

2005

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https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/worldlanguages_pubs/26

Original Publication Citation

Lubich, F. (2005). Surviving to excel: The last German Jewish autobiographies of holocaust survivors Ruth Klüger, Marcel Reich-Ranicki, and Paul Spiegel. *Modern Judaism*, 25(2), 189-210. doi:10.1093/mj/kji012

Frederick Lubich



**SURVIVING TO EXCEL: THE LAST
GERMAN JEWISH AUTOBIOGRAPHIES
OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS RUTH
KLÜGER, MARCEL REICH-RANICKI,
AND PAUL SPIEGEL**

I

Ruth Klüger's *Weiterleben: Eine Jugend* (1992) is one of the first narratives of a series of testimonials of the last members of the generation of Holocaust survivors, which began to appear toward the end of the twentieth century.¹ The author was born in 1931 in Vienna, where her first years of socialization were already marked by a rapidly growing discrimination against the city's Jewish population. In 1942 she was deported together with her mother to Theresienstadt and eventually to Auschwitz, whose death machinery she survived by sheer luck and her determination to live. At the age of sixteen, she emigrated to the United States, where she eventually became a professor of German literature. In the late 1980s she returned to Göttingen in Germany as the director of an American study abroad program. After her recovery from serious injuries stemming from a traffic accident, she decided to write down the recollections of her youth and her reflections on life. Her dedication, "To my Göttinger friends. A German book" (p. 284), at the very end of her memoirs clearly indicates that they were primarily written for a German audience.²

Klüger's narrative is structured by a literary subtext, which surfaces twice, thereby framing the account in a subtle but substantive manner. It makes its first appearance in the labor camps, when Ruth's mother asked one of the "friendly foreman" (p. 160) to bring her daughter a book, since she loves to read. To her surprise, the man does bring her some reading material the next day; it is a torn textbook, and the author can no longer remember any of the texts with the exception of the "Easter Walk" from Goethe's *Faust*, which includes the famous line: "River and brooks are freed from ice" (p. 161).³ The young girl was immediately touched by these lines and their evocative imagery. For her they resonated with both the end of the exceptionally

doi:10.1093/mj/kji012

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cold winter and the beginning withdrawal of the German army from the advancing allies. Faust's intimation of spring, "and hope grows green throughout the dale" (p. 161), was a hermetic harbinger of the coming liberation. The second reference to Goethe's epic poem occurs when the author begins to recover from her accident injuries in Göttingen several decades later. Here she associates the process of healing with Faust's "Healing Sleep" (p. 276) at the beginning of the second part of Goethe's verse drama, and Klüger's joyous recognition of her recovery again resonates with lines from Faust's "Easter Walk": "The ice is melting, the chain, it comes asunder" (p. 276). Thus, the emblematic masterpiece of German literature figures also as a key narrative for both the author's liberation from the death camps and her recovery from her life-threatening injuries. In addition, the Faustian frame adumbrates the concept of Germany as a nation of *Dichter und Denker* (poets and thinkers), as Madame de Stael's *De l'Allemagne* (1810) had defined and popularized it during the nineteenth century. However, through its Faustian Pact with ultimate Evil in the twentieth century, the country of famous *Dichter und Denker* had become one of infamous *Richter und Henker* (judges and henchmen).⁴

This transformation of lofty humanism into humanity's profoundest catastrophe can be described as a *verkehrte Welt*, a world turned upside down. A seminal trope in the genesis of the gothic novel in German Romanticism, it became a ghastly reality in Nazi Germany. Not surprisingly, Klüger's experiences of the Holocaust are marked in various ways by this *verkehrte Welt* phenomenon. The author introduces the term herself, when she remembers her arrival in Auschwitz. Baffled by her observation that prisoners who had lower numbers seemed to act superior because they had lived longer in Auschwitz, she begins to wonder about the (in)sanity of these temporary survivors and sums up her amazement with the non sequitur "verkehrte Welt" (p. 114). Throughout the years of her stays in concentration camps, she encountered repeatedly situations in which the order of things was turned upside down. Since the education of children was forbidden in Theresienstadt, school all of a sudden became attractive and intriguing. As the camp included numerous adults who were teachers, if not prominent scholars, a clandestine culture of learning developed, culminating in the secretive gatherings around Rabbi Leo Baeck, the beloved leader of Berlin's once formidable Jewish community. Inspired by his knowledge and wisdom and excited by the conspiratorial camaraderie associated with these meetings, little Ruth becomes—*horribile dictu*—quite a happy camper: "Somehow I loved Theresienstadt" (p. 103), she characterizes her memories of Hitler's "model" camp. Given the fact that her last school years in *Anschluss* Vienna meant nothing but isolation and discrimination, Klüger makes a sadly

convincing case for her first camp experience: “In Vienna, I had symptoms and neuroses, which I overcame in Theresienstadt through contacts, friendships, and conversations” (p. 103). This perversion of social progress continued as the thirteen year old became more and more entrapped in the *verkehrte Welt* of the Holocaust. She remembers feeling a kind of delusional defiance when she received her inmate number in Auschwitz: “They would have to take me seriously with my concentration camp number” (p. 116). This irrational reasoning becomes the *ultima ratio* of Auschwitz, whose daily reality Klüger poignantly describes as “ordered chaos” and “chaotic order” (p. 131). It is a universe in which “the irrational...the absurd...the unreasonable... the *Aberwitzige*” (pp. 148–149) rule supreme—for Auschwitz’s *raison d’être* is death.⁵

The most pervasive manifestation of this *verkehrte Welt* is its systematic perversion of sex into death: “Death, not sex, was the secret” (p. 9), reads the very first sentence of Klüger’s memoirs. In Auschwitz, Richard Wagner’s romantic *Liebestod* motif, which celebrates Tristan and Isolde’s consummation of love as a unification in death, emerges as a morbid leitmotiv, which begins to contaminate everything around Ruth like the plague. Already the antisemitic gutter press of the *Stürmer* in Nazi Vienna struck Klüger as a “political pornographic rag magazine” (p. 53) and a harbinger of the moribund depravities to come. In Auschwitz, little Ruth imagined “the uniformed, Aryan world of men outside, who went about their mysterious and obscene business” as something “repulsive and fascinating,” a forbidden reality, “which, if you mentioned it, turned into the pornography of death” (p. 102). When Ruth received final confirmation from her friend that in Auschwitz the facts of life are indeed death, she paraphrases it in unequivocal sexual terms: “[Liesel] talked about the details like street kids talk about intercourse” (p. 118). Sex, the natural conception of life, has been transmogrified into a sexual contortion of death, into the “perversities of killing and of ravishing corpses” (p. 118). Klüger condenses this orgy of genocide into a sexual scenery of widely symbolic proportions: “With their backs to the back door of the barracks, two SS men stood on both sides of the ‘chimney.’ . . . In front of them was a long queue of naked women. . . . A female inmate, who took notes, stood next to the SS officer, who was sitting comfortably and when in a good mood was asking some young girls every now and then to do some gymnastic exercises, presumably to get some amusement out of this boring task” (pp. 132–133). Since the German noun for queue also means snake, this snaking up of naked women conjures up the primordial scene of seduction in the Garden of Eden. Already in this Urtext of our Judeo-Christian civilization, love and death, erotic temptation and deadly damnation, are fatefully intertwined, forging the Christian crucible for the Fall of Mankind. In Klüger’s

cross-cultural montage, the taunting SS officers add an additional twist to this founding myth. Replacing the archangel at the gate of Paradise, they have become fallen angels, the diabolical embodiment of humanity's deepest fall in history. As they are flanked by a *Schreiberin* who records this iconic *mise en abîme*, Holy Script finds its last hellish parody.⁶ After Klüger has escaped the death camps, she completes this symbolic arch in which modern genocide blends into mythic genesis. Looking back in bewilderment, she states: "I was innocent . . . except I had eaten from knowledge" (p. 185). Although innocent in a moral and sexual sense, she lost her innocence in a biblical sense, since she ate from that forbidden fruit of knowledge, which ultimately destroyed her belief in God and the goodness of man. In this symbolic telescoping between myth and modernity, Eden and Auschwitz mark beginning and end of a Judeo-Christian eschatology, which seems to have utterly failed in its promise of a redemptive history.

In order to survive in the extermination camp, young Ruth seeks refuge and consolation in reciting and writing poetry. In her desperate attempts to make rhyme and reason out of "the irrational," she both confirms and undermines the "absurdity of the whole" (p. 149). However, in the final analysis, her lyrical exercises serve as a provocative contradiction to Adorno's vexing verdict about poetry after Auschwitz: "My word is as good as theirs, above all Adorno's; I am talking about the experts in matters of ethics, literature, and reality, who demand that no poems are to be written about or after Auschwitz" (p. 127).⁷ For Klüger and many others in the camps, writing and reciting poetry became a form of aesthetic and spiritual resistance: "Many of the inmates found consolation in those verses that they knew by heart" (p. 123). During her time in the camps, Klüger practiced poetry as a form of last prayer to a God who—to all appearances—had stopped listening to the calls and cries of his Chosen People. In a "last intimation of religiosity" she speculates: "God will let me live, otherwise he would not let me write poetry. Maybe I wanted to please God above all, ingratiate myself with him, so that he would treat me as an exception" (p. 138). She, the desperate doubter of God, hoped to live as she saw others, devoted believers, perish everywhere around her. This paradoxical *spes contra spem* helped her make it through the Night. Looking back on Auschwitz, poetry and pornography emerge as the author's two most complex modes and models to comprehend and transcend the unimaginable catastrophe around her.⁸

After the war, Klüger was classified as a "Displaced Person," and she ended up staying in Germany for another two and a half years, graduating from *Gymnasium* with an emergency diploma and enrolling at the University of Regensburg. She considers this time period essential for her painful but productive reattachment to a country and

culture, which would draw her back decades later: “It was those two and a half Bavarian years that are responsible for the fact that I swallowed the hook of this culture; it was a culture deeply conflicted with itself and therefore appropriate for me; years later it pulled me on land again” (p. 221). After Klüger had survived the Holocaust physically, she found herself confronted with the challenge of surviving its trauma psychologically. And just like her German counterparts, she began to suppress the horrors of her past experiences: “We all took part in suppressing the past” (p. 215). Making friends with her German fellow students, she wonders: “Am I really so different from all of you, who have invited me to your dinner tables?” (p. 218). What the author and her German friends shared on the surface are the similarities of their Bavarian and Austrian dialects as well as a cultural context of “allusions and ironies” (p. 218). More significantly, however, on a much deeper level, both Germans and Jews share, as members of the people of perpetrators and survivors, to varying degrees their suppressed Holocaust memories.⁹

Decades later in Germany, these collectively suppressed memories would resurface as a powerful (sub)culture of mourning and remembrance. For Klüger, the personal experience of the Holocaust made such a delayed reaction impossible. As her father and half brother perished in the Shoah, they began to literally haunt the author as ghosts from an earlier stage in her life. Soon, her vivid memories of them would permeate places and whole cities, thus turning Vienna into a “ghost town” (p. 68) and Auschwitz into a “landscape of ghosts” (p. 71). For decades to come, these specters of the past would return in her poetry, accompany her on her journeys, and even join her in social gatherings as “naked, freezing ghosts at the dinner table” (p. 98). Finally, she had to face this spectral reality: “The ghosts, they will not let go of us” (p. 70).

Closely related to the theme of the ghosts is the problem of coming to terms with one’s own survival. Two-thirds into her account, the author addresses this question for the first time directly: “I certainly did not believe that I was supposed to die because others had been killed” (p. 185). However, years later in therapy sessions in New York, Klüger began to realize “that the dead caused me trouble because I was alive” (p. 245). And in family conversations about lost relatives, she believes she hears the implied accusation of her uncle: “You have no right to live” (p. 266). This lost right to live in turn transforms the author into a kind of living dead, a ghost out of flesh and blood. Again, Germany’s literary history can illustrate both Klüger’s intellectual inspiration and her existential plight. Whereas the *Geist der Goethezeit* had envisioned life as a classical *Bildungsroman*, a novel of education and self-perfection, Klüger’s life history had become the daily challenge of surviving in a dark, romantic *Schauerroman*, a gothic family romance haunted by ghosts.¹⁰

Klüger concludes her memoirs with an exemplary exploration of the theme of *Zu/Flucht*, of fleeing and seeking shelter. Her whole life was characterized by the continuing experience of being uprooted, fleeing, settling, and resettling. This modern odyssey took her eventually to Southern California. It is here, at the western end of the New World, where she found a new home of sorts. Here she sees her own personal fate of continuing escape reflected and manifested as a collective destiny: "This is a country whose history can be defined by its inhabitants who fled to its shores in order to escape history, their European, Asian, and finally American history" (p. 280). If any country in the Western world comes close to the fantasy of "Paradise Regained," it is Southern California, where the American Dream and the pursuit of happiness offer the last promise of fulfillment. For someone who survived the deepest fall of mankind, this *exile in Paradise* must appear like the ultimate *Aberwitz* of Auschwitz.¹¹ In addition, California is a "Promised Land" that makes everybody work hard to forget their past: "I like to live here. This landscape of ocean and deserts, which is always threatened by earthquakes, has made it its foolish, tragic business to abolish the past" (p. 281). No longer trapped but still intrigued by the *verkehrte Welt*, the author contrasts this Californian dream with German reality: "Having come back here, the Germany that I have come to know in my two years in Göttingen appears to me like an inverted mirror image of my California. Because there, they courageously take the truth into their hands, just like the believer took the hot iron under God's Judgment, only to let it drop with a scream, 'But I am innocent'" (p. 282). After decades of repressing if not denying its past (*Geschichtsvergessenheit*), Germany has become a country virtually obsessed with its past (*Geschichtsbesessenheit*).¹² As Klüger has already alluded to with her reference to the medieval Judgment of God (*Gottesurteil* [p. 282]), the nation of *Richter und Henker* is now submitting to its own grueling ordeal of judging the crimes of its atrocious past. Thus, in present-day Germany and the western United States, the labor of exposing and eclipsing history has become the two countries' diametrically opposed identity. Its central contradiction illuminates one more time Klüger's fundamental Faustian quandary: "Zwei Seelen wohnen ach in meiner Brust" [Two souls, alas, cohabit in my breast]. Hers is a lifelong conflict of fleeing a traumatic past in search for a safe home where she can both remember and forget.

II

Given the thematic and intertextual complexities of Klüger's narrative, they can serve as a frame of reference for the interpretation of both Marcel Reich-Ranicki's and Paul Spiegel's histories of survival.

Marcel Reich-Ranicki's memoirs *Mein Leben (My Life)* appeared in 1999, and they became an instant best-seller in Germany.¹³ The author was born in Poland in 1920 but spent the formative years of his high school education in a *Gymnasium* in Berlin. After the Nazis seized power, he was forced to return to Poland, where he soon ended up in the Warsaw Ghetto. There he met and married Teofila (Tosia), with whom he was to share his entire life. Whereas they managed to escape the Warsaw Ghetto just in time, the rest of Ranicki's family was deported and perished. Sheltered by Polish peasants in the countryside, where their hiding places included attics, cellars, and dirt holes, the young couple survived the onslaught of the German army. After the war, they returned to Warsaw, and the author joined the Communist Party, worked in London in the Polish secret service, and was soon appointed consul for the Polish government. However, not before long he fell out of favor with the Communist Party, and when Jews became again scapegoats in Polish politics, Reich-Ranicki and his wife decided in 1958 to emigrate to West Germany, where they assumed German citizenship. Working as a literary critic, he soon became head of the literary sections of the leading German newspapers *Die Zeit* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. As the host and moderator of highly popular radio and television programs on German literature, Reich-Ranicki rose to become the country's most influential literary arbiter, widely celebrated and sometimes criticized as the nation's all-powerful *Großkritiker* (Grand Critic) and one and only *Literaturpapst* (Literary Pope).

Reich-Ranicki's survival and success are marked by similar challenges as Klüger's. The deeply *verkehrte Welt* of her early years resurfaces in his account as a pervasively contradictory world. Already as a young Polish boy, excited to travel to Germany, he had very mixed feelings. His initial "fear of the German cane" (p. 31) soon merged, however, with a growing fascination for German culture: "The fear of everything German was complemented by the happiness it gave me" (p. 31). In *Tonio Kröger*, Thomas Mann's celebrated novella of adolescence, and its protagonist's fear of and longing for life, Reich-Ranicki found the model for his own existence: "This fear and this longing belong to the leitmotivs of my life" (p. 103). Soon, these diffuse anxieties and excitements about Germany were to take shape in two distinctly opposite personalities: "Deutschland—that is in my eyes Adolf Hitler and Thomas Mann. These two names continue to symbolize the two sides, the two possibilities of Germany" (p. 105). Here, Goethe's Faust and Mephisto metamorphose into two exemplary historical figures.¹⁴ This personal distinction between good and evil, guilt and innocence, soon broke down in the ghetto, where the *Judenrat* became a hapless Nazi instrument in the maintenance of order for the efficient

deployment of the Final Solution. Reich-Ranicki, who himself worked as a secretary and translator for the *Judenrat*, draws an empathic portrait of Adam Czerniaków, the ombudsman of the *Judenrat* who ended up committing suicide in his desperation over his double bind of aiding his Jewish people and thereby abetting their perdition.¹⁵ Reminiscent of the pornographic dimension of Klüger's camp experiences, Ranicki too witnessed the perversion of erotic innocence into cruel obscenity: "Good-looking young Jewish women were arrested in the street and were brought into the main building of the *Judenrat*. There, they had to undress, and then they were forced into obscene acts and positions" (p. 232).

To escape at least temporarily the many degrading experiences of life in the ghetto, Reich-Ranicki organized, with the help of the *Judenrat*, numerous concerts. Whereas for Klüger it was the power of poetry, here it was above all the magic of music, which uplifted the spirit of the downtrodden and doomed. Drawing on the rich musical talents and traditions of Eastern European Jewry, the ghetto boasted three string quartets and several gifted pianists, violinists, and singers; and together they performed with desperate dedication: "Haydn and Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert, Weber and Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Schumann and Brahms, in other words, like everywhere in the world, primarily German music" (p. 223). Just as Klüger's Theresienstadt was turned into an entertainment charade, performing the greatest hits of Weimar cabaret, the Warsaw Ghetto resonated with the best that Germany's classical and romantic music traditions had to offer. Given the conditions in the ghetto as a situation in extremis, Reich-Ranicki surmises "that music has a much more immediate impact on humans in borderline situations than the spoken word. Music is more powerful in stirring feelings and exciting the imagination" (p. 229). The concerts in the camps brought together not only all those who were doomed to die but also young lovers like Marcel and Tosia, whose love became intensified through their mutual passion for music. In their fearful flight from death and into the arms of each other, they relive the Wagnerian *Liebestod* drama from Klüger's sexually twisted prison of death. In retrospect, Reich-Ranicki confesses: "To this day no other opera fills me more with joy and happiness than the *Meistersinger*, and no opera affects me deeper and excites me stronger than *Tristan und Isolde*" (p. 127). Thus, it is the signature sound of the Third Reich, its Wagnerian will to power, that also uplifted its victims and granted them a rapturous reprieve from almost certain perdition.¹⁶

Having survived the Holocaust poses for Reich-Ranicki the same problem as it does for Klüger: "If one has been spared by sheer luck, whereas one's loved ones have been murdered, one cannot live in

peace with oneself" (p. 303). The question why he was allowed to live will haunt him for the rest of his life (see also pp. 151, 312). And as with Klüger, this question is intricately linked with the quest for his own identity and place in the world. When asked in 1994 to give a speech in a lecture series titled "Talking about Your Own Country," the author answered: "I have no country of my own, I have no *Heimat* and no fatherland" (p. 12).¹⁷ However, when he was a child in Poland, his mother described German culture as their promised land, and it was this promise on which the author never gave up. Having spent his youth in a German *Gymnasium*, he had acquired the most important aspect of its culture: "I had taken from the country, out of which I had been expelled, the German language and the German literature" (p. 160). As he returned to a bombed-out Berlin right after the war, Reich-Ranicki writes: "Not revenge brought me to Berlin, but *Sehnsucht* [longing]" (p. 316). Such *Sehnsucht* was once the emotional elixir of Germany's romantic poets, who invested this yearning with the almost metaphysical equivocation of *Fernweh* and *Heimweh*, that is, the longing for faraway places as well as the longing for a final home. Following in the footsteps of the German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine, the most prominent romantic exile of nineteenth-century German literature, Reich-Ranicki too declares German literature his "portative *Vaterland*" (p. 373); and when he crosses German borders, he invariably invokes Heine's most famous epic poem, *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen* (*Germany, a Winter Fairy Tale*), in which the poet not only satirized Prussia's reactionary grip on Germany but also envisioned a utopian rebirth of his fatherland out of the spirit of the French Revolution. If Goethe's classical *Faust* triggered for Klüger a cathartic sense of liberation, Heine's romantic *Wintermärchen* represents for Reich-Ranicki above all a critical model, which promoted national progress through social satire. When toward the end of his memoirs Reich-Ranicki looks back on his meteoric rise to become a cultural institution in Germany, he asks himself: "Was it my ambition to continue the tradition of Jews in German literary criticism and to demonstratively do it in a leading position and with all the accompanying publicity? Certainly" (p. 492). And he continues to mine his motives: "Did my passion have something to do with my longing for a *Heimat*, which I did not have and which I thought I had found in German literature? Yes" (p. 492). In his chapter "Max Frisch or Europe Personified," Reich-Ranicki defines his cultural *Heimat* most succinctly. In contrasting the oeuvre of the modern Swiss author Max Frisch with the work of his comparable literary contemporaries Dürrenmatt, Böll, Grass, and Uwe Johnson, Reich-Ranicki comes to the conclusion that Frisch had mapped and explored the existential topography of Europe's modern intelligentsia in exemplary fashion: "Like no other, Frisch had understood our mentality, our

hunger for life, our capacity to love, our weaknesses, and our impotence” (p. 526). Whereas Klüger’s lifelong search for home and identity is torn between Germany’s *Geschichtsbesessenheit* and California’s *Geschichtsvergessenheit*, Reich-Ranicki’s existential quest for belonging finds its most authentic reflection in the German/European zeitgeist of post–World War II modernity. Within the paradoxical parameters of the *verkehrte Welt*, it is an ironic reversal of fortune that the former refugee of Nazi Germany, hiding from Hitler’s henchmen in the Polish hinterland, should survive to become the supreme judge of German literature, Germany’s *Herr der Bücher* (“The Lord of the Books” [*Der Spiegel*, June 18, 2001]). With his missionary ambition, reminiscent of the Polish pope in Rome, this German *Literaturpapst* from Poland has promoted German literature and culture at home and abroad like no one before him. On one of his lecture tours around the world, the author met the famous violinist Yehudin Menuhin in China, and he remembers: “I wanted to know what he was doing here. He answered in a few words: ‘Beethoven and Brahms with the local orchestra.’ Then he wanted to know what I was doing here. ‘I give presentations on Goethe and Thomas Mann.’ Menuhin was silent, though not for long, and then he said: ‘Well, we are Jews. . . . That we travel from country to country in order to play music and to propagate and interpret German literature—this is good, and this is right’” (p. 531).

Reich-Ranicki’s conclusion of his memoirs includes a cautionary chapter about recent revisionist tendencies in unified Germany. He focuses in particular on the acrimonious Historians’ Debate, whose conservative expositors had questioned the singularity of the Holocaust, as well as the national controversy over Martin Walser, a well-known German writer who had demanded an end to what he considered the nation’s unending obsession with the Holocaust. Although the revisionists’ arguments of both debates were ultimately defeated by leading historians and public intellectuals, Reich-Ranicki felt personally betrayed, since he had been acquainted if not friends with some of the key figures on the revisionist side of the debates. However, the author concludes his memoirs with a cherished memory of Willy Brandt, Germany’s chancellor in the early 1970s, whose genuflection in front of the monument to the uprising in the Warsaw Ghetto had made headlines around the world. In 1990, Reich-Ranicki met Brandt in Nuremberg, and the former chancellor, already marked by his terminal illness, asked him how he had survived the Warsaw Ghetto: “When I was done with my brief account, someone had tears in their eyes. Willy Brandt or I? I don’t know it anymore. But I know very well what I thought. When I saw the photo of the kneeling German chancellor in 1970, I thought that my decision to return in 1958 and settle in the Federal Republic of Germany was not wrong after all” (p. 551).

III

Given his preeminent position in present-day German–Jewish relations, Paul Spiegel was asked by the Ullstein publishing house in Berlin to write his memoirs. After some initial hesitations, he agreed, and in 2001 his *Wieder zu Hause? Erinnerungen (Home Again? Memoirs)* appeared.¹⁸ In the preface, Spiegel expresses his gratitude to Rafael Seligmann, a well-known German Jewish journalist and novelist, “who after long and intensive talks with me committed my memories to paper” (p. 9). Since Seligmann’s narrative is a detailed account of Spiegel’s own experiences and reflections, the latter will be referred to as the “author” in the following explorations. Unlike the two preceding autobiographies, Spiegel’s narrative focuses less on the private and personal and more on the public and political. However, the numerous photographs that accompany the text, ranging from snapshots out of the family album to press photography from the author’s professional and political career, combine both realms and turn the autobiography into a kind of picture book of “Who’s Who” in the cultural life of post–World War II Germany.

Spiegel was born in 1937 in Warendorf, a small town in Westphalia, where his ancestors had lived for centuries, many of them making a living as cattle dealers. Little Paul was hardly two years old when *Kristallnacht*, the Night of Broken Glass, shattered his parents’ illusions that they could weather the Nazi storm in Germany. That night his father was severely beaten by members of the SS, and his parents soon decided to flee with their two children on separate routes to Belgium. During the German occupation of Belgium, Spiegel’s father was betrayed, arrested, and deported. In addition, Roselchen, Paul’s seven-year-old sister, was caught in the streets, recognized as a Jew, and sent to Auschwitz, from where she did not return. During the Nazi occupation, Paul was hidden with various families and thus, together with his mother, survived the Holocaust. After the liberation by the American army, Paul’s mother was determined to emigrate together with her little boy to the United States. However, as it turned out, Paul’s father had miraculously survived three years of Buchenwald and Auschwitz, and he persuaded his remaining family to return to their little hometown in Germany. While Hugo Spiegel began rebuilding his livelihood as a cattle trader, Paul grew up to pursue his dream of becoming a journalist. In 1959 at an international summer camp for young Jews, he met Gisèle from France, who soon became his wife and mother of two daughters and with whom he would share, as numerous references indicate, a very happy marriage and family life. In his professional career, Spiegel rose quickly from talented journalist to editor-in-chief of a successful fashion magazine and eventually became

the founder of his own agency representing and managing a wide variety of artists. From the beginning of his adult life, Spiegel was also very dedicated to rebuilding what was left of the Jewish community. He volunteered his services in numerous offices and activities with ever-growing range and responsibilities; rose through the ranks of the Central Council of Jews, the most important Jewish organization in Germany; and in 2000 became its president.

Given the trials and tribulations of German Jewish history in the twentieth century, Spiegel too cannot escape its *verkehrte Welt* absurdities. A first example is little Paul's adventurous flight to Belgium. His mother had bribed a German officer to help her and her son cross a tributary of the Rhine by night. During the crossing, Paul had, according to the story of his mother, slipped off the shoulder of the officer and began to drift away in the current. The officer immediately swam after the drowning boy, caught him, and brought him and his mother safely to the other side (an unlikely Christopheros, carrying a Jewish child.) Years later, whenever the adolescent Paul seemed to be at odds with himself or mankind, his mother used to cheer him up: "A SS officer saved your life, Paul. The Good Lord will not abandon you" (p. 34). If the pronouncement "God left in 1941," attributed to the Jewish Lithuanian philosopher Emanuel Levinas, is true, then Spiegel proves this apocryphal commentary to the Shoah substantially true but wrong. Combining a child's innocent trust in God with the blessed fate of a lucky survivor, the young adult Spiegel embraced a worldview of determined confidence that would form the foundation of his lifelong faith in God and in his own mission: "Our faith and our experiences give us the indestructible trust against all better knowledge to overcome the greatest dangers and the worst enemies. God would not forsake his people. . . . If worse comes to worst, he would have to work a miracle. David Ben Gurion, the founder of Israel, summarized this attitude in one sentence: 'He who does not believe in miracles, is not a realist'" (p. 37). It is this paradoxical optimism that Spiegel recognized as Ben Gurion's central source of strength and vision and which empowered him to found the State of Israel and give Jews around the world after 2,000 years of diaspora a home in the Promised Land. It is this same spiritual source that inspires Spiegel to dedicate his energies to making Jews feel at home again—in a homeland that had broken all its promises to his people. Throughout the memoirs, the author refers repeatedly to the religion and cultural traditions of his people, drawing strength and motivation from their ancient wisdom. Thus, the individual survivor's guilt becomes transformed into a survivor's energy invested into the revival of his community.¹⁹

Interwoven with the account of his own rise to prominence within the German Jewish community are several portraits of prominent

German Jewish personalities who played major roles in the rebuilding of Jewish communities in post-World War II Germany. Whereas Reich-Ranicki's portraits of literary figures focus primarily on their artistic accomplishments, Spiegel's portraits of prominent Jewish leaders such as Werner Nachmann, Heinz Galinski, Ignatz Bubis, and the popular entertainer Hans Rosenthal highlight time and again their lifelong endeavors to work toward German-Jewish reconciliation. Noteworthy especially are the affectionate portraits of Bubis and Rosenthal, with whom Spiegel had cultivated lasting professional and personal friendships. Hans Rosenthal had lived through the Nazi years as a young man in Berlin, where Christian families had helped him hide and survive. In the 1970s and 1980s he became the most popular TV entertainer in Germany, before his life was tragically cut short by cancer. Ignatz Bubis, born in Breslau, today's Wrocław in Poland, survived several slave labor camps and became in the 1970s one of the most successful real estate businessmen in Frankfurt. In 1992, he succeeded Galinski as president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, and during the eight years of his presidency he grew into such a well-known and much-liked figure that he became a popular candidate for the presidency of the Federal Republic of Germany. With his inexhaustible energy, witty intelligence, and genuine warmth, he is for Spiegel the embodiment of a German Jewish *Brückenbauer und Versöhner*, a builder of bridges and reconciliator (p. 221)—Bubis's final doubts about his lifelong endeavors notwithstanding.

Given the horrendous catastrophe of the Shoah, the author finds himself wondering repeatedly: "What ties the Jews to Germany?" (p. 85). Spiegel is not alone in struggling with this puzzle. Remembering his father's unwavering resolution to leave Auschwitz for no other place but Warendorf, the son concludes with indulging incredulity: "Even after the worst crimes against humanity, Hugo Spiegel remained a German" (p. 84). Unlike Spiegel's father, Bubis tried at least to escape his German destiny: "Repeatedly, he decided to emigrate to France, Latin America, or Israel. Yet time and again he was drawn back to where he came from—Germany" (p. 207). And Rosenthal did not even try to leave. At the end of his life, when he left the Berlin hospital in order to die at home, he asked his wife: "Drive me home. Slowly. Through the city I love" (p. 178).²⁰ Spiegel attempts an explanation for this enigmatic attraction to Germany by speculating about the deeper emotional needs of Jewish celebrities: "I think there are, at least in the diaspora, so many disproportionately successful Jewish artists because they have the unquenchable need for applause and popularity. The Jews want to be accepted. The Jewish film comic Jerry Lewis had a poster on his office door for years that read: 'Don't hesitate. Come in. You are welcome and I love you!' And that implied, please

love me too” (pp. 170–171).²¹ Conversely, Spiegel sees this remarkable longing for love and acceptance also reflected in the German psyche:

This addiction to love is of course not an exclusively Jewish phenomenon. Many non-Jewish Germans are insecure. One of the reasons for this is probably the location of the country in the heart of Europe; its eventful history of many wars, which were by no means all started by Germany; and finally the Hitler era. I claim, the Germans’ attraction to the Nazis was not grounded in their hatred of Jews—massive eliminatory antisemitism existed above all in Poland, the Ukraine, Russia, and the Baltic states—but; rather, in the fact that many people felt they had lost their security after the war, which was compounded later by dramatic unemployment. They looked for protection and security in—of all people—the worst criminal. (p. 171)

Spiegel’s reference to an “eliminatory antisemitism” is a clear refutation of Daniel Goldhagen’s central thesis, that German history was driven for centuries by such a rabid antisemitism that it eventually culminated in the Holocaust.²² Furthermore, Spiegel’s economic and psychological explanations of Germany’s susceptibility to Hitler’s promises illuminate a dimension that non-Jewish German scholars would hardly dare to intimate lest they be accused of political incorrectness.²³ Spiegel’s reflections on German and Jewish longing for security, acceptance, and affection can be complemented by a trend in Germany that has been frequently described as a national love affair with everything Jewish. From renovating synagogues, establishing Judaica bookstores, and founding Jewish museums, schools, and universities to the ubiquitous strains of German klezmer, also known as “Goyzmer,” postunification Germany has become—*mutatis mutandis*—a virtual theme park of everything that was anathema to the Third Reich.²⁴ This German reversal of Jewish fortune, its systematic *Verkehrung* from antisemitism into philosemitism, can be easily ridiculed, as has happened since Adorno flippantly and famously defined a philosemite as an anti-semite who loves Jews. However, reducing contemporary German–Jewish relations to such a travesty flies in the face of the many soul-searching debates and somber commemorations associated with the Holocaust, which altogether give this newfound German–Jewish love affair a very tragic, deeply traumatic foundation. The rising Holocaust memorial in the heart of Berlin testifies in its centrality and monumentality to this national trauma. Whereas the centers of other capitals are sites designed to display monuments of national pride, Berlin’s *Neue Mitte* will become a place displaying lasting national shame and disgrace.²⁵

As Spiegel assumed the presidency of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, he vowed to continue the work of his predecessors Galinski and Bubis and declared the following three goals as the guiding principles of his presidency: to make Jews feel at home again in Germany, to integrate the immigrating Russian Jews into German Jewish society,

and to dedicate his energies toward the continuing reconciliation between Germans and Jews (p. 246). He also cautions not to reduce modern German Jewish identity to the Holocaust and its psychological legacy but, rather, to see it within the much larger context of almost two thousand years of German Jewish history. By the same token, he argues that Germany also needs to embrace the positive aspects of its long history in order to (re)gain a healthy national identity.

Spiegel had hardly taken over the leadership of the Central Council when the Federal Republic went through another critical period in its recent history. Still recovering from the bitter debate around Martin Walser's inflammatory speech, which both Bubis and Spiegel had criticized as intellectual arson, the political discourse flared up again, this time around the controversial concept of a German *Leitkultur*. Considered as a model in which essential features of German culture should become guiding principles for all immigrants, it quickly became a mantra for conservatives and reactionary forces arguing against the increasingly multicultural developments in modern Germany. These controversies were further exacerbated by a bomb attack on the synagogue in Düsseldorf, where several people were injured. Investigations finally proved that the crime was committed by *junge Deutsche* (p. 259), young Germans whose families had immigrated from Palestine. Together with the increased provocations from skinheads and Neo-Nazis, these events and developments seemed to conspire to destabilize Germany as a secure and pluralistic democracy. On November 9, 2000, at Germany's annual commemoration of *Kristallnacht*, Spiegel addressed a crowd of 300,000 people at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Flanked by prominent members of Germany's political establishment, including the president of the Federal Republic of Germany, Spiegel clearly articulated his concerns:

When it comes to fighting right-wing extremism, we need to nip it in the bud. . . . Weeks ago, Chancellor Schröder demanded an "uprising of all decent human beings." . . . I am convinced that the majority in this country is against right-wing radicalism, antisemitism, and hostility against foreigners. . . . But this majority must not remain silent any longer, it must not look the other way anymore. . . . Jews in Germany have, despite all the horrible things that happened during the past weeks, confidence in this country, in its responsible politicians, and in its fellow citizens. Our parents had decided, after horrible suffering and against worldwide opinion, to live here again and to found Jewish communities. We continue to be of the strong conviction that this decision was right and important. We will not and we must not help Hitler and his fellow criminals to become successful posthumously in their endeavors to make Germany free of Jews [*Judenrein*]. (p. 266)

As other German Jewish intellectuals have done in recent years, Spiegel used his prominent position to play the role of a warning prophet, who with the hindsight of history clearly spoke out against the first signs of its potential return. Given German history, its present-day Jews

consider themselves social seismographs, who react in a highly sensitive fashion to the slightest indication of discrimination of any kind. With this public calling in mind, Spiegel appealed to the hundreds of thousands at the Brandenburg Gate: "It is not enough to fight right-wing radicalism, antisemitism, and hostility against foreigners. Because it is not just about us Jews, about Turks, about blacks, about the homeless, about gays. It is a fight for this country, for the future of everyone in this country" (p. 267). In response to his speech, Spiegel received about a thousand letters, 90 percent of them positive. He felt heartened and encouraged in his endeavors to provide guidance and assurance to his Jewish community, a community that more than ever needs a realistic visionary. In recent years it has grown dramatically in size and diversity through the influx of Russian Jews and has become the third largest Jewish community in Europe, after those in France and the United Kingdom, and the fastest growing Jewish community worldwide.²⁶

Although Spiegel's professional life is a great success story in German-Jewish public relations, his experiences too are tainted and twisted by some of the uncanny characteristics of Klüger's autobiography. For example, when he is accused by some Israeli politicians of practicing a *Selektionsmentalität* (p. 275) because he sends back those Russian immigrants who fake a Jewish identity in order to be able to immigrate to Germany, the *verkehrte Welt* of modern German Jewish history spins again into absurdity.²⁷ Furthermore, Klüger's personal stories of haunting ghosts permutate in Spiegel's account into a much larger, cultural phenomenon: "The attention that we Jews receive in this country, especially those of us in prominent positions, is to a large part the result of recent German history. Many Germans suffer from a 'phantom pain.' They miss the Jewish element in their society and their culture" (p. 281). In other words, the ubiquitous celebration and commemoration of everything Jewish in today's Germany can also be understood as a much deeper complex of emotions in which the powerful feelings of guilt and shame associated with mourning the Other (Jew) merge with the painful awareness of a loss of Self (German). In addition, Germany's phantomatic remembrance of its lost Jewish Other is probably further reinforced through the phantom pain caused by the loss of former eastern territories and the country's long division into antagonistic eastern and western political entities. Thus, Germany's perennial quest to become again a "normal" nation remains a daunting task.²⁸

IV

This brings us back to the central theme of all three autobiographies, the German Jewish longing for a lost *Heimat*. The common history of

Jews in Germany goes back to Roman times when the first Jewish merchants settled along the Rhine. Throughout the centuries Jewish communities flourished in Germany, despite repeated periods of persecution, especially in the Middle Ages. Modern Germany did not find its political identity as a unified nation until 1871 with the founding of the Second German Empire. During its rule and rise in Europe, the German Jewish community made great strides to integrate and identify with German culture. Looking back through the perspective of his own family history, Spiegel writes: “Germany’s Jews loved their fatherland and were deeply rooted in their *Heimat*” (p. 11). The process of social and cultural integration reached its apogee in the Weimar Republic, when the German–Jewish symbiosis crystallized in a myriad of cultural experimentations and scientific innovations, ranging from cabaret and cinema to psychoanalysis and astrophysics. It was in those heady heydays when Jewish artists and intellectuals became associated in the popular imagination with *Luftmenschen* (literary, “people in the air”). This sobriquet suggested that some newly arrived Jews might not have been quite grounded yet, whereas for others the sky had already become the limit instead. Such *Luftmenschen* metaphors were soon to morph into unimaginable realities. As the skies darken with smoke rising out of the extermination camps, Celan’s *Todesfuge* envisions his people digging their graves in the air (“Wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften”). The German *Heimat* had become utterly *unheimlich* (uncanny), a ghoulish world upside down, defying the imagination of any of Grimm’s fairy-tales or any Freudian theories.²⁹ Klüger’s, Reich-Ranicki’s, and Spiegel’s autobiographies have this abysmal loss of home inscribed into the very fabric of their narratives. In Klüger’s introductory leitmotiv, “escape was the most beautiful thing, then and to this day” (p. 9), any sense of belonging has been transformed into a longing that can only be enjoyed as fleeing. Unlike Klüger, Reich-Ranicki had decided to return to Germany permanently. But he too feels most at home not in the physical world but in the lofty realm of literature. Here, he can comfortably reside as a Weimar coffee-house intellectual, albeit as “a coffeehouse *literatus* without a coffee-house” (p. 429). However, with his thousands of radio programs and television presentations, he has succeeded in getting “on the air” like no German Jewish *Luftmensch* before him. It is with Spiegel’s autobiography that the *Luftmensch* metaphor becomes an integral part of the author’s narrative. When he describes his decision as a young man to become a journalist, he characterizes this profession as *Luftgeschäft* (literally, “business in the air” [p. 123]). With this retooling of the metaphor, Spiegel aligns himself with a long tradition of German Jewish journalists, authors, and literary critics, beginning with Heinrich Heine and Ludwig Börne in the nineteenth century; moving on to Alfred Kerr and Egon Erwin Kisch in the Weimar Republic; and finally leading up to Henryk

Broder, Richard Chaim Schneider, Maxim Biller, Raffael Seligmann, and Reich-Ranicki in present-day Germany. However, Spiegel's most significant deployment of the *Luftmensch* metaphor occurs when he describes the founding of the Central Council of Jews in Germany in 1950: "The local Jews no longer had solid ground under their feet. For them and their insecure existence, the jocularly melancholic notion of the *Luftmensch* gained validity" (p. 108). Exactly fifty years after the foundation of the Central Council, Spiegel had become its president. In his speech at the Brandenburg Gate, he had both warned Germany of threats to its democracy and assured his Jewish community that Germany is their home and that he will do his very best to safeguard their growth and well-being. Responding to the questioning title of his autobiography *Home Again?* Spiegel calls his final chapter "Home Again." Its conclusion is a last private echo of his public speech at the Brandenburg Gate, a moving meditation on his hometown Warendorf, his parents, and his former neighbors. It contains three photos of which the last one shows the author and his wife under a street sign that bears the name of his father. The last sentences of this chapter read: "Hugo Spiegel had never left home. My family, my community, and I are returning home—if the non-Jewish Germans want it. I am convinced they do" (p. 291).³⁰

Looking back at the many similarities in the three autobiographies, what is especially striking is the role of mediation, which all three authors are engaged in with a growing degree of impact and importance. Klüger taught German language and literature to several generations of students at leading American universities; Reich-Ranicki reached hundreds of thousands of readers, viewers, and listeners in Germany and around the world, propagating a passionate understanding of German literature; and Spiegel spent a substantial part of his personal and professional life working tirelessly for the improvement of relations between Germans and Jews. In doing so, they continue a long tradition of Jewish mediation in German culture and politics. In a sense they live and work for all those who perished in the Shoah. Given the horrific experiences of their early years, *per aspera ad astra* seems to be a fitting motto to describe the tragic and triumphant trajectory of their autobiographies and the authors' remarkable determination to survive in order to excel.

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NOTES

1. Ruth Klüger, *Weiterleben: Eine Jugend* (Munich, 1994). The literal translation of Klüger's memoirs would be *Continue to Live: A Youth*. In 2001, Klüger

published an English version of her memoirs under the title *Still Alive*. For the numerous differences between both versions, see Caroline Schaumann, who writes that *Still Alive* is an “entirely different text than *Weiterleben*” (“From *Weiter leben* [1992] to *Still Alive* [2001]: Ruth Klüger’s Cultural Translation of Her ‘German Book’ for an American Audience,” *German Quarterly*, Vol. 77, No. 3 [2004], p. 326). Consequently, all English translations of Klüger’s German version are mine. The same applies for the translations of Marcel Reich-Ranicki’s and Paul Spiegel’s memoirs.

2. The book became a great success in Germany. According to Schaumann, it sold “over 250 000 copies and quickly climb[ed] bestseller lists. . . . [It] garner[ed] the praise of Germany’s most esteemed literary critics, and Klüger received numerous literary awards. Never before had a Holocaust testimony been so successful in Germany” (“From *Weiter leben* [1992] to *Still Alive* [2001],” p. 324). For a recent study on Holocaust memories, see Christopher Browning, *Collected Memories: Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony* (Madison, WI, 2003); and Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer, eds., *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and the Holocaust* (Madison, WI, 2003).

3. This and the following translations from *Faust* are by Louis MacNeice, *Goethe’s Faust* (New York, 1976).

4. This punning perversion of German *Bildung* into Nazi barbarity became one of the central catch phrases in Germany’s moral reckoning with its recent history.

5. *Aberwitz* translates into “folly, madness, absurdity,” but it literary connotes a bad joke, a punch line that backfires, meanings that are lost in the English translation.

6. Klüger’s symbolically thick description of her extermination camp experience has a poetic precedent in Paul Celan’s *Todesfuge*, one of the most famous poetic transcriptions of the Holocaust horrors. There, one of the incantatory refrains reads, “A man lives in the house who plays with snakes.” As will become evident, other images of Celan’s *Todesfuge* will shine through the dark recollections of these autobiographies. See Paul Celan’s “Todesfuge,” in Theodor Echtermeyer and Benno von Wiese (eds.), *Deutsche Gedichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin, 1993), p. 663.

7. For a recent study of the problematics of poetry after Auschwitz, see Susan Gubar, *Poetry after Auschwitz: Remembering What One Never Knew* (Bloomington, IL, 2002).

8. Throughout her life and her memoirs, Klüger writes and cites poetry, and she continues to envision the extermination camps as a human labyrinth of voyeuristic, sadistic, and pornographic perversions (*Weiterleben*, pp. 123, 193, 238–239). This sexual framing of the extermination camp experience should become a veritable film and theory genre, first conceptualized by Susan Sontag in her seminal essay “Fascinating Fascism” (in *A Susan Sontag Reader*, introduction by Elizabeth Hardwick [New York, 1983], pp. 305–325) and fleshed out in such films as Visconti’s *The Damned*, Passolini’s *Salo*, and Cavani’s *The Night Porter*, to mention only the most well-known and controversial ones.

9. In a daring analogy between Jews and Germans, Klüger describes a scene after her escape from Auschwitz in which she watches a death march of concentration camp inmates through a German town. In an attempt not to be

discovered as a Jew she tries to blend in with the Germans: “We were waiting on the side of the street, until all those sub humans had passed by. When the Americans marched in shortly afterwards, nobody had ever seen anything” (*Weiterleben*, p. 186). Reflecting on the behavior of the Germans who watched with her, she concludes: “Cowardice is the norm and one must not condemn anybody for normal behavior” (p. 186). It certainly takes courage to articulate such an unequivocal conviction, which strikes at the core of Germany’s guilt and accountability and its continuing struggle to come to terms with its Nazi legacy.

10. For an early exemplary exploration of survivor’s guilt, see Jean Améry’s *Hand an sich legen: Diskurs über den Freitod (On Suicide: A Discourse on Voluntary Death)*, trans. John D. Barlow [Bloomington, 1999]), which was published shortly before the author committed suicide in 1978. For a recent study of this survivor trauma, see Petra Fieros, *Schreiben gegen Schweigen: Grenzerfahrungen in Jean Améry’s autobiographischem Werk* (Hildesheim, 1997).

11. For a first systematic account of the emigration of Hitler’s refugees to America and especially Southern California, see Anthony Heilbut, *Exile in Paradise: German Refugee Artists and Intellectuals in America from the 1930’s to the Present* (Boston, 1983).

12. These terms are gaining more and more currency in public and academic debates in Germany.

13. Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *Mein Leben* (Stuttgart, 1999). In a cover story on Reich-Ranicki, the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* reported in its June 18, 2001, issue that the book had already sold a million copies. Also in 2001, the memoirs appeared in an English translation under the title *The Author of Himself: The Life of Marcel Reich-Ranicki* (Princeton, 2001). In a review in the *German Studies Review*, Wulf Koepke wrote: “The translation is sloppy and mediocre at best, if not outright bad. A comparison with the original shows that many important statements have been omitted or distorted” (*German Studies Review*, Vol. 25 [October 2002], p. 657).

14. As the most representative intellectual antagonist of Hitler, Thomas Mann thematized this polar affinity in his polemic essay “Bruder Hitler,” published in English under the title “The Brother,” in Frederick A. Lubich (ed.), *Thomas Mann, Death in Venice, Tonio Kröger, and Other Writings* (New York, 1999), as well as in his semiautobiographical novel *Doctor Faustus: The Life of the German Composer Adrian Leverkühn as Told by a Friend*, trans. John E. Woods (New York, 1999).

15. For an extensive study of the roles and responsibilities of the *Judenrat* in Eastern Europe under Nazi occupation, see Isaiah Trunk, *Judenrat: The Jewish Councils in Eastern Europe under Nazi Occupation* (Lincoln, 1996).

16. In Celan’s *Todesfuge*, this musical transfixion appears inverted into the sadistic command of death, the “Master from Germany”: “He commands us to play for a dance . . . play the violins more darkly.” The medieval *Totentanz*, the Dance Macabre, could not have found a more spectral and spectacular stage for a modern comeback than the extermination camps of the Third Reich.

17. The word *Heimat* is virtually untranslatable. It is an emotionally charged trope, connoting home, family, familiarity, a strong sense of origin and belonging, and it strongly resonates with the memories of a happy, innocent

childhood. After World War II, the German *Heimatfilm* became a sentimental, cinematic ersatz world for all that was lost, corrupted, and destroyed. With *The Sound of Music*, this *Heimatfilm* genre went Hollywood. For a critical analysis of the *Heimat* trope in German cultural politics, see Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (Rochester, 2002).

18. Paul Spiegel, *Wieder zu Hause? Erinnerungen* (Berlin, 2001).

19. Given the growing temporal distance to the Holocaust, Spiegel's childhood recollections of survival are among the last ones in the annals of the Shoah. For a more comprehensive review of recent childhood memories of the Holocaust, see Anita Brostoff and Sheila Chamovitz's *Flares of Memory: Stories of Childhood during the Holocaust* (Oxford, 2001), a collection of ninety-two short texts of forty survivors composed in the writing workshops at the Holocaust Center in Pittsburgh.

20. For a general overview on the state of German Jewish identity and the quest for Jewish belonging around the time of German unification, see John Borneman and Jeffrey M. Peck, *Sojourners: The Return of German Jews and the Question of Identity* (Lincoln, 1995).

21. Reich-Ranicki's labor of love for German literature might be a part of this psychological pattern.

22. Daniel Jonah Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (New York, 1997). For a comprehensive assessment of Goldhagen's research and an analysis of the "Goldhagen Effect" on Holocaust studies, see Geoff Eley, ed., *The "Goldhagen Effect": History, Memory, Nazism—Facing the German Past* (Ann Arbor, 2000).

23. For a detailed investigation of Rafael Seligmann's novel *Der Musterjude* (*The Model Jew*) as a social satire on this politically (in)correct German–Jewish dialogue, see Frederick A. Lubich, "Rafael Seligmann's *Der Musterjude*: A Master Parody of German Jewish Führer Phantasies," *German Studies Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (2004), pp. 229–248.

24. In a sense, the current klezmer craze in Germany is part of a haunting return of the musical genius of Eastern European Jews, whose last great flourishing Reich-Ranicki had witnessed in the Warsaw Ghetto. Today there are 100 klezmer bands playing and touring in Germany (*New York Times*, August 29, 2004). For a perceptive interpretation of this phenomenon, see Leslie Morris, "The Sound of Memory," *German Quarterly*, Vol. 74 (2001), pp. 368–378.

25. For a good introduction into the diversity of Jewish experiences in Germany in the 1990s, see the following studies and anthologies: Lynn Rapaport, *Jews in Germany after the Holocaust: Memory, Identity, and Jewish–German Relations* (Cambridge, 1997); Susan Stern, *Speaking Out: Jewish Voices from United Germany* (Chicago, 1995); and Uri Kaufmann, ed., *Jewish Life in Germany Today* (Bonn, 1994).

26. According to Julius H. Schoeps and Olaf Glöckner ("Abschied vom 'gepackten Koffer,'" *Aufbau*, No. 9 [May 1, 2003], p. 2), since the mid-1990s, an annual number of 15,000 to 20,000 so-called Jewish contingency refugees from Russia have resettled in Germany.

27. Daniel Levy and Yfaat Weiss's *Ethnic Citizenship: German and Israeli Perspectives on Immigration* (New York, 2002), a recent collection of essays on

German and Israeli perspectives on immigration, strikes at the core of this German–Israeli controversy.

28. For a broader representation of current German Jewish issues and their reflection in literature, see Leslie Morris and Karen Remmler, eds., *Contemporary Jewish Writing in Germany: An Anthology* (Lincoln, 2002).

29. Sigmund Freud's 1919 article "Über das Unheimliche" (or "On the Uncanny," in *Studienausgabe in zwölf Bänden*, ed. Alexander Mitscherlich, Angela Richards, James Strachey [Frankfurt, 1982], Vol. 4, pp. 241–274) explores the Oedipal fantasies surrounding the maternal body, man's original home, whose sexual territory becomes the son's terrifying taboo. Freud's exploration tries to shed light on the psychosexual transformation of the *Heimlich* into the *Unheimlich*, but he could not have foreseen how the beloved motherland would get perverted into the hellhole of the Holocaust.

30. For a recent German collection of essays by German Jews about their decision to stay in Germany, see Katja Behrens, Mario Simmel, and Ralph Giordano, eds., *"Ich bin geblieben—warum?" Juden in Deutschland heute* (Gerlingen, Germany, 2002).