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# The Continuation of War Trauma in the Novels of Hanns-Josef Ortheil

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## **Introduction**

'The past is not dead. It is not even past'. It is probably not accidental that two of the seminal texts of the early seventies, one West and one East German, bore this sentence of William Faulkner as their motto. Both Alfred Andersch's novel *Winterspelt* (1974) and Christa Wolf's autobiographical text *Kindheitsmuster* (1977) are concerned with the extent to which the present is still haunted and therefore determined by the past. While the focus of Andersch's narrative is the examination of the possibility of an alternative ending to the war which would have changed the preconditions of post-war German history and thus identifies the war and not just National Socialism as determining Germany's political present, Wolf's autobiographical enquiry into her childhood under National Socialism falls under the category of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (coming to terms with the past) that takes its cue from the realisation that National Socialism had never been fully confronted at a personal and institutional level. Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's claim that the Germans had missed out on mourning and, both individually and collectively, suppressed the confrontation with National Socialist atrocities in and through the Economic Wonder had several implications.<sup>1</sup> The suppression of guilt in the immediate post-war period displaced the act of confronting National Socialist crimes onto the next generation(s) which in turn came to see their historical past in predominantly Nazi terms. The increasing public awareness of National Socialist atrocities and the dimensions of suppression brought about by events like the 1963 Auschwitz trial in Frankfurt and plays such as Rolf Hochhuth's *The Deputy* (1963) and Peter Weiss' *Investigation* (1965) left the generation of the student movement with the realisation of their relatives' complicity in these crimes.<sup>2</sup>

While a decade later Christa Wolf was confronting her own past, young writers in West Germany tried to come to terms with their parents' past that was still haunting their present, in what came to be known as the 'father-novel', a genre flourishing as late as the mid 70s and the early 80s. The model was Bernward Vesper's *Die Reise*, written in 1971, but posthumously published in 1977. Vesper, son of eminent Nazi poet Will Vesper, in a radical search for authenticity attempted to locate and exorcise the Nazi father in himself but subsequently committed suicide. The psychoanalyst and critic Michael Schneider has described these father novels as a 'symptom of a present closing in on itself [...] that cannot be lived to the full extent because it is still under the spell of a dark past'.<sup>3</sup>

In a recent essay on the question of the uniqueness of the Holocaust, Avishtai Margalit and Gabriel Motzkin described the Holocaust as a 'negative myth of origin' which has become a 'universal symbol of our culture' and which 'separates us from the past before the Holocaust'.<sup>4</sup> They developed the thesis that the Holocaust's uniqueness and meaning lies less in its character as a historical event than in the way it is perceived. This, however, only began in the mid 50s, while in the previous years the focus had been on the war itself.<sup>5</sup> In Margalit's and Motzkin's view it is this perception and experience of the Holocaust which makes it 'a focal point in the contemporary discussion about memory'.<sup>6</sup> However, because of the absolute break that the Holocaust constitutes in this perception, the experience of history since 1945 is one of discontinuity. It is this discontinuity, I would argue, which in the case of Germany, due to the omission of mourning, forecloses memory and the full realisation of this break in a singular concentration on the question of guilt.<sup>7</sup> The suppression of guilt and the displacement of full confrontation with National Socialism amongst other things brings about a conflict between the personal experiences and memories of the war participants and the question of collective guilt. The commonplace euphemistic term of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* for any aspect of public discussion of National Socialism is very significant in this respect for it replaces the recurrent act of memory with an idea of finality in overcoming the past and remains locked in a continuous re-presentation of atrocities.<sup>8</sup> Thus a structure of repeated denial is generated which finds its expression in the 'father-novels' I have cited. Schneider has observed that the parents'

suppression of guilt, their insistence on their own sufferings and their subsequent silence about the Third Reich is repeated by their children's denial of their parent's wartime experiences and sufferings.<sup>9</sup> The cycle of suppression and subsequent forgetting, virulent in the parental generation's fiction of a 'zero hour' and a new beginning in 1945, is repeated by the student movement's rejection of its parents. From this perspective, German social history presents itself as a history of repeated abrupt discontinuities which overshadow the continuity of psychological conflicts that remain unfronted. Schneider pointed out that the radicalness and violence of the student movement, especially the emergence of the urban terrorist group Red Army Faction, in a way unconsciously repeated National Socialist extermination fantasies.<sup>10</sup> This repetition of breaks and rejections of family histories thus paradoxically prevents any full experience of the discontinuity that the war and National Socialism meant. In this many of the 'father-novels' constitute the symptom of a past that does not want to pass rather than a satisfactory confrontation and resolution of the problem.

### **Hanns-Josef Ortheil**

This particular phenomenon is the central aspect and concern of Hanns-Josef Ortheil's novels, especially of his first and second novel, *Fermer*<sup>11</sup> and *Hecke*,<sup>12</sup> as well as his last book *Abschied von den Kriegsteilnehmern*.<sup>13</sup> Since these themes are historical it is necessary to give some biographical background. Ortheil was born in Cologne in 1951 as the fifth of four brothers, all of whom had previously died as result of the war. The first child died in a premature birth owing to a bombing raid in Berlin, the second was hit in the head by a German shell splinter at the age of three in the last days of the war. His mother then had two more children who died shortly after birth as an effect of the deep traumatic shock his mother suffered at the death of her sons. The experience of the war, the struggle and failure to keep her second child alive had left her with a deep anxiety trauma which resulted in severe depression. Furthermore, her speech capacity had been affected by a shell splinter which had hit her head, and as a result of which she lost her speech for several years. Thus Ortheil spent his first few years in a silent, symbiotic relationship with his mother, a 'soundproof room' in which 'both of us

had become the other's mirror'.<sup>14</sup> His father, who had been at the Eastern front as a land surveyor, had equally become 'silent and tired'. However, the continuation of the war horrors is felt by the young Ortheil in the impression of a fragile present that can implode at any minute: 'I was under the impression they had only meagrely escaped the war which was talked about almost daily a decade after its end, secretly the war was still stuck in their bodies [...]' (EE, 80). Furthermore, the origin of this trauma is unwittingly continued in the last surviving son who grows up under the spell of the one brother who had lived a short life: 'One could neither see nor hear him, nevertheless I felt when he was present' (EE, 79). Thus, reinforced by his mother's stories about his predecessor(s) he grows up with the felt task of re-embodiment of the dead: 'And I was the First who had to prove to my brothers, allegedly looking down from heaven, that they would live on in me, that I was reincarnating them' (EE, 23).

In exploring the folds of this family history, Ortheil ventures to approach the suppressed and forgotten areas of parental experiences and their effects on the psyche and lives of 'those born after' in Bertolt Brecht's famous phrase.<sup>15</sup> What makes his novels distinct from the 'father-novels' is their high level of artistic construction. This raises the autobiography to the representational level of a social novel. Where most of the texts of the late 70s were highly personal, confessional texts with a relatively low level of abstraction, in Ortheil's case the boundaries between autobiography and fiction are distinctly blurred, with a level of symbolisation that intends the novels to become representative of 'the inner (hi)story of those born after that grew up in West Germany'.<sup>16</sup>

Ortheil sees this 'inner history' as still very much under the spell of suppressed wartime trauma. His first novel *Fermer* tells the story of a young deserter from military service who embarks on a flight through Germany which turns into a journey of self-discovery. The main character is a late representative of *Neue Innerlichkeit* (New Interiority), a phenomenon of 70s West German literature and society which was characterised by an inward turn towards radical subjectivity, away from of a society which was experienced as limiting, ever more rationalised and fragmenting.<sup>17</sup> Ortheil interprets this turn from an alienating society as a survival reflex which nevertheless essentially leads to a *cul de sac* situation. His protagonist Fermer, confronted with a society which thrusts

its demands of conformity on to him, retreats into inner space until 'he hit upon nothing but himself' (F, 62). Moreover, the demands of contemporary life, in its repetitious and automatic nature, have occupied him in such a way, that 'nothing led me back to my own life' (F, 129). His unreflected concentration on himself leaves him unaware of the social and historical determinants for his situation especially since in the process of his withdrawal, Fermer has forgotten his personal history in the form of childhood memories. Instead he concentrated on 'hopes for a totally different life, which had nothing to do with all that was past' (F, 129). The prize for this total retreat is a lost capacity to act and interact and, most significantly, he loses the capacity to communicate his experience in language: 'There was something in him, which was never addressed and of which, if he only could hit on it, he could have spoken at length. But there was no beginning to venture into this darkness' (F, 129). Ortheil reads the desperate retreat into inner space as part of a cycle of forgetting and suppression of personal and social history.

The narrative, largely modelled on the tradition of the German educational novel, leads its protagonist out of that situation towards an understanding of the historical preconditions of his existence. Two steps are important in this development. The first occurs when he stays at his friend Lotta's house and with her younger brother Ferdinand one evening discovers a box of old family photos which show an elder brother who had died around the time of the student revolt. This brother had confronted his parents with accusations in respect to his father's party career under National Socialism. He 'always mistrusted [his parents] and asked how the father had spent the war, how many people he had on his conscience, [...]' (F, 233). Lotta's family is torn apart by this irresolvable conflict. The brother behaved 'as if the war was still continuing, as if the enemy was lurking everywhere, as if every face was suspicious' (F, 234). While the brother develops 'an almost blind hate towards the past', the father treats him, 'as if he didn't exist any more, his pictures disappeared from photo-albums and he tried to conceal him from the other family members' (F, 234). After his death, he disappeared from family memory so that Ferdinand has no knowledge of him. The centrality of this story in the novel gives it an exemplary status that serves as an explanation for the conditions of the present. The text represents this conflict as a continuation

of radical interruptions of personal and social history that obscure the preconditions of the present. Ferdinand refers to the rediscovered photographs as 'another trace, maybe a rope which leads from the dark into the present' (F, 166). This present is described by the novel as stilted, frozen and determined by an obsessive order.<sup>18</sup> In this situation of frozen silence one has to develop a special gaze to see through the standstill of material objects: 'Yes, said Fermer, this is the way to look at the connections; the secret language of people - that is the language of their houses and gardens, the pictures, windows and streets. We have to understand this secret language of images and get behind the things which remain hidden' (F, 168).

Fermer's parents live in a similarly frozen present. Returning home he is confronted with their incapacity to understand his motivations for desertion. Fermer notices that he doesn't know anything about his parents: 'What did he know about them? How secretly their life had passed in front of him! Had they not hidden themselves from him all these years?' (F, 221). What is important here is that Ortheil attributes the reasons for this silence and mutual non-understanding almost equally to both parties. A friend points out to Fermer that it is his task to break the silence and try to understand them. Fermer's attempts, though, are not very successful. He has, however, achieved a better understanding of his parents, if not with them, and thus a greater insight into the preconditions of his own history. The break between the generations is not removed but it is made conscious and experienced as one that transcends the individual in its historical dimensions.

The second stage is the extrapolation of this personal story onto a historical level. Fermer spends several days with a reclusive historian near his parents' village who has written the region's social history. Through him Fermer understands the topographical, social and mental history of the region, a history of continued memory loss, determined by crop cycles, church hierarchy and mutual control through gossip. The aftermath of the war appears as the central reason for the loss of memory in the second half of the century: 'After the war a fever broke out, attempting to reconstruct everything as it was. [...] All the hectic activities were lacking in quiet and restraint. [...] The rebuilding and repairing served to obliterate the memories' (F, 195).

Ortheil's second novel *Hecke* is concerned with the recapturing of these lost memories through narration. It is the story of a man who, while looking after his parents' house in the country, begins writing down his mother's wartime experiences. His mother's own reference to this time does not go beyond February 1933 when she had been arrested by the Nazis for refusing co-operation. The consecutive events, the mother's engagement to a local boy who joined the SA for career reasons, their move to Berlin and the subsequent death of the first child, and finally the death of the second child in the last days of the war from a shell splinter are pieced together by the son in a detective effort the complexity of which is reflected in the novel's complicated time structure.

The narrative present is determined by a silence between all three parties, mother and son and the parents themselves. This present is, again, under the spell of an unconflicted trauma, the origin of which is the experience of the war. The parents' house is characterised by an 'almost supernatural order' which the mother restores after every visit 'so that I find them again a few weeks later, lost in time, as if nobody had ever touched them' (H, 10). The mother's narrative circles obsessively around the experience of her arrest which is always repeated in the same words. This, rather than being an act of memory, is her means of keeping the memories at bay: 'My mother forgets while she narrates; but only through narration does she master her forgetting' (H, 23). This generates the 'prisonhouse of stories' (H, 280) in which the son is captured in a repetitive role inscribed in the mother's narrative: 'The simpleton listener is silent. With every sentence that he listens to he is getting deeper into the dreamlike wave of forgetting' (H, 51). The re-telling of his mother's concealed story thus constitutes an act of liberation from this prison of history. This prison is strengthened by the unrealised continuity of psychological wounds. Furthermore, the re-telling is a re-connection to the severed roots of family and country history.

In the face of his dead predecessors the son grows up with the feeling of having to replace the dead while at the same time having to 'compete with these broken off, unfinished and halted histories' (H, 309). When, in an act of resistance and self-determination, he cuts himself loose from this hold of the dead, he also severs the ties, leading to an alienation of the previous symbiotic relationship with his mother. Disgusted by history, which

determined his family's fate, he takes refuge in a 'zero-hour' myth: 'Was I to recognise these soldiers as my ancestors, these marching troops as my forerunners? [...] No, I did not want anything to do with this (his) story. [...] The war - that was the time before my birth, another time which had no relation to the time I experienced' (H, 37). Writing down his mother's story is not only an attempt at returning the suppressed and forgotten memories to their owner, but even more importantly an act of self-understanding in which the unrealised continuity of wartime trauma is broken by the experience of the historical discontinuity that determined it.

*Abschied von den Kriegsteilnehmern* is a reflection on the parental conflict that is symptomised by the 'father-novels' and on the conflict between the parents' memories and their children's focus on National Socialism. Taking its cue from Ortheil's family history, it is the story of a writer who, trying to come to terms with his father's death, reopens old wounds and realises how his father's war experiences and the mental problems arising from them have shaped his own life. Ortheil interprets the father's war experience as a geographical and historical dislocation. The war splits the father's life into a time *before* and *after* with the war as a suppressed void. Exclusively concentrating on rebuilding the present, he declares the past as 'invalid' (AK, 316). The father, a man with an intense bond to his Rhineland birthplace, had been moved eastwards by the war to the Eastern front. The father's post-war life is characterised by constant journeys westwards, which he undertakes with his young son, a repetitious counter-movement to his forced displacement in the east. The suppression of his wartime experiences, the lack of *Trauerarbeit* (mourning work) destroys the father's capacity for *Heimat*; he remains locked in an obsessive repetition of the dislocation and a series of endless homecomings where he can never be at home. This psychological impossibility of *Heimat*, caused by an unrealised continuity of trauma within a not fully experienced historical discontinuity, is repeated by the son in his disturbed relation to Germany.

During his adolescence, his close bond to his father was disrupted by his discovery of the father's implication in historical guilt. He had questioned the father about Auschwitz but he refuses to admit any knowledge: 'and thus we had been facing each other like the accused and the judge' (AK, 105). The more the son plays the accuser, the more the father insists on

his role as a victim. 'And thus our trial had remained eternally pending, sometimes we were unable to look at each other for weeks, [...]' (AK, 108). The experience of Auschwitz as the end of history created a paradox within the son's own existence: 'In bad moments I had believed the history of the country I was born in after the war had been finished once and for all, while on the other hand my birth was a visible sign that history was continuing' (AK, 108). The son thus accepts the 'traumatisation by the Holocaust as historical heritage'<sup>19</sup> at the cost of a rejection of his ancestors, their history and the country that grew out of it: 'And thus the hate of my father, [...] had been a hate of my father's historicity' (AK, 108). 'Germany, I thought, consists of all sorts of villages, of nothing but bombed, messed up and reconstructed villages. It was this Germany which I had tried to leave behind' (AK, 92).

The father constitutes a super ego, from which the son, even in rejection, has never liberated himself. He is the origin of his writing career since it is he who makes the son write down their travels. On the death of the father, the son manically repeats their movement west on a trip which takes him from the US to the island of Santo Domingo where he begins writing down his father's history. The liberation from the super ego, as well as from the hold the family trauma has over the son, happens through a writing process in which he confronts the suppressed complex. The process of writing thus constitutes a step from melancholia to mourning, a piece of *Trauerarbeit*.<sup>20</sup> Working through the family history, the son is at last able to lay the past to rest. The final image of the novel is the son carrying the dead war participants eastwards to bury them metaphorically: '[...] a long way I had carried them, for a long time [...]' (AK, 412).

Through this act of mourning, the son becomes able to experience fully the historical rupture and its continuing psychological consequences. The final step of the process is an act of symbolic return of the father's memories and an acknowledgement of the break constituted by the war: 'Hey Dad, I thought, I painted you a picture. [...] It is your picture, not my picture [...]. You always behaved as if your picture also had to be my picture, [...] but now I know your picture is not my picture, they only resembled each other for a long time' (AK, 391).

This form of coming to terms is different from the idea of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* outlined earlier because it restores the

hitherto denied memories in an act of mourning through which the subject's own historical conditions can be experienced. The novel contains a passage of about twenty-five pages where the father's war experiences are described by the son in an act of remembrance. In this acknowledgement of the father's war experiences, the dead father becomes a sacrifice on the son's behalf. The father had, in a characteristic form of denial, always insisted on his status as a victim of war. In German, the terms victim and sacrifice are covered by the same word, *Opfer*. In a 1989 essay, Ortheil describes how growing up amongst 'uninterrupted gestures of mourning' had alerted him to the evasion of questions of guilt and prevented him from accepting the *Opfer*-status of his family, since he understood 'the word *Opfer* in a positive sense, as surrendering what is one's own for the purging of a common guilt'.<sup>21</sup> The memorial acknowledgement of the father's war experiences together with a symbolic burial at the end takes the form of such a sacrifice. This opens up for the son the hitherto untransgressable boundary of 1945 in an acceptance of the previously rejected 'gloomy country and the stony heights' (AK, 300). *Abschied von den Kriegsteilnehmern* ends with a joyous celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall as an opening up of a frozen present. In his latest book, a reflective diary of the years 1989 to 1995, Ortheil remarks of unification: 'In the light of Unification the past acquires its full historical weight. For the earlier two divided states it was a problem of *Entsorgung* (the German term for the disposal of toxic waste), now it is an important active part of history'.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, this laying-to-rest of the dead ancestors does not represent an act of finality, since it is connected with the discovery of the conditions of the subject as originating in the horrors of war. Ortheil's writing can be described as a continuous struggle against the silence that determined his early childhood. The eloquence and musical qualities of his prose point to its origin in a struggle for language of which it always remains conscious. His novels develop a prolonged dialogue with dead family members which has been described by one critic as a 'topographical aesthetics of memory'.<sup>23</sup> In reply to Adorno's thesis that writing poetry after Auschwitz was barbaric,<sup>24</sup> Paul Celan justified the writing of poetry insofar as it is mindful of its dates, i.e. its origin in Auschwitz.<sup>25</sup> In a similar fashion to Celan's idea that 'every poem has its 20th January written into

it',<sup>26</sup> for Ortheil 'the lifelines of our family, of my parents and myself have a far away vanishing point, the 6th April 1945, the day when my second brother, almost three years of age, died' (EE, 17).

Ortheil's novels reflect, probably for the first time in contemporary German writing, on the continuity of suppression and forgetting amidst the discontinuous family narratives and thus constitute a meta-narrative, a comment on post-war German literature and social history. However, in extrapolating from family to social history, Ortheil's meta-narrative presupposes and constructs a homogeneous 'generation' of those born after that. Ortheil the writer then comes to narrate as 'collective biography'.<sup>27</sup> While the Gruppe 47 and particularly writers like Günter Grass and Heinrich Böll had the term 'conscience of the nation' thrust upon them, something Böll felt quite uncomfortable with, Ortheil's novels are marked with his desire to become a kind of spokesperson for his envisaged generation, post-1980s literature and German 'inner' history. Their significance, however, lies in charting and historicising a central part of (West)-German mental history.<sup>28</sup> I would like to close with a poem by the German poet Paul Zech, written in exile in Mexico in 1945, which in hindsight seems extraordinarily sensitive and far-sighted:

The guilt laid upon the children into the second  
and third generation: who could coldly  
pass it by? The verdict concerns us all  
and nobody is allowed to dodge aside

as if before a leper  
upon whom not a single shred of healthy skin remains.  
Only he has interwoven himself with the severed roots  
who is one and agreed with the thought

that the obligation is indivisible  
and that the screams address him, too:  
'Woe unto you, that you are a German!'

Only in closest tie and unison  
of father, son and grandson  
can we settle what we owe our creditors.<sup>29</sup>

## NOTES

All Translations from the German are my own.

<sup>1</sup> Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*, München, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> See Helmut Peitsch's introduction to *European Memories of the Second World War*, ed. by H. Peitsch, C. Burdett and C. Gorrara, forthcoming (1998)

<sup>3</sup> See Michael Schneider, 'Väter und Söhne posthum' in: Schneider, *Den Kopf verkehrt aufgesetzt oder Die melancholische Linke* (Darmstadt, Luchterhand, 1980), 8-64, here p.9.

<sup>4</sup> Avishtai Margalit and Gabriel Motzkin, 'Der Holocaust. Zur Einzigartigkeit eines historischen Geschehens' in: *lettre internationale* (1996), vol 4, 23-27, here p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> See Margalit and Motzkin, p.23.

<sup>6</sup> Op.cit., p. 27.

<sup>7</sup> The expression 'mercy of late birth', introduced by Chancellor Kohl in the early '80s, to denote the generations born too late to be implicated in National Socialism, can be seen as an example of this.

<sup>8</sup> Margalit and Motzkin make a similar point when they state that 'since the Holocaust the focus of memory has been less the content of the life destroyed than the process of its destruction', op.cit, p.27.

<sup>9</sup> See Schneider, op.cit., p.10f.

<sup>10</sup> See Schneider, 'Über die Außen- und die Innenansicht eines Selbstmörders. Notwendige Ergänzungen zu Bernward Verspers *Die Reise*' in: Schneider, op.cit., 65-79. Vesper, who had a child with the founding RAF member Gudrun Ensslin, frequently refers to the bourgeois class as 'vegetables' which have to be 'exterminated'. The problem of an unconscious continuation of National Socialist ideology fragments in the next generation has received growing attention in recent years. See for example Anita Eckstaedt, *Nationalsozialismus in der zweiten Generation*, (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1989) and Tilmann Moser, *Politik und seelischer Untergrund*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1993).

- <sup>11</sup> Hanns-Josef Ortheil, *Fermer* (Frankfurt, Fischer, 1979), quoted from the 1991 paperback edition (München, Piper), quotations from the text are given as follows: (F, page number).
- <sup>12</sup> Hanns-Josef Ortheil, *Hecke* (Frankfurt, Fischer, 1983), quotations from the text are given as follows: (H, page number).
- <sup>13</sup> Hanns-Josef Ortheil, *Abschied von den Kriegsteilnehmern* (München, Piper, 1992), quotations from the text are given as follows: (AK, page number).
- <sup>14</sup> Hanns-Josef Ortheil, *Das Element des Elefanten* (München, Piper, 1994), p.27. Further quotations are given as follows: (EE, page number).
- <sup>15</sup> See Brecht's poem 'An die Nachgeborenen' ('To those born after') from the Svendborg poems (1939) where he addresses a future generation born after the war. *Brecht, Große kommentierte Berliner & Frankfurter Ausgabe*, herausgegeben von Werner Hecht, Jan Knopf, Werner Mittenzwei und Klaus-Dieter Müller, vol. 12 (Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1989) p. 85-87.
- <sup>16</sup> Hanns-Josef Ortheil, 'Werkstatt-Poetik', in: Ortheil, *Schauprozesse. Beiträge zur Kultur der 80er Jahre* (München, Piper, 1990), p.21.
- <sup>17</sup> The best assessment of this era is still Michael Rutschky's *Erfahrungshunger* (Köln, Kiepenheuer, 1980).
- <sup>18</sup> It is worth noting in this context that Rainer Werner Fassbinder's 1978 film *The Marriage of Maria Braun*, a critique of post-war Germany as obsessively concerned with an imaginary future and thereby repressing the present, ends with an image of the then chancellor, Helmut Schmidt. The idea of a frozen present is also to be found in Margarethe von Trotta's 1981 film about the relationship between Gudrun Ensslin and her sister *Die bleierne Zeit* (*Leadene Time*, English title: *German Sisters*), an expression she may have borrowed from Ortheil's 1979 essay 'Deserteure in bleierner Zeit'.
- <sup>19</sup> See Volker Wehdeking, 'Ortheils Abschied von den Kriegsteilnehmern als Generationenkonflikt und Geschichtslektion', in: Manfred Durzak/Hartmut Steinecke (eds.) *Hanns- Josef Ortheil - Im Innern seiner Texte* (München, Piper, 1995) 148-66, here p. 158.

<sup>20</sup> See Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', *Standard Edition*, Vol XIV (London, 1957) 243-258, esp. p. 244-5.

<sup>21</sup> Hanns-Josef Ortheil, *Schauprozesse*, op.cit., p. 97.

<sup>22</sup> Hanns-Josef Ortheil, *Blauer Weg* (München, Piper, 1996), p.99.

<sup>23</sup> See Manfred Jurgensen '>...als wollte ich zu mir kommen.<' Erzählmodelle in den Romanen Hanns-Josef Ortheils', in: Durzak/Steinecke, op.cit., 37-51, here p.44.

<sup>24</sup> See Theodor W. Adorno, 'Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft' in: *Lyrik nach Auschwitz, Adorno und die Dichter* (Stuttgart, reclam, 1995), 27-49, here p.49.

<sup>25</sup> See Paul Clean 'Der Meridian, Rede anlässlich der Verleihung des Georg-Büchner-Preises', in: *Lyrik nach Auschwitz? Adorno und die Dichter*, op.cit., p.78.

<sup>26</sup> The 20th January, the start of Büchner's story Lenz, is also the date of the Wannsee-conference where Heydrich gave his directives for the extermination of the Jews, see Paul Celan, 'Der Meridian', p. 78.

<sup>27</sup> See Jurgensen, op.cit., p.37.

<sup>28</sup> Ortheil's metaphor for his enterprise is 'Land-surveying', see my 'The Land Surveyor. Hanns-Josef Ortheil's search for his poetic home', William/Parkes/Preece (eds.) *Contemporary German Writers, Their Aesthetics and Their Language* (Berne, Lang, 1996), 97-108.

<sup>29</sup> Die Schuld, den Kindern auferlegt bis in das zweite  
und dritte Glied: wer könnte kalt daran  
vorübergehn? Der Schuldspruch geht uns alle an  
und keinem ists erlaubt, daß er zur Seite

sich flüchte wie vor einem Leprakranken,  
an dem kein Fetzen heiler Haut mehr klebt.  
Der erst hat mit den unterbrochenen Wurzeln sich verwebt,  
der eins und einig ist mit dem Gedanken,

daß das Verpflichtende nicht teilbar ist  
und daß auch ihn die Schreie meinen:

'Weh Dir, daß Du ein Deutscher bist!  
Nur in dem bündigsten Vereinen  
von Vater, Sohn und Enkelkind  
ist tilgbar was wir unsern Gläubigern schuldig sind.

Paul Zech, *Vom schwarzen Revier zur neuen Welt*, Collected poems (Frankfurt, Fischer, 1990), p.130.