Diverging Memories? Durs Grünbein's Mnemonic Topographies and the Future of the German Past

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While walking the streets of Berlin these days, one can clearly observe the last visible remains of WWII and the Cold War years gradually vanishing from sight: bullet holes, smoke-blackened buildings, and rubble give way to restored classicist palaces, while new buildings ornamented with steel and glass emerge on every corner. While the war and the years that followed remain, in Reinhart Koselleck's term, an always-present *Zeitschicht* of Berlin's visual palimpsest, they nevertheless seem to drift into oblivion.[1] Only rarely does the lurking past shimmer through the facades of the old-new German capital, calling to mind the interdependency linking its past, present, and possible future. Berlin's topography is currently being rewritten according to the city's central role in Germany's new self-image and its unique position in Europe's reawakening middle.

Yet, Berlin's new topography—the visual result of fierce artistic and political debates—represents only one result of the much larger process of what Andreas Huyssen has called "rethinking German nation," or, as I would phrase it, discussing alternative future German narratives, that is historical, political, and cultural conceptions and representations of the German past (74). Indeed, the disputes over the future of the German history haven't ceased for a moment since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

With the changing political map, the growing distance from the era of National Socialism, and the increasing integration of those born after 1945 into the cultural and public arena, the chain of public disputes over alternative narratives of the past seems unbreakable: The quarrel over the Gulf War and Germany's responsibility for helping to create Sadam Hussein's war machine was followed by the debate over Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. The argument surrounding the publication of the "Black Book" of Communist atrocities paved the way for the continuous dispute over the so-called "Wehrmacht crimes exhibition." The seemingly endless commemorating events on the fiftieth anniversary of the end of WWII in and around 1995 were followed by the thorny question of whether Germans in uniform should return to the Balkans, this time as protectors of human rights. After the ferocious conflict over Martin Walser's attack on the "instrumentalisation" of Holocaust memory in his 1998 Peace Prize speech, came the dispute over Peter Sloterdijk's "Menschenpark"—did he *really* plead, in a post-Nietzschean manner, for the breeding of nonviolent human beings? That was soon to be succeeded by the recent controversies over German *Leitkultur* and the caesura *1968*.[2]

Indeed, all these debates—and I certainly didn't mention all of them—can be explained within their immediate contexts. Yet they simultaneously pose variations on one overarching question: namely, how to tell about the past in the future, and what discursive consequences each and every story, each and every history, would have.[3]

One debate in particular, though—over the planned Holocaust Memorial in Berlin—seems to have posed this question more than others and thus has attracted the most public attention in Germany and abroad.[4] The reason for this lies at hand: Once built, the German national Holocaust Memorial in Berlin will visually embody the symbolic space of the past, of the Holocaust, in the nation's self-image.

To be sure, what shaped the course of this intense conflict was not solely the issue of which of the mostly pretentious proposals should be realized. Rather, the debate was fueled by the kind of discursive suggestions that different artistic choices would have. The proposed location of the memorial was of crucial importance in this respect. It was clear that the erection of the memorial at the corner of Ebert and Behrens Streets—in the heart of German political and cultural activity—denotes, as James Young pointed out, the relationship between the postreunification German nation to the memory of the Nazi crimes (Young 7, 184–223). Furthermore, I would argue, it implies the topographic inscription of the Holocaust into the forefront of the German state, its symbolic integration into the heart of any future German narrative. Indeed, no visitor, no busy pedestrian, would be able to marvel over the uplifted face of the city without confronting the decisive event, the marked caesura of modern German history. The so-called *Denkmalstreit* was thus fought primarily over the topographical-visual presence of Germany's traumatic past.[5]

Bearing this in mind might help us understand why, in 1997, at one of the heights of this blazing debate, the distinguished Jewish architect and critic Salomon Korn stated that this dispute clearly reflects the divided memory of the past shared, or rather not shared, by Germans and Jews:

> Noch gibt es in Deutschland eine Zweigeteilte Erinnerung an den Holocaust. Die überlebenden Opfer und deren Nachkommen müssen als "passiv" Betroffene der planmäßigen deutschen Ausrottungspolitik naturgemäß eine andere Erinnerung haben an das nationalsozialistische Jahrtausendverbrechen haben als die "aktiv" betroffenen "Nachfahren der Täter." Das hatte sich in der Debatte um das "Holocaust Mahnmal" deutlich gezeigt. (199–200)[6]

Salomon Korn uses the debate over the topographies of memory as a diagnostic device to conclude that the historic dynamic categorically separating Germans and Jews has hardly changed since 1945. He suggests that the radically divergent historical experiences of victims and perpetrators were followed by the so-called "second" and "third" generations' barely negotiable viewpoints on the past. His judgment is rhetorically underlined by the different adjectives given to the Germans and to the Jews: Both the victims and their descendents are "passive," while both the perpetrators and their children and grandchildren are "active."

Although no one is likely to question that much still differentiates the ways in which Germans and Jews tell about and commemorate the past, I would like in what follows to question Salomon Korn's implied conviction that the collective repression of the Shoah in German discourse during the 1950s, 1960s, and much of the 1970s continues up to the present in what appears to be a metahistorical manner. In idiom and tone, Korn seems to follow Gershom Scholem's notion that any future rapprochement between Germans and Jews will be contingent upon accepting the *Abgrund* dividing their historical memories.[7] Yet, Korn seems reluctant to admit that anything had changed since Scholem delivered his 1966 lecture, *Deutsche und Juden*.

Rather than pointing to the quite obvious fact that the *Denkmalstreit* was fought across the fault lines dividing Germans and Jews, I will revisit Korn's notion of

geteilte Erinnerung from the perspective of contemporary German literature. Thus, instead of analyzing the architectural topographies of memory, their discursive premises, and their implications, I will examine the poetic figuration of WWII as it is inscribed in the poetic figuration of time and in poetic topographies.

As the work of the poet Durs Grünbein shows, he and other significant authors of his generation do not tend to dissolve one memory at the expense of another. Rather, Grünbein's poetry, most significantly in his topographic-poetic figuration of Berlin and his hometown, Dresden, signifies his—and his generation's—attempt to find the historical complexity of National Socialism and its aftermath to be an adequate idiom, and thereby—consciously or unconsciously—grant to the historically different memories of Germans and Jews a fragile, yet shared poetic space.

I. "Protokoll der inneren Blicke"

Born in Dresden in 1962 and raised in the GDR, Durs Grünbein belongs, as Heiner Müller artfully remarked, to a generation of authors with no "Vaterland" and no "Muttersprache," but to the "Untoten des kalten Krieges."[8] Like other significant German poets who began publishing in the late 1980s—Ralf Rothmann, Barbara Köhler, Raoul Schrott, Marcel Beyer, and Hans-Ulrich Treichel—Grünbein's poetry marks a decisive shift away from the poetics of dichotomy between engaged literature and aesthetic autonomy so typical of modern German poetry since the 1930s.

Similar to many of his contemporaries, Grünbein is no longer committed to the *poésie pure Artistik* of Gottfried Benn and his admirers or to the enlightened political idiom and tone and slant-lyrical style of German poetry of the 1970s and most of the '80s. In the footsteps of his mentor, Heiner Müller, who equated utopia with terror and the Enlightenment with catastrophe, Grünbein names his allergies as his most decisive poetic tool. He is allergic to every form of propaganda, every use of dichotomies such as "East" and "West," allergic to all utopian hopes.[9] Indeed, Grünbein and other younger poets of his "post-historicist" generation no longer seek to understand history with the help of ideology as a meaning-generating entity amid all that is meaningless.[10] Rather, their writing reflects a resistance to any overreaching sense presumably concealed in history, a farewell altogether to history as an ultimate narrative entailing moral lessons or implying political imperatives.

Grünbein's poems are rhetorically opulent, elegantly mixing biological terminology, mythological narratives, fine art, dream analysis, geography, and philosophical reflections. Grünbein shies neither from combining high and colloquial forms of language nor from making use of and transgressing every possible metrical form. His extraordinary poetic scope soon earned him a considerable reputation: After the publication of his critically acclaimed *Grauzone morgens* (1988), *Schädelbasislektion* (1991), and *Falten und Fallen* (1994), he was awarded Germany's most distinguished literary honor, the Georg Büchner Prize, in 1995.

Like no other poet of his generation, and in what could be described as a postmodern form of Renaissance aesthetics, Grünbein seeks to bridge the ostensible gap between the body's materiality—the brain and the nervous system—and the realm of poetics.[11] In the footsteps of Georg Büchner, and with a certain resemblance to Gottfried Benn's attempt to wed neurophysiology with poetic Imagism, Grünbein's poetics negotiates between the lyrical word and the nerve cell and seeks to locate the origins of historical images in the brain.[12] Following Büchner, Grünbein asks: "Was ist Geschichte, denkt man sie vom solcherart präzisierten Körper her?" (*Galilei* 79).

Grünbein leaves no room for doubt on his position: Every poetic expression is of physical origin. Poetry is the idiosyncratic manifestation of the brain's most immediate perceptions, impressions, and recollections. Indeed: in neurology lies hidden the poetics of the future (*Galilei* 20). Thinking history from the body leads Grünbein to evoke the Greek poet, Simonides of Ceos, who, according to Cicero, founded mnemonics. Simonides is said to have been the sole survivor of a Thessalian feast that dramatically ended when the ceiling collapsed, burying all participants but Simonides. Since the corpses of the guests were mutilated, Simonides had to rely on the pictorial scheme involuntarily engraved on his memory in order to give an account of the dead. His pictorial-spatial recollection method was the beginning of mnemonics—and of the poetics of memory. In an analogy to Simonides's mnemonics, Grünbein sees the historically informed poetic image as the linguistic expression of all pictorial images unconsciously engraved— qua nerve transmission—in the brain.

According to Grünbein, all poets since Simonides engage in mnemonics insofar as they report, tell, and reconstruct in their work the immediacy and proximity of images physically engraved in their mind. Poetry is thus the encounter with the immediacy of the self (*Selbstbegegnung*); "Der lyrische Text ist ein Protokoll der inneren Blicke" (*Galilei* 33). Indeed, the body determines the poetic mode: behind the semantic order lays anatomy. The poem is hence by no means the result of a self-reflecting, subjective, spiritual entity delegating and organizing images according to aesthetic or ethical principles. Rather, it is the dictate of a singular "Socratic" daemon whose words and images always raise questions, but never delivers answers (*Galilei* 33).

In viewing poetry as the lingual manifestation of the present inner protocol—what Wolfgang Riedel accurately describes as Grünbein's "Poetik der Präsenz" (90)—Grünbein significantly adopts Georg Büchner's distinction between the "*teleologische*" and the "philosophische" methods.[13] Building on Büchner's notion, Grünbein implies that the poet does not remember and thus turn what is remembered into poetry in order not to forget, but rather he or she has a brain constantly perceiving the world, collecting images, and turning them into words, poems.

Yet in light of modernity's calamities —Grünbein significantly adopts the term *Zivilisationsbruch*, Dan Diner's famous metonymy for the Holocaust—poetry is not just the expression of any collected image, combined in a light-hearted, high-modernist manner, the reflection of a Baudelaireian Babylonic heart, but rather the intense expression of "das Babylonische Hirn" (*Galilei* 30–32; Diner, *Zivilisationsbruch*). Contemporary poetry is, as Grünbein claims in an essay in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the remnant of *Vernichtungsorgien*—indeed the product of a highly accurate memory machine as invasive as the eye of an insect. [14]

This memory machine is not just an instrument to rediscover private "gelebter Zeit" (*Galilei* 19), but the expression of archived "mörderischen Akten," the documents of "notorische[r] Inhumanität" (*Galilei* 30). Hence, Grünbein's at times seemingly obsessive occupation with death, decay, and oblivion can be seen as the poetic reflection of a historically fascinated memory machine. A significant section of his work can thus be seen as a poetic attempt to decode and encode different time layers in images such as epitaphs, cadavers, death masks, and organic remains, to set them allegorically, in Reinhart Koselleck's terms, as the material manifestation of a universal historical tectonics, and to give to rapidly flashing historical time, the shade of the absent, yet so present catastrophe, a visual form (Grünbein, *Den Teueren Toten* 7–41; *Das aufgehobene Gesicht* 11–20).

Thus, in the midst of Grünbein's resonant and occasionally overwhelming blend of cultural citations and poetic formalisms, images taken from the experiences of German history—National Socialism, WWII, the Holocaust, and the division of Germany—often take a concrete poetic form. In what is characteristic for Grünbein's poetic breadth, even a common experience as a morning shower serves as a point of departure for an ironic-chilling account of the neural procedure in which the presence of that past is revealed in the memory machine:

> Und morgens schießt aus der Dusche...
> Wasser, was sonst? Rot und Blau
> Steht auf den Hähnen für heiß und Kalt.
> Daß die Haut sich in Streifen
> Abschält, bleibt ein alberner Alptraum.
> Kein Dorn im Handtuch, kein Blut
> An den Fliesen—das Röcheln im Ausguß
> Heißt Hygiene, nicht Tod.
> Und ob Seife noch immer aus Knochen
> Gemacht wird, der Schaum
> Auf den Handlinien trockend, sagt nichts.
> Ängstlich belebt, an den Harren
> Herbeigezerrt, stirbt ein kurzer Verdacht.
> (*Falten* 14)

Alongside the shuddering effect caused by the historical references—the death by gas disguised as a shower, the use of human skin and fat in the production of lamps and soap, and the allusion to human remains—what strikes the reader of this poem is its interweaving of images taken from the seemingly distant catastrophe with those of the most immediate, if not trivial now. The poem, in Grünbein's own view an egoistic daydream and a sarcastic opponent of critical philosophy ("Wiedergänger vernunftkritischer Philosophie" and "Tiefenphysiologie," qtd. in Hidenreich 47), aims neither at poetic representation nor at a commemoration of the Holocaust, nor does it try to illuminate or advise on "proper" kinds of memory. Yet this chain of images hardly introduces an arbitrary pictorial game. Rather, it boldly records the brain's inherent fusion of disparate visual images that have become a part of modernity's collective archive of images. The brain's hallucinatory, nightmarish suspicion that the past might suddenly return is confronted in the final lines with the German idiom "an den Haaren Herbeigezerrt," "far-fetched," which—while literally referring to the human remains of the exterminated—points to the fact that this hallucination, based on the neural procedure of collecting, saving, and merging images, has nothing on which to rely. The crime lies after all in the past.

Significantly, in this chilling analytical account, the lyrical "I" remains absent. Precisely because the poem is not centered in an always already humanized "I," it speaks in a universal mode: No German self is depicted here, no concrete poet poses himself in a self-victimizing manner before the lens of his poetic camera. Rather, the same neural procedure, the same "suspicion," can result anywhere, anytime, in modernity's postcatastrophic, post-Holocaust reality. Hence, the poem does not use Holocaust images for sensational aims.[15] Rather, it boldly follows the neural procedure in which sensually conceived images merge with others and become anxiety, "suspicion," poetic words.

II. Mnemonic Spaces: Rome, Berlin, Dresden

Grünbein's poetic figuration of simultaneously existing and moving time layers, of the interdependency of different modes of time in the memory machine, increases noticeably in his most recent volume of poetry, *Nach den Satiren* (1999). On massive word canvases, Grünbein draws scenes from Western civilization's book of history. Yet these are decisively framed by the viewpoint of the poet's time, the time "nach den Satiren," after the bacchanalian feasts, the Caravaggioan scenes resulting from mo-

dernity's dreams and nightmares—indeed, the time after the death of the last grand narrative, the last modern utopia, whose victim, he, the GDR-born poet, was.

Nach den Satiren opens with a cycle of poems entitled "Historien," in which St. Augustine's question, "What is time?" is emphatically echoed: "Nichts was du kennst, ist die Zeit [...]/ Nichts was du siehst, ist die Zeit [...]/ Nichts was du hörst ist die Zeit [...]/Nichts was du fassen kannst, ist sie" (33). Yet, this "Nichts" does not amount to a nihilistic negation of all meaning. In fact, later in this poem, the seemingly abstract, transcendental category "time" becomes the emphatic affirmation of the different modes of time as manifestations of one and the same imminent poetic present:

> Drei Arten Gegenwart sind in dir aufgespart
> Die eine heißt *Gestern*, die andere *Heute* und *Morgen* die dritte. Sie sind alle rege in dir, nur in dir, nirgendwo sonst. (*Nach* 35)

This simultaneity of different time layers in the body's mental and nervous systems corresponds thus to a marked poetic space —the italicized temporal indicators highlight that any temporal differentiation is of linguistic nature—synchronizing dissimilar images and fusing disparate historical moments in one topographic-mnemonic space. Read as a single, cautiously constructed body of work, *Nach den Satiren* offers itself as an impressive allegory of the simultaneity in which all time layers are present in one and the same space: Classical Roman scenes, New York's Avenue of the Americas, the Moscow Zoo, and the West Indian islands merge with Berlin's Landwehrkanal, where Rosa Luxemburg, "Jean d'Arc die Jüdin, die den Aufstand singt," was murdered (66), or with Munich 1923, the scene of Hitler's putsch (67).

The volume's topographic-mnemonic procedure culminates, though, in its central section, the long Berlin poem bearing the book's name, "Nach den Satiren," and in the poem cycle "Europa Nach dem letzten Regen," dedicated to Grünbein's hometown, Dresden. In "Nach den Satiren," the voice of the most powerful of all Roman satiric poets, Juvenal, and that of the contemporary poet unite into one lyrical thou (*du*) strolling during the night and at daybreak through the streets of Berlin, studying the city's constantly shifting and changing time layers.[16] This polysemic Juvenal observes how the city's past rapidly slides into oblivion while a "Pompeyian" sun sets on Berlin's oblivious, non-utopian tomorrow (*Nach* 114). Rome of the first century and Berlin at the end of the second millennium become one poetic-mnemonic space in which the image of self-indulgent Romans, who didn't care when "der Jude verreckte am Kreuz," dissolves into the evoked memory of those Jews sent only recently from Berlin to their death in the east: "Das es doch überall gab, wie die Unschuld, die Schaulust/ Beim Schlachten im Zirkus, wenn die Hirnschalen krachten,/ Das zufriedene Blinzeln, als der Jude verreckte am Kreuz" (*Nach* 95).

In a similar manner, Grünbein's Dresden serves in this volume as a topographic-mnemonic site encoding the European and human conditions in the twentieth century. In "Europa Nach dem letzten Regen," Grünbein turns Max Ernst's famous allegorical painting that depicts Europe after WWI as a posthuman wasteland into a departure point for a poetic journey to Dresden and Germany of the 1940s. In the first parts of the poem, we view Dresden as a pictogram denoting ultimate destruction, loss and, void: "Raumlos, Erinnerung ... und keine Stadt,/ An die Man sich, heimkehrend, halten kann" (*Nach* 143). In another poem in this cycle we read: "Dresden ist lange her," and in yet another poem, dedicated to the poet's grandmother:

[A]us einer Nacht im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert
Flogen Maschinen eine zweite Steinzeit an.
In manchen Kellergrab, ein Höllenwunder,
Fand man verbacken Kind und Frau und Mann.(*Nach* 148)

Like Grünbein's Berlin, what makes Dresden so noteworthy is that it evokes the German catastrophe while clearly observing the memory of the other catastrophe that took place at the same time. The same poem includes both the image of Allied bombers nearing the German city before unloading their deadly devices and—separated by only one line—a hidden reference to the eradicated names of Jews taken from their homes before they were to dissolve into smoke over Europe's sky (*Nach* 107). In Grünbein's fundamental poetic procedure of synchronizing dissimilar images while protocolizing the associative, nonreflected occurrences in the memory machine, Part 8 of "Europa Nach dem letzten Regen" weaves together the catastrophe inscribed in the poetic topography of Dresden with the Holocaust while questioning the very effort to find meaning retroactively in historical narratives. At a decisive point in the section titled "VIII," we read:

Zerissen ist das Blatt vorm Mund.
Geschichte,
Geht mir der Staubwind wirklich nah,
Der alles auslöscht? Und dass man verzichte
Im Namen dessen was geschah

Auf den Vermeer (verbrannt), den Bach (verschollen),
War es das wert? Dass ganze Städte,
Aus denen Züge zur Vernichtung rollten,
Brachflächen wurden an den Ufern Lethes..."(*Nach* 150)

According to the poem's skeptical notion of history as a swift, ever-eradicating "wind," and according to its non-Enlightenment, if not nihilistic rhetoric, no answer is given to the provoking question of whether the destruction of German cities was worthwhile. Indeed, the poem seems to suggest that no overarching lesson, no ultimate judgment about this tormenting question can be reached. Yet what distinguishes this poem and Grünbein's poetry as a whole is precisely its nonreflective mode, its insistence on the temporal and spatial synchronicity of the catastrophe, the way it poetically penetrates the city's constantly present time layers. Hence, even as the poem seems to resist any moral lesson, it significantly merges disparate historical memories: that of the mass murder of Jews deported to the east from German cities and that of the air raids' horrific devastation of the very same cities. This procedure—the poetic evocation of the obviously disparate—can be found repeatedly in Grünbein's work. When he writes, in his essay "Verspätete Züge," on the consequences of modernity Grünbein mentions in one and the same paragraph the precision with which Jews and slaves were deported in trains to the east and the hidden, modernistic background of the mass protest in the GDR of 1989 (*Galilei* 155).

Dresden, the mnemonic space of "Europa Nach dem letzten Regen," uncovers the simultaneity of different time layers, different memories, and thus both amalgamates and keeps apart the image of those who were burned alive in the cellars of the cities and that of those killed and burned in the camps. The evocation of the crimes committed by, among others, inhabitants of many German cities (or in their names) is boldly entangled with, yet not "balanced" or "neutralized" (*aufgehoben*) by the evocation of these cities' destruction. Indeed, in expressing, yet not attempting to resolve the troubling question of murder and destruction, Grünbein's daring canvas mixes both images, both memories, in a manner that clearly precludes its interpretation as a one-dimensional, strictly German elegiac lamentation.

Grünbein's poems' unquestionably thorny interweaving of distinctively divergent

images and memories, their intertwined poetic idioms, is surely not unique in his generation. One could point here to the novels of Katharina Hacker, Marcel Beyer, and Norbert Gstrein, or to works of the somewhat older Christoph Ransmayr, Josef Haslinger, Hans-Ulrich Treichel, and Winfried G. Sebald. These and other authors who entered the German literary scene in the 1980s or shortly after German reunification, continue what Klaus Briegleb, in his seminal account of contemporary German literature, "Negative Symbiose" describes as the "neue Schreibweise des Erinnerns" (Briegleb/Weigel 133). They reflect a diverse, aesthetically conscious, and refined, yet historically informed poetics of memory.

Looking back at Salomon Korn's notion of a "geteilte Erinnerung" that continues to separate Germans and Jews, just as it did in the first decades after the Holocaust, one must underscore that all these authors, while working through their own private and collective histories, seem to be well aware of the memory of others and its meaning. Beyond their literary writings, most of them are active participants in the public debate over writing and rewriting the German narrative. While viewing their work from a historically contextualized perspective, one can further distinguish both their aesthetic and their thematic interests from those of the first generation of postwar German writers. Indeed, in contrast to Alfred Andersch, Günter Grass, Martin Walser, and Christa Wolf, Grünbein and his generation endeavor to tell the past or evoke it from a present perspective that clearly tries to account for those who can no longer speak.

These current literary attempts and their discursive implications seem to be just as crucial in understanding Germany's constantly changing sites of memory as any debate over the visual manifestation of the past in stone, glass, and steel. After all, memory is first and foremost a mental phenomenon mediated in verbal form. Indeed, it is a much more "Socratic" device than an actual material memorial. As Durs Grünbein notes in one of his poems from *Nach den Satiren*:

> Ein Denkmal ist ein Rinnstein für Erinnerungen,
> Die niemand auffängt sonst. Es ignoriert
> Die Ignoranz von Zeit zu Zeit....
> Ein Denkmal ist eine Wendemarke, an der Tod
> Ein Datum hinterließ und einen Namen, lesbar
> Als Tröstung rückwärts und voraus als Drohung. (204)

Notes

[1]This essay is part of a book-length study of historical narratives in contemporary German culture. I would like to thank Leslie A. Adelson, Russell A. Berman, and Hans-Ulrich Gumbrecht for their helpful remarks.

[2]On the interplay of these debates, see Zuckermann, 1999; Eshel, 2000 and the introduction to the collection by Micha Brumlik, Hajo Funke, Lars Rensmann, eds., *Umkämpftes Vergessen. Walser-Debatte, Holocaust-Mahnmal und neuere deutsche Geschichtspolitik*. (Berlin: Verlag Das Arabische Buch, 2000) 6–12.

[3]To be sure, by "story" I understand here the broad spectrum and multiplicity of such different narrative forms as historiographic accounts, edited archival materials, exhibitions, the testimonies of participants in historical events, *and* fictional or poetic accounts and so on. Although these very different genres cannot claim to be true in the same way, they are all written according to narrative strategies that are the subject of critical reflection. Postwar German literature and discourse constitute a unique laboratory to examine the ways in which different historical narratives relate to each other, intertwine, and participate in determining the course of public discourse.

[4]Cf. the 1300 pages of documentation in Günter Schlusche and Horst Seferens, *Der Denkmalsteit—das Denkmal? Die Debatte um*

das "Denkmal für die ermordete Juden Europas." (Berlin: Philo, 1999); Michael S. Cullen, *Das Holocaust-Mahnmal: Dokumentation einer Debatte* (Zürich: Pendo, 1999).

[5]As in the ferocious fight over the national memorial to the victims of war and totalitarianism in Schinkel's *Neue Wache*, the struggle over the Holocaust Memorial was thus actually a debate over the artistic figuration of the interdependency between history and the future German narrative.

[6]On Korn's position on the Holocaust Memorial, see also 175–218.

[7]See Korn 201 and Scholem 20–46.

[8]Heiner Müller, qtd. in Grünbein, Rede 26.

[9]Durs Grünbein, "Wo man selbst ist, kann kein anderer sein," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 24, 2000. As for Grünbein's characterization of Heiner Müller's anti-enlightenment poetics, see Grünbein, qtd. in Heiner Müller, 100-01.

[10]Heiner Müller, qtd. in Grünbein, Rede 26.

[11]Durs Grünbein, *Galilei* 75-86. See also Grimm 291.

[12]On Grünbein's interest in the relationship between the nervous system and poetry as resulting from his reading of both Büchner and Gottfried Benn, see Riedel 82–105 and Hennemann 49–66.

[13]Georg Büchner, Über Schädelnerven 41.

[14]Durs Grünbein, "Wo man selbst ist, kann kein anderer sein,"*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* June 24, 2000.

[15]For a different view on this matter, see Nolden 266: "Die Konnotationen der folgenden Schreckensvisionen (abschälende Haut, Dorn im Handtuch, Blut an den Fliesen) verweisen auf Sensationen von Grausamkeiten weit jenseits der Erinnerung an die sytematische Ermordung des jüdischen Volkes [...]".

[16]Grünbein sees the satire as the song of those who have finished to feast and are thus self-content and free to develop utopian visions. After satires is thus the time after richness and shortly before the dramatic, possibly catastrophic turning. Cf. Osterkamp 1999, Köhler 1999 and Böttiger 1999.

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