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RETROSPECTIVE OF GERMAN COLLOQUIUM SPRING 1995

Angelika Rauch

With the decline of the unified subject in modernity, the body becomes more and more prominent not only as a site of subjective experience and as the basis for the construction of subjectivity but also as a political instrument to resist if not subvert dominant ideology. Whether it is in relation to language or to history, to memory and a social other, the body serves as new ground for the expression of the divided or alienated subject. An epistemology of the body, however, renders traditional critical approaches to the understanding of culture, such as marxist discourse or structuralism, inadequate. All papers therefore tend to resort to psychoanalytic concepts for an investigation of their themes involving the relation of body to consciousness.

In Ciarán Ó Faoláin's paper on Christa Wolf, "The Politics of Space in Christa Wolf; or, Situation of the Writer in a Tight Squeeze," the writer's critical stance toward official policies and practices is put at stake. A particular emphasis rests on the writer's own undoing of ethical certainties in a social climate of dialectical contradictions. In an attempt to find a continuity between Wolf's early (*Der Geteilte Himmel*) and later work (*Kassandra, Was bleibt*), Faoláin follows Wolf's theme of split thinking and de-totalizing representation as one that implies a hidden critique of social existence in the DDR. Whereas split thinking, initially, is supported by images of nature symbolizing the bad West and the good East, it is these very binary opposi-

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FILMMAKER CLAUDE LANZMANN AT CORNELL

Suzanne R. Stewart

The recent visit by the distinguished French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann to Cornell University undoubtedly constituted an event. Invited as a Clark Fellow, by the Society for the Humanities, Lanzmann addressed a large audience on April 26, and on April 27 answered questions from a panel--Dominick LaCapra, History, Cornell University;



Claude Lanzmann

David Rodowick, Film Studies, University of Rochester; Jon Weiss, History, Cornell University; Tony Brinkley, English, University of Maine; and Susan Buck-Morss, Government, Cornell University--as well as from the audience. Lanzmann's visit was preceded by a complete showing of his nine-and-a-half hour film on the Holocaust *Shoah* (1985) and his most recent film on the Israeli army *Tsahal* (1994). His first film *Why Israel* (1973), which together with *Shoah*

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UBIQUITY OF TRANSLATION WORKSHOP

Vera Pohland
Fellow 1995

On March 4 the workshop "Ubiquity of Translation," sponsored by the Institute of German Cultural Studies with additional support from the Society of the Humanities, was held at the Department of German Studies at Cornell. The daylong workshop, initiated and organized by Professor Leonard Olschner, Department of German Studies, Cornell University, intended to establish an ongoing forum and to bring together colleagues and students at Cornell who actively translate or study translation.

In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the study of translation, with scholars establishing translation studies as a separate discipline and thus forming a new professional identity. More and more translators organize activities among themselves to interchange ideas and to explore the potentiality of that field. With the first in a planned series of workshops the Cornell forum opened the topics for cultural studies, theory and practice of translation in varying degrees.

Michael Steinberg, Department of History, Cornell University, contributed a paper on Walter Benjamin's thought on language. Benjamin's German-Jewish consciousness led to his addressing the problem of assimilation and the question of language as carrier of identity and cultural ideology. The lack of transparency of language and the inaccessibility of language as such are problems Benjamin dealt with in his essays "The Task of the Translator" and "Critique of Violence."

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RECENT PUBLICATION



Michael Pauen

Dithyrambiker des Untergangs: Gnostizismus in Ästhetik und Philosophie der Moderne by Michael Pauen (Berlin, Germany: Akademie Verlag GmbH, 1994)

Writing a history of the Gnostic religion is not a task I would gladly undertake; fortunately, neither would Michael Pauen, the author of *Dithyrambiker des Untergangs: Gnostizismus in Ästhetik und Philosophie der Moderne*. The emphasis falls more on *Untergang* and *Die Moderne* than on Gnosticism, hence the relative brevity of the "historical sketch" which begins his text. Despite the title, this insightful and highly theoretical work deals mainly with Heidegger, Adorno and a number of other critics of progress rather than with the Gnostics ("the knowing ones") of the first centuries of the Christian era. His goal is to elucidate the structural similarities and differences in modern philosophy in the light of the Gnostic belief system. In so doing he brings out the emancipatory character of a number of modern aesthetic and philosophical approaches.

In his *Vorbemerkung*, Pauen legitimizes his own project while disclaiming any desire to compete with religious historians (Kurt Rudolph, Hans Jonas, or Hans Leisegang). He writes: "The intention [of this text] is simply to create typological and historical terms of reference for the analysis of the history of Gnostic influence." (translation by reviewer). Indeed, Hans Jonas, among others, has argued that a comparison of

Gnosticism and twentieth-century thought would prove fruitful. Jonas writes in his *The Gnostic Religion* that "It would be of great interest to compare [the use of the term 'thrownness'] in Gnosticism with its use in a very recent philosophical analysis of existence, that of Martin Heidegger". [Jonas, Hans *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958, 64)]. Indeed, much of Jonas' explication of Gnostic doctrine reads like a glossary for *Sein und Zeit* ('life' and 'death,' 'the one' and 'the many,' 'fall,' 'capture,' and 'homelessness.') Pauen takes Jonas' advice as the jumping off point for his argument, but expands the project to include Klages, Bloch, and Adorno.

Rather than use 'thrownness' as a way to compare and contrast the distant and recent philosophical past, Pauen builds a model of Gnostic thought which serves as the frame upon which Adorno, Heidegger, et al are stretched. Pauen is trying to tell us more about the twentieth century than about Gnostics. Undoubtedly Hans Jonas would have taken issue with Pauen's brief "sketch," but gnosticism itself is not, in this case, so important. The idea is rather the modern philosophers in question shared the belief that this world was illusory and, arguably, that matter itself was evil. The Gnostics held on to the idea of an other (*Das Andere*) or the "Alien" in Jonas' translation. This idea comes specifically from the Mandeian sect of Gnostic religion. For the Mandeans, human life contained elements of the Alien within it, and the task of the Gnostics was to recall that they were aliens within the world. In Jonas' language, for the Gnostic, "the recognition of his own alienness, the recognition of his place of exile for what it is, is the first step back; the awakened homesickness is the beginning of the return." To some extent this is a formulation attributable to either Heidegger or Adorno as well as the Gnostics, and Pauen is smart to see the resemblance, using it to elucidate differences between these to thinkers, among others.

The first task of his book, then, becomes pointing to structural similarities between Gnosticism and twentieth-cen-

tury thought. Regrettably, however, the lack of direct references to Gnosticism in twentieth-century German philosophy, leads Pauen to do some quick backpedaling, and remind the reader that his argument is not that Bloch, for example, was secretly a Gnostic himself, but that there are structural similarities between Bloch's writings and Gnostic thought. Pauen may have done well to condense that structure. As it is, it threatens to consume everything in its path. If one adopts the hypothesis that the structure of Gnosticism consists of the recognition of a world beyond the perceptible, then Gnosticism is the *Lichtpunkt* of one out of every two aesthetic and philosophical treatises ever written. In this way his work is rich and comprehensive, even more than the task demands. His historical narrative works from Schopenhauer through Bachofen, Baudelaire, and Gauguin, to name a few. The work bears similarities to Peter Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason*; he feels compelled to cover everything at once. The model becomes somewhat more economical as the narrative proceeds.

His second focal point is the claim that Gnosticism in Modernity emerged during a time of general economic prosperity, hence he starts the narrative with Nietzsche and Eduard von Hartmann. For Pauen, this is an important point because it implies what he calls a "secondary level" of Gnostic pessimism. Gnosticism though, either in its early stages or in modernity, was more about self-empowerment (through the knowledge of one's own alienness) than about economic fears. Pauen describes this as

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VISUALTY AND CULTURAL MEMORY: ABY WARBURG AND BEYOND

Blake Stimson

On Sunday afternoon, April 2, an informal roundtable discussion convened by Michael Steinberg of Cornell University took place at Cornell's A.D. White House on the topic of Aby Warburg and what one participant called "the early theoretical unconscious" of art history as a discipline. The symposium, entitled "Visuality and Cultural Memory: Aby Warburg and Beyond," was part of an ongoing series organized by the German-Jewish study group under the aegis of the Institute for German Cultural Studies. Michael Ann Holly from the University of Rochester and Keith Moxey from Columbia University were invited to share their thoughts on the topic together with five Cornell faculty members (in addition to Steinberg): Susan Buck-Morss, Hal Foster, Peter Hohendahl, Suzanne Stewart and Geoffrey Waite. Stewart and Waite, unfortunately, were forced to cancel at the last minute, but, while their insights would have certainly been appreciated, the smaller-than-planned number of official participants seemed to allow for exceptionally lively and continuous participation from the 30 or so people in the audience.

The bulk of the discussion turned on Steinberg's new, full-length translation of a 1923 Warburg text, titled "Images From the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America" (forthcoming from Cornell University Press together with an introduction by Steinberg), which had been made available in advance to the official participants but not to most of the audience. The text's breadth of historical and theoretical scope and the circumstances surrounding its original presentation (it was conceived by Warburg and approved of by his physician as a test to evaluate his mental stability in order to determine whether he should be discharged from the sanatorium where he had been committed since 1919) proved to be particularly provocative.

Steinberg opened the symposium by

introducing Warburg with a brief biographical sketch and a short discussion of his reception, focussing on what he described as a dominant tendency to interpret Warburg's scholarship in psycho-biographical terms. The main pattern of this reception, he stated, was to see in Warburg's work the expression of a need for emotional balance, maintaining adequate distance from madness, tempering demons, etc. This tendency, Steinberg suggested, was probably more a reflection of the desire of his interpreters than of Warburg himself. Warburg had a very concrete, if grand, historical object of study -- he sought to understand the emergence of modern consciousness as it is manifest in the transformation of symbolization from the archaic mythopoetic forms and the sense of an immediate, organic relation to the world that they offered to modern abstract and schematic forms and the analytical distance and mastery that they allow. Steinberg noted that the 1923 text on the Hopi marks a distinct shift in Warburg's scholarship. Prior to this text Warburg sought to locate particular moments in the histories of the various cultures he studied when that shift took place (or in the case of the Hopi, to see it taking place in the present). In "Images From the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America," however, Warburg comes to understand the primitive and the modern to be synchronous and even to express fear that, with the collapse of time and space brought about by the new electrical and communications technologies, a return to the primitive was immanent: "With ['the lightning imprisoned in wire'] the culture of the machine age destroys what the natural sciences born of myth so arduously achieved: the space for devotion, which evolved in turn into the space required for reflection." (As it turned out, Warburg did not pass his sanity test and was not released from the sanatorium until some months later.)

Michael Ann Holly, best known for her study of Warburg's student and colleague, Erwin Panofsky, began her comments by drawing an association between Warburg and the so-called New Art History. The parallel with the more

recent work can be seen, she said, in Warburg's "incipient foray into relativist or multicultural perspective." Indeed, she suggested, Warburg's relatively low level of output as a scholar can be attributed to his being vexed by the multi-layered nature of images and the profusion of perspectives wrought by that nature. Another parallel with much of the art-historical scholarship since the early 1970's is Warburg's critical relationship to the more conventional methodologies of aestheticism, connoisseurship and iconography. These methods, he thought, were too academic and simply not adventurous enough and he understood himself to be a deliberate transgressor of such conventions. In one of the more baleful moments of the afternoon, Holly remarked that the independence of Warburg's position amongst his peers was a feature of what is now largely a lost intellectual role -- that of the independent scholar unaffiliated with a university and unburdened by the demands of acquiring tenure. Responding to a question from Karen Barzman, Holly sketched a comparison of Warburg's and Panofsky's approaches: While both were interested in "the unconscious tendencies of the human mind that get written into the image," Panofsky's project was "one of figuring out the riddle -- getting it right," whereas Warburg's was one of "making meaning fragmentary, scattering it"; where Panofsky was interested in closing down meaning, she said more schematically, Warburg was interested in opening it up.

Keith Moxey, in his comments, picked up on the theme of adventurousness raised by Holly: "one thing that strikes me about his thought," he said, "is its danger ... the willingness to take risks, the willingness to go back and look at the underside." The danger came from not subscribing to the Hegelian model of the history of style canonized by his forebears Wölfflin and Riegl. Rather than seeing in art the sign of reason progressively unfolding in history, Warburg saw there the moments of its collapse. At issue in his implicit critique of the assumptions of the earlier scholarship,

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lence" of 1921.

At this time Benjamin adapted Kant's position of the unavailability of absolute language and knowledge that makes absolute moral or political action impossible. Thus he turned against the discourse of late Jewish assimilation that claimed philosophical and political resolution or synthesis conceivable. The first essay "assimilates the Lurianic myth of the breaking of the vessels and fashions it into a Kantian metaphor for the limits of the human knowledge of the world, and hence of the possibilities of linguistic and historical practice." Generated as an introductory essay to his own translations of parts of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal*, the essay addresses the incommensurabilities of different languages and the limitations of the process of translating from one language into another as well as the very issue of translation and its necessity as metaphor for the fragmentary character of the world. The myth of the breaking of the vessels serves to illustrate that a language is like a shard from the broken vessel. "Just as shards of a vessel which are to be joined together must fit together (...) a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's way of meaning, so that both the original and the translation are recognizable as the broken piece of a vessel, as the broken pieces of a greater language. For this reason translation must in large measure refrain from wanting to communicate something."

Steinberg unfolded the historical and biographical frame of the allusion to the broken vessel in discussions between Gershom Scholem and Walter Benjamin between 1915 and 1921. Benjamin referred to Scholem's translation of his essay on language (1916) into Hebrew as "Ursprache." He saw the problem of Zionism as another form of nationalism and rejected it like political action for its limitations and particularity. After the First World War he "hesitated in front of the politics of the universal, in front of political Messianism."

This position is further developed in the

second essay of 1921 "Critique of Violence", through the distinction between mythical and divine violence. The German title "Zur Kritik der Gewalt" illustrates the limitations of translatability because "Gewalt" means both the legitimate and the illegitimate possession and exercise of power. According to Steinberg, Benjamin refers to three kinds of violence: law-making, law-preserving, and law-destroying, and sees the category of myth entailed by the two first forms. Steinberg points out that Benjamin makes a clear distinction between mythical violence as law-making and divine violence as law-destroying. He applies the divine as a new term for the forbidden Messianic to a Judaic archetype and a Greek archetype to the mythical. "This Graeco-Judaic distinction implies a commentary on contemporary German culture and ideology." In "The Task of the Translator," according to Benjamin, "all language and languages operate according to the principle of the hidden, forbidden referent, which is the language of God, of God's remembrance." Steinberg embraced Benjamin's thoughts: "A translation enters into a dialectic with the original text in common reference to that hidden absolute." As synecdochic to the forbidden totality of absolute language he views the translation and the translation process, just as the worldly shard is synecdochic to the divine vessel. Benjamin wants the success of a translation to be judged according to its incompleteness and its expression of "longing for linguistic completeness."

Interested in the consequences for translation of a "constructivist" view of culture, Susan Van Deventer, Department of Romance Studies, Cornell University, chose two French translations from *A Thousand and One Nights*. In an observant interpretation she compared Antoine Galland's early nineteenth-century French translation and Joseph-Charles Mardrus' turn-of-the-twentieth-century version with their Arabic source texts and examined how they address the issue of gender. For the translator, who must act as mediator between cultures, the question becomes what to do when the

source culture and target culture construct reality in radically different ways. Rather than offering a solution to this "problem," Van Deventer sees the translators setting into motion a cross-cultural dialogue by choosing to highlight or conceal the differences between the source and target cultures' construction.

Examples for both conclusions are depicted by the translations of the descriptions of two young beautiful protagonists, one male and one female, that prove different aesthetic values in medieval Arabic ideals and Western standards. The descriptions pose challenges to the French translators, who have to decide which culture's standards to privilege. Unlike Western canons, Medieval Arab canons of beauty are non-gender-specific, males and females are beautiful for the same reasons. The medieval collection of tales describes the female protagonist through an accumulation of stylized and often hyperbolically exaggerated attributes, the male protagonist is described in much the same terms and he is as well desirable and seductive. The Arabic text presents a systematic catalogue of body parts for oral consumption and sensory gratification, while Galland presents her beauty as a work of art for contemplation. Galland's text tends to conform to the French neoclassical abhorrence of excess and turns the female character into an ornament, while he presents the male character as ready to become an active participant in sociopolitical life. That makes his translation conform to eighteenth-century French aesthetic values and gender constructions, which implies a significant modification of the Arabic source.

The second translator, Joseph-Charles Mardrus, respects medieval Arabo-Islamic canons of beauty and in so doing constitutes a radical break with conventional European constructions of gender. Through many alterations to the source Mardrus creates a sublime and grotesque celebration of beauty, sexuality, and comedy. Van Deventer understands several functions of these modifications. The comic features constitute an attempt to dispel the anxiety provoked by sexu-

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FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

Recent publications of Cornell University faculty members include:

James Webster: Beethoven Forum, Volume 3 (1994), University of Nebraska Press. Edited by Christopher Reynolds, Lewis Lockwood, and James Webster. Volumes 1 and 2 of this series were published in 1992-1993.

In 1992, Professor Webster's book Haydn's "Farewell" Symphony and the Idea of Classical Style (Cambridge University Press, 1991) received the Otto Kinkeldey Award of the American Musicological Society - the only such book award in the AMS.

Arthur Groos: Romancing the Grail: Genre, Science, and Quest in Wolfram's Parzival (1995) Cornell University Press.

The *Newsletter* plans reviews of these books in subsequent issues.

OPERA CONFERENCE SCHEDULED

The Institute for German Culture Studies announces opera conference Wagner: Opera and Cultural Practice, convened by Professor Art Groos, to be held at Cornell April 5-6, 1996. Participating in the conference, in addition to Groos, will be Reinhold Brinkman, Harvard; John Deathridge, Cambridge, England; Thomas Grey and Herbert Lindenberger, Stanford; Linde Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, Toronto; David Levin, Columbia; and Marc Weiner, Indiana.

Contributions to German Culture News are welcome. If you would like an event listed or have a brief review or article to contribute, please contact Julia Stewart at 255-8408.

FELLOW PROFILE



Vera Pohland

Vera Pohland, Institute for German Cultural Studies fellow for Spring 1995, is an independent scholar with an interdisciplinary focus on literature, medicine and cultural studies. In her scholarly works, she has concentrated on the representation of disease in late nineteenth and early twentieth century literature, especially German literature. Her current research is on Franz Kafka: his writing and the illness (tuberculosis) which ultimately resulted in his death. In her analysis, she examines Kafka's perception of writing, of the body and disease, the ways they combine with socio-historical discourses and are inscribed in his works..

Vera Pohland studied in Vienna and

Heidelberg and received her Ph.D. from Heidelberg University in 1984. During her stay in Heidelberg, she taught German literature classes in the summer school and conducted classes in German as a second language at Heidelberg University's Studienkolleg. In 1984, as a representative of Heidelberg University and a DAAD lecturer of German literature, she was sent to Beijing Foreign Studies University in China. She was invited to present a paper on "Literature and Disease" at the first Chinese Comparative Literature Conference in Shenzhen, China.

Three years later she came with her husband to Cornell University where she was given a Visiting Fellow appointment in the Department of German Studies. With the support of Professor Sander Gilman, Pohland organized a conference on Disease and Medicine in Modern German Cultures and co-edited the results in a book published in the Western Societies Papers of Cornell.

In 1992, she returned to China where she taught German language at the Goethe-Institut Beijing and a year later at Beijing Foreign Studies University, again under the aegis of DAAD.

Pohland is now living in Ithaca with her family and finishing her book on Kafka.

COLLOQUIUM TO CONTINUE IN FALL 1995

The German Colloquium series will continue next Fall 1995 semester with a roster of invited speakers from other universities and colleges as well as graduate students from various departments at Cornell. Speakers will include Dr. Susan Gustafson, University of Rochester; Tom Lampert, Government graduate student, Cornell; Dr. Tom Levin, Princeton University; Kizer Walker, German Studies graduate student, Cornell; and Dr. Liliane Weissberg, University of Pennsylvania. The Colloquium will meet alternate Fridays at 3:00 p.m.

LECTURE SERIES PLANNED AT CORNELL

In progress at the Institute for German Cultural Studies are plans for a Fall Semester lecture series by leading German political and public figures. Expected to attend - but as yet not confirmed - are: Kurt Biedenkopf, Minister-President of Sachsen; Jens Reich, member of the German Parliament; Hans-Magnus Enzensberger, poet and critic; and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, political activist and member of the European Parliament.

Dates and themes of the lecture series will be announced at a later date by the Institute.

(Colloquium - continued from page 1)

tions that are depicted, analyzed and subverted in terms of their destructive strategies of othering and scape-goating, resulting in a self-alienation in *Kassandra*. Heroic struggle goes hand in hand with an ideology of productivism which, when situated in a positivist world view (the state has turned the social/male fantasy of Helena into a real object to justify war), prevents dialectical praxis. Faoláin points to barely visible gestures in Wolf's early novel that undermine such a positivist world view, for example, the blurring of outlines of building and cities on the horizon, or, the transgressions of political boundaries by the sky. *Kassandra's* moral failure, on the other hand, arises from this dismantling of symbolic spatial oppositions, i.e. the certainty between right and wrong. What emerges in the end, for both *Kassandra* and Wolf, from this anti-dualism is the less widely perceived non-contestatory mode that can only be an experiential, visceral mode of individual resistance to the state and to dominant forms of thought. Faoláin expands on this visceral response with a reading of the prominence of thresholds and unstable, in-between spaces in the narrative as carnevalesque practice. Transgressions of such thresholds become a deliberate in *Was bleibt* in which the narrator retreats from both the spheres of activity and ideological production, and by which the writer refuses to examine the *relations of production* in her texts as her way of adapting to official doctrine.

The (ideological) secret that the desired object is a fantasy becomes the revealed masochistic truth in Wagner's operas and in their representation of a historically specific modern subjectivity *after* the crisis of the bourgeois (male) subject. As a manner of speaking: you act on, and act out, the fantasy of a *lost phallus* rather than trying to obtain it. **Suzanne Stewart** leads us through the "Masochistic Seduction in Wagner's *Parsifal*" as a "Stealing of the Operatic Voice," a theft which constitutes a new law for the subject's relation to his/her body, the law of the introjected cruel mother. Wagner's music pierces the

Ego's armor and seduces the listener to the sublime, because of ego-shattering pleasures of "oceanic regression." And it is this kind of sexual pleasure of self-fracturing that Wagner not only effects but, more significantly, displays in and as theatrical productions. Whereas the audience sees--with the possibility to know--death and the wounded self on stage, it also gives in to the "abject" experience since the music renders it as sensory, pleasurable experience. Hence, the vision is blurred by physical effect, an effect that makes conscious fantasmatic desires. Stewart focuses on the role of woman in *Parsifal* to bring out the masochistic subject-position achieved through the resistance to the mother's/ Kundry's kiss (Oedipal drive=the father's name) and the disavowal of genital sexual desire. The latter is replaced by a sexualized and aesthetized display of guilt and punishment. Such sublimated pleasure, Stewart asserts, constitutes a new self-creation *qua* aesthetic if not sublime act. The pain of the loss becomes the pleasure of a new identity without substance in a realm beyond the phallus, beyond object-identification, which Stewart persuades us to see behind Wagner's politics of visibility: the possibility of pure (un-conscious) enjoyment. To move beyond consciousness is for Wagner to move beyond the "power of the quill" (cf. Klingsohr's spear) that generates the written word and distorts authentic German culture. Wagner attempts to redeem a German people from the spell of the (Jewish) word with the undifferentiating power of music stemming from silenced/castrated woman. As for historical agency, it is inconceivable to live this new subjectivity outside the realm of literature and art, a position that Stewart ultimately accentuates through affirmation of Žižek's claims to the enjoyment of ideology as one that is manifested in social reality into which the individual escapes. But Žižek's is a social reality that is informed by aesthetic practices borrowed from the fantasmatic structure of theatrical, and I would add post-modern, forms of art. Hence, what might have developed from a displacement of the abject or sacred

into modern literature (Kristeva), which is a textual practice, is not necessarily a new subjectivity with demonstrated political effects but one with primarily poetic effects; and, based on unconscious pleasure, these effects would have to be examined on the premise of a sympathy of pleasure and politics, of private/aesthetic realm and public/political sphere which would require the re-entry or at least a negotiation of a space for consciousness.

A similarly libidinal but very different connection between bodily sensation (pleasure and pain), desire and writing (the letter) is made by **Vera Pohland** in her work on "Kafka's Transgressions--Writing, the Body and Disease." She stresses the importance of reflection for Kafka on the body as a way of coming to terms with the pain of writing. Particularly, the wounded body harbors the potential for self-experience in an age in which technological and scientific developments threaten to obliterate the human body altogether. The rejection of a sick body in an engineered society is tantamount to the rejection of the self. Exact definition of the body in medical discourse plays into the hands of social programs of racial hygiene and eugenics which designate disease as site of social disintegration. Illuminating the literature on tuberculosis, a disease from which Kafka suffered, Pohland demonstrates an interesting shift from this genius-producing disease of artists and intellectuals to one that, by the early 20th century, is associated with syphilis and deviant sexuality. She explains Kafka's ambivalence to sexuality and his Jewishness by his adoption of the contemporary bias against non-stable identities, emblemized by disease, disintegration of the body, and the un-bordered and socially unformed existence of the Jews. Pohland's juxtaposition of medicine, its practice of writing case histories, with Kafka's reflection and practice of writing reveals the dependency of historical production of disease on language. Medicine, in this historical or commemorative sense, serves as preserver of the past. Medical records defend a space for the past, for history, the

body and the individual in modernity, because they tell the story of disease as process, that is, in a narrative structure of events. The infected body, according to Pohland, takes on the significance of giving expression to the creative mind that otherwise might have succumbed to social and ideological pressures. Disease is hypostatized to the last bulwark of subjectivity. A disease of the lungs, tuberculosis, indeed fueled Kafka's obsession with the figure of the "Luftmensch," a spiritual, aerial being that is able to exist detached from the social matrix and is yet a physical, not a transcendental, being. This unstable and hovering existence permits the subject to own his/her "filthy" disease, to live with the hated other that s/he otherwise, in society, would have to exclude or repress. The abject is transformed by Kafka into a sublime existence in writing, a state of mind which is increasingly influenced and inflicted by the body, with the disease turning the mental agony of writing into a sensuous activity. An erotized body-mind symbiosis is lived out in the space and pleasure of writing which eventually becomes the space or rather the material of history, the history of the body, its affects, and its mindful affectations.

Using the body for artistic expression is also the topic of **Julia Wagner's** paper, "Mimesis and Kinesthesia: Eurythmy as 'Übersinnliche Nachahmungskunst'." But the emphasis here lies on the body's ability to move and, in dance, to render the experience of floating, unencumbered, spiritual existence. The mind is rocked into other-worldly ecstasy by the body's motions. Central to Wagner's thesis is the denial of the sensual female body in Rudolf Steiner's philosophy and dance projects. Just as women are reduced to prepubescent, graceful bodies, uniformly disguised as ephemeral beings whose movements are to symbolize a transcendental worldview, Steiner's anthroposophy caters to the childlike state and playful expressions of the soul. Although Steiner engages the concept of mimesis, he decidedly transforms it into a practice that is akin to the symbolist movement with the

added difference that the Eurythmic movements stage a reproduction of an etheric body; that is, the staged dance event corresponds directly to the (super) real event and needs not be interpreted. Movement supplants symbolism in an effort to reveal "the spirit." Wagner elaborates this view into an argument of non-representational performance aesthetic, an aesthetic of "Sein" and hence as ritual aesthetic. But such ritual aesthetic is already achieved through a transformative effort exerted on the body; Steiner rejects a naturalistic aesthetic. Wagner thus points out the untenable position of a "Sein" on stage and demonstrates Steiner's need for representational strategies that diminish the female body into image and, as in classical aesthetic history, use woman as vehicle to gain access to a spiritual or supersensual experience of beautiful soul. Wagner likens eurythmy to alchemy, that is to transform audience through the perception of motion. The dance performance works on the spectator's fantasy and evokes dreams and memories of the past through which s/he enters a spiritual space. From this vantage, Steiner's mimesis in eurythmic performance reproduces not the natural body but instantiates the supersensual or hallucinatory space surrounding the dancers. The spectator is almost jolted into the perception of such a spiritual space by the kinetic experience of the dancer; the dance trains the mind to separate symbol (the body) from meaning and eventually suppress the material presence of the body. For this reason, the sexual or individual characteristics of the body must be eliminated as not to distract the mind by affect which keeps the mind fixed on physical perception and fantasies. The desired "clairvoyant" perception requires a trained spectator whom Wagner associates with an initiated member of a magical cult. The oscillating movements of the dancers are to bring about the hovering state of the mind. Unlike the physically experienced empathy in the theater of Enlightenment, this kind of resonance bypasses the emotional state, as a translation from (abstract) body to mind.

Giving priority to emotions is what

does another "new man," in the wake of the French Revolution, in. In a paper entitled "Werther was a Square: Semiotic Rectangles in Eighteenth-Century German Thought," **Brad Prager** reads Werther not as a love story but as a historical moment in which the Ego can no longer relate to the opposition and negation of his self with which it is confronted. Ego-position (Werther), Non-ego (courtly society), and alter Ego (Albert) constitute the three corners of the semiotic rectangle which structures traditional narratives. Werther in search of harmony fails to represent or construe the fourth term, i.e. religion, to overcome the negation of his self and sublimate his desire. Death as suicide is not the completion of the semantic rectangle of the ideology of harmony but its explosion. Death is also less a conscious decision for Werther, which would make it part of a value system of freedom, as it is a drive that overpowers the Ego's mental capacities signalled by Goethe's switch from first person narrative to third person perspective and the introduction of the impersonal "Es" in his syntax. Death here signals the limits of a comprehensible system that no longer contains experience, particularly that of the split Ego. Prager asserts Goethe's transformational model of narrative against the usual Goethe criticism, including the historicizing attempts of Lucacs, that pits the "new man" against corporate society and bourgeois philistinism, the sensitive artist against the stoic rule of social existence. Such a reading through alliances of oppositions fails to acknowledge the historical and revolutionary potential of writing texts. The various outlets for the subject's desire to dissolve himself (as such, an acknowledged desire in 18th century literature), nature, love, writing, are demasked as mere compensations that do not provide a new ground for a viable subjectivity and for an acceptance of self as divided subject. With reference to Jameson, Prager interprets Goethe's *Werther* as an example of a sign-system that articulates on the level of the signifier what the signified cannot communicate except as a contradiction. When the narrative material does not

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(Lanzmann - continued from page 1)
and *Tsahal* constitute Lanzmann's trilogy, is unfortunately unavailable in the United States.

On April 26 Lanzmann spoke at length both about the making of his films and about his personal trajectory in grappling with Jewish identity during a period that begins with his birth as an assimilated Jew in the 1920's, and that spans his participation in the French Resistance, the Holocaust (Lanzmann was not among those deported

from France), the creation of Israel, and an engagement with the complexities of Jewish identity in a secular, post-Holocaust world in Israel and in the diaspora. What emerged in Lanzmann's talk was less an historical narrative than a testimony to the traumatic nature of such a trajectory, less an account of what Lanzmann *did* in those years than a language that may speak to the simultaneous necessity for and impossibility of an unproblematic Jewish identity and culture.

Several themes became particularly prominent in this attempt to work through such an identity, themes that are crucial also for an understanding of Lanzmann's films: the obsession (as Lanzmann himself described it) with death, with a life that recognizes itself only in the moment before death, with the conflict between ordinary time and a time that is radically suspended at the moment before it ceases, with the assimilation of Jews in European culture that is in conflict with another language, Yiddish, as the language of secrecy and shame, and with Israel as the possibility and promise of normal

life in conflict with Israel as a state of perpetual war. Speaking to the latter question, for instance, Lanzmann described *Why Israel* precisely as an interrogation of the possibility of normality, of the possibility of a Jewish normal,

flashes up in a moment of always incomplete recognition, it constitutes a series of signs or gestures, traversed as such signs always are by what Lanzmann described as an *illo tempore*, the return of a ghostly revenant.

Shoah makes present a distance, it is a distanciation; it is always marked by absence. In answer to a question regarding the absence of French survivors in *Shoah*, Lanzmann claimed that, above all, the film is not about survival but about death. Thus, none of the 2,500 survivors of the



even fun time.

Finally, Lanzmann articulated Jewish identity as a mysterium, as an enigma, as a flash of recognition in the face of death, a recognition that in its moment of testimony or witnessing challenges the listener, the participant to that same act of witnessing. It was this challenge with which the audience was confronted on April 26 (never before, Lanzmann stated, had he given such an account of himself), and it is one that must be faced when viewing *Shoah*. It is this mysterium that lies at the very heart of his masterwork, a fact that Lanzmann most forcefully argued during the panel discussion on April 27. Lanzmann steadfastly refused his own subject-position either as authority on the Holocaust or even as experimental filmmaker. He insisted that *Shoah* is not a documentary, that it is not "about" the Holocaust, nor simply a speech unproblematically rendered in images. *Shoah* is not about an historical past (the film is consistently shot in the present), but neither is it about the present: it signals (as he has stated elsewhere) to an almost Benjaminian *Jetztzeit* as it

75,000 deported from France had been members of the Jewish *Sonderkommando*, that is, of those in the camps forced to work the machinery of death and destruction. The site of departure is irrelevant to this machinery; it is Poland as destination, as place of death and of obliteration of origins that speaks most forcefully in Lanzmann's film: in the making of *Shoah* what he had been after was the articulation of a *Gestalt*, a mode of transmitting the language of death of those who had been "selected for life" - selected or chosen for life in all the most painful meanings that such a phrase could possibly bear. The members of the *Sonderkommando* are the true bearers of the secret; it is the language emerging from those whom Primo Levi has called the drowned, and not from the saved of Auschwitz that constitutes the mysterium or enigma of the film.

Yet, paradoxically, this enigma simultaneously contributes to what Lanzmann described as the "softness" of the film. For *Shoah* is not accusatory; it is not, as he insisted, a trial or even an approach to the possibility of justice, but a reconsti-

tution of the human voice, of human language, a language that gains strength, Lanzmann stated, from the landscapes of Poland, and that yet unsettles those same landscapes as it emerges from their invisible mass graves.

Just as the witnesses in *Shoah* never tell a personal story, never narrate acts and deeds of survival, escape and liberation, never, that is, speak from with an unproblematic "I" but instead testify to an impossibility, so also those members of the Israeli army who speak in *Tsahal* do not tell of the events of war, nor seek to explain the history of Israel through the trajectory of her many wars. Instead, they too testify to the undoing of language at the moment of death. The members of the Israeli combat units speak to fear, to courage, to the price of blood, to the transmission of blood as these intersect in complicated ways with the past (the Holocaust) and the present (Israel's relationship to both its outside and to itself). Lanzmann insisted that *Tsahal* is not to be understood as a political film; its subject matter is not, for instance, the Intifada or the occupation. It is, like *Shoah*, about Jewish identity, in Lanzmann's later film rendered even more problematic insofar as it now also involves the question of an Israeli identity traversed by a political identity and by marked inter-generational differences, an identity that Lanzmann described as a "division of self."

In the course of Lanzmann's autobiographical testimony, which he himself called his testament, he described how he had come to understand Sartre's post-war text on Jewish selfhood as essentially wrong. While Sartre (to whom he nevertheless remained intellectually close until the philosopher's death) had perceived Jewish identity as dialectically constituted in its relationship to anti-semitism, Lanzmann recalled his father once telling him that "we are everywhere on the map." That such a "we" is both autonomous from the existence of anti-semitism, and yet fundamentally marked by it, that this "we" is always internally fragmented and divided, always on the verge of extinction, on the verge of death, is perhaps Lanzmann's most command-

ing and insistent message, a message that Jews must contend with after 1945 and 1948, a message that must be heard, even if only in order to affirm it for life.

(Translation - continued from page 4)

ality, and the strange mixture of humor and eroticism creates a Bakhtinian carnevalesque destabilization that prevents us from coming to terms with Arabo-Islamic aesthetic values. Mardrus' description of the male protagonist as beautiful in Arab terms marks him as feminine in a European cultural context. This feminization diminishes the threat to the social order the male Arab poses in the Arabic text, the Oriental becomes the focus of an idle sensuality. In Mardrus' translation normative Western aesthetic values and constructions of gender are destabilized. According to Van Deventer, both translators fail to deal with the Orient on its own terms. She concludes by questioning the adequacy of each translator's solution and by pointing out that translations should be seen as cultural artefacts that tell us much more about the time and place in which they were produced than about the source text or its culture.

Kofi Agawu, Department of Music, Cornell University, looked into the variety of interrelations between and differences of music and language in his paper on *Music as Text as Translation* by referring to the question of music's translatability and exploring the possibility of translating music by focusing on its linguistic properties. By applying Roman Jakobson's triadic scheme--i.e., intralingual translation or rewording, interlingual translation or translation proper, and intersemiotic translation or transmutation--to music, he came to the conclusion that it is theoretically possible to discuss the translation of music.

Before focusing on the question whether music is a language and what there is to translate, Agawu inquired into the nature of the musical work and what constitutes 'music'. For him there are four terms that provide a foundation for discussions of music's translatability: There is the 'composer' who could be a virtual author or

historical persona; there is the 'performer' who transmits the work to an audience; there is the 'listener,' either the naive or the competent one; and there is the 'work' that is open and textual, that enshrines irretrievable secrets, the search for which constitutes the after-life of each work and guarantees its endurance.

Agawu continued with the consideration: "If music is text, then presumably it is 'in' a language (...) and it is in principle translatable into another language." Though many agree that music is a language, only a few are able to defend this claim without retractions. "Music has been called a 'defective' language, a 'language with syntactic but not semiotic features,' and a 'form of wordless discourse'." Agawu continued his close inquiry with eleven propositions concerning the music-as-language-metaphor that were informed by musical semiotics:

1. Music, like language and possibly religion, is a species-specific trait of man. Music is necessary to us. But the "more radical constructedness and artificiality of music, together with its dependence on context for validation and meaning, suggest that a semiotics of music cannot simply be formulated in parallel with a semiotics of language."
2. Unlike language, which functions both as a medium for communication ("ordinary language") and as a vehicle for artistic expression ("poetic language"), musical language exists primarily in the 'poetic' sense, although it can function for communicative purposes.
3. Unlike language, music exists only in performance (actual, idealized, imagined, remembered).
4. Like language, music is organized into temporally bounded or 'closed' texts.
5. A musical text, like a verbal text, is organized into discrete units or segments. Music is therefore segmentable. The physical and the cultural segmentability of music are intertwined, but there is a difference in the degree to which historically-specific data is included in the criteria for segmentation. A work's significant sense units are not neutrally derived; nor are they value-free.
6. Although segmentable, the musical text is more continuous in its sonic

reality or "real-time unfolding" than a verbal text. Verbal texts rely more on virtual or physical rests than do musical texts. Even this notion can be challenged; the illusion of the physical or psychological continuity in music is supported by a variety of reasons, such as the far from mechanical approach to punctuation. 7. A musical segment (phrase, period, sentence, paragraph, section, movement) exists in two interdependent planes, the plane of succession ("melody") and the plane of simultaneity ("harmony"). Language lacks the plane of simultaneity. There is no equivalent of a phenomenon such as harmony (or counterpoint or polyphony) in natural language. This plane of simultaneity is one of the factors that makes music untranslatable. 8. Units of language have more or less fixed lexical meaning while units of music do not. That carries implications for its translatability. 9. Musical and linguistic meaning (or reference) may be extrinsic or intrinsic. In music intrinsic meaning predominates over extrinsic meaning, whereas in language it is the other way round. 10. While the essence of music is play, play forms only a special part of language use. Music means nothing but itself. 11. Whereas language interprets itself, music cannot interpret itself. Language is the interpreting system of music.

Agawu answers the question, "Is music a language?" by pointing out that music exhibits linguistic features like syntax, semantics and semiotics, but that "it is finally not language since no linguistic act can substitute for the musical act. Nor is music a system of communication in the ordinary sense, although it can be used to communicate." "Music resists translation" is his conclusion. It would be the conclusion of another project about language and music that language cannot be translated into music either.

"Beyond the confines of conventional and academically respectable translation there lies a whole universe of translation activity". **Stephen Pearl**, Chief of the English Interpretation Section, United Nations, dealt with the media coverage of events and media-staged events in which the reportage of television or news-

paper has passed through the medium of translation. How crucial the impacts of translation on international understanding are he showed through a variety of examples. The first set of examples confronted quotes of the misleading live simultaneous interpretation in English of Mikhail Gorbachev's speech on 22 October 1986 on the Moscow TV evening news, as provided by CNN, with a correct and quite literal English version of the original Russian. He thus demonstrated that this version of a major political statement "barely contained a single sentence that was both accurate and in normal, idiomatic, comprehensible English." On the effects of such performances Pearl concludes that on the one hand U.S. policy makers occasionally rely on these translations given by the media, and on the other hand that the portrayal of non-English speaking political figures will be at best a caricatured personality and at worst a demonised one.

Pearl demonstrated obstacles of translation in the news media that derive from reports on foreign affairs which relied on translations of uncertain sources and sometimes through third languages. In addition, English statements of non-native-English speakers may pose the same kind of problems as badly translated material, since the speaker himself has made the translation. Usually the media does not clarify what was translated by whom--by correspondents, by official sources, or by "second-hand" informers.

It is the duty of the correspondents and their editors to keep their readers aware of the fact that statements and "quotations" originating in foreign languages have suffered several kinds and innumerable degrees of distortions before their translations appear in the media. Pearl points out that no translation can be the actual words of the original in the source's own language. An accurate but poor translation into unidiomatic English can distort the original source to a great extent. The danger of mistranslation is present and even greater when the translation is expressed in clear, comprehensible and idiomatic English. And finally the problem of the incomprehensi-

bility of a statement in its original language makes it almost impossible for the translator to transfer it into an English which is understandable and makes sense.

Through a second set of examples of translation travesties mostly derived from *The New York Times*, Pearl showed the daily difficulties of accurate translation. They are the same in the electronic media; however, the "voice" in which the words are presented to the audience adds its own dimension. For television networks are not only in the "news business" but also in "show business," as Pearls phrases it: they make decisions not based on the informative value but on what makes "better T.V."--For example, an interview with Sergei Khrushchev in English which was almost impossible to understand or an interview with Manuel Noriega in which the English translator was voiced over by an actor with an unreconstructed "Hispanic" accent. In the first case, for the producers, Khrushchev's even barely comprehensible voice seemed to carry more authenticity and in the latter the actor's voice seemed to fit better into the picture that should be drawn of Noriega. All of these examples indicate that faulty translation practice can leave a negative impact on international understanding.

David McCann, Department of Asian Studies, talked about the story of Ch'oyong from a thirteenth-century Korean miscellany known as *Remnants of the Three Kingdoms*, or *Samuguk yusa*. The story was written in Chinese, which was comparable to Latin in the middle Ages (Lingua Franca), as were some but not all of the songs embedded in it; a number of the latter were transcribed in hyangch'al, a Korean invention using Chinese characters to record vernacular Korean language materials. McCann concurred with scholars who suggest that beneath the surface of narrative could be found the vestiges of an earlier culture, and that the songs might have been used in village rituals that had little or nothing to do with the prose narrative context in which they were embedded. By focusing upon the figure of Ch'oyong, McCann had three questions in mind. First, what explains the hero's passivity in being

confronted with his beautiful wife's betrayal when he comes home and discovers her in bed with someone else. Second, he explored three readings of the narrative, as a narrative about the concept of authority, as a narrative about language, and as a narrative about gender. And third, he was interested in how this interpretative framework would lead to an explanation of the final couplet in Ch'ôyong's song that would draw a new light on the story. McCann contextualized the story and its content; covering further aspects of translation the speaker and the audience addressed a range of questions in the discussion which followed.

In his talk "Towards a Poetics of Translation" Leonard Olschner, Department of German Studies, Cornell University, sketched aspects of twentieth-century thought on translation not by scholars or translators, but by writers and philosophers. The rationale for this stems from the assumption that translation is, or can be, a creative process closely related to the writing of primary texts (poetry, prose, drama) and philosophy. After drawing on several older writers (Lichtenberg, Fr. Schlegel), Olschner turned to the twentieth century, when many writers reflected on translation in splinters of their thought. Such unsystematic fragments, taken together, might be seen as formulations of collective poetics without the necessity of conclusiveness and closure. By extension, the texts cited, apart from certain exceptions such as Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator," do not have canonical character, frequently appearing in inconspicuous places in the writer's work.

In the first half of the presentation, Olschner turned to philosophical statements by Benjamin, Jaspers, Heidegger and Gadamer. Benjamin, not surprisingly the boldest thinker on translation of the group, postulates a "pure" universal language which no one speaks but towards which all translation strives. Common to all four philosophers is the obsession with the role language plays in mediating and articulating philosophical and literary ideas. Drawing on the word-play in "übersetzen" and

"übersetzen" ("translate" and "carry over"), Heidegger sees both the translation and understanding of a Greek text as being essentially the same as understanding a text of one's own language: "the translation of one's own language into its most radically possessed word remains the more difficult task."

Of lyric and prose writers Olschner initially cites H.M. Enzensberger's claim that "What is not itself poetry, cannot be translation of poetry." This sentiment finds echoes differently in Eich, Krolow, Handke, Fried, Rilke and Celan, where a tension develops in the double movement of the writer away from him- or herself to the translated writer and back home to that writer's own idiom and world. Krolow speaks of the "poet's curiosity about foreign poetry" as being "natural," and how the poet senses the urge to leave his or her own confines in order to translate, only then to be pulled back. In specific case of "translation," Rilke related to Lou Andreas-Salome in how he attempted to write on a certain theme in both French and German and how each version, guided in his view by the immanent cultural forces in each language, took on a life of its own. Olschner concluded with several theses on decision, fidelity, relativism and poetics in translation, closing with Novalis' statement: "The true translator [...] is necessarily the poet of the poet and should be able to let the poet speak according to his and the poet's own idea at the same time."

The discussion of Olschner's paper moved into a more general discussion of many of the issues raised during the workshop, continuing the lively discussions that arose after every paper. There was an agreement that the workshop or another forum on translation will be continued.

(Review - continued from page 2)

a secondary pessimism. It is not simply a pessimism which reflects an existing economic decay rather a philosophical principle which discredits the world as a place of darkness and ignorance.

One of the problems with making the

argument that so-called modern Gnosticism finds its origins in the period of rapid German industrial expansion (*Gründerzeit*) as presented in the thought of Nietzsche is the shift into twentieth-century Gnosticism. It is harder to make the claim that Adorno's 'pessimism' was not directly historically contingent. The stronger and more interesting claim comes with Pauen's argument that modern Gnosticism positions its type of knowledge (*Wissen*) in contrast to generally accepted scientific principles (*Wissenschaft*) and hence the space it has to create for poetry and philosophy as a sacred realm through which access to the knowledge of *das Andere* might come. Heidegger and Adorno set themselves, according to Pauen, against Husserl's "Philosophie als Strenge Wissenschaft," claiming that truth is accessible (*zugänglich*) through art. Science merely reproduces the existing (the *Bestehende* in Pauen's system), which art has a responsibility not to reproduce, particularly for Adorno in his apparently Gnostic *Aesthetic Theory*. Pauen writes "When Klages, Bloch, Heidegger and Adorno refer to aesthetic experience above all, this is not the first time, because artists like Baudelaire, Mallarmé, or George had already advocated the idea in support of Gnostic thinking, that genuine knowledge of the 'alien' is accessible only through the arts. Philosophical theorists take over this postulate and let the aesthetic step into the place of scientific knowledge paradigms: no longer scientific knowledge, but aesthetic experience is only the primary representation by which genuine knowledge is measured." 409 (translation by reviewer).

Aesthetic and philosophical access to knowledge is the main structural link between Gnostics and modern pessimists with whom Pauen concerns himself. Only aesthetic experience can relieve the blindness (*Verblendung*) which is part and parcel of terrestrial existence. He studies closely the works of Bloch, Heidegger, and Klages and concludes that, although their paradigms are close to that of the Gnostics, they lack the moment of self-empowerment through

genuine knowledge as described in the Gnostic Corpus Hermeticum. Bloch emphasizes too highly the need for prophets, and for Klages and Heidegger the way is open to only a select few. Adorno, however, in Pauen's formulation provides a solution to the Blindness which finds an analogue in Adorno's category, the Spell (*der Bann*). For Adorno, knowledge could be awakened in anyone who was willing to hear it. Pauen cites the bleak passages from *Minima Moralia* and finds a Gnostic optimism in Adorno's aphorism "invitation to the dance," among others "... a cathartic method with a standard other than successful adaptation and economic success would have to aim at bringing people to a consciousness of unhappiness both general and -- inseparable from it -- personal, and at depriving them of the illusory gratifications by which the abominable order keeps a second hold on life inside them, as if it did not already have them firmly enough in its power from outside. Only when sated with false pleasure, disgusted with the goods offered, dimly aware of the inadequacy of happiness even when it is that -- to say nothing of cases where it is bought by abandoning allegedly morbid resistance to its positive surrogate -- can men gain an idea of what experience might be." [Adorno, Theodor *Minima Moralia* (Verso: London 1974) translation by E. F. N. Jephcott, 62. Cited in German in Pauen's text.]

Any text which strives to explicate a narrative of pessimism from Schopenhauer to Adorno is on the right track. Pauen would have done well to narrow his scope slightly rather than trying to encompass the *Geistesgeschichte* since 1871. He is best when he is doing close readings of Heidegger, Klages and Adorno. One can, by Pauen's own logic, read the persistence of Gnostic pessimism as a good sign. In this excellent and scholarly work, Pauen is right, dialectically, to find hope in Adorno's apparently hopelessness. Things are always worse than they appear; we should only hope that things don't ever get so bad that the pessimists go away. -- Brad Prager

(*Warburg - continued from page 3*)

Moxey argued, was the status of aesthetic value. The function of the image, for Warburg, was not simply its measure of rational thought but rather, more foundationally, its role as a kind of buffer meant to keep "chaos and fear at bay". That is, the image serves a culturally-defined psychological function which creates the space necessary for reason to exist at all.

Susan Buck-Morss began her discussion by drawing a parallel between Warburg's approach and that of Walter Benjamin, particularly the way each worked with images. Warburg's way of thinking through the layers of meaning associated with any given image was to look for associations by juxtaposing it to a whole variety of others based on morphological homologies without need for immediately transparent historical connections in a manner similar to the Benjaminian concept of dialectical images. In both cases, mimetic cognition was understood to be valuable without relying on proof, on substantiated historical connections but the danger of such a project, one that Warburg comes closer to than Benjamin, is that cultural forms will be seen as universal and eternal. Buck-Morss concluded her remarks with a rhetorical question addressed to the symposium: If we can understand the production of images as a social project, as an attempt to give definition to collective life, what is it about the fetish, for example, or the commodity, that accomplishes this social or community function?

Hal Foster began his comments by noting that "all the smart things have already been said" and then proceeded by raising a couple of smart questions. First, he introduced a more critical appraisal of what he called Warburg's "anthropological Hegelianism," or the attempt to generate a language capable of depicting the idea of "one world" (thereby reconciling differences between different times and places), and wondered whether Warburg felt some sort of pressure to think of his work as a response to European civilization in crisis. The second issue he raised was a more general

one: whether the use of German Idealist paradigms was an assimilationist by German-Jewish art historians. This question generated a fairly lengthy discussion with Holly noting that Panofsky was not allowed to teach undergraduates at Princeton for a significant portion of his tenure there because of his Jewishness and then, carrying on the theme of assimilation, wondering what it means for art history as a discipline that all the German immigrants with more metaphysical orientations were forced into the mold of American positivist academic culture. Steinberg noted that Warburg's family was not pleased that he had chosen to make his career studying images (especially the Renaissance art history he did most of his work on which was so strongly Christian-identified), because secular Jewish assimilation had traditionally relied on words. Keith Moxey commented that Idealism served the purposes of assimilation by substituting aesthetic value for religious spiritualism.

Peter Hohendahl gave the last of the official informal presentations by locating Warburg's project within a line of German intellectual history spanning from Lessing's *Education of the Human Race* to Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The central question for Warburg, according to Hohendahl, was: "How can memory be preserved or transformed for use in a time of technology?" For Lessing, there was no incompatibility between reason and religion -- the history of religion progressed with the history of reason, both pushed forward by the agent of education. Lessing's example of an archaic religion was Judaism which was sublimated and superseded by Christianity. Lessing's question -- where do you go beyond Christianity? -- was, according to Hohendahl, a precursor to Warburg's concern with preserving and cultivating the necessary distance for devotion-cum-reflection in an age dominated by the technological compression of time and space. The other side of Warburg's study, thus, anticipated the breakdown in compatibility of reason and religion, the return to mythical think-

ing, and the closing down of the project Lessing advocated for described by Adorno and Horkheimer in *The Dialectic of Enlightenment*. This was his fear of technology: by all but eliminating the space of mediation between the individual and the world, the wireless, the telephone, the airplane and "the instantaneous electrical connection," functioning as god-like forces in the new world, do not allow themselves to be engaged with in a contemplative and negotiated fashion. Instead, Warburg feared, the individual has little opportunity to do anything but simply and blindly yield without understanding to these new and forever-foreign powers-that-be.

The conference concluded with a lengthy discussion of the place of some of Warburg's ideas in Germany at the time, particularly his use of the term *Denkraum*, and a brief discussion on the nature of Warburg's therapy during his stay in the sanatorium.

Michael Steinberg closed the session with a chuckle by asking the last one out to "please turn off the snake."

(Colloquium - continued from page 7)

generate from itself a fourth term that negates the negation (Albert)--Werther does not defeat Albert--then the structural model of oppositions forces a transformation in thought. When this happens, structures of narratives reveal their historically bound ideational system and

lose their grip on representing the "human being" to which even Goethe's *oeuvre* falls prey.

That discursive frames do not change easily, Moishe Postone demonstrates in the most recent attempts to rewrite German history after the fall of the Wall. In his project to thematize the role of time as a necessary tool to work through the past, Postone juxtaposes time, as ingredient of recuperating experience, to the moral category of "work" which dispenses with memory in an attempt towards progress, or a flight forward. Hence, the non-national or marxist discourse no longer works in a local, historical setting that is manifested in the existence of symptoms. Indeed, the very nature of symptoms demonstrates that there cannot be a total theory of the past or of history, if the past is conceived of as reality. Instead, Postone advocates the application of psychoanalytic concepts in order to articulate the possibility of social change. Concretely, the German contemporary era between 1969 and 1983 was defined by a coalition of Democrats and Socialists, of both silencing a historical debate and indulging in the ideology of guilt. Since 1983, the Christian Democrats reestablished a hegemony again, which meant reconsidering the past in a more favorable light. A new nationalism emerged from the victim view of Germany as a wounded nation. (By dint of designating yourself

as victim, you accede to the possibility of heroic status.) This view has been corroborated by conservative literary critics like Schirmacher and Karl-Heinz Bohrer who claim that German literature since 1945 has been colonized by American genres and themes, a political move to integrate the new Germany into the Western alliance. Hence, such colonization of German culture has deliberately prevented Germany from actively dealing with its past and, ultimately, from creating a national identity as well as an independent stance towards foreign policy and war. The refusal to join other nations in the bombing of Baghdad was the first of such moves towards redirecting German consciousness to its Nazi past that, in the refusal to bomb, Germany finally rises up against. This belated awareness of and sentiment against Nazi politics is, in part, determined by the external, international constraints imposed on Germany during the cold war. The fall of the Wall in 1989 served then as the opening of a defensive floodgate against the past. At the same time, however, this historical event took on the political and psychological significance of restored sovereignty with which Germany could overcome the lingering impression of defeat, manifest in its split country, in the Second World War. Here, Germany acted out what it had repressed: its continuity with the Third Reich mentality.

GERMAN CULTURAL CALENDAR - continued from page 14

June

1-4 **Germany 1989-1995: Reappraisal and Reconstruction.** Organizer: John Conway, University of British Columbia. Contact DAAD, 950 Third Avenue, NYC, Tel: (212) 758-3223.

8-10 **First international conference on Radical Conservatism in Europe: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.** Lund University, Lund Sweden. Contact Dr. Goran Dahl, Dept. of Sociology, Lund University, Box 114, S-22100 Lund, Sweden. Tel: 46-46-108874, Fax: 46-46-104794, e-mail: goran.dahl@soc.lu.se.

24-7/15 **Goethe Institute/AATG: Wiesneck Seminar.** Contact AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Tel: (609) 795-5553.

July

2-15 **Goethe Institute/AATG Jena Seminar.** Contact AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Cherry Hill, NJ 08034. Tel: (609) 795-5553.

August

3-8 **Ninth World Congress, International Association for German Studies (IVG).** Vancouver, BC, Canada. Contact AATG, 112 Haddontowne Court #104, Sherry Hill, NJ 08034. Tel: (609) 795-5553.

GERMAN CULTURAL CALENDAR

May

- 1-9 Exhibition: **Graphiken von Max Beckmann.** MOMA. Contact Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, 460 Park Ave., NYC, Tel: (212) 572- 5633.
- 1-21 Exhibition: **Scenes from Behind the Wall.** Photographs of East Germany, 1989-1990. Wed-Sat., noon-5:00 pm, Washington Center for Photography, 1831 21st Street, NW, Washington, D. C. Tel: (202) 234-5517.
- 1-7/23 Exhibition: **"Between War and Utopia: Prints and Drawings of the German Avant-Garde 1905-1933."** Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, PA. Contact Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, 460 Park Ave., NYC, Tel.: (212) 572-5633.
- 1-7/30 Exhibition: **"Women Photographers in the Weimar Republic."** Jewish Museum. Contact Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, 460 Park Ave., NYC Tel.: (212) 572- 5633.
- 4-26 Exhibition: **German Artist Conny Dietrich.** Generalkonsulat. Contact Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, 460 Park Ave., NYC, Tel.: (212) 572-5633,
- 9 Lecture: **"Die deutschen Verwandten von George Washington."** Gary Grassl, speaker, sponsored by the German Heritage Society. 8:00 pm. Concord Club, 5518 Lincoln St., Bethesda, MD 20817. Tel: (301) 572-6803.
- 9-27 Exhibition: **"Objects and Paintings" by Peter Julian Fuchs.** Selection of some 100 objects and paintings from 1965-1995. The Multi Media Arts Gallery, 594 Broadway, Suite 309, Tel: (212) 966-4080.
- 10 Study Group on German Cultural History: **From the Enlightenment to the World Wars.** Christo and Jean-Claude. **"Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin."** Sackler Museum, Harvard University 6:00-8:00 p.m.
- 10-7/9 Exhibition: **"Herter Brothers Furniture and Interiors for a Gilded Age."** Metropolitan Museum. Contact Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany, 460 Park Ave., NYC, tel: (212) 572-5633.
- 11 Study Group on Politics and Enterprise in a **Changing Europe.** Mary Nolan, Professor of History, New York University. "Germanizing Fordism: American Models and the Restructuring of Technology and Management in Interwar Germany." Cabot Room, Harvard University, 4:15-6:00 p.m.
- 11 Study Group on German Cultural History: **From the Enlightenment to the World Wars.** Julius Schoeps, Moses Mendelssohn Zentrum, Universitaet Potsdam "Die Herausbildung der Toleranz im Zeitalter von Mendelssohn und Lessing," and Regina M. Seitz, University of Virginia. "'One has to put a stop to certain inquiries sometimes...' Moses Mendelssohn: Writing in the Margins." **Lower Level Conference Room, Center for European Studies, Harvard University, Tel: (617) 495-4303.**
- 22 Exhibition: **"Cultural Exodus from Austria."** Computer installation documents the fate of 4000 intellectuals who were forced into exile in the late 1930's, including Sigmund Freud, Alma Mahler-Werfel, Otto Preminger. Opening reception Monday, May 22 at 7:30 p.m. On the day of opening, Dr. Leon Botstein, President of Bard College, will focus on issues related to Austrian emigration to the US. **565 Fifth Avenue, Tel: (12) 759-5165.**
- 25 **Unifying Music (Music of Germany).** Stockhausen, Zechlin, Humel, Grahn, Still. Reception to follow the 8:00 p.m. concert. Contact The Contemporary Music Forum, Washington, D. C. Tel: (202) 333-4529/298-4317.
- 31 Exhibition: **"A Lost Legacy: The Austrian-Jewish Connection."** Features material from the archives, library and art collection of the Leo Baeck Institute, 129 East 73rd Street, NYC. **Opening reception: Wednesday, May 31, 5:30-7:00 p.m. Tel: (212) 744-6400.**

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