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## International Conference: Re-imagining the Nation? Transformations of German Cultural Identity Since 1989 Date: 15-17 October 2009

### Abstracts and Bio Blurbs

#### 1) Pertti Ahonen (School of History, Classics, and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh)

##### **'Unity on Trial: The *Mauerschützenprozesse* and the East-West Rifts of Unified Germany'**

Unification posed many dilemmas for Germany. The '*Mauer im Kopf*' syndrome proved much more persistent than optimistic commentators had initially assumed, and various East-West rifts have continued to burden the Berlin Republic. These rifts and their implications have been expressed and debated in numerous different arenas, particularly during the 1990s, but also in more recent years: in politics, the media, historical accounts and exhibitions, film, literature, and the politics of public spaces and monuments, to name a few prominent examples.

Although many of these processes have been analysed in some depth by now, another public arena that assumed central importance in unified Germany's East-West rifts and disputes, particularly during the 1990s, has received much less attention: that of the judiciary. Of particular significance were the nearly 200 trials of former East German border guards and their political and military superiors that took place between the early 1990s and the first years of the new millennium, often with high levels of public attention. The trials raised a series of fundamental questions about the GDR and its legacies, frequently shaping the broader public agenda, especially in the 1990s, and also feeding into ongoing debates that reached well beyond the problems of unification as such, including those on German victimhood.

My paper will explore dilemmas of unification in the German judicial arena through an examination of several of the so-called *Mauerschützenprozesse* (post-unification trials of East German border guards). I shall show how the trials and the public debates provoked by them raised fundamental questions about the legacies of division

and the prospects of unification in Germany. How was the GDR to be evaluated? Had it been a fundamentally criminal political system? Could it be judged along the same lines as the other German dictatorship that had preceded it between 1933 and 1945? Who was to take responsibility for the crimes committed under the East German regime? To what degree could East Germans be viewed as victims of their own political system -- or of the broader surrounding context of the Cold War? How far up or down in the social and political hierarchy could any such victimhood reach?

The paper will draw on my broader ongoing research on the Berlin Wall and its victims. It will be based on a wide range of sources, including published materials, such as newspaper articles, published trial transcripts, and secondary accounts. But the most important sources will be the unpublished judicial records from specific trials of East German guards that have been made available to me by special permission by the Berlin public prosecutors' office (*Generalstaatsanwaltschaft*).

Bio blurb:

Pertti Ahonen is Senior Lecturer in Modern European History in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh. He received his Ph.D. in European History from Yale University in 1999 and previously taught at the University of Sheffield. He is the author of *After the Expulsion: West Germany and Eastern Europe, 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) and co-author of *People on the move. Forced population movements in Europe in the Second World War and Its* (Oxford: Berg, 2008). He is currently finishing a monograph entitled *Victims of the Berlin Wall: Political Legitimation and Identity-Building in Cold War Germany* for Oxford University Press.

**2) Aleida Assmann (English and Comparative Literature, University of Konstanz)**

**Marcel Beyer's *Kaltenburg*: an Exercise in Attention**

In this novel, the West German author Marcel Beyer retells German traumatic history from an East German point of view. This, however, is not the only striking example of shifting the point of view (Umperspektivierung) in his text. In this paper I will try to show that the novel systematically elaborates a post-traumatic style of writing that is, at the same time, a conscious exercise in attention.

Bio blurb:

Aleida Assmann studied English Literature and Egyptology at the universities of Heidelberg und Tübingen. Since 1993 she has held the chair of English Literature and Theory at the University of Konstanz. She was a fellow of the Wissenschaftskolleg at Berlin in 1998/1999, and she has lectured at a range of universities, including Princeton, Yale, Vienna and Chicago. In 2009 she was awarded the Max Planck Forschungspreis for her outstanding contribution to memory studies. Her publications deal with theories of fiction between the 16th and the 18th century, the history of writing and of print media, the forms and media of cultural memory and the development of collective memory in post-war Germany. Selected Publications: *Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses*. München 1999, 4th ed. 2009; *Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. München 2006; *Geschichte im Gedächtnis. Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung*, München 2007.

### 3) Elizabeth Boa (German Department, University of Nottingham)

#### Some Versions of Heimat in Contemporary German Fiction

Heimat discourse following German unification in 1871 served to mediate between older regional and new national loyalties: umbilical attachment to one's native heath infused blood into the more abstract identification with the fatherland, while the lost rural Heimat offered an urbanising populace a store of mythic landscapes to intensify patriotic emotion. It was also a reaction to tensions associated with modernisation, with perceived loss of identity in an expanding world and anxieties at the impact of industry on the natural environment. Unification in 1990 too has seen an upsurge of Heimat discourse as citizens of East Germany faced the task of reconfiguring the past, often through balancing rejection of an authoritarian father-state with nostalgia for a maternal Heimat. Provincial themes stand in oblique relation to the Berlin Republic and bypass the metropolis in reacting to globalisation. This paper will compare texts by some of the following authors: Christoph Hein, Monika Maron, Ingo Schulze, Jens Sparschuh, Uwe Tellkamp. It will explore how the East German Heimat is constructed through social, geographical, historical, familial and experiential categories, through metaphoric motifs and the other structural devices. The texts which prove most productive of comparison will determine the final selection.

#### Bio blurb:

Elizabeth Boa, is Emeritus Professor of German at the University of Nottingham and a Member of the British Academy. Her research focuses on feminist literary criticism; Kafka; 20th-century and contemporary literature. Book publications include: *Franz Kafka, Gender, Class, and Race in the Letters and Fictions* (Oxford, 1996), with Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat: A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford, 2000), with Heike Bartels (eds), *Anne Duden: A Revolution of Words* (2003). Email: elizabeth.boa@nottingham.ac.uk

### 4) Mary Cosgrove (Department of German, University of Edinburgh)

#### The "Melancholy Gene"? Literary Responses to Historical Rupture in Contemporary German Fiction

"Melancholy. A German Feeling" announces somewhat fatalistically the title of an anthology of German literature (Grüning 1993). Without doubt, melancholy has a long history in German-language literary, cultural and scientific traditions; thinkers such as Freud, Panofsky, Tellenbach, Lepenies, to name but a few, have made major contributions to the understanding of melancholy in the Humanities in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In the literary arena after the Second World War, writers such as Thomas Mann, Günter Grass, Wolfgang Hildesheimer, Peter Weiss, and many more, drew on melancholy traditions partly to address the legacy of National Socialism, partly to take up specific, often ironic, positions within old, established and elaborately dignified discourses on the artist-intellectual. Against this backdrop, my paper highlights the resurgence of melancholy discourses in post-unification German literature, exploring how it functions as a response to unification and the collapse of the GDR. While it is currently an established discourse for the literary representation of catastrophe – W.G. Sebald's oeuvre has more than put melancholy on the map for a whole range of contemporary concerns, such as the environment, the Holocaust, globalization processes – the time has come to ask how melancholy is being re-invested in texts that address specifically

the question of identity in post-unified Germany. Related to this is the matter of melancholy as a highly fashionable and potentially trite literary discourse in the here and now, a position that casts in a different light the rather fatalistic question of melancholy as a special German feeling. Texts may include *Endmoränen*, *Ach Glück* (Monika Maron); *Heimsuchung* (Jenny Erpenbeck); *Grüner Engel* (Dagmar Leupold).

Bio blurb:

Mary Cosgrove is Lecturer in German at the University of Edinburgh. She has published on modern German and German-Jewish literature, especially post-war writers including Albert Drach, Wolfgang Hildesheimer, Günter Grass, and more recently W.G. Sebald. With Anne Fuchs she co-edited a book on post-unification German memory culture which appeared with Camden House in 2006 (Winner Critics' Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Title in 2007) and a *German Life and Letters* special issue on the same theme, *German Memory Contests*, which also appeared in 2006. In 2004 her monograph on Albert Drach was published by Niemeyer (Conditio Judaica). A second monograph on melancholy in German literature since 1960 is in preparation.

### 5) Peter Fritzsche (Department of History, University of Illinois, Champaign)

#### 1989 and the Chronological Imagination

I propose a paper that will examine how "1989" came to bound epochs such as "1789-1989" or "1914-1989." The paper will analyze how 1989 as an epoch boundary in commentary and current history created the effects of inevitability, resolution, and depth and manufactured a sense of historical continuity out of the event of discontinuity. It will go onto reflect on how chronology across time resituates the specificity of German national history. Finally, the paper will comment on the political ramifications of particular dating systems in modern Western history and the place of "1989" in those systems. In short, I want to ask how does the figure of "1989" govern the narration of modern German and European history.

Bio blurb:

A professor of history at the University of Illinois, Peter Fritzsche is the author of *Life and Death in the Third Reich* (2008), *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (2004), and several other books. He is currently at work on *Twentieth-Century Life: The Autobiographies of Franz Göll, Graphomaniac*.

### 6) Anne Fuchs (School of Languages and Literatures, UCD)

#### Psychotopography and the Transformation of Space in Uwe Tellkamp's *Der Turm*

Uwe Tellkamp's award-winning novel *Der Turm* relates the demise of the GDR in the 1980s from the perspective of the GDR's social and cultural elite, who was living on the privileged Loschwitzhöhe in Dresden. On the one hand, the novel highlights the social and political elite's aloofness from the world of lived socialism; on the other, it traces divergent political attitudes and a sliding scale of ideological accommodation in what, from a western perspective, is often perceived in terms of a homogenous GDR leadership. While the novel resists a monolithic view of the GDR by way of its vast social panorama, it nevertheless portrays its downfall as the inevitable endpoint of an unstoppable process of erosion. Focussing on Tellkamp's transposition of historical

experience into architectural discourse, my paper analyses the topography of decay that underpins what is a great realist narrative in the tradition of Thomas Mann.

#### Bio blurb:

Anne Fuchs is professor of Modern German Literature and Culture at UCD. Her research focuses on German cultural memory, modernism, travel writing and contemporary German and Austrian Literature. She is author of four monographs, amongst them *Die Schmerzensspuren der Geschichte. Zur Poetik der Erinnerung in W. G. Sebalds Prosa* (Boehlau: 2004); her latest book *Phantoms of War in Contemporary German Literature, Films and Discourse* (Macmillan/Palgrave, 2008 winner of the CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title in 2009) addresses shifts in German cultural memory since unification from an interdisciplinary perspective. She has published widely on modern German literature and cultural memory in journals and in books, and she has co-edited a range of volumes.

### **7) Deniz Göktürk (UC Berkeley, German and Film Studies)**

#### **Interrupting Unity: Traces of the Berlin Wall in Turkish Cinema**

Turning to scenes from films such as *Almanya Acı Vatan* (Şerif Gören, 1979), *Polizei* (Şerif Gören, 1988), and *Berlin in Berlin* (Sinan Çetin, 1993), alongside passages from literary texts and public debates, my paper will propose to expand our archive for the discussion of history and memory in an immigrant society. I will show that the transnationalization of Europe was already well underway before 1989, and comic interventions were mobilized to critique the labor economy of circulation. If anything, the rhetoric of German unification elided those translingual voices, which beg to be unearthed in a more comprehensive picture of a *Germany in Transit*.

#### Bio blurb:

Deniz Göktürk was born in Istanbul, studied in Konstanz/Germany, Norwich/UK, and Berlin, where she received her Ph.D. in 1995. She joined the German Department at Berkeley in fall 2001, after having taught at the University of Southampton/UK for six years. Her publications include a book on literary and cinematic imaginations of America in early twentieth-century German culture: *Künstler, Cowboys, Ingenieure: Kultur- und mediengeschichtliche Studien zu deutschen Amerika-Texten 1912-1920* (1998) as well as numerous articles on migration, culture, and cinema. As a translator from Turkish into German she co-edited an anthology of contemporary Turkish literature, *Jedem Wort gehört ein Himmel* (1991, with Zafer Senocak), and translated novels by Aras Ören and Bilge Karasu. She is co-editor of *The German Cinema Book* (published by the British Film Institute in 2002, co-edited with Tim Bergfelder and Erica Carter).

### **8) Simone Hain (TU Graz)**

#### **Taking Stock of Twenty Years of Reshaping East German City Centres. An Analysis at Half-time**

Twenty years have now passed since the Fall of the Berlin Wall and German unification. This is exactly half of the length of time in which Germany was divided into two different states with different social directions. It is also almost equal to the amount of time which it took the GDR to plan and to almost completely rebuild the city centres which had been destroyed during World War II in time for the twentieth anniversary of its foundation in 1969. Twenty years is also generally assumed to be the length of a generation. Against this background, this paper presents, on the one hand, a half-time analysis of German unity and, on the other, an examination of four German generations: 1949, 1969 1989

and 2009. Exploring six individual cases of cities of different size and significance (Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig, Rostock, Cottbus, Suhl), this paper examines which urban basic conditions and visual characteristics they are marked by in a) 1949 at the point of German division, b) 1969 at the peak of state socialist modernity, c) 1989 at the height of an urban and ecological crisis and the popular reform debate which stemmed from this, and d) 2009 after twenty years of a unified-German politics of city development.

As the former urban front of the Cold War, I have deliberately chosen to focus on Berlin as it represents a unique and universally significant example of a challenge for political identity. Dresden is also ascribed a special status in this paper as its urban fate, so carefully monitored by an international audience, is often accompanied by irrational myths. Leipzig as the ‘city of heroes’ of autumn 1989 – during the Monday Demonstrations, this was the city which raised concerns like no other (“can Leipzig be saved?”) and it also provided the stage for the “First Building Conference for the People” (1. Volksbaukonferenz) – provides an opportunity to consider the political urban-development contract of the ‘round tables’ and the ‘citizen’s initiatives’ at the end of the GDR. To what extent has their desire and their engagement been incorporated into politics of unified Germany and what are the differences between the former horizons of expectation and the contemporary reality? How is ‘resistance’ to political urban-development currently expressed in Leipzig?

Rostock, Cottbus and Suhl complete the picture, allowing an exploration of two medium-sized and one small town that owe their unusual upturn and their characteristic socialist ideal planning to the GDR period. Were the new communal political elites able to recognise this character of exceptionality in order to adeptly pick up on this politically? Which concrete social dynamics defined the development of these more peripheral cities over the last twenty years? Finally, this paper also traces the urban fates of four new cities from the time of the GDR: Eisenhüttenstadt, Hoyerswerda, Schwedt and Halle-Neustadt.

### Bio Blurb:

Prof. Dr. Simone Hain is the Director of the ‘Institute of Urban and Building History’ at the TU Graz, Austria. In 1990 she directed the ‘Department of Theory and History’ at the GDR ‘Institute for Urban Development’. She taught at diverse schools of architecture in Berlin, Hamburg and Weimar and acted as curator for numerous exhibitions. Most recently she has curated the Institute of International Relations’s international travelling exhibition “Two German Architectures” with Hartmut Frank.

Books “Die Salons der Sozialisten. Kulturhäuser in der DDR” (The Salons of the Socialists. Cultural Buildings in the GDR)

## **9) Kathleen James-Chakraborty (School of Art History and Cultural Policy, UCD)**

### **Beyond Cold War Interpretations: Shaping a new Bauhaus Heritage**

2009 marks the ninetieth birthday of the Bauhaus as well as the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The understanding of the legacy of the twentieth century’s most influential art school has been dramatically altered by the collapse of communism and the reunification of Germany. The last two decades have witnessed two quite different developments in the way in which the Bauhaus is understood at home and abroad. First the physical heritage of the school has been harnessed to legitimize new institutions in the former east, chief among them Bauhaus Dessau Foundation and the

Bauhaus University and Bauhaus Museum, both in Weimar. These now compete with the Bauhaus Archive in Berlin as the official successors to the school and repositories of its products and related documentation. Second German scholars, followed closely by their American and English counterparts, have deconstructed cold war myths about the school, in particular questioning its relevance as an anti-fascist bulwark of democratic and/or socialist ideals. These two divergent approaches are to finally come together in an exhibition scheduled to open at the Martin Gropius Bau at the end of July, which will travel to the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

#### Bio blurb:

Kathleen James-Chakraborty is professor of Art History at University College Dublin. Her books include the edited collection *Bauhaus Culture from Weimar to the Cold War* (Minneapolis, 2006) and the monographs *German Architecture for a Mass Audience* (London, 2000) and *Erich Mendelsohn and the Architecture of German Modernism* (Cambridge, 1997). She has taught at the University of California Berkeley, the University of Minnesota, and the Ruhr University Bochum, and lectured and published on a wide variety of topics concerning modern architecture in Germany, the United States, and South Asia.

#### **10) Anja K. Johanssen (Komparatistik, University of Paderborn/Literaturhaus Zurich)**

**»Der Schein bestimmt das Bewusstsein«: Poetic Reflections on German re-unification in Angela Krauss and Monika Maron**

In 1989, only a few weeks before the Berlin Wall came down, one of the most well-known German newspapers, the *FAZ*, published a pamphlet-like article by one of its editors, Frank Schirmmacher, in which he declared German contemporary literature more or less dead. This article turned out to be the beginning of a long lasting argument among literary critics, authors and editors. Schirmmacher claimed that, unlike Anglophone authors, German authors weren't able to tell entertaining stories about present-time political and social conditions; instead, they would just dwell on self-referential linguistic experiments and literary navel-gazing. As a proof of his argument he drew on the absence of any *Großstadtromane*, i.e. novels set in and inspired by big cities. Nowadays, twenty years later, the new ›Berlin novel‹ and the ›Wenderoman‹ even appear to be genres of their own. So there is no reason to moan about novelists' disinterest in their social surroundings and in the aftermath of re-unification any more. In my paper I will focus on two contemporary woman authors from East Germany, Angela Krauß and Monika Maron. Their texts will enable me to exemplify in what way the antagonism at the base of the above-mentioned argument is a false one anyway: these texts relate quite explicitly to the ›real world‹ of their re-unified country while writing very private, linguistically daring prose.

#### Bio blurb:

Anja Johanssen studied German literature and philosophy in Berlin, Providence, R.I., USA, and Freiburg. Her doctoral thesis was published in 2007, which deals with conceptions of space in contemporary German literature and which was partly written during a working stay at UCD's *Humanities Institute Ireland*. She has published on contemporary authors such as W.G. Sebald, John Banville and Anne Duden, among others. Currently, she holds a post-doctoral fellowship of the University of Paderborn, where she teaches and works on her second book, which focuses on methodological questions of research on contemporary literature. Additionally, she plans and organizes readings and conferences for the Literaturhaus Zurich.

**11) Jennifer Jordan (University of Wisconsin)****Pigs, Potatoes and Collective Memory in Post-1989 Germany**

The development of "Genussregionen," Slow Food convivia, campaigns to save and popularize particular pigs or potatoes all lend themselves to a discussion of contemporary memory and identity in Germany (in part because of significant differences between these phenomena in East and West). The use of "heirloom" vegetables and fruit trees in the gardens of open-air folk museums is an example of the intersection of memory, food, and identity. This paper will ask what (if any) differences there appear to be in the public and active linking of food, gardens, and farms with memory and identity. The paper will also incorporate the contrasting culinary memories of the two halves of the country. Today there are around a dozen Slow Food convivia in eastern Germany, but sixty-five in the West. Even accounting for the smaller population of the eastern states, this is still a striking difference that points to divides relating to income and, probably to a lesser extent, varying tastes. Finally, I will consider broader movements directed at developing culinary tourism, regional specialties, organic and small-scale farmers and home producers, using particular foods as a way to bolster local economies and local identities. These ways of working on the landscape and of linking memory to the built (and planted) environment offer a window into shared understandings, interpretations, and representations of the past, and—importantly—into a given polity's visions of its future.

Bio blurb:

Jennifer Jordan is an associate professor of Sociology at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, where she has taught since earning her doctorate from the University of California San Diego. Her book *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond*, was published by Stanford University Press in 2006. She is currently working on a project entitled *Edible Memory: Heirloom Tomatoes and Antique Pigs in a Changing World*. A former fellow of the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Museum, she has also received a Fulbright Fellowship and been the Lise Meitner postdoctoral senior scholar at the Austrian Academy of Sciences.

**12) Karen Leeder (University of Oxford, New College)****'Wenn die Ideen begraben sind kommen die Knochen heraus'. The Death and Afterlife of the GDR**

This paper focuses on the afterlife of the GDR not - as is often the case though looking at how it is nostalgically remembered (à la *Goodbye, Lenin!*) or retrospectively re-imagined (the 'Zonenkinder' boom) - but more literally. A number of motifs have been common among key poets: that of being buried alive, epochal catastrophe, the instruments of death, but also of the revenant undead (ghost, spectre, zombie), most strikingly manifested in a series of contemporary 'Totentänze' (2002). This preoccupation links with those recent poetological programmes which have focused on the archaeological excavation of memory, but also with the interest in time which has been noted by a number of observer offering a contemporary take on the haunting of German literature. However, there is more at stake: an ironic take on Marx and the loss of ideals ('Ein Geist kommt um in Europa'), an exploration of literature as 'postscript', and a fascination with epochal lateness, all of which chimes with contemporary international interests. This paper will focus on texts by Heiner Müller, Volker Braun, Harald Gerlach and Karl Mickel,

but also gesture towards the younger (female) writers, to explore the link between lateness, death and the ghostly afterlife of the GDR.

**Bio blurb:**

Karen Leeder is Professor of Modern German Literature at the University of Oxford, and Fellow and Tutor in German at New College. She has published widely on modern German literature, especially poetry and GDR literature, including, most recently: the edited volumes *'Flaschenpost': German Poetry and the Long Twentieth Century* and *'Schaltstelle': Neue deutsche Lyrik im Dialog* (both 2007). A volume of essays, *From 'Stasiland' to 'Ostalgie': The GDR – Twenty Years After*, will appear as a special number of *Oxford German Studies* in November 2009.

**13) Margaret Littler (School of Languages, Linguistics and Cultures, University of Manchester)**

**The Fall of the Wall as Non-Event in Turkish-German Literature**

Zafer Senocak memorably described the unification of Berlin as the coming together of 'das anatolische Berlin und das sowjetische Berlin' (2001: 60), thus downplaying the city's status as world-metropolis, and reminding us of the large Turkish presence in West Berlin since the 1970s. In the same essay he recalls the slogan 'Deutschland ist kein Einwanderungsland' while asserting that 'Berlin ist eine Einwandererstadt par excellence' (157), a city where one need not feel at home. Yet he, like many other acculturated Turks in Germany, found new barriers erected just as the German Wall came down. This paper will review German unification from the perspective of its immigrant intellectuals, with a particular focus on their literary representations of the Berlin Wall as a threshold rather than a barrier, and of the city's unstable foundations on 'markischem Sand' (158). From Emine Sevgi Özdamar's protagonists' charmed crossings of the Wall in the 1970s, to Senocak's view of Berlin as permanent building site, and Feridun Zaimoglu's satirical perspective on the newly annexed East, the paper will consider how their writing cuts across the old political structure of East and West.

**Bio blurb:**

Margaret Littler is Professor of Contemporary German Culture at the University of Manchester, where she has taught since 1990. She is editor of *Gendering German Studies* (1997) and co-author with Brigid Haines of *Contemporary Women's Writing in German: Changing the Subject* (2004), and is currently completing a project on Turkish-German writing.

**14) Jonathan Long (German Department, University of Durham)**

**Topography, Photography: Viewing Berlin 1880/ 2000**

This paper seeks to investigate the intersection of two representational practices central to the constitution of cultural identity: architecture and photography.

Taking as my starting point post-1990 architectural photography of Berlin by, among others, Florian Profitlich, I then offer a brief archaeology of Berlin photography, going back to photographs produced by Frederick Schwarz and others in the years after the first unification of Germany in 1870. While there is, of course, a vast quantity of photographs of Berlin from the Weimar, Nazi, and post-war periods, my main argument is that contemporary architectural photography reanimates a set of visual tropes that have their origins in late-nineteenth-century photography and go into abeyance between about

1920 and 1990. These include: a concentration on historic rather than modern edifices; the constitution of public space almost exclusively in terms of state institutions and public buildings; the decontextualisation of individual buildings so as to construct them as isolated spectacles divorced from the wider urban context; the almost total elimination of the human body, except for isolated figures whose function is largely to demonstrate scale; and an ostensibly 'disembodied' camera position, which thwarts the viewer's attempts to inhabit imaginatively the represented space of the image.

I then go on to argue that such structures of representation are intimately tied to the constitution of nationhood. The concentration on historic buildings seeks to ground the legitimacy of the modern state by positing continuities with the institutions of a bygone era, while eliding more recent traces of historical trauma (the Franco-Prussian war and World War II). The other dimensions of such architectural photography (spectacular isolation of the object, depopulation of the image, the disembodied camera position) contribute to this agenda, removing all signs of modernity (such as the circulation of traffic and bodies, industry, and so on) and representing urban space as unsullied and pristine. Furthermore, these techniques exclude the spectator from the space of the image, thereby diminishing its status as lived space and blocking access to the memory that, as Pierre Nora writes, persistently attaches to place and sediments itself in the fabric of our environment.

In architectural photography of this kind, then, the nation is legitimized in the register of nostalgia that is based on a fundamental disavowal of historical trauma. But, of course, that which has been disavowed always re-emerges in another place, and my final point is that by representing urban space as a nostalgic site of historical continuity and the spectacular performance of the state, one ends up presenting an uncanny city, inhabited by strange traces of all that the photographs seek to elide: the eerie phantom traces of car headlights, the surreptitious presence of expressionist aesthetics, and the strenuous technical manipulations required to empty the city streets of the people who live in them.

#### Bio blurb:

Jonathan Long is Professor of German at the University of Durham. His recent books are *W. G. Sebald: Image, Archive, Modernity* (Edinburgh and Columbia UPs, 2007), and, as editor, *Photography: Theoretical Snapshots* (Routledge, 2009). He has published widely on German literature and contemporary photography, and his research interests include writing and photography in twentieth-century Germany, and the photographic culture of the Weimar Republic.

### **15) Bill Niven (School of History, Nottingham Trent University)**

#### **The Role of Prussia in Shaping Contemporary German Identity**

This paper will examine the debates surrounding united Germany's attempts – in the eyes of some – to reconnect to the history of Prussia, especially that of the Second Empire. Such attempts can be identified in reconstruction programmes (e.g. Berlin's *Schloss*, Potsdam's *Garnisonkirche*), plans for memorials (e.g. the planned *Freiheits- und Einheitsdenkmal*, the *Bundeswehr-Denkmal*), as well as in a spate of novels, films and historiographical works dealing in some aspect with Prussia. One interpretation of these developments might point to a linked, tripartite process: first, the crimes and victims of Nazism are memorialised; second, Germans discover their victimhood, asserting the right to mourn and thereby 'rehabilitating' German history (we suffered no less); thirdly, on the basis of this national self-rehabilitation, pre-1933 German history previously regarded with suspicion can be reassessed and reappropriated as legacy.

Concern at a creeping 're-Prussianisation' has also been expressed by former East German citizens who see it as a means of eliding the GDR past from memory (as in the replacement of the *Palast der Republik* with the Berlin *Schloss*). A less cynical view might point to a continuation and further variant of the 'partial' appropriations of Prussia characteristic of the GDR and FRG, where Second Empire monuments became vehicles for the proclamation of the importance of German unity, either under socialist auspices (*Kyffhaeuserdenkmal*, *Voelkerschlachtdenkmal*) or western-liberal ones (*Hermannsdenkmal*, *Kaiser-Wilhelm-Denkmal* Koblenz). What form – this paper asks – does contemporary Germany's interest in Prussia take, and what might it mean? Is there evidence of a shift from 'negative memorialisation' (the Holocaust) to 'positive memorialisation' (German unity as historical achievement)?

Bio blurb:

Bill Niven is professor of contemporary German history at the Nottingham Trent University. Forthcoming publications include (as editor with Chloe Paver) *Memorialisation in Germany since 1945* (Basingstoke, 2009) and *Das Buchenwaldkind* (Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2009).

**16) Jürgen Paul (Art History, TU Dresden)**

**The Rebirth of Historic Dresden**

During the communist era the Dresdeners' attitude to their city was, on the one hand, characterised by enduring, deep-seated, and self-pitying mourning over the destruction of their beautiful city and, on the other hand, a defiant self-assurance that Dresden remained the most important cultural centre in the GDR. The ruins and the huge pile of rubble of Frauenkirche with its monumental dome, which had collapsed after the 1945 bombing, were powerful symbols of the destruction of beautiful old Dresden. Immediately after the political change in 1989, a small group of citizens in Dresden started an initiative for the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche. This initiative grew into a large and strong movement, and in 2005 the rebuilding – financed mainly by private donations from all over Germany and abroad – was completed. While the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche was still under way, the city government gave in to public pressure and decided to have the wider surroundings of the church built up on the historical sites with houses reconstructing the former Baroque appearance. Much of it has been completed now. Analysing how the rebuilding of the Frauenkirche and its frame of Baroque houses has transformed the mood amongst the citizens, the paper then examines the impact of the rebuilding of the former Royal Palace, a burnt-out ruin for almost 50 years. While the pseudo-historical theatricality of new Baroque Dresden can be seen quite critically, for the citizens of Dresden and the growing crowds of tourists the reconstruction of architectural splendor and art collections signals the restoration of one of the great cultural capitals of Europe.

Bio Blurb:

Jürgen Paul is an Emeritus Professor of Art History at the TU Dresden. He studied art history, classical archaeology, and musicology at the universities of Freiburg, Munich, Berlin, and Florence. After his PhD and a period as assistant lecturer at the University of Cologne, he took up a research fellowship at Columbia University, New York. A period as special lecturer at University of Toronto was followed by his Habilitation at the University of Tübingen in 1973. From 1973-1978 he was Professor of History of Architecture at the Technical University of Braunschweig; from 1978-1993 Professor of Art History at the University of Tübingen, and from 1993-2001 Professor of Art History at the Technical University of Dresden. He is a member of the Saxonian Academy of

Arts.

### 17) Gillian Pye, (School of Languages and Literatures, UCD)

#### Contamination and Territories of Disappearance

'The GDR did not just simply disappear. [...] It merely transformed from an idea into a space, a contaminated space, into which only those who wanted to study the pollution or make money from it, set foot' (Jana Hensel, *Zonenkinder* 155). This paper looks at the way in which images of contamination and decay are employed in Wolfgang Hilbig's narratives as a means of interrogating the experiences of loss, disorientation and disappearance. Whilst Hilbig denies that his narratives are solely explorations of his relationship to a lost GDR Heimat, this paper contends that Hilbig's work nevertheless represents a significant and consistent engagement with his relationship to that problematic space which 'contaminates' the present.

In texts such as *Alte Abdeckerei* and *Die Kunde von den Bäumen*, Hilbig maps a 'territory of disappearance', which is characterised by obsolescence, decay and the threat of contamination. The grotesque overthrowing of boundaries – between nature and technology, past and present – suggested in the notion of contamination offers a 'bad place' ('ungutes Ort') within which Hilbig plays out both fantasies of disappearance and assimilation and anxieties of stagnation and loss.

#### Bio blurb:

Gillian Pye is Lecturer in German at University College Dublin. Her research focuses on recent prose and drama and she also has research and teaching interests in the built environment. She is interested in material culture and its treatment in literature and her current project investigates the topic of trash. Recent publications include the book *Approaches to Comedy in German Drama* (2002) and essays on comedy theory and the postmodern, pop literature and rubbish theory. She is presently editing a volume of essays entitled 'The Aesthetics of Trash'.

### 18) Linda Shortt (University of Konstanz)

#### "Heimat is something lost": Re-Imagining West Germany after 1989.

Examining the popular resurgence of interest in Heimat and in notions of placed identity in post-unification Germany, this paper focuses particularly on how the memory of West Germany is currently being managed in contemporary German literature. Exploring a selection of works by three different authors who belong to two different generations, this paper analyses how these authors represent and re-imagine the FRG in their works. As shall be shown, while both Sven Regener (1961) and Florian Illies (1971) attempt to recreate a unique identity for the FRG in their writings which replaces politics with 'pop interests', Juli Zeh (1974) writes politics back into her past and rejects the notion of placed identity.

Exploring the popular interest in Heimat as 1) a response to unification (requiem for the lost Heimat), 2) symptomatic of the continued rifts between East and West identity (*West-algia* as a response to *Ost-algia*) and 3) a reaction to and an effect of globalization (Heimat as an idyllic counter-present to supermodernity), this paper treats the current return to place as a global and as a specifically German phenomenon.

Bio Blurb:

Linda Shortt studied German and History at UCD and the FU Berlin before graduating with a BA and MA from UCD. As a recipient of the UCD Humanities Institute scholarship scheme, she embarked on a Ph.D. project, investigating expressions of placed identity in contemporary German literature. In 2006 she received a DAAD scholarship which enabled her to spend a semester at Konstanz University where she had the opportunity to co/teach seminars related to her research. Having recently completed her PhD at UCD (“Pathologies of Belonging? Generation, Place and Rebellion in Post-Unification German Literature”), Linda Shortt is currently employed as a research assistant by Prof. Aleida Assmann at the University of Konstanz.

**19) Andrew Webber (University of Cambridge, Churchill College)****Topographical Turns: Casting Berlin in Contemporary Film**

This paper revisits the territory explored in the last chapter of my recent book, *Berlin in the Twentieth Century: A Cultural Topography*. There, post-*Wende* films set in Berlin were seen as occupying an ambivalent position, caught between attachments to past (national) scenarios and turns in other, more contemporary (transnational) directions. Across a range of films, the performance of urban identity – on stage, on screen, or in the streets – was seen as the key to that ambivalent condition. The paper explores this further, with reference to three recent films and their performative negotiation of the topography of the New Berlin through a varied cast of characters. Thomas Arslan’s *Der schöne Tag* (2001) focuses on a young German-Turkish actress, following her passage through the topography of the city on one fine day. Casting and dubbing become metaphors for her performance of everyday living as a displaced figure on her way through Berlin. Christian Petzold’s *Gespenster* (2005) summons up something of a cliché of Berlin in film and other media, as the site of a particular version of what Derrida has called hauntology. In Petzold’s film, the ontological exploration of the figures that ghost through the narrative and their potential relationships is linked to that of a spectral urban territory cast (on CCTV) between two of the city’s reconstructed sites of memory: Tiergarten and Potsdamer Platz. Its focal scene of a casting session for a film reflects upon the more general politics and ontology of performance in the film’s narrative. The third film, *Stadt als Beute* (2005), by von Alberti, Dehne, and Gronenborn, focuses on the on- and off-stage, individual and group performances of members of an avant-garde theatre ensemble. These expose the post-unification city as a kind of post-dramatic stage and screen for the enactment of exploitation and counter-exploitation. The three films, with their thematics of displacement, haunting, and exploitation, recast the performative configuration of identity and topography in today’s Berlin, its possibilities for new turns and the constraints upon these.

Bio blurb:

Andrew Webber is Reader in Modern German and Comparative Culture at the University of Cambridge and a Fellow of Churchill College. He has published widely on the literary, cinematic, and visual cultures of Germany and Austria. His most recent books are *The European Avant-garde: 1900-1940* (Polity, 2004) and *Berlin in the Twentieth Century: A Cultural Topography* (CUP, 2008).