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# THE STRANGE EVERYDAY: DIVIDED BERLIN IN PROSE TEXTS BY HERTA MÜLLER AND EMINE SEVGI ÖZDAMAR

ÁINE MCMURTRY

## ABSTRACT

The Rumanian-born Nobel laureate, Herta Müller, and the Turkish-German writer, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, came to reside in West and East Berlin respectively following persecution under political regimes on different sides of the Cold War divide. This comparative article examines the ‘strange gaze’ (Müller 1999) on everyday Berlin in two of their German-language texts in order to consider the potential of displaced modes of cultural production to rethink the reunified nation. *Reisende auf einem Bein* (Müller 1989) and ‘Mein Berlin’ (Özdamar 2001) engage with divided Berlin as a place of resettlement and new beginnings, yet simultaneously reveal historical continuities between the two Cold War Germanys, and with those authoritarian states their authors had left behind. Offering an alternative to psychologising interpretations that focus on the works as expressions of historical trauma, a tendency that can downplay their contemporary political significance, the article examines how the texts engage with experiences of migration to express the material imbrication of personal and socio-historical reality. Ultimately the experimental prose texts, themselves born of Cold War histories of forced migration, will be found to make a prescient contribution to reconceptualising the post-1989 German nation and to prefigure the migrant as the key agent of societal change.<sup>1</sup>

Dieser Aufsatz untersucht den „fremden Blick“ (Müller 1999) auf den Berliner Alltag in deutschsprachigen Texten von Herta Müller und Emine Sevgi Özdamar als Beitrag zu einem Überdenken der wiedervereinigten Nation nach 1989. Die Literaturnobelpreisträgerin Müller, die aus dem rumänischen Banat stammt, und die deutsch-türkische Autorin Özdamar sind als politisch Verfolgte zweier Systeme nach West- und Ost-Berlin gezogen. Ihre Prosatexte *Reisende auf einem Bein* (Müller 1989)

und „Mein Berlin“ (Özdamar 2001) setzen sich mit dem geteilten Berlin als einen Ort der Umsiedlung und des neuen Anfangs auseinander. Gleichzeitig legen sie geschichtliche Kontinuitäten sowohl zwischen den zwei deutschen Staaten als auch mit den autoritären Heimatstaaten, dar. Als Versuch einer alternativen Lesart zu den gängigen psychologisierenden Ansätzen, die jene Werke oft als Ausdruck geschichtlichen Traumas lesen und so ihre politische Resonanz und Brisanz unterschätzen, untersucht dieser vergleichende Aufsatz ihre literarische Darstellung von Migration als materielle Erfahrung persönlicher und soziohistorischer Realität. Schlussendlich wird die Analyse zeigen, wie die experimentelle Schilderung des Alltags in jenen Werken, die selbst aus der Realität erzwungener Migration im Zuge des Kalten Krieges hervorgegangen sind, einen voraussehenden Beitrag zu einem Neudenken der deutschen Nation nach 1989 leistet und den Migranten dabei als Schlüsselfigur sozialer Veränderung vorwegnimmt.

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In diesem Alltag ist der Fremde Blick entstanden. Allmählich, still, gnadenlos in den vertrauten Straßen, Wänden und Gegenständen. Die wichtigen Schatten streifen herum und besetzen. Und man folgt ihnen mit einem Sensorium, das immerzu flackert und einen von innen verbrennt. So ungefähr sieht das dumme Wort Verfolgung aus. Und dies ist der Grund, weshalb ich es beim FREMDEN BLICK, wie man mir ihn in Deutschland bescheinigt, nicht belassen kann. Der Fremde Blick ist alt, fertig mitgebracht aus dem Bekannten. Er hat mit dem Einwandern nach Deutschland nichts zu tun. Fremd ist für mich nicht das Gegenteil von bekannt, sondern das Gegenteil von vertraut. Unbekanntes muß nicht fremd sein, aber Bekanntes kann fremd werden.<sup>2</sup>

In her 1999 essay, *Der Fremde Blick*, the Romanian-German Nobel Laureate Herta Müller identifies everyday life in Ceaușescu's Romania as that which has defined the strange gaze on the world that informs her textual practice. Herta Müller was born into the German-speaking minority in the Romanian Banat and, after years of political persecution at the hands of the *Securitate*, she left for West Berlin in 1987 at the age of thirty-four.<sup>3</sup> Müller's German-language oeuvre is centrally preoccupied with the lived experience of totalitarianism and, in recent years, Müller has been one of the foremost literary voices in Germany to speak out publicly in support of refugees, invoking those who fled abroad under National Socialism to make a historical case for Germany's contemporary humanitarian obligations.<sup>4</sup> With the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2009, she was acclaimed by the Swedish Academy as a writer 'who, with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose, depicts the landscape of the dispossessed.'<sup>5</sup> Her 1999 essay describes how it was the everyday experience of surveillance that generated the strange gaze, which is widely understood to define her writing. Müller is categorical that the insidious familiarity of everyday persecution, not the mere fact of displacement to another country, is what generates radical dislocation. The German adjective 'fremd' can be translated variously into English as 'strange', 'foreign', 'alien' and, in English-language discussions of Müller's 1999 essay, scholars have often chosen to render the word as 'alien', emphasizing experiences of subjective isolation and psychic fracture that drive the author's production.<sup>6</sup> The extreme dislocation suggested by this translation, however, potentially re-inscribes linguistically the othering experienced during persecution, and the word is also at odds with Müller's insistence in the above lines on the material imbrication of self and environment. In my view, it is precisely the quotidian character of the English word 'strange' that comes closest to Müller's meaning in the essay which foregrounds the inextricability of material reality and subjective experience. The everyday is experienced materially in streets, walls and objects, all of which provoke a sensory

response that both warns and injures, as well as giving rise to the ‘Strange Gaze’ which – writ large – assumes an agency of its own that determines the author’s perception of the world. The significance of the essay lies in its insistence on the political roots of experimental textual strategies, which are said to reflect a materialist understanding of the relationship between the self and the everyday environment.

In what follows, I set out from this materialist premise to offer original readings of two prose texts set in the respective halves of divided Berlin which engage with migrations that resulted from experiences of political oppression, Herta Müller’s *Reisende auf einem Bein* (1989)<sup>7</sup> and Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s ‘Mein Berlin’ (2001).<sup>8</sup> My concern is to consider the displaced vision of Berlin in texts by two writers who came from countries on either side of the Cold War divide to reside in the respective halves of the city. West and East Berlin offered Müller and Özdamar refuge following their persecution under opposing political regimes and their texts fictionalize aspects of these real-life experiences. Both writers engage with divided Berlin as a place of resettlement and new beginnings, yet are simultaneously concerned to reveal parallels between the regimes left behind and the German context, as well as to highlight historical continuities between the two Cold War Germanys. *Reisende auf einem Bein* is the only work from Herta Müller’s oeuvre to date set in Germany. It was published in autumn 1989, just two years after Müller’s arrival in the West and it charts the emigration of its traumatised female protagonist from a state in the Eastern Bloc to West Berlin before the fall of the Wall. Speaking about the novel, Müller has suggested that ‘Fremdheit’ constitutes a constructive creative strategy rather than a condition to be overcome:

Ich glaube nicht, daß es das Ideale ist, nicht fremd zu sein. Die ideale Beziehung zu einer Umgebung ist aus meiner Sicht eine Fremdheit, an die man sich gewöhnt. Fremdheit kann nicht ausgetragen werden, weil

sie eine Modalität der Wahrnehmung ist. Bewußte Wahrnehmung und kritische Sicht werden immer Fremdheit zur Folge haben.<sup>9</sup>

Through its radicalized gaze, Müller's strange prose throws up complex interrelations and parallels between West Berlin and the Eastern Bloc, which enables critical commentary on the migrant's everyday experience of the city. My reading of this West Berlin text will be complemented by consideration of the textual figuration of East Berlin in Özdamar's 'Mein Berlin', a short text that takes as its primary setting the Eastern half of the city after the speaker's escape from right-wing extremism in Turkey.<sup>10</sup> A writer, playwright and actor, Özdamar is one of the most significant artists of her generation and, in 1991, she was the first German-language writer of Turkish origin to win the prestigious Ingeborg Bachmann Prize.<sup>11</sup> By engaging with experiences of forced migration and resettlement, the experimental textual strategies adopted by Özdamar and Müller make a prescient contribution to reconceptualising the post-1989 German nation that carries particular resonance in our contemporary age of mass-flight and human displacement.

In the context of reunified Germany, Andreas Huyssen was one of the first critics to identify issues of citizenship, asylum, and immigration as crucial to any new democratic understanding of German national identity.<sup>12</sup> Huyssen calls explicitly for greater attention to the relationship between 'diasporic memory and the memory formations of the national culture within which a given diaspora may be embedded.'<sup>13</sup> Leslie Adelson was arguably the foremost scholar to respond to Huyssen's call in her work on Turkish-German literature. Adelson questions, however, the validity of Huyssen's use of the term diaspora for referring to German literature written in the 1990s and born of Turkish migration that began in the 1960s. In her view, loosening 'an exaggerated attachment to identity as an analytical category' permits 'new questions about the nature of cultural contact in literary texts'.<sup>14</sup> Adelson's

groundbreaking 2005 monograph *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature* is concerned to highlight the contribution of literary works to new kinds of subject formation at historical moments of structural transformation in which the former East-West coordinates of Cold War division and the binaries of Orient and Occident are no longer valid.<sup>15</sup> It is this understanding of textual production by writers who migrated to Germany as an imaginative cultural archive for rethinking the reunified nation that drives my analysis in this article. My approach is particularly indebted to Margaret Littler's Deleuzian interpretations of Özdamar's writings which stress the relevance of the philosopher's materialist thought for an understanding of the transformative potential of literature to imagine alternative worlds.<sup>16</sup> In her reading of Özdamar's 1998 novel *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn*, Littler further outlines her understanding of 'material, historical reality and individual protagonist, as inextricably connected in the novel, the personal life entirely continuous with and externalized onto the forces permeating the world she inhabits; the self as an unfolding of the outside, rather than the interiority of a psyche'.<sup>17</sup> Instead of looking for subjective stories and individual psychologies, Littler attends to cinematic techniques and parodic moments in the novel, arguing that it 'both thematises and enacts a non-representational aesthetic [...] building to a collective enunciation not localizable in any individual subject'.<sup>18</sup> My analysis will therefore relate the 'strange' vision of everyday Berlin to an undoing of the conventional subject that gives expression to the imbrication of personal and socio-historical reality. Rather than focusing on the portrayal of an individual psychology, the texts will be seen to develop strange focalisers that generate new perspectives on the material experience of everyday Berlin. Ultimately, my comparative readings of these imagistic textual engagements by writers from countries on different sides of the former Cold War divide move towards interpretations that are not determined by identity politics or ethnic and national difference, but rather investigate the potential of cultural production to more radically reimagine Berlin's Cold War status as the symbolic site

of East-West division. By figuring human experience of social agency and transnational movement in experimental literary form through the lens of the everyday, the two authors will be seen not only to reconceptualise the German nation at a crucial juncture in its modern history but also to point towards what the political philosopher Thomas Nail has termed ‘the contemporary political task of the migrant’ to create an alternative to social expulsion.<sup>19</sup> For Nail, ‘[t]he migrant is the political figure of our time.’<sup>20</sup> In the introduction to his 2015 monograph, *The Figure of the Migrant*, Nail argues:

The twenty-first century will be the century of the migrant not only because of the record number of migrants today but also because this is the century in which all the previous forms of social expulsion and migratory resistance have reemerged and become more active than ever before.<sup>21</sup>

In the two literary texts written at the cusp of this century, the strange gaze born out of Cold War histories of forced migration will be shown to prefigure the migrant as the driving force of social history and the key agent of societal change for the new millennium.

It is the imaginative relationship between divided city and self which stands at the centre of ‘Mein Berlin’, a text that looks back on Berlin during its years of partition. Özdamar wrote her text in the years following German reunification and it was first published in the 2001 German-language collection *Der Hof im Spiegel* alongside a sister-text, ‘Mein Istanbul’. Liesbeth Minnaard’s rich account of these two city texts has convincingly established their significance in offering ‘an exceptional perspective on (German and Turkish) history and public memory’ in ‘a subtle rewriting of dominant national history [...] from the perspective of Turkish-German migration’.<sup>22</sup> As Minnaard highlights, the two cities share a history of division between East and West – partitioned by a wall in one case, and by a waterway in the other. Minnaard’s analysis demonstrates how ‘Özdamar’s literary cartography unites these two problematic



histories of division in a transnational comparison’, revealing ‘[t]he “geographic” variables ‘East’ and ‘West’ as locally specific, ideological constructs’.<sup>23</sup> My reading seeks to develop Minnaard’s compelling interpretation of ‘Mein Berlin’ as ‘a particular kind of “Wende” literature’ by paying heightened attention to the relational aspects of the quotidian as enacted in Özdamar’s prose. My interpretation therefore moves away from reading the text’s ‘disruptive quality’ in the protagonist’s ‘outsider status’<sup>24</sup> against a Brechtian tradition of artistic estrangement.<sup>25</sup> Instead, the comparative treatment of Özdamar and Müller’s prose figuration of felt encounter with divided Berlin offers an understanding of their non-identitarian textual politics that enables – following Jacques Rancière – a creation of ‘forms of perceptible community (that) unite people within living ties’.<sup>26</sup>

Right from its opening lines, ‘Mein Berlin’ highlights the intersection of personal experience with wider history: the first-person, female speaker identifies the year as 1976, nine years after her first stay in the German city and following her arrest after the 1971 military coup in Turkey, when – through Amnesty International – friends have intervened to bring her back to Berlin (*MB*, p. 55). The speaker’s biography bears striking parallels to that of Özdamar herself, who came to West Berlin from Turkey as a foreign worker in the 1960s and then studied acting in Istanbul, before returning to East Berlin to work with the Brecht director, Benno Besson, at the Volksbühne.<sup>27</sup> Throughout the short text, references to experiences of political persecution in Turkey, including her own imprisonment and the murder of friends at the hands of fascists, give clear socio-historical contours to the situation that has been left behind. The narrative play with time and space, however, as well as the frequent use of irony, disrupt straightforward identification of the speaker as Özdamar and any clear-cut sense of textual order and stability. Özdamar’s speaker identifies with the city, claiming it as her own. Indeed, the first-person vision of animated Berlin presents the reunion as something mutually welcomed by both speaker and city. The city is figured through a

series of vignettes whose haphazard inclusion reflects the shifting character of everyday perception and human memory:

Am Bahnhof Zoo begrüßte ich alle Busse, die vorbeifuhren. Ich war in Freiheit und freute mich über den Regen. Ich dachte: Berlin hat neun Jahre auf mich gewartet. Es war, als wäre Berlin damals, als ich nach Istanbul zurückgegangen war, zu einem Foto erstarrt, um auf mich zu warten – mit den langen, hohen Bäumen, mit der Gedächtniskirche, mit den zweistöckigen Bussen, mit den Eckkneipen, Berliner Kindl, die Kreuze auf den Bierdeckeln. Mauern. Checkpoint Charlie. U-Bahn. S-Bahn. Kino Steinplatz. Abschied von gestern. Alexander Kluge. Bockwurst. Das Brecht-Theater Berliner Ensemble. Arturo Ui. Kanäle. Pfaueninsel. Bahnhofspenner. Erbsensuppe. Einsame Frauen im Café Kranzler. Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte. Arbeiter aus anderen Ländern. Spaghetti. Griechen. Kümmeltürken. Café Käse. Telefon Tanz. Einschußlöcher an den Hauswänden. Kopfsteinpflaster. Currywurst. Am Wannsee auf die Sonne wartende weiße Körper. Polizeihunde. Scheinwerfer der Ost-Berliner Polizei. Tote Bahnschienen, zwischen denen Gras wuchs. [...] Enten am Wannsee. Ein Lokal mit Musik aus den 40er Jahren, alte Frauen tanzen mit Frauen. Broiler. (*MB*, p. 56)

At first glance, this train-of-thought sequence appears an account of everyday impressions of a city streetscape. The breathless sequence of names, places and images has the character of a children's game of word association and it works rhythmically to combine personal memories of double-decker buses and Black Forest gateau, with snapshots of bullet holes, border guards and dogs, signalling a narrative refusal to comment explicitly on the obvious socio-historical context for these uncomfortable impressions. The above sequence of images defies the attempt to ascribe the portrayal

to either East or West. Whilst the lines could evoke the image entertained by a West Berliner of the city, as most images are of West Berlin, the portrayal is – in fact – a tripartite one, with references to the West, a few specific images of the East which refer to border fortifications and culture, as well as a number of everyday scenes that bring the two together. This complicates any account of the text as an East Berlin narrative, since it is also a text on all of Berlin from the perspective of a figure who is able to traverse the border. Özdamar has in the past been accused of downplaying political injustice, particularly in the context of the GDR, through her non-committal observational style, which focuses on everyday details and occurrences. In the author's defence, Claudia Breger has suggested that this 'faux naïveté' playfully critiques the stereotype of the naïve Oriental woman,<sup>28</sup> whilst Liesbeth Minnaard identifies a 'narrative mode of tactful wondering that often touches upon the sad and tragic absurdities of the situations of separation described.'<sup>29</sup> In my view, however, these readings do not go far enough in acknowledging the political provocation of Özdamar's engagement with Berlin. In fact, the juxtapositions which define the structure of Özdamar's impressionistic narrative call out to be interpreted. Their imagistic character, first signalled in the reference to the freeze-frame photograph of Berlin with which the sequence begins, appear derived from the realm of everyday perception and recollection. No obvious logic links the impressions and, instead, their disconnection from one another is made apparent in the narrative cuts, which are reminiscent of cinematic montage techniques. In this light, the images of the fortified border and historical bullet holes which feature in the textual montage alongside references to pea soup and Wannsee bathers can be seen to bring out the everyday character of past and present violence with devastating clarity.

Özdamar's narrative foregrounding of the freeze-frame within imagistic everyday impressions can be further illuminated by the second volume of Gilles Deleuze's *Cinéma* work, 'The Time-Image', where modern cinema is explicitly

associated with the unexceptional images of the quotidian. According to this philosophical account of post-war cinema, which Deleuze terms ‘a cinema of the seer and no longer of the agent’, cinema helps its viewers to think by filming our relation to the world. In his discussion of everydayness in the work of the twentieth-century Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu Deleuze suggests: ‘In everyday banality, the action-image and even the movement-image tend to disappear in favour of pure optical situations, but these reveal connections of a new type, which are no longer sensory-motor and which bring the emancipated senses into direct relation with time and thought.’<sup>30</sup> In the shift from the ‘movement-image’ to the ‘time-image’ in modern cinema, Deleuze identifies an autonomy in the act of reading the everyday image, which renders both character and viewer visionaries: ‘The purely optical and sound situation gives rise to a seeing function, at once fantasy and report, criticism and compassion.’<sup>31</sup> The anticipatory quality of this vision is therefore seen to break beyond the known to register what Margaret Littler terms ‘an outside, an unthought, a non-linear time and a non-homogeneous space, not limited to its historical “setting”.’<sup>32</sup> Foregrounding the capacity of modern cinema to record radical shifts at the level of their everyday impact, Deleuze identifies the political character of this cinema in ‘precisely the weakness of the motor-linkages [...] that are capable of releasing huge forces of disintegration.’<sup>33</sup>

Deleuze’s reading helps to draw out the wider politics of Özdamar’s imagistic montage of animated Berlin, which also calls on the reader to respond to the contrasting images it accumulates, drawing together diverse social groups and historical sites within a non-hierarchical narrative frame that signals their fundamental equality and basic difference simultaneously. The deliberate and often comic juxtapositions in Özdamar’s observation of the Berlin streetscape can further be seen to open a narrative space in which attention can be directed towards those things that are not said. The speaker contextualises her move to East Berlin with a description of a final walk through the Western part of the city and of the array of graffiti slogans daubed on West German

walls. The textual ellipsis signals to the reader-observer the need to read between the lines: ‘DDR: Deutscher DReck ... Attention! You are entering the Axel Springer sector ... Alle Roten in die Gaskammer ... Wird Zeit, daß wir leben – Geh erst mal arbeiten ... USA Army go home’ (*MB*, p. 58) – which suggest the political diversity and activism of the populace. In East Berlin, the speaker appears to identify more with the intellectual figures memorialised in the names of underground stations, which she contrasts with her knowledge of persecution in Turkey:

Jedesmal freute ich mich über den Namen der Haltestelle an der Volksbühne: “Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz”. Ich freute mich auch über die U-Bahn-Haltestelle “Marx-Engels-Platz”. Wegen der Bücher von Marx, Engels und Luxemburg hatte man in der Türkei Menschen verhaftet. Ich freute mich auch, daß eine Gurke in jedem Land gleich viel kostete: 40 Groschen. Im Gegensatz zu West-Berlin gab es an den Hauswänden oder an der Mauer keine Sprüche. (*MB*, p. 59)

The everyday juxtapositions included in the shifting narrative, which moves from fond recognition of left-wing intellectuals in the context of bad memories of the Turkish regime, to allusion to fixed prices in the GDR economy and the conspicuous absence of graffiti in East Berlin, enable a politicised narrative that nonetheless circumvents the fixed articulation of an ideological stance. The bleak reality for free speech in the GDR – signalled in the pointed contrast of the graffiti-free walls in East Berlin – provokes simultaneous reflection on the prohibitions that accompany more positive aspects of the Socialist order. The correspondences created through Özdamar’s shifting first-person narrative that weaves together memories, anecdotes, fragments of conversations and dream, enable a relational mode that figures the narrator’s past and present experience between Berlin and Istanbul as part of an imaginative space in which alternative forms of identification are presented to those defined in terms of nation or political allegiance.

The text closes with an encounter between the speaker and a young boy she meets at the cemetery in East Berlin, to whom she must explain that Turkey is a country near Bulgaria (*MB*, p. 61). The contrast between the official GDR map of history and the complex reality of lived experience reproduced in the narrative web is left to speak for itself.

It is the ambivalent figuration of Berlin that also defines Herta Müller's engagement with the city in *Reisende auf einem Bein*, a novel that appeared in English translation as *Traveling on One Leg*<sup>34</sup>. Like Özdamar, Müller employs an imagistic poetic prose unconcerned with plot development that instead engages with the minutiae of everyday experience to offer an unconventional view of the divided city. In contrast to the animated vision of 'Mein Berlin', however, Müller's is a fractured portrait that narrates the emigration of her protagonist Irene from an unnamed but recognizable Romania under military surveillance to the West Berlin of the late 1980s. As has been frequently pointed out in scholarly discussions of the novel, so strange was its portrait of the Western half of the city that the text perturbed early reviewers, foremost amongst whom was Christian Huther who went so far as to question whether the protagonist really finds herself in Federal German territory.<sup>35</sup> Instead of portraying well-known central Berlin districts or locations, Müller's fragmentary narrative plays out in the northern district of Wilhelmsruh, a poor suburb of the city populated by down-and-outs, child prostitutes, and workers from Eastern Europe, who – like Irene – appear stranded in inhospitable and unexceptional terrain. In their reading of the novel published in 2004, Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler convincingly suggest that the text's ambivalent portrayal of West Berlin has been seen to call into question late twentieth-century myths of the city as a free bastion during the Cold War, which 'tended to erase the earlier history of the city, deny what was common to both halves of the city and of Germany, and present the success story of West Berlin as the whole story.'<sup>36</sup> Their chapter draws together central strands from existing scholarship on the novel,

combining aspects of trauma theory with Rosi Braidotti's work on nomadic subjectivity to interpret 'der Fremde Blick' not as 'marker of separation between Irene and what she sees' but rather 'a continuing estrangement of the self and of the very relationship between self and other, arising from trauma but sustained by postmodern city life.'<sup>37</sup> The dual foci – trauma theory and nomadic subjectivity – are said to share certain preoccupations, 'not least their theorizing of the viability of an identity based on aporia and of the desirability of giving expression to unique experience.' This narrative foregrounding of the fragmented and isolated female self leads Haines and Littler to acknowledge Müller's rejection of organised politics but to qualify the wider political implications of her novel. They suggest that – unlike Braidotti – Müller's nomadic subject does not seek to 'reinvent politics, empower women and enable new forms of interrelatedness.'<sup>38</sup> Through the lens of the strange everyday, my concern is to reconceptualise the political significance of Müller's prose: Irene's position as onlooker will be shown to record aspects of her precarious existence in West Berlin and to establish linkages between the intersectional experience of the female migrant and others who exist at the fringes of society. Rather than downplaying the wider political import of Müller's text, I seek to consider how the text exposes the dominant socio-political and economic forces which work to undermine and isolate her protagonist.

The political implications of Irene's onlooker status can be seen to emerge in a passage towards the end of the novel where she travels to Marburg by train. Here, Irene contrasts her sense of living at a remove from her environment with the automatic responses of those close to her, who lose no opportunity to perform their own closeness to those towns and cities in which they reside:

Irene hatte das Gefühl, durch ihren Blick auf diese Städte, die Menschen, die ihr nahestanden, von den Städten zu entfernen. Sie gab sich Mühe, ihre Fremdheit nicht zu zeigen.

Doch die Menschen, die Irene nahestanden, ließen keine Gelegenheit aus, ihr zu zeigen, wie nahe ihnen diese Städte standen.

Sie wußten sehr genau, was sie an jedem Ort tun sollten. [...]

Dann sah Irene, daß die Menschen, die ihr nahestanden, die Stadt, in der sie lebten, auf dem Rücken trugen.

In diesen Augenblicken wußte Irene, daß ihr Leben zu Beobachtungen geronnen war. Die Beobachtungen machten sie handlungsunfähig.

Wenn sich Irene zu Handlungen zwang waren es keine. Sie blieben in den Anfängen stecken. Es waren Anfänge, die zusammenbrachen.

Nicht einmal die einzelnen Gesten blieben ganz.<sup>39</sup>

The recognition in these lines recalls Deleuze's comments in *Cinema II* on the relation between the everyday realm and the new observer status of the filmic subject in modern cinema. As is the case for Özdamar's prose vision of Berlin, the textual politics at work in Müller's portrait can be illuminated by Deleuze's conception of the character as 'a kind of viewer [...] the situation he is in outstrips his motor capacities on all sides, and makes him see and hear what is no longer subject to the rules of a response or an action.'<sup>40</sup> For Deleuze, the everyday forms neither the mere backdrop to individual action, nor the site of automatic responses. By foregrounding Irene's realisation of her own observer status, Müller can be seen to cast her protagonist in Deleuzian terms as a viewer-character who 'records rather than reacts, [...] is prey to a vision, pursued by it or pursuing it, rather than engaged in an action.'<sup>41</sup> Rather than voicing any interior perspective, the text employs an image of material burden to evoke the forces weighing down on the inhabitants of the city. The odd negation of the third person reflexive undermines Irene as a subject capable of taking independent action and the subsequent depersonalised forms stress the abortive and fragmented character of any attempts to do so. As highlighted above, in *Cinéma II*, Deleuze stresses the role of everyday



banality in the attenuation of narrativity in neo-realist film, suggesting that powerful forces of disintegration are released by its weak motor connections. He further cites Jean-Luc Godard's suggestion that 'to *describe* is to observe mutations' in underlining his own understanding of a new post-war cinema with a new politics.<sup>42</sup> As Michael Sheringham highlights in his landmark study on the everyday, the word 'mutation' in French often refers to a process of transformation and so, to follow Deleuze's interpretation of post-war neo-realist film, Müller's strange vision of Irene might similarly be understood to convey a more general process of social disintegration or mutation, which records 'seismic changes at the level of their tremors in the everyday.'<sup>43</sup> In Sheringham's view, 'the relational, performative aspects of the *quotidien* – a dimension that emerges through the act of being apprehended – are enacted in the way a film, play, or artwork "stages" an interaction between human subjects and social structures'.<sup>44</sup> The politics of Müller's prose are therefore to be located in how it performs Irene's situation in everyday Berlin, which gives literary figuration to human entanglement to changing socio-historical realities.

A marked tendency to overlook the everyday tremors in Müller's narrative, particularly in relation to the German situation, can be seen in scholarly considerations that focus on her protagonist's experience of alienation and otherness. Much has been written about the novel's status as a form of trauma narrative, where Irene's isolation and powerlessness are foregrounded.<sup>45</sup> Whilst many of these readings offer productive and convincing accounts of the symptomatic character of Müller's dislocated, imagistic prose, their focus on long-term psychological disturbance resulting from persecution often neglects the everyday context for the novel's pointed socio-political commentary on insidious power relations and modes of surveillance and exclusion. One of the most striking evocations of the subjective implications of the strange gaze occurs in chapter two when Irene looks at passport photographs of herself as she prepares to leave the other country. The everyday bureaucracy of the emigration process forms the trigger

for a moment of estrangement. A shift in perspective displaces the reader, relocating him or her as focaliser of the action:

Dann hatte Irene Lust gehabt, die Paßphotos in den Regen zu halten, und hatte es nicht getan. War unters Dach vor den ersten Hauseingang gegangen. Hatte ein Photo aus dem Umschlag genommen und es angeschaut.

Eine bekannte Person, doch nicht wie sie selbst. Und da, worauf es ankam, worauf es Irene ankam, an den Augen, am Mund, und da, an der Rinne zwischen Nase und Mund, war eine fremde Person gewesen.

Eine fremde Person hatte sich eingeschlichen in Irenes Gesicht.

Das Fremde an Irenes Gesicht war die andere Irene gewesen. (*R*, pp. 18-19)

The process of narrative displacement begins with the omission of the subject from the second and third sentences of the passage, which disturbs textual coordinates and issues an implicit challenge to reader assumptions about their situation in relation to the events described, as the ambiguous auxiliary verb forms which begin both sentences resist the possibility of distinguishing between first and third person. In this way, the reader's situation shifts towards the place inhabited by Irene, merging their respective viewpoints until the subsequent paragraph break, which asserts the process of textual transfer. With the sudden focus on the familiar yet estranged object of the gaze, who stands alone in a sentence stripped of verb and agency, the reader inhabits the place of Irene, as her self-image fractures into a series of facial parts. As the strange gaze takes in the dislocated eye, mouth and nose, the fragments are reconstituted as an estranged Other, which results in a moment of disembodiment, doubling and disassociation. The moment of looking at the official photograph might therefore be understood to figure a sudden recognition of those othering processes inherent to power structures that

establish their control through the monitoring of individuals and the production of groups of insiders and outsiders. As Irene prepares to leave her country of origin, the narrative vision of the dictator trampling on her summer blouses compounds a sense of her precariousness as someone living under relentless state surveillance.

In those chapters set in West Berlin, the strange narrative gaze records everyday scenes from the city's backstreets and second-hand shops, at one point describing a flea market as '[...] einer der vielen, von der Stadt vergessene Orte, wo sich die Armut tarnte als Geschäft' (*R*, p. 68) in a rare instance of explicit critique of the free market economy. For the most part, Irene is observed amongst other impoverished subjects on the fringes of society:

Im Übergangsheim waren alle Plätze belegt. Irene wohnte im Asylantenheim. Es lag in der Flottenstraße. Die Flottenstraße war eine Sackgasse.

Der Bahndamm lag auf der einen Straßenseite. Die Kaserne auf der anderen Seite.

Die Flottenstraße hatte die Härte der großen Häfen, der Eisenstangen, die sich in der Spiegelung des Wassers verdoppelten.

Auf dem Bahndamm rosteten die stillgelegten Gleise. [...]

Die Kaserne war ein Backsteingebäude. Hatte zwei Stockwerke. Schien doch zu hoch, wegen der roten Steine. Die eine Hälfte gehörte der Polizei. Die andere Hälfte war ein Asylantenheim. [...]

Die Kleider waren in der Flottenstraße Almosen. Zwischen Hals und Schultern klaffte das Tuch.

Irene kannte die billigen Schuhe aus den Kisten der Supermärkte. Sie hatte Männer und Frauen gesehen, die sich drängten und in den Kisten

wühlten. Und Kinder dazwischen, die ihre Mütter und Väter wegziehen  
wollten. Und weinten. (*R*, p. 30)

In a discussion of the novel that foregrounds its status as a story of migration that compiles everyday scenes without sketching any kind of development, Sigrid Grün interprets the home on Flottenstraße as ‘ein Symbol für das Leben der Flüchtlinge in der Bundesrepublik’, highlighting the dead-end character of the street that lies between abandoned railway tracks.<sup>46</sup> Sanna Schulte concurs with Grün’s symbolic reading, suggesting that the militarised character of the scene where police and soldiers dominate the streetscape is to be interpreted as a comment on Irene’s ongoing persecution.<sup>47</sup> Such universalising interpretations, however, can themselves be seen to strip the female migrant of agency by relegating her to a permanently excluded other of the system. Instead, it is precisely the strange everyday detail of the scene that militates against any simplified symbolic interpretation. Despite the fact that there are few rooms or resources going spare, West Berlin appears emptied of human presence and contact. Müller’s prose gives stark articulation to those everyday juridical and economic exclusions that isolate and contain the solitary female migrant who lives in a building shared with the West Berlin police. The short sentences provide a matter-of-fact summary of the bleak situation; the pared-down narrative style is stripped of adjectives and its sentences are often missing the subjects of verbs, which compounds the impression of stasis and struggle for human agency. As Sabine Egger has highlighted, classical tropes of the journey – the street, railway tracks and ports – are presented in unconventional terms as disused and blocked off.<sup>48</sup> Müller’s language and imagery thus reduplicate the state of disconnectedness in which Irene finds herself, living in temporal suspension as she awaits a decision from the immigration authorities.

Notably, references to others and othering can be seen to occur at points in the narrative when expression is sought for experiences of disassociation explicitly related

to the structures and mechanisms of a given political order. In the opening lines of the novel, for example, the attempt to name a militarised border zone marked by radar screens and soldiers provokes the first of many critical references to ‘das andere Land’. Similarly, in Berlin, fleeting allusion to the little cloud that passes over the German-German border permits implicit comment on the artificiality of the political divide: ‘Eine Wolke war dünn und zerbrochen. Sie kam aus dem anderen Teil der Stadt. Aus dem anderen Staat herüber’ (*R*, p. 32). The choice of the same descriptor to refer to both East-West and inner-German divisions points towards shared othering practices through which apparently opposing political orders construct their self-definitions. Throughout the narrative, textual links are established between West Berlin and the anonymous country Irene left behind; grimy locations in the West are portrayed in comparable terms to the drinking dens and comfortless rooms that Irene frequents at the beginning of the narrative and the same weeds grow on Berlin wasteland (*R*, p. 68). As in Özdamar’s text where the narrator makes repeated reference to her surprise that the East and West parts of the city experience the same weather conditions, Irene contemplates the cloud (*R*, p. 32) and swifts - or ‘Mauersegler’ (*R*, p. 130) – that sail freely over the Wall, gesturing towards a natural state which shows up the artificiality and man-made character of the political divide that defines human experience in the city. The relational mode of each narrative establishes connections and contrasts without providing explicit commentary. The Wall features obliquely in the text; its presence is acknowledged without being endowed with symbolic significance. Rather in its banal everydayness, the Wall stands in the background, contributing to the sense of containment in the city, as well to the unreality of a political system that lends the strange scene the character of a theatre set. As critics such as Moray McGowan have pointed out, Müller’s account goes beyond the re-inscription of straightforward ideological binaries precisely through the complex web of relations that the narrative establishes between West Berlin and Communist Romania:

Instead of a complacent polarity that views Berlin as a microcosm for the encounter of two systems, *Reisende* constructs complex patterns of parallel and difference between West Berlin and the East European dictatorship, and, within these patterns, it constructs moments that resist resolution altogether.<sup>49</sup>

McGowan offers convincing close readings of the richly ambivalent character of Müller's prose in a wide-ranging chapter concerned with the symbiotic relationship between city and self in the novel. His analysis, however, omits to reflect on the wider significance of the parallelism at work throughout the text and, instead, suggests – rather reductively – that 'Müller replaces one predictable dichotomy – the East-West binary, with another, less predictable though perhaps no less schematic one, that between the city [...] and the state', as though West Berlin could somehow be divorced from the wider political order of the Federal Republic.

Rather than searching for predictable binaries in the novel, it seems crucial to acknowledge the text's more complex commentary on societies of control and their mechanisms, which consistently reflects a web of power relations from which there is no escape. It is especially in her interviews with officials from the Federal Intelligence Service that Irene experiences a strong sense of *déjà vu*, as she recalls past interrogations in the material features of the West German official's wardrobe, demeanour and speech patterns:

Der Beamte trug einen dunklen Anzug, wie Irene sie kannte aus dem anderen Land. Die Farbe zwischen braun und grau. Nur der Schatten hatte diese Farbe. Und das Blauweiß hatten nur die Hemden, die zum Schatten gehörten. Lassen Sie das Differenzieren vorläufig meine Sorge sein. Dafür werde ich schließlich bezahlt. Auch die Haltung des Kopfes, das Gesicht halb im Profil, ein wenig nach unten gewandt,

kannte Irene. Das Kinn immer knapp über der Schulter, ohne sie beim Sprechen zu berühren. (*R*, p. 27)

Here, Müller's strange gaze suggests the extreme anonymity of interrogation in which the official becomes a mere mouthpiece of interchangeable systems, signalled in his narrative erasure as the agent of speech. Instead he is figured in material terms as the blind spot at which a certain type of clothing, formulaic turns of phrase and contrived gestures converge. Brief comparison of this passage with a more straightforwardly biographical account of Müller's own experiences of interrogation by the Federal Intelligence Service in her later text *Cristina und ihre Attrappe* (2009) further underlines the fictional achievement of the strange narrative gaze:

Hinter der nächsten Tür, beim BND, war der Empfang noch schroffer. Heute weiß ich warum. Der Verleumdungsplan der Securitate ging auf: "Hatten Sie mit dem dortigen Geheimdienst zu tun?" Meine Antwort: "Er mit mir, das ist ein Unterschied", beeindruckte den Beamten nicht. "Lassen Sie das meine Unterscheidung sein, dafür werde ich schließlich bezahlt", sagte er. Und: "Wenn Sie einen Auftrag haben, können Sie es jetzt noch sagen." Während alle anderen dieses Büro nach ein paar Minuten mit einem Unbedenklichkeitsstempel verlassen konnten, wurden Richard Wagner und ich mehrere Tage gemeinsam und einzeln verhört.<sup>50</sup>

Whilst the two texts detail strikingly similar interrogations, it is the displaced literary mode adopted in *Reisende* that evokes the dissolution of the individual within the oppressive order. Neglecting the dialogic exchange and referential specificity of the later account in *Cristina* to figure biographical experience in an imagistic scene, Müller's fictional narrative captures the insidious familiarity of the encounter with the official.<sup>51</sup> In its further suggestion that this figure is to be found in both East and West,

*Reisende* makes a wider comment on modern political systems and the transnational character of their social organization. As Patricia Hill Collins points out in her acclaimed intervention on the politics of empowerment in black feminist thought, ‘capitalist and socialist countries alike depend on bureaucracies – this style of organization becomes highly efficient in both reproducing intersecting oppressions and masking their effects. Bureaucracies, regardless of the policies they promote, remain dedicated to disciplining and controlling their workforces and clientele.’<sup>52</sup> In its fictional evocation of everyday oppression in West Berlin, *Reisende auf einem Bein* establishes a means of making links and connections between different forms of coercion and exclusion experienced by Irene and those around her. Clearly Irene – as someone who can both speak the language and apply for German citizenship in the FRG – enjoys certain rights and privileges unavailable to other migrants. But the achievement of the novel is to be located in its sustained – and highly political – refusal to render Irene a representative figure or social type. Rather by focusing on the material experience of West Berlin, the novel works to undermine easy distinctions and to suggest the ambiguous realities of Irene’s situation, where spatial and temporal boundaries blur and the displaced female migrant’s experience instead offers a surface onto which intersecting oppressions – political, territorial, juridical, economic – may begin to be mapped.

It seems no coincidence that it is the queer relationship with Thomas, a bisexual man who sleeps with Irene, which offers the context for a rare instance of explicit commentary on Irene’s understanding of the difference between East and West. Throughout the text Irene interacts with three male figures who at times are presented as interchangeable, Franz, Stefan and Thomas, yet it is Thomas with whom she appears most intimate.<sup>53</sup> Referring to Thomas as a prefiguration of Leo Auberg in *Atemschaukel* (2009), Karin Bauer has suggested that Müller’s writing constructs homosexuality as ‘an alternative third position that breaks open the binaries of gender and exchange.’<sup>54</sup>



With Thomas, Irene appears able to articulate her sense of impasse when, towards the end of the novel, she describes to him the difference between the two social orders that she has experienced:

In dem anderen Land, sagte Irene, hab ich verstanden, was die Menschen so kaputtmacht. Die Gründe lagen auf der Hand. Es hat sehr weh getan, täglich die Gründe zu sehn. [...] Und hier, sagte Irene. Ich weiß, es gibt Gründe. Ich kann sie nicht sehn. Es tut weh, täglich die Gründe nicht zu sehn. (*R*, pp. 138-39)

In these lines, a tension between different forms of hegemony finds articulation, which might simultaneously shed light on the strange literary mode devised in the text. Everyday experience of totalitarianism has made Irene sensitive to hidden power structures and their human consequences, which is further reflected in her simultaneously intimate and distrustful exchanges with Thomas. The textual refusal to identify causal relations responsible for the damage forms a further acknowledgment of the insidious character of their invisible stranglehold and influence on aspects of existence, which cannot, in any straightforward sense, be named or counted. Instead, the relational mode of the narrative establishes connections and contrasts without providing explicit commentary. The exchanges between Irene and Thomas identify a shared fear related to the experience of Eastern dictatorship which is communicated and understood in corporeal terms:

Ich kenne die Könige des Ostens, sagte Irene. Ich habe Angst. Und du hast Angst, du kennst sie nicht.

Manchmal, sagte Thomas, wenn du redest und mit den Händen zeigst, was du erzählst, kenn ich sie auch.

Vielleicht sind es dann die Könige des Westens, wenn ich von den Königen des Ostens hier erzähl. (*R*, p. 140)

The lines point towards the relativity of spatial demarcations and categorizations, as well as the transmutability of systems of oppression. Following Irene's comments, Thomas suggests that the movement of people through transit spaces in the city enables an appreciation of the material potential of human existence to break beyond rational constraints:

Thomas hob den Blick: Manchmal könnte man meinen, wir haben keinen Verstand. Und brauchen auch keinen. Nur sinnliche Kraft, um zu leben. Weißt du, wo man das merkt, auf windigen Straßen, auf Bahnsteigen im Freien und auf Brücken. Dort bewegen die Menschen sich so schamlos und leicht, daß sie den Himmel fast berühren. Manchmal sehe ich, sagte Irene, daß es den Menschen, die an mir vorbeigehen, gut geht. Sie haben kein Ziel, nur sinnliche Schritte treiben sie durch die Straßen. Die übertragen sich. Luft schlägt mir über das Gesicht. Es ist mir, als rauschten die Blätter aller Bäume zwischen meinen Schenkeln. Ich werde unsicher. Wer weiß, was aus mir wird, wenn es mir gut geht. (*R*, p. 141)

This articulation of potentiality generated by the material movement through the city, in which steps – not human subjects – take on self-perpetuating agency might be understood to gesture towards forms of becoming that are closely aligned with the position of the migrant as a dynamic force for social change. Throughout the narrative, Müller's strange depiction of everyday Romania and Berlin can be seen to lay bare the debilitating othering mechanisms through which social orders exclude individuals in states of static containment. In the counter-image of people streaming through the city

on foot, a figuration of what Thomas Nail terms ‘pedetic social force’ might be identified:

Pedetic motion is the force of the foot – to walk, to run, to leap, to dance.

As a social force of motion, it is defined by its autonomy and self-motion.

It is different from the social forces of centripetal, centrifugal, tensional, and elastic power because it has neither center nor surplus. Instead its movement is irregular and unpredictable. It is turbulent. It does not expand by social expulsion but by inclusive social transformation.<sup>55</sup>

As true for the first-person account of passing through animated Berlin in Özdamar’s text, Müller’s novel is consistently preoccupied with charting the implications of the migrant’s non-automatic movement throughout the city, establishing connections and contrasts without providing explicit commentary. In the novel’s closing lines, unenthusiastic about the letter informing her that she has been awarded German citizenship, Irene reflects on those moving through the city: ‘Menschen die nicht mehr wußten, ob sie nun in diesen Städten Reisende in dünnen Schuhen waren. Oder Bewohner mit Handgepäck. Irene lag im Dunkeln und dachte an die Stadt. Irene weigerte sich, an Abschied zu denken’ (*R*, p. 176). With this ambivalent counter-vision to national citizenship, Müller’s text can be seen to conclude with an unsteady of established political categories and subject positions that at least partially valorises mobility and transit over more conventional modes of belonging. In this respect, the novel can be seen to share Thomas Nail’s project to ‘reinterpret the migrant first and foremost according to its own defining feature: its movement.’<sup>56</sup> Rejecting dominant conceptualization of the migrant as failed citizen, Nail’s study sets out to develop a political theory that ‘allows us to *diagnose the capacity of the migrant to create an alternative* to social expulsion.’<sup>57</sup> Throughout the text, Irene’s interactions with those around her reflect the multiple levels on which expulsion and othering take place –

political, territorial, juridical and economic. However, in the strange vision of precarious arrival and multiple belonging on the final pages of the novel, which carries particular resonance in our contemporary era of mass-flight and -displacement, the narrative might also tentatively be seen to cast migration as the primary phenomenon by which new societies come into being.

In the years immediately following German reunification, tensions towards foreigners and migrant communities in both former East and West Germany grew rapidly. There were notorious outbreaks of violence in the early 1990s when Turkish homes were firebombed in Mölln and Solingen, and Roma and Vietnamese residents were attacked in Rostock.<sup>58</sup> Andreas Huyssen gives a striking interpretation of this growing tide of xenophobia as ‘a complex displacement of an inner-German problematic’, suggesting that old hostilities relating to ‘the other Germany’ were projected onto non-Germans.<sup>59</sup> In calling for a new democratic understanding of German national identity, Huyssen underlines that ‘[n]ation would have to be understood as an ongoing process of negotiating identity and heterogeneity outside of the parameters of the ethnic myth and including all those foreigners who live and work in Germany’.<sup>60</sup> This article demonstrates that it is the work of cultural production that permits expression of political entanglements, lived realities and social possibilities where conventional forms of language falter. At a public forum entitled *Berlin – tolerant und weltoffen* that was held in the reunified city during April 1993, Herta Müller delivered a speech that challenged popular conception of tensions between East and West as being somehow particular to the German national situation:

Wie Ost- und Westdeutsche einander begegnen, ist keine Folge der  
Vereinigung, ist so alt wie die erste Flucht von Ost nach West. Was  
man am Lamentieren im Osten und an der Überheblichkeit im Westen  
als *typisch deutsch* bezeichnet, ist anderswo typisch ungarisch, wenn

sich wunschzugehörige Ungarn aus Siebenbürgen und “selbstverständliche Ungarn” aus Ungarn begegnen. Und wenn sich Rumänen aus Rumänien und Moldawien begegnen, ist es typisch rumänisch. Der Umgang zwischen Ost- und Westdeutschen ist so *typisch* wie überall, wo es zwischen zwei Gleichsprachigen ein Gefälle gibt. *Typisch deutsch* ist dieser Umgang nicht.<sup>61</sup>

Müller’s words highlight the inevitable relation between apparently stable categories of identity and those conflicts that ensue in the face of unequal power relations and material conditions. The oppositional subject positions based on territorial boundaries and borders are acknowledged as universally problematic but – in the language of the public speech – they are presented as irresolvable binaries tied to concrete historical and territorial contingencies. In both Özdamar and Müller’s prose narratives, however, it is the strange literary gaze on everyday experience that moves towards a linguistic overthrow of these categories. Set in the period immediately before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the two texts pre-empt Andreas Huyssen’s urgent call to reconceive the city through the lens of migration. Through the portrayal of everyday migrant experience in Cold War Berlin, the texts enable implicit critical questioning of the city’s infamous symbolic status as the fractured meeting point of East and West. Whilst Müller casts her strange gaze on West Berlin to offer an ambivalent portrait of its status as a free enclave, Özdamar fashions a first-person vision of animated East Berlin. Coming from different sides of the Cold War divide, the two writers configure the respective halves of the divided city as ambivalent spaces of displacement and renewal. Using innovative textual means, the works indicate the relative and arbitrary character of spatial alignments and national allegiances. Each narrative can be seen to undo common understandings of the migrant as a character type or fixed identity and, instead, to follow Thomas Nail in figuring their protagonists in terms of ‘a mobile social position or spectrum that people

move into and out of under certain social conditions of mobility.’<sup>62</sup> The focus on material aspects of everyday experience enables entangled histories to be traced, and intersecting oppressions to be mapped on a minute level. By suggesting experiential affinities between figures on either side of the East-West divide, the works develop displaced aesthetic modes which challenge dominant conceptual frameworks and gesture towards possibilities for solidarity and forms of perceptible community in the reunified capital as yet unthought and unimagined.

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<sup>2</sup> Herta Müller, *Der Fremde Blick oder Das Leben ist ein Furz in der Laterne*, Göttingen 1999, pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2009/muller-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2009/muller-bio.html) (accessed 15 January 2018).

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bild.de/politik/inland/fluechtling/hoert-uns-zu-42375908.bild.html> (accessed 15 January 2018); <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05gpzs8> (accessed 15 January 2018); <https://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article160039053/Die-Angstherrscher-beherrschen-das-Angstvolk.html> (accessed 15 January 2018).

<sup>5</sup> ‘The Nobel Prize in Literature 2009 - Press Release.’ *Nobelprize.org*. Nobel Media AB 2013. Web. 24 May 2014.  
[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/2009/press.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/2009/press.html) (accessed 15 January 2018).

<sup>6</sup> C.f. Norbert Otto Eke, “‘Macht nichts, macht nichts, sagte ich mir, macht nichts’”: Herta Müller’s Romanian Novels’, in *Herta Müller*, ed. Brigid Haines and Lyn Marven,

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Oxford 2013, pp. 99-116; Sneja Gunew, 'Estrangement as pedagogy', in *After Cosmopolitanism*, ed. Rosi Braidotti, Patrick Hanafin, and Bolette Blaagaard, Abingdon and New York 2013, pp. 132-148; Lyn Marven, 'An Alien Gaze', *Red Pepper* (2010). <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/an-alien-gaze/> (accessed 15 January 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Herta Müller, *Reisende auf einem Bein*, Berlin 1989.

<sup>8</sup> Emine Sevgi Özdamar, 'Mein Berlin', in *Der Hof im Spiegel*, Cologne 2001. Further references appear in the text as *MB*.

<sup>9</sup> Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler, 'Gespräch mit Herta Müller', in *Herta Müller*, ed. Brigid Haines, Cardiff 1998, pp. 14-24 (p. 20).

<sup>10</sup> Emine Sevgi Özdamar, 'Mein Berlin', in *Der Hof im Spiegel*, Cologne 2001.

Further references appear in the text as *MB*.

<sup>11</sup> <http://archiv.bachmannpreis.orf.at/bachmannpreis.eu/de/information/30/> (accessed 15 January 2018).

<sup>12</sup> Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, New York and London, 1995, p. 79.

<sup>13</sup> Andreas Huyssen, 'Diaspora and Nation: Migration into Other Pasts,' *New German Critique*, 88/4 (2003): 147–64 (151).

<sup>14</sup> Leslie Adelson, 'The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature and Memory Work', *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory* 77/4 (2002), 326-338 (327).

<sup>15</sup> Leslie Adelson, *The Turkish Turn in Contemporary German Literature: Toward a New Critical Grammar of Migration*, New York and Basingstoke, 2005, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Littler, 'Intimacy and Affect in Turkish-German Writing: Emine Sevgi Özdamar's "The Courtyard in the Mirror"', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29/3 (2008), 331-345 (334-5).

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- <sup>17</sup> Margaret Littler, 'Machinic Agency and the Powers of the False in Emine Sevgi Özdamar's *Die Brücke vom Goldenen Horn* (1998)', *Oxford German Studies*, 45/3 (2016), 290-301 (292).
- <sup>18</sup> Littler, 'Machinic Agency', 293.
- <sup>19</sup> Thomas Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant*, Stanford 2015, p. 225.
- <sup>20</sup> Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant*, p. 235.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>22</sup> Liesbeth Minnaard, *New Germans, New Dutch: Literary Interventions*, Amsterdam 2008, p. 74.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- <sup>26</sup> Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, pp. 55-56.
- <sup>27</sup> Yasemin Yildiz, *Beyond the Mother Tongue: the postmonolingual condition*, New York 2012, p. 146.
- <sup>28</sup> Claudia Breger, "'Meine Herren spielt in meinem Gesicht ein Affe?'" Strategien der Mimikry in Texen von Emine S. Özdamar und Yoko Tawada', in *AufBrüche. Kulturelle Produktionen von Migrantinnen, Schwarzen und jüdischen Frauen in Deutschland*, ed. Cathy Gelbin, Kader Konuk, and Peggy Piesche, Frankfurt a.M. 2000, pp. 30-59.
- <sup>29</sup> Minnaard, *New Germans*, p. 80.
- <sup>30</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma II. The Time-Image*, ed. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, London and New York 2013, p. 18.
- <sup>31</sup> Deleuze, *Cinéma II*, p. 19.
- <sup>32</sup> Littler, 'Machinic Agency and the Powers of the False', 292.
- <sup>33</sup> Deleuze, *Cinéma II*, p. 19.
- <sup>34</sup> Herta Müller, *Traveling on One Leg*, trans. Valentina Glajar and Andre LeFevere, Evanston, Illinois 1998.



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<sup>35</sup> ‘[...] eine Strafexpedition in die lebensgeschichtlich längst bewältigten frühen Fünfziger.’ <http://pdf.zeit.de/1989/46/test-the-west.pdf> (accessed 15 January 2018).

<sup>36</sup> Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler, ‘Herta Müller, *Reisende auf einem Bein* (1989)’, in *Contemporary Women’s Writing in German: Changing the Subject*, Oxford 2004, p. 102.

<sup>37</sup> Haines and Littler, ‘Herta Müller’, p. 116.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 113.

<sup>39</sup> Herta Müller, *Reisende auf einem Bein*, Frankfurt a.M. 2010, pp. 146-47. Further references appear in the text as *R*.

<sup>40</sup> Deleuze, *Cinéma II*, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> Deleuze, *Cinéma II*, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> Deleuze, *Cinéma II*, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Sheringham, *Everyday Life*, p. 337.

<sup>44</sup> Michael Sheringham, *Everyday Life: Theories and Practices from Surrealism to the Present*, Oxford 2006, p. 334.

<sup>45</sup> For readings of the engagement with trauma in the novel, see especially: Brigid Haines, “‘The Unforgettable Forgotten’: The Traces of Trauma in Herta Müller’s *Reisende auf einem Bein*”, *GLL*, 55/3 (2002), 266-81; Lyn Marven, *Body and Narrative in Contemporary Literatures in German: Herta Müller, Libuše Moníková, and Kerstin Hensel*, Oxford 2005, pp. 53-114.

<sup>46</sup> ‘Die Erzählung *Reisende auf einem Bein* ist eine Migrationsgeschichte, die sich jenseits einer Identitätssuche entwickelt. Eine Episode reiht sich an die nächste – Alltagsszenen -, ohne dass sich eine Entwicklung abzeichnen würde. [...] Das Flüchtlingslager in der Flottenstraße scheint ein Symbol für das Leben der Flüchtlinge in der Bundesrepublik zu sein. Die Straße ist eine Sackgasse zwischen stillgelegten Bahngleisen.’ Sigrid Grün, ‘*Fremd in einzelnen Dingen.*’ *Fremdheit und Alterität bei Herta Müller*, Stuttgart 2010, p. 101.

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<sup>47</sup> Sanna Schulte, *Bilder der Erinnerung. Über Trauma und Erinnerung in der literarischen Konzeption von Herta Müllers Reisende auf einem Bein und Atemschaukel*, Würzburg 2015, p. 29.

<sup>48</sup> Sabine Egger, 'Der Raum des Fremden als "fahrender Zug" in Herta Müllers *Reisende auf einem Bein*', *Zeitschrift für interkulturelle Germanistik*, 7/2 (2016), 35-54 (44).

<sup>49</sup> Moray McGowan, "'Stadt und Schädel', 'Reisende', and 'Verlorene': City, Self, and Survival in Herta Müller's *Reisende auf einem Bein*", in *Herta Müller*, ed. Brigid Haines and Lyn Marven, Oxford 2013, pp. 64-83 (p. 67).

<sup>50</sup> Herta Müller, *Cristina und ihre Attrappe*, Göttingen 2009, p. 39.

<sup>51</sup> For an account of the rewriting and revisions to *Cristina und ihre Attrappe*, see: Lyn Marven, 'Life and Literature: Autobiography, Referentiality, and Intertextuality in Herta Müller's Work', in *Herta Müller*, ed. Brigid Haines and Lyn Marven, Oxford 2013, pp. 204-23 (p. 216).

<sup>52</sup> Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought. Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment*, New York and London 2000, p. 281.

<sup>53</sup> C.f. Haines and Littler, 'Herta Müller', p. 115.

<sup>54</sup> Karin Bauer, 'Gender and the Sexual Politics of Exchange in Herta Müller's Prose', in *Herta Müller*, ed. Brigid Haines and Lyn Marven, Oxford 2013, pp. 153-71 (p. 155-6).

<sup>55</sup> Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant*, p. 125.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>58</sup> <http://www.bpb.de/politik/hintergrund-aktuell/161980/brandanschlag-in-solingen-28-05-2013> (accessed 15 January 2018).

<sup>59</sup> Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*, p. 82.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

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<sup>61</sup> Herta Müller, 'Und noch erschrickt unser Herz', in *Hunger und Seide. Essays*, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1995, pp. 19-38 (p. 27).

<sup>62</sup> Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant*, p. 235.