl. Pierre Joris. Boston, MA: Black Widow Press, 2012.

— »Introduction.« ibid. 2012: 7–21.

Keil-Sagawe, Regina. »›Odysséennes‹ – ou de l'écho féminin dans l'oeuvre de Habib Tengour. Sept esquisses pour un entretien.« *Expressions maghrébines* 11.1 (2012): 117–130.

Knipp, Kersten. »Habib Tengour. Seelenperlmutt.« 27 July 2009. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.arte.tv/de/tengour-habib-seelenperlmutt/2768426.html‹.

Kunisch, Hans-Peter. »Kirschrote Weisheiten. Martin R. Dean will unterhalten.« *Zeit Online* 6 March 2003. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.zeit.de/2003/11/L-Dean/komplettansicht‹.

Maraini, Toni. »L'ineffable et la dérision chez Habib Tengour.« Yelles 2003: 219–229.

Mazenauer, Beat. »*Von den Nöten des Patriarchats.*« Le Culturactif Suisse 24 April 2003. Web. 17 September 2013. http://www.culturactif.ch/livredumois/mai2003 dean.htm‹.

Ranaivoson, Dominique. »L'Arc et la cicatrice: D'abord écouter les silences et arpenter les interstices.« *Expressions maghrébines* 11.1 (2012): 71–82.

Reinacher, Pia. »Vatersprache, in Lügen erstickt. Auf Augenhöhe: Martin R. Dean erforscht Sohnesgefühle.« *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 13 August 2003. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/rezensionen/belletristik/vatersprache-in-luegen-erstickt-1120023.htm#‹.

Sandberg, Beatrice. »Schreibende Söhne. Neue Vaterbücher aus der Schweiz: Guido Bachmann, Christoph Keller, Urs Widmer und Martin R. Dean.« *Grenzen der Identität und der Fiktionalität.* Eds. ibid. and Ulrich Breuer. München: iudicium, 2006. 156–171.

Schimmang, Jochen. »Die Asche meiner Väter. Abenteuerroman aus dem Echoraum des Kolonialismus: Martin R. Dean versucht das Rätsel seiner Herkunft zu lösen.«

Die Welt 12 April 2003. Web. 17 September 2013. ›http://www.welt.de/print-welt/article664979/Die-Asche-meiner-Väter.html‹.

Vilas-Boas, Gonçalo. »Heimat und Ferne. Ein Väterroman von Martin R. Dean.« *Zwischen Globalisierungen und Regionalisierungen. Zur Darstellung von Zeitgeschichte in deutschsprachiger Gegenwartsliteratur*. Eds. Martin Hellström and Edgar Platen. München: iudicium, 2008. 63–74.

Wegelin, Anna. »Ein Hang zur Flunkerei.« *Wochenzeitung* 37 (15 September 2011). Web. 17 September 2013. http://www.woz.ch/1137/ein-koffer-voller-wuensche/ein-hang-zur-flunkerei‹.

Yelles, Mourad. »›Personne, voilà mon nom.‹ Jeux de masques et fictions identitaires chez Habib Tengour.« *Expressions maghrébines* 11.1 (2012): 43–55.

— Ed. *Habib Tengour ou l'ancre et la vague. Traverses et détours du texte maghrébin.* Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2003.

— »Introduction.« ibid. 2003: 5–13.

Zlitni Fitouri, Sonia. »Habib Tengour: Le passeur de mots ›aux semelles de vent.‹« *Expressions maghrébines* 11.1 (2012): 1–4.

Resources on Theoretical, Socio-Political, Historical, Psychoanalytic and Religious Contexts

Abdel-Jaouad, Hédi. »Habib Tengour ou le ›zappeur‹ surréaliste.« Yelles 2003: 39–64.

Allahar, Antón L. »Out of Many, One Caribbean?« Misir 2006: 141–166.

Arnaud, Jacqueline. »Les Maghrébins et le surréalisme.« Yelles 2003: 15–37.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffith, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York / London: Routledge, 1995.

BBCNews. »Algeria profile.« 18 December 2013. Web. 18 February 2014. ›http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14118856‹.

Benaissa, Omar. »Algerian Sufism in the Colonial Period.« Shah-Kazemi 1997: 47–68.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture. With a new preface by the author*. New York / London: Routledge, 1994.

Blos, Peter. »Freud und der Vater-Komplex.« *Jahrbuch der Psychoanalyse. Beiträge zur Theorie und Praxis* 20 (1987): 241–257.

Booker, Keith M. and Dubravka Juraga. *The Caribbean Novel in English. An Introduction.* Portsmouth, NH et al.: Heinemann, 2001.

Bourdieu, Pierre. »Outline of a Theory of Practice.« 1977/1972. *On Violence. A Reader*. Eds. Bruce B. Lawrence and Aisha Karim. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. 188–198.

Brathwaite, Edward Kamau. »National Language.« Ashcroft/Griffith/Tiffin 1995: 309–313.

Brereton, Bridget. *Race Relations in Colonial Trinidad 1870–1900*. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Britton, Celia. *Race and the Unconscious. Freudianism and French Caribbean Thought*. Oxford: LEGENDA, 2002.

Bush, Ratimaya Sinha. *Festivals, Rituals and Ethnicity among East Indians in Trinidad*. Diss. The Ohio State University, 1997. (UMI Number: 9731596)

Cudjoe, Selwyn R. »Multiculturalism and Its Challenges in Trinidad and Tobago.« *Soc* 48 (2011): 330–341.

Dabydeen, David. »Teaching West Indian Literature in Britain.« *Writers of the Caribbean Diaspora. Shifting Homelands, Travelling Identities.* Eds. Jasbir Jain and Supriya Agarwal. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 2008. 26–43.

David, M. D. *Cultural History of Modern India*. 2nd ed. Allahabad: Kitab Mahal, 1973.

Deosaran, Ramesh. »Some issues in multiculturalism: The case of Trinidad and Tobago in the post-colonial era.« *Ethnic Groups* 3 (1981): 199–225.

Donadey, Anne. »Foreword.« Sebbar 2001: vii–xvii.

Dugge, Marc. »›Hogra‹ in Algerien – das Land der Wütenden.« 8 February 2012. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.deutschlandfunk.de/hogra-in-algerien-das-land-der-wuetenden.724.de.htm?dram:article_id=100458.‹

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth. Preface by Jean-Paul Sartre*. 1961. Transl. Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press, 1963.

— *Black Skin, White Masks*. 1952. Transl. Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press, 2008.

Figueira, Daurius. *Tubal Uriah Butler of Trinidad and Tobago. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana. The Road to Independence*. Lincoln, NE: iUniverse 2007.

Freud, Sigmund. *Moses and Monotheism*. 1939. Transl. Katherine Jones. 1967. New York: Random House, 1967.

— »Dostojewski und die Vatertötung.« 1928. Web. 10 October 2013. ›http://www.textlog.de/freud-psychoanalyse-dostojewski-karamasoff.html‹.

— »Der Untergang des Ödipuskomplexes.« 1924. Web. 10 October 2013. ›http://www.textlog.de/freud-psychoanalyse-untergang-oedipuskomplex.html‹.

— »Das Ich und das Es.« 1923. Web. 10 October 2013. ›http://www.textlog.de/sigmund-freud-das-ich-und-das-es.html‹.

— *Die Traumdeutung*. 1900. 11th ed. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003.

Gharib, Mohamed. »The Algerian Islamist Movement.« Shah-Kazemi 1997: 69–97.

Gordon, Zahra. »1970 Through The Eyes Of A Revolutionary.« *Trinidad Express online*. 17 July 2011. Web. 23 October 2013. ›http://www.trinidadexpress.com/sunday-mix/1970_Through_The_Eyes_Of_A_Revolutionary-125726388.html‹.

Grieger, Monika Fatimabi. »Sufismus, der Weg des Herzens.« n.d. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.sufismus.ch/intro_sufismus.php‹.

Hanchard, Michael G. »Black Power Trinidad. Racial politics in a plural society.« n.d. Web. 23 October 2013. ›http://diaspora.northwestern.edu/mbin/WebObjects/DiasporaX.woa/wa/displayArticle?atomid=709‹.

Heim, Robert. »Der symbolische Vater als Revenant. Die Geburt der Psychoanalyse aus dem Geiste des Vaters.« Psyche 51.11 (1997): 1023–1050.

Heuman, Gad. *The Caribbean*. London: Hodder Education, 2006.

Hintzen, Percy C. »The Caribbean: Race and Creole Ethnicity.« Misir 2006: 9–31.

Huggan, Graham. *Interdisciplinary Measures. Literature and the Future of Postcolonial Studies*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008.

Jung, Ruth. »Ende des Krieges ohne Namen.« 18 March 2012. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/ende-des-krieges-ohne-namen.932.de.html?dram:article_id=131480.‹

Kambon, Khafra. »Black Power in Trinidad & Tobago: February 26–April 21, 1970.« Ryan/Stewart 1995: 215–242.

Koschorke, Albrecht. *Die Heilige Familie und ihre Folgen.* 2000. 3rd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001.

Kovce, Philip. »Zu Besuch in Utopia.« *Zeit online*. 27 March 2013. Web. 23 October 2013. ›http://www.zeit.de/2013/14/utopien-utopia-thomas-morus/komplettansicht‹.

Kristeva, Julia. *Strangers to Ourselves*. 1988. Leon S. Roudiez, transl. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.

Lacan, Jacques. »The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis.« 1953. *Écrits. The first complete edition in English*. Transl. Bruce Fink, Héloïse Fink, and Russell Grigg. New York / London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006. 197–268.

La Guerre, J. G. »Culture and Politics: Changing Scenarios in the Commonwealth Caribbean.« Misir 2006: 101–119.

Liverpool, Hollis Urban. »Origins of Rituals and Customs in the Trinidad Carnival: African or European?« *The Drama Review* 42.3 (Fall 1998): 24-37.

Martinez, Luis. *The Algerian Civil War 1990-1998*. 1998. Transl. Jonathan Derrick. London: Hurst & Company, 2000.

Meeks, Brian. »The 1970 Revolution: Chronology and Documentation.« Ryan/Stewart 1995: 135–177.

Meighoo, Krik. *Politics in a ›Half-Made Society.‹ Trinidad and Tobago 1925–2001*. Jamaica et al.: Ian Randle Publishers, 2003.

Messaoudi, Michèle. »The Cultural and Artistic Heritage of Algeria.« Shah-Kazemi 1997: 150–159. [Messaoudi b]

Messaoudi, Rashid. »Algerian-French Relations: 1830-1991.« Shah-Kazemi 1997: 6–46. [Messaoudi a]

Millette, James. »Towards the Black Power Revolt of 1970.« Ryan/Stewart 1995: 59–95.

Misir, Prem, ed. *Cultural Identity and Creolization in National Unity. The Multiethnic Caribbean.* Lanham, MD et al.: University Press of America, 2006.

— »Introduction.« ibid.: xxi–xxix.

Mohammed, Patricia. »The ›Creolization‹ of Indian Women in Trinidad.« Misir 2006: 41–57.

Muschg, Adolf. *Wenn Auschwitz in der Schweiz liegt. Fünf Reden eines Schweizers an seine und keine Nation*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997.

Neptune, Harvey R. *Caliban and the Yankees. Trinidad and the United States Occupation*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. »Jenseits von Gut und Böse.« 1886. *Friedrich Nietzsche. Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe, Band 5.* Eds. Giorgio Colli und Mazzino Montinari. Berlin / New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1980. 9–243.

— *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*. 1882. n.d. Web. 6 December 2013. ›http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/ buch/3245/9‹.

Oxaal, Ivar. *Black Intellectuals and the Dilemmas of Race and Class in Trinidad*. Cambridge, MA: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1982.

Parmasad, Ken. »Ancestral Impulse, Community Formation and 1970: Bridging the Afro-Indian Divide.« Ryan/Stewart 1995: 309–317.

Pasley, Victoria. »The Black Power Movement in Trinidad: An Exploration of Gender and Cultural Changes and the Development of a Feminist Consciousness.« *Journal of International Women's Studies* 3.1 (November 2001): 24–40.

Perelberg, Rosine Jozef. »Ein Vater wird geschlagen: Konstruktionen in der Analyse männlicher Patienten.« *Jahrbuch der Psychoanalyse. Beiträge zur Theorie und Praxis* 61 (2010): 83–103.

Reddock, Rhoda E. *Women, Labour & Politics in Trinidad & Tobago*. A History. London / New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994.

Ryan, Selwyn and Taimoon Stewart, eds. With the assistance of Roy McCree. *The Black Power Revolution 1970. A Retrospective.* Trinidad: The University of the West Indies, 1995.

Ryan, Selwyn D. *Race and Nationalism in Trinidad and Tobago: a study of decolonization in a multiracial society*. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972.

— »Introduction.« ibid./Stewart 1995: 1–21. (1995a)

— »The Struggle for Black Power in the Caribbean.« ibid./Stewart 1995: 25–57. (1995b)

Sabra, Martina. »Zornig, zärtlich, leidenschaftlich: Algerien erzählt. Eine literarische Erkundung zum 50. Jahrestag der Unabhängigkeit.« Redaktion Barbara Wahlster. Regie Stefanie Lazai. 27 May 2012. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.deutschlandradiokultur.de/zornig-zaertlich-leidenschaftlich-algerien-erzaehlt.974.de.html?dram: article_id=150861‹.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism. 25th Anniversary Edition. With a new Preface by the Author*. 1978. New York: Random House, 2003.

Schäffner, Raimund. »Carnival, Cultural Identity, and Mustapha Matura's ›Play Mas.‹« *New Theatre Quarterly* 18.2 (May 2002). 186–195.

Scher, Philip W. »The Devil and the Bed-Wetter. Carnival, Memory, National Culture, and Post-Colonial Conciousness[sic!] in Trinidad.« *Western Folklore* 66.1/2 (Winter 2007): 107–126.

— »Copyright Heritage: Preservation, Carnival and the State in Trinidad.« *Anthropological Quarterly* 75.3 (Summer 2002): 453–484.

Schweizer Geschichte. »Schweizerische Flüchtlingspolitik im 2. Weltkrieg.« n.d. Web. 1 December 2013. ›http://www.geschichte-schweiz.ch/fluchtlingspolitik-2-weltkrieg.html‹.

Sebbar, Leïla, ed. *An Algerian Childhood. A Collection of Autobiographical Narratives*. Transl. Marjolijn de Jager. St. Paul, MN: Ruminator Books, 2001.

Seiffge-Krenke, Inge. »Väter in der Psychoanalyse. Väter und Söhne, Väter und Töchter.« *Forum der Psychoanalyse* 17 (2001): 51–63.

Shah-Kazemi, Reza, ed. *Algeria. Revolution Revisited*. Islamic World Report 1997.

— »From Sufism to Terrorism: The Distortion of Islam in the Political Culture of Algeria.« ibid. 1997: 160–192.

Shepherd, Verene A. »›Coolitude‹: The Diasporic Indian's Response to Creolization, Négritude and the Ranking Game?« Misir 2006: 33–39.

Slemon, Stephen. »The Scramble for Post-colonialism.« Ashcroft/Griffith/Tiffin 1995: 45–52.

Stone, Martin. *The Agony of Algeria*. London: Hurst & Company, 1997.

Szeman, Imre. *Zones of Instability. Literature, Postcolonialism, and the Nation.* Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.

Tarwater, Alison. »French Colonization in the Maghreb: A Central Influence in Both Regions Today.« 2005. Web. 18 February 2014. ›http://www.howardcc.edu/academics/academic_divisions/english/instructional/pdf/French_Colonization_in_the_Maghreb.pdf‹.

Tsuji, Teruyuki. »Villaging the Nation. The Politics of Making Ourselves in Postcolonial Trinidad.« *Callaloo* 31.4 (2008): 1148–1174.

TT Guardian. »Eric Williams, 100 years later.« 28 September 2011. Web. 23 October 2013. ›http://www.guardian.co.tt/editorial/2011/09/27/eric-williams-100-years-later‹.

CHAPTER 4: INVASION

RELIGION, WAR, AND THE POLITICS OF NARRATION. IAN MCEWAN'S *SATURDAY* (2005)

Primary Literary Texts

Arnold, Matthew. »Dover Beach.« 1867. *Poetical Works*. London: Macmillan and Co., 1908. 226–227.

Bellow, Saul. *Herzog*. New York: The Viking Press, 1964.

Eichendorff, Joseph von. *Das Marmorbild. Novelle*. 1819. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2008.

Joyce, James. »The Dead.« *Dubliners.* 1914. Eds. Hans Walter Gabler and Walter Hettche. New York / London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1993. 336–384.

Larkin, Philip. »Water.« 1954. *The Whitsun Weddings*. New York: Random House, 1964. 20.

McEwan, Ian. *Solar*. New York: Doubleday, 2010.

— *Saturday.* 2005. New York: Anchor Books, 2006. (2006)

— *Atonement. A novel*. 2001. New York: Anchor Books, 2003.

— *The Daydreamer*. 1994. New York: Anchor Books, 2000.

— *Black Dogs*. 1992. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.

— *Or Shall We Die? Words for an oratorio set to music by Michael Berkeley*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1983.

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1925.

Non-Fictional Texts by Ian McEwan

»The originality of the species.« *guardian.co.uk*, 23 March 2012. Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2012/mar/23/originality-of-species-ian-mcean/print‹.

»End of the World Blues.« *The Portable Atheist. Essential Readings for the Nonbeliever.* Ed. Christopher Hitchens. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2007. 351–365. (2007a)

»I hang on to hope in a tide of fear.« independent.co.uk, 26 April 2007. Web. 28 June 2012. ›http://www.enjoyment.independent.co.uk/books/features/article2424436.ece‹. (2007b)

»Introduction.« *What We Believe but Cannot Prove. Today's Leading Thinkers on Science in the Age of Certainty*. Ed. John Brockman. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006. xiii–xvii. (2006a)

»What I believe but cannot prove…« *What We Believe but Cannot Prove. Today's Leading Thinkers on Science in the Age of Certainty*. Ed. John Brockman. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006. 36. (2006b)

»A parallel tradition.« *guardian.co.uk*, 31 March 2006. Web. 7 September 2012. ›http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2006/apr/01/scienceandnature.richarddawkins‹. (2006c)

»Literature, Science, and Human Nature.« *The Literary Animal. Evolution and the Nature of Narrative. Foreword by E. O. Wilson and Frederick Crews.* Eds. Jonathan Gottschall and David Sloan. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2005. 5–19. (2005a)

»A Boot Room in The Frozen North.« *capefarewell.com*, 2005. Web. 7 September 2012. ›http://www.capefarewell.com/climate-science/comment-opinion/ian-macewan.html‹. (2005b)

»Mother Tongue: A Memoir.« *On Modern British Fiction*. Ed. Zachary Leader. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. 34–44.

»Only love and then oblivion. Love was all they had to set against their murderers.« *guardian.co.uk*, 15 September 2001. Web. 20 June 2012. ›http://www.guardian.co.uk/ world/2001/sep/15/september11.politicsphilosophyandsociety2‹. (2001a)

»Beyond belief.« guardian.co.uk, 12 September 2001. Web. 20 June 2012. ›http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/sep/12/september11.politicsphilosophyandsociety‹. (2001b)

Interviews with Ian McEwan

Amis, Martin. »Writers Talk: Ideas of Our Time.« 1987. Roberts 47–53.

Begley, Adam. »The Art of Fiction CLXXIII: Ian McEwan.« 2002. Roberts 89–107.

Casademont, Rosa González. »The Pleasure of Prose Writing vs. Pornographic Violence: An Interview with Ian McEwan.« 1989. Roberts 54–60.

Cook, Jon, Sebastian Groes, and Victor Sage. »Journeys without Maps: An Interview with Ian McEwan.« *Ian McEwan. Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. Ed. Sebastian Groes. New York / London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009. 123–134.

Friesen, Eric. »The Writer Who Listens. Ian McEwan Interviewed.« *Queen's Quarterly* 116.3 (Fall 2009): 415–424.

Gormley, Antony. »A Conversation about Art and Nature.« 2005. Roberts 134–142.

Haffenden, John. »Ian McEwan.« *Novelists in interview*. Ed. John Haffenden. New York / London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1985. 168–190.

Khandekar, Ashutosh. »Dual Purpose.« 2008. Roberts 176–179.

Louvel, Liliane, Gilles Ménégaldo, and Anne-Laure Fortin. »An Interview with Ian McEwan.« 1995. Roberts 67–78.

Lynn, David. »A Conversation with Ian McEwan.« 2006. Roberts 143–155.

Miller, Laura. »The Salon Interview: Ian McEwan.« salon.com, 9 April 2005. Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://www.salon.com/2005/04/09/mcewan_5/print/‹.

Noakes, Jonathan. »Interview with Ian McEwan.« 2001. Roberts 79–88.

Remnick, David. »Naming What Is There: Ian McEwan in Conversation with David Remnick.« 2007. Roberts 156–175.

Roberts, Ryan, ed. *Conversations with Ian McEwan*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2010.

— »›A Thing One Does‹: A Conversation with Ian McEwan.« Roberts 188–201. (2010a)

Smith, Zadie. »Zadie Smith Talks with Ian McEwan.« 2005. Roberts 108-133.

Whitney, Helen (PBS Frontline). »Interview: Ian McEwan.« April 2002. Web. 25 June 2012. ›http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/faith/interviews/mcewan.html‹.

Secondary Literature on Ian McEwan and *Saturday*

Alden, Natasha. »Words of War, War of Words: *Atonement* and the Question of Plagiarism.« Groes 57–69.

Amiel-Houser, Tammy. »The Ethics of Otherness in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*.« *Connotations* 21.1 (2011/2012): 128–157. Print.

Bennett, Caroline. »›Pathological Rationality‹ in Ian McEwan's *Enduring Love* and *Saturday*.« *American, British, and Canadian Studies* 10 (July 2008): 222–235. Print.

Childs, Peter, and Nicolas Tredell, eds. *The Fiction of Ian McEwan. A reader's guide to essential criticism.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Felch, Susan M., and Gary D. Schmidt, eds. *The Emmaus Reader: Listening for God in Contemporary Fiction*. Brewster, MA: Paraclette Press, 2008.

Ferguson, Frances. »The Way We Love Now: Ian McEwan, *Saturday*, and Personal Affection in the Information Age.« *Representations* (Fall 2007): 42–52.

Garrard, Greg. »Ian McEwan's Next Novel and the Future of Ecocriticism.« *Contemporary Literature* 50.4 (Winter 2009): 695–720.

Girard, Monica. »*Mr. Dalloway* (Robin Lippincott) and *Saturday* (Ian McEwan): Virginia Woolf's legacy of London.« *(Re-)Mapping London. Visions of the Metropolis in the Contemporary Novel in English. Essays collected by Vanessa Guignery and François Gallix.* Ed. Vanessa Guignery. Paris: Éditions Publibook, 2008. 37–56.

Green, Susan. »Consciousness and Ian McEwan's *Saturday*: ›What Henry Knows.‹« *English Studies* 91.1 (February 2010): 258–273. Print.

Groes, Sebastian, ed. *Ian McEwan. Contemporary Critical Perspectives*. New York / London: Continuum , 2009.

— »Introduction. A Cartography of the Contemporary: Mapping Newness in the Work of Ian McEwan.« Groes 1–12. (2009a)

— »Ian McEwan and the Modernist Consciousness of the City in *Saturday*.« Groes 99–114. (2009b)

Head, Dominic. *Ian McEwan*. New York / Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007.

Heber, Nicole. »Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, 9/11 and neuroscience.« *Online Proceedings of ›Sustaining Culture‹*. (2008) Annual Conference of the Cultural Studies Association of Australia (CSAA), UniSA, Adelaide, December 6–8, 2007. Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://w3.unisa.edu.au/cil/minisites/csaa/files/heber.pdf‹.

Hillard, Graham. »The Limits of Rationalism in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*.« *The Explicator* 68.2 (2010): 140–143.

Impostato, David. »Secular Sabbath. Unbelief in Ian McEwan's Fiction.« *Commonweal* 23 October 2009. n.p.

Kakutani, Michiko. »A Hero With 9/11 Peripheral Vision.« 18 March 2005. Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/18/books/18BOOK.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print&position=‹.

Knapp, Peggy A. »Ian McEwan's *Saturday* and the Aesthetics of Prose.« *Novel* 41.1 (2007): 121–143.

Kosmalska, Joanna. »Dichotomous Images in Ian McEwan's *Saturday*: In Pursuit of Objective Balance.« *Text Matters* 1.1 (2011): 268–277.

Lusin, Caroline. »›We Daydream Helplessly.‹ The Poetics of (Day)Dreams in Ian McEwan's Novels.« Nicklas 137–158.

Malcolm, David. *Understanding Ian McEwan*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2002.

Marcus, Laura. »Ian McEwan's Modernist Time: *Atonement* and *Saturday*.« Groes 83–98.

Martiny, Erik. »›A Darker Longing‹: Shades of Nihilism in Contemporary Terrorist Fiction.« Nicklas 159–172.

McCrum, Robert. »The story of his life.« *The Observer* 22 January 2005 (n.p.). Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2005/jan/23/fiction.ianmcewan‹.

Nicklas, Pascal, ed. *Ian McEwan. Art and Politics.* Spec. issue of *Anglistik und Englischunterricht* 73 (2009).

— »The Ethical Question: Art and Politics in the Work of Ian McEwan.« Nicklas 9–22. (2009a)

Puschmann-Nalenz, Barbara. »Ethics in Ian McEwan's Twenty-First Century Novels. Individual and Society and the Problem of Free Will.« Nicklas 187–213.

Rader, Mario. »Think Small: September 11 Déjà Vu in *Saturday* by Ian McEwan.« 8 August 2010. Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://suite101.com/article/think-small-september-11-deja-vu-in-saturday-by-ian-mcewan-a272350/print‹.

Ridley, Matt. »Foreword. Ian McEwan and the Rational Mind.« Groes vii–x.

Root, Christina. »Melodiousness at Odds with Pessimism: Ian McEwan's *Saturday*.« *Journal of Modern Literature* 35.1 (Fall 2010): 60–78.

Ross, Michael L. »On a Darkling Planet: Ian McEwan's *Saturday* and the Condition of England.« *Twentieth-Century Literature* 54.1 (Spring 2008): 75–96.

Ruge, Enno. »Seize the Saturday: Re-viewing Ian McEwan's Saturday and Re-reading the Novels of Saul Bellow.« *Anglistik: International Journal of English Studies* 21.2 (September 2010): 69–81.

Schwalm, Helga. »Figures of Authorship, Empathy, & The Ethics of Narrative. (Mis-) Recognition in Ian McEwan's Later Fiction.« Nicklas 173–185.

Seaboyer, Judith. »Ian McEwan: Contemporary Realism and the Novel of Ideas.« *The Contemporary British Novel Since 1980*. Eds. James Acheson and Sarah C. E. Ross. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. 23–34.

Takolander, Maria. »The Sensational Imagination: Ian McEwan's *Saturday*.« *Literature and sensation*. Ed. Anthony Uhlmann. Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009. 50–60.

Thraikill, Jane F. »Ian McEwan's Neurological Novel.« *Poetics Today* 32.1 (2011): 171–201.

Tournes, Anne-Laure Fortin. »*Saturday* by Ian McEwan or the resurgence of 9/11 in allegorical form.« *Accueil* 1 (2009). Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://revues.u-paris10.fr/index.php/latelier/article/view/25/78‹.

Wally, Johannes. »Ian McEwan's *Saturday* as a new atheist novel? A claim revisited.« *Anglia: Zeitschrift für Englische Philologie* 130.1 (2012): 95–119.

Weidle, Roland. »The Ethics of Metanarration: Empathy in Ian McEwan's *The Comfort of Strangers*, *The Child in Time*, *Atonement* and *Saturday*.« Nicklas 57–72.

Wells, Lynn. *Ian McEwan*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

— »The Ethical Otherworld. Ian McEwan's fiction.« *British fiction today*. Eds. Philip Tew and Rod Mengham. New York / London: Continuum, 2007. 117–127.

Zalewski, Daniel. »Life and Letters. The Background Hum. Ian McEwan's art of unease.« 23 February 2009. Web. 23 June 2012. ›http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2009/02/23/090223fa_fact_zalewski?printable=true‹.

Resources on Theoretical, Socio-Political, Scientific, and Religious Contexts

Académie de Toulouse. »Mise en abyme.« (n.d.) Web. 25 November 2012. ›http://pedagogie.ac-toulouse.fr/ecoleetcinema31/films/chantons/abyme.pdf‹.

Atwood, Paul L. *War and Empire. The American Way of Life*. New York: Pluto Press, 2010.

BBC News. »Iraq parliament approves new flag.« 23 January 2008. Web. 17 October 2012. ›http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/middle_east/7203222.stm‹.

Bergen, Peter. »The Last Days of Osama bin Laden. Life and Death in Pakistan.« *TIME Magazine* 179.18 (2012): 24–33.

Beyer, Peter. *Religions in Global Society.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

Bradley, Arthur, and Andrew Tate, eds. *The New Atheist Novel. Fiction, Philosophy and Polemic after 9/11.* New York / London: Continuum, 2010.

Crick, Bernard. *Crossing borders. Political essays*. New York / London: Continuum, 2001.

Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. 2006. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008.

— »I believe, but cannot prove…« *What We Believe but Cannot Prove. Today's Leading Thinkers on Science in the Age of Certainty*. Ed. John Brockman. New York: Harper Perennial, 2006. 9. (2006a)

— *The Selfish Gene*. 30th ed. New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. (2006b)

Deggerich, Markus. »Saddams Baath-Partei. Das Kaderreservoir des Diktators.« *Spiegel Online* (11 March 2003). Web. 26 September 2012. ›http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/saddams-baath-partei-das-kaderreservoir-des-diktators-a-239690.html‹.

Dorey, Peter. *British Conservatism. The Politics and Philosophy of Inequality*. New York / London: I. B. Tauris, 2011.

Ehrman, Bart D. *Jesus, Interrupted. Revealing the Hidden Contradictions in the Bible (and Why We Don't Know About Them).* New York: Harper One, 2009.

Falundafa. »The Falun Emblem.« (n.d.) Web. 11 December 2012. ›http://www.falundafa.org/intro/0-falun.htm‹.

Figley, Charles and William P. Nash. Eds. *Combat Stress Injury. Theory, Research, and Management.* New York: Routledge, 2007.

Gannon, James. *Obama´s War. Avoiding a Quagmire in Afghanistan*. Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2011.

Genette, Gérard. *Die Erzählung*. 2nd ed. Transl. Andreas Knop. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1998.

Gordon, Philip H., and Jeremy Shapiro. *Allies at War. America, Europe and the Crisis over Iraq.* New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004.

Grossman, Dave. *On Combat. The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and Peace.* 3rd ed. USA: Warrior Science Publications, 2008.

Guillemette, Lucie, and Cynthia Lévesque. »Narratology.« *Signo online* 2006. Web. 25 October 2012. ›http://www.signosemio.com/genette/narratology.asp‹.

Harvey, Frank P. *Explaining the Iraq War. Counterfactual Theory, Logic and Evidence*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Hesemann, Michael. *Hitlers Religion. Die fatale Heilslehre des Nationalsozialismus*. München: Pattloch, 2004.

Hitchens, Christopher. *god is not Great. How Religion Poisons Everything*. New York: Twelve, 2007.

Hildebrand, Klaus. »Einleitung.« *Zwischen Politik und Religion. Studien zur Entstehung, Existenz und Wirkung des Totalitarismus*. Ed. Hildebrand. München: R. Oldenbourg, 2003. VII-XI.

Huntington, Samuel P. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Touchstone, 1996. [1996a]

— »The Clash of Civilizations?« *Foreign Affairs, The Debate* (1996): 1–25. [1996b]

— »If Not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World.« *Foreign Affairs, The Debate* (1996): 56–67. [1996c]

Ibrahim, Anwar. »Who Hijacked Islam?« *time.com*. 15 October 2001. Web. 17 November 2012. ›http://www .time.com/magazine/article/0,9171,178470,00. html‹.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. »The Humanity of Jesus. What's at Stake in the Quest for the Historical Jesus.« *The Jesus Controversy. Perspectives in Conflict.* By Luke Timothy Johnson, John Dominic Crossan, and Werner H. Kelber. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1999. 48–74.

Jones, Bill. *Dictionary of British Politics.* 2nd ed. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2010. (2010a)

Jones, David Albert. »The declaration of Geneva and other modern adaptations of the classical doctors' oath.« *Catholic Medical Quarterly* Feb. 2006. Web. 10 October 2012. ›www.cmq.org.uk/CMQ/2006/hippocratic_oath_ii.htm‹.

Jones, Seth G. *In the Graveyard of Empires. America´s War in Afghanistan*. New York / London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010. (2010b)

Lemish, Leeshai. »Why is Falun Gong Banned?« *newstatesman.com* 19 August 2008. Web. 12 November 2012. ›http://www.newstatesman.com/print/blogs/the-faith-column/2008/08/falun-gong-party-chinese‹.

NBC News. *Operation Iraqi Freedom. 22 Historic Days in Words and Pictures. Written by Marc Kusnetz, William M. Arkin, General Montgomery Meigs, retired, and Neal Shapiro.* Kansas City, MI: Andrew McMeel Publishing, 2003.

Phillips, David. »9/11: The day America had forever changed.« *examiner.com* 10 September 2012. Web. 25 November 2012. ›http://www.examiner.com/article/9-11-the-day-america-was-forever-changed‹.

Piper, Ernst. *Alfred Rosenberg. Hitlers Chefideologe*. München: Blessing, 2005.

Poewe, Karla. *New Religions and the Nazis.* New York: Routledge, 2006.

Razon, Wendie. »Americans still believe Iraq was involved with 9/11.« *examiner.com* 11 September 2010. Web. 27 May 2013. ›http://www.examiner.com/article/ americans-still-believe-iraq-was-involved-with-9-11‹.

Reid, Sue. »Conspiracy fever: As rumours swell that the government staged 7/7, victims' relatives call for a proper inquiry.« *dailymail.co.uk* 3 July 2009. Web. 15 November 2012. ›http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1197419/Conspiracy-fever-As-rumours-swell-government-staged-7-7-victims-relatives-proper-inquiry. html?printingPage=true‹.

Reiter, Raimond. *Nationalsozialismus und Moral. Die »Pflichtenlehre« eines Verbrecherstaates*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1996.

Sanger, David E. »Charting on Obama's Journey to a Shift on Afghanistan.« *nytimes.com* 19 May 2012. Web. 20 June 2012. ›http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/20/us/obama-journey-to-reshape-afghanistan-war.html?hp‹.

Shay, Jonathan. *Odysseus in America. Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. New York: Scribner, 2002.

Tal, Uriel. *Religion, Politics and Ideology in the Third Reich. Selected Essays*. Ed. Saul Friedländer. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Tyson, Peter. »The Hippocratic Oath Today.« *pbs.org* 2001. Web. 11 September 2012. ›http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/Hippocratic-oath-today.html‹.

Tzu, Sun. *The Art of War. The Oldest Military Treatise in the World*. Trans. Lionel Giles. Memphis, TN: Bottom of the Hill Publishing, 2012.

Voegelin, Eric. *Hitler und die Deutschen*. Ed. Manfred Henningsen. München: Wilhelm Fink, 2006.

— *Die politischen Religionen.* 2nd ed. Ed. Peter J. Opitz. München: Wilhelm Fink, 1996.

Wildman, David, and Phyllis Bennis. *Ending the US War in Afghanistan. A Primer*. Northampton, MA: Interlink Publishing Group, 2010.

Wolf, Gary. »The Church of the Non-Believers.« *wired.com* November 2006. Web. 7 September 2012. ›http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.11/atheism_pr.html‹.

World Medical Association (WMA). »Declaration of Geneva.« *wma.net* (2006). Web. 12 September 2012. ›www.wma.net/en/30publications/10policies/g1/‹.

World Net. »Rebuilding the Gulf. Document shows Saddam-Taliban ties.« *wnd.com* 13 June 2006. Web. 22 December 2012. ›http://www.wnd.com/2006/06/36589/‹.

Zakheim, Dov S. *A Vulcan´s Tale. How the Bush Administration Mismanaged the Reconstruction of Afghanistan.* Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2011.