Beyond Biography

Semantics of (Self-)Construction

Levke Harders and Axel C. Huentelmann

Imagine visiting a bookstore in your hometown. At chains like *Barnes & Nobles* in the United States, *Fnac* in France or *Thalia* in Germany one finds well-filled shelves with biographies and autobiographies, regularly supplemented with new publications. On the occasion of anniversaries of birthdays or days of death, like Albert Einstein's in 2005 or Charles Darwin's in 2009, a huge number of new biographies is published. Today ›biography‹ is a diversified genre, especially in regard to academic publications. In contrast to the stuffed shelves and their popularity, biography as a method in the humanities has had a rather negative reputation. Its low status is astonishing because no other genre is as present as biography in diverse fields like history, sociology, cultural studies, literature or the arts – to name only a few. Even though biographies are genuinely appreciated by the general readership and though they are prevalent in several academic disciplines, scholars do rarely discuss the methods or the theory of biographical writing. Biographies are, as the British literary scholar David Ellis sharply remarks, »lives without theory« (Ellis 2000:1).

But there is light (respectively: theory) at the end of the tunnel. Since the 1990s, only few approaches in the humanities have developed as dynamic as the genre of biography. The individual in its times and its societal context moves more and more back to the centre. In the field of literature, both scholars and writers discuss the ›return of the author‹. Sociological analysis focuses on life and career patterns, while historical studies deal with biographical topics like illness, migration, or individual experiences with bereavement or trauma. Biographies written in an academic context have become more and more critical, questioning and reflecting on the biographical subject. Biographers do not only contemplate on the

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construction of a unitary, autonomous subject, but also on categories like race, class and gender as well as their own perspective on the person they are writing about. In the opinion of some critics, (post-)modern biography at the same time functions as part of the biographer's autobiography (Fish 1999).

Biography has always been an interdisciplinary genre – with all its benefits and difficulties. Therefore, theoretical questions as well as methods of biographical writing have to be discussed on an interdisciplinary level. During the last decade, a renewed dialogue has been institutionalised in the German-speaking countries at the *Centre for Biographics* (*Zentrum für Biographik*), the Austrian *Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for the History and Theory of Biography* (*Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Biographie*), the *Institute for History and Biography* at the *University of Hagen* and, since the late 1980s, in *BIOS*, a *Journal for biographical research, oral history and life course research* (*BIOS. Zeitschrift für Biographieforschung, Oral History und Lebenslaufanalysen*).[1] The current interest in (and the need for) theoretical discussions on biography becomes apparent by the publication of overviews of the history and practice of the genre (Hamilton 2007; 2008; Lee 2009) and by two compendia on the history and theory of biography from the past few years.[2]

»Beyond Biography«, the here presented issue of *InterDisciplines*, originates from a workshop on the »Semantics of (Self)Construction. (Auto-) Biography in Sociology and History in the 19th and 20th centuries«, held in Bielefeld (Germany) in January 2010. The participants in the conference discussed their projects on biography and life course research in history and sociology. We reflected upon common problems, methods and theoretical approaches as well as on different perspectives in the two

1 For more information about the *Centre for Biographics*: www.zentrum-fuer-biographik.de/en/index.htm; about the *Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for the History and Theory of Biography*: http://gtb.lbg.ac.at/en; about the *Institute for History and Biography* as well as about *BIOS*: www.fernuni-hagen.de/geschichteundbiographie.

2 Fetz 2009; Klein 2009. For sociological approaches see: Fuchs-Heinritz 1984/2009.

disciplines and their reciprocal influences. Although the biography genre has developed as a distinct field of research during the past few years, communication on and comprehension of common theoretical and methodological foundations in sociology and history are mostly missing.[3]

The discussion during the workshop touched mainly issues of current debates on biography. To begin with, the term »biography« itself was questioned: What kind of literary genre is biography? What type of source material characterises biographies? How do the new media influence biographies, e.g. is a personal profile on *Facebook* or other social networks valuable as a biographical source? How should a biographer assess different personal papers (diaries, notes, letters) for the professional career of his or her biographical subject? The »Biographical Questionnaire« on the cover of this issue was filled in by the teacher and scholar Elizabeth Reynard (1897-1962).[4] As an alumna of Barnard College, Reynard was one of the early founders of American Studies as well as a lieutenant commander of the *United States Naval Reserve* during the Second World War. She answered the »Biographical Questionnaire« in the 1950s after her retirement. Though the document gives only sparse information about her education and career, it can serve as a first means of access to biographical research on a female scholar in the 20th century (Harders 2009). Though these »Bioseme«, as Myriam Richter calls the smallest biographical entities, seem to function as objective and neutral personal data, biographers have to keep in mind that even these tads and

3 The workshop was organized by Levke Harders, Julia Herzberg, Axel C. Huentelmann and Dominique Schröder. We would like to thank Julia Herzberg and Dominique Schröder for this fruitful cooperation. Cf. the conference report by Carsten Heinze and Christian Meyer: »Semantiken der (Selbst-)Konstruktion. (Auto-)Biographisches Arbeiten in Soziologie und Geschichtswissenschaft im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert". 21.1.2010-23.1.2010, Bielefeld. H-Soz-u-Kult, 11.5.2010, http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=3096.

4 Associate Alumnae of Barnard College, Biographical Questionnaire, Elizabeth Reynard, Class of 1922. Barnard College Archives, Barnard College, New York, NY. We would like to thank the Barnard College Archives for the permission to print this document.

bits of biographical information include judgment and contain – or better they do not contain – omissions.

Secondly, the term »biography« is commonly linked to autobiography or biography in the traditional sense of a life story. Recent studies – and also this issue of *InterDisciplines* – go beyond this popular understanding of biography. »Beyond Biography« includes different types of writing about an individual: While the genre of autobiography might consist of diaries, interviews or other evidence, the genre of biography might deal with certain periods of a life, with biographical narration on a meta-level (e.g. Rupke 2008) or with a specific group of persons in a collective biography (see below).

Thirdly, some speakers dealt with the precarious relation between autobiography and biography. Although autobiographies appear to be more authentic, memoirs develop a specific narrative, since the author is tempted to harmonise his or her own life course. Moreover, participants challenged the intention for and the generators of (auto-)biographical writing like confessions or interviews.[5] The differentiation between the categories of autobiography and biography led to other problems, too. The biographical subject becomes part of the author's life. She or he not only has to critically analyse the sources of his/her research subject or those concerning it but also to question her or his own motives as well as her or his relation to the biographical subject.

All these topics reach beyond biography, but have to be dealt with in current biographical studies. The articles in this number of *InterDisciplines* touch on interrelated subject matters: Are there identifiable semantics of biographical writing? How can we productively analyse the tension between memory, reality, construction and narration? What kinds of problems occur with the reconstruction respectively the construction of a life course? How does the author's identity relate to his or her writing of someone else's life story? What are the methodological advantages and

5 Alois Hahn conceptualises the so-called »Biographiegeneratoren«, cf. the essay »Biographie und Lebenslauf« in Hahn 2000: 87-115; see also Bohn & Willems 2001; and Rosenthal 2010.

pitfalls of individual biography and of collective biography, i.e. the well-known tension between the micro- and the macro-level?

The (self-)construction of a biography always involves a tension between subjective reality and memory, narration and legend-building. On the one hand, the semantics of biography encompass literary or audiovisual descriptions of a person's life, using well-known formulas and legends. On the other hand, these formulas and legends influence the writing of a biography, since they develop a life of their own. In reference to Hayden White, the »narrative relativity« of historiographical work could also shed light upon biographical work: As with all stories, the biographer finds his or her sources as single episodes and then interconnects them by drafting a chronological order to build a complete and logical story. This narration usually begins with the birth of the protagonist (or the story of his or her ancestors) and ends with his or her death. In this process, the chronological events are composed to form a reasonable structure that, taking place in a certain context, becomes a story by attaining a meaningful organisation. In accordance to White, the sense of a story can only be appreciated through this construction and the explanation of events, whereas for the genre of biography the sense of the story is generated through explication, conclusion, ideological implications, but especially through emplotment: For the reader, the storyline becomes reasonable through an archetypical plot underlying the narration (White 1986). Consequently, the analysis of (auto-)biographies has to identify the basic design and its considerable influence on the narration of the life course. The biographical narrative is guided by sources which rely on chronological incidents, so that the story always includes the claim to be ›objective‹ and historically ›true‹. Nevertheless, by adapting factual events to the narrative pattern the biographical text constantly develops additional meaning.

An analysis of the narrative structures and semantics of biographies has to take into account »biographical formulas«, i.e. typical metaphors and topoi which are steadily repeated in different biographies, with only slight alterations (Kris & Kurz 1934/1995: 29). A biography can be built upon the basis of other biographies and their emplotments. These bio-

graphical blueprints develop a life on their own insofar that the following generation might stage their own lives (or their life stories) consistent with these topoi. They vary in regard to the subject's profession or social background: While in many biographies of physicians the encounter with a hurt creature is mentioned as a crucial motive for the later choice of the medical profession (Gradmann 2003; Klein 2006), biographies of artists often identify the motive of an »innate« passion. Either way, biographical topoi refer both to the ideal and ethic potential of the chosen profession and to the alleged natural »genius« of the person.

In this issue, Axel Hüntelmann sketches the early attempts of Paul Ehrlich's family, who started to commission a biography after his death. By these early efforts to produce a biography of »Ehrlich the Nobelprize winner«, Huentelmann illustrates the inherent modes which then created legends. Similar to other scientists – like Robert Koch and Louis Pasteur – the early biographies on Ehrlich portrayed a genius searching for the scientific truth in his laboratory rather than a realistic picture of his life and career. In his article Huentelmann demonstrates the process of myth-construction by means of the alleged chemical talent of Ehrlich. His early chemical experiments during his years of studying were gradually moved to his school days and associated with the scientific interest of his grandfather. Thus, through this genealogical link, Ehrlich's career and his success appeared as the inevitable endpoint of a natural predisposition.

Another important topic of biography concerns the semantics of (self-) definition. Studies in literature and sociology have shown the significance of narration for the construction of a life course, both in biography and autobiography. Malte Griesse presents a detailed analysis of the relation between (life-)writing, memory and selfconstruction. He reconsiders the significance of atomization in Stalinist society and reassesses the phenomenon of imposture as a constituent part of the system's functioning. In historiography impostors have been regarded as subverters who perfectly mastered Bolshevik language and behavioural codes to take advantage of the revolutionary chaos and the system's dysfunctions: Thus, they revealed the regime's incapacity to establish totalitarian control. This

view overlooks that parallel to its campaigns for transparency and unambiguity the Stalinist regime systematically pushed large segments of the population into double-dealing, i.e. into hiding central aspects of their (past) lives. The impact of such dissimulation is explored on the basis of an inedited personal diary written by a former Menshevik converted to Bolshevism who concealed his former political allegiance and committed to paper his sufferings from loneliness and political guilt. For him his diary was a means to »leave a trace« and »find consolation« in »conversations with himself«. It is a liminal document that perfectly illustrates Arendt's distinction between solitude as domain of dialogical thinking and loneliness as a state of readiness to succumb to purely deductive logical (or totalitarian) thinking, a distinction that is developed with the aid of the multiple-personality-model as proposed in ego-states-psychology.

The next two contributions reflect on the question of identity and images of a person in life writing. Theo Jung deals with the writing self and the author's identity. He introduces his paper with Rousseau's 1749 inspirational experience on the road to Vincennes when he was on his way to visit Diderot in prison, which became a crucial moment in his life story. In his many autobiographical writings he would time and again interpret this event as the seminal point of his identity as a writer. Taking the conflicting contemporary interpretations of the Vincennes episode as a starting point, this article asks in what way modern, post-subjectivist theories of the self can enrich our understanding of historical events, while at the same time providing answers to wider questions concerning the ways in which historically changing and contextually specific forms of what it means to be a self are constructed, interpreted, articulated and ›put into practice‹. To this end, Rousseau's ›illumination‹ and its subsequent interpretations are interpreted in the light of contemporary controversies over the identity of the writer that developed against the background of fundamental changes in the social and economic structure of the literary field.

Dominique Schröder examines the phenomenon of diary writing at German concentration and transit camps. She focuses on the question of how Jewish and so called political prisoners used language to express

their experiences and to cope with their daily surroundings in the camps. Taking the diaries of Hanna Lévy-Hass and Emile Delaunois as examples, the article first describes the writing environment of these two diarists: Bergen-Belsen on the one hand and Ellrich, a sub-camp of Dora-Mittelbau, on the other. Schröder then discusses the role of diary writing regarding the construction of the writer's self, highlighting the specific characteristics of diary writing in an extreme situation like the concentration camp. This part is followed by a description of the biographical backgrounds of Emile Delaunois and Hanna Lévy-Hass and of the material appearance of their texts. This leads to a deeper analysis of the two diaries concerning what is called the political self. It is shown how this concept was designed, constructed and preserved through language within the medium of the diary.

While Schröder uses the method of comparing two (auto-)biographies, collective biography focuses on a larger group of persons. While prosopographical approaches analyse large quantities of data (e.g. in the history of politics or of science), collective biography enables research on the influence of social structures and values on individual lives and careers. At the same time, collective biography as a method deals with personal choices and agency. As a result, collective biographies explain both the representative patterns and the specific qualities of the sample, like a group of scientists, of writers or of a family. Besides, studies in collective biography might shed light on intersectional questions, since their comparative perspective allows for researching the construction of gender, class, race, age, disability and other relations of power (Harders & Schweiger 2009).

As a means of ›creating‹ a sample for a collective biography, »generation« is a key concept in history and sociology. By the example of former COMECON pipeline builders from the GDR, Jeanette Prochnow examines the impact of generational belonging on community and network building under the conditions of social change in post-1989 Germany. Since the 1990s a vivid culture of companionship and remembrance has developed among former pipeline workers. It is kept alive by associations and interest groups claiming to represent the interests of people

who were employed with the state-run pipeline project either in 1974-1978 or 1982-1993. Yet, employees of the first construction phase remain noticeably underrepresented in the community. In an attempt to explore this generational segregation, concepts of the Ethnography of Communication are combined with a network analytical perspective and Karl Mannheim's sociology of generation. The paper is guided by the hypothesis that the »speech community« of former pipeline builders corresponds to a »generational unit« to which employees from the 1970s do not belong because of varying performances responding to events in the socio-historical context.

With these considerations, »Beyond Biography« would like to contribute to the discussion on interdisciplinary methods and theories of (auto-) biography.

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Legend of science

External constructions by the extended ›family‹ – the biography of Paul Ehrlich

Axel C. Huentelmann

Among Paul Ehrlich's personal heritage at the *Rockefeller Archive Center* we find a copy of an undated letter by Otto Meyer, from the years 1916/1917, to »Dear Lady!«. This letter was addressed to Hedwig Ehrlich.

> In the quiet atmosphere of a hospital train which now is taking me to Russia I find the opportunity to meet your request and to write down what I remember from the good days of my time as a [research] assistant. I hope that this will find you well; I will post the letter when still being in Germany. In about eight days I will be back in Hamburg again, and then I will be happy to further discuss one or the other point, as far as my memory will not betray me. Should I have the opportunity to go to Frankfurt, I will accept your friendly invitation. I think there will be much to talk about our common memory of this great and honourable man.[6]

No autobiography exists of Paul Ehrlich, winner of the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1908 and ›discoverer‹ of Salvarsan, and only a few autobiographical statements and sketch-like pieces of information on his life have been passed on.[7] This may be astonishing, given the fact that his

6 Otto Meyer to Hedwig Ehrlich, 1916/1917, copy, Rockefeller Archive Center 650 Eh 89 Paul Ehrlich Collection (RAC PEC) Box 51 Folder 5 (hereafter abbreviated as 51/5).

7 For example an address (»Ehrlich-Kommers«), given in Frankfurt in January 1909 on the occasion of being granted the Nobel Prize, in RAC

less famous colleagues and contemporaries considered it desirable to tell posterity about their lives, like Friedrich von Müller (1953), Bernhard Naunyn (1925), Carl Ludwig Schleich (1920), Ehrlich's ›tutor‹ Wilhelm von Waldeyer-Hartz (1921), who again refered to his ›tutor‹ Adolf Kußmaul as an example, who had published his personal memories (Waldeyer-Hartz 1921: V; Kußmaul 1902). In the 19th and 20th centuries it was rather common for famous life scientists and physicians to write memoirs at the end of their lives. These autobiographies were written as a retrospective memory to make later generations remember one's own pride in achievements. Furthermore, these memoirs allowed their authors to present their own contributions to ›progress‹ as well as to the process of modernization.

Even in periods of crisis (and lack of confirmation) countless autobiographies were written, e. g. after the First and Second World War. These texts served as justification, self-assurance and keeping control of the interpretation of one's own life. If a scholar or a politician did not write memoirs himself or herself, others did: disciples, successors, relatives, contemporaries. This group of people can be understood as an extended academic family, possibly including a sworn-in team of colleagues as well as the scientific community.[8] From Albert Schweizer to Ferdinand Sauerbruch the German history of medicine has maintained the illusion of great men as physicians with an intense passion for their profession. This hagiographic approach to the history of an academic discipline has no match (Gradmann 1998; 2003: 245). It was the autobiographers' or their disciples' goal to classify the main achievements and to locate themselves in a tradition of great scientists. Furthermore there is a great demand for biographies of life scientists, also providing the reader – mainly physicians – with orientation for their work, while at the same time a certain ethos of a passionate and charitable physician is

PEC Box 3 Folder 8; or a sketch he sent to Christian A. Herter, 10.7. 1909, RAC PEC 1/17.

8 See e.g. Legout 1999, who describes the Institute Pasteur as a »lieu de memoire« and the close community of scientists as a family.

idealized and facilitated to the medical profession – the biography in some way serves as living evidence of this ideal.[9] The construction of icons of science worked most of all as a commemorative practice, and the collective memories of Paul Ehrlich, Robert Koch or Louis Pasteur as ›saints‹ of medicine helped creating the identity of an extended ›family‹, of the discipline and of the nation (Söderqvist 1997; Abir-Am 1999).

Earlier biographies of Paul Ehrlich (Lazarus 1922; Marquardt 1924 & 1951; Venzmer 1948; Loewe 1950; Greiling 1954; Satter 1963; Bäumler 1979) describe him as a hero, as the founding-father of chemotherapy, as a saint of science and a benefactor of mankind. Another metaphor characterizes Ehrlich as somebody who was oblivious of everything around him, a childish professor who, far from any earthly interest, made countless experiments in his laboratory to find out about scientific truth. Both narrations are rather fiction than reflections of Paul Ehrlich's ›real‹ life and every day activities, which consisted essentially of organizing knowledge and literature as well as of administering a scientific cooperation organized according to the division of labour.

As a Nobel Prize winner and the »inventor of chemotherapy«, contemporaries as well as later generations doubtlessly considered Paul Ehrlich ›worthy of a biography‹ and his achievements worth to be remembered.[10] Still, his family, his former staff and colleagues had a specific interest in a biography on Paul Ehrlich. In this paper I will give a short account of his life. I will then present the ›history of the biography‹, how books on Ehrlich were (or were not) realized and for which purposes the relevant pieces of information were collected. These biographical memories of friends and colleagues laid the groundwork for later biographies as well as for the movie on Paul Ehrlich. These bits and pieces of collective

9 The great number of biographies on physicians and life scientists bases probably on the need not only of the biographers (or the autobiographers) to locate themselves in the tradition of great men, but also on the demand of a wide readership – mainly physicians themselves – for guidance and orientation for their own work, cf. Frank Stahnisch, cited in Klein 2006: 9.

10 To refer to the keyword by Schweiger 2009.

memory can be found among Paul Ehrlich's personal papers at the Rockefeller Archive Center. Ehrlich's papers have a changeful history of their own. The archival records do not only consist of his personal papers but also of documents by others, growing with every article written on Ehrlich and his legacy. Finally, by some examples I will illustrate the construction of biographic legends. Among others, this will be about Ehrlich's alleged early talent for chemistry.

Paul Ehrlich – stages of a biography

In 1854 Paul Ehrlich was born at Strehlen near Breslau, where he grew up. After having attended grammar school in Breslau, Ehrlich studied medicine there, in Strassburg and Freiburg. Already during his studies Ehrlich had distinguished himself by dye-technological studies on the histology and morphology of cells, and immediately after the completion of his doctorate in Leipzig the leading German internist, Theodor Frerichs, made him his assistant at the *Charité* in Berlin. At the *Charité* Ehrlich enjoyed much freedom. During his years there he worked on the histological colouring of cells, particularly blood cells, he worked on blood diseases and started first chemotherapeutical research projects. These studies resulted in being appointed university professor in July 1882, at a comparatively young age. In the following year Paul Ehrlich married Hedwig Pinkus, daughter of the Silesian textile industrialist Joseph Pinkus. In 1885 he published what later became his habilitation thesis on the *Requirement of the organism for oxygen.*[11]

Until the mid-1880s his future prospects looked splendid, but in 1885 his mentor Theodor Frerichs committed suicide. Ehrlich's relations to his new superior, Carl Gerhardt, were difficult. After a professional crisis, suffering from tuberculosis and a health stay in Egypt in 1888/1889, Ehrlich worked first at a private laboratory and from 1891 on at the newly founded *Institute for Infectious Diseases*, which was headed by Robert Koch. It was there where, together with Emil Behring, he developed the

11 Cf. Ehrlich 1956-1960; and for this and the following paragraphs Huentelmann 2011.

anti-diptheria serum, which was celebrated as a new kind of therapy and as a milestone in medicine. The anti-diphtheria serum did not only mean a scientific but also an economic success. With the serum being marketed, the medical administration started discussing state regulation for it, and a state control station for anti-diphtheria serum was established. After it had become independent in 1896 as the *Institut für Serumforschung und Serumprüfung* (*Institute for Serum Research and Serum Testing*), Paul Ehrlich was appointed its director. In the following years, Ehrlich and his staff worked on questions of determining the value of sera, of standardizing evaluations as well as of the development and constitution of antitoxins (and toxins) or antibodies as well as on the course of immunological processes which Ehrlich explained by his sidechain theory.

In 1899 the institute was transfered to Frankfurt and renamed *Institut für experimentelle Therapie* (*Institute of experimental Therapy*), thus symbolizing the shift of its research focus. After the turn of the century, Ehrlich increasingly turned towards dye therapy and extended it to what was to become chemotherapy. Ehrlich reduced the operative principle of the antitoxins produced by the body as a reaction to toxins to their molecular or chemical composition, in the course of which antitoxins and toxins neutralized each other. Following this model, Ehrlich searched for chemical substances which had a direct effect on the pathogenic germ causing a certain illness or on its toxic substances but were neutral towards the organism. In the context of searching such ideal »magic bullets« that ideally target the pathogen, chemical substances were supposed to be experimentally and systematically examined for their therapeutic effects. In this context, Ehrlich also concentrated on illnesses caused by exotic parasites, such as malaria, later sleeping sickness and syphilis. Furthermore, he focused on certain chemical substances, most of all the basic dyes of the azogroup, with which he was familiar (aniline dyes) and later on arsenic.

Furthermore, in 1901 Ehrlich had received private donations to drive on experimental cancer research. With the countless animal experiments, research in the field of experimental therapy proved to be extraordinarily expensive, and the Institute's chronical lack of funding was the reason for repeated overspending. Only by Franziska Speyer's foundation and

the establishment of the *Georg-Speyer-House* in 1906 the funding of experimental research was provided with a solid basis, so that the experiments could be extended at a large scale. After Paul Ehrlich had been granted the Nobel Prize for Medicine for his works in the field of immunology in 1908, he achieved the breakthrough in the field of chemotherapy two years later. This discovery made his fame last. By Salvarsan, Ehrlich and his staff had developed a remedy against syphilis which was very effectful and easy to applicate, and thus they had also practically realized the ideal of the »magic bullets« propagated by Ehrlich, on whose clinical testing and improvement he worked in the following years. After a first serious illness in the winter of 1914/1915, Paul Ehrlich died in August, 1915 – mourned by posterity as a benefactor of mankind.

How to construct a biography

As mentioned, Paul Ehrlich did not write an autobiography. He did not like writing »artistic letters«, as he called official letters, expert's reports or longer manuscripts. An alternative was a biography based on interviews, something which Ehrlich and his family planned after his 60th birthday (Schiff 1916; Bäumler 1979). This project was never realized, so that Paul Ehrlich's death put an end to all plans for an autobiography. In October 1915, soon after his death, Hedwig Ehrlich decided to appoint a biographer in order to keep the memory of her husband alive. She gave the task of collecting material and writing the biography to a former assistant and staff member of Ehrlich, Leonor Michaelis, and to her nephew Felix Pinkus.[12] Though much material as well as many contemporary witnesses (Hedwig Ehrlich among them) could help to describe the last years of his career, only little information had survived on the first thirty years of his life. Ehrlich himself had only made sporadic remarks on his childhood and education, and most of his fellows had already died.[13]

12 NN (Leonor Michaelis) to Felix Pinkus, 5.6.1916, RAC PEC 60/11.

13 There was only little Hedwig Ehrlich knew about his youth. »What a pity that Neisser is not alive anymore, just as Mr. Max Cohn who would still know some things. These two gentlemen would also have known much about his time as a university student, about which unfortunately I can-

Thus, Michaelis and Hedwig Ehrlich wrote to old friends, schoolmates and relatives to collect information on Paul Ehrlich.[14] Michaelis asked a former schoolmate, Max Grube, »to shortly and freely summarize the memories of this schoolmate and of school in general. Any memory from this time would be of great value for my purpose, as unfortunately sources from this time are very scarce«.[15]

The results varied: Alfred Neumann pinned down memories of Paul Ehrlich from his own childhood and his years of studying,[16] while Otto Meyer wrote some pages on his time as Ehrlich's assistant at the *Charité*.[17] Among the documents of the Faculty Department of Medicine of Leipzig University, Leonor Michaelis researched Ehrlich's lost dissertation thesis on the *Theory and Practice of Histological Staining*.[18] In the course of time, these bits and pieces of memory were supplemented by the recollections of family members, colleagues and staff members such as Franz Oppenheimer, a former doctoral student of Ehrlich, who pub-

not tell anything myself. It is such a pity that death has been such a grim reaper among my husband's colleagues from those days. On Strasburg Salomonsen, Kopenhagen and Waldeyer may be supposed to be best informed, after all. I do not know anybody from the time in Freiburg. Also, I have never seen any ›Collegienhefte‹ [college exercise books], study books or the like. Unfortunately, there does not even exist any letter by Carl Weigert from those days.« Hedwig Ehrlich to NN (Leonor Michaelis), 25.2.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

14 Cf. correspondence in RAC PEC Box 51; 59/1; 60/11.

15 NN (Leonor Michaelis) to Max Grube, 28.2.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

16 See NN (Alfred Neumann) to NN (Hedwig Ehrlich), 25.3.1916, RAC PEC 51/7.

17 See Otto Meyer to Hedwig Ehrlich, undated ca. 1916/1917, RAC PEC 51/5.

18 See University Library Leipzig University, 20.3.1917, RAC PEC 60/11; the dissertation thesis, including remarks on its origin – as assumed by the member of the library staff, was found among the files of the Faculty of Medicine. The thesis is reprinted in Ehrlich 1956 I.

lished a newspaper article on his experiences as Ehrlich's assistant,[19] Wilhelm Waldeyer-Hartz wrote his memoirs during the war including some passages on Ehrlich,[20] Anna Knoche, Paul Ehrlich's sister, remembered her brother's childhood, youth and years as a schoolboy and student.[21] The history of his ancestors and parents was reconstructed from family documents,[22] and a nephew of Paul Ehrlich started to reconstruct the broader family history (Knoche 1936). All these different memories were complemented by Hedwig Ehrlich, who recalled her life with her husband, looked through her diaries and letters[23] and wrote a report of their journey to Egypt.[24] Moreover, the construction of Ehrlich's biography by collecting material profited from stories that had been published on the occasion of Ehrlich's 60th birthday, e.g. by his teacher Rudolf Tardy or his fellow student Carl Julius Salomonsen.[25]

These various biographical fragments came from different kinds of sources (oral narrations, excerpts from diaries, newspaper articles, excerpts from a biography, written reports) and therefore differed from each other. Furthermore, their content depended profoundly on the respective narrator as the source of the information. Heinrich Rosin, for

19 See reminiscence by Franz Oppenheimer, Vossische Zeitung, 4.7.1930, excerpt in RAC PEC 51/8.

20 Cf. Waldeyer-Hartz 1921. Waldeyer-Hartz had sent the manuscript to Paul Ehrlich.

21 »Material for a biography on Paul Ehrlich – I. ancestors and parents – II. school years – III. studenthood – memories of his sister«, RAC PEC 51/4.

22 Memories of Abraham Weigert, 1867, RAC PEC 51/16.

23 »Some time later I will also give you the travel reports on Egypt.« They were still with Hedwig Ehrlich's mother, Auguste Pinkus, and Hedwig would soon look for them, Hedwig Ehrlich to NN (Michalis), 24.9.1916, RAC PEC 60/11.

24 Cf. the report: »Journey to Egypt 1888-1889«, RAC PEC 51/12. The fragments of the diary on the journey to Egypt are found in RAC PEC Pack 1.

25 Cf. Tardy 1914; Salomonsen in Bäumler 1979: 41-45.

example, was almost of the same age, had basically grown up with Ehrlich at his stepfather's boarding house and had attended school with him.[26] Still, his reaction to Hedwig Ehrlich's request was cautious: »Even I cannot tell much; it has been such a long time, and memories cannot be ordered to come. But I will prepare a paper where I will write down what might come back to my mind now and then; and this I will send to you then.«[27] In contrast to these painstaking remarks, *Hofrat* Max Grube, who had had only little contact with Ehrlich, boasted to have »a lively memory of [Ehrlich] as a young boy. He is still in my mind: small, with a comparatively big head showing reddish, slightly curly and always centre-parted hair, and sitting in the first row.«[28] What is crucial is not that Grube remembered Ehrlich as a silent and keen student »who read for himself the most difficult Greek and Roman authors«, but that his recollections related to a time almost fifty years ago. It is therefore questionable to which degree these memories were more subjective than ›objective‹ and how much of them was due to Grube's imagination.

Ehrlich's early talent for chemistry

Apart from his activity as a physician, Ehrlich also worked at the interface of biology, pharmacology and chemistry – which started to become institutionalized also as biochemistry and what Ehrlich called experimental therapy. Adolf Lazarus in his biography dedicated a chapter to »Ehrlich as a chemist«. Starting out from Ehrlich's early dye-analytical histological studies and his studies on chemotherapy, the contemporaries raised the question about the preconditions for his success. They assumed that Ehrlich must have had a particular talent for chemistry which belonged to his personality and qualified him for his special studies on chemistry and chemotherapy. Ehrlich supported this assumption by tel-

26 During his time at the Magdalenen-Gymnasium (ca. 1864-1872), Ehrlich lived as a boarder at the family Munck. The owner, »Professor« Munck, was Heinrich Rosin's stepfather, the two were almost brought up together.

27 Heinrich Rosin to Hedwig Ehrlich, 15.12.1915, RAC PEC 51/10.

28 Max Grube to NN (Leonor Michaelis), 10.3.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

ling anecdotes, saying that he was able to see chemical compounds with his inner eye. Another one of Ehrlich's anecdotes, which was also spread by his friend, Arthur von Weingart, is the biographical sketch introducing a commemorative publication dedicated to Ehrlich, telling that for his final grammar school exam on the subject »Life – a dream?« he had written an essay discussing »that life was based on ordinary oxidation, that even the activity of the brain was such a process, and that dreaming was a kind of oxidation, a kind of ›brain phosphorescence‹«. This essay by Ehrlich had been marked »insufficient«, so that he had had to pass an additional oral exam (Weinberg 1914: 3-4). In the construction process of biographies on Ehrlich, this particular talent for chemistry was supposed to be emphasized, as Hedwig Ehrlich explicitly asked about information on early chemical experiments in Ehrlich's childhood days or his time at school.

This »talent for the natural sciences« was said to have been inherited from his father's father, »a man who had much talent for natural sciences and who even at the age of ninety ex proprio studied the natural sciences in my small hometown and gave popular-scientific lectures«.[29] This grandfather had owned a huge library where Ehrlich stated to have read books on natural sciences at an early age. Hedwig Ehrlich and Leonor Michaelis in their letters to schoolmates asked for details then to be used as evidence for the alleged talent for chemistry.

Heinrich Rosin remembered »chemical experiments, the production of oxygen and the like«, as well as »all kinds of mixtures we produced in nutshells and donated to the gods as ›sacrifices‹«.[30] *Sanitätsrat* Seidelmann, however, who during *Oberprima* (final school year in Germany) often had been sitting next to Ehrlich, stated that he did not know about chemical studies during Ehrlich's years in school. He reported that they had been talking about other things on their way home from school.[31]

29 Paul Ehrlich to Christian Herter, 10.7.1909, RAC PEC 1/17.

30 Rosin to Hedwig Ehrlich, 4.12.1915, RAC PEC 51/10.

31 Sanitätsrat Seidelmann to Rudolf Tardy, 12.12.1916, RAC PEC 60/11.

Also G. Neisser, brother of Albert Neisser, a close schoolfriend who died only one year after Ehrlich, was not able to provide the desired information. His brother obviously had not reported on early influences which might have directed Ehrlich towards the natural sciences, particularly to chemistry.[32] Major Noack proved to be a failure, too: »In my memory, P. E. was a somewhat delicate, modest, very keen and gifted man, whom I liked very much personally. I was never close to him, as he lived a very secluded life. We did know that he was interested in a variety of matters, but I do not remember that chemistry was one of them.«[33]

By presenting instances of early chemical experiments during Ehrlich's years as a schoolboy, Hedwig Ehrlich and her supporters were interested in providing evidence for Ehrlich's early talent for and preference of the natural sciences. However, to prevent this from being disqualified as children's games and to make it appear a serious and thought-out matter, they had people search for the ominous exam essay. They were able to win over Rudolf Tardy for the investigation,[34] Ehrlich's former teacher. Besides, Tardy asked Noack and Neisser about the essay, but only received negative answers: »Also, I do not know anything about Ehrlich in his examination essay having interpreted life as a chemical process in the brain. Thus I am sorry for not being able to contribute anything in this respect to the intended biography on E.«[35] Although Neisser was not able to make any statements on the examination essay, too, he did further research.[36] Even Adolf Lazarus, one of Ehrlich's former staff members, was not able to provide the desired information: »He himself has found such anecdotes only in newspaper articles.« However, Neisser was successful with *Kommerzienrat* Ernst Schwerin: »On the other hand, Ehr-

32 G. Neisser to Rudolf Tardy, 8.1.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

33 Major Noack to Rudolf Tardy, 11.1.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

34 Rudolf Tardy had been asked to do the research work, Leonor Michaelis to Hedwig Ehrlich 1.1.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

35 Major Noack to Rudolf Tardy, 11.1.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

36 G. Neisser to Rudolf Tardy, 8.1.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

lich's son-in-law, […] confirms that often his father-in-law had told with a laugh that for his examination essay he had interpreted dreams as brain phosphorescence. Ehrlich had been interested in chemistry as early as in his time at Strehlen, and in those days he had been mixing all kinds of styling gel.«[37] Finally, Tardy went back to the original place, to the Magdalenen-Gymnasium in Breslau, and asked a former teacher whether he could look for Ehrlich's examination essay – without success, since the result was »= 0«, as Michaelis had once summarized the research results.[38] The essay could not be found, but indeed they could find evidence that the written exam – whatever it was written about – had been marked »insufficient«, so that Ehrlich had had to pass an oral examination.[39] Arthur Weinberg, director of the chemical company Leopold Cassella & Co. in Frankfurt and a close friend of Paul Ehrlich, during the war serving as a major at the *Kriegsamt* (War Office), who had been contacted because he had told this anecdote in his biographical sketch, knew about it only from Ehrlich's own narrations. He »even quoted some sentences he still remembered, and because his memory is very good, as you know, I do not doubt that these sentences were literal/really historic.« Weinberg presumed that the headmaster had made the essay disappear to not compromise Ehrlich.[40] All this correspondence and efforts had – in the midst of the troubles of the First World War – produced only marginal results.

Paul Ehrlich *post mortem* – the (hi)stories of biography(ies) on Paul Ehrlich

The biography by Leonor Michaelis and Felix Pinkus was never written. Nevertheless, above quoted Adolf Lazarus wrote a small volume for the *Meister der Heilkunde* (Masters of Medicine)-series, which was published in

37 G. Neisser to Rudof Tardy, 15.1.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

38 As a final account: Leonor Michaelis to Hedwig Ehrlich, 1.1.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

39 Krause to Rudolf Tardy, 8.2.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

40 Arthur von Weinberg, 4.3.1917, RAC PEC 60/11.

1922 and was dedicated to Hedwig Ehrlich. Obviously, Lazarus had previously been talking to Hedwig Ehrlich and had included some personal anecdotes in his book (Lazarus 1922). More than any other, the biography by Martha Marquardt, Ehrlich's secretary, caused great sensation. In 1924 she had published a biography on the occasion of Ehrlich's 70th birthday, relating her boss's personal characteristics and his way of working (Marquardt 1924). After Ehrlich's death it had been Marquardt who had sorted his papers at the institute.[41] Her book was met with approval by Hedwig Ehrlich, who supported its publication. Georg Venzmer, too, when writing a biography of Paul Ehrlich in the 1930s, was allowed to see the biographical material collected by Hedwig Ehrlich, to whom he expressed his special thanks in the foreword (Venzmer 1948).[42]

The year 1933 marked the beginning of troublesome times for the Jewish Ehrlich family. Increasingly, Jews were discriminated and public life was cleared from the memories of Jewish scientists. The »Paul-Ehrlich-Strasse« in Frankfurt was renamed. With the Ehrlich family emigrating, the odyssey of his papers and the biographical material began: from Geneva to South America and finally to the United States. During the difficult times of exile, Paul Ehrlich's family again wished a biography that would meet their demands. Even more so as his widow and his children believed Ehrlich's heritage and reputation for his achievements in immunology and chemotherapy to be wiped out. Accordingly, his grandsons Günther and Hans-Wolfgang Schwerin, who were living in exile, planned a biography which, however, became rather a compilation of legends. A preliminary collection of notes included chapters such as: »Ehrlich's favorite quotations«, »Ehrlich as a martyr«, the »secret of bacteriologic war«, »Ehrlich and the Emperor«, »coach driver«, »absent-mindedness«, the »magician and on the magic of colours«, and many other keywords.[43]

41 Cf. the Martha Marquardt Collection in the RAC.

42 A manuscript of the biography in RAC PEC 51/14. An evaluation of Venzmer's biography by Ehrlichs grandson, who found the biography »naive« in RAC PEC 59/1.

43 Cf. »Notes on a Biography of Paul Ehrlich«, RAC PEC 59/1.

One of the grandsons also noted: »the secret of the ingenious act of creation. Inspiration by music. I was able to see how he was ›moved‹ and carried away towards creative thought. Rythm. He always needed associative stimulation. Strongly associative, i. e. ingenious thinking.«[44]

A biography from a similarly emotional perspective was written by a nephew of Paul Ehrlich, the physician Felix Pinkus, who had known Ehrlich also from their personal cooperation.[45] The troubles of the war and the post-war period as well as Felix Pinkus's death brought these plans to nought – neither Hans-Wolfgang and Günther Schwerin nor Felix Pinkus ever published their intended books. After all, another biography had perhaps become obsolete, since Martha Marquardt published a biography on Paul Ehrlich in 1949. She still owned a number of Ehrlich's letters, excerpts and copybooks.[46] In the years after the Second World War, two other biographies were published: one by Hans Loewe (1950) as part of a series called *Große Naturforscher* (Great Natural Scientists), the other one by Walter Greiling (1954), entitled: *Im Banne der Medicine* (Under the Spell of Medicine). The latter was published on the occasion of Ehrlich's 100th birthday in 1954. These early biographies as well as the US-American movie »Dr. Ehrlich's magic bullets«[47] presented a

44 Fragments and copies of the biographical sketch are found in a number of boxes in RAC PEC.

45 Cf. Ehrlich, Lazarus & Pinkus 1901.

46 Marquardt 1949. The biography was funded, and Marquardt, who was then living in London, financed by Almroth Wright, a former British friend of Ehrlich; see also her personal papers, Martha Marquardt Collection in the RAC.

47 The film was produced at Warner Brothers Studios and premiered in the US in 1940. The cast was of the finest quality, e.g. Edward G. Robinson in the role of Paul Ehrlich, and it was one of the most successful films of that year. The script was nominated for the Oscar. In 1945/1946, the film was shown at first at Austrian and then at German cinemas, under the title »Paul Ehrlich – Ein Leben für die Forschung«, cf. Lexikon 1995: 3008.

number of anecdotes from the family's collection. One of these legends will shortly be recalled in the following paragraphs.

The construction of Ehrlich's talent for chemistry

During university vacations, Paul Ehrlich usually visited his family at Strehlen. Presumably he spent his summers with additional physiological and histological studies. Instead of guinea pigs, difficult to get and expensive to buy in the city, other rodents were found in abundance in the rural area of Silesia, even more so as Ehrlich had help. In retrospect, Alfred Neumann remembered that after the student's arrival a bunch of boys met in front of his parents' home to collect frogs, mice or other animals for him.[48] Ehrlich dissected the creatures or used them for physiological experiments in a vacant kitchen room that had been converted into a provisional »laboratory«. Later his sister Anna Knoche reported on one such experiment: Ehrlich had stolen some pigeons from the family's pigeon loft and had injected dye into their brains, as a result of which their heads were said to have turned blue. In this kitchen laboratory, so the legend goes, Ehrlich did not only consolidate and trained the practical aspects of his medical studies but also produced different kinds of hair gel, creams and cough drops.[49]

There is a number of anecdotes on chemical experiments during Paul Ehrlich's childhood, youth and years as a student. Georg Venzmer made the vacant kitchen an »alchemist's laboratory« (Venzmer 1948: 17), Martha Marquardt described it as a »washhouse« where Ehrlich »brewed all kinds of little mixtures« (Marquardt 1951: 5). In Walter Greiling these anecdotes became even more colourful: Ehrlich classified stones but also beetles, butterflies and water animals according to his grandfather's books, and later, inspired by the narrations of his cousin Carl Weigert who was studying medicine, he had more animals collected.

48 See the report by Alfred Neumann, RAC PEC 51/7.

49 Memories of Anna Knoche, sister of Paul Ehrlich, RAC PEC 51/4.

> He kept the animals in his mother's washhouse, in the vessels and washtubs he found there, and fed them daily, until one morning, when it was washing day, the maids were frightened by the swarming mass and started to cry, so that his mother had to intervene. From then on, an empty kitchen room on the first floor, which had not been used for years, was left to Paul Ehrlich. It was there where he established his laboratory. From the liqueur factory [the family held a licence for producing alcohol] he took what he needed, at the pharmacy he watched for hours how the receipts were made, how substances were crushed and mixed, how the many glass vessels contributed their powders and liquids. He asked to be given some vessels and their contents, and with them he filled the shelves of his laboratory which envying comrades called a ›devil's workshop‹ (Greiling 1954: 53-54).

Ernst Bäumler, who tried to write a rather documentary book, rejects these stories as »nice legends« »meant to give evidence to his early ingenuity«. Nevertheless, he mentioned anecdotes on how »little Paul« had established a laboratory in a former kitchen where he had experimented as much as he liked and had produced cough drops. Then, however, he connected these »legends« to Ehrlich's dye-therapeutical experiments during his medical studies (Bäumler 1979: 30-32).

Looking at the construction process of the biographies on Ehrlich, it becomes clear that these experiments were transferred from his years as a university student to his years as a schoolboy. Over the decades the legend was transformed to a story of young Paul continuing the chemical experiments he had started during his vacations when attending grammar school. But according to the retrospective reports by Alfred Neumann and Anna Knoche, these only sketchily mentioned ›experiments‹ can be dated to his years as a university student, not to his earlier education.[50] This chronological shift does not so much mark the correction of a detail of Paul Ehrlich's biography, but rather the backdating of his experi-

50 Cf. the report by Alfred Neumann, RAC PEC 51/7 and the memories of Anna Knoche PEC 51/4.

ments to his schooldays illustrates exemplarily how specific characteristics were attributed to him. For Venzmer and Marquardt his early research represents Ehrlich's (ingenious) talent for the natural sciences which later only had to be further developed. Knowledge of chemistry or of the natural sciences achieved in the course of his life were projected on Paul Ehrlich as a young man. As a result, his career towards a Nobel Prize winner was explained as an unavoidable consequence of his early talent.

These legends and biographical fragments of young Paul's interests in the natural sciences and in his grandfather's library, his use of the kitchen as a laboratory, the vital colouring of pigeons, the production of mixtures as well as the misunderstood examination essay appear in all biographies. More or less colourfully depicted, the biographical legends produce an idea of Ehrlich who already as a child had shown an impressive talent for chemistry.[51]

51 A similar (re)construction of Ehrlich as a young man can be sketched by the example of his ›leadership role‹ as described by Marquardt. In the chapter on his time at grammar school in Breslau she describes that during holidays »the whole male youth of Strehlen« between seven and 16 years of age had been rallying around Ehrlich and that he had been roving around with the »whole bunch of boys«. They had made »all kinds of fun«, had collected mice and frogs, and Ehrlich had always been their leader. When they had been playing »highwaymen« there had sometimes been quarrels, in the context of which Ehrlich had »once been severely beaten«. »This may be supposed to have been some kind of little revenge of the physically stronger subjects on their spiritually superior leader […], for his spiritual superiority which, however, did not change at all the love and adoration of all his followers […]. After all, all his life meant fighting. He did not put up with anything, could not stand injustice. He was always ready to defend himself and, if necessary, to attack.« With this »militant attitude« Ehrlich had been a child of his time – and of the historical space. Without a break, Marquardt changes from the »militant Ehrlich« – who, other than Emil Behring, had never served with the army or, as Robert Koch had done, had fought in the war – to the bad fate of his Silesian home region (Marquardt 1951: 6 f.). Probably as a result of the freedom of the author, Georg Venzmer mixed the various anecdotes beyond recognition and colours them with a grain of imagination. Young

Legend of science – external constructions by the nuclear and the academic family

The construction of biographical legends raise a number of general questions. The first question aims at the biographies, at their authors and their sponsors. What was the constituents' interest, what the biographers' benefits? Hedwig Ehrlich as well as her grandchildren were interested in keeping the memory of Paul Ehrlich alive. Besides, all biographies on her husband refer to Hedwig Ehrlich herself: She would be less significant as Paul Ehrlich's widow if her husband and his good deeds were forgotten and, as a consequence, his significance declined. For this

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Paul had not only been a »little natural researcher«, who already »when attending 4th form had the pharmacist make cough drops of his own design, he is also a real boy who knows well how to play and frolic around and who, notwithstanding all his modesty, is the leader of his little friends« (Venzmer 1848: 18).

Alfred Neumann's retrospect provides a more accentuated image of Ehrlich. Neumann's memory, who was seven years old then, starts when Ehrlich was 18 and already a university student. On vacation at Strehlen Ehrlich, »together with a teacher from the local school«, had initiated open-air games at regular intervals. Having initiated them, Ehrlich had been the leader when they were playing »knights« or »highwaymen«. »Otherwise, Paul led rather a secluded life during holidays. He was seldomly seen, on the other hand quite a number of thrilling stories was told about him […].« Neumann tells about the same games and fights as Marquardt and Venzmer do, for whom Neumann's memories must have served as a source. In Marquardt and Venzmer respectively the memories are given in different contexts, wrongly so the games and fights are placed in his childhood years, and Ehrlich is stylized as a young leader. However, the original source makes obvious that probably Ehrlich played the »leading role« because he was older than the others, being in his period of adolescence between youth and adult, because of his somewhat remote status as a university student as well as his contact to a teacher from the local *Bürgerschule*, and not at last because of his upper class status which made him somewhat different from the Strehlen ›village youth‹. Otherwise, in accordance with a number of other memories, Ehrlich is described as calm, reserved and leading a secluded life, cf. the report by Alfred Neumann, RAC PEC 51/7; and 60/11.

reason she was personally involved in shaping the public memory of Paul Ehrlich. In my opinion, this motivation becomes particularly obvious in periods when the memory of Paul Ehrlich was threatened, e.g. after his death in 1915 and during the Nazi era. For Hedwig Ehrlich, the plans for a biography and its publication shortly after her husband's death may also have been some kind of mourning. This loss meant a personal, severe cut in her life, because as *Frau Geheimrätin* she had to redefine her role and to find new tasks – such as organizing a biography, and twenty years later, when the commemoration of Ehrlich was threatened to be erased, his family and colleagues attempted to raise his fame by means of a biography.

For me, it is particularly remarkable that the biographical material looks back to an odyssey of its own. Among the few things Hedwig Ehrlich was allowed to take with her when emigrating to Switzerland and later the US were letters (all the letters she had received as a bride as well as the here presented correspondence), official documents, newspaper articles and other memorabilia. On the one hand, remembering was a bitter emotion when in exile she was recalling past times by way of letters and excerpts from newspapers, on the other hand these documents meant comfort, and the memories of her former significance helped with compensating for the loss of status.[52]

It is also interesting to ask about the motivation of Leonor Michaelis, Adolf Lazarus, Martha Marquardt and the other biographers. These early biographers, who had had a personal relationship to Ehrlich, may have had reasons similar to those of Hedwig Ehrlich: by reminding to Ehrlich's achievements and describing his career they would also increase their own significance.

In his studies on different forms of capital, Bourdieu states that cultural capital is more or less connected to a certain person who has accumulated the scientific or cultural capital during his/her life, and that delegating this cultural capital is impossible (Bourdieu 1992: 55). Using the

52 On this, see the correspondence with Felix Pinkus in the Pinkus Family Collection (RAC).

example of biographers who write a biography of their teachers, scientific colleagues, companions or family members, it could be asked to what extent cultural capital could be transferred onto the biographer if the biographer has or had been in closer contact to the biographed person and thus by biographing the once (or still) known person this connection stays ›alive‹, and, in in some way, the fame of the biographed person rubs off on the biographer himself and if in so far, under these circumstances, the cultural capital of one person could be delegated or transferred to another. Nevertheless, even if one might doubt the delegation of cultural capital, without doubt the early biographers of Paul Ehrlich, who had had a personal relationship to him and the Ehrlich family as their supporter or initiator, had accumuled cultural capital by writing biographies[53] and keeping his memory alive.

Secondly, there are questions about the sources. It is remarkable how insistently biographical information was searched for during the difficult years of the war in 1916/1917. But how is this information to be judged? The requests for information about chemical experiments make us expect a certain answer and certain information. As a result, other memories might have been concealed and remained untold. Beyond this, all biographies are in some way a retrospective review of one's life. Contemporaries had a specific idea of Paul Ehrlich, the Nobel Prize winner. These images were retrospectively matched with appropriate childhood memories (e.g. of the hard-working student). In any case, the childhood memories were related to the later Paul Ehrlich, they were checked for their validity and, if necessary, rejected.

What can be remembered of an incident that happened fifty years ago, and in how far does this reflect a ›real‹ past, in how far is it actually ›historical‹, as Arthur von Weinberg has it? As we have seen, the value of a statement depends on who provides the information and from the de-

53 In some way all written biographies accumulate capital: beside the mentioned connex of accumulating cultural capital, scientific capital is accumulated if the biography is written in a certain academic context, and economic capital if the biography is written for the purpose of sale.

gree to which he/she reflects on his/her own memories: Heinrich Rosin, who for many years had been living with Ehrlich day after day and who, while expressing doubts, tried to remember, will be judged differently from Max Grube, who was not close to Ehrlich but at once produced an image of Ehrlich in front of his inner eye.

The various reports were collected and served as a foundation for many biographies on Paul Ehrlich. In the course of this process the reports developed a life of their own. Each biographer staged the information differently and added details. For example, in the case of Walter Greiling's narration finally the reader cannot differentiate between the original report, the modifications resulting from Greiling's own imagination and his image of Ehrlich, and Greiling's personal experience that only later was projected on Ehrlich.

Precisely because of their lack of clarity the reports were more and more transformed to legends, because they recall events that had happened forty or fifty years ago. Their narrators recalled particular incidents which, after having been internalized, are told as having happened daily. The unique colouring of pigeons is changed into Ehrlich having coloured animals already as a young man. By way of individual legends it then became possible to construct a certain image. The longer ago, the more probable was it that the incident would become legendary. For Ehrlich's grandchildren, who had often heard these anecdotes and who had deeply internalized the legends into the family's (collective) memory, the series of legends fixed on record cards served as a basis for their intended biography. Single, supposedly typical incidents which the biographer may have experienced personally, such as Ehrlich's dye experiments, are meant to typically reflect a certain characteristic. Furthermore, every biographer looked at the sources from a different angle and enjoyed the freedom of the author. Most of Ehrlich's biographers used this freedom extensively. Often the reports, embellished to become legends, served for bridging gaps in the narration or to stage typical characteristics as legends. By way of the legend of his early talent for chemistry the image of the student and assistant physician is constructed, who via

dye-technological and chemotherapeutical experiments finally made a career as the creator of chemotherapy.

In some way, the writing of a biography is rather the construction of new life than the re-construction of somebody's life – no matter if it is an autobiography or a biography. By constructing and narrating the life of the biographed person, (former) hagiographic biographies highlighting the topos of a founding father, similar to the discourses of inventor or the narrative of a creator of a certain discipline, institute, therapeutic or research field, becomes a double meaning: the biographer becomes a creator of a new person himself: In the same way as Ehrlich is described as a creator, e.g. by his grandson or by Hans Loewe as a creator of chemotherapy, the biographer creates (invents or becomes the founding father/mother) a new, individual person who in some passages has only few things in common with the life of the biographed person.

My article is not meant to doubt Ehrlich's outstanding importance for the life sciences or his talent for chemistry, about the latter I could only speculate. The history of (published and unpublished) biographies shows how Ehrlich's talent and the narration of his career as a scientist was constructed from the various, purposefully researched reports. This particular talent for chemistry was more and more shifted to his childhood and therefore seemed to be ›inherited‹. While these legends cover gaps in the biographies, they were also used for making Ehrlich more human and at the same time – by way of making him more human – for super-elevating him as a scientist. These legends were complemented by a number of others: his love for animals, his modest origins, his childish-quirky behaviour and others more, on the whole resulting in an overall image of Ehrlich. The history of science as well as the popular biographies of scientists are for a good deal made of legends. Legends do not only serve as means of commemoration of the ›saints of science‹ but also as an illustration for complicated processes of scientific discovery.

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Isolation, imposture and the impact of the ›Taboo‹ in Stalinist society

A diarist on the verge of loneliness[54]

Malte Griesse

3.7.1938
Bitter Lines
I go to the pub in the basement just around the corner …
To reflect upon my grief and my depression …
I ask for a jug of beer,
It doesn't matter, for me there is nothing to seek any more.

The beerhouse deeply buried into the ground,
Daylight oozes dimly through the windows,
As if it was from a grave, one can see the feet marching in close rank,
Meaning somebody still has a path in life.[55]

54 I am grateful to Gleb Albert, Dario Chi, Levke Harders, Ann Healy, Vanessa Ludden and Gabór T. Rittersporn for their attentive reading and perceptive criticism of earlier versions of this paper.

55 Extracted from K. A. Koshkin's diary, entry of 3.7.1938, conserved at the author's personal archive in Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Ekonomiki (in the following RGAE), f(ond) 154, op(is) 1, d(elo) 67, l(ist) 62.

Requiem
Feelings are worn out in my soul,
Leaving just the bitterness of unvoiced suffering
Lonely and decrepit like a little boy I am getting cold
At the idea that my life cycle is about to close.

My thoughts will vanish from the world
And the corpse on the fire turns into a white nil
Like vessels in the world that pass by without leaving a trace
Like the sun that dries up [and scorches] the feather-grass in the fields.[56]

* * *

These two poems were included in a Soviet diary kept by Konstantin Andreevich Koshkin (1888-1968), an old revolutionary and specialist in hydraulic engineering. The author scribbled them on two separate, loose sheets of paper.

Apparently both poems date from the years of the »Great Terror« and somehow reflect key experiences from this period. They are highly permeated with violence – not with clear and open violence, which would make it easy to distinguish between perpetrator and victim, but with a diffuse sentiment of depression [*pechal'-tosku*] that seems to result much more from the suffering person her/himself than from an exterior world that remains extremely vague and almost shapeless. The »action« or »non-action« takes place in the inner self of the narrator. No one but himself can be blamed for his profound gloominess – at least there is no one in sight. This gloominess and despair is due to the paramount feeling of loneliness that is forcefully conveyed through both poems, though in different degrees.

56 RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 67, l. 15. What I have transcribed as a superscript has been added above the line in the manuscript, underscoring is transcribed as underscoring; my emphases are in *italics*.

In *Bitter Lines* we can still identify the location of the narrator: the pub [*pivnaja*] in the basement. In principle it could be a public space, a place where people meet and communicate. But here it is not. On the contrary, it is depicted as a place of detachedness, where the lonely drinker surrenders to his bitter reflections. In connection with grief [*pechal'*], his yearning [*toska*] is deprived of any concrete external object. For him, detachedness does not mean that events in which he is ordinarily involved can now be coolly looked upon from a bird's eye view, thanks to an external point of view he has perfected over time. As there is no more involvement in earthly matters and as isolation is permanent, there are no more shifts of standpoint. Everything is paralysed. Two interconnected metaphoric elements elucidate the dilemma of isolation from the world: the location and the light. The pub is »deeply buried into the ground«: and thus it is impossible to watch and follow what is happening outside. But it »doesn't matter«, as »for him« there is »nothing to look forward to« any more. Accordingly, the daylight comes in only dimly through the windows that are hardly above the ground. This combination of dim light in a basement creates a particular atmosphere of death and being confronted with a distant life, which is definitely beyond reach. Like »from a grave« one can see the row of marching feet. One cannot see faces, and not even bodies. It remains obscure what they are doing and what sense their actions have. These marching feet just indicate that »in life« (that is far away) there »is still someone who has a path«. Loneliness and ensuing inactivity are identified with death: not only a social, but a psychological death.

The *Requiem* goes a step further, as it deals with the consequences of death by referring to memory and the traces one leaves in the world. Again the narrator is extremely isolated: a decrepit little boy who is cold – a spiritual shiver rather than a physical one. Whereas in *Bitter Lines* the narrator is situated at least somewhere (albeit in the cellar-room of a dark and sinister pub), here there is no more question at all of a locus and of a standpoint. Everything has got in flux, and a concrete world is farther away than ever. The title of the poem is in contrast to (and thus emphasizes) the tenor of the verses: requiem should mean honor and the com-

memoration of the dead, but here there is nothing to commemorate, there is only a disappearance »without trace«. Everything that has been is about to vanish into thin air: feelings, ideas and memory. The feelings constitute the first category. They are particularly fragile and ephemeral by their very nature. So at first the feelings in his soul run dry. It is impossible to materialize them and they can only survive in quite an altered way by the perception and retelling of their exterior manifestations by others. Significantly, this disappearance leaves only the bitterness of *unexpressed* pain, i.e. pain and torment that have not been shared. His thoughts or ideas [*dumy*] belong to the second category. In contrast to the vague nature of feelings (i.e. intricate and confused movements of the heart), ideas can be materialized or realized: they can be clear and leave traces. It is the third category, the disappearance of the *memory* of one's ideas that evokes these three massive, hopeless comparisons that dominate the whole second stanza: first the corpse in the crematorium that burns to ashes, second the vessels in »the world« (a world with no focal points any more) that pass without any traces, and third the feather grass that is dry and – as the author adds above the line – scorched by the sun. A decisive moment is identified: the narrator's shivering is provoked by the recognition that the »life cycle« is quickly closing, narrowing or »locking up« [*zamknetsja*]. In this context, the »life cycle« [*zhiznennyi krug*] has a twofold meaning. On the one hand, it hints at the circular movement of physical life itself (»ashes to ashes, dust to dust«) and thus to the approaching of death, to the closing of the circle. On the other hand, it indicates the circle of fellow human beings with whom one communicates and shares one's experiences: only the presence and the interaction with these people endow actions with sense. Only they are able to commemorate and preserve the traces of a fellow-interactor, once he has physically vanished. It is the isolation from other people, the fading away of human interaction that is at the heart of the narrator's frightful experience, an experience that is extremely uncertain and wavering, as it is (just) an experience with himself, an (unexpressed) feeling.

In the following, the poems will serve as a starting point to reconsider Arendt's concept of solitude, inner dialogue and loneliness. This concept is differentiated and elaborated by the theory of ego-states as developed by psychologists on the basis of their insights into multiple personality disorder. By a next step I will exemplify how Koshkin's silencing of his former political allegiance, Menshevism, influenced his personal memory of the 1905 Revolution and made him an active participant in the regime's effort to launch a distorted narrative of these fundamental events. Then I will explore the traces of multivocity in Koshkin's diary, and we will see how constraints on interior dialogue hampered critical capacity. Although Koshkin never overtly mentioned his former Menshevism in his diary (until 1954), he occasionally found means of fictionalizing his complex apprehensions in at least fragments of self-reflective stories that will be regarded in some detail. Koshkin's individual experience of loneliness as reflected in his diary was not a random case. It was related to systematic strategies of the Stalin regime. This will lead me to open up a comparative perspective and to review some aspects of Bukharin's prison writings. Bukharin's case will be reinterpreted as a human experiment enacted by Stalin in order to study the impact of controlled solitude of an individual. This introduces a change of perspectives on the regime that will be further elucidated in the final part that deals with the complex interplay of reciprocal apprehensions and the accompanying dynamics of dissimulation imposture.

Solitude and loneliness: philosophy and psychology on multivocity

The impression conveyed by Koshkin's poems seems to be a perfect illustration of Hannah Arendt's notion of loneliness.[57] Her fundamental distinction between »loneliness« and »solitude« implies that the former can only be understood by help of latter. Since solitude is normally a temporary condition and generally alternates with interaction, the entirely

57 She briefly presents this concept at the end of her classical study on totalitarianism, cf. Arendt 2004. The pluralist and dialogical self that she distinguishes from the one-dimensional one is fundamental to her later conceptualization of thinking, cf. Arendt 1978.

hopeless state of loneliness arises from a deep problem with what is experienced in solitude, when it becomes permanent (and only at this level does the centrality of the atomization thesis for her interpretation of totalitarianism become intelligible). Arendt defines solitude as a state in which one is alone with oneself, and this means that one becomes multiple and polyphone and engages in an interior dialogue that she calls *thinking*: speaking to oneself from different perspectives. This splitting of the personality into different subjects in the process of inner dialogue has to be seen in close interrelation and in constant alternation with the unequivocal identity/personality that people assume (and acquire) in their interactions with the outer world. Personal »identity« in the sense of uniqueness and unity thus results from a conjunction of two opposite, and at the same time, complementary movements: first being perceived by others as an individual with his/her own distinctive traits and opinions and, second, more or less in reciprocal interaction with this perception, the constant (narrative and moral) effort to be coherent with oneself in front of others.[58] A permanent adjustment between self- and external perception regulates, more or less, the sense of the self and of one's place within the human environment. In a state of solitude and inner plurality, i.e. when we are thinking, this definite point in the world is (temporarily) effaced.

The theory of »ego-states« reflects this experience of thinking from a psychological perspective. What makes it interesting for social scientists and historians concerned with biography and self-construction is that it is not limited to explaining mental illness, but rather takes the diagnosis of multiple personality disorder as a starting point for a general model of the human personality. With any person we find a variety of ego-states, as contended by these psychologists, and not just the Freudian *id*, *ego* and *super-ego* with their relatively neat functional division of labor. All of us – or most of us – have multiple personalities, and the existence of a variety of egos is not at all a sign of illness. In fact there is no clear-cut division

58 Ricoeur 1990 examined this question of coherence with oneself and differentiates between narrative, ethical and poetical coherence.

line between normality and pathology. The multiple personality *disorder* is the result of a lack of coordination of and communication between the egos within one person: the illness is thus a disturbance of internal dialogue, i.e. of the very activity and capacity that Arendt calls »thinking«. The theory uses the metaphor of more or less permeable membranes or of thinner and thicker walls between separate rooms in a house that facilitate or impede dialogue and coordination. In cases of extreme disorder, the lack of inner communication between the different *egos* leads to their successive take-over of the control over an individual's actions. This is so bewildering for others who only perceive these shifts as complete changes of personality. Often the new ego that takes hold of the person does not even know what the former alter has done, this is the reason for memory and time loss (Watkins & Watkins 2007). Such dramatic cases of complete dissociation and inaccessibility of certain alters are generally the result of traumatic experiences in childhood.

The question of inner communication is pivotal, not only for one's psychological balance, but also – if we follow Arendt's famous argument on the Eichmann trial and the »banality of evil« – for the quest for meaning and, in the longer run, for political judgment and moral responsibility. Eichmann's repeated clichés and ready-made phrases that betrayed not the least sense of responsibility hinted at a peculiar absence of internal dialogue which is the very precondition for self-criticism, the latter only being possible when a person is able to take at least two standpoints simultaneously. Self-criticism is at the same time one of the external traces of the multiple personality. But it is mitigated for the environment, for the different egos are temporalized and their simultaneousness is blurred: one criticizes a *past* self or *past* conduct and behavior.

The sudden plurality of the person as experienced by the internal dialogue of »thinking« reproduces the external plurality of perspectives and opinions.[59] This does not mean that the different interior voices exactly

59 Walzer 1996: 111-135 defends the correspondence between outward and inward pluralism, although his conception of the »divided self« is somewhat different from mine. He also emphasizes the necessity of a person's division in operations of self-criticism.

mirror the positions of the individuals one communicates with in outer social life; the adaptation necessarily includes a certain degree of personal transformation. But essentially the inner selves are generated by mimetic processes: the constituent parts of the interior world of (dialogical) thinking are inspired by parts (persons/opinions/points of view) in the outer world. This corresponds to what Kant calls »enlarged thinking« (*erweiterte Denkungsart*), i.e. the capacity to imagine somebody else's situation, to think from his/her standpoint by transcending one's own subjective conditions of judgment. In Kant's view this is the very condition for judgments of *good taste*, which is the domain par excellence of the *sensus communis* that concerns questions of inter-subjectivity. This is clearly differentiated from objective insights of both pure and practical reason that can be attained *a priori*, without recourse to experience, like the categorical imperative, for instance. *Good taste*, however, does not result from the imitation of somebody else's standpoints and aesthetical judgments; it is not a question of reproduction. It has a strong poetic dimension, produced by the dialogue of a multitude of standpoints explored in the interplay of pluralist external communication and of the internal processes of (enlarged) thinking. This poetic dimension as a consequence of inter-subjective plurality and the interaction of different standpoints is analogically claimed for political judgment by Hannah Arendt, who thus strictly separates the domain of politics from morals and reconciles it with the sphere of aesthetics.

Normally the division of the person into a set of distinct selves by interior dialogue is no problem. On the contrary, although thinking does not produce concrete results and rather permanently reiterates and (re-) weighs questions of sense and meaning from infinite points of view, it has an impact on the capacity of judgment, even if this capacity is only attained and developed by an interplay with external interaction, where the person manifests a definite identity, also for him/herself. But if this interplay and alternation of interior and exterior dialogue is disturbed and solitude seems to be endlessly perpetuated (cf. Arendt 1978; 1998; 2004), the split of the self can become an unbearable burden. Then the eternal flux of thinking is apprehended as a pathological state of mind, as

a sort of schizophrenia. This is the state of loneliness, where the person loses her/his centre and the assurance of an ability to return to a backbone of core identity that is maintained (or only gradually adjusted and modified) in the course of human interaction and communication. Then inner multiplicity is felt like a loss of one's own position in the world. This is reflected in the *Requiem* when the narrator deplores the closure of his communicational (life) circle and literally speaks from nowhere.

The fear of losing or having lost one's footing in a perpetuated state of solitude makes a person receptive to totalitarian propaganda and prone to what Arendt calls *totalitarian thinking*, in radical opposition to *thinking* as an interior dialogue. To escape pathological multiplicity, people desperately search for new certainties. And apparently they sometimes find a hold in totalitarian thinking, i.e. in purely logical operations, the Cartesian deductive reasoning of mathematics, where B can be deduced from A, C from B, and so forth. As deductive logic does not discuss the premisses of its mental operations, it provides a particular form of security and stability. It is reduced to the use of instrumental reasoning (*Verstand* in Kantian terms or *instrumentelle Vernunft* in the terms of critical theory), whose conclusions can be divided into right and wrong-categories. The domain of reason (*Vernunft*) is excluded, since it asks for sense and meaning and questions premisses, and is thus always on the shaky ground of (dialogical) *thinking*. If you have deduced correctly, you are right, and that's the way it is. There remains nothing relative like an opinion, which can always newly be put into question. And this security makes totalitarian ideology so attractive for the isolated person who has lost an inner center and self-assurance as a result of the permanent flux of the indeterminate dispute of inner voices.

It is *loneliness* – and not solitude – that pushes a person to desperately seek for an anchor in deductive reasoning, because the rightness produced by logic endows one with a substitute for lost (interactive) identity and uniqueness. Totalitarian propaganda delivers the corresponding premisses one can (and has to) deduce from, premisses that are not to be put into question and have to be accepted by everybody. If it is the form of the right-wrong dichotomy, independently of the content of ideology,

that in fact leads to a depersonalization of those who build their self-assurance on using this form of reasoning, it is the content of totalitarian ideology, i.e. the binding premisses it delivers, that creates the uniformity of those depersonalized. Of course, the resulting *totalitarian individual* is an ideal-type that is never fully attained in reality, but this does not qualify the heuristic potential of the concept.

But however convincing such a conceptualization of personality might be, what can we do with it? How can we approach these inner domains and forms of reasoning for a given period (Stalinism) and on the basis of material evidence? Is not such an attempt prone to lead to mere speculation? – It is true that the very process of dialogical thinking is virtually inaccessible for a historian, and probably generally for other social scientists and even psychologists who tend to immediately take hold of the person as their object of inquiry. Literature probably comes closest to interior dialogue, and that's why literary works, like Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Orwell's *1984* and others, have not lost their suggestive potential for explaining the internal mechanisms in human personalities under a totalitarian system. But this is not the principle path I would like to tread here, even though I have started with the interpretation of two poems and although literary treatment plays an important role for my argument. Indeed, the main focus is on K. A. Koshkin's very diary, in which we can find these poems and several other literary attempts, but also entries of a completely different nature. This diary is particularly appropriate to explore and illustrate the liminal states of the author that have immediately to do with the categories elaborated above. Koshkin's diary itself is a liminal document. It consists of about a dozen notebooks and many loose sheets of paper, with several thousands of pages altogether. His first notes date from the 1905 Revolution and the latest ones from the 1960s, some time before his death.[60] The diary oscillates between very different functions and genres: apart from more or less introspective personal entries, recollections, pieces of autobiographical narration, col-

60 Cf. RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 65-86, op. 2, d. 3-4. As there are also numerous non-dated entries, I cannot exactly determine the time of his latest writings.

lected folklore from travels etc., we can find reminders and notes related to work, phone numbers, but also drawings, sketches, caricatures, etc.[61] The most sketchy notes are often simply not understandable for an external reader, and the general composition of the diary is rather fortuitous: the diarist apparently wrote intuitively on what he had at hand, so that the notebooks are chronologically overlapping.

A Menshevik past: the impact of dissimulation on the memory of Revolution

Rather than in generic liminality, I am interested in the introspective one, in the traces and the limits of an interior dialogue on the verge of loneliness. As early as in 1927 Koshkin explained his diary-writing by the desire for »leaving a trace« and in a breath he asked: »For what? Who needs this trace? Is it worthwhile to think about that?« And his affirmative answer points to the affinity of his writing to inner dialogue:

> It is enough for me to find consolation in the fact that I speak to myself in a tête-à-tête. Have I tried it previously? Yes, I have, but sinful and lazy as I am, I have given up on these attempts, have lost what I had written down and have forgotten that one has to reiterate one's conversations with oneself. That means first of all that I have to confess to my sins and through penitence gain enough energy for correction. Thus I write and write.[62]

Of course, even where the diary is addressed to nobody else and is thus definitely not part of external communication, diary writing cannot be taken for a direct expression or even a transcription of dialogical think-

61 Caricatures and drawings were quite a popular genre, and many diarists tried their hands at portrayals. This inclination can also be found among political leaders, who often sketched each other even during *politburo* and Central-Committee-sessions. On the one hand, this artistic occupation seems to be due to the idea of a polyvalent ›New Man‹, on the other hand the sessions were well known for long (and probably often boring) speeches. Such drawings of leading Bolsheviks have recently been published, cf. Vatlin et al. 2006.

62 Entry from 12.2.1927, RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 67, no numbering.

ing. Not only can the flow of dialogical thinking never be entirely verbalized and needs to be interrupted in order to be committed to paper; the materialization itself would transform the very essence of this immaterial flow. In fact, hardly anyone ever feels the need to commit to paper these endless movements of the spirit and mind. The very effort of taking notes and writing down impressions rather aims at overcoming this constant flow, at collecting one's thoughts in order to come to a point, or to a standpoint. In this sense, diary-keeping can be a means of escaping the vicissitudes of loneliness: a liminal occupation that has to be situated between multivocal thinking and an attempt to come to a univocal position.

Why should this be so in Koshkin's case, who was spared by the »Great Terror« and whose professional career even remained undisturbed? After having worked at the beginning of the 1920s as a water supply specialist and a member of the administration of the Shatura site (near Moscow) for the extraction of peat, he worked for the *Chief Administration of the Gold and Platinum Industry* (*Glavzoloto*) and taught at the *Water Supply and Canal Building Department* of the *Municipal Construction Engineers Institute in Moscow* (from 1941 as the Dean). He later became director of the *Correspondence Institute of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic for Silicate Industries*, and in 1948 the Dean of the correspondence division of the *All-Union Polytechnic Institute*. During this time he seemed to have had a rather harmonic family life, with his wife A. M. Cherniak, like himself a former militant fighter against tsarism, and his two children. He was perfectly integrated into the political, social and cultural domains: a member of the *Moscow Soviet* since 1927, he was also very active at the *Museum for the History of the Reconstruction of Moscow*, for instance. As he did not fall victim to the »Great Terror«, he never experienced the total isolation that was the destiny of so many Soviet citizens who were affected personally or whose immediate family members had been arrested: the bitter feeling when former friends did not want to know you any more, when neighbours and colleagues turned their back on you, etc. (cf. numerous examples in Figes 2007). Even if people around Koshkin were arrested or just

disappeared,[63] an experience that everybody had to a certain extent during these years, his own core family remained untouched, and he was thus lucky in comparison to others.

Was he not part of the masses marching forward for a common goal? Was he not even part of the vanguard? Why this self-image of a lonely drinker in this dreary pub, and why the *Requiem* which almost unconsciously and in an obscure way reflects on the disappearance of fellow revolutionaries, including their memories? Why should he have been on the verge of loneliness? Indeed, the poems tellingly convey a feeling of deepest isolation, but could this not be a literary device? A literary scholar would admonish us, stating that one should not confuse the narrator with the author and indeed, if we separate them neatly, we could come to the conclusion that Koshkin demonstrated extreme lucidity in describing so many aspects that were later singled out as the defining criteria of »totalitarianism«.

But to present Koshkin as a harsh critic of the regime would be an undue over-interpretation of his poems. This can be clearly seen from the broader context of his diary, although – or rather because – we learn only very late (from an entry of late 1954) of a decisive biographical fact that he constantly withheld from his entourage (and even from his diary), but that apparently put a heavy strain on his life and to a significant degree influenced his communicational behavior: he had been a Menshevik until 1919:

> In 1955 the first Russian revolution, the revolution of 1905, will be 50 years of age.
> 1954-1904 = 50 y[ears]. From these: 1920-1954 member of the CPSU = 34 years, and 35 years in 1955. Consequently, from a total life span of 65 years: [there were] 30 years before my joining the CPSU. Of these 30 years, the early period from 1888 to 1904: edu-

63 It is mainly in the post-war years that he starts to deplore the fact that hardly anybody was left from the old guard of revolutionary activists, but even in his diary he never even evokes the reason for the prematureness of these disappearances.

> cation at primary school and college, i.e. 1904-1888 = 16 years. Consequently, at the age of 17 I was already a member of the RSDLP. The schism between b[olsheviks] and m[ensheviks] started in 1903 and I found myself with the mensh[eviks], nominally from 1905.
>
> Consequently, from 1905 to 1919 I was a menshevik, if the period of [my] stay [cooperation?] with the bolshev[ik] [word missing] in the Urals in Zlatoust and then in Orenburg is not substracted. So 1919-1905 = 15 years and then 35 years. And 0 notice, not even 0, but minus 0.[64]

The very form of these strange calculations reminds us of Arendt's argument on deductive reasoning that tends to replace dialogical thinking, when the interior split of the personality in the state of solitude is no longer supported. Apart from the operators, the keyword of deduction here is »consequently« [*sledovatel'no*], but also words like »then« in the sense of »from this follows« [*togda*]. The »I« emerges only reluctantly, and Koshkin speaks of himself only in the passive voice. There seems to be not the least margin for personal decisions: »I found myself« [*ja popadaia*], »nominally«, etc. The »I« is not presented as an actor, but rather as an object driven by circumstances. It is the first time that Koshkin explicitly addresses his past political allegiance with Menshevism (although we will see that he has made attempts before in his diary). Neither can we suppose that he would have talked about this past to other people. But the information slumbered in his personal files and could be extracted at any

64 RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 67, l. 72. His formulation is ambiguous here. He speaks of »0 vnimanie«, which may also mean »no consideration«, in the sense that rather his merits than his failures would have been disregarded. This would not refer to the 15 years of his Menshevism, but to his (successful) self-re-education effort and to the consecutive 35 years of affiliation with the Bolshevik party, that then he was not adequately credited for. Especially as Koshkin is facing difficulties at work at that time (see below), it is possible that we have to read the passage in this way. This would imply a considerable shift of perspective after the release of pressure related to Stalin's death. I thank Gleb Albert for this insight.

time.[65] Not only was the Menshevik party already prohibited during the Civil War and those who did not renounce their non-Bolshevik political convictions prosecuted in Soviet Russia, but even ex-Mensheviks who had repudiated their past and converted to Bolshevism (as had Koshkin) were increasingly accused of conspiracy, with notable publicity in the Menshevik Trial of 1931.

I would argue that Koshkin vaguely felt and feared a split in his personality (vaguely because he apparently never verbalized it): although he probably did not actually lie about his past, the simple fact of hiding and silencing it made him feel like an *impostor*. Of course, his former Menshevism definitely made him vulnerable to all sorts of accusations under Stalin (and the quoted entry dates from more than a year after Stalin's death). This was the case for many Soviet citizens: kulaks, bourgeois, political actors, officers of the Tsarist army, etc., and generally also their children.[66] Their social or political backgrounds had actually been criminalized, while at the same time (from the 1930s on) dissimulation about their past was persecuted as »double-dealing«. Koshkin's situation was thus far from being so much exceptional, and it has to be seen against the backdrop of a culture of ubiquitous autobiographical narrative: in spite of all teleology and future orientation in the official discourse it was not easy, and often simply impossible, not to speak of one's own past and to only live in the present. On numerous occasions one was asked to write and tell one's biography, which was submitted for inquiry and the questioning of the collective (Halfin 2000).

In Koshkin's case the situation was still more complicated. As an old revolutionary and an old party member (that he indeed was, although he had not originally adhered to the »good« faction) he was constantly invited to commemorational ceremonies dealing with revolutionary events,

65 The concept of file selves as developed by Harré 1984 has been used by Fitzpatrick 2005: 14-18.

66 On these numerous »outcasts« see Alexopoulos 2003. In many cases these persons hid their past from their environment, cf. also the destinies related in Figes 2007.

especially to celebrations of the 1905 Revolution, when he had been a member of the strike committee whose actions at the Putilov factory had sparked off the events. With this experience he was an authoritative voice for the memory of those times; and the more time passed and former participants died (naturally or not), the more he was asked to speak on such occasions. At the end of 1954, at the time of his diary entry with the strange calculations on his party membership, the preparations for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the 1905 Revolution were underway. Koshkin was acutely involved in these commemorational endeavors: since 1953 he had practically stepped out of one meeting and into the next. Then, on 22nd January 1955, for the 50th anniversary of »Bloody Sunday«, he was interviewed on television for the first time ever and, judging by his diary, he was very excited about this. Certainly, by that time Stalin was dead and, even though the XXth Party-Congress had yet to take place, there were clear signs of détente. Even in this atmosphere it was absolutely impossible and unthinkable for Koshkin to out himself as an ex-Menshevik on such an occasion. During such public appearances he thus constantly related »personal recollections« of his political committment in the 1905 Revolution without mentioning his political allegiance. Judging by the drafts of his speeches on these occasions in his diary, he never explicitly claimed to have been a Bolshevik, but he definitely talked his public (and maybe to a certain degree even himself) into thinking he had been one.

As in most Soviet autobiographies, a cornerstone of his narrative is his humble social origin: the wage earners in his family lived the life of poor peasant-commuters between the village and the capital, which forced him to start working very early in order to top up the family's miserable income.[67] Once at the Putilov factory, as he recalled in 1948, the contact with the »most class-conscious and progressive workers« could not but »open my young eyes for the reality of life, and I became a member of a

67 Entry 3 December 1953, RGAE, f.154, op.1, d.67, l.73-79.

clandestine social-democrat circle«.[68] Naturally, he describes the *Bolsheviks* as the principal protagonists, as here in his narrative of 1955:

> The most experienced figures of the revolutionary workers' movement Mikhail Iv. Kalinin, Nik. Poletaev, Vasilij Buyanov and others founded a Bolshevik party organization at the factory, which had huge influence among the workers, and the Putilovtsy always marched in the vanguard of the revolutionary workers of Petersburg.

Koshkin's description of the strike and of the events that led to »Bloody Sunday« sticks closely to the official representation in the *Short Course of the History of the CPSU*, especially as regards his evaluation of the agent-provocateur Gapon and the description of his *Assembly of Russian Factory Workers* as the incarnation of evil. The ambiguity of the clergyman is completely effaced, and he is presented as a one-dimensional traitor who had voluntarily led his sheep into misery. According to Koshkin, Gapon had not only founded his assembly on Okhrana money »to teach the workers obedience to the Tsar and to the authorities, to not listen to the social-democrats, to hope for the ›dear father Tsar's mercy‹ [*›na milost‹ tsaria batiushki*] instead of organizing strikes«, all that in order to divide the workers and to weaken the combative potential of the Putilov Factory. But even more so, by instigating the workers to go to the Winter Palace unarmed to submit a petition to the Tsar, Gapon would have consciously provoked the slaughter of »Bloody Sunday«.

> The Bolsheviks and the most conscious factory workers tried very hard to persuade the other workers not to go to the Tsar unarmed and explained to them the criminal and provocative aim of Gapon's plan. But nobody listened to *us* and *we* had no other choice but to join the working masses, while constantly warning them of the approaching carnage. And that's exactly what happened.[69]

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68 Entry from July 1948, RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 69, l. 32.

69 See his script written for the 1955 anniversary of »Bloody Sunday«, RGAE, f. 154, op. 2, d. 4, l. 446-449. The use of this »we« is not an open lie, as he speaks of the Bolsheviks and of »the most conscious workers«.

In reality, Gapon had by that time almost emancipated his organization from the clutches of the Okhrana. He was a fierce opponent of the procession that was finally pushed through by others against his will. However, he did not hesitate to take the lead of the demonstrating workers once he could not stop them anymore. That he survived the slaughter was pure chance. Furthermore, no mention was made in Koshkin's narrative of the fact that Gapon pronounced the Tsar's excommunication after the bloodshed.[70]

In principle Koshkin could have known better,[71] but the exact inscription of his life-story into the official narrative (however distorted this was in relation to historical reality) seemed to provide him with a certain (albeit fallacious) security, not only externally but also internally, for he was far from having accepted Menshevism *as his own past*. We know that the memory of facts and experiences is not something that is fixed in time but is constantly shaped and reshaped by communicational constellations (Welzer 2000; Markowitsch 2000). Through his personal recollections, Koshkin did not only participate in the implementation of historical fiction, but constant repetition even made him believe in his early Bolshevism, at least to a certain degree. This was all the more the

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A reader who knows what the audience did not, namely that he was not a Bolshevik at the time, has to understand him in a way that he counted himself among the most conscious workers. But in Soviet understanding, could someone who had taken the erroneous path of Menshevism have been among the most conscious workers? In another autobiographical sketch from 1948 he inserts another ambiguous formulation. Writing about the beginning of his propaganda and agitation experience in the ranks of the Social-Democrat Party during his work at the Putilov plant he adds: »A really experienced and comparatively skilful lecturer I became only much later, when I developed my activity in the domain of my beloved party work, in the years of Soviet power«, entry from July 1948, RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 69, l. 32.

70 Cf. N. P. Petrov 1907: Zapiski o Gapone. *Vsemirnyj vestnik* 1907 (1).

71 Koshkin was an avid reader of Soviet writer Sergei Mstislavskii who still in 1928 had written an essay on Gapon's death, where he exposed the clergyman's ambiguity, Mstislavskii 1928.

case as he perceived his communicational interactions with his interlocutors and his audiences as a deep personal experience and repeatedly described his involvement in these commemorational events and expressed a certain pride in them in his diary.[72] But apparently it was only a part of his egos that believed in this story of his earlier life, and his internal communication between these different positions seems to have been rather perturbed. This lack of mediation and the one-dimensional presentation of his personality towards the exterior contribute to the dull and distressing feeling of a personality split.

How constraints on interior dialogue hamper the capacity of judgment

Koshkin's commemorative spirit was not something that was externally imposed. Apart from his public duties, his recollections were often oriented at jubilees and anniversaries, even in the 1920s, when he was much younger. On 1st March 1927 he drew a parallel between his current election to the Moscow Soviet and his past experience of the 1905 Revolution:

> 1.5.1927. This day was a noteworthy day in my life. I was elected by the General Assembly of the Soviet workers and employees of the MS[N]Kh [Moscow Soviet of National Economy] to the Moscow Soviet. This day is memorable for me, because it is 22 years ago that I was for the first time elected into the Petersburg Soviet of workers' deputies by the steam-mechanics workshop of the Putilov Factory in 1905. I was 17 years old at that time. It was one thing at that time, and it is another thing now. How time flies. What progress has been achieved in the meantime? 17 years – Petersburg Soviet – the last plenum at Terijoki, where Trotsky and

72 See especially the entry from 22.1.1955, after his appearance on TV. Koshkin is particularly proud that Levinson, the »best announcer of the USSR«, acted as a presenter of the broadcast. »Sinking into the grave, Derzhavin got his blessing from Pushkin. And for me it is the other way round. Even before I am lying in my grave, Levinson has given me his blessing …«, RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 70, l. 39.

> Parvus presided alternately. In my head: youthful thoughts, dreams and outbursts of vigor. 22 years have gone by and I am again a member of a Soviet, now the Moscow Soviet. But it's now another time, other songs. And the role is different one.[73]

Here, at a time when the official narrative of the revolutionary past had not entirely taken shape (Corney 2004), we can see what has become emotionally more and more stunted in Koshkin's recollections. Although he is quite clear about the »progress« that has been achieved since the 1905 days, his melancholy and nostalgia are unmistakable, when he speaks of his dreams and »outbursts« [*poryvy*] in these »other times«. He does not specify these impulses. This part of his personality is already to a certain degree marginalized here, even though his emotional involvement comes out clearly. He remains outwardly neutral, but one senses a certain regret, perhaps towards a lost grandeur related to outstanding leaders like Trotsky and Parvus, the latter having already died in emigration and the former being engaged in his last open oppositional combat with the United Opposition against the Stalin faction (Daniels 1960: 273-321). If we compare this piece of recollection with his puzzling calculations of 1954, what has remained of this part of his personality? Or has this ego been completely effaced in the heyday of Stalinism, so that inner tensions and the necessity for internal dialogue between these entities have really disappeared instead of having to be constantly repressed? Could this be an appropriate explanation of the strange detachment with which Koshkin registers his own past, as if he were a bureaucrat who had to constitute a personal file on someone else?

A few paradigmatic entries from the 1930s will show that then he was far from having come to terms with himself and that the inner split of his personality continued to trouble him. Koshkin constantly tried to verbalize this tension in his diary, without ever managing to address the matter openly. We will see that this dissimulation and the disturbance of his interior dialogue had a considerable impact on his capacity for judgment.

73 RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 67, no numbering.

The following entry dates from a few months after the trial against the alleged *All-Union Bureau of the Menshevik Central Committee* in 1931 (Liebich 1997: 199-216). Koshkin was returning from a visit to the experimental station for the extraction of peat in Redkino, the successor to the Shatura site, where he had worked from 1918 to 1923. Since his work there, he had visited his former colleagues on several occasions and it is highly probable that they remembered the old days when Koshkin had still been a Menshevik (at least at the beginning of his work there). But his Menshevism was certainly not openly touched upon, due to tactfulness, discretion or fear, although at least part of his colleagues, notably his former boss, Ivan Radchenko, naturally knew about his political past:

> Thinking aloud. September 9, 1931.
> On the way back from the T.O.S. [Experimental Station for the Extraction of Peat] to Moscow by train, while sitting in the warm carriage, I was doing a great deal of thinking about these ideas.
> There is a passage in Timiriazev where he deals with the fact that man changes his very essence. Today he is not what he was yesterday.
> And his memory tells him, as he is constantly renewing himself: you remember – you were like that – you were there – you have achieved this. Memory – it is a photographic film where you can have a good and clear solution, and a bad and dim one.
>
> Memory retains and captures anything, but sometimes the developer works badly …

This is a direct attempt to deal with the experience of inner multiplicity: its temporalization (yesterday, today, tomorrow) by the famous biologist K. A. Timiriazev (1843-1920) refers to Koshkin's problem with his denied past. Koshkin links the idea that man constantly renews himself to the Bolshevik discourse on the ›New Man‹. He implicitly applies it to the problem of his denied past and to his unvoiced hope that his renewal will be accepted. His considerations on the vicissitudes of memory also seem to be related to what has been addressed and withheld (by himself and by the others) in the conversations he had with his former col-

leagues. The passage that follows immediately makes clear (for the reader who knows about Koshkin's past), what exactly was at stake:

> Revolution – revolution – my whole life is intertwined with the revolution. And even though I have made mistakes, even though I have been foolish – I have grown up together with the growth of the revolution! I have been borne by her breathing …
>
> And in essence humanity has gone through only the very very beginning of the dawn of [its] blossoming. The night is behind – it is going away, but its nightmares are still weighing heavily; they are still swaying and grimacing and raging in the mist before dawn.
>
> One has to think of this! The man of Europe – and the man of the isle of Borneo. Civilization and savageness. The savages – the Negroes – have been civilized. That means that savageness is the yesterday of mankind. And today it [mankind] appears in bygone collars. Imagine the empoisoned years. Great people – erudite scholars – they are not buffoons!
>
> One great, one giant of thought and action, by whom a narrow chink has been made for the future. Lenin! A little beam of light shines already through this chink!
>
> But the shadows, although tiny, are still all around – [word illegible] and the owls are still flying.
>
> ›Social-democracy‹.[74]

These lines seem to be implicit and abstract justifications with the aid of the »From-Darkness-to-Light«-metaphor. According to one pattern of Soviet discourse, erring and being foolish (i.e. once adhering to the Menshevik faction) was supposed to be excusable if it had been due to a lack of consciousness (Halfin 2000). Claiming to have grown with the Revolution and to have overcome this confused state of mind, Koshkin concluded his entry by glorifying Lenin. Nevertheless, in the aftermath of collectivization he seems not to manage to muster up a similar admira-

74 RGAE, f. 154, op. 2, d. 3, l. 59.

tion for Stalin; otherwise he would also have referred to the Secretary General in this context of sketching historical development.

In order to persuade himself of the success and rightfulness of the Soviet *mission civilisatrice* (Baberowski 2003) (and he desperately wants to persuade himself) he is looking for convincing illustrations of the historical-evolutionary progress of mankind that lead him away from the achievements of the Soviet Union and towards world historical clichés of civilization and barbarism. Thus, instead of trying logically to prove the historical progress *achieved by the Russian Revolution* by juxtaposing the Russian *muzhik* before the Revolution and the kolkhoz-peasant after collectivization, or the Soviet men in the centre and the peoples of the periphery that are still to be civilized, he intuitively chooses a more reliable opposition that seems more likely to illustrate the progress-paradigm, the contrast between European man and the Borneo native. Certainly this choice is a manifestation of his unacknowledged doubt about the efficiency of the Soviet civilizing mission. And accordingly, the gloomy night metaphors remain omnipresent throughout the whole passage: although he expresses certainty in the approaching end of the night, the actual signs even in his metaphors remain weak, and they rather reveal the fear that his longing for sunrise and a consecutive release from the terrifying nightmares might be unfounded.

Apart from these rather abstract sentiments, Koshkin also points out more concrete contradictions between propaganda and reality, but then he always shrinks back from such insights and attributes them to his own incapacity to recognize the real essence of things. With Koshkin a tiny glimpse of criticism is sufficient to provoke an immediate turn into self-criticism, following a quite widespread pattern in Soviet diaries which perpetuated the Soviet practice of public self-criticism and transported it into the intimate realm (Hellbeck 2006). This is the case in an entry that was written when the great famine was devastating the country. These traumatic events, costing the lives of millions of people, were a consequence of forced collectivization, and mentioning them was systematically made a taboo in official discourse. We do not know what Koshkin »knew« about the famine, he probably only heard rumors anyway. How-

ever, he most likely sensed the spreading atmosphere of taboo and silencing, even if he would certainly not have acknowledged it. The starting point of a 1932 entry is again his revolutionary past:

> 4 October 1932. Let us devote a few lines to this day that has come to a remarkable end. In the evening I was at Com. S.s place – I went there in order to seek confirmation of what happened in 1905, i.e. a confirmation of my participation in the fighting squads of the Putilov plant.[75]

This situation was nothing special in the early Soviet Union, which derived its legitimacy from the heritage of the fight against the Ancien Regime. As there are only few written documents about that struggle, the revolutionaries had to mutually attest to their participation in this or that event. For many, that seemed in principle a mere formality. But in reality this was the way the historical narrative of the revolutionary movement was constructed, at least at the beginning.[76] And for Koshkin it was an extremely delicate issue, always with an element of imposture: Comrade S. should confirm Koshkin's participation in the strikes, but he should not specify his factional affiliation. For Koshkin the outcome of such »formalities« was far from self-evident. That is why this day »has come to a remarkable end«, once he has received his confirmation.

The rest of the diary entry directly concerns his perception of the discrepancy between appearance and reality in Soviet life, and this provokes serious problems of inner multivocity. A critical voice within him was almost instinctively intervening when Koshkin considered S.s comparatively luxurious apartment: »They live well, some of the builders of socialism. One can say for certain – they live like under socialism. And the masses?« But suddenly another voice interrupted. We can observe *in nuce* how inner dialogue was stifled and a real discussion of different stand-

75 RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 67, l. 87.

76 See Corney 2004 for the constitution of a historical narrative of October. The most important collection of biographies and autobiographies of the protagonists of revolutionary movement that had been composed in the middle of the 1920s is *Deyateli SSSR* 1989.

points was prevented. Instead of a response, the critical question itself is attacked – and the questioner discredited: »Horror. What an insidious [*kovarnyi*] question, as it seems?« The »as it seems« still left a glimpse of doubt, but immediately a more radical voice intervened that did not allow even a remnant of ambiguity: »In fact, this is a philistine [*obyvatel'skii*] question, primitive like an axe.« The adjectives employed correspond to the kind of vocabulary also used to discredit a political adversary, i.e. Mensheviks more specifically. Once the critical remark was attributed to the Menshevik ego within him, it could be effectively silenced.

> It has always been like that, but there will come a time when this will be no more. Individual people take the lead and harvest either hundredfold grief and misfortune or boon and joy. The masses will catch up later. Let's imagine that S. did not work here in our country, but over there, in the capitalist world. Would he live materially in a similar way or not? Maybe he would live even better. But there he would build one thing, here he builds something else.

Then the individual case was explicitly transcended:

> At the same time the given reasoning is not necessarily subjective, but in its conclusion it is generalizing. The moral: everybody should be a fighter and a worker; and everybody [reaps] according to his merit. There must not be any obliteration of personal responsibility. This means that one does not get anything from laughing or weeping, but one has to understand and to work …

At first, this moral echoes Marx's formula of the logics of distribution in a socialist society that has not yet attained the abundance necessary to assure the distribution of goods to anyone according to his needs: »Everybody (works) according to his capacities, and everybody (receives) according to his merits«. Marx emphasized the significance of unalienated labour for self-realization. Lenin, who took up the formula in his *State and revolution* (1917), rather aimed at refusing to provide for the »exploiters«: »He who does not work, neither shall he eat.« According to Lenin, the state must remain strong in this phase, but it has to be taken into the hands of the proletariat that is supposed to exert its dictatorship in order

to expropriate the expropriators, i.e. to force them to earn their living by work (chapter 5, section 3).

But in contrast to Koshkin's 1931 reasoning on the Borneo native and the European man that did not go further than admiring Lenin's genius, here the dominant voice in Koshkin's interior dialogue actually subscribes to the cult of Stalin and echoes the latest political turn towards »one-man command« [*edinolichie*] that has just been launched and justified by the Secretary General for the Five-Years Plan economy. In his speech on »The New Situation and the New Tasks of Economic Construction«, delivered on 23rd June 1931 in front of leading administrators of the Supreme Council of the National Economy and the People's Commissariat of Supply, Stalin defined two evils of the hitherto dominating principle of collective command: *uravnilovka* and *obezlichka* (*Pravda* (183) 5.7.1931). *Uravnilovka* is a pejorative term for egalitarianism: an obsession with leveling. Whereas wage-leveling was an ideal in the years after the Revolution, Stalin stipulated that it did not take into account the enormous difference between qualified and non-qualified workers, which leads to enormous fluctuations among the workforce. In the phase of reconstruction after the Civil War this flux was not such a big problem, as only a small number of specialized workers were needed. But this had completely changed with the drive towards industrialization that produced a desperate need for highly qualified workforce. Even though Koshkin did not use the term *uravnilovka*, he clearly used these arguments in order to justify Comrade S.s prosperity which contrasted so glaringly to the misery of the great majority of the Soviet population. And in this context he also quoted Stalin's condemnation of *obezlichka*, the obliteration of personal responsibility, which alluded more specifically to the level of command and included the sanction and punishment of irresponsible management.[77] Koshkin followed this argumentative line when he weighed the risks against the benefits of the responsibility that was assumed by Comrade S. and similar individuals [*odinochki*] of the vanguard (»either

77 It is this logic of »responsibility« that is deployed in the Show Trials against bourgeois specialists, including the ex-Mensheviks – they are made responsible for the malfunctions of industrialization.

hundredfold grief and misfortune or boon and joy«). He concluded by turning to educational responsibility: »not laughing or weeping«, but understanding and working and mainly »learning and teaching – first of all our children. They shall be equipped for life, intellectually developed and strong in terms of knowledge. May my own bitter line be a warning for them.« For himself he thus only saw a negative role: presenting a scary example. One might think that he would now move on to self-criticism, more concretely to a flagellation of his past »errors«. It would be logical to specify *how* he wanted to warn the new generation against taking a path similar to his own. Did he want to write about his own experience in order to present it as an anti-model? And how? – But the inner taboo continued impeding him, and even the shrill voice that has accused the philistine with his »primitive« question does not frontally address Koshkin's former Menshevism. Instead, Koshkin pedaled back into shallow waters, and what follows on behalf of his »bitter line« are well-tried clichés of the childhood-narrative that can be found in most Soviet memoirs: »My father was illiterate – may his grand-children be rich in knowledge.« With this toast he turned to his own children and to the rather innocuous question of their future professional qualifications: »Valentin wants to become a production engineer, that's good. I will support him to the end. Zoya as well. Then, on to new battles in life! To new knowledge, to fighting, and – Goddamnit – to less sentimentality, and to more sang-froid and exact calculation, and mainly to knowledge, to knowledge!«[78]

The specter of exposure: literalizing a latent threat

About four years later, in 1936, well before the first show trial against Zinov'ev, Kamenev and other former oppositionists within the Party,[79]

78 RGAE, f. 154, d. 67, l. 87.

79 The first trial was of 16 members of the »Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Centre«, held in August 1936. The chief defendants were Zinov'ev and Kamenev, former leaders of the »New Opposition« (1925-1926) and of the »United Opposition« (1926-1927), this time with Trotsky. All were sentenced to death and executed.

Koshkin seems to pick up the thread of his »bitter line« (though the »Bitter Lines«-poem was still to follow a year later): this time he came closer to his Menshevik past, and he even devoted much space to the experience of living with the blemish of Menshevism – but without saying that it was his own experience. He started with allusions to the famous last verses of Nekrasov's *Knight for an hour* (1860-1862), a fierce criticism of the *superfluous man*, the literary and real-life type of person who is at odds with the social order but does not know how to use his talents and capacities to put his convictions into action. This type of person was typical 19th century Russian intelligentsia, for which Goncharov's *Oblomov* has become a sort of ideal-type, as he spends practically his entire life on a sofa. Koshkin starts with Nekrasov: »Destiny has given us good impulses …« But he does not accept Nekrasov's sarcastic conclusion (»but it is not given to us that we act«) and rises in protest against this verdict:

> But no! That cannot be! It is indispensable to take action. One only has to want to do so. One must force oneself. Is it possible that I am doomed to make do only with impulses? Is my life nothing but a constant change between impulses and unbodied dreaming? Is it not because of my efforts to build illusory edifices that the reality of my destiny is now chasing me and drives me from one dead-end to the next? It drives me like a football, finally in order to score the last goal into the gates of death.[80]

Did his protest fizzle out that fast? Was it only resignation that remained? As we know about his destiny, we can guess what he meant by his »efforts to build illusory edifices«. Again it was his past, which seemed to ruin all his plans for the future. But at this point Koshkin shifts abruptly to the third person and recounts one day in the life of »Comrade Koshin«, apparently a literary pseudonym for himself. This allows him to fictionalize his own anguish, the emotional experience that he is not able (not even in his diary) to articulate as his own: notably every-

80 This and the following quotations are from the entry of 28.2.1936, RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 67, l. 3-5 ob(orot).

thing that is related to the »misfortune that I covered myself with the shame of Menshevism for my whole life«. Comrade Koshin works as an engineer like Koshkin himself. He too is a propagandist and teaches Leninism. The story relates the thoughts of the protagonist who has come home late in the evening, was sitting alone and reviewing his experiences of the day, a fatal day for him, as his former Menshevik past has attracted the attention of the party organization. He called himself »lucky as a drowning man«.

After a working day that had started as usual, Comrade Koshin had to present himself before the district committee »in order to get his status confirmed as a propagandist and teacher of Leninism«.

> Patiently he waited for his turn in the queue for the propagandists of his organization and then, when at 6:00 it was finally his turn, he was raked over the coals within 3 minutes.
> Comrade Lissabon read out his card …
> Party member since 1920. Came from the Mensheviks, where he had been from 1904 to 1917 … Comrade Lissabon could not read further; she was interrupted by the presiding Comrade Shikbali who tabled the question of his [i.e. Koshin's] role as a propagandist to the secretary of the party organization. ›And how does he lead his circle?‹ ›He leads it well, the audience is satisfied and is well prepared for the lessons,‹ was the answer and then suddenly everything happened so quickly that he could not even bat an eye.
> And then this terrible verdict, a low blow to his spirit and heart …
> [И затем этот ужасный приговор – словно глухой удар рванул и мысли и сердце …]
> ›Impossible to confirm, [the case] has to be further examined …‹

This was the external situation. We do not learn more about the events and the consequences of this examination for the protagonist. The rest of the story deals with Comrade Koshin's reflections, his inner dialogue:

> He sat there, his thoughts boiling and clenching his fists […] he whispered to himself: this damned Menshevism haunts me like an eternal shame and misfortune. But why weep? You cry like a wo-

> man. That doesn't help. 16 years of preventive measures and treatment. 16 years of persistent work on myself – 16 years of work in the party, in addition to the two years I have lost with feverish re-examinations to weed out of my head and out of my heart all the trash and the rottenness of the withering opportunist illness.
>
> And still, the opprobrium of Menshevism had broken his life, in spite of the working masses, it had put its stamp on him ›and it serves me right – may people look at me with suspicion and watchfulness – I was a Menshevik (you cannot throw off a word from a song)‹, thought Comrade Koshin as he was sitting there on that day.

The metaphor describing an erroneous political allegiance as an »illness« that can be healed by persistent work on oneself echoes the discourse of the early 1920s towards the opposition (Halfin 2007: 32). The »2 years of feverish examinations« refer to the time before Kosh(k)in actually joined the Bolshevik party: this period of wavering, as presented here by the literary protagonist, seems to be the reason why Koshkin mentioned different years for his resignation from the Mensheviks. The work of re-education consisted of »weeding out« »trash« and »rottenness«, but it is important to note what the author repeatedly emphasized: it is a question of weeding it »out of my *head* and out of my *heart*«. Head and heart, spirit and soul: remaking oneself involves both disciplining one's intellect and emotions. But this »sentimental education« (or »hermeneutic of the soul« as some historians put it, Halfin 2007), even though Kosh(k)in claims to have practiced it for 16 or even 18 years, was of no help, despite the »opportunist illness« having withered and seemingly been overcome. This shattering conclusion built on the intimidating experience of the implicit and quasi-systemic combination of taboo on the one hand, and criminalization of dissimulative practices on the other, a combination that was very typical for the 1930s and owed its repressive potential in great part to the circumstance that the inherent contradiction was not named. And Kosh(k)in did not point to it either. There seemed to be no escape from his stigma. He accepted his own guilt, saying that he deserved nothing but suspicion.

His reasoning reflects a tendency that can also be found in other autobiographical documents of this period, especially of authors who deplore their isolation and are particularly prone to loneliness: Koshkin does not want to surrender to the feeling of offence and humiliation [*obida*]. Such feelings were considered petty, philistine and consequently illegitimate, as they abandoned the standpoint of the societal whole in favor of an individualistic perspective centered on one's own person.[81] Despite his constant efforts, the »opprobrium« of Menshevism had »broken« Kosh-(k)in's life: wouldn't it be natural to complain about his fate? And isn't there an attempt at protest when he inserted »in spite of the working masses«? The sense of this sub-clause is not entirely clear, we can only guess that he wanted to hint either at his working-class-origin or, which seems grammatically more likely, at his close contact (for instance as a member of the Moscow Soviet) with the »working masses« who were far from regarding him suspiciously because of his stamp of Menshevism. But instead of developing this idea, we can again see how the authoritative voice interrupts and cuts short the argument. What it boils down to is self-condemnation: »and it serves me right«, as it is his »damned Menshevism« that »haunts« him.

But what can he do with this verdict, in fact (already) his own verdict about his actions? Does not his hopeless situation throw him back to the passivity of Nekrasov's superfluous man, to whom it is »not given to act«? What else remains for him to do but wait for »impulses« from the exterior, or rather, as his stigma turns out to be ineradicable, wait for nothing at all anymore, as he will soon express it in the two poems on

81 In his diary the murderer of Kirov, L. Nikolaev, voiced his feeling of humiliation after having been excluded from the Party. This gradually led him to plans of revenge. His sentiments were not tempered by a bird's eye-perspective. But the document, confiscated by the NKVD after his assassination, was never published in the Soviet Union. It could thus not serve as an appalling example of the evil consequences of these feelings. For other communist diaries that voice the illegitimacy and philistine essence of such emotions of humiliation see Dahlke 2010: 420-430; on Jaroslavskii, Hellbeck 2006; on Podlubnyj ibid: 165-221; on Denis'evskaia ibid: 115-164; and others.

the Terror referred to at the beginning of this article? But Kosh(k)in does not (yet?) accept this fate of death, decay and oblivion. For the following he took up the idea that first came up in his 1932 entry – writing for others, especially for the younger generation (to give a deterrent example):

> But I must act … I must write my book. Let this book become my honest and sincere confession – and the confession of a proletarian soul. I am 48 years old. The earth turns round faster and faster under my feet. There remains only little and then everything will be finished.

Here again he was at the point of surrender: »The flame of the universe swallows up my perishable corpse.« But: »Faugh, to the devil, it seems as if I have turned sour … and sniveled, at the end I will start writing poems. The flame of the universe – perishable corpse … Stuff and nonsense. We will still fight, to hell with it!« And then, for the second time, he specified the aim of the book he intended to write:

> I have to act, I have to write my book and may it help, at least a little bit, the true sons of the proletariat, those who are still rambling in the nausea of Menshevism, conciliationism and opportunism, may it help them to get out there as quickly as possible, and to embark on the difficult path of the proletarian revolutions, a difficult path, yes, but the only true Marxist, Leninist and Stalinist path of October.
>
> Yes, in the past I had the misfortune of covering myself with the opprobrium of Menshevism for my whole life. Yes, I am a former old Menshevik [sic! *byvshii staryi men'shevik*] – from 1904 to 1918 – for 13 long years.
>
> But look here, I am a young Soviet engineer. I graduated from the Moscow Institute for Engineering and Construction in 1932 and was a student there for 4 years. And still younger [sic!], I am a candidate of technical sciences and have only this month defended my thesis.

While it sounds strange and stylistically awkward here, the apparent play on words like »old«, »former« and »young« is not fortuitous at all. Kosh-(k)in radically changed perspective: If he felt old, outlived, a man of the past[82] with his 48 years, now he seemed to rejuvenate: he was a »young« engineer and an even »younger« candidate of technical sciences. Here he employs the word »young« in the sense of »recent«, but this is consistent with Stalin's discourses, as he increasingly tried to perpetuate (his) revolutionary legacy, a legacy built on what he determined as the »new« and the »young«. The cult of youth was accompanied by sorting out and rejecting the »old« and »useless«. Deference for old age should be abandoned; former exploits (even – or especially – in the Revolution) were to count for less if they were not followed up by merits in the present. What counted as merits and what not was generally defined by the party leaders and mainly by Stalin. In 1935 the two principal associations of old revolutionaries were closed: this was a step towards the extermination of their clientele as »enemies of the people« in the »Great Terror« (Vajskopf 2002: 327-332). Only at the idea of youth Kosh(k)in takes fresh heart. His hope is related to the rejuvenating effect of the new prospects for him to be useful to society, not only as an engineer (symbol of the new technological intelligentsia), but also and mainly politically, for his writing plans to make a showcase (or rather a *show trial*) out of his biography as an anti-model destined to educate the readers.

> So why shouldn't I live? Is it possible that for the rest of my days I cannot be useful for the party of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, for the great party of the working class, can't I be useful for the fatherland of

82 The term he employs is *byvshii* (former), used for former members of the exploiting classes, but also for people of non-Bolshevik political allegiance. On Stalinist »gerontology« as experienced by E Yaroslavskii see Dahlke 2010: 347-361. Garros-Castaing 2009 describes this experience as expressed in another diary of an old Bolshevik in the 1930s. She did not obtain the authorization to name the author from his descendants.

> labourers, for socialism, can't I be useful for my family that has been formed and is developing under Soviet power?[83]

Only his present utility was at stake. We do not know if he still hoped for personal rehabilitation through his writing. It also remains unclear whether the self-accusatory plot of his book was supposed to culminate in an inner renewal and in a new life, according to the socialist-realist pattern of the protagonist's development from darkness to light (Clark 1985) – or if his story should have a gloomier ending – more deterrent for the reader, who would learn that a heresy such as Menshevism was absolutely irredeemable. Caring for his own future appeared illegitimate to Koshkin: would it not be a manifestation of narrow-minded self-interest to hanker after his personal fate (again)? The feeling of elation that he has attained here in the process of his reasoning is essentially a readiness to sacrifice himself for the Party, to assume the »opprobrium« with all its consequences, whatever they might be.

The old communists' assistance in their destruction and denigration

This is similar to many old communists who were to accuse themselves of all possible crimes in the show trials of the following years. The question of how they could come to such confessions have troubled contemporaries as well as historians to this day. But mainly for Soviet communists, notably Old Bolsheviks, who knew the convicts personally from their common revolutionary committment, these confessions represented an existential blow to their own self-esteem. And was there a revolu-

83 Similar to the 1932 entry, he concluded his reasoning by turning to his family and notably to his children, the most immediate targets of his educative efforts who already »blossom as komsomol'tsy« at present, and who will »become good engineers« and »builders of socialism in a period when its evolution moves from the transitional stage between socialism and communism, to the stage of classless society.« But judging from his writing I rather have the impression that he did not speak to his wife of his suffering due to his Menshevik past, although she had fought tsarism like himself and certainly knew about his former political affiliation.

tionary who did *not* have to do with the one or other of the victims of the Great Terror? If they believed in the veracity of these crimes, this meant that they in fact had not been dealing with courageous and trustworthy comrades acting in profound solidarity, but with traitors who had only feigned committment for the common cause. This undermined both the revolutionary common cause (in its *commonness*) and the reciprocity of interactions from which the actors derived their very feelings of authenticity and identity. Instead of conscious, self-assured revolutionaries fighting together for a common cause, an image they built their personal identity on, they would turn out to have been fools. And if they did not believe in the veracity of the crimes, they were in fact not that much better off. Had these revolutionaries not been absolutely hardened, relentless heroes in their uncompromising struggle for a better world of equality and truth, people who not even under torture had betrayed the common cause? If they signed false confessions and told lies in court, how could that be compatible with their revolutionary image?[84]

Such reasoning might seem crude in view of the NKVD's (Народный комиссариат внутренних дел, *Narodnyy komissariat vnutrennikh del*, Peoples commissariat for Internal Affairs) perfidious methods to force people to confess and prepare them for show trials, but even an NKVD-official, who was relatively familiar with the organs' work including the applications of torture, argued in this way. Mikhail Shreider, who started working with the Cheka during the Civil War and by 1938 had climbed up the ladder to the position of vice-minister of the Kazakhstan NKVD (a position he held at the time he was arrested on Ezhov's initiative), survived prison and Siberian camps and later even managed to write his memoirs. The survival of such high-ranking NKVD officials, once they had fallen out of favor, was in itself extremely rare, but the existence of a written record by such a survivor is almost a unique case. Shreider was relatively close to S. F. Redens (Stalin's brother-in-law), whose deputy he had become in Kazakhstan. He recalls a conversation with Redens, dur-

84 For a reinterpretation of the show-trials in this light see Griesse 2009: 119-123.

ing which both interlocutors, who found themselves under enormous pressure at the sight of the frightening events, gradually and hesitantly started to voice their hitherto almost unacknowledged doubts, among which the old revolutionaries' confessions figure prominently. Whereas Shreider (according to his account) was still hoping for Stalin's intervention to stop the slaughter of the »Great Terror«, Redens shattered his illusions and asserted that all this did not and could not happen without Stalin's knowledge, that Ezhov was successful in »imbuing him with suspicion about all sorts of attempts and subversive activity« and that he, Redens himself, had been transferred from Moscow to Kazakhstan on his brother-in-law's initiative as he had tried to oppose the dynamics of terror by remarking that his subordinates »were beginning to falsify one case after the other«.[85] Only in response to this extreme confidentiality that could have cost Redens his head (two years later, in 1940, he lost it anyway), Shreider in turn confided what troubled him most:

> ›I am not as much surprised by the arrests as by the confessions of former staunch old Bolsheviks' admitting to having committed the most terrible crimes against the party. After all, *many of these old revolutionaries jeopardized their lives in tsarist Russia and they accepted certain death in the name of truth without flinching*. Why don't they endure the beatings now and why do they confess to crimes they have never committed? Or maybe I am not right and they indeed have committed these crimes?‹
>
> ›What a crank you are!‹ – answered Redens. ›This is exactly it: before the revolution we struggled against tsarist autocracy and now, to start battling against Ezhov and people higher up means striking a blow in the party's back.‹
>
> However, at that time I was not yet able to comprehend all that. I could not understand what power could force these old Bolsheviks, who *had been tempered in tsarist prisons and in the underground strug-*

85 Of course, in such a narrative one can never rule out an attempt by the author to whitewash himself or his friends, but I will not engage in these discussions as they do not really affect my general argument here.

> *gle*, to confess in an open trial (or during investigation) to crimes that they had not committed.
> (Much later I learnt through my own bitter experience and from the accounts of several fellow-prisoners that it was a significant part of the ›investigations‹ at that time to provide the false assurance that *by subscribing to the slander of themselves and their colleagues and comrades the prisoner would actually ›help‹ the party*. And even though he was not guilty himself, but had fallen into an organization where ›enemies of the people‹ and terrorists operated, he should perjure himself *in the interests of the party and of comrade Stalin* personally, *in order to help the country get rid of the ›enemies who hampered the building of socialism and communism‹*. […] Of course, it is not inconceivable that the attempt to escape torture played a significant, if not decisive role. Nevertheless, I am personally sure that in cases when the interrogations were led by experienced workers, who had the talent for persuasion, this method could have an enormous impact. But I have never and nowhere read anything to this effect in instructions and orders. Apparently it was an invention that was conveyed orally from one investigator to the other, as a measure of ›raising the level of one's skill‹.) (Shreider: 112-114)

Helping the party by giving false testimony was not a random idea. In Bukharin's last prison-letter to Stalin (December 10th, 1937) we can observe a similar reasoning, the difference being that the correspondent was concerned with the immediate situation and did not write retrospectively.[86] Bukharin assured Stalin that he would not only put up with his death, but also with the loss of his dignity and honor as a devoted Bol-

86 In 1928, N. I. Bukharin (1888-1938) was the leader of the so-called Right deviation that opposed forced collectivization. He was arrested in February 1937 and condemned to death at the last big political show-trial of March 1938, at which he was the most prominent defendant and played the most visible role. During the first three months of his imprisonment he refused to confess the crimes he was charged with. He had already been »collaborating« for a while when he wrote this letter in December 1937.

shevik, where something as »great and bold« as the »political idea of a general purge« was concerned:

> I know too well that great plans, great ideas, and great interests take precedence over everything, and I know that it would be *petty* for me to place the question of my own person on a par with the universal-historical tasks resting first and foremost on your shoulders (Getty & Naumov 2002: 557).

Death is not the main sacrifice for Bukharin, but discrediting himself in the show trial was:

> It would be a thousand times easier for me to die than to go through the coming trial: I simply don't know how I'll be able to control myself […]. I'll do all within my power, but under such circumstances […] heavy emotions rise up in my soul. I'd get on my knees, forgetting shame and pride, and plead with you not to make me go through with it. […] I'd ask you, if it were possible, to let me die before the trial. Of course, I know how harshly you look upon such matters (Getty & Naumov 2002: 559).

This seems to confirm Shreider's retrospective assessment, though it remains unclear to what extent the idea of sacrificing himself for the Party by giving a false testimony had been *explicitly* proposed to Bukharin or had rather been made up by himself on the basis of what the interrogator(s) *implicitly* suggested to him. The question of whether the »deal« was explicit or not[87] (the latter seems much more likely) is important, as it reflects the degree of solitude/loneliness felt by Bukharin. Isolation was the »only« torture applied to him, and he seems to have been a sort of guinea pig used to explore what could be done to a human being who had been exposed to almost total solitude. As an outstanding Old Bolshevik and talented writer, Bukharin was an ideal candidate for such experiments. For these reasons, he was placed in a cell and given paper and

87 In *Darkness at Noon* (1940), his novel on the Bukharin trial, Athur Koestler suggests that it was an explicit deal.

a typewriter, which enabled or, given his nature, practically forced him to commit his thoughts to paper.

His writings allowed Stalin to study in detail the psychological effects of isolation and to retrace the agonies of solitude and inner dialogue at the abyss of loneliness. And as was to be expected, Bukharin made use of this »privilege« that could provide him a degree of relief: among his prison papers there are philosophical writings, mainly his *Philosophical Arabesques* (where he struggled with dialectics and thus tried to come to terms with his »split consciousness«), poems, a novel and letters, the most important ones directly addressed to Stalin, the only »comrade« to whom his letters would be delivered.[88] Here we can see how the prisoner at the mercy of his own loneliness desperately tried to establish a communicational link with his addressee in order to overcome what he painfully sensed as a split in his personality (and what had been diligently induced by a combination of isolation and the construction of a distorted biography during the interrogations with the investigators). And he principally searches for complicity *in his innocence*, in the knowledge that the crimes he confessed to were only made up and that he had not really committed them. In short, he searched for complicity in the very reality, in *his* reality that he risked losing. In this sense he wrote to Stalin on behalf of the imminent show trial:

> In order to avoid any misunderstandings, I will say to you from the outset that […] I have no intention of recanting anything I've written down [confessed] […]. But I am writing to you for your personal information. I cannot leave this life without writing to you these last lines because I am in the grip of torments which you should know about.

88 Bukharin's prison documents were treated as top secret, and nobody was allowed to read them without Stalin's permission. The documents were preserved at Stalin's personal archive (now at the Presidential archive) and some of them, including the poems, remain inaccessible to this day. Here I cannot quote the whole literature that exists on these questions. For a bibliography both of Bukharin's prison-writings and their controversial interpretations in historiography see Hellbeck 2009.

> 1) Standing on the edge of a precipice from which there is no return, I tell you on my word of honor, as I'm awaiting my death, that I am innocent of those crimes which I admitted to during the investigation.
> […]
> 5) If I were absolutely sure that your thoughts ran precisely along this path [of a revolutionary necessity to stage a great purge that demanded Bukharin's personal sacrifice], then I would feel so much more at peace with myself. Well, so what! If it must be so, then so be it! But believe me, my heart boils over when I think that you yourself think that I am really guilty of all of these horrors. In that case, what would it mean? Would it turn out that I have been helping to deprive [the party] of many people (beginning with myself!) – that is, that I am wittingly committing an evil?! In that case such action could never be justified. My head is giddy with confusion […]. I feel like pounding my head against the wall: for in that case I have become a cause for the death of others. What am I to do? What am I to do? (Getty & Naumov 2002: 556, 558)

If not even Stalin believed in his innocence, then nobody would, maybe he would even stop believing in it himself – this was one of Bukharin's main fears, a fear that became particularly clear when he pleaded for a meeting with his wife before the trial: »If my family sees what I have confessed to, they might commit suicide from sheer unexpectedness. I must somehow prepare them for it. It seems to me that this is in the interests of the case and its official interpretation« (Getty & Naumov 2002: 559). However, it was not in the interest of the ongoing human experiment: there would be no meeting, and his wife would not receive his letter until 1992, so that he was fobbed off with the illusion of a one-way-communication.[89] Similarly, it would have disturbed the human experiment if Stalin had responded to Bukharin's letters, in which the lonely correspondent tried over and over to dig into the depths of his own

89 The letter to his wife was published with her comments from the 1990s, see Bukharin 2008: 12-19.

consciousness and subconsciousness in search of real sins and increasingly cultivates his affection for his silent confessor (who became the incarnation of the *Grand Autre* in Lacan's and Žižek's terms) (Žižek 1989). So he writes to Stalin:

> [M]ore than anything else I am oppressed by one fact, which you have perhaps forgotten: Once, most likely during the summer of 1928, I was at your place, and you said to me: ›Do you know why I consider you my friend? After all, you are not capable of intrigues, are you?‹ And I said: ›No, I am not.‹ At that time, I was hanging around with Kamenev (›first encounter‹). Believe it or not, but it is this fact that stands out in my mind as original sin does for a Jew. Oh, God, what a child I was! What a fool! And now I'm paying for this with my honor and with my life. For this forgive me, Koba. I weep as I write. I no longer need anything, and you yourself know that I am probably making my situation worse by allowing myself to write all this. But I just can't, I simply can't keep silent. I must give you my final ›farewell‹. […] I ask you for forgiveness, though I have already been punished to such an extent that everything has grown dim around me, and darkness has descended upon me (Getty & Naumov 2002: 558).

The darkness that obscures even what has formerly been crystal-clear is about to engulf him, and reality becomes blurred. Here his experience of loneliness challenges his renunciation of solipsism, and the concomitant statement on »facts« and »the reality of the outer world« that »exist regardless of whether they are in anybody's mind«, a reply that he will give to the general procurator Vyshinskii at the said trial that will seal his fate (Bukharin 1938).

Isolation, imposture and the fragile dynamics of fear

Of course, in his diary Koshkin did not confess to actual crimes that he had not committed, and in contrast to Bukharin he was never summoned to do so. But we can observe how under the impact of loneliness, due to silence and taboo, his former Menshevism in combination with the self-accusation of double-dealing and hypocrisy assumed tremendous

dimensions and took the shape of an enormous, irredeemable sin, even more so than his 1928 »intrigues« (i.e. his negotiations with Kamenev and the leaders of the defeated »United Opposition«) were for Bukharin. And even without being accused by an investigator or somebody else (as he would note in 1954, »zero notice« has been taken of his past) and only by means of his incapacity to communicate his grief does Koshkin come to the point – at least at times in his diary – that what he feels as his deep »moral guilt« is about to overwhelm him. His specific loneliness lasted for decades; it was not as clearly imposed from the »exterior« as in Bukharin's case, which to a certain extent made it even harder to deal with it psychologically.

Koshkin's self-accusatory project aimed at overcoming his loneliness and his uselessness – and in this sense it was both similar to and different from what the interrogator demanded of Bukharin. Both acted in favor of their own condemnation, but where Bukharin decided to distort his biography in court, Koshkin planned to set the records straight and make up for his »dissimulation«. It has to be emphasized: Koshkin *was* well integrated and far from being separated from the collective. His isolation was a *moral* one. The very fact that he silenced his past made his *inclusion* the main problem, to such an extent that through his self-accusatory plan he actually aimed at *excluding* himself from the collective. What made him lonely was the conviction that the others had a false image of him, an image provoked by his own behavior; this made him feel like an impostor. He could talk to the others as much as he wanted, but as long as he did not reveal his moral and political »stain«, his interactions increasingly alienated him from his interlocutors, even though his main intention was to get closer to them. This »false« external perception inspired in him a deep uncertainty about his very identity, an uncertainty that could never be mended by the multivocity of inner dialogue. On the contrary, precisely under the auspices of self-perceptional uncertainty, the inner multivocity became a burden, as the feeling of the inner split(s) only confirmed and exacerbated the loss of identity. External voices continued to resonate inside him – and the most authoritative and threatening voices resonated most powerfully. But his inner dialogue was dis-

turbed; the different voices had found it difficult to communicate with each other and, as a result, they could not change and evolve creatively. They remained more or less unaltered, i.e. mimetic images of external positions.

Such a situation of more or less self-imposed communicational restraint is the most fertile ground for an authoritative voice to establish an (interior) »totalitarian« rule. In Koshkin's case, as in the case of many other communists (like Piatnitskaia, Podlubnyi, Afinogenov, Yaroslavskii and others)[90] who were forced by the atmosphere of taboo and dissimulation to develop a similar feeling of moral vulnerability and guilt due to a past »political error« or a non-proletarian social origin, etc., this dominant voice was self-accusatory, as in the atmosphere of Stalinist practices and discourse accusation and self-accusation, in official parlance »criticism and self-criticism«, were omnipresent (Erren 2007). In psychology one speaks of »traumatic bonding«, most prominent in the famous case of the Stockholm hostage-taking in the 1970s, when the victims, long after they had been released, expressed their sympathy and eventually love for their tormentors and even defended them in court. This is explained by »identification«, a process during which the introject of the perpetrator, to whom one finds oneself in complete subjection (I would say the mimetic image of his voice within one's inner polyphony), is cathected (invested with mental and emotional energy) and transformed from an object (introject) into an image-ego (or »introfact«), i.e. into a subject that leads to the internalization of the perpetrator's perspective (Watkins & Watkins 2007: 14-20). An »introfact« does not necessarily become the absolute ruler of the internal dialogue and will not always manage to oppress all other voices: for that to occur a person has to know that he/she is at a perpetrator's mercy – and (I would add) the omnipotent other has to abuse his/her power by manipulating and alienating his/her

90 I have dealt with the cases of Podlubnyi and Piatnitskaia in Griesse 2011: 154-159, 232-239, 270-277. For Afinogenov see Hellbeck 2006: 285-345, Revolution, who proposes a different interpretation (also for Podlubnyi) that does not pay attention to the aspect of isolation; for Yaroslavskii see Dahlke 2010.

victim's self-perception, thereby having a weakening and disturbing effect on the inner dialogue. And as we can see from the Bukharin experiment, the Stalin regime perfectly mastered this manipulation.

Nevertheless, the conditions of imprisonment were specific (though, of course, not that rare in those repressive times). Prisoners were absolutely helpless in the face of the investigations that could completely control their means of external communication and by the same token deliberately exert pressure on their interior state of mind. The NKVD-investigators were the perpetrators facing the convicts, even if they also have to be placed within a (more or less hierarchical) chain of dependency that made them at the same time appear as victims in their dependency on mercy from »above«. But the situation was more complex in »the outer world«. Koshkin was not imprisoned but dug himself into his own prison, symbolized by the dark and gloomy basement pub just around the corner where he experienced his isolation from the marching masses (that he was in reality part of). Here, in the outer world, the perpetrator was not personified: even though many Soviet citizens professed love for Stalin, perpetration and torture were anonymous and ubiquitously reciprocal. Silencing their own stains, people intuitively tried even harder to conform to the unspoken norms of behavior and unwittingly became their mutual tormentors, while suffering from each other's actions as »victims«. In such a context an analytical distinction between perpetrator and victim is extremely problematic. Persons suffered from *their own behavior* towards others, from their lack of honesty and openness that made them hypocrites and impostors and perturbed what we could call the »economy of their interior dialogue«. This certainly corresponds to Arendt's conceptualization of the totalitarian subject and its subjection to deductive reasoning as an ideal-type, but at the same time it shows the concrete and much more complex workings of and impediments to multivocity.

I would thus argue that imposture was in fact far from being a funny business as it was wittingly suggested in Il'f's and Petrov's extremely popular Ostap Bender novels (*Twelve Chairs* and *The Golden Calf*). In reality it was a state of mind that crippled the possibilities of communica-

tional exchange for those concerned and pushed them into isolation. The regime systematically fostered imposture, for it was conscious of the isolating effect of dissimulation. Aside from stigmatizing past political allegiances, the regime not only excluded entire »objective« categories of social aliens (this was done from the early 1920s on and did not involve personal guilt), but with the »subjectivist turn« of the early 1930s it began systematically criminalizing them and imputing to them individual responsibility for alleged »counterrevolutionary« and »anti-Soviet« *actions* and *thoughts* (this was something like the political equivalent to the campaign against *uravnilovka* and *obezlichka* in economics) (Bauer 1955). From then on they were considered to be *personally* guilty. Legalistically, discriminating laws were revoked; *de facto* prosecution of social aliens continued. Now they were »unmasked«, accused of having hidden their past. Double-dealing became the worst crime that was regularly pilloried. Constantly the population was summoned to be »vigilant«, to »unmask« double-dealers and to manifest absolute transparency towards the Party (Alexopoulos 2003; Shearer 2009). Given the legally opaque situation (fostered by the regime), such transparency was not only unrealistic but, in fact, seems to have been less and less desired. As such, the demand for transparency in combination with perpetual discrimination became more and more a means of pushing people towards hypocrisy and dissimulation and into harboring a latent feeling of guilt for this.

Koshkin is a perfect example, for he does not cease to torment himself with his past, which he denies at the same time. And it is telling that he never realizes his auto-accusatory project, and even more so, that he does not even confide in his diary that it is *his own* project. Without previous revelations and communications about what troubled him so deeply, he is simply unable to realize this project. The result is an obsessive, and more or less uncritical, identification with the regime and with the Party at whose mercy he is. Uncritical because the egos inside him that try to voice doubts about the general Party line and the regime's politics are immediately silenced and interpreted as a manifestation of a lack of communist consciousness and as philistinism (and Menshevism, though the actual word is avoided). He thus views his problems *with Soviet reality*

mainly as the problem of *his incapacity* to find his place and to make his appropriate contribution to the societal good. And this does not even change after Stalin's death, when there is a considerable relief from external pressure. In August 1954 he writes:

> [29.8.1954] I have continuously struggled with my damned question and I am incapable of finding a solution – the question whether as a human being with more or less significant substance, experience, knowledge I am needed by society – and by what society?! – By the new socialist society, about the formation of which I have dreamt since I was 17. And I don't know … don't know, don't know, how and from whom I could get an answer to this question – that is apparently analogical to Hamlet's – To be or not to be?

However, in the diary entry from 1954, probably in connection with his public commemorational speeches on the 1905 Revolution, Koshkin increasingly records meetings with former fellow revolutionaries who are still alive (only few remain), for instance with a certain Troitskii, with whom he had worked at the Shatura site in 1918: together they visit a fellow-revolutionary's tomb at the cemetery, for instance.[91] Although he does not mention conversations about his Menshevism (and they perhaps did not even take place), in the general atmosphere of political détente these meetings seem to allow for a certain relaxation that in turn leads not only to the strange confession mentioned previously, where Koshkin recounts his years in the Menshevik and Bolshevik factions (or party), but also to glimpses of complaint or even limited criticism. And what is new in comparison to what we could observe in the 1930s (and similarly in the 1940s), such outbursts are not immediately revoked by his (self-)accusatory voice. His confused syntax (almost impossible to translate appropriately) nevertheless shows his difficulty with articulating indignation, for instance when he speaks of a Party meeting he attended:

91 Entry from 8.9.1954, RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 70, l. 31.

> [A]gain big trouble, again battles with this devilish folk. Indeed there are such devilish folk, so that they, these hack-workers of the party, [don't care at all about] principles, about efficient and productive work! Better to kick up a row, to find out how to badger whom, how to gobble him up, to pin a label on him, to pelt him with mud. And this is what they understand by criticism and self-criticism.[92]

Of course, in Koshkin's case this »criticism« does not go that far, or at least it is unclear if he deplores the subversion of the Stalinist »principle« of »criticism and self-criticism« by the calumnious behavior he observes at the Party meeting, or if he considers this behavior typical of Stalinist practice in general, that he implicitly juxtaposes to what criticism and self-criticism should mean in his eyes. Judging by the general tone of his diary even in these years, he rather remains an ideal-type of how atomization was to function on the psychological and cognitive levels.

But I would neither imply that there was no escape for those suffering from isolation, nor that the Stalin regime was almighty and managed to control everything out of a position of absolute (totalitarian) power. I rather argue that the regime developed its perfidious practices of atomization out of a vague and inarticulate *feeling of weakness*, out of an unacknowledged existential fear. It was caught up in the web of lies that it

92 Entry from 13.9.1954, RGAE, f. 154, op. 1, d. 70, l. 32. The entry follows immediately after the one about the visit to the cemetery with Troitskii. It is interesting to note that in these days Koshkin read with enthusiasm Dickens' *The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit*. The literary description of ubiquitous egoism in mid-19th century England (and USA) encouraged him to name similar behavioral traits in his own environment. This cathartic effect of literature can often be observed in Soviet diaries. Moreover, 19th century foreign literature, that was widely read in the Soviet Union, provided very elaborate interpretational instruments that could also be used to analyze societies other than capitalist ones. Literary discussions could thus turn into spaces that enabled discussants to transcend or sidestep taboos. It is not a coincidence that the dissident movement of the post-Stalin era was so closely related to literature.

had created itself and was subject to its own mechanisms. Mentioning contradictions and inconsistencies was made taboo; and there was indeed a significant gap between Soviet reality and its official representation. In spite of the regime's undeniable repressiveness, people could shape their communicational spaces, especially on an informal level. It was on such levels that doubts were voiced and criticism could develop – this would be the case with the dissidents' proverbial kitchen-conversations in the post-Stalin-era, and we can also observe it with personal documents of Stalin's time (Griesse 2008; 2009). Much more than alternative »political grammars« grounded on a particular composition of »scales of evaluation« (like economic or political liberalism, for instance),[93] the regime feared criticism that questioned its legitimacy in the name of revolutionary values, i.e. of the values that it claimed to monopolize and upon which it built its legitimacy. Such criticism was particularly efficient: not only Trotsky, but also other more or less well-

93 The concept of (more or less competing or complementary) »scales« of justification/evaluation/criticism has been developed by the French »school« of pragmatic sociology in order to reconstruct different »political grammars« in societies and its subsystems. See the display of the general model in Boltanski & Thévenot 1991 and, for the elaboration of a »liberal grammar« from a juxtaposition of different manners of settling conflicts in various subsectors of the French and US-American societies, see Lamont & Thévenot 2000. This pluralist approach with a highly elaborate and systematic revaluation of free human agency can be read as a response to Hannah Arendt's criticism of the social sciences and their reduction of human action to calculable behavior. This criticism was primarily intended for behaviorist sociology, but actually it applies to most sociology including Bourdieu's *habitus* and his comparatively hermetic field-theory that is put into perspective by Boltanski and Thévenot. In a current work I am trying to combine the ethical pluralism (not arbitrariness) of the social world as conceptualized in pragmatic sociology, with the multiplicity of the personality as theorized in ego-state-psychology. In this article this would have led to confusion, as my principal focus was on the state of loneliness and because my principal source material, Koshkin's extremely introspective diary (that recalls very few external dialogues), is rather unsuitable for an empirical demonstration of the correspondences of concrete evaluation-scales between outward interlocutors and inner ego-states.

known renegades (like A. Ciliga, M. S. Voslenskii, F. F. Raskol'nikov, V. Kravchenko) attacked propaganda lies as an indicator of the regime's betrayal of revolutionary ideals and as proof of its usurpatory essence. As these collectivist revolutionary values were constantly disseminated and must have had the most important anchoring in the Soviet Union, such argumentation seemed to be able to raise considerable support in the shortest time. And who could articulate such criticism with more persuasiveness than old revolutionaries, who had made the Revolution, had devoted their lives to its values and who could speak with an authoritative voice on what the Revolution really meant and how the regime had distorted it in order to establish its usurpatory rule?

The authority of these Old Bolsheviks was thus particularly dangerous for the Stalin regime, and even more so their personal networks that were regarded with deep suspicion as (potential) generators of criticism. Could they meet without discussing politics? And what was the outcome of such conversations? The fervent public discussions during the Revolution had shown the dynamics and uncontrollable potential of uninhibited human interactions, and the participants in these events had formed their political personae in the course of this dynamic experience. In the eyes of the anxious regime it was hard to imagine that they could have changed forever and that they could have lastingly given up their deep committment with the revolutionary cause (whatever they might understand by it in actual practice). But, on the other hand, they were needed to foster the regime's legitimacy. The Stalin regime felt itself ideologically too fragile to trust solely in their convictions; on the contrary, it was their fierce convictions that it feared most, so that it increasingly looked to corrupting them by pushing them into imposture and dissimulation. People with blemishes like Koshkin (or Vyshinskii, also a former Menshevik) could be particularly useful instruments, and as we know Stalin favored them as collaborators. In order to foster imposture, the regime elaborated and constantly refined its methods, of which isolation and atomization to inspire vexing feelings of guilt were paramount.

Hannah Arendt speaks of »guilt by association«, meaning that contact with an oppositional or »enemy« was considered sufficient to incriminate a person. But on a more profound level we could speak of »association by guilt«: the feeling of guilt, occasioned by one's own dissimulation, associates the impostor with the falsifying and manipulatory regime. This is not to be conceptualized as a question of pure »negotiation« and overt complicity (»I lie and hide and do not denounce the regime's lie, and in return I can expect from the regime that it doesn't dig too deep and accepts the distorted version of my past …«), but as a more complex process that comes down to the very cognitive level of recognizing reality and facts. So it often occurs that people mistrust their very basic perceptions (let alone their judgments, which is a much more complex level) if they do not communicate and share them with others. If not confirmed by communicational exchange, perception and »experience« become dreamlike, as in Koshkin's poems where the outer world seems to fade away, and as in Bukharin's letters to Stalin where he deplores that »everything has grown dim around me, and darkness has descended upon me« (the »solipsist« self-experience that the former leader of the Rightist Opposition refutes so vehemently in court when facing Vyshinskii.[94]

But this loss of reality could rapidly come to an end when people spoke to each other and shared experiences. The Stalinist regime did not fear individuals as such: they could be controlled, like Bukharin in the human experiment mentioned previously. It did not even fear informal networks if they had a rather utilitarian design (such as the criminals, who were consequently privileged towards the »political prisoners« in the Gulag). But it feared relations of trust between politically engaged people, especially communists who embraced revolutionary values, relations that en-

94 Of course, this phenomenon is hard to grasp in written sources, because it concerns the unspoken that is rapidly effaced even from memory. For that reason contemporaries of the Third Reich in Germany often claimed in retrospective that they didn't know anything about the extermination of Jews. Often they have not shared their perceptions, of raids on their neighborhood and of the disappearance of Jewish families. They have not asked questions and the futile perception did not materialize and rapidly »vanished from the world«.

abled open and engaged communication and the forming of opinions on political issues.

These fears grew notably in the aftermath of forced collectivization, when the denial of the great famine and the blurring of reality by the state did take on unprecedented dimensions. This multiplied the regime's fears. It singled out scapegoats instead of recognizing the catastrophic failure of its economic policy. But this was no guarantee at all that others would not point at this discrepancy between reality and appearance. It was the fear of the naively truthful word that would call a spade a spade and thus lead to mutually backed up recognition of basic facts of economic and other realities that were otherwise denied, resulting in the regime's fundamental de-legitimization. To prevent such naively truthful words from emerging, people had to be transformed into liars, they had to be isolated from each other by dissimulation and through a vague and vexed feeling of personal guilt – a feeling that Koshkin describes in such a depressing manner.

It is not a coincidence that the (innocent and uncorrupted) child in Anderson's tale speaks out the very basic and ostensible truth that everybody tried desperately to ignore: that the emperor was naked. These innocent, honest parts in the personalities had to be tamed and suppressed in order to ensure the functioning of the systemic taboo.

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The writing self

Rousseau and the author's identity

Theo Jung

Introduction

»The History of the world«, the British historian, novelist and literary critic Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) famously wrote in his *On heroes, hero-worship and the heroic in history*, »is but the Biography of great men« (Carlyle 1840: 34). »They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of men contrived to do or to attain« (3). Naturally, not all agreed with this view. One outspoken contemporary critic of this type of historiography as the serial biography of a number of heroes was the philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). In the second chapter of his classic *The study of sociology* he posed the question if there could be such a thing as a social science. At least two groups, he thought, would deny such a possibility. Those who saw the hand of Providence at work with every historical phenomenon were bound to write history as a series of acts of God. As every event was individually produced by a divine will which could change at any moment this could not, properly speaking, be an object of science. The second group, »allied« to the first and »equally unprepared to interpret sociological phenomena scientifically«, was made up of those who interpreted the course of civilization as the mere »record of remarkable persons and their doings« (Spencer 1874: 30).

Needless to say, what Spencer termed the »great-man-theory« of history was not at all to his taste. Dismissing as ridiculous the supernatural interpretation of the great man as a »deputy-god«, he stressed the necessity to

account for his natural origins. Like all other phenomena, the great man should be understood as a product of a »long series of complex influences«. »Along with the whole generation of which he forms a minute part – along with its institutions, language, knowledge, manners, and its multitudinous arts and appliances, he is the result of an enormous aggregate of forces that have been co-operating for ages.« Although Spencer did not deny that certain outstanding individuals could have a decisive influence on the history of societies, he stressed that »[b]efore he can re-make his society, his society must make him« (34-35).

As the intellectual weaknesses of the »great-man-theory« were only too obvious, in Spencer's opinion its continuing popularity could only be accounted for by other factors: the universal love of »personalities«, the theory's enticing combination of instruction and amusement, and its beautiful simplicity (32-33). Significantly, Spencer traced its origins to the pre-scientific narratives told by »savages« assembled around their campfires and to the records of early – »uncivilized and semi-civilized« (30-31) – peoples. In this context there could even be, he admitted, a limited truth to the »great-man-theory« in that it »approximately expresses the fact in representing the capable leader as all-important«. But inasmuch as societies had become more complex, they could no longer be adequately understood in this way. A true science of society was needed and the degree to which someone was prepared to switch his focus from the individual to the general structures of social life could be taken as a meassure of his intellectual maturity: »If you want roughly to estimate any one's mental calibre, you cannot do it better than by observing the ratio of generalities to personalities in his talk – how far simple truths about individuals are replaced by truths abstracted from numerous experiences and things« (Spencer 1874: 32).

Carlyle had anticipated this type of argument and had tried to answer it in advance. In his eyes, the modern disposition against hero-worshipping was a woeful sign of the times. It was symptomatic of an age that reduced all greatness to the circumstances of its emergence. »Show our critics a great man,« he wrote, »they begin to what they call ›account‹ for him; not to worship him, but take the dimensions of him, – and bring

him out to be a little kind of man! He was the ›creature of the Time‹, they say; the Time called him forth, the Time did everything, he nothing – but what we the little critic could have done too!« (Carlyle 1840: 15-16). The conditions of modern society, he thought, were not to be interpreted as the preconditions of the great man. In the best case they were only »dead fuel, waiting for the lightning out of Heaven that shall kindle it« (16), in the worst case nothing but »mountains of impediment« (188) under which heroic men were buried. Like Spencer, Carlyle was not afraid to draw conclusions regarding his opponents' identities: »Those are critics of small vision, I think, who cry: ›See, is it not the sticks that made the fire?‹ No sadder proof can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men. There is no sadder symptom of a generation than such general blindness to the spiritual lightning, with faith only in the heap of barren dead fuel« (17).

Such heavy-handed polemics, pitting the ›unscientific‹ against the ›narrow-minded‹, seem from our point of view outdated and overly schematic. They belong to a period in which the disciplines of history and sociology were enemies, competing for academic respectability (and resources). Since then, they have grown much closer. History has left behind its predilection for the individual stories of dead white males and habitually includes social and economic structures as an integral part of its narratives. Sociology, on the other hand, has increasingly found ways to integrate particular historical circumstances and events as well as individual actions into its models of society. Even more important for our changed perspective on such questions than the reciprocal convergences of two disciplines is the gradual emergence – in both disciplines, or rather: between them – of a new type of question that sheds a new light on the opposition between individual agency and social structure itself.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, both the humanities and the social sciences have experienced a gradual shift of emphasis towards the analysis of ›meaning‹ and its role in the social construction of reality. What has been termed the ›cultural turn‹ (cf. Bachmann-Medick 2009) had many faces – a linguistic, a performative, a post-colonial, a spatial and an iconic ›turn‹, to name but a few. One important effect, however,

was that it produced a new way of conceptualizing the individual in its relation to the social structures surrounding him/her. Previously, the ›individual‹ had been primarily understood as a unified entity both forming the atomic building blocks of social structures and being constrained by them. Under the influence of post-structuralist philosophy, however, this traditional concept of the subject was ›de-centered‹ in several respects (cf. Reckwitz 2008: 11-22). Instead of understanding the individual self as an autonomous, irreducible and essentially a-historical universal entity, historians and sociologists alike began to turn their focus to the pluriformity of historically changing ›forms of subjectification‹. They analyzed the culturally specific and competing discourses and practices that make up what it means to be a (certain form of) self in particular historical circumstances. At the same time, the in-divisibility of the in-dividual was broken up into a multiplicity of identities played out in various contexts, identities which may or may not conflict with one another.

This change of perspective was reflected by the type of historical narratives it engendered. Many traditional narratives of modernization had taken their cue from the dualism between the individual and the social, interpreting the history of ›civilization‹ either as the progressive emancipation of the individual from social constraints or, conversely, as the gradual subjection of the individual under ever stricter and more rationalized regimes of social discipline. As the dualism between the individual and society was progressively broken up, these grand narratives lost their appeal. They were replaced by a multitude of contextually sensitive studies about particular conceptions of subjectivity in specific historical contexts.

It is to a specific chapter of this history of the ›self‹, of ›subjectivity‹ or ›identity‹ (the terminology to be preferred is a matter of dispute) that we want to turn our attention here. Taking a well known ›anecdote‹ from the history of thought as a test case, the question is posed if and how the discussed new theoretical understanding of the (history of the) self provides a fruitful new perspective on specific historical events and developments, one that significantly broadens traditional accounts.

It will be argued that even if not all aspects of the post-subjectivist theories of subjectification are equally applicable at all times and to all subject matters, they are helpful in that they direct our attention to at least four dimensions of ›selfhood‹ that have remained underappreciated in the past. In the first place, this holds true for the general shift of focus from the individual as an analytical entity presumed to be self-transparent, rational, universal and a-historical to its various historically changing forms of subjectification. Second, for the fact that the individual's identity is never a given but always a socially contested construction at the centre of a permanent struggle between competing normative conceptions of identity put forward by the individual himself as well as by others. Third, it points to the fact that therefore the ›individual‹ is in fact ›divisible‹ in that he/she may resort to multiple forms of identity in various circumstances and contexts. The hybrid quality of the individual's identity is thus not something endangering his/her a priori unity from the outside, but rather an essential part of what it means to be an individual in the first place, resulting from the ambivalent, equivocal and often non-congruent forms of subjectivity that make up this unstable unity we call the self. Finally, it helps us understand that identity is not just a question of metaphysics but is essentially connected to specific social practices in the context of which forms of subjectivity are ›performed‹ or rather: ›put into practice‹. These ›strategies‹ or ›technologies‹ do not just express an identity that has been there all along. Rather, they are ways included in the individual ›working out‹ his/her identity, constructing his/her own self in the process.

Rousseau's ›illumination‹ and Diderot's counter-narrative

One example of such practices of subjectification meriting special attention is the individual's narration of his/her own life. Autobiography, though often posing as the objective analysis of the (past) self, is productive in that it reduces the multiplicity and ambivalences of lived experience to a single narrative, selecting ›relevant‹ events and providing them with the inner coherence of a structured plot. One of the best known examples of this practice of retrospective self-narration – one that was to become immensely influential in later times – are the many autobio-

graphical writings of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), most notably his *Confessions* (1782). At the centre of Rousseau's life story, as it is told by himself, stands an episode that has come to be one of the most famous anecdotes of literary history (cf. Starobinski 1980; Darnton 2003: 107-118).

In the afternoon of August 25th 1749, Jean-Jacques Rousseau was on his way from Paris to the medieval fortress of Vincennes just outside the city to visit his friend Denis Diderot (1713-1784) who was imprisoned there. Diderot, who a few years earlier had started the editing process of what would become the *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, had been arrested on account of the publication of his *Lettre sur les aveugles*. Tired from the long walk and the burning sun, Rousseau sat down in the shade of one of the oak trees lining the road with a copy of the *Mercure de France*. On its pages he found the announcement of a prize contest offered by the Dijon Academy of Sciences, Arts and Literature for an essay on the question »if the re-establishment of the sciences and the arts has contributed to the purification of morals«. This moment would prove decisive. On the spot and in a feverish state, he wrote down the so-called *prosopopoeia* (a technical term for a speech in the voice of a dead person or object) of the ancient Roman Fabricius (Rousseau 1751: 24-28). This would be the centrepiece of the discourse by which he would make a literary name for himself, a text which would spark a Europe-wide debate on the merits and drawbacks of civilisation (cf. Tente 1974).

In retrospective accounts, Rousseau would time and again emphasize this event's inspirational character. The question of the Academy had provoked in him a singular and irretrievable experience, a vision that had changed his life. In 1762, in an open letter to Frances head censor, Chrétien-Guillaume de Lamoignon de Malesherbes (1721-1794), he wrote:

> Si jamais quelque chose a ressemblé à une inspiration subite, c'est le mouvement qui se fit en moi à cette lecture; tout-à-coup je me sens l'esprit ébloui de mille lumieres; des foules d'idées vives s'y présentent à la fois avec une force, & une confusion qui me jetta dans un trouble inexprimable; je sens ma tête prise par un étour-

> dissement semblable à l'ivresse. Une violente palpitation m'oppresse, souleve ma poitrine; ne pouvant plus respirer en marchant, je me laisse tomber sous un des arbres de l'avenue, & j'y passe une demi-heure dans une telle agitation, qu'en me relevant j'apperçus tout le devant de ma veste mouillé de mes larmes, sans avoir senti que j'en répandois (Rousseau 1792: 248-249).

Later, in the eighth book of his *Confessions*, he returned to the event. Once more he interpreted the experience as a turning point in his life story: »A l'instant de cette lecture, je vis un autre univers, & je devins un autre homme« (Rousseau 1789: I, 228). This time, however, his later experiences placed the incident in a more ambivalent light. What had been the seminal experience of the one big truth to which he had dedicated his life had in the long run turned out to be a personal catastrophe.

> Ce que je me rappelle bien distinctement dans cette occasion, c'est qu'arrivant à Vincennes, j'étois dans une agitation qui tenoit du délire. Diderot l'apperçut; je lui en dis la cause, & je lui lus la prosopopée de Fabricius, écrite en crayon sous un chêne. Il m'exhorta de donner l'essor à mes idées, & de concourir au prix. Je le fis, & dès cet instant je suis perdu. Tout le reste de ma vie & de mes malheurs fut l'effet inévitable de cet instant d'égarement (I, 229-230).

The sudden success of his first discourse had established Rousseau as a renowned and controversial author. It had made him a public figure in France and beyond and had provided him with access to the inner circles of the Parisian *beau monde*, something he had been aspiring to for a long time. At the same time, this had put him into a position in which he could no longer do full justice to the experience itself. His effort to articulate the vision he had had on the road to Vincennes had condemned him to be subjected to the logics and constraints of the literary world and of high society. These had aroused his self-love and ambition, his desire for an inane »gloriole littéraire« (Rousseau 1782: 59). His immediate experience of the truth, his pure love for it and his uncompromising willingness to devote his life to its articulation had thus ultimately lured him into a domain in which untruth reigned.

The specific nature of Rousseau's narrative of the events on the road to Vincennes becomes clearer when we contrast it to an alternative account of the same event that originated with Diderot and was circulated in writings of his friends – in Friedrich Melchior Grimms (1723-1807) literary newsletter, the *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique* and later in the memoirs of Jean-François Marmontel (1723-1799) and André Morellet (1727-1819) (Grimm 1829/1830: 140-141; Marmontel 1818: I, 434-435; Morellet 1822: I, 119-120). In *philosophe* circles, Diderot had told a markedly different story about the origins of the first discourse. In his version, after Rousseau's arrival at Vincennes and his excited report of the question posed by the Dijon Academy, Diderot had asked him what position he would take. »Celui des lettres«, Jean-Jacques had answered. He would argue that the sciences and arts had indeed purified morals. »C'est le pont aux ânes«, Diderot had replied, »prenez le parti contraire, et vous verrez quel bruit vous ferez« (Grimm 1829/1830: 140).

Though the accounts by Grimm, Marmontel and Morellet varied somewhat in their choice of words, the expression *pont aux ânes* turned up in every one of them. Diderot's central argument against Rousseau's initial position had not been, they contended, that it was untrue. Rather, his critique had aimed at the fact that it was too obvious, generally known, and boring. His proposal, on the contrary, would be *piquant* and would present »un champ nouveau, riche et fécond« to philosophy as well as to eloquence (Marmontel 1818: I, 435). It would have the allure of novelty, would be controversial and could therefore count on a wide literary resonance (*bruit*).

Modern historians tend for the most part to give priority to Rousseau's version (Sturma 2001: 22-23). The essential continuity between the discourse's central arguments and earlier statements from the 1740s as well as with later utterances speaks – even if a certain amount of polishing on the part of Rousseau is unmistakable – in favour of Rousseau's version. Diderot's account quite obviously aims to expose his one time friend in the eye of the reader. It can be understood against the backdrop of the alienation that had come between them after Rousseau's break with the *philosophes*.

This interpretation is confirmed by the setting in which Diderot brought up the Vincennes anecdote in his own writings. In his *Essai sur les règnes de claude et de Néron* (1778) he used the anecdote – which by this time was well known among France's literary circles – as an example of Rousseau's pathological disposition to contrariness. »Lorsque le programme de l'académie parut, il vint me consulter sur le parti qu'il prendrait. Le parti que vous prendrez, lui dis-je, c'est celui que personne ne prendra. Vous avez raison, me repliqua-t-il« (Diderot 1782: 137). The context in which the account appeared was most telling. What Diderot titled »mon apologie« was in fact a rant over several pages in which he charged Rousseau with being deceitful and false and called him an »ingrat«, »méchant« and »anti-philosophe«. Its final verdict was »Rousseau n'est plus« (Diderot 1782: 138-140).

In the absence of further sources, the real course of events on the road to Vincennes may remain beyond our grasp. Instead, we turn our attention to another – ultimately more interesting – question and ask how both accounts can be understood as two opposing models of interpretation, constructing conflicting images of Rousseau's identity as well as, more generally, of what it meant to be an ›author‹ in eighteenth-century France. This approach may not only shed new light on the anecdote itself, but also point to its wider significance within the context of contemporary debates about what it meant – as well as what it should mean – to be an author. It will be argued that the controversy over the events at Vincennes should be understood as a key episode in these debates. To this end, it is necessary to briefly go into the wider context which provided the basis for the conflicting interpretations of Rousseau as an author.

Literature on the market place and in high society

The controversy about Rousseau's identity as an author marked the centre of a wider debate about the identity of the *homme de lettres* (cf. Roche 1988; Chartier 1996), which itself took place against the background of profound structural changes in the literary field (cf. Raven 1992: 42-60; Melton 2001: 81-122). The eighteenth century witnessed an

impressive expansion and diversification of literary production. As the number of individual publications rose, so did their average print runs. New textual forms arose, while traditional ones gained new significance. A large number of new periodicals appeared, with ever larger distribution and ever faster publication cycles. The publishing industry was reorganized and differentiated, to be able to keep pace with the many technological and organizational improvements in printing procedures. Although censorship by church and state was still a limiting factor, the sector found ever new ways to bypass it.

These developments in literary production had their counterparts on the side of the consumer, the reader. The gradual advance of alphabetization that had begun in the seventeenth century accelerated in the following. Especially on the countryside, among women and the middle and lower classes there was yet much progress to be made. At the same time, practices of reading underwent a change so fundamental that it has been termed a ›reading revolution‹ (Engelsing 1974; Wittmann 1999). Traditional, intensive ways of reading gradually gave way to more extensive reading methods. Instead of the repeated, collective reading of a few authoritative texts, readers increasingly turned to the extensive, silent and individual reading of many different texts. In this sense, the popular writer Louis Antoine de Caraccioli (1719-1803) differentiated between the modern style of reading *à la Française* (»c'est parcourir un *in-douze* dans la journée«) and the traditional style of reading *à l'Anglaise* (»c'est l'étudier tout un mois«) (Caraccioli 1777: 147-148). Along with the manner of reading, its aims gradually shifted from the acquisition of information and character building to entertainment and diversion. Furthermore, several new institutional forms – like the reading society and the public library – emerged and provided access to literature for ever growing numbers. Combined with the absolute growth of the population, a reading public of some size emerged which provided a steadily growing customer base for the publishing industry.

Although the growing demand for literary products resulted in a corresponding growth in the demand for the industry's raw material, content, this did not automatically translate into higher income for writers. Under

the system of royal privileges that regulated France's book trade until the Revolution, authors would usually sell their works to a publisher for a fixed sum. All income generated from this point onward (i.e. by all editions) would thus flow to the publishers who – after the work's approval by the official censor – held the privilege for a period of six years, with the possibility of indefinite renewal. Under these conditions, only a few of the most successful writers could actually live off the earnings from their literary products (cf. Saunders 1992: 75-115; Pfister 2010). Even fewer had other private sources of funding which provided them with the leisure time to dedicate themselves to their writing without any concern for financial matters. Most, then, were dependent on some form of patronage. As a result, the relationship of the author to the social elites remained of essential importance for their livelihood.

In the eyes of many contemporary observers, in the course of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries the literary world and high society had formed a kind of strategic alliance. Literature played an increasing role in the social life of the elite. The negative view on books and knowledgeability that had been characteristic of traditional court culture made way to a keen interest in the world of letters and in the men of letters themselves. The *gens du monde* had admitted the *gens de lettres* to their world, and in the eyes of the *historiographe de France*, Charles Pinot Duclos (1704-1772), this association had been beneficial to both sides:

> Les gens du monde ont cultivé leur esprit, formé leur goût, et acquis de nouveaux plaisirs. Les gens de Lettres n'en ont pas retiré moins d'avantages. Ils ont trouvé de la protection & de la considération; ils ont perfectionné leur goût, poli leur esprit, adouci leurs mœurs, et acquis sur plusieurs articles des lumiéres qu'ils n'auroient pas puisées dans les Livres (Duclos 1752: 242-243).

Access to high society offered authors the opportunity to get to know its habitual forms and practices. This acquaintance with the ›ways of the world‹ played a key role in achieving literary success. Conversely, the presence of the men of letters saved the *beau monde* from its inherent boredom and injected it with a seemingly inexhaustible supply of talking points for polite conversation. What Duclos did not mention, however,

was the fact that the exchange between these two groups was by no means purely cultural or social. For most authors, their connections to high society were a financial necessity.

Since time immemorial, for most authors patronage had been the main source of income. Most publications included elaborate and – to our taste – servile dedicatory letters to (potential) patrons. In the course of the eighteenth century, the forms in which such ties between patron and client were ›acted out‹ in the context of polite society underwent a marked change. Increasingly, hierarchical relationships were cast in linguistic and performative forms that suggested – at least to the uninformed outsider – ties of friendship and equality. In spite of this, however, and perhaps unsurprisingly, in practice the social pecking order remained for the most part intact. The popular conception that the hierarchical ties of the pre-modern era had in the literary world been replaced by quasi-democratic ties of friendship between social classes on the basis of common intellectual interests remained a beautiful but deceptive utopia (cf. Hulliung 1994: 78-88; Lilti 2005: 419-428), as eloquently described by the *Encyclopédie*'s other editor, Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717-1783), in his *Essai sur la Société des Gens de Lettres et des Grands* (1760).

The affiliation of the author to the *monde* remained precarious at all times. His *considération* or *dignité*, which he had gained as a result of his fame, could be revoked by his social superiors at any moment. A single *fauxpas* could result in his exposure as ›unfit‹ for the world and in unrelenting exclusion. An uninterrupted effort was needed not to transgress the subtle and implicit but rigorously monitored boundaries that separated the *cela se fait* from the *cela ne se fait pas*. To take the *grands* at their word when they habitually asserted their friendship was a luxury the author could not afford. It remained necessary to permanently be aware of his subordinate status and never to breach the forms of gratitude. To the author, being part of polite society meant, then, adjusting not just his writings but his whole attitude and behaviour to its tone (*bon ton*).

Although the relationship between the author and the *grands* were thus not in any general sense becoming less hierarchical, the author's corporeal admittance to the spaces (salons, theatres, clubs, sometimes even the court) of high society nevertheless did much to change the social dynamics of this dependency. His traditional attachment to a single wealthy patron was gradually loosened and progressively widened to a dependency on the favour of high society as a whole, what contemporaries called ›the world‹ (*le monde*). Whereas before the patron's decision to support an author financially in the form of gifts, grants or pensions had been for the most part a matter of his private discretion, now group pressure played an increasing part in this process. As such, the author was increasingly bound to please an indefinite multitude: ›the public‹.

The achievement of this goal, however, and the fame that resulted from it, were never a goal in itself. Rather, this was a form of social capital that was essential in the struggle for financial survival. The dark side of this dynamic became increasingly visible in the course of the eighteenth century, as a gap opened up within the literary world between what the historian Robert Darnton has called the *High Enlightenment* and the *Low-Life of Literature*, between those few authors that made it and those that did not (Darnton 1971). For every author that saw the doors to polite society open, a multitude remained excluded. As it was, this exclusion pushed such unlucky authors into a cutthroat market place, a verdict that almost inevitably resulted in abject poverty. This dynamic was in fact further aggravated by the fact that the cultural visibility and role model status of those happy few that had actually achieved literary success was great, so that every year new waves of ambitious youths came flooding into the city to try their luck as writers. Thus, alongside a few best selling authors a multifaceted, prolific and numerous class of literary hacks emerged that had to seize any opportunity – legal or not – to make ends meet. They practiced their writing as freelancing professionals, a way of life that in practice often meant living on the margins of subsistence (Darnton 1984: 145-189).

Contemporary controversies

Contemporaries were well aware of these developments. Whereas some celebrated the enormous advances in literary production and consumption as the ›progress of enlightenment‹, others saw them more critically. Especially from the perspective of the ›economy of knowledge‹, the vast increases in quantity were not necessarily deemed beneficial to its quality. Today, in the so called ›information age‹, we are as familiar with the discursive topoi of information overload as with the everyday challenges of coping with its problems. But the problems that arise with the shift from a situation of information scarcity to its overabundance have in fact long been recognized (cf. Headrick 2000). Ever since the spread of the printing press, there has been a constant quest for better strategies of information management. In the year 1685 Adrien Baillet (1649-1706), to give but one example, opened a multivolume collection of literary criticism, worrying if the steady rise in numbers of new publications would not »fasse tomber les siecles suivans dans un état aussi facheux qu'estoit celuy où la barbarie avoit jetté les precedens depuis la decadence de l'Empire Romain« (Baillet 1685: Avertissement; Smith & Schmidt 2007). If he had thought of the paradox that his ›solution‹ – which consisted in critically separating the literary wheat from the chaff – would only aggravate the problem by yet another multivolume work is another question.

The fast increase in literary production in the course of the eighteenth century made such voices grow ever louder. Especially from the second half of the century onwards, a lively debate about the production and consumption of literature unfurled (cf. Goetsch 1994; Kreuzer 1977). On the one hand, the question was raised if the enormous rise in the quantity of text produced had affected its quality. Using metaphors of unstoppable ›rivers‹ or ›seas‹ of literature and comparing the short literary life of individual texts to withering ›flowers‹ or ›ephemera‹, the question was raised if the sheer extension of available text helped or hindered its meaningfulness. An analogous question was put to the readers. Had the increased speed of reading and the enormous quantity of text that was devoured every day in fact resulted in the spread of significant knowledge and good morals? Or had its speed in fact precluded its absorption

and left nothing but a superficial entertainment, so that the modern reader, as Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742-1799) wrote in his private notebook, had read himself into some »educated barbarism« (quoted in: Goldmann 1994: 79).

The English divine John Brown (1715-1766) was one of many who interpreted the reading revolution as a purely detrimental development. In his eyes it was, as he wrote in his *An estimate of the manners and principles of the times* (1757), at once an expression of and an aggravating factor in the spreading of a culture-wide »vain, *luxurious* and *selfish* EFFEMINACY« (Brown 1757: 67).

> Reading is now sunk at best into a Morning's Amusement. BUT what kind of Reading must *that* be, which can attract or entertain the languid Morning-Spirit of modern Effeminacy? Any, indeed, that can but prevent the unsupportable Toil of *Thinking*; that may serve as a preparatory *Whet* of *Indolence*, to the approaching Pleasures of the Day (42).

The sheer number of authors, of readers and of texts read was widely felt to be a disgrace. The *age of paper*, *of ink*, or *of authors*, as the age was now sometimes termed, true knowledge, many thought, threatened to be drowned in a flood of paper and ink.

Closely tied to such worries about the relationship between quality and quantity in literature were debates about the changing identity of the man of letters. As it became more and more obvious that the social reality of the practice of writing had changed dramatically, the question of what it meant to be a writer attracted ever wider interest and became a battleground for conflicting normative conceptions. Two negative stereotypical ›figures‹ that played a central part in such debates were the ›scribbler‹ and the ›worldly author‹. Both provided a specific perspective on the modern writer that was contrasted to alternative normative ideals of the *homme de lettres* which were projected into the past.

The stereotype of the scribbler arose in the context of debates about the gradual rise of the market as a determining factor in the literary field. Though as yet the reality of the ›literary market‹ was by no means free

from non-economic ›constraints‹, the fact that market forces became on the whole more influential than before was by many contemporaries viewed with suspicion and alarm. It was understood – and condemned – as the commodification of literature. »In opulent and commercial societies«, Adam Smith wrote in an early draft of his *Wealth of Nations*, »to think or to reason comes to be, like every other employment, a particular business«. Unter these conditions, knowledge and literature appeared as a product among others, as a form of goods that could be purchased under market conditions »in the same manner as any other commodity« (Smith 1978: 574; Rommel 2008).

Within the context of Smiths work, this was by no means meant to be a derogatory remark. Rather, his purpose was to show how even the seemingly ›sterile‹ philosopher fulfilled a useful function in society. For many others, however, putting literary work on equal rank with any other commodity had very negative connotations. The real concern that lay at the heart of this criticism was an anxiety about the diminishing status of the author. In this vein, the Presbyterian theologian Samuel Miller (1769-1850) in his *Brief retrospect of the eighteenth century* (1803) complained that the »spirit of trade« had infected the literary world, with disastrous consequences: »It too often leads men to write, not upon a sober conviction of truth, utility, and duty, but in accommodation to the *public taste*, however depraved, and with a view to the most *advantageous sale*« (Miller 1805: III, 300).

> When pecuniary emolument is the leading motive to publication, books will not only be injuriously mutliplied, but they will also be composed on the sordid calculation of obtaining the greatest number of purchasers. Hence the temptation to sacrifice virtue at the shrine of avarice. Hence the licentious and seductive character of many of those works which have had the greatest circulation in modern times, and which have produced the greatest emolument to their authors (Ibidem).

In combination with the sheer volume of literary production, this development had severely compromised the status of authorship in the modern world.

> From the unprecedented spirit of publication, which the eighteenth century exhibited, it has happened, as a natural consequence, that the character of the *author* has become lower in the public estimation, than it generally stood in preceding ages. Every object loses something of its value in the public esteem, in consequence of being cheap and common. Thus it has fared with the dignity of authorship. Persons of this profession have become so numerous in society; many of those who engage in it discover such a selfish and mercenary spirit; and it is found so easy a task to compile a book, that their importance has suffered a diminution in some degree corresponding with the number and worthlessness of their literary labours (Miller 1805: III, 422-423).

In this context, the figure of the author lusting for success in the literary market became a stereotype that was negatively contrasted to the ›real‹ author. Lengthy treatises on the nature and historical development of the *polygraphe*, *petit auteur*, *littérateur*, *Skribent, Lohnschriftsteller* or ›sordid scribbler‹ appeared, such as Christian Ludwig Liscow's (1701-1760) satirical *Die Vortrefflichkeit und Nohtwendigkeit der elenden Scribenten gründlich erwiesen* (1736).

The main point of critique regarding this new social figure was that under these conditions the writer could no longer afford to measure his writings only by the criteria of truth or literary beauty. Rather, he was forced to submit to the tastes and whims of the reading public, and to continually readjust both form and content of his writings to accommodate its unquenchable thirst for literary novelties. Only thus could he assert himself in the competition with the multitude of other hacks that likewise aspired to the public's attention. In this new situation, then, the worth of a literary work was nothing more than the number of readers – or more precisely: of buyers – it reached.

»Was hat der Schriftsteller zu seiner ersten Pflicht?« asked Johann Georg Heinzmann (1757-1802), who, being an author and publisher, knew the book trade from both sides, in his *Über die Pest der deutschen Literatur*.

> Er soll den Geschmack seiner Zeitgenossen leiten, und ihr Vormünder seyn; er soll kein Sklavendiener der Mode, sondern ein freyer, gewissenhafter Mann seyn. Thut er das der Lohnschriftsteller? Schmeichelt er nicht um seines Vortheils willen der Eitelkeit, den herrschenden Sitten und Thorheiten? Ist er also nicht ein Verräther an der Menschheit, ein Giftmischer in einem geistigen Sinne (Heinzmann 1795: 161-162)?

As the figure of the scribbler figured in debates about the commodification of literature, the worldly author became the central stereotype in controversies over the author's position vis-à-vis high society. In contrast to the scribbler, however, this figure represented an aspect of the modern author's identity that was not exclusively judged negatively. On the contrary, as we have seen in the case of Duclos, many interpreted the author's integration into the circles of high society as a positive development.

One important factor in the spreading of this positive interpretation was a wealth of literature propagating a conception of the writer as an essentially social figure, knowledgeable of the ways of the world. In effect, this amounted to a strategy of self-assertion, meaning that those same authors standing in line to gain access to the inner circles of elite social life were the ones praising the virtues of the socially competent *homme de lettres*. At the centre of this re-thinking of the social role of the author there was a controversy about the interpretation of a figure that had come to be thought of as the writer *par excellence*, the *philosophe*. Whereas traditionally this term had been associated with the solitary and contemplative life of the sage, unconcerned with the world and solely interested in the eternal truths, from the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards and culminating in a general campaign in the wake of the publication of the first volumes of the *Encyclopédie*, a new notion of philosophy gained ever wider currency.

From being the ultimate outsider, the philosopher now moved into society, living in ›the world‹ as well as working to improve it (Gumbrecht & Reichardt 1985: 12-24; Schneiders 2006). Joseph Addison (1692-1719), who together with Richard Steele (1672-1729) co-edited the famous pe-

riodical *The Spectator*, wrote in 1711 that he would be proud to have it said of him that he had brought philosophy »out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables, and in coffee-houses« (Anonymous 1711). In France, in the introduction to his history of philosophy of 1737, André-François Boureau-Deslandes (1698-1757) in a similar vein stressed the differences between the real philosopher and his traditional, misanthropic, image. Certainly, history had witnessed many ›philosophers‹ that had removed themselves from social life »par des airs concertés, ou par des habits extraordinaires, ou par leurs gestes, leur ton de voix, ou par un goût continué de disputes & de crieries« (Boureau-Deslandes 1737: I, xi). These, however, were not to be misunderstood as examples of real philosophy. »La principale utilité qu'on tire de la Philosophie, c'est le bon-sens, c'est l'humanité, c'est la politesse des mœurs, c'est l'amour de la société« (I, xiii).

This line of argument, stressing the social character of the genuine philosopher, gained wide circulation when it was taken up in an anonymous pamphlet with the title *Le philosophe*, which first appeared in 1743 and would become the blueprint for the *Encyclopédie*'s article of the same title, published in 1765. Its author – probably the prominent grammarian César Chesneau Dumarsais (1676-1756) – took the argument one step further and proclaimed honour and social integrity to be the only »religion« of the modern philosopher and society the only »divinité« he recognised (Anonymous 1743: 188). In 1766, the Parisian theologian Claude-Joseph Boncerf (1724-1811) dedicated a full monograph to the issue. In a paragraph titled *Caractère du philosophe sociable*, he summarized the changes the concept of the philosopher had undergone in recent times.

> Dans l'esprit de bien des gens, un Philosophe étoit, il n'y a pas encore fort longtems, un Misantrope, ou un Cynique. La Philosophie aimable qui regne à présent parmi le beau monde, a donné une autre idée du Philosophe. Non, le vrai Philosophe ne fuit point le commerce des Hommes. S'il fait vivre avec lui-même, il faut aussi vivre avec les autres. Une dureté sauvage n'est point son caractère; au contraire, ses mœurs ne respirent qu'une élégante urbanité. Il donne l'exemple de toutes les vertus sociales, & les chérit, parce

> qu'il connoît mieux que personne combien elles contribuent au bonheur de la Société (Boncerf 1766: 3-4).

Many – first and foremost the *philosophes* and all who sympathized with them – thus interpreted the philosopher's integration into society as a form of progress, lending practical relevance to a figure that had been absorbed in unproductive, abstract contemplation. Still, as we have seen, others held a more negative view of this process. It was felt to interfere with the philosopher's splendid isolation and his exclusive regard for the truth. Thus it was seen as detrimental to his independence from the interests and fashions of the world. An analogous argument was made with regard to the writer more generally, of which the *philosopher* was generally understood to be the highest variety.

Thus, both the scribbler and the worldly author were figures that – at least with some – evoked negative interpretations of the developments of the literary field in general and of the changing identity of the modern writer in particular. The literary market place and high society were certainly two very different social spaces. Yet in the eyes of many contemporaries they had one essential aspect in common: both were arenas of fierce competition for scarce resources in the form of financial or social capital. Therefore, both were regulated by laws and pressures that were fundamentally foreign to the literary endeavour as it had been traditionally understood. As such, they put illegitimate constraints on the author's ability to live up to his mission: to freely express truth and beauty by writing.

Vincennes revisited

Our excursion into the social and discursive context in which the controversy over the Vincennes episode took place puts us in a position to reinterpret its conflicting interpretations as a part of the contemporary controversy over the author's identity. The specific form of Rousseau's self-narration can only be understood in the context of other socially available models of authorship from which Rousseau wished to distance himself. His was essentially a counter-narrative, a mode of self-interpretation that reacted against certain conceptions of the modern author that

understood him to be progressively subjected to the anonymous forces of the market and to the social pressure of ›society‹. As such, Rousseau's autobiographical narrative was part of a much wider array of strategies of self-presentation. By means of his conspicious ›armenian‹ dress, his rude and vociferous rejection of any form of patronage and especially his purposefully un-polite rhetoric, he constructed a distance to society. Already on the front page of his first publication – the very discourse that had originated on the road to Vincennes – he had announced this self-interpretation by a motto taken from Ovid: »Barbarus hic ego sum quia non intelligor illis …« (Rousseau 1751).

Rousseau's self-imposed isolation was bound to scandalize those who propagated sociability one of the author's prime characteristics. Voltaire in 1755 sarcastically characterized the second discourse as a »livre contre le genre humain« and wryly added: »[o]n n'a jamais employé tant d'esprit à vouloir nous rendre bêtes« (Voltaire 1995: 300-302). Especially hurtful to Rousseau was the thinly veiled criticism articulated by his one time friend Diderot in his play *Le fils naturel*, that »l'homme de bien est dans la societé, & qu'il n'y a que le méchant qui soit seul« (Diderot 1757: 76). Rousseau was by this time habitually called »l'homme insociable« or »misanthrope« by his enemies. In his many autobiographical writings he took great pains to regain control over his own identity. Time and again he stressed that what was interpreted as misanthropy was in fact the only genuine form of philanthropy (Rousseau 1758: 54-73). In his final, unfinished, work, the *Rêveries du promeneur solitaire*, he returned to this issue, once again explaining why his resentment of society was not an expression of hatred for mankind. On the contrary, he maintained, only in his self-chosen solitude had he been able to preserve the sincere love of man that had always been his primary motivation:

> Alors pour ne les pas haïr il a bien-fallu les fuir; alors, me réfugiant chez la mere commune, j'ai cherché dans ses bras à me soustraire aux atteintes de ses enfants, je suis devenu solitaire, ou, comme ils disent, insociable et misanthrope, parce que la plus sauvage solitude me paraît préférable à la société des méchans, qui ne se nourrit que de trahisons & de haine (Rousseau 1782: 204-205).

In this context, his writings gained another level of significance. Rousseau's proverbial solitude was not just a rejection of ›society‹ as he understood it. It was also the precondition for his project of building an alternative form of community with his readers. In a literary world of his own fabrication, the free and open communication between virtuous souls that was made impossible by the rigid formality and dishonesty of modern society could – albeit on a purely fictional level – take place (cf. Wertheimer 1986; Konersmann 1992; Jurt 1994).

To achieve this, however, it was essential that his writings were not taken to be literary commodities, a product of his literary ambitions. Thus the central aim of his elaborate strategies of self-presentation was to make plausible that his activities as a writer were not in any sense strategic. That they had in fact, starting with the publication of his prize essay, led to social and even moderate financial success had been – so he stressed – an unfortunate side-effect of a pure impulse. In his characteristic manner of self-accusation, he was even willing to admit that the lures of this newfound fame had not failed to have their effect on his self-love (amour propre). All the same, they did not touch the real centre of his identity as an author which was based upon the sole wish – or, more precisely: the inner necessity – to give expression to an overwhelming and life changing experience.

At this point we are able to understand the central relevance of the Vincennes episode for Rousseau's self-image. As he painted the origins of his first publication as a sudden flash of inspiration, he demarcated his identity from the modern *homme de lettres* and its negative connotations. His authorship was not – in contrast to the scribbler and the worldly author – a function of his self-interest and of strategic calculation. Rather, he had become a writer despite himself: »Voilà comment lorsque j'y pensois le moins, je devins auteur presque malgré moi« (Rousseau 1792: 249). As he wrote in his *Rêveries*, he was »jetté dans la carriere littéraire par des impulsions étrangeres« (Rousseau 1782: 192-193). His writing activity was therefore to be understood not so much as a literary endeavour, but rather as a form of immediate expression, as the articulation of a higher truth.

This narrative had profound consequences for the complex structure of Rousseau's understanding of himself as an author. His writing self was, it had to be concluded, in a fundamental sense not his own. As far as he was himself, he was nothing but the mouthpiece of a higher power that inspired his utterances. Conversely, in as far as he thought of himself and of his own interests in the literary world, he was not properly speaking himself anymore.

It is not difficult to see that key elements of Rousseau's narrative point to an established tradition of literary self-reflection. The centrality of an experience provoked by reading is an obvious echo of the eighth book of Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, which also provided the model for Rousseau's most famous autobiographical work. Through the vocabulary with which he articulated the experience that formed the basis of his writing, Rousseau placed himself in a long tradition of inspired authorship reaching from antiquity via medieval mysticism through the aesthetics of genius and romanticism up to contemporary literature (cf. Zaiser 1995). At the same time, Rousseau's return to this tradition was more than just another instance in a long series. It would prove highly influential on future debates. Already during his lifetime Rousseau would become an exemplary figure, his name a cipher for a certain type of authorship. Especially the Vincennes episode played a key role in debates about authenticity, in which the example of Rousseau played a central part.

Although the figure of the author as the authentic voice of a higher power echoed a long tradition, it gained new relevance in view of modern developments of the literary field. It could function as a contrast, a counter-identity, against the pressing constraints of the modern literary world. It was in this vein that Josias von Hendrich (1752-1819), privy councillor in Meiningen, contrasted Rousseau and Voltaire. Like many of his contemporaries, he interpreted the two as representing two types of authorship. Whereas Voltaire typified the modern ›worldly philosopher‹, Rousseau had been solitary and shy. His rigid nature and ›apostolic‹ gravity had made it impossible for him to adjust to the forms of society. In this manner, his composure and style had marked him – against the fashionable finesse and sophistication of the *philosophes* – as an ›old sage‹.

Von Hendrich characterized Rousseau's peculiar style in manner and dress as well as that of his writings in a quasi-religious vocabulary of genius. The distinguishing marks of the strength of soul that had characterized the citizen of Geneva were his »tiefempfundene Sprache des Herzens, die starken originelle Züge seines Geistes, die das Gepräge der Erhabenheit und der eigenen Geistes-Stimmung ihres Urhebers tragen, und die aus seiner Einsamkeit wie aus einer überirdischen Region hervorstrahlten« (Hendrich 1797: 27-29).

By this time, such vocabulary had become widespread in the many reflections upon the identity and mission of the author that marked debates about literature since the second half of the eighteenth century. Several key literary currents like *Sturm und Drang* or Romanticism formulated new answers to the old question of the essence of writing and authorship. These were expressed in a vocabulary that at times reached quasi-religious elevation, which made Paul Bénichou speak of a *sacre de l'écrivain* (Bénichou 1985). In this process, the figure of the author as the authentic voice of a higher experience gained renewed currency. As the case of Rousseau suggests, this attempt at reinterpretation of the author's identity must at least partly be understood as a reaction to the rapid changes in the social and economic conditions of literary activity during this time. The self-image of many authors could not be conciliated with what – in view of recent developments in the literary field – many felt to be their assigned role: to be a freelance producer for a market oriented branch of industry, competing in the social arena as well as on the market, desperately trying to please ›the public‹. In this context, the Rousseauian concept of authorship provided many with a way of rethinking the author in – but also: against – the modern world.

Rousseau's auto-narration thus has to be interpreted against the backdrop of this wider controversy over the identity of the author. The same is true for Diderot's opposing strategy of deflation. The significance of his alternative narration lay in the fact that it exposed Rousseau's style and ultimately his whole *persona* as nothing more than a social and literary strategy. Therefore, Morellet was right when he wrote about Diderots counter-narrative: »Ce récit, que je crois vrai, renverse et détruit toute la

narration de Jean-Jacques« (Morellet 1822: I, 119-120). Not surprisingly, this version of the anecdote would play a major role in the anti-Rousseau literature that became, in the last decades of the Old Regime, a popular literary form in its own right. From its point of view, Rousseau's proverbial ›authenticity‹ was nothing more than a mask, an artful dissimulation in the service of popular success. Tellingly, Marmontel ended his version of the anecdote with the remark: »Ainsi dès ce moment, ajoutai-je, son rôle et son masque furent décidés«. He gave the final word to Voltaire: »Vous ne m'étonnez pas, me dit Voltaire; cet homme-là est factice de la tête aux pieds, il l'est de l'esprit et de l'ame; mais il a beau jouer tantôt le stoïcien et tantôt le cynique, il de démentira sans cesse, et son masque l'étouffera« (Marmontel 1818: I, 435).

It is important to note that in the end both sides recurred – with differing motives and in a contrary direction – to the same discursive fault line. Both Rousseau and Diderot interpreted the modern literary world as a space of competition and of strategic action. Whereas Rousseau tried to construct a concept of authorship that emphatically put this modern literary world at a distance and attempted to steer clear of its many pressures, Diderot exposed this alternative form of identity as just another strategic device in the literary arena.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, we return to the question posed in the introduction: to which extent may modern perspectives on the self – understanding the individual's identity as a result of hybrid, conflicting and historically changing forms of subjectification that are neither fixed nor unified, but rather present an object of continuous construction through a number of practices – shed new light on historical processes? The answer seems to be that even though the story resulting from the application of this new perspective may not be new in every respect, our interpretation is indeed enriched by focussing on the four major dimensions of subjectification mentioned in the introduction. As an analytical concept, it has proven to provide a fruitful way to overcome the traditional opposition

between individual agency and social structures and integrate both aspects into a single model.

From this point of view, the episode at Vincennes proved to be less of a story (true or not) about an exceptional individual and his battle with the constraints of society than a key moment in the history of changing forms of subjectification, of changing models of what it *means* to be an individual. It could be shown that Rousseau's identity was not in any meaningful sense a fixed, given entity. Rather, it must be understood as an arena of conflicting interpretations, of which Rousseau's own self-narration being just one of many. His autobiography was thus part of a wide range of practices by way of which Rousseau attempted to construct a certain form of the self. The result of this struggle between conflicting interpretations was by no means a unified, self-sufficient or self-transparent identity. Rather, the concept of the self as the authentic voice of an overwhelming inspiration, as it emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century, was essentially hybrid. It contained major inner tensions that surfaced whenever it became an object of reflection. This was a form of selfhood which could only become itself through an absolute disregard for its own self-interest and which could only become autonomous by the total submission to a higher truth that it could in no way claim as its own.

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Semantics of the self

Preservation and construction of identity in concentration camp diaries*

Dominique Schröder

Preliminary remarks

»In any case, we decided to keep a diary from now on, which we will take weekly turns to keep!«[95] This line was written at the beginning of March 1944 by Hans Horwitz and Arnold David Koller, both of whom were deported to Bergen-Belsen, in their collective diary. Koller and Horwitz belong to those Jewish prisoners of the German concentration and transit camps who kept a diary during their imprisonment. Beyond these texts, a number of diaries exist from this period, which were written by so called political prisoners. Despite the most difficult circumstances – catastrophic hygienic situations, permanent hunger and shortage of space, physical and psychological violence and permanent agony – these prisoners managed to write about their experiences and subsequently guarded their texts – frequently aided by their fellow prisoners – from the grasp of the SS and the *Kapos*. It should not be overlooked, however, that not every prisoner had the opportunity to keep a diary in every camp and at all times. In this respect, the concrete situation of the camp and the position of the prisoner in its hierarchy were of central importance. As Primo Levi has rightly stressed, those who reached the deepest point of the abyss and were killed in the gas chambers could not bear witness anymore (Levi 1990: 83f.). As a result of this, with the ex-

* I am deeply indebted to Theo Jung (Bielefeld) for his assistance in translating this article.

95 Hans Horwitz and Arnold David Koller: Diary from Bergen-Belsen, 8.3. to 16.4.1944, Bergen-Belsen Memorial, BT-397.

ception of a few diaries written by *Sonderkommando*-prisoners at Auschwitz, there are no known diaries from the extermination camps.[96]

The situation was different at a camp like Bergen-Belsen, where one of those diaries to be analyzed here, by Hanna Lévy-Hass, was written. As a so called »exchange camp«, Bergen-Belsen occupied a special status within the concentration camp system (Kolb 1996; Wenck 2000). As in other camps, much depended on the specific part of the camp a prisoner was placed in. Nevertheless, at least in the beginning, the environment in Bergen-Belsen – which was only established in the spring of 1943 – was relatively tolerable. The reason for this was that the SS had a special interest in these prisoners.[97] For the most part they had special identity papers or good connections. This qualified them, in the eyes of the SS, as candidates for an exchange with Germans imprisoned in enemy countries. Therefore in comparison to prisoners held at other camps, those at Bergen-Belsen had small material advantages that made it easier for them to keep a diary. Some prisoners, for example, were allowed to take some personal belongings into the camp. This is one of the reasons why an uncommonly large number of holocaust diaries stem from Bergen-Belsen. Only in the second half of 1944 the situation deteriorated rapidly. The »exchange camp« progressively turned into a concentration camp to which all prisoners from camps near the front were evacuated. After their arrival they were increasingly left to themselves, dying of hunger or as a result of insufficient medical care. This process is described in the diaries. Many of them break off in view of the deteriorating circumstances. Others explicitly describe the last days of Bergen-Belsen. One of these is the second diary to be analyzed here, written by Emile Delaunois. He was one of those who arrived with the »evacuation transports« from other camps, in this case from Mittelbau-Dora (Wagner 2001) – or to be more precise from the labor camp of Ellrich-Juliushütte, which be-

96 It should be noted that in contrast to Belzec, Sobibór or Treblinka, Auschwitz was not solely an extermination camp but also a labor camp; on the *Sonderkommando*, cf. footnote 12.

97 This remark should be understood in comparison to the other camps. It should in no way trivialize the living conditions in Bergen-Belsen.

longed to this camp complex (Wagner 2009). Delaunois wrote the largest part of his text at this camp, which, since May 1944, functioned as accommodation for prisoners who were put to work at weapons factories, in tunnel building (*Stollenbau*) or – for the largest part – on building sites. This differed markedly from the »exchange camp« of Bergen-Belsen. A further difference lay in the fact that the camps belonging to the Ellrich complex – which in September 1944 held up to over 8,000 prisoners – were built in the centre of the town of Ellrich, in no way shielded from the eyes of the public. On the contrary, as ever more *Außenkommandos* were established, the SS used more and more of the town's buildings – like the *Bürgergarten* inn – as quarters for prisoner commandos.[98] This part of the camp, however, was in no way identical with the central camp, Ellrich-Juliushütte, where as a result of decrepit buildings, deficient sanitary facilities and catastrophic hygienic conditions the circumstances were considerably worse. Improvisation was this camp's central characteristic (Wagner 2009: 64). Jens-Christian Wagner has calculated that, resulting from hard labor and the worst possible conditions, a prisoner's life expectancy was four to eight weeks, during which the prisoners reached a state of total exhaustion which usually resulted in death (Wagner 2009: 90).

Against the background of these conditions, Emile Delaunois' ability to keep a diary at Ellrich has to be attributed to the fact that – as a prisoner functionary – he had a privileged position. This point will be elaborated below. After having outlined the writing conditions, we now turn to some considerations concerning the motivations for diary writing. A special focus will be on the relation between the writing process on the one hand and the description and conservation of the self in the face of the extreme situation of the camp on the other. Subsequently, the diaries of Emile Delaunois and Hanna Lévy-Hass will be analyzed in view of the construction of the self taking place in them, with a special regard for the linguistic articulation of the political self.

98 The same phenomenon can be observed in other communities where *Außenlager* were established.

Diary writing and the construction of the self

In some academic and non-academic writings it is claimed that the Holocaust was an unthinkable and therefore indescribable and unspeakable historical event. On the other hand, we have diaries testifying that prisoners in fact tried to express themselves even during the event itself. They did not cease to speak, but tried to name and describe what they had to experience. Despite the oftenly quoted indescribability of the Holocaust, then, many prisoners of concentration camps found ways of expressing themselves and their feelings. Some of them used the cultural practice of writing a diary. There might be several motivations for this. It could function, for example, as constructing an »alternative reality« in the mind as a contrast to the camp's reality or, alternatively, as an instrument of »resistance« in the broadest sense. What could not be done in reality became possible by the medium of the diary. The boundaries of reality were broken or avoided, so to speak. Finally, writing served the differentiation and also the self-assertion of the writers. By addressing the issue of the »I« inside the text – and through this often distinguishing oneself from others in a positive way –, the individual constitutes him/herself by the act of writing. This last point is of special interest for the following considerations concerning diary writing and the construction of the writer's »self« in the text.

Ever since the phenomenon of diary writing has become a subject of systematic reflection, it has been interpreted as the writer's attempt to represent, reflect on and construct his/her self (cf. Kapp 1987; Hahn 2000; Dusini 2005).[99] By this form of communication with and about him/herself, he/she is confronted – consciously or not – with the question of identity. Writers question, deliberate about or affirm their own established positions. As such, writing about the self can be defined as the core of this genre.[100]

99 Hahn speaks of generators of biography. He understands diaries as a social institution that allows for a »recollection upon one's own existence«.

100 See also Michel Foucault who assumes writing a diary under the so called »technologies of the self« (Foucault 1993).

In the face of the world being turned upside down at the camps, writing under extreme circumstances, the significance of being committed with one's own identity has an enormously increased and different significance. All the more since prisoners were not only denied their individuality, but their humanity in general (Warmbold 2008: 31; Pollak 1988: 89). As the National Socialists systematically negated the prisoner's individuality – one has only to think of the procedures they were exposed to when entering the camp, such as the abasing removal of their personal names, property and values, as well as their separation from the people they were close to[101] – they on the other hand assigned them a new identity, as they categorised – and stigmatized (Goffman 1975) – the prisoners according to the criteria of National Socialism. Whereas so called political prisoners could find a certain sense and validity by this ascription, for many prisoners the categorization as being Jewish was more difficult to understand. Many Jewish prisoners did not understand themselves as Jews at all, they did not identify with Jewish religion and traditions, as other affiliations dominated their lives.[102] Only in the context of the persecution – by anti-Semitic laws and measures in Germany from 1933 onwards, in the »antechambers« (Todorov 1993: 35) of the camps, the Ghettos, many felt ›made‹ into Jews by the National Socialists. Already here the question of self, of identity, was posed under changed circumstances. Yet even in the Eastern-European Ghettos, if in considerably reduced measure and under worsening, sometimes catastrophic,

101 »The prisoners were [sic] robbed of their names and were numbered. But the name is the first characteristic of the individual. If guards spoke about them, they avoided concepts such as ›person‹, ›individuals‹ or ›people‹ and instead identified them as ›parts‹ or ›pieces‹ or used impersonal expressions« (Todorov 1993: 198). Or in the diary of the *Sonderkommando*-prisoner Salmen Gradowski: »One began tattooing the new arrivals. Everybody got his number. And already you are no longer the same person you were before, but instead a worthless, moving number […] From this moment on you have lost your ›I‹ and you have changed into a number« (Gradowski 1996: 130-172, 163).

102 Here it is necessary to take the individual temporal and spatial context into account. Simplifications have to be regarded with caution.

conditions, most still had ties of family and friendship, tasks and occupations, access to books or music (Löw 2006). Religious Jews were confronted with the problem that their religious practice was constrained and, finally, forbidden. As these religious practices touched the core of their identity, this called their very being into question at the camps at the latest (Rahe 1998; 1999; Michman 2002).[103]

A study of the diaries written at Nazi concentration camps has to ask how the diarists handled their self-descriptions, how they put their own identities into words. This theme is all the more pressing if one takes into account the negation of the victims' humanity, which – as previously described – the National Socialists tried to effectuate, as well as the positive identity that resulted from this process. Identity with regard to the prisoners, as constructed by the National Socialists, always had negative connotations. Besides, it made all the difference for the individual's self-image if he could formulate his identity himself or if it was attributed and proscribed from the outside: if others could decide who one was (Hahn 2000: 47f).

Taking into account Alois Hahn's sociological model, one may speculate what happens if the characteristics of the »implicit self« break away, if identity can no longer be expressed through action and loses its self-evidence. Hahn's concept of identity differentiates between two discriminate aspects: the »implicit« and the »explicit self«. Whereas the »implicit self« does not necessarily entail self-reflectivity, this aspect is constitutive of the »explicit self«. This is a self »that makes its selfness (*Selbstheit*) explicit and makes it an object of description and communication« (Hahn 1987: 10). Is not the diary a place where this – consciously or not – is put into practice? And does not the situation of the concentration camp produce the necessity of such measures of positive identity-construction (Bettelheim 1980: 59f.)? It is Alois Hahn again who pointed out that the medium, in this case the diary and the contextual origin, always already predetermines the mode as well as the function of addressing the self

103 Nevertheless, Jewish prisoners found ways to practice their religion – even at the camps itself.

(Hahn 1987: 17). In the context of the present article, this leads to the questions of what influence the situation of the concentration camp had on the process of writing, how the properties of the writing material affected this and of what significance its genre was.

Individuality and identity are constituted by interaction with as well as in contrast to others (Hahn 1987: 15). However, how can this succeed in a concentration camp, where interaction has to occur under changed, very constricted circumstances, sometimes not at all? Without being able to treat the issue exhaustively, the analysis of selected diaries can provide insight into aspects of the »semantics of auto-description« (Hahn 1987: 16). Diaries, understood as artefacts of the diarists' linguistic actions, provided them with a space beyond the grasp of the SS, where they could interact with themselves as well as with absent persons.[104] They constituted a space where identity could be negotiated by writing.

Many different ways of preserving or even constructing identity in concentration camp prisoner's diaries are imaginable. Identity can be negotiated in connection with family-related topics, for example when a writer presents herself as a caring mother.[105] In this case, one can speak of »Family Identity«. Another possibility lies in the formation of identity with regard to belonging to a specific group or religion. In this respect it might be illuminating to ask how Jewish prisoners understood themselves when facing the annihilation of their own people.[106] Did they hang on to Jewish traditions, to a positively connoted understanding of Jew-

104 It is for this reason that in her dissertation Alexandra Garbarini speaks of »letter diaries« (Garbarini 2006: 18).

105 See for example: A.B. Theresienstadt, 1942-1945, Yad Vashem Archives, Jerusalem, JM-13.

106 A most striking example is the *Sonderkommando* at Auschwitz. Jewish prisoners were forced not to commit the murder itself but to clean the gas chambers and to cremate the bodies. They also had to supervise the undressing of the victims before the gassing later on. It happened that they discovered friends, former neighbours or close family members among the murdered (Friedler et al. 2005; Greif 1999). Some of these prisoners wrote diaries (Bezwińska & Czech 1996).

ishness (*Jüdischkeit*) despite the murder or did they consider themselves victims? Another area in which identity is articulated can be observed when prisoners regard themselves as political. This does not necessarily have to appear explicitly, but can also occur by the use of certain linguistic markers that announce the political self-conception of the prisoner in question. Considering oneself political can be articulated within the framework of the National Socialist's prisoner categories (*Häftlingskategorien*). But it does not have to be. Especially in the case of people who were arrested as »Jewish« but regarded themselves as political, the ›racial‹ categories of the SS might not have been congruent with the prisoners' own self-imaging.

The political self

In the following, the first of the mentioned concepts – family identity and Jewishness – cannot be explored extensively in this context. This relative neglect happens in favor of a deep analysis of two specific prisoner's diaries: Emile Delaunois'[107] and Hanna Lévy-Hass' (Lévy-Hass 2009),[108] with regard to the articulation of their political self-concepts. Emile Delaunois, alias Louis Lelong, was born in Belgium in 1917. He had been arrested by the Gestapo because of his activities as an officer of the »Armée Belge des Partisans« in spring 1944. After being imprisoned at Breendonck, Belgium, and Buchenwald he had been deported to the labour camp of Ellrich. Whereas Delaunois repeatedly

107 Emile Delaunois, diary from 3.4.1944 to 16.4.1945, Bergen-Belsen Memorial, BT-144 (henceforth cited as Delaunois, Diary). For the French text see: Sans Haine mais sans crainte. Journal de Mr. Delaunois, Emile prisonnier politique depuis son arrestation par la Gestapo jusqu'à sa mort en terre ennemie, Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines, Bruxelles (CEGES-SOMA), AB 337.

108 This edition is based on a translation by her own hand of Hanna Lévy-Hass' original diary, which was written in Serbo-Croatian. The new edition of 2009 is identical with the translation edited by Eike Geisel (Lévy-Hass 1991).

writes about thinking of his wife at home in Belgium,[109] for the most part he holds on to his feelings and hopes for a better future together. In this regard, his diary would also have been interesting with respect to the first group of identity-attributions, family. At the same time, however, he writes about his belonging to the group of political prisoners and, beyond that, to the so-called prominents. For Hanna Lévy-Hass, neither her family nor being part of the Jewish community had been a central part of her self description. This might be a consequence of the fact that, as she writes repeatedly, despite intensive efforts she was not able to remember her past, since the experiences at the camp outweighed all what had been before. Hanna Lévy-Hass was born in Sarajevo in 1913 and was deported from Yugoslavia to Bergen-Belsen in 1944, just before she could carry out her plan to attach herself to the group of partisans with whom she was already in contact. In her text, the focus lies on her political – in this case communist – attitude, on the emphasis on the unequal behaviour of men and women, as well as on her activity as a teacher, which she tried to sustain also at the camp and which she linked to her political aspirations. Taking these two diaries, the third aspect should be described first, and secondly it can be explained how a political self-concept is drafted while facing the extreme circumstances of a concentration camp.

The texts by Hanna Lévy-Hass and Emile Delaunois have in common that they are at present only available in transcribed and, as far as Hanna Lévy-Hass' diary is concerned, translated form. Whereas on the one hand this makes them a lot easier to work with, on the other it poses the question whether they can be taken as a plausible basis for the study of their semantic-pragmatic aspects. Since this problem is unsolvable at least for the moment – information about the whereabouts of Emile Delaunois' original handwritten text is not yet available, while Hanna

109 »[…] to think ›in writing‹ a little of my Nande, of mom, dad, Albert … of all those whom I love and who return my love« (Delaunois, Diary: 37).

Lévy-Hass's original is presumed to be lost[110] –, working with the available texts seems to be the only option.[111]

Emile Delaunois wrote his diary between April 3rd 1944 and April 16th 1945 as a prisoner of the camp of Ellrich, which belonged to the concentration camp of Mittelbau-Dora, as well as at the »exchange camp« of Bergen-Belsen. On April 5th 1945 he was transported to Bergen-Belsen, where he arrived on April 11th and experienced the liberation by the British armed forces on the 15th. Emile Delaunois died on June 5th 1945, shortly after his liberation, at a hospital in Melle.[112]

The first part of his diary deals in a retrospective manner with his arrest and the subsequent interrogation by the security police (*Sicherheitspolizei*) in Belgium, who accused him of involvement in several raids upon trains as well as of the transport of weapons, ammunition and explosives. He wrote this part nine months after his imprisonment at camp Ellrich. A large part of the entries are no longer retrospective but, from November 7th onwards, promptly recorded events as they unfolded at this camp. A further section of his diary covers the evacuation transport to Bergen-Belsen, and the then following part gives details of the last days before the liberation of the camp, when unprecedented circumstances were prevailing. As becomes clear from his diary, Emile Delaunois could at least understand and speak German. His text, (except a few German insertions, for example when quoting Germans or in using camp-specific ter-

110 This statement is taken from the epilogue of the published version of the diary (Kerenji 2009: 152).

111 The fundamental question here is, of course, how published, edited or transcribed texts can be incorporated into the study of linguistic structures, or if they are to be excluded in principle from the source basis. Taking the scarcity of source material – as compared to, for example, retrospective sources – into account, this seems to be a luxury that one cannot realistically afford. Furthermore, only a fraction of prisoners had the opportunity to write a diary. To exclude their texts upon purely formal grounds seems questionable.

112 Information from the Bergen-Belsen Memorial, Email from November 27th 2009.

minology like *Kapo*) however, is written in his native language, French.[113] The text, which exists as a typescript, encompasses 82 pages on standard (DIN-A4) paper.

Hanna Lévy-Hass, by her own account, personally transcribed the diary she wrote in Bergen-Belsen some weeks after her return to Yugoslavia. If in this process she made significant changes to the original text is unknown.[114] The result was copied several times for potentially interested persons. After her arrival in Israel – her experiences in her native country Yugoslavia brought her to immigrate to Israel a few years after her return – again she made copies for a small circle of people. At this time she also translated her diary into French, as only a few people knew its original language, Serbo-Croatian. Only in the wake of the Eichmann trial, which took place in Jerusalem in 1961, the diary was made available to a larger, but still very specialized, circle of readers. Hanna Lévy-Hass handed over her diary to the International Federation of Resistance Fighters, which published it in its brochures. According to Hanna Lévy-Hass, the diary appeared in five editions,

> the first, by just a few copies, in 1946 in Serbo-Croatian; then in 1961 in French and German at the publishing house of the International Federation of Resistance Fighters. In 1963 a translation into Hebrew was published by the Israeli Fighters against Nazis, and almost 10 years later an Italian edition by the left-wing Italian

113 »This is all I am able, with great difficulty, to tell him in Flemish, taking great care not to let any German words slip out. – After long persistence he seems to be convinced both of my identity and of my ignorance of the German language. This will be of great advantage, because in the time in which the interpreter translates Fits' questions to me I have time to think and prepare answers« (Delaunois, Diary: 6).

114 But one of her remarks gives reason to be cautious: »I had a small notebook, and when I had time or courage, I wrote. Sometimes I wrote just some words or a few lines, to elaborate it later« (Geisel 1991: 61). One would wish to know when and if Hanna Lévy-Hass carried out these elaborations, but this can no longer be clarified, since she died in Jerusalem in June 2001.

publishing house ›La Nuova Italia‹. Finally, in 1974 a private edition was published in Israel (Geisel 1991: 62-63).[115]

This article draws on the newest edition, which was published in 2009. This was based on the first French translation. Hanna Lévy-Hass already wrote a diary before her deportation to Bergen-Belsen, while still at the Gestapo-prison in Cetinje. This text, however, is believed to be lost. Her Bergen-Belsen diary, which in the published version comprises 77 pages, covers the time between August 16th 1944 and April 1945, when her evacuation transport was liberated by the Red Army near Tröbitz. After this formal characterization it is time for a closer examination of the contents of the texts, especially with regard to the linguistic forms both authors used to describe the self.

Emile Delaunois

Our starting point will be the diary of Emile Delaunois. Judging from his activities as a member of the resistance – during which he adopted the alias name Louis Lelong –, the question of identity would have been of central importance to him. To guard his real identity, he needed to create a second, coherent and resilient life history, including the appropriate documents and legends. Before his capture this second identity could possibly – according to the scope of his activities with the resistance – for a while have become more important than the real one. Since there is as yet no information available about this period, we can only speculate if this had any effect on his writing at the camp. It is noticeable, though, that in the context of the first part of the text, in which he gives a detailed account of his capture and the subsequent interrogations, he repeatedly uses the alias »Michel«, under which he was known in the resistance organisation.

115 Unfortunately it remains fully unclear if the basis of her publication in Israel is in Hebrew or some other language, for more information see Bock 2005: 261.

> But everything is exposed as they start to search me and address me as ›Michel‹, and as I pretend not to understand, they repeat ›Michel‹ several times, ›You are Michel‹, after which I finally answer: ›Louis Lelong‹ (Delaunois, Diary: 4).

Further ascriptions by the Germans follow, calling him a »terrorist« or »partisan« (Delaunois, Diary: 8, 14), and finally the confession under torture: »I am Michel« (Delaunois, Diary: 13). Whereas from the vantage point of the Germans these concepts have negative connotations, for Delaunois they underline his affiliation to the group of resistance fighters that remains of positive significance to him throughout his captivity, giving them a positive ring. Quoting these concepts in his diary, he retrospectively inscribes himself into the group of resistance fighters, even though he was in fact a (political) »prisoner« at the concentration camp.[116]

When reading Delaunois' diary, its prominent use of the first person singular is conspicuous. »I« is the central personal pronoun, followed by »we« which – coincidentally – in most cases refers to two other prisoners with whom he shares his workplace and can hear the news on the radio.[117] In his diary, Emile Delaunois wants to write down his story. He is concerned with his moods, his thoughts and events. As such, he is explicitly negotiating his own self, whereas descriptions of everyday life at the camp remain in the background. They are only elaborated upon insofar as they immediately concern him.

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116 »Today, almost nine months after my capture, at the *Arbeitseinsatz*-office of our work camp B 12 I find a little time and try to collect the memories I have of this interrogation; but so many events have already invaded my poor memory that I hardly succeed with rendering the interrogation by its chronologic order« (Delaunois, Diary: 14-15).

117 »Today we could not hear the announcement, and I have to admit we are a little perplexed because of it, because now we have to wait, in trembling uncertainty, until tomorrow afternoon and endure the onslaught of news hungry comrades that have no other reliable source except us« (Delaunois, Diary: 35).

He stressed that he had an exceptional position in the hierarchy of the camp. »Since Monday we have moved into barrack nr. 2 of the new camp B 12, and since we are ›prominents‹, we have a nice ›booth‹ of about 5x4 m for ourselves« (Delaunois, Diary: 43).

Why Delaunois belonged to the small group of the camp's »prominents« cannot be reconstructed from his diary. Repeatedly he writes about »prisoners«, often abbreviated as »Prsnrs.«, and refers to them as »comrades«. It is clear, however, that he only partially includes himself in this group. Rather, he describes their actions from a distance, without taking an active part in the everyday life of the camp and the corresponding suffering.

> I am certain that the topmost Kapo's whistle tears the poor ›Prsnrs.‹ finally from a sort of obtuseness, then as they hardly have time to think most of them never reach the state of hopelessness (Delaunois, Diary: 19).

This position in the commando – he can work at the »office«, while his comrades are occupied outside under conditions of snow and ice – becomes manifest linguistically, even though he realizes that after all he, too, is part of the community of prisoners:

> But the less fortunate of our poor comrades are in misery. Day and night without bread, work from 6 o'clock in the morning to 5 at night with only a litre of soup in their stomach, feet in the mud, in wind and rain (Delaunois, Diary: 41).

Finally he declares: »Our work demands everything from us, but it is not extremely exhausting; theirs, however, is deadly. [paragraph] Aside from that, all ›Prisoners‹ are equal« (Delaunois, Diary: 44).

Whereas Delaunois in the first, retrospective part of his diary codified his identity with the help of the attributions of »terrorist« and »partisan« as a political prisoner and a member of the resistance, in the course of the text this aspect is fully lost. The self-description as a hierarchically higher placed prisoner, as »prominent«, is distinctly put into the fore. Only his classification as belonging to the prisoner categories of the Bel-

gians and French can still be taken as evidence of an immanent self-understanding as a political prisoner.[118] This might be due to the fact that in the last phase of Camp Ellrich, when the anyway inadequate provisions for the prisoners completely collapsed, his position as being »prominent« ensured the satisfaction of his elementary needs and ultimately guaranteed his temporal survival:

> For supper I just had about two litres of soup. The first was special soup, that is cooked for the 6 Kapos, both of the block leaders, the head of the camp and for both of the ›prominents‹, that is us (Delaunois, Diary: 51).

This special position is carried forward both during the transport and in Bergen-Belsen, even though it is not explained in the text. This change is accompanied by a new shift. Whereas in the first part of the diary the personal pronoun »I« is predominant, in the second part it is the collective »we« that refers to him and the other privileged prisoners. Two exceptions build a short intermezzo, in which he addresses his wife – on the occasion of her 23rd birthday – and considers their joint future after his return (Delaunois, Diary: 55) as well as the immediate experience of the liberation of Bergen-Belsen, which stirs in him a plethora of conflicting emotions: »And in this moment I'm shivery and full of spite. The Americans are there after all … hurray! … but the guys still have not had anything to eat today and will not get anything« (Delaunois, Diary: unpaged).

In the case of Delaunois' diary, a relatively unambiguous shift in the use of self-descriptions can be observed in the course of time, as well as an accompanying shift in the predominant ascription of identity. This is directly linked to the situation of writing. In both cases, however, it con-

118 »This is exactly what kills us Belgians and French: thinking too much of our loved ones and of our homes« (Delaunois, Diary: 48). And: »The great majority of the prisoners of Mittelbau consisted of adult, male non-Jewish aliens and ›Reichsdeutsche‹, almost all of whom were classified as political. Almost half of these were classified as ›criminal‹, one fourth as ›political‹ and another fourth as ›antisocial‹« (Wagner 2001: 405).

cerns positive concepts that are put in opposition to specific negations of his person that are attributed to him from the outside.

Hanna Lévy-Hass

In her text, Hanna Lévy-Hass grapples with the environment that surrounds her much more engagedly than was the case for Emile Delaunois. Not only are the catastrophic circumstances investigated, as they are by Delaunois, but she especially goes into the condition of her fellow sufferers, even though in most cases she expressly separates herself from them. This demarcation functions by way of her self-understanding as a political woman whose Jewish identity plays only a secondary role. At this point this issue will only be addressed as far as it has an identity-building function for Lévy-Hass.

Whereas in the case of Delaunois it could be shown that in the course of time his self-description as a political prisoner gave way to identificating himself as »prominent«, in Hanna Lévy-Hass' diary the opposite tendency can be observed. As the external circumstances in Bergen-Belsen became more precarious and life-threatening, her adherence to communist ideals and values, which she understood as a future solution for societal problems, became ever more important to her. Accordingly, on the 24th of August 1944 she wrote:

> A world in decay … A new, a healthy world will replace it. I shiver for joy at the thought of this new life, of the coming triumph of light and of truth. […] And everything will become incomparably more simple, just, clear, there will be no more room for situations of bondage like this one (Lévy-Hass 2009: 40).

And even in an undated entry from February 1945, six months after her deportation to Bergen-Belsen, she writes with increased intensity:

> What are they waiting for? And the English? What do they want? What are their plans? Do they play, as masters of the situation, with the whole world as they maintain the situation that fits them best? If not, they would have dealt with Germany a long time ago [paragraph] The human lives, the suffering, death and the decay of

> slaves – what do they care? Nothing. Freedom – bluff, as long as they can put it to their advantage. They are exploiters of small nations, the advantaged, the privileged in the current hierarchy of nations. That is why everything is the way it is. The only thing that counts are the policies of the USSR and the belief in the triumph of the new society. What would be the sense of everything otherwise? Is war in the nature of man? What does it all mean? If there is no real victory, if the whole world does not become socialist, what good is anything? So that everything starts anew. New massacres, new corruption? I'm starting to despair of man (Lévy-Hass 2009: 103f.).

Most directly she ties her own identity to political decisions, as if she would – to a degree – negate her own person, quasi to conserve herself by her belief in a political solution:

> So I've learnt to closely associate my special fate with the general questions that determine the result of the social and international fermentation, and to seek the solution of my personal problems first and foremost in the context of the solution of problems on a world-scale (Lévy-Hass 2009: 36).

Her political self-image is affirmed by her female fellow prisoners, who designate her to act as speaker in the reorganization of the barracks self-management. Given her very limited opportunities, her self-determined actions carry forward her »struggle« against inequality und the advantages of a small group of fellow prisoners. She directly confronts the barrack leader and works for the benefit of the whole group. This would have been very much in accordance with her political self-understanding. On a linguistic level, this is expressed by the fact that she describes this form of organised resistance in a distinctly political vocabulary. In this way, in the depiction of the conflict, which takes up several pages of the diary, there is mention of »organised action«, of a »reorganisation of the regime«, of »opponents«, »bourgeois types«, of a »monopoly of the kettles« as well as repeatedly of »action« and »struggle« (Lévy-Hass 2009: 65-72).

Just as relevant for her self-image is her activity as a teacher in Bergen-Belsen. As, even within the camp, she tries in this capacity to play an active part, she again ties in with a familiar practice from before the war. In a certain sense, this aspect can be understood as a form of preservation of identity that goes beyond pure construction. Even in this context her political attitude played an important role, as can be seen from an entry of the 28th of August 1944, where she wrote:

> This is why I am so impatient in my expectation of the new era, which will help us to overcome the evil as we grab it by its roots. With tremendous joy I think of the opportunities I will have in the field of teaching (Lévy-Hass 2009: 44).

Strikingly, in the context of her activities as a teacher she writes about herself more intensively, as she writes herself into the text using the first person singular. In relation to her political identity, on the other hand, her self-designation is articulated more implicitly by way of topical or subject-related reflections on this aspect.[119]

Hanna Lévy-Hass is – in her writing – very aware of her affiliation to the group of Jewish prisoners. This is how she is categorized by the National Socialists. And this is the reason why she has been imprisoned, not her activities as a communist in Yugoslavia or the fact that she wanted to join the partisans. This becomes clear not only by the passage quoted above, about the subsumption of her personal fate within a bigger, global context, but also by the fact that she identifies other prisoners as »political prisoners« and »political captives«, whereas she never designates herself as such (Lévy-Hass 2009: 62f.). In contrast to Emile Delaunois, who removes himself partially from the group of prisoners and who ac-

119 »The class with the big ones has a special aftertaste. They like to talk with me about diverse questions of life. In this way I can convey those thoughts to them that are dear to me«. And in the same entry »[…] and I subtly got them to describe the worth of the results of labour, the role of the worker in society, with the development of the riches of the earth, in production, etc. From this, they were brought to highlight the close connection between the fate of civilized humanity and the consciousness and movement of the working class« (Lévy-Hass 2009: 75).

centuates his own position among the hierarchically better situated »prominents«, in Hanna Lévy-Hass' diary such a removal from the prisoner collective does not take place, regardless of all the linguistic demarcations from individual fellow prisoners or groups. On the contrary, she sees herself as part of a moribund community of all Bergen-Belsen prisoners and repeatedly speaks of »we« and »us«.

> We are all slaves here, and we are layered on top of one another, without leaving us enough room to breath. On purpose they look on, how we insult one another, scuffle and fight with one another: Then they are trying to make our lives unbearable, brutalize us, to even better be able to ridicule, humiliate and torment us. These beasts (Lévy-Hass 2009: 51).

The common enemy is clearly defined. These are the National Socialists that make her life and that of her fellow prisoners a hell in the full sense of the word. This attitude remains until the last entry of her diary, where the same ascription to the collective appears that could be found in Delaunois'.

> This camp is set up and established with deliberate purpose and scientific thoroughness in such a way as to eradicate thousands of human beings in a systematic and planned way. If this will go on even for one month, it is questionable if even one of us will escape it (Lévy-Hass 2009: 111f.).

Conclusion

If one tries, as a conclusion, to summarise the way in which the attribution and linguistic self-designation of a political or resistant identity is used in the diaries of Hanna Lévy-Hass and Emile Delaunois, the focus has to be on the shift that takes place in Emile Delaunois self-description, whereas in Hanna Lévy-Hass's diary no such comparable shift can be found. While for Delaunois, as his self-understanding as being »prominent« comes into the fore, in the course of time his political entity plays an ever lesser role, in the case of Hanna-Lévy Hass a constant inscription into a political identity already developed in the pre-war era can

be observed. If anything, it becomes more intense. In contrast to Emile Delaunois, Hanna Lévy-Hass does not have the resource of a favored position in the hierarchy of prisoners. It can be suspected, then, that she is more emphatically at pains to preserve the identification with positive self-ascriptions by the medium of the diary. This speculation should not be taken to imply that only by way of their diaries prisoners could secure their survival. For this, concrete physical and material concerns would have been at least just as important. However, writing a diary as well as the accompanying possibility to say »I« in the text can be understood as a strategy of mentally writing oneself out of an unbearable situation.

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»But we realized that we didn't fit in there«

The impact of generational belonging on community building and network formation in post unification Germany

Jeannette Prochnow

Introduction

»But we realized that we didn't fit in there«, Ellen, a woman in her late fifties concludes her interview account of a reunion of East German workers who were occupied for several years in the Soviet Union with GDR's (German Democratic Republic) economic prestige project of the COMECON[120] pipeline construction. In June 1974, delegates of former COMECON member states[121] signed the general agreement on economic collaboration to tap natural gas resources near Orenburg in the then Soviet Union. In the following, a first pipeline section was built in Ukraine from 1974 to 1978. This section was named »Drushba-Trasse«, a combination of the Russian word for friendship and an explicitly East German term for pipeline. Being 24 years of age, Ellen left for the Ukraine in 1975 to work as a post office clerk at two construction sites. Being unmarried and due to the deficient housing market of the GDR, she was still living with her parents. The opportunity to work in Ukraine was a welcome chance to finally leave

120 The Council for Mutual Assistance was founded in 1949 and basically constituted the ›socialist counterpart‹ to the Organisation for European Economic Co-Operation that emerged from the Marshall Plan and later to the European Economic Community.

121 Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, People's Republic of Bulgaria, People's Republic of Poland, GDR, People's Republic of Hungary and Soviet Union.

home and on top of that to even see a foreign country. She came back home in 1978 when the venture was completed. After having returned, Ellen experienced a painful odyssey in the authoritarian East German state and left the GDR for the West in the mid-1980s, after her partner had spent four years as a political prisoner. Despite all or probably because of all she has experienced, her deployment abroad occupies a glimmering position in her narrated biography.

When Ellen was already living in a West German city, thousands of East German contract workers and delegates of the *Freie Deutsche Jugend* (Free German Youth, henceforth FDJ), that officially directed the economic project, were again working with a number of East German state-run companies in the framework of a second construction venture, plainly referred to as the *Erdgastrasse* (natural gas pipeline) by political officials. This pipeline section was started in 1982 and comprised of construction cites located in the Ukraine, Central Russia, the Perm district, and Kazakhstan. The venture was eventually completed in 1993 on behalf of reunified Germany. In total, more than 15,000 mostly young, predominantly male workers applied for an occupation with the project (Belwe 1983).[122] For many of them their period of life and work with the

122 People applied voluntarily for a contract within the framework of pipeline construction that also included affiliated obligations, such as the development of the general infrastructure and residential areas along the pipeline for the future Soviet operators. Thus, a wide range of craftsmen was employed. Furthermore health care, cleaning, administration, catering and entertainment staff, economists and police officers were on duty. The contract period covered a minimum of two years. In the 1980s some contracts were prolonged for up to eight years. In some exceptional cases employees worked with the project in both the 1970s and the 1980s and finally worked eleven years in total in the Soviet Union, with an interruption between the construction phases. The venture was declared a »Youth Project« by GDR's Minister of Coal Mining and Energy. Therefore, the majority of pipeline workers were FDJ members who were officially delegated to the pipeline project by their home factories. Older employees also came, mainly experienced construction supervisors and engineers. In general, these workers were either members of the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, Socialist Unity Party of Germany) or SED functionairies, which had a permanent office at the con-

socialist prestige project represents one of the key points of their lives, and thus still connects them to other people who share the same life experience.[123] Nowadays a community of several hundreds of former pipeline labourers closes off from an out-group by strongly refering to the shared biographical event, i.e. only those who are *Trassenerbauer* (pipeline builders/ pipeline constructers) – to use the group's conventionalized label of self reference – may become a participating member of the community. For many years, two *Trassenvereine* (pipeline associations) and semi-institutionalized associations founded by former pipeline workers have developed cultural practices leading to a common group identity. The mission statement of the initial and still largest associations reads:

> In September 1997 our association ›Erdgastrasse e.V.‹ was founded. It is an alliance of former pipeline builders and likewise represents the connecting link between all pipeline builders who were involved in the construction of the ›Drushba-Trasse‹ resp. since 1982 the ›Erdgastrasse‹ in Russia.[124]

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struction sites. The economic operation was set in an all-embracing ideological campaign launched by the SED and the FDJ, and the young pipeline workers were put centre stage.

123 Most of the former pipeline workers today state that they applied for a job with the venture because of the alluring prospects of high earnings, access to rare consumer goods by means of an exclusive shopping catalogue (GENEX) or simply the allocation of an apartment or university admission. In a survey conducted in 1987, 81.2% fully agreed that they wanted to earn more money than in their home employment. At the same time, 52.6% fully agreed that they wanted to contribute to an economically important project of the GDR, 42.2% fully agreed that they wanted to have an exceptional experience, 41.6% fully agreed that they wanted to acquire special skills in their professional field (Zentralinstitut für Jugendforschung 1987).

124 »Im September 1997 wurde unser Verein ›Erdgastrasse e. V.‹ gegründet. Er ist ein Bündnis ehemaliger Trassenerbauer und stellt zugleich das Bindeglied aller Trassenbauer dar, die am Bau der ›Drushba-Trasse‹ bzw. seit 1982 am Bau der ›Erdgastrasse‹ in Russland beteiligt waren« (http://www.erdgastrasse-ev.de, accessed on July 16th 2010, author's translation).

Like the representatives of the above-mentioned association, all initiatives claim to represent the interests of people who were employed with the state-run project in both construction periods. However, former employees of the first construction phase remain noticeably underrepresented and marginalised within the community. Therefore, Ellen and three friends of hers believe that it was their first and last time to take part in a reunion of former pipeline builders.

This article examines the impact of generational belonging on community and network building under the conditions of social change in post 1989-Germany, by the example of the peer community of former pipeline builders. In an attempt of exploring the generational divide within the community, the ethnographic analysis combines different methodological and theoretical approaches that allow for a depiction of network building processes, and also account for segregations in network dynamics. To that end, concepts of ethnography of communication (EOC) are combined with a network analytical perspective and a theoretical approach based on Karl Mannheim's tenet of generation. The main argument of the paper is that explanations for the exclusion of first generation pipeline builders from the community require a reflection of social practices and must not be reduced to content analysis of collective memory. Therefore, the focus is on practices of community building. Special attention will be paid to the utilization of communicative means to interact, and generation specific variations according to intentions and social needs of the community members. The empirical findings will be interpreted in view of the historical context in which the community building process was embedded.

The first section of the paper is devoted to the theoretical and methodological approach. Next to an illustration of the empirical tools that were employed, the subjacent understanding of ›generation‹ in this paper will be introduced and further elaborated in the empirical part. The paper will then turn to a description of the pipeline builder's ›communicative infrastructure‹ that on the one hand has fostered social cooperation and on the other hand has been the outcome of community building. The next part focuses on how first generation pipeline builders have attempt-

ed to integrate into the community, and how they reflect about failures and constraints of integration. Reflections of first generation pipeline builders on their standing in the community will be interpreted pertaining to the structural analysis of the communicative infrastructure. As a final step, the interpretive potential of the concept of generation for the case study will be concluded.

Theory, methodology and data: a microsociological and emic approach to ›generation‹

This article is based on a project that investigates community and network building practices in the context of transition processes by the case of former GDR pipeline labourers. The study raises the question of which social practices, linguistic performances and bodies of knowledge have fostered and facilitated the formation and maintenance of the community network since the early 1990s. In addition, reasons for a recent, yet gradual decrease of community activities since roughly 2007 will be traced. What may the rise and descend of the community tell about the present state of a post socialist society? To this end, analytical instruments of EOC are combined with a network analytical perspective. The data corpus comprises of web pages, internet forum discussions among community members (since 1999), invitation letters to reunions, observation at reunions, written documents of club rules, tape recordings of informal conversations at reunions as well as telephone conversations and e-mailing between the researcher and former pipeline builders. Furthermore, narrative non-standardized interviews were conducted during a two-years field research. This has, for instance, been the case with founding members of the associations to learn about its history. Further interviews were carried out with first generation pipeline builders who are usually unavailable in community contexts. Therefore, this article for the most part builds on non-standardized interviews produced at the homes of the interviewees.

EOC conceives of speaking and communicative interaction as a community building activity (Bergmann & Meyer 2010: 151). The primary unit of description is the »speech community«. Dell Hymes conceived of a

speech community as: »sharing knowledge of rules for the conduct and interpretation of speech. Such sharing comprises knowledge of at least one form of speech, and knowledge also of its patterns of use« (Hymes 1974: 51). A few years later John Gumperz redefined speech community as:

> a system of organized diversity held together by common norms and aspirations. Members of such a community typically vary with respect to certain beliefs and other aspects of behaviour. Such variation, which seems irregular when observed at the level of the individual, nevertheless shows systematic regularities at the statistical level of social facts (Gumperz 1988: 24)

Accordingly, EOC »looks at communication from the standpoint of interest of a community itself« and considers »its members as sources of shared knowledge and insight« (Hymes 1974: 8). It is based on the premisses that every community has developed a set of »linguistically distinguishable settings« (Gumperz 1982: 43) that allow to conclude on the structures of the group and the social function of their communicative performances, in addition to underlying social norms and needs. Thus it investigates the relation between activities of speech and social life by aiming at a »theory of language use« (Hymes 1972). To that end, Hymes developed his »speaking mnemonic« to promote the analysis of group specific discourses conceived of as a series of (interpersonal) speech events and speech acts among members of a speech community. The speaking model uses the first letters of terms for determinative speech components – setting and scene, participants, ends, act sequence, key, instrumentalities, norms, genre – to explore conventions, functions, and underlying social structures of linguistic performances (Hymes 1974: 53-62).

Beyond doubt, EOC provides excellent instruments to explore activities of community building through communicative interaction. However its research instruments, predominantly tape recording and observations of interactions among community members of local areas (Hymes 1974: 31; Gumperz 1988: 155), are only partly applicable for the here presented study. In fact, interpersonal relationships of former pipeline builders are

maintained over long distances by means of corresponding communication facilities. After Germany's reunification in 1990, the social structure of East German localities has dramatically changed. Owing to the introduction of market economic principles, a large number of factories closed down. As a consequence of rising unemployment rates, tens of thousands left their hometowns and native areas (Paqué 2009), among them also former pipeline workers. With regard to the history of the pipeline associations since the mid 1990s, it can be safely said that the increasing spread of access to the Internet has had a significant impact on the emergence of the community. Only by means of the World Wide Web and by establishing corresponding communicative habits have former pipeline builders been able to bridge geographical distances between various places of residence.

This non-local character of the community stipulates a network analytical perspective that treats »communities as a social network rather than as a place« (Wellman 1999a: xiv). While linguist anthropologist John Gumperz still comprehended of a social network as »localities« (Gumperz 1988: 38), the sociologist Barry Wellman construed networks as »personal communities« (Wellman 1999a: xiv). According to him, »network analysis conceives of social structure as the patterned organization of these network members and their relationships« (Wellman 1999b: 16). During the past two decades, network analysts have highlighted the important role that electronic communication media have been playing for providing »companionship, social support, and a sense of belonging« (Wellmann 1999a: xiv; Haythornthwaite & Wellman 2002). However, network studies heavily rely on either surveys and statistical data or semi-standardized interviews in an attempt to trace structures of cooperation rather than acts of social cooperation. One major drawback of this approach is that it is unable to demonstrate how people respond to social circumstances and how they make reference to them in the context of network interaction. How do network members channel, define and negotiate their actions and thus make situated use of an interpersonal infrastructure that also defines the boundaries of a community? And more importantly, how do communities generate communicative interaction

structures? Accordingly, to assess the social network of former pipeline builders the non-territorial perspective of network analysis has to be combined with the decisively interactional approach of EOC.

The research design also pays attention to what scholars such as Robert D. Benford, David A. Snow and associates called the »framing/movement link«.[125] It starts with the assumption that framing processes are »a central dynamic in understanding the character and course of social movements«. To this end, the concept of »collective action frames« was introduced. »Collective action frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organization (SMO)«. Thus, collective action frames enable for the mobilization of »potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists» (Benford & Snow 2000: 614).[126] More interesting, however, is that the »framing/movement link« also traces constraints on mobilization of adherents: Why do people feel attracted by certain rhetoric elements, interpretations of historical, political and economic events, and collective activities while others are not reached at all or drop out quickly after a preliminary contact? Similarly, network analysis does not merely focus on »patterns of connectivity« but also on patterns of »cleavage within

125 Following Goffman, »frame« is understood as »schemata of interpretation« that enable individuals »to locate, perceive, identify, and label occurrences within their life space and the world at large«. Frames, thus »help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action« (Benford & Snow 2000: 614; Snow et al. 1986).

126 On the empirical level these authors seem to treat frame as equal with rhetoric rather than comprehending of framing as a process of interpersonal negotiation. Therefore, the »movement framing research« (Benford & Snow 2000) remains open to doubt concerning its methodological and theoretical comprehensibility. Nevertheless crucial analytical concepts, such as: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, frame transformation, frame dispute, frame resonance etc. can beneficially be applied to trace internal social structures of interest groups as well as alliances with out-group social actors (Benford & Snow: 2000).

social systems« (Wellman 1999b: 19). What may be the reasons that first generation pipeline builders have barely found their way into the community, although they seem to share the exceptional biographical experience of years of life and work in the former Soviet Union? What is more, they are explicitly invited to participate in the community's activities by the initiators of the associations.

These questions cannot be answered in terms of shared biographical experiences alone. It is rather suggested that groups like the peer network of former pipeline builders do not exist by reason of shared biographical experiences but because of communication about them in the social context of the network. Biographical research[127] first and foremost sheds light on the reciprocal reorganization of narrative structures and life courses and takes this interplay as a point of departure for the analysis (cf. Rosenthal 1995; Lehmann 1983; 2007). Although it is acknowledged that narrated biographies are socially shaped (Fuchs 1984: 22-24) and subject to »interferences« in the process of changes of identity (Schütze 1983), hardly any analytical emphasis is placed on reciprocal negotiations about life histories. Therefore, biographical interviews only reveal retrospective assessments of events (Bergmann 2007: 45). Yet, there is a social world beyond narrated life histories. Accounts are the manifestation of social knowledge generated in particular contexts (Gardner 2001: 196). Given that social action is knowledge-based performance, knowledge is not only produced under certain historical conditions but also contributes to the generation and alteration of social contexts. The ex-

127 In the understanding of the social sciences, biographical research deals with the interpretive analysis of autobiographic narrations and accounts. As distinguished from life course research that explores constraints and inequalities of life chances in the context of a given social structure, biographical research makes individual interpretations of experiences its focus, whereby the individual and not the social structure marks the point of departure. The category of the generation is closely related to that of biography, however the aim of periodization of courses of time is much more pronounced. Hereby, generation research aims at bringing together individual life stories and broader socio-historical processes (Lepsius 2005: 47-48).

ploration of the latter is not a matter of the analysis of a narrator's perceptions alone but also needs to include phenomena that (partly) deprive of the narrated stories because they cannot be assessed retrospectively yet. For its main part, the study presented here focuses on social interaction among those who carry a similar biography. Collective biographical identity is considered the outcome of rather than the reason for community building. Consequently, the description of community building processes calls for a more interaction oriented concept than ›biography‹. Yet, it must not be neglected that members of the community share the experience of life and work in the former Soviet Union. In fact, semantic biographical codes, above all the common self-designation *Trassenerbauer* (pipeline builders), clearly mark the borders of the community. Such »conventionalised labels« inherently refer to »discourse strategies« (Gumperz 1988: 34). More precisely, they inform about participants and norms of group-specific interactions. Thus, mutual accommodations of life histories restrict the scope of legitimate membership. Bearing in mind the significance of life histories on the one hand and social interaction on the other hand, it is assumed that a conceptualization of the concept of generation can provide an important key to understanding community building processes of former pipeline builders. Drawing on the latest critical debate about generation research program, Mannheim's distinction between »generation as an actuality« and »generation unit« will be reinterpreted and guide the interpretation of the data in order to grasp the generational divide within the network.

In his programmatic essay *The problem of generations* (1970 [1928]), Karl Mannheim argued that generation does not primarily correspond to cohorts but to attitudes, i.e. mechanisms of distinction against preceding generations (Wohlrab-Sahr 2002: 216). A common generation location[128] has the potential to materialize in a generation as an actuality, on condition of participation in shared historical destinies (Mannheim 1970 [1928]): 536) and »in the ideas and concepts which are in some way bound

128 Generation location refers to the biological cycle and means the belonging of individuals to one socio-historical space in which they are exposed to a common range of historical events.

up with its unfolding« (Karl Mannheim 1952: 306, cited in Diepstraten et al. 1999). Thus a generation as an actuality exceeds a mere historical co-presence of individuals (Diepstraten et al. 1999). Yet, social ties and a feeling of connectivity are annullable and shiftable. On the contrary, Mannheim displays the generation unit as a far more tangible affinity (Mannheim 1970 [1928]: 525). Generation unit refers to a »concrete social group« (*konkrete soziale Gruppen*, actual social groups) within the same actual generation (Mannheim 1970 [1928]: 548). Its members develop a common vision on shared historical events and shifts in the socio-historical structure. Thus generation units are the actual manifestations of a generation materialized as a quantitatively limited, concrete group within a larger generation (Diepstraten et al. 1999). This also means that different generation units coexist. Each of them interprets experiences in a distinctive way and by adopting specific cultural practices. These concrete groups bound in generational unity are no longer characterized by loose participation of a variety of individuals. Rather they distinguish themselves through »coherent reactions« (*einheitliches Reagieren,* resp. common reaction) to socio-historical events. These coherent reactions and performances contain an associational power (Mannheim 1970 [1928]: 547).

As Mannheim thinks of specific articulations in response to socio-historical events in theoretical terms, so do sociologists, anthropologists and sociolinguistics with their different schools of thought leave no doubt that socially connecting (communicative) performances are contingent on culture and history. Likewise, network analysts have stated that »communities do not function in isolation but in political, economic, and social milieus that effect their composition, structure, and operations« (Wellman 1999b: 34). Bringing Mannheim's theoretical ideas in line with the methodological tools of EOC, the network of former pipeline builders is conceived of as a »speech community« that corresponds to a generational unit in the sense of an emically practiced discrimination between the two generations of pipeline builders from the 1970s and from the 1980s. In spite of a similar common past it is assumed that former employees from the 1970s do not belong to that generation unit, because of varying articulations and reaction in the socio-historical world

that consequently constrain their integration into the community. Historians and sociologist (cf. Jureit & Wildt 2005) have lately offered a critical evaluation of the analytical category of »generation«. They make clear that even though generation has become a fundamental interpretive category in history and the social sciences it remains a highly fussy concept open to criticism (Lepsius 2005: 47). Among other hindrances, generational research has not satisfyingly answered the question if generation refers to an emic self-description of social actors or an etic ascription by researchers for the sake of periodization. Prevailing so far has been the latter, i.e. deductive and ex post application of the concept to explain social change and continuity rather than an inductive description of how social actors themselves discriminate one generation against another. Furthermore, this deductive, mostly retrospective research program made the explanation of dynamics of a society as a whole its focus (Jureit & Wildt 2005: 22). The analytical potential for explaining processes on the level of microsociological case studies therefore remained largely undiscussed. Eventually the understanding of what a generation is has not managed to overcome its close linkage to age cohorts, a semantic that was brought forward by academics (Jureit & Wildt 2005: 25). In this respect, sociologist Rainer Lepsius speaks of a focus on *Kohortenerlebnisse* (experiences of cohorts) (Lepsius 2005: 50).

The belonging to age cohorts plays a subordinated role for the interpretation of the generational divide in the network of former pipeline employees of the GDR. By the same token it is not the aim of the paper to explain broader socio-historical dynamics of East Germany. Rather it tries to apply concepts of Mannheim's sociology of knowledge to explain practices of community building on a micro scale. Thereby, the analysis attempts to mediate between a deductive and inductive approach. Deductive is the application of notions and categories that were put forward by Mannheim. Inductive, however, is the transfer of the analytical distinction between »generation as an actuality« and »generation unit« to the case study in order to coming to terms with discriminations between employees of the »Drushba-Trasse« (1970s) and the »Erdgas-Trasse« (1980s) that prevail among former pipeline builders themselves. Hence,

the term generation here refers to an emically employed »before-and-after-model« (Jureit & Wildt 2005: 15). The pipeline builders' awareness of a temporal cohesion finds its linguistic expression in a deictic, more precisely numeric-chronological differentiation between »first and second Trasse« (construction phase). Such deictic devices »set up a frame of reference« (Saeed 2009) referring to equivalence and counterpart relations (Hanks 2005: 191-220.) Former pipeline builders of both construction phases locate themselves in a similar biographical frame and acknowledge each other – to borrow from Mannheim – as »pipeline builders as an actuality«. At once they narratively differentiate between each other, by making life experiences relevant in a frame of periodicity. This shared knowledge has to be seen as inextricably linked to performance-relevant patterns, i.e. first and second generation pipeline builders differ on the level of identifiable social practices after the end of their employment. Those pipeline workers who participate in, yield and frame activities of the associations will be comprehended as a generation unit or the »unit of agency« in the network building process.

The communicative infrastructure of the community of former pipeline workers

Since the early 1990s former pipeline workers have regularly met in small private circles. In September 1997 the core of that initial group founded the first officially registered association, and in 2000 a second association was registered. The splitting up of the community into two associations reflects the structure of the economic event. The association *Erdgastrasse e.V.* addresses former employees of the state owned companies that were in charge of the implementation of the affiliated duties of the venture, i.e. the development of the general infrastructure along the pipeline. The association *Erdgastrasse-LT e.V.* addresses former employees of companies that were in charge of the construction of the pipeline as such. After some disagreements concerning the financial organization of reunions, an *Erdgastrassen-Interessengemeinschaft* (pipeline interest group) was launched. In 1998 the original association organised a first reunion. Today, each association hosts its own get-together, with around 300 people participating. Despite some discrepancies that cannot be explained in de-

tail here, all three initiatives keep a remarkably high degree of mutual acceptance and cooperation. Biannual reunions are coordinated in such a way that no competitive situation is created. Representatives of the associations invite each other to events, web pages are linked to each other and visitors of the reunions are partly overlapping. Urgent problems that equally affect the organizations, e.g. keeping reunions alive against the background of financial shortages, are jointly negotiated. Hence, a vivid culture of companionship and remembrance has developed among former pipeline workers. It is kept alive by *Trassenvereine* (associations and interest groups) whose members organize reunions, maintain web pages, provide an online networking forum (*Kontaktbörse*), a discussion forum (*Trassenforum*), and run a small museum. A few pipeline workers have published memoirs, and the historical event is mentioned on a great deal of web pages and personal Internet blogs.

Since these days former pipeline workers are spread all over Germany and in some cases have even emigrated to other European countries (e.g. Denmark, Switzerland, Ukraine, Norway) or overseas (e.g. Canada and California), the community vastly uses means of electronic communication to stay in touch. What in 1998 started with the attempt to reunite former colleagues has developed into an organized, yet pell-mell cluster of face-to-face and virtual encounters. This pattern of interactions on the one hand fostered the formation of the community and on the other hand has been the result of community building processes. In what follows the term ›communicative infrastructure‹ will be applied to refer to the dialectic correlation between the process of community building and patterns of interaction. The appropriation of this communicative infrastructure by network members has been contingent on: their place of residence; degree of shared intimacy; degree of activity and social position within the community; access, ability and preferences in using communication tools; former occupation and resulting contemporary alliances; communicative purposes and goals; timeframe of employment with the pipeline project; and persistence of interpersonal contacts since the end of their employment.

Place of residence

To begin with, the opportunities to meet face-to-face are of course contingent on the place of residence. What sounds like a platitude, actually is a critical aspect of the development of the communicative infrastructure bearing in mind the massive move of qualified East German workforce to the West as a result of an enormously fast structural change with very high unemployment (Paqué 2009). While some former pipeline builders have not left their towns or regions of origin and still meet up with old colleagues face-to-face, others have moved to the western federal states. Geographical proximity along with a degree of intimacy thus decides about forms and intensity of social encounters among former pipeline workers.

Degree of intimacy

Apart from the place of residence, personal relationships among former pipeline workers range from close friends to acquaintances, to people who maintain no direct interpersonal contact. While some of them visit each other at home, use the telephone to talk to each other on a regular basis or go on holidays together, others only meet every two years when the reunions take place or their encounters are realised on a topic-related basis, e.g. on the online forum, where they participate in discussions. Last but not least, the community network is composed of a variety of circles of friends whose associates are not all acquainted to each other.

Degree of activity and social position within the community

The network of former pipeline workers knows persons of higher or lower profiles. Community members who actively engage in the organization of events or administration of web pages enjoy a high extent of interpersonal contact. They maintain a lot of friendships with former colleagues and due to their key position frequently make new acquaintances. Their engagement in establishing new contacts has been an indispensable requirement to reach potential adherents. Additionally, these actors are compelled to make use of a variety of communicative means for organizational purposes. Ahead of reunions they send out electronic

mails and letters, make phone calls and contact the media such as regional newspapers, TV and radio stations.

Access, ability and preferences in using communication tools

From the beginning, the community has made extensive use of the Internet that afforded the opportunity to shape a non-local social space. As early as 1999 a member who was a computer scientist by training installed the first online forum. Careful examination on that networking forum (*Kontaktbörse*) provides important insights into the communicative behaviour of former pipeline builders. Over the past decade it grew constantly, until in 2009 there was a peak of 159 postings. People who make use of the forum introduce their concerns, very often search requests for former colleagues, and specify the preferred way of contacting by means of explicit or implicit imperatives, for instance »call me«, »best via mail« etc. Still, a notable number of people add mobile or home phone numbers. Also very common is public feedback about whom and how they are still or again in contact with. Analysing these postings by paying attention to what Harvey Sacks called membership categorization devices, e.g. »met [name] on the street«, »attended [name's] wedding» etc. provides information about contexts of encounters (Goffman 1983: 19) between community members. Furthermore, users often mention why and how they have found the homepage, for instance by stating that they have just got access to the Internet or how they have heard of the homepage. Also remarkable is what is called here »on-behalf-postings«, for instance by family members, in most cases children of former pipeline workers searching for colleagues of a parent. Likewise, the Webmaster himself publishes contact requests and takes over the responsibility of delivering contact details. Such performative diversities in accessing the community allow for conclusions about varying forms of interaction because of either divergent access to the Internet, varying abilities to use electronic communication devices or simply different preferences and habits of personal communication.

Former occupation and resulting contemporary alliances

The two main associations split up in accordance with the organizational structure of the pipeline project. They consequently address slightly different pools of people. However, both associations are closely linked to each other, not least because several pipeline builders socialize in both circles.

What is more, the networking forum and electronic guest books on the homepages of the associations signify clear interpersonal alliances. Most community members are not interested in contacts with any former pipeline workers, rather they build upon bonds from the past. Contact requests are narrowed and interactions are channelled by deployment of ›social coordinates‹ that have functioned as a ›navigator aid‹ in the network building process. Such criteria as having been applied to the establishment of relationships include: name, in most cases also nickname by which people were known during their employment, name of brigade, employer, years of employment, town of residence and occupation. Thus they search for and maintain relationships with colleagues they directly worked with, friends they lived or shared facilities with, or spent their spare time with. Likewise, space acquisition at reunions confirms these groupings. Participating observation at reunions revealed that indeed »space speaks«, as anthropologist Edward T. Hall put it (1959: 158). On the camping grounds where the meetings take place tents and campervans are grouped together. Friends and former colleagues of work units share their own little anecdotes or tragic memories of industrial accidents. Puzzles of the GDR past, rituals and jokes are preferably recalled, discussed, enjoyed and celebrated among trusted and privy *Trassenkumpel* (pipeline lads). However, not all contacts are coordinated in the same way. Actually, quite often new friends are made at reunions. Therefore, social strategies are constantly rectified. Initial framings that arise from earlier interactive experiences furnish expectations and thus legitimate, coordinate and facilitate social interaction. Yet, it is in the very situation of interaction that contexts are shaped and negotiated. These situated contexts yield shifts of initial interpretive frames, which again affect future events and encounters (Gumperz 1988: 167). Therefore, studies on

collective action frames take the »dialectic between frames and events« as a starting point of interpretation (Benford & Snow 2000: 627). What is more, communicative cooperation among former pipeline workers is highly contingent on interactive purposes and goals, and so are the scope and means of communication.

Communicative purposes and goals

In interviews or informal conversations between researcher and former pipeline workers, interactive experiences with other community members are often addressed by specifying communicative occasions and means that have been in use. Thus indexical expressions such as »in the guestbook«, »on skype«, »online«, »in the forum«, »at the Trassentreffen« (reunion) reflect the variety of communicative settings and conventions that have become constitutive of the community's everyday life. A circle of five closer friends, for example, reported about frequent chats on Skype after one of them had a major stroke. A lot of these accounts illustrate that the expansion and maintenance of the community network has gone beyond the scope of mere recalls to the past or finding old friends. Users of the online forums indicate or overtly express their needs and expectations towards the community. In a lot of cases it is ›practical‹ purposes, goals or problems that need to be accomplished or solved. In such cases, unlike those described above, purposes have priority over ›target group‹. Practical purposes to call on the community have been: exchange of opinions about reports on the GDR's pipeline project in the mass media, foundation of an aid programme for Russian orphanages in the regions of former construction sites,[129] job-related topics, such as recognition of pension rights or exchanges of experiences with professional retraining and unemployment or announcements of job vacancies in Germany and the neighbouring countries. Further concerns have been the exchange of experiences with financial fraud, discussions about political issues concerning East European and East German transformation processes, planning holiday trips to Russia or Ukraine,

129 Under the heading *Alte Freundschaft rostet nicht* (Old friendship never dies) the officially registered initiative *Tscheburaschka e.V.* was founded in 2004.

lets of holiday apartments abroad, announcements of events organized by other clubs or associations former pipeline builders are involved in, and the foundation of a lottery betting pool, to give only a random selection. Hence, the community must not be regarded as a mere milieu to cherish nostalgic sentiments. Rather it is a multifaceted network that provides support contingent on and responding to prevailing purposes and needs of its members.

Timeframe of employment with the pipeline project

Although the activities of the associations explicitly address former pipeline workers, irrespectively of time frame or length of employment it does not go without notice that people who worked with the COMECON project in the late 1980s have acted as the ›trendsetters‹ of community building and introducing new activities. They are considerably more active in online forums and constitute the main clientele at reunions. Out of a core group of 293 people that have been of interest for the study,[130] 265 people worked with the venture in the second construction phase or, in very few cases, both in the 1970s and the 1982-1993 period. The study came across as few as 28 people who worked (only) with the first construction phase. Still more striking is the fact that out of the group of 265 people of the second construction phase another 155 people ended their employment in 1989 or later. The end of their employment with the pipeline venture coincided with the collapse of communism. They came back to East Germany when societal transformations were imminent or had started. The majority of the founding members of the associations and the aforementioned aid programme for the support of child care institutions ended their employment in 1989 or later. These people had already established close contacts with each other during their occupation with the venture. Thus it can be suggested that the timeframe of employment has had an impact on the involvement with the commu-

130 Because they either replied to a posting of the researcher in one of the online forums respectively guest books requesting for a narrative interview about their employment with the pipeline venture or/and their involvement with the associations or because of their activities within the community network since its onset.

nity, to the effect that persisting social contacts after return from the Soviet Union were the springboard for the formation of the network. This group of people defined the framing of the associations and initiatives that have increasingly blossomed since the end of the 1990s. As stated earlier, the network is not a mere community of shared memory; rather it provides an environment for political debate and social support. The social benefit of the community has to be considered in the context of the reforms and uncertainties during the transformation process. The majority of community members entered (East) Germany's transition process as pipeline builders who had just come back from the Soviet Union and evidently continued to rely on their social ties with former collegues during the transformation process. Network analysts have shown by the example of Hungary that network building has already been an indispensable social practice during socialism to counterbalance widespread socio-economic malfunctions and a rigid political system (Wellman & Sik 1999).[131] After the collapse of socialism, networks helped to cope with the challenges people faced, for instance unemployment, loss of economic prosperity or in the case of former pipeline builders also the heartfelt sense of loss of professional prestige.[132] Indeed, post socialist culture favours the development of networks, since people reactivate practices that were cultivated during socialism. Practices of network

131 Against the background of shortages in material and consumer goods and a rigid political system that came along with inflexible administrative structures, network capital was an indispensable social resource in pursuit of individual social and economic interests in virtually all spheres of activity (work place, career management, family planning etc.). Life accounts of former pipeline builders, too, address strategies that were adopted in the attempt of propitiating the expectations of bilateral treaties between the GDR and the Soviet Union with conflicting economic and material availabilities. Furthermore, political defaults regarding regulation and control of movement within the Soviet Union and of social contacts with locals were circumvented through situated negotiations with respective supervisors.

132 The author of this paper has discussed the aspect of a heartfelt sense of loss of recognition in a recently published article about the pipeline community (Prochnow 2010).

building of former pipeline workers have been informed by their exceptional biographical experience. They relied on extant relationships to cope with typical problems of East German society since their return from the Soviet Union.

Persistence of interpersonal contact since the end of employment

Maggi, a founding member of the association that was registered in 1998 participated in both construction phases. Her contract eventually expired in 1992. Since then she has maintained contact with former colleagues. In an interview in summer 2008 she describes the onset of institutionalized community building as follows:

Maggi: […] ten years ago we founded the association, actually this association, we all worked on the second Trasse, on the Erdgastrasse, right. And Hanni, who presides over the association, she worked with passports and visa, her husband worked with us […]. And […] we already got along well there and we stayed in touch. I stayed the longest outside and then we said: ›man, it can't be true that it's all over!‹ Let's just, or that each working unit organizes a reunion for itself, let's just try to gather something nationwide.[133]

[…]

Maggi: We wrote [letters], everyone collected contact details, collected contact details and when it took place, man! And we send out [announcements] and also asked for spreading the word and so on. Who knows other people, they can all be invited. We set

133 Maggi: […] vor zehn Jahren haben wir den Verein gegründet, eigentlich dieser Verein, wir waren alle an der zweiten Trasse, an der Erdgastrasse, ne. Und die Hanni, die dem Verein bei uns vorsteht, die war bei uns Pass-Visa, ihr Mann der war bei uns […]. Und […] wir haben uns dort schon gut verstanden und wir sind in Kontakt geblieben. Ich war dann am längsten mit draußen und dann haben wir gesagt ›man das kann doch nicht sein, dass das alles gewesen ist!‹ Lass uns doch einfach mal, oder dass jedes Gewerk sich einfach mal ein Treffen organisiert, lass uns doch einfach mal probieren, ob wir nicht mal überdimensional was zusammenkriegen.

any date, we calculated what we might need more or less, back then it was still dirt cheap.[134]
[…]

Maggi: Well, then we had our first reunion with a peak of, I think, 1,400 people!

Interviewer: God, that is really a lot.

Maggi: Including Drushba-Trasse. […] I did some research and everything, well meanwhile they are … I'm already one of the youngest. And a lot of [them] are going like ›/ehm/ I haven't found this one and that not‹, I say, well maybe you should have taken a paper, should have written, and ›if I would have known that none of my people are coming‹ or like that, well they give that line, too, what can I …[135]

The founding of associations was an act of bringing together different groups of people and several informal networks that had existed permanently since the end of the pipeline project. The example of Maggi shows that the initiators of the first reunion had not been home for

134 Maggi: Wir haben angeschrieben, jeder hat Adressen gesammelt, Adressen gesammelt und als, es war Wahnsinn! Und /äh/ haben wir rausgeschickt und haben eben drum auch gebeten Mundpropaganda weiterzumachen und und und. Wer noch Leute kennt, kann er einladen. Hast du irgendwo Termine hingesetzt, haben wir ungefähr kalkuliert, was wir da vielleicht brauchten, da war das ja noch spuckebillig. […]

135 Maggi: Ja, und da hatten wir das erste Treffen, […] da hatten wir, glaube ich, Spitze mit 1.400 Leuten!

I: Gott, das ist ja echt viel.

Maggi: Mit Drushba-Trasse. […] Ich noch rumrecherchiert und alles Mögliche, na die sind ja nun mittlerweile … ich bin ja auch schon ziemlich eine der Jüngsten mit. […] Und viele der Art kommen natürlich auch, ›/äh/wir haben den nicht gefunden und das nicht‹, ich sag: naja, hättste vielleicht mal das Blatt genommen, hättste mal hingeschrieben und ›hätt ich das gewusst, dass keiner von meinen Leuten da ist‹ oder so, naja solche Sprüche kommen auch, was soll ich dazu …

more than six years or so. The organization cost them nothing more than sending out letters or doing phone calls and apart from that relying on word-of-mouth advertising. By contrast, reaching pipeline builders from the 1970s involved »research« and seizing more initiative. First generation pipeline builders obviously had no active network at their disposal that enabled them to activate word-of-mouth advertising. In the end a few of them came to the reunion, but according to Maggi those taking part were not satisfied with what or better who they found. Maggi comments on the attitude of first generation pipeline builders by using what American anthropologist Claudia Mitchell-Kernan called marking, respectively mocking in terms of direct speech. By using first person singular (or plural) and voice manipulation »the marker attempts to report not only what was said but the way it was said, in order to offer implicit comment on the speaker's background, personality, or intent« (Mitchell-Kernan 1972: 176). This message form reveals characterizations and judgements on those imitated and signifies Maggi's generalised estimation of the social relations between first and second generation pipeline builders. In her point of view, first generation pipeline builders have hardly anything to contribute to the community. It can be assumed that they have been marginalised in the community building process right from the beginning, due to a lack of social ties that they probably had lost in the period of time after the end of their employment at the end of the 1970s.

Performances of first generation pipeline builders

Network building strategies and a correlating expansion of the communicative infrastructure constitute an essential distinctive social practice that members of the community of former pipeline builders have adopted throughout the transformation process. They have profoundly benefited from social ties that already had been forged during their employment with the economic venture. After all, mastery of computer-mediated communication has become a crucial requirement for participation in everyday issues of the non-local community. It is on the various electronic forums and platforms where communicative memory (cf. Welzer 2002) is performed, where reunions and face-to-face meetings are an-

nounced, where people express all kinds of requests, articulate ideas for future activities and coordinate them. The Internet also connects pipeline builders that maintain looser social relations and in a lot of cases presents the onset for mutual activity and support.

Regarding the competences that a member needs to display in order to facilitate participation in the community's activities, it might be assumed that aspects of marginalization and exclusion of first generation workers are grounded in age difference. Studies on the appropriation of new communication media have called attention to a »digital divide« that, among other things, is grounded in age differences, i.e. older people have either less access or less preferences in computer-mediated communication (Haythornthwaite & Wellmann 2002). A quantitative study on *The digital divide in Germany* from 2002 identified two factors that might also explain the perpetuated generational cleavage in the community of former pipeline workers: firstly, use of the personal computer and the Internet hitherto has been more prevalent in West Germany than in East Germany. Secondly, the Internet has bypassed age groups of sixty years and older (Wagner et al. 2002). A qualitative inquiry on generational differences in media use in Germany also found that older generations are less involved in the electronically mediated environment. Following Mannheim, the authors argue that fundamental educational competences, and thus computer skills, are acquired during adolescence or adult onset. Therefore, computer use increasingly deprives of the »conjunctive space of experiences«[136] of those generations who did not grow up in the computer age (Bohnsack & Schäffer 2002). But how tenable is an argument that grounds the explanation of a generational divide in the pipeline builder's network in a universal graduation of cohorts rather than following the group specific logic of periodization? It was argued earlier on that the date of expiration of the contract and return to Germany had

136 Ralf Bohnsack describes generation as a »conjunctive space of experiences«, conceiving of »conjunction« as corresponding to distinction in the sense of mostly unquestioned practices that mark social belonging (Wolf & Burkart 2002: 16; Bohnsack & Schäffer 2002: 249).

an impact on the involvement with the community. Those who came back in 1989 or later appeared as the trendsetters of community building. Acknowledging this, a cohort-based definition of generations of pipeline workers must be avoided. Rather, generation has to be understood by strict reference to the period of the GDR's pipeline venture and when people got involved with it and when their contract expired.

Indeed, when the first online forum was installed in 1999, a lot of second generation pipeline builders were in their early or mid thirties and thus already belonged to the »technology generation« (Bohnsack & Schäffer 2002: 258) or were at least closer to it. The founding members of the associations, who – to crown it all – had a computer scientist among them, soon introduced communicative conventions that probably outdistanced older age groups, born in the 1950s or even earlier, from the network building process. A married couple, today in their mid and late fifties that met when both were working with the pipeline project in the 1970s reflect about their standing in the community as follows:

Peter: […] It's just a shame, today I'd like to meet some of them again, but we have drifted apart, it is now 30 years ago.

Ricarda: Yeah, today one has different opportunities. Today there is the Internet and all these things, but that didn't exist back then.

Peter: [addresses the interviewer] Well, like I said, I contacted you because of your ad in the Internet.

Ricarda: [addresses Peter] Well look, when we went to the Trasse, we were both relatively young. There were a lot of people that already had family. Well, they were in their late twenties and in some cases even older. Who knows how old they are by now.[137]

137 Peter: […] Ist bloß schade, ich würde gerne den einen oder anderen heute mal wieder sehen wollen, aber man hat sich auseinander gelebt, das sind dreißig Jahre her.

Ricarda: Ja, heute hat man ganz andere Mittel. Heute gibt's das Internet und das alles mögliche, aber war ja damals nicht so.

Peter: Na wie gesagt, ich hab mich ja auf Ihre Annonce gemeldet im Internet.

Peter: Maybe they don't have access to the Internet and are already retired and [???].

Ricarda: Yeah, Yeah, who knows how old they are by now. I was only 19 when I went to the Trasse, had just finished my apprenticeship.

[…]

Interviewer: /Mhm/ So you actually tried to find former colleagues?

Ricarda: Yeah, Yeah.

Peter: We tried that and still do. I also carry on going on that Webpage and check out who signed in and stuff.

Interviewer: The webpages of the associations?

Peter: Yeah, Drushba-Trasse.de or, well, the …

Ricarda: But we are especially interested in our time, a lot there is after our time.[138]

Ricarda: Na guck mal, als wir zur Trasse gegangen sind, wir waren noch beide relativ jung, da waren viele, die hatten schon Familie gehabt. Also die waren schon Ende Zwanzig und teilweise noch älter. Wer weiß, wie alt, die jetzt sind.

138 Peter: Die haben vielleicht kein Internet und sind auch schon im Rentenalter und [???].

Ricarda: Ja, ja, wer weiß wie alt die jetzt sind. Ich war ja man gerade 19, als ich zur Trasse gegangen bin. Hatte gerade ausgelernt.

[…]

I: /Mhm/ Also haben sie versucht alte Kollegen wiederzufinden?

Ricarda: Ja, Ja.

Peter: Das haben wir versucht und versuchen wir weiter immer noch. Ich bin auch immer wieder auf der Internetseite und guck nach, wer sich da eingetragen hat und so.

I: Auf der Internetseite von den Trassenvereinen?

Peter: Ja, Drushba-Trasse.de oder hier diese …

Ricarda: Aber uns interessiert speziell unsere Zeit […] sehr viel ist ja jetzt nach unserer Zeit […]

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Peter and Ricarda are aware of the societal opportunities provided by the Internet and of the communicative conditions that have established among the community. For years they have been observing the postings in the forums. In 2003 they posted a search request themselves. Their request shows the same restrictive preferences as search requests by second generation pipeline builders, i.e. they are in particular looking for people who were working with their work units or at the same construction sites. Unfortunately, none of their former colleagues reacted to the posting. When Peter explains that he and his wife have lost contact and drifted apart from former colleagues, Ricarda tosses in that »today one has different opportunities« because of the Internet. The temporal deictic expression »today« and the modal particle »one« involves a comparison between social practices of first and second generation pipeline builders. Ricarda assumes that upcoming new communication media at the time when the second construction phase expired facilitated the maintenance of social contacts. Peter and Ricarda furthermore see reasons for absent reactions to their request in a lack of Internet access among first generation workers that are either their age or even older, implying that their generation is usually less active online. In addition, they suggest that skills in the use of online communication tools are acquired and employed during working life, as is most probably the case for them, a secretary and a machine operator. They presume that former colleagues might already have withdrawn from working life, meaning that retirees presumably have no access to the Internet. What also becomes apparent from their account is that at least Ricarda does not perceive the Internet and thus computer mediated communication an inherent part of everyday life. Her and her husband's online activities are explained by urging an age-related argument, i.e. stating that they have been among the youngest during their term of employment. However, later on in the interview Peter objects and distances himself from his wife's assumption, as he stresses that it was him who found the interview request online and reacted to it. Indeed, he has turned the former children's bedroom into a home office equipped with computer, Internet access, Webcam, scanner and copy machine. Despite his familiarity with

new technologies, he failed with establishing contacts with former colleagues »from our time« even when he had the opportunity:

Peter: […] There was lately another posting by a daughter of a former colleague […] who turns sixty now […] and well she looked for companions from that time, who would know him and, well, then I also scanned some pictures of him for her, sent them to her via E-mail, but she said, she replied then, she would already know them […]. And then this also, well [???].

Ricarda: Well, two of my colleagues, former colleagues, also worked with the AOK, I ran into them accidentally at a staff meeting. Yeah, but meanwhile …

Peter: But even from my own brigade, as I said, so far there has only been my former brigadier here in Michendorf, but he isn't here anymore and so nearly all contacts /ehm/ [.] have broken down.

Ricarda: Yeah.

Peter: That is too bad, really.

Ricarda: Well, meanwhile it's nearly thirty years ago, right?[139]

139 Peter: […] Da war letztens wieder ein Eintrag drin von einer Tochter von einem ehemaligen Arbeitskollegen, […] der wird jetzt sechzig […] und da hat sie auch aus der Zeit Mitstreiter gesucht, die ihn kennen und da hatte ich ihr auch mal ein paar Bilder eingescannt von ihm, habe sie ihr hingeschickt per E-mail, aber sagt sie, da schrieb sie dann zurück, die hat sie schon […]. Da hat sich das auch ein bisschen jetzt [???].

Ricarda: Ja und zwei Kolleginnen, ehemalige Kolleginnen, die haben auch bei der AOK gearbeitet, die habe ich dann durch Zufall bei der Personalversammlung mal wieder getroffen. Ja aber mittlerweile …

Peter: Aber selbst aus der eigenen Brigade, wie gesagt, war bisher nur mein ehemaliger Brigadier hier in Michendorf, den gibt's aber hier auch nicht mehr und somit ist da jetzt fast jeglicher Kontakt /äh/ [.] abgebrochen.

Ricarda: Ja.

In fact, a closer look at the current age composition of the second generation that constitutes the majority of the community network of former pipeline builders reveals a wide range of ages, reaching from early forties of those having worked with the venture subsequent to their completion of professional training to mid sixties of those having been appointed to leading positions on grounds of professional experience. Even though it cannot be denied that today a large part of community members are noticeably younger than workers from the 1970s term, older cohorts are not outnumbered in a way that makes a generalization of age-related arguments viable. Not least Maggi, a key actor of the foundation of the associations, is already in her mid fifties. More revealing than stressing age-differences for understanding Ricarda's and Peter's problems to integrate into the community seems the recurring deictic differentiation between two timeframes that are perceived as two separate entities by former pipeline builders. Even though Peter and Ricarda see themselves as former pipeline builders, they clearly identify with a specific time frame. The cases of first and second generation pipeline workers whose biographies at a first glance show a lot of similarities[140] reveal that membership in the community is not inevitably associated with age. Instead, it is equally imperative how biographical events correspond to historical events. It is these interrelations that yield patterns of performance and belonging. The age of former pipeline builders has been less fundamental for the community building process than the timeframe of employment, as Ricarda confirms when noting that her employment ended already thirty years ago. The self-labelling of the associations as *Trassenvereine* (pipeline associations) can not hide the fact that social belonging to the community is determined by more facts than self-identification with a label, as clarified by Ricarda's and Peter's account:

Peter: Das ist schlecht, ja.

Ricarda: Naja, nun sind ja mittlerweile fast dreißig Jahre vergangen, ne.

140 Apart from the participation in a prestigious economic endeavour of the GDR also the experience of the events in 1989 and the restructuring of the East German society.

Interviewer: You also said some other time[141] /ehm/ these reunions, you're not that much into them. Could you again a little bit …

Ricarda: Well, actually yes, but /ehm/ we participated in a reunion, but there was hardly anyone from our time. And when I go to such a reunion, then I'd really like /ehm/ to meet former colleagues.

Peter: But that was already a few years ago.

Interviewer: /Mhm/.

Peter: […] And the time of the Drushba Pipeline, in fact we met two couples that were from our time, but they worked /ehm/ on different sites that we didn't know.

[…]

Ricarda: But exactly from our sites you didn't know anyone, and that isn't fun.

Peter: Sure you

Ricarda: ∟ talked to them, too

Peter: ∟ talked to them, too

Ricarda: ∟ but …

Peter: how it has been going and what they were up to there, but it wasn't what we expected from it and, well, for that reason we aren't that much into these reunions anymore.[142]

141 During a telephone conversation.

142 I: Sie hatten auch mal gesagt /äh/, das mit den Trassentreffen, das liegt Ihnen auch nicht so. Können sie das noch mal ein bisschen …

Ricarda: Doch eigentlich ja, aber /äh/, wir haben an einem Trassentreffen teilgenommen, aber da war kaum jemand von unserer Zeit. Und wenn ich zu so einem Trassentreffen gehe, dann würde ich schon ganz gerne /äh/ mit ehemaligen Kollegen mich treffen wollen.

Peter: Das war aber vor einigen Jahren.

I: /Mhm/.

Even though pipeline builders from the first construction phase feel less attracted by the social milieu of the associations, they still benefit from certain features provided by the associations. Ellen, who was introduced at the beginning of the paper, found three friends via the network forum in 2008. Their search requests appeared in the forums years apart from each other. The first of them posted as early as 2001, in 2003 a second and third friend, one of them living in Switzerland now, left a posting. In January 2008 Ellen sent her request. Just having been introduced to the Internet by her son, she looked through postings from previous years. She immediately contacted her old friends, and the four of them arranged a meeting at the reunion that fortunately took place the same year. Ellen appreciates the possibilities that have opened up to her on account of the association's online forums and will probably carry on using it in an attempt to find further friends. However, she also states that she had no feeling of belonging when attending the reunion:

Peter: […] Und die Drushba-Trassenzeit, wir haben zwar auch zwei Ehepaare kennengelernt, die waren aus unserer Zeit, aber die waren /äh/ auf Baustellen, die wir nicht kannten.

Ricarda: Aber direkt von unserer, unseren Baustellen kannte man keinen und das macht ja keinen Spaß.

Peter: Sicher man hat sich mit denen

Ricarda: ∟auch unterhalten

Peter: ∟auch unterhalten

Ricarda: ∟aber …

Peter: wie es denen so ergangen ist und was die da so getrieben haben, aber es war nicht das, was wir uns da vorgestellt haben und aus dem Grund sind wir da jetzt nicht so auf diese Trassentreffen mehr aus.

Ellen: […] and well, then he wrote, well what do you think, shall we go there? And I said, sure we go, we have been crazy back then, so we can do it today anyway. But we realized that we didn't fit in there. I had a feeling like that.

Interviewer: /Mhm/ Coco, too, or not?

Ellen: Yeah, Yeah, Yeah, I don't know. We didn't say we'll go there again in two years. We haven't said that yet, right? Cause, well I actually hope that I'll find my two girlfriends [names], these two I am actually looking for. But see, I found these ones again by chance after 5 years.

Interview: ∟ That's true.

Ellen: Right, and I think now that the Internet is increasing, it is possible […].[143]

Ellen does not go into further detail if she will see her friends again or not. But what becomes clear from her account similar to Ricarda's and Peter's conclusions is that first generation pipeline builders have lost a connection to former friends many years ago. Irrespectively of how many experiences these people share, they have not been able to re-establish a social and emotional connection after almost three decades

143 Ellen: Und da hatt' er eben geschrieben, ja was meinste wollen wir hin, da habe ich gesagt, ja na klar, wir waren früher verrückt, also können wir es heute noch mal machen. Aber wir haben gemerkt, dass wir da nicht hingepasst haben. Hatte ich so das Gefühl gehabt.

I: /Mhm/ Der Coco auch, oder?

Ellen: Ja, ja, ja ich weiß nicht. Wir haben nicht gesagt, wir fahren in zwei Jahren wieder hin. Das haben wir erstmal nicht gesagt, ne. Weil doch, ja, ich hoffe eben, dass ich noch meine beiden Freundinnen da wiederfinde, [Namen], die beiden, die suche ich eigentlich. Aber guck mal die hier habe ich auch durch Zufall nach fünf Jahren wieder gefunden.

I: ∟ Jaja, das stimmt.

Ellen: Ne, und ich denke, wenn das jetzt mit dem Internet immer mehr wird, das kann sein […].

merely on the basis of memories. What essentially distinguishes the community today is not a shared memory of the pipeline project alone. Rather the network has been largely shaped by mutual support in times of extreme social uncertainty. To ease the charges of the transformation process they relied on contemporaries who were situated in an equal position; that is to say those who had just belonged to the celebrated elite of the GDR's workforce and practically the next day came back from the Soviet Union to the reunified Germany. By contrast, first generation workers were never in such a position. Therefore, their exclusion has to be explained by looking at practices, needs and intentions of those included. A correlation of the end of pipeline employment with the turnaround (*Wende*) is surely shared only by a smaller proportion of the total of more than 15,000 former pipeline builders. However it is this minority that has represented the pillar of the community building process since the 1990s. They have acted as the »unit of agency« of former pipeline builders. A shared memory of work and life with the pipeline project is an essential part of social belonging. The establishment of social ties upon a similar biography alone, however, remains a highly fragile endeavour, since the associational power springs from companionship during the transition process.

Conclusion

This paper has given an account of the impact of generational belonging on community building processes under the conditions of East German transformations. Examining the example of former COMECON pipeline builders, the article set out to determine the reasons for a notable exclusion of 1970s workers from the contemporary community that evolved since the early 1990s. This question seemed relevant in particular with reference to the mission statement of pipeline associations that claim to act for both pipeline workers from the 1970s and the 1982-1993 construction phases.

By the case of the network of former pipeline builders it has been shown that community building has not built upon memories alone but has emerged in close response to the transition process. Social actions under

these historical circumstances had a deeper formative influence on the sociality of the group than shared memories of the socialist past. A generational perspective allowed taking into account self-images and memories of community members without disregarding the structural embeddedness of their performances.

Mannheim's theoretical distinction between generation as an actuality and generation unit, together with his focus on generation-specific performances and responses to the socio-historical world, form a generation analytical perspective readily applicable for the analysis of dynamics of community building processes. It was indispensable to redefine Mannheim's theoretical assertions in accordance with the empirical findings. The data analyzed by means of EOC and a network analytical perspective were interpreted by employing Mannheim's distinction between generation as an actuality and generation unit, respectively ›pipeline builder as an actuality« and »pipeline builders as a unit of agency«. For this purpose, a cohort based understanding of generation was outpaced in favour of a comprehension that strictly follows the deictic differentiation between two timeframes with which former pipeline builders identify themselves. Thus periodization offered an important key for understanding aspects of integration and marginalization in the community building process. However, generation has to be understood in strict reference to the period of the GDR's pipeline venture, when people got involved with it and when their contracts finally expired. It has been crucial for the formation of the community how single biographical events correspond to each other in the context of the socio-historical world. The group of people who came back to Germany in 1989 or later appeared as trendsetters repectively unit of agency in the community building process. Those pipeline workers who ended their employment when the transformation process started established an elaborated system of exchange, addressing a variety of topics and implementing group-specific social performances. By doing so, they have drawn on immediately available practices and resources: firstly, an existing social network of former colleagues, secondly the skills necessary for establishing and maintaining networks (a social practice that had been acquired during socialism), and

thirdly the appropriation of the increasing technological means of communication. The interplay of these three forces coalesced into a speech community and network of mutual support. Compared to those who are involved in the network, first generation pipeline builders (1970s) lack the concurrence of the expiration of their employment with the historical events of 1989 and the early 1990s and with it a shared and persistent common social practice after their return form the Soviet Union. It becomes clear from the case of former pipeline builders that the establishment of social ties merely upon shared biographical memories remains a highly fragile endeavour in the absence of a common ›social function‹ of the group in the present. Therefore, dynamics of post socialist societies can only be fully comprehended when also looking at social practices beyond the ›narrated world‹.

Transcription conventions

All names and nicknames are pseudonyms.

[…]	Omission of talk in order to shorten the passage, cut out by the author in case of longer speech acts.
man	Stressed speech.
/ehm//mhm/	Hesitation vowels and interjections.
well the …	Indication of unfinished sentences.
[.]	Short pause.
[???]	Untranscribable speech.
[addresses X]	Addressee of speech indicated in square brackets.
⌞That's true	Simultaneous speech.
›haven't found this one‹	imitation of direct speech

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