German Women Writers and the Spatial Turn: New Perspectives

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Introduction: "Gender, Germanness, and the Spatial Turn"

German Women Writers and the Spatial Turn: New Perspectives connects spatial studies, German studies, and women's writing, and emphasizes a return to the written word as an original site of cultural interrogation. The idea to bring together the following essays emerged from a 2007 MMLA conference panel on German women's writing, where the fluidity and familiarity of spatial metaphors made clear that the study of space and place was fully anchored within German studies, confirming Edward W. Soja's statement that "we are, and always have been, intrinsically spatial as well as temporal beings" ("Taking space personally" 12). Indeed, in the last few decades, the phrase "spatial turn" has received increasing attention in German studies, inspired by developments within the discipline of geography when spatial theorists started reading space as a complex product of cultural, social, and discursive practices, as noted in Klaus Müller-Richter's and Ramona Uritescu-Lombard's 2007 co-edited volume *Imaginäre Topographien: Migration und Verortung* [Imaginary topographies: migration and place]. In an attempt to pinpoint the effect of the spatial turn more broadly within the German language realm, Jörg Döring's and Tristan Thielmann's 2008 edited volume *Spatial Turn: Das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* [The paradigm of place in cultural and social studies] considers the plurality and transdisciplinarity of spatial turns (versus a singular "turn"). The essays look at the mutual exchange and enrichment within and between the disciplines of cultural and media studies, history, and sociology, giving special attention to geography which Döring and Thielmann see as being pushed to the margins of more recent (specifically German) critical theory discussions on spatial thinking (11).[1]

U.S. German Studies scholars Jaimey Fisher and Barbara Mennel pick up on this plurality in their 2010 edited volume *Spatial Turns: Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture*. Interpretations via a spatial lens, as Fisher

1 A broader disciplinary discussion and attempt to categorize the various cultural "turns" can be found in Doris Bachmann-Medick's book *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften* [Cultural turns: new orientations in cultural studies] (Reinbeck bei Hamburg, 2006). For a more recent perspective on the spatial turn debate in German literary studies, see Katrin Winkler, Kim Seifert, and Heinrich Detering's essay "Die Literaturwissenschaften im Spatial Turn" [Literary studies in the Spatial Turn], *Journal of Literary Theory* 6.1 (2012): 253–270.

and Mennel suggest, open up new and unseen insights into German culture and history:

> German Studies seems particularly well suited to analyses of space, given the long-term centrality of space and spatial imaginary to German culture (the struggle for a German nation state, territorial wars of aggression, and constantly changing borders); but recent developments also suggest the severe limits of a traditionally spatial or territorial model for the German nation-state itself ("Introduction" 9).

In the vein of critiquing traditional models of space via cultural texts, Friederike Eigler and Jens Kugele "challenge static notions" (3) of German space and place in the cultural-historical essays of their 2012 volume *Heimat at the Intersection of Memory and Space*. The present volume, *German Women Writers and the Spatial Turn: New Perspectives*, continues the challenge to understand the representation of space and place in German language texts, and with its focus on the written word and the literary, the analyses in the following chapters indeed shake up traditional notions of German identity and language. Before looking more closely at what the authors presented in *New Perspectives* bring to the discussion on spatial theory and German literature, various terms need further definition, such as what the ideas of German, German women's writing, and feminism mean for our project. We also outline a brief history of spatial studies, including what specific spatial theories are used in the interrogation of literature, and how spatial theory figures into the realm of feminist thinking and writing. Finally, we discuss the thematic divisions of the essays into the volume's three sections.

Germanness, feminism, and German women's writing

The terms of Germanness, feminism, and German women's writing need further explanation before we begin. Like history and space themselves, such label and identity categories are in a constant state of flux and indeed socially constructed, as Benedict Anderson reminds us with his idea of the nation as an "imagined community." Approaches to space can also be shaped by specific cultural and historical experiences with nationalism: Katrin Winkler, Kim Seifert, and Heinrich Detering suggest in this context a German hesitation to discuss "Raum" [space] due to its association with German national-socialist politics. For Fisher and Mennel, an understanding of Germany in the twenty-first century presents limitations on traditional models of the nation state, while Eigler and Kugele challenge static notions of German space and place through reflections on memory and

Heimat [home]. Furthermore, shifts in emigration and immigration in the past two centuries have led to changes in how Germans are named and how those living in German-speaking countries label themselves. For example, the term "Afro-deutsche" conceived of with the help of African-American activist and poet Audrey Lorde was adopted in the 1980s to describe mixed race African-Germans; the long-used term "Gastarbeiter" [guest worker] to describe foreign-born migrant workers in Germany is no longer accurate and has been replaced with the longer but more politically correct *Menschen mit Migrationshintergrund* [people with an immigration background].[2] Reforms to the nationality law (formerly based on jus sanguinis, or having German ethnicity) in 1999 and 2000 granted citizenship to foreigners who have lived in Germany for generations, and especially their children born in Germany (following the law of jus soli).

While perhaps not directly, such considerations play an important part in how we define the German women writers in this volume. The writing discussed here spans the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, although the majority of the texts are more recent. While the perspectives offered are in general from white, heteronormative, middle-class authors (with the exception of Yoko Tawada), the authors and their texts shake up our assumptions about what constitutes a German author, as well as our expectations of traditional paradigms of a national literature. The writers in this volume defy a simple label: Ottilie Assing emigrated to the United States and became an American citizen in the 1840s; Yoko Tawada moved from her native Japan and has lived in Germany for over twenty years; Croatian-born Dragica Rajcic emigrated to Switzerland in the wake of the Balkan wars; Alja Rachmanowa was born in Russia and emigrated to Austria in 1925; Elisabeth Langgässer became known for her Catholic writings despite her Jewish heritage and persecution by the Nazis; Irina Liebmann was born in Moscow and moved to East Berlin in 1945; East German-born authors such as Monika Maron and Jenny Erpenbeck, as well as West German-born authors, such as Brigitta Kronauer, Inka Parei, Julia Franck, and Judith Hermann have moved either east or west after the Fall of the Wall.

However unintentional, a pattern emerges that reflects migrations that are old (German migration westward in the mid-nineteenth century) and new (westward-migrating Eastern Europeans in the post-Cold War era), with an emphasis on east to west or horizontal migration, rather than south to north or vertical

2 The terms Afro-Österreicher, Afro-Swiss, and Afro-Europäer are also used. See http://www.bpb.de/gesellschaft/migrationmigration/afrikanische-diaspora/59383/zuwanderung-1884-1945; http://medienservicestelle.at/migration_bewegt/2012/07/25/afrikaner-in-osterreich-ein-kurzuberblick/; http://collectifafroswiss.blogspot.fr. For more on Afro-German history, see Katharina Oguntoye, May Opitz, and Dagmar Schultz's book *Farbe bekennen* [Showing our Colors].

migration. Noticeably absent are contributions on German writers born in Turkey who reflect first generation migrant writers, for example.[3] While the degrees vary greatly between the cultural positions or language regions from which the writers in this volume speak, Claire Horst offers the broad definition of writers with migration experience as able to report from more than one cultural space. She borrows Turkish writer Zafer Şenocak's term "Bridge Literature" to mark their writing as "literature that can create connections" (*Der weibliche Raum in der Migrationsliteratur* [The female space in migrant literature] 10). Helpful also is Azade Seyhan's suggestion that "[l]abels like "*exilic, ethnic, migrant*, or *diasporic*" are inadequate, because none completely grasps "nuances of writing between histories, geographies, and cultural practices" (Seyhan 9). In the presentation of geography and space through literary images and language – often in the spaces in-between, marginalized, disempowered, uncomfortable, overlooked, and unexpected – the German women writers presented in this volume challenge ethnic, national, or geographic labels, and thus, define the unique approach to space that we highlight here. The negative photograph of the Berlin wall from 1988 on the volume's cover reflects this perspective as well.

The present study differs from other recent U.S. interdisciplinary German Studies investigations of the spatial in its specific focus on women's literary texts and language. Instead of analyzing film and visual representations, otherwise so prevalent in spatial studies, our contributors discuss the written word as a primary conduit for the interpretation of space; it is through language after all, through the adoption of various terms and metaphors of spatiality such as mapping, regions, place, space, territory, location, geography, and cartography, that geographical thinking migrated to other disciplines. In *The Production of Space* (1974; 1991 in translation), Henri Lefebvre discusses in this context how space is represented through language – how spatial codes are constructed by various individuals and how "the spatial practice of a society is revealed through the deciphering of its space" (Dear and Flusty 140). While German is the language in which our authors write, it does not necessarily define their ethnic or national identities, nor does the condition of living in Germany, as Rajcic lives in Switzerland and Rachmanowa made Austria her home. It is the movement through and occupation of German language spaces that brings about their identity as German authors, where indeed, language and writing provide a new *Heimat* [home] in which to create one's identity, or where they can provide an important artistic tension or resistance. Tawada and Rajcic, for example, "revel in the foreignness"

3 For more information on first generation immigrant writers, see the anthologies of Irmgard Ackermann.

of the German language, as Cohen-Pfister, Silke Maehl, and Chase Dimock discuss in their essays, intentionally playing with words and ideas that lead us to question our conventional sense of how German can or should be used, or of what it means to live in more than one cultural tradition and language.

Likewise, it is in their continued attention to the concepts of gender, language, space, and power that allows us to consider the work of these authors within a framework of feminist spatial thinking. Our use of the word feminist is hereby in line with spatial theory's focus on the social constructions of space, and, in particular, the social construction of gender and gender roles (Löw, *Raumsoziologie*, 253). Our emphasis on women's writing is meant to bring together a variety of ways in which women authors experience space and represent it in fictional form, highlighting the multiplicity of approaches to deconstructing gender and space (as well as other intersectionalities such as race and class). Not all of the women authors discussed in the volume would accept the label feminist to describe their work. Yet what draws their work together are the ways in which each uniquely approaches concerns about space, power, and knowledge (specifically informed by German-language spaces and histories), how those concerns are reflected through fictional narrative forms and linguistic creativity, and how they often build on and play with everyday, "real" experiences of gender, space, and power. What reflects the feminist spatial-literary strategies frequently at play in the fiction discussed here are the blurring of the boundaries (as we discuss below in relation to Soja's real-and-imagined spaces in "Thirdspace"), the questioning of marginalized positions, and the undoing of dualisms and hegemonies (as we discuss in relation to Doreen Massey's call to accept that time and space are "inextricably interwoven").

Overview of spatial theory

A brief glimpse at the history of spatial thinking, including the consideration of terms such as the spatial turn, topographical turn, and geocriticism, can help illuminate its centrality within literary-historical studies in which gender and writing intersect, and provide insight on differences between German and Anglo-American approaches. While German philosopher Martin Heidegger's "Building, Dwelling, Thinking" (1951) and French phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* (1958) are mentioned as important philosophical texts about space that come just prior to where we begin our history (Thacker), the names of the French scholars Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault appear most frequently in connection with a history of spatial theory and identity, based on their work on space, geography, and urbanism in the 1960s in Paris. They changed what many

theorists considered a long-standing subordination of space to time, at least since the nineteenth century (Warf and Arias 3). Indeed, it was Foucault who famously claimed that, "the great obsession of the nineteenth century was, as we know, history [...] The present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space" ("Of Other Spaces, Heterotopias" n.p.). Inserting social theory into the study of urban geographies and the landscapes of class, the central tenet that Marxist geographers like Lefebvre and the English human geographer David Harvey agreed upon in the 1970s was that space is a social construct. In his classic text *The Production of Space* (1974), Lefebvre divided space into three categories: first, concrete or real physical spaces; second, imagined spaces or representations of space, and third, the lived "spaces of representation" (38–40). Engaging initially with Lefebvre and then other Marxists such as bell hooks, American human geographer Edward Soja confirms and reaffirms in his texts *Postmodern Geographies* (1989), *Thirdspace* (1996), and *Postmetropolis* (2000) the argument of the "social-spatial dialectic" that insists on a reciprocal relationship between social processes and spatial forms. Having coined the phrase "the spatial turn" in 1989, and claiming it later, in 1996, to be "one of the most important philosophical and intellectual developments of the 20th century" (Winkler, Seifert and Detering 254), Soja's three categories of space correspond roughly to Lefebvre's. With a "perceived" or "Firstplace," and a "conceived" or "Secondspace," Soja describes a "Thirdspace" as "tentative and flexible, real-and-imagined, and open to new constellations and contestations," as Susanne Lenné Jones summarizes in her essay (247). The invitation of Soja's "Thirdspace" to thinkers beyond geographers, urban planners, and architects to consider spaces where the real and imaginary can coexist provides a chance to negotiate, contest, and remain flexible to spatial configurations of everyday life. Such opportunities situate women's writing most comfortably within Soja's third category, as Jones maintains.

Marxist critics and feminist thinkers alike would argue against any sense of a shared experience of space and place, and any notion of space as abstract geometry: "both conveniently ignore the myriad ways in which differences of gender, age, class, 'race,' and other forms of social differentiation shape people's lives" (Bondi and Davidson 17). Building on Foucault's "rejection of a teleological version of history and his rescue of space from 'the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile'" (Rose 315), feminist geographers such as Alison Blunt, Gillian Rose, Mona Domosh, and Doreen Massey ("probably the single most influential scholar in thought about space and gender" according to Pamela Gilbert [104]), critique gendered notions of time and space, further politicizing the Marxist contention that space is constructed. For these scholars, considering the everyday in relation to time and space and keeping in mind categories of identity that affect temporal-spatial relations means being aware of power. According to

feminist geographer Gillian Rose, "[f]eminism [...] through its awareness of the politics of the everyday, has always had a very keen awareness of the intersection of space and power – and knowledge" (315). The subject of feminism outlined by Rose "depends on a paradoxical geography in order to acknowledge both the power of hegemonic discourses and to insist on the possibility of resistance" (322). This geography describes a subjectivity that includes paradoxical positions – of both prisoner and exile, of center and margin, of being on the inside and the outside at the same time, i.e., the "tentativeness and flexibility, real-and-imagined spaces, and spaces open to new constellations and contestations" of Soja's *Thirdspace*.

While other Marxist geographers like Lefebvre or Harvey grappled with how to reassert space into a modern consciousness long dominated by temporal or historical thinking, feminist critics of cultural geography began to deconstruct a gendered "dichotomous dualism" that had come to define time and space. "With time are aligned History, Progress, Civilization, Science, Politics and Reason," Massey writes, "portentous things with gravitas and capital letters. With space on the other hand are aligned the other poles of these concepts: stasis, ('simple') reproduction, nostalgia, emotion, aesthetics, the body [...] and space, in this system of interconnected dualisms, is coded female" (257–258). Massey concludes that the issue is not resolved through a total collapse or denial of differences between time and space (and related binaries), but rather through accepting that time and space are "inextricably interwoven," that "definitions of both space and time in themselves must be constructed as the result of interrelations," and that "space is not absolute, it is relational" (261). Thus, the idea that the social and spatial are inseparable and indeed, stand in a political reciprocal relationship to one another, marks the foundational understanding of space that has since been gradually adopted by virtually all disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. It is this inextricably interwoven sense of space that comes to the fore in many of the essays presented in this volume. Moving closer to our contributors' essays, we first take a closer look at how spatial theory plays itself out in the field of literary studies more broadly.

Spatial turns, postmodernism, and feminisms in literary studies

In their 2009 volume *Spatial Turn: Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, Barney Warf and Santa Arias claim "[s]pace has played such a long and important role in literary criticism that it is difficult to know where to begin to summarize its significance"

("Introduction" 8). German scholar Doris Bachmann-Medick (2009) differentiates between merely a heightened understanding of space within a discipline – such as in German historian Karl Schlögel's monograph *Im Raum lesen wir die Zeit* [In space we can read time] (2002), which signaled the introduction of spatial concepts into the long temporally-focused field of history – and what constitutes the presence of an actual "spatial turn" within a discipline. For Bachmann-Medick, only the spatial theories that emerge from a specific postcolonial and postmodern understanding of cultural studies and the social sciences, emanating from the primary fields of geography, sociology and anthropology, can claim to constitute a spatial turn within a discipline. Most of the essays presented in this volume indeed align with this definition, and build on the theories of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Foucault, Lefebvre, Soja, Casey, and Marc Augé, to name a few, and so our use of the term "spatial turn" here is accurate.

As a designated "undercurrent" of the spatial turn (Bachmann-Medick 299), Sigrid Weigel introduces the concept of the "topographical turn" in 2002 to define spatial studies within cultural studies, attempting to clarify what she sees as the "theorizing" practice of European cultural theory versus the "reconceptualizing [of] space and its meaning (and interpretation)" with which Anglo-American cultural studies is engaged ("On the Topographical Turn" 193). Weigel's topographical turn, however, seems to have brought about a reterritorialization of theory (see Döring and Thielmann; Winkler, Seifert, Detering). In commenting on the shifts within his own discipline of geography, Soja responds to the multiplicity of disciplinary approaches and influences as they relate to cultural and literary studies:

> Through a process of hybridization, it has become increasingly difficult today to draw boundaries between who is a geographer and who is not, for the unprecedented transdisciplinarity of the Spatial Turn is making almost every scholar a geographer to some degree, in much the same way that every scholar is to some degree a historian" ("Taking space personally" 24).

The transdisciplinarity of the spatial turn is indeed apparent in the chapters of this volume. Our contributors adopt key concepts from a broad array of European and Anglo-American schools of thought, much like those mentioned in other studies on literary representations of space (Tally; Winkler, Seifert, and Detering; Fisher and Mennel, etc.). While not all of the theorists we will mention are adopted for analysis by our contributors, we highlight some of the most important influences on literary spatial studies to offer a broader context to our study. To begin, however, it is useful to keep in mind what is generally meant by space in literature. German sociologist Martina Löw helpfully differentiates between the concepts of place and space in her book *Raumsoziologie*, where she sees place as

geographically determined, and space as a metaphorical entity (201). However, space is referred to by others, such as Pamela Gilbert, as both "real" and "imaginary" in literature, although literary and cultural studies' approaches tend to further delineate space in two directions: "one is concerned with 'actual' spaces, the space of proper nouns, so to speak (the London of Defoe, the Paris of Zola, or even Dickens's fictional but highly specific Bleak House) and one is concerned with a 'type' of space: the city, the factory, the home" or in other words, how literature helps shape our understanding of space (105). As well, whereas space can be part of description, it can also take shape via characters within the story, i.e., within the psychological realm of individual characters, a primary concern in Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*. These dimensions of space are indeed reflected in many of the essays here, but given the feminist approach of the analyses, as well as the postmodern, postcolonial characteristics in the fictional writing, a focus on the spaces in-between or on reinterpreting and reclaiming unconventional spaces frequently characterizes the types of spaces explored here, i.e., abandoned buildings, parking lots, hotels.[4]

Likewise, as the actual spaces of cities listed by Gilbert happen to be those of male authors, we might also point out that the city-spaces described by our women authors thus necessarily become the Berlin of Inka Parei, or the Vienna of Alja Rachmanowa, i.e., different cities altogether than what we would expect from the Berlin of Alfred Döblin or the Vienna of Arthur Schnitzler. Finally, whereas feminist literary theory as we outline it below might begin with a concern for space *for* women writers, *New Perspectives* is concerned with how space is represented *in* women's writing. However, given the theoretical underpinnings of Marxist and feminist geography in this volume, we keep in mind Massey's "dichotomous dualisms," the "real-and-imagined" spaces of Soja's "Thirdspace," and Rose's "awareness of the politics of the everyday [and] intersection of space and power – and knowledge" (315) in order to consider how the metaphorical spaces of women's writing might help us understand the material spaces of women's lives.

The boundaries of postmodernist, poststructuralist, feminist theory are blurry, despite demarcations along the way such as U.S. American literary theorist Frederic Jameson's book *Postmodernism* (1991) that created an important caesura in critical thinking (Arias and Warf, Tally, Thacker, Westphal). Jameson sees the spatial turn as a way to differentiate between modernism and postmodernism, in essence another twist on Foucault's idea that if the modern period was dominated

4 Broadly stated, writing (and theories) that reflect postcolonial or feminist positions have a similar foundation in their examination of and questioning of the social constructions of power.

by historical thinking, then the postmodern is dominated by spatial thinking. In line with Gilbert's suggestion that urban (public) spaces in literature are omnipresent, Franco Moretti's 1998 *Atlas of the European Novel*, his "mapping of literary geographies" has helped us understand how cities are spatially constructed and become part of narrative form (Gilbert, Tally, Westphal). Moretti was influential in the development of French theorist Bertrand Westphal's concept of "geocriticism" that has recently garnered interest, particularly with the translation of his 2007 book *La géocritique: réel, fiction, espace* into English by Robert Tally in 2011 as *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Critical Studies*. Because exploration of all places on earth has reached almost full saturation without necessarily giving stable meanings to those places, as per U.S. cultural studies scholar Eric Prieto, Westphal's focus on the areas in-between, in the borderlands, the interstitial, the hybrid spaces, and marginal zones offers a useful model for spatial thinking in the postmodern era. While Prieto ultimately sees potential in Westphal's approach as a tool for ecocritical and activist approaches to writings on the natural world, Westphal's embrace of radical thought (in the tradition of Lefebvre, Soja, Harvey, and Derek Gregory), postcolonial theory (such as Gloria Anzaldúa and Homi Bhabha), and Deleuzian notions of "deterritorialization" and "reterritorialization" reflect well the myriad theoretical approaches to space used by our contributors.

But we are getting ahead of ourselves, because before we can consider postmodernity, we should look at the actual moment of the caesura itself and the "mini-spatial turn" of the early twentieth century prompted by Walter Benjamin's writings, especially his influence on visual and literary studies of space (Soja "Taking space personally" 26). Benjamin's *Berliner Kindheit um Neunzehnundert* [*Berlin Childhood around 1900*], *Einbahnstraße* [*One-Way Street*], and his unfinished magnum opus, *Das Passagen-Werk* [*The Arcades Project*] reflect sociologist Georg Simmel's thoughts on broad economic and social changes, such as the effects of urbanization and industrialization on the modern population in early twentieth-century Germany. Benjamin's particular (if unintended) emphasis on gender in the public and private sphere as introduced in "The Return of the Flâneur" (1929) prompted a number of feminist cultural studies scholars to consider the possibility of the female flâneur and the role of women in urban spaces, as in Janet Wolff's essay "The Invisible Flâneuse" (1985), Katherine von Ankum's volume *Women in the Metropolis* (1997), and Anke Gleber's book *The Art of Taking a Walk* (1998), as well as it inspired reflection on women's experiences in private spaces, as in German literary scholar Annegret Pelz's essay "The desk: excavation site and repository of memories" (1999).

We can imagine that at the same time that Benjamin was writing about the place and space of the flâneur, Virginia Woolf was contemplating the place and

space of the female writer in *A Room of One's Own*, published in the same year as Benjamin's essay. This coincidence gives us one example of how reflections on public and private spaces and time might be considered interrelationally. A further example is Woolf's text itself, where she seeks to create a space for women writers within the dense and select (male) canon of literary production and highlights the prominent theoretical and metaphorical function that space holds in women's writing, thereby revealing how closely exterior and interior spaces are interconnected: walking on the turf instead of the path of Oxbridge campus was as transgressive for a woman as attempting to enter the library. Building on Woolf, North American feminist literary scholars Sandra Gilbert's and Susan Gubar's important study *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) on nineteenth-century British women writers interrogates the myth of literary paternity and authority ("the pen as a metaphorical phallus") that attempted to keep women writers who challenged the myth sequestered within confined spaces.

Like the disruptions to history caused by women writers and their writing, feminist and poststructuralist literary theory is also engaged with disrupting traditional metaphorical and theoretical spatial organization, i.e., male public and female private spaces. French feminist thought, from Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* to the writings of poststructuralist feminist theorists Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, and Julia Kristeva, has affected broadly how we understand the relationship between sexuality, language, and women's outsider position within the hegemonic spaces of patriarchal literary production. Cixous's *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975; 1976 in translation) admonishes that women must learn to write in order to enter into history and take their proper place (*Signs* 880). Still, while much of French theory concerns writing and the space that women occupy within history, many aspects have been criticized for reinforcing an essentialist standpoint. German literary scholars such as Inge Stephan and Sigrid Weigel build on French feminist theory to explore the ways in which German women writers have used their otherness vis-à-vis a specific German patriarchal cultural hegemony to find their own voice, as in Weigel's titular reference to Cixous in *Die Stimme der Medusa* [The voice of the Medusa] (1987). In particular, they discuss metaphors of the body as they relate to manifestations of control or lack thereof (including hysteria, depression, madness, anorexia, and rape). In our volume, Elaine Martin's essay on the healing process of the raped protagonist in Inka Parei's *Schattenboxerin* [*The Shadow-Boxing Woman*] reveals a paradoxical adoption of abject subjectivity (as per Kristeva) via a renewed exploration and embrace of urban space.

Contemporary academic discussions of marginalized identities, body politics, and otherness in literary texts frequently refer to Russian literary theorists Michel Bakhtin's notion of "chronotopos" (1937) – reflecting the inseparability of temporal and spatial relationships with literature – or Jurij Lotman's concept of "semio-

sphere" (1982) – describing any process or activity in which signs communicate within a specific *Umwelt* [environment]. Due to its broad applicability, however, Foucault's concept of "heterotopia" (describing non-hegemonic places of otherness; see *Les mots et les choses,* 1966 [*The Order of Things,* 2001]) has become one of the most commonly cited terms in humanities approaches to spatial studies.[5] In this volume, Caroline Frank looks at Monika Maron's space-writing in *Silent Close No. 6* as "literary reference and answer to actual space discourses." Frank combines the powerful theoretical implications of Foucault's concept of "heterotopia" with Cixous's *écriture feminine* [literally: women's writing] to identify possible constants of female space-writing, and further uses Lotman's theory of binary-topological perception to consider Maron's adoption of potentially non-binary spatial structures.

Deleuze's and Guattari's work, specifically the two-volume *Schizophrenia and Capitalism, Anti-Oedipus* (original 1972; English translation 1977) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (original 1980; English translation 1987), has been equally influential in discussions of male and female literary spaces. Deleuze and Guattari present various spatial-philosophical concepts used in literary analysis, such as "rhizome" (borrowing from botany) – a concept that allows for non-hierarchical, multiple entries of interpretation and representation – and the terms "territorialization," "deterritorialization," and "reterritorialization" – concepts that reflect a blurring of boundaries and a fluid and dynamic understanding of identity and meanings. In her essay on Judith Hermann in this volume, Necia Chronister adopts Deleuze's and Guattari's spatial categories of "smooth and striated surfaces" to describe the protagonist's subjective experiences of urban and suburban Berlin in *Sommerhaus, später* [*Summerhouse, Later*].

If writers and theorists have long been preoccupied with public spaces of work and the city, feminist writers have long contested the private space of the home, particularly as any type of safe haven as demonstrated in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* or Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper." Here again, Woolf's comment that "[f]iction must stick to the facts, and the truer the facts the better the fiction" (24) reminds us of the function of metaphorical representations of space as they can reflect women's lived experiences. While a feminist critique of home has a longer history,[6] feminist geographers especially problematize the

5 While the ubiquity of Foucault is not necessarily present in this volume, in the papers presented at the 4-th Global Conference on Space and Place held in Oxford, England in October 2013, Foucault's "heterotopia" was a key buzzword and was gently criticized as "overused." The digital archive Foucault.info claims Foucault to be "the most cited author in the humanities."

6 In sociology, we might look to the sharp criticism of women's domestic realm in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1903 book *Home: Its Work and Influence*. From the history of technology, Ruth

notion of home vis-a-vis female subjectivity: "The home as a haven, as a sanctuary from society into which one retreats, may describe the lives of men for whom home is a refuge from work, but certainly doesn't describe the lives of women for whom it is a workplace" (Blunt and Dowling 16).

Poststructuralist and postcolonial feminists Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, and Chandra Talpade Mohanty radicalize notions of home, critiquing it as a site of oppression, as well as seeing it as a place of potential resistance, or as a more fluid concept, metaphor and lived experience. Here we return to Massey's notion of the interrelational: "home is neither public nor private but both. Home is not separated from public, political worlds but is constituted through them: the domestic is created through the extra-domestic and vice versa" (Blunt and Dowling 27). Monika Shafi's recent study *Housebound*, for example, looks at contemporary German fiction that focuses on houses in order to better understand the ways in which "selfhood, social relations, and materiality intersect and influence each other" (4). To demarcate the unconventional spaces that Julia Franck has reconfigured into a fictional sense of home, Alexandra Merley Hill adopts the "non-places" theory of French anthropologist Marc Augé in her essay, specifically his book *Non-Lieux* (1992) [*Non-Places: An Introduction to the Anthropology of Supermodernity*, 1995] that reflects on spaces we normally only pass through, like airports and supermarkets.

Postcolonial literary theory continues this sense of negotiating, contesting, and remaining flexible to spatial configurations of everyday life, while illuminating the connection of space and body through movement. Led by critics such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, Homi Bhabha and Arjun Appadurai, postcolonial theory uses metaphors and terms of cultural geography to provide insightful readings to texts of travel, migration, and exile, where movement through space and the reconfiguration of identity within new spaces is a central concern. Like Soja's "Thirdspace" that allows for transformation within the geographies of urban spaces, Bhabha's sociolinguistic theory of "Third Space" reflects the cultural hybridity inherent in the conception of individual identities, suggesting resistance and challenge to old categories, and allowing for new subjectivities to emerge. Feminist literary scholars pick up on postcolonial discourse and prompt inquiries about how women writers discuss displacement, denial, or marginalization in their writing. Annegret Pelz's 1993 book *Reisen durch die eigene Fremde* [Traveling through one's own foreignness] on German and Austrian women's travel writing as "autogeography" is such an example, and interrogates patriar-

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Schwarz Cohen's 1980 book *More Work for Mother* discusses the negative consequences of technical innovation in the home from a feminist perspective.

chy's use of women's bodies as spatial and topographical locations upon which histories have been mapped. Here, women's travel and writing is seen as an act of reclaiming the female body within (and from) history. The mutual influences between postcolonial, feminist, and spatial theory are apparent in a number of the essays in our collection. Cohen-Pfister's essay in particular points to the postcolonial theories of Said and Appadurai, among others, to discuss Croatian-Swiss Dragica Rajcic's ability to intersect gender, nationalism, ethnicity, and memory within her poetry.

Thematic groupings of the essays

The themes of public and private space, the body, movement, and mobility flow throughout many of the essays in this volume, creating an interesting parallel to the approaches to space as reflected in the history of women's writing, literary-spatial theory, and feminist theories of space. These multiple approaches are evident in the three thematic groupings and order in which we have placed the essays of the volume: "Transnational Spaces: Mobility and Migration," "Seeking Space: Gender and Regulation," and "Revisited Spaces: Repositionings and Points of Encounter." The number of essays in the volume that are concerned with spaces of and between travel, mobility, and homelessness reveal these overarching themes to be the dynamic bookends to the concepts of stasis, the home, and domesticity that punctuate the middle section of our volume. To better grasp the volume's interconnections, Beth Muellner provides a brief clarification at the beginning of each of the three sections as well as a short introduction to each individual essay. Traci O'Brien's essay on Ottilie Assing, Laurel Cohen-Pfister's on Dragica Rajcic, Silja Maehl's and Chase Dimock's on Yoko Tawada in the "Transnational Spaces" of part one are concerned with shifting the boundaries, knowledge of, and language of one's world to another place and with the reporting on and linguistic playfulness of those experiences. In the "Seeking Space" of section two, Xenia Harwell's essay on Alja Rachmanowa, Elaine Martin's on Inka Parei, Alexandra Hill's on Julia Franck, and Necia Chronister's on Judith Hermann are concerned in various ways with gender and interior spaces, specifically when the individual is either exiled from, violated within, rejects, or is denied that space. Returning to themes of movement, the "Revisited Spaces" of section three includes Elizabeth Weber Edward's essay on Elisabeth Langgässer, Caroline Frank's on Monika Maron, Susanne Lenné Jones's on Irina Liebmann, and Maria Snyder's on the work of Brigitta Kronauer and Jenny Erpenbeck. We move from a theology of space created in the pilgrimage of survivors through a postwar landscape, to spatial shifts created in the wake of the former German Democratic Republic, to

"modern" spaces of nature viewed by German women authors as neither in the romantic nor apocalyptic traditions. In all of the chapters, Massey's "inextricably interwoven" themes of history and nostalgia, reason and emotion, politics and the body, stasis and movement emerge repeatedly, binding the essays within feminist geography's "relational sense of space and time," as well as into the broadening realm of interdisciplinary German studies. With the diversity of women authors in this volume presenting a rather wide historical swath of literary-spatial configurations, we gain a clearer picture of how space figures in the lives and fictions of women in the German language.

I Transnational Spaces: Mobility and Migration

Beth Muellner

Space Across Time and Place

The first of three sections in our volume, "Transnational Spaces" brings together four essays on three very different authors, Ottilie Assing, Dragica Rajcic, and Yoko Tawada – to whom two essays are dedicated. The authors are from different time periods and different birth countries, but all of them use the German language to reflect on a kind of fluidity of space in their experiences of movement from one place to another. In Assing's case, her German heritage plays a critical role in how she views and judges the United States and its inhabitants; in the cases of the Croatian-born Rajcic in Switzerland and the Japanese-born Tawada in Germany, and later in the U.S., the readings and writings of the language spaces they inhabit are also marked by their unique cultural backgrounds, creating a sort of ebb and flow in their reflections on space and power. Two essays focus on observations while traveling within the space of a train: Assing's in the nineteenth century and Tawada's in the twentieth century. The causes for the migrations of these authors, from revolution and war to adventure and study, are as different as their reflections on mobility and space itself. In addition to the theme of gender and movement, other concerns that course through most of the chapters in this section are how race, ethnicity, and language factor into the spatial.

Traci S. O'Brien

"Full Steam Ahead!": Technology, Mobility, and Human Progress in Ottilie Assing's "Reports from America"

Traci O'Brien's opening essay provides us with an example of spatial thinking at a time in which the temporal ostensibly still held sway: the nineteenth century. As an educated German woman who emigrated to the United States when travel as a single woman was still rare, when the privileged urban space of the flâneur was still solidly male, and when a writing woman posed a threat to propriety, Assing crossed a number of boundaries. One of the more startling was her friendship and collaboration with the well-known African-American abolitionist Frederick Douglass, whose autobiography she translated into German and published in 1860. O'Brien's essay traces layers of meaning as assigned to different spaces within the American landscape, building on Mark Simpson's notion of mobility as a "contestatory process." Assing's journalistic essays sent from the U.S. to Germany during the mid-nineteenth century reflect perspectives on race and technology that vary greatly, especially through her comparison of the lives of African Americans and Native Americans. As O'Brien argues, Assing's use of spatial and temporal metaphors to connect progress and freedom with increased technology and mobility for African Americans ironically required Native Americans to remain within spaces of stasis and primitiveness. For Assing, mobility and technology allow access to spaces of modernity and cultural superiority. In not seeking access to those spaces, Assing's Native Americans are complicit in their own disappearance from the otherwise modern, progressive, and hopeful landscape of the U.S. abolitionist era. O'Brien sees Assing's journalism as reinforcing the same act of erasure in depicting Native Americans as unable to cross spatial boundaries. Thus, unlike African Americans, they remain stuck in time. (Beth Muellner)

In recent years, nineteenth-century German journalist, Ottilie Assing has garnered a good deal of attention for two main reasons. After having emigrated to the U.S. in 1852, Assing wrote numerous articles for the *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* [Morning news for educated readers][1] in support of abolition, and many of them have been recently translated into English (see Assing, *Radical Passion*).[2] Assing

1 *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* [Morning news for educated classes], after 1837 *Morgenblatt für gebildete Leser* [Morning news for educated readers], published by Cotta from 1807–1865. On this influential journal, see Baasner.

2 On Assing's work, see Keil, "Race and Ethnicity" and "German Immigrants"; Sollors; Behmer.

also developed a long-term personal relationship with Frederick Douglass, the well-known nineteenth-century abolitionist, whose 1855 autobiography, *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Assing translated and had published in Germany in 1860.[3] One aspect of Assing's work on which most scholars have commented is her reluctance to embrace fully the U.S. women's movement despite her radical views on social justice. Unlike other radical women, both German and U.S. American, Assing does not view the struggle for increased human rights in the nineteenth century within the context of gender oppression. Instead, she defines this struggle in terms of the discrepancy between modern civilization – expressed in technological advances and in the values of "liberty and justice for all" – and the existence of slavery in the United States.

Her gender does, however, play a role in Assing's writing. In fact, one could argue that her embrace of technology and social justice could be read as an affirmation of women's legitimate right to participate in public activities, as well as a validation of a new kind of modern and socially conscious masculinity. Nevertheless, this essay is more concerned with Assing's social engagement in terms of her vigorous association of social progress with technological advancement, primarily in the area of travel and technology. In fact, throughout her work, Assing frequently depicts the increasing possibility of physical movement through space – via train travel, for example, but also via the abolition of slavery – as connected to the progress of humanity. Conversely, she transforms the spaces she depicts, from landscapes to train cars, by infusing them with the democratic ideals of progress. In the process, she defines progress in both temporal and spatial terms, linking it to an historical narrative of human development which privileges freedom over enslavement. At the same time, there is a startling contradiction in Assing's work: her progressive vision of civilization and technology, with its expanded freedoms and mobility, requires the "primitive" (Native Americans) to disappear. Her depictions of spaces and of the people within them therefore also illustrate the qualities she deems necessary to civilized modernity.

One can understand Assing's rejection of the "primitive" in part as a reflection of her historical moment. She embraces the "passion for locomotion" which, Wolfgang Schivelbusch notes, is typical of nineteenth-century U.S. culture both in terms of technological advances and individual human bodies (117). This is, however, complicated terrain: with the title of his work, the "politics of mobility," Mark Simpson problematizes any streamlined narrative of nineteenth-century

3 See Douglass, *Sclaverei und Freiheit* [Slavery and freedom], trans. Assing. Terry H. Pickett first uncovered archival evidence of their relationship. See Pickett. Maria Diedrich's *Love Across Color Lines* is a biography of Assing and of her relationship with Douglass. See also Lohmann.