

Valerie Heffernan & Gillian Pye

**Trends and Transitions in
Contemporary German-language Writing by Women**

Women have never played a stronger role in German literature than since the turn of the new millennium. As writers, editors, publishers, translators, critics, and readers, they are a powerful force in the shaping of the twenty-first century literary landscape. This book aims to illuminate the contribution of a number of emerging female German-language writers to this terrain. Its perspective is broad: it argues that despite their contribution to literary life, women writers remain as yet underrepresented in academic criticism of recent German-language fiction. This volume therefore belongs to a period of scholarly transition: a space where women seem, despite their highly visible activity, to remain nevertheless partially out of sight. The essays in this collection seek to bring them closer to view by exploring some of the ways in which female writers are addressing key themes and concerns of recent years. It is vital to recognise that each writer speaks from a multifaceted place, which is defined by material, cultural, historical but also gendered constraints, and so the analyses in this book open up, but do not restrict themselves to, gendered readings of texts.

Rather, in a hypermediated and hypermobile environment, it is the notion of transition in its broadest sense that links the work of the authors covered in this volume. As Karen Leeder notes, the poet Durs Grünbein has argued that in many ways, ‘the quality of transit, in all its full range of meanings defines the art of the present’.¹ The term transition – moving ‘across’ or ‘over’ – expresses an in-between state: a passage from one place to another, or a connection between points. It is this combination of movement and networking which seems particularly symbolically potent in our contemporary world. That we operate within a mode of transition is, it seems, perceived as a basic condition of, rather than an exception to, our existence in an information age.²

This volume introduces ten emerging voices in German-language literature by women. All of these female authors have in common that they are writing from different perspectives about various notions of transition: protagonists who are attempting to relocate from one country or culture to another or who must adapt to new personal, political,

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economic, and material circumstances; families who seek to move forward with their lives by coming to terms with the trauma of the past; bodies recovering from illness and infirmity; characters who come to a new understanding of themselves and their environment through the demons they have faced and the bridges they have crossed. Their texts speak to the diverse modalities of transition that characterise German society and culture in the twenty-first century, such as the adaptation to still evolving political and social conditions in a newly united Germany; globalisation, the dissolution of borders, and the changing face of Europe; dramatic shifts in the meaning of national, ethnic, sexual, gender, religious, and class identities and their relationship to society as a whole; rapid technological advancement and the revolutionary power of new media, which have in turn brought about radical alterations in the connection between public and private, personal and political. In their literature, the authors presented here reflect on the notion of transition and offer some unique interventions on its meaning in the contemporary era.

The term ‘emerging’ is used here in its broadest sense, as the writers featured differ significantly in terms of their age, the length of their writing career, the number and array of works they have published, and the recognition that they have received to date. Ilma Rakusa, for instance, has been writing and publishing fiction since the 1980s, but it is only in the first decade of this century that her work has begun to be discussed more widely and that she has begun to attract the critical attention which she deserves. Names such as those of Julia Franck, Jenny Erpenbeck, Kathrin Schmidt, Kathrin Röggla, and Juli Zeh may well be known to the reader, as these writers have already produced a significant body of work; but again, it is only in recent years that they have begun to gain wider recognition. Others, including Eva Menasse, Eleonora Hummel, Larissa Boehning, and Lea Gottheil, are relative newcomers to the literary scene who have not yet gained much critical attention, since their work is still relatively unknown. Nevertheless, the substance and quality of their literature indicate that they bear comparison with some of the more established writers featured here.

Women and German-language literature

Since the turn of this century, women writers have begun to play a much more prominent role in the German-language literary arena, as is

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evidenced by the critical attention they are receiving. One strong indicator of the growing success of female authors is their frequent selection for literary awards. Since its inception in 2005, for example, the prestigious Deutscher Buchpreis for the best German-language novel has been awarded to five women and three men.³ Some of the more established awards such as the Mara-Cassens-Preis for the best debut novel in German, inaugurated in 1970, and the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis for non-German authors writing in the German language, established in 1985, have shown a marked upswing in the number of female winners since the turn to the twenty-first century.⁴ Moreover, women writing in the German language are also gaining a stronger profile abroad, a fact reflected in their regular appearance on the shortlists for prizes awarded to books in translation. For instance, of the nine German-language novels shortlisted for the UK-based Independent Foreign Fiction Prize since its revival in 2001, five were by female writers.⁵ It is also worth mentioning, however, that many of the more traditional prizes, for example the main Literaturpreis der Stadt Bremen, which has been in existence since 1954, continue to be dominated by male writers.⁶ Nevertheless, the evidence suggests that women are gaining considerable ground in high profile honours, both at home and abroad.

Reports on employment within the culture industry in Germany suggest that women are also playing an increasingly important role in the diffusion and dissemination of literature. A recent study that focuses specifically on the publishing sector comes to the somewhat stark conclusion that 'Die Buchbranche ist weiblich'.⁷ As polemical as this claim may appear, it seems that it is borne out by compelling statistical evidence. In the course of the study, which was commissioned by the network BücherFrauen and published in October 2010, media specialist Romy Fröhlich surveyed over 1200 professionals working in all areas of the publishing industry. Her findings confirm that women make up the vast majority of employees in the sector; as much as 80% of the workforce is female.⁸ Fröhlich's survey also reflects statistics cited in a German government report from 2009 which concludes that women constitute the majority of employees in the cultural and creative arenas more generally.⁹ Although the figures also indicate that men still occupy the majority of top management and senior executive roles, Fröhlich's study reveals that the number of women in positions of power within the publishing industry is increasing. In any case, the strong female presence

in this field attests to the clear and growing influence of women as a driving force within the cultural, and especially the literary, arena.

To complete the picture, recent studies have also reaffirmed the importance of women as consumers of literature. Julia Karolle-Berg and Katja Skow cite evidence which indicates that in Germany, as elsewhere, women read far more fiction than men. They paint a picture of the average German reader as an educated woman in her forties who is likely to buy about fifteen books a year.¹⁰ Given the anticipated reader of contemporary German texts, it is therefore no surprise that their analysis of the marketing of literature in Germany comes to the conclusion that 'women carry the market in sales and are thus a force to be reckoned with'.¹¹ As producers, mediators, and consumers of contemporary German literature, women have clearly begun to take centre stage.

At this point in the twenty-first century, the obvious importance of women within the literary sphere might cause the discerning reader to question the need for a volume devoted specifically to showcasing emerging women writers. However, despite the commercial and critical success of contemporary female writers, their under-representation in academic criticism is striking. Academic books devoted to contemporary German writing still appear to place a far greater emphasis on male writers. For example, a cursory glance at some twenty-two volumes published between 1999 and 2011, all of which are devoted to surveying key aspects of recent (i.e. roughly post-1989) prose writing in German, reveals that a large majority of these make explicit mention of conspicuously more male than female writers in their tables of contents. Whilst it is true that female writers may also receive attention as part of more general discussions within individual chapters, the dearth of named female writers at the outset remains striking.¹² It is particularly unusual for a volume to feature a female writer whose work is not well known.¹³ As Lyn Marven argues, the imbalance with respect to women writers 'may now lie more in criticism of literature than its production'.¹⁴ The apparent mismatch between the success of women writers in recent years and their representation in current academic criticism suggest that there is still a need to focus attention on their work.

Moreover, retrospective glance at one phenomenon in the reception of women's writing in recent years offers an interesting example of how in some instances, the way in which women writers are received by literary critics differs markedly from the reception of their male colleagues. In a now notorious article published in the *Spiegel* magazine in 1999, which took as its point of departure the resurgence of interest in

home-grown German-language literature, the critic Volker Hage famously referred to the up-and-coming generation of women writers such as Karen Duve and Judith Hermann as ‘das literarische Fräuleinwunder’.¹⁵ Although his article also mentioned the success of male authors such as Christian Kracht and Benjamin Lebert, it was apparently less remarkable and less miraculous for a male writer to achieve commercial success and critical attention at home and abroad – or at least, Hage’s focus on the ‘wonder girls’ of German literature would imply this. Whilst publishing houses sought to cash in on the apparent popularity of young female writers to market their literature and women’s magazines carried glossy photos of these beautiful, extraordinary creatures, academics and other critics hurried to write against the notion of a ‘Fräuleinwunder’ and to demonstrate the inappropriateness of the label as an indicator of current trends in women’s writing.¹⁶ The young women writers named in Hage’s article – and many others beside – railed against what they perceived as the dismissal of their writing as a miracle; ‘Auch nach zweitausend Jahren christlicher Zeitrechnung’, wrote Julia Franck, ‘ist es noch alles andere als selbstverständlich, dass Frauen über ähnliche Fähigkeiten verfügen wie ihre männlichen Artgenossen’.¹⁷ Whether or not Hage’s designation was fitting, it served as the yardstick against which women’s writing was measured for quite a few years of this century.

It is important to emphasise, however, that there have been notable efforts to address the deficiency in academic studies of contemporary German literature by women. Jo Catling’s survey volume offers vital insights into a long history of women’s writing from the Middle Ages right up until the 1990s¹⁸ and Chris Weedon’s detailed study focuses on the development of women’s writing in the German-speaking countries in the post-war period.¹⁹ Two volumes that focus on women’s writing of the 1970s and 80s are particularly worthy of mention: Leslie Adelson’s feminist examination of texts by three female writers offers an exciting stimulus to debates about the literary representation of femininity, of female roles, and their performance and manipulation as part of a complex play of gender politics,²⁰ and the post-structuralist feminist approach used by Brigid Haines and Margaret Littler in their excellent analysis of six novels published between 1972 and 1990 reveals much about the complex question of (female) subjectivity in the contemporary era.²¹ A number of books have engaged specifically with more recent women writers’ treatment of key contemporary issues, such as the German past (Schaumann, Fredriksen).²² Edited collections, such as

those of Bartel and Boa²³ or Nagelschmidt²⁴ and essays such as those by Marven, Linklater, or Gerstenberger,²⁵ have also sought to bring contemporary women writers to the forefront of current academic debates in German, Swiss and Austrian studies. Furthermore, Marven and Taberner's inclusion of a number of up-and-coming women writers in their recent volume on emerging German-language novelists serves as an important point of reference for the present volume.²⁶

This book situates itself as part of these wider efforts, adding new names to the range of women writers covered in recent volumes of criticism, as well as opening up alternative perspectives on female writers who have only recently begun to earn the critical attention they deserve. This project does not seek to offer uniquely feminist readings of the authors presented, nor do the contributions aim to suggest that the writers featured are somehow representative of a particular generation of women. It does, however, engage with the question of gender in a broader sense, situating the writers in the context of German-language prose in general and opening up gender-sensitive insights into wider concerns and themes. The selected writers also reflect an interesting cross-section of voices emanating from German-speaking culture in Austria, Switzerland, and Germany as well as encompassing a certain ethnic and social diversity, showing perspectives from both East and West and transnational, multilingual identities. This book makes no claim to comprehensive coverage however: Turkish-German writers, for example, though a considerable force in German-language writing today, are not represented here, and the interested reader will find some excellent material on this topic, as well as the topic of migrant writing and transnational literature in general, in recent work by Adelson, Arnold, and Schmitz.²⁷ Finally, the contributions in this volume are not oriented towards the formal diversity of literary production by women. The book does not seek to provide coverage of drama or poetry, for example, but focuses instead on recent novels.²⁸ In so doing, it seeks to situate the work of the chosen authors in the context of current concerns in German-language prose writing.

The writers considered in this volume are all participating in key debates addressed in recent German-language writing, issues which might certainly be considered contributory factors in anxieties of transition. These include the search for a (lost) Heimat, the attempt to reconstruct family history and to understand that history in the context of competing memory contests of guilt and suffering, as well as the search for authentic, close human relationships in an experience-

saturated, individualised world. Within the work of the authors considered here, issues of sex and gender, strongly implicated in bodily experiences such as illness and the passage from girl- to womanhood, also emerge as key components in heterogeneous identities in flux and transition.

Female family narratives

Recent volumes on contemporary German literature have highlighted the popularity of the 'Generationenroman' or family narrative since the Wende.²⁹ Working from the premise that the historical events of the twentieth century, and in particular the experience of National Socialism, have had a lasting impact on both German and Austrian society, as well as continuing to colour discourses of Swiss identity, these narratives explore the impact of history on the most basic unit of society, namely the family. These novels are most often written from the perspective of the third post-war generation, who, since they have no personal memories of this era, are dependent on the stories and memories passed on to them by their parents and grandparents. Thus, as Friederike Eigler emphasises, the contemporary 'Generationenroman' is not only characterised by a multi-generational perspective on the family past, but it also accentuates the complex and at times difficult processes by which family history is remembered and reconstructed.³⁰ In bringing to the fore the blind spots within the family story, these multigenerational narratives also point to aspects of German history that have been subsumed or suppressed by dominant historical narratives. Moreover, since the third post-war generation have no direct memories of the war, their temporal distance from the object of enquiry necessarily involves a creative investment on their part; contemporary family narratives thus often emphasise the imaginative element that is an inevitable part of the reconstruction of memory and history.³¹

The twentieth century encapsulates a period of momentous political, economic and social transformation, and many contemporary writers use the family as a prism through which to assess the human cost of these broader historical developments. Recent novels by Julia Franck, Monika Maron, Uwe Timm, Arno Geiger and Günter Grass depict familial relationships and intergenerational tension against the backdrop of historical events and thus offer an alternative vision of those events, one which incorporates and indeed emphasises their effect on ordinary

people. In exploring history through the lens of everyday family life, these family narratives touch upon what the Mexican microhistorian Luis González terms 'historia patria'; as opposed to the grand narrative of history, which focuses on the fate of the *patria* or fatherland, 'historia patria' tells the lesser-known story of the feminine and sentimental world of the home, the territory traditionally associated with the mother.³² The focus on the home and the family both serves as a counterfoil to the histories of great men and of great battles won and lost and offers a more inclusive image of the historical period.

Not unsurprisingly perhaps, generational novels by women often tend to focus on the hidden history of women's experiences of war and political turmoil – the mothers, sisters, and daughters who fight on the home front and whose battles tend to revolve around the domestic arena and the family. However, working against the cliché that women's writing, in its focus on the domestic rather than the public, shies away from bigger issues, these novels emphasise the very active role that women have played and continue to play in the broader historical narrative. For example, Julia Franck's *Die Mittagsfrau* (2007) presents strong female figures who strive to endure and to bring their families through the war; their struggles to tend to the sick and the wounded, to feed their children, to survive and keep going are presented as no less significant, no less historic than the battles that their fathers, husbands and sons are fighting on the front. Moreover, the protagonist Helene's decision to abandon her only child at the end of the war reveals in its poignancy the force with which the personal and the historical can sometimes collide.³³

One topic that has long been a feature of women's writing is its concern with interrogating the roles ascribed to women, both within the family and in the wider arena. Heike Bartel and Elizabeth Boa's recent volume on contemporary German women writers emphasises that many contemporary female writers continue to play with and subvert traditional gender roles in their writing, and indeed, this is one of the reasons why they chose the title *Pushing at Boundaries* for their volume.³⁴ Alongside this, the historical overview offered by the generational novel offers particular insight into the extent and the manner in which women's roles have changed in the course of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. This is especially true of texts that focus on generations of women; in examining the various gender roles ascribed to grandmother, mother and daughter, the generational perspective allows us to make useful comparisons between eras, to see clearly the various

transitions and transformations that have taken place and – perhaps more poignantly in terms of women’s emancipation and participation in public life – to identify what has not changed noticeably. The fact that female characters’ struggle to find a voice in (patriarchal) society remains a strong theme in contemporary literature indicates that despite the great strides made by women to date, the pressure to conform to social expectations still plays a role women’s lives.

Furthermore, in their focus on the maternal past, many contemporary novels by women also imply a sense of maternal legacy or matrilineality. This idea is given concrete expression in the objects and possessions handed down from mother to daughter; for example, in the image of the fur coat that figures in three of the novels dealt with in this volume.³⁵ However, in more abstract terms also, many generational narratives by women explore what is passed down from one (female) generation to the next – as well as what remains unspoken, what is withheld, and what is denied – and how this impacts on the generations that follow. Tess Cosslett uses the term ‘matrilineal narrative’ to describe a text ‘which either tells the stories of several generations of women at once, or which shows how the identity of a central character is crucially formed by her female ancestors’.³⁶ In their exploration of female lineage, many family narratives by women writers investigate the impact of the past upon the present through this aspect of maternal legacy.

A number of ‘Generationenromane’ by German women writers encompass elements of female lineage and matrilineal narrative, and some of these have already been the focus of critical and scholarly attention. Monika Maron’s semi-autobiographical narrative *Panels Briefe* (1999), which thematises the narrator’s examination of her own family history across three generations, is one such narrative, and it is noteworthy that in this novel, the narrator’s fraught relationship with her mother looms large in her efforts to recover the memories of the past. Tanja Dückers’ *Himmelskörper* (2003) considers the question of how the individual’s fate is determined by the stories and memories passed on by the older generations – and by what is not talked about and not passed on.³⁷ Dagmar Leupold’s *Nach den Kriegen* (2007) is a semi-autobiographical novel that focuses on the female protagonist’s attempts to fill the gaps in her family memory by means of a creative engagement with her father’s war diaries and other documents. Significantly, here, a female narrator intervenes in the reconstruction of family memory at its intersection with official, male-dominated, historical accounts; directly

tackling her father's legacy, she claims the right for the female voice to take an active part in intergenerational communication.

Several of the novels discussed in this volume fall into the category of the family narrative or 'Generationenroman', and as is the case for those mentioned above, these texts also offer an alternative perspective on the broader historical narrative. This not only implies closer attention to the roles played by women in historical events, but also involves highlighting the significance of gender in processes of transmission. In her chapter on Eleonora Hummel's novels *Die Fische von Berlin* (2005) and *Die Venus im Fenster* (2009), which deal with the history of the Russian German collective, Linda Shortt highlights the gendered nature of experiences of expulsion and return and the transmission of these experiences, particularly between female family members. Daphne Seemann shows how the female narrator of Eva Menasse's *Vienna* (2005) reflects on the processes of reconstructing family narratives, filling the gaps, and healing the wounds of the past, and, crucially, writing women back into family history. The protagonist in Lea Gottheil's *Sommervogel* (2009), discussed by Siobhán Donovan, discovers information about her father's wartime activities that both offers a more complete picture of the past and radically alters the way in which she views her father and the country she has grown up in. In her analysis, Donovan shows how the female protagonist liberates herself from the constraints of (gendered) family tradition through her artistic activity, and later, her experience of serious illness.

Writing in 1989, Marianne Hirsch's analysis of a broad spectrum of literature by women noted that in almost all cases, female-centred family narratives tended to be written from the point of view of daughters at the expense of the maternal perspective. Whilst Hirsch celebrated what she saw as the gradual emancipation of daughters in the course of the twentieth century, she found that with very few exceptions, mothers were silenced or disregarded in literature by women. In response to this, Hirsch imagined 'a feminist family romance of mothers *and* daughters, both subjects, speaking to each other and living in familial and communal contexts which enable the subjectivity of each member'.³⁸ For Hirsch, it is blending of the voices of mothers and daughters that represents a future for women's writing:

The story of female development, both in fiction and theory, needs to be written in the voice of mothers as well as in that of daughters. [...] Only in

combining both voices, in finding a double voice that would yield a multiple female consciousness, can we begin to envision ways to 'live afresh'.³⁹

The focus on both mothers and daughters and multi-generational perspectives on the family past in many contemporary novels suggests that a number of women writers have begun to make the transition towards the feminist family romance envisioned by Hirsch. Of the novels featured in this volume, several value and even celebrate the maternal perspective in ways that we have not seen previously. In Franck's *Lagerfeuer*, Nelly's character can never be divorced from her role as mother, and yet her subjectivity, her autonomy and indeed her sexuality are celebrated in the narrative. Furthermore, she emerges as one of the strongest figures in the novel. Hummel's *Die Venus im Fenster* underlines the significance of female storytelling in the transmission of family identity; though the novel is told from the point of view of Alina, the granddaughter within the female line, the individual stories of her mother Hilda and her grandmother Erika represent crucial elements in Alina's understanding of her past and therefore in the construction of her own story. However, it is in Larissa Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe* (2007) that we see most clearly the fulfilment of Hirsch's vision of the feminist family romance. As Emily Jeremiah's analysis shows, Boehning's novel focuses on three generations of women troubled by the fallout of the Second World War. It is noteworthy that grandmother, mother, and daughter are each allowed space to relate their versions of the family past, and no one perspective is given priority over the other two. Furthermore, *Lichte Stoffe* highlights the collaborative work carried out by mother and daughter in their attempt to come to terms with their family history by finding, or if necessary inventing, an end to their story. The novel's presentation of maternal and filial perspectives working in harmony to produce a shared story comes closest to the kind of 'double voice' that Hirsch envisages.

Moving home: Changing notions of Heimat

Recent years have seen a resurgence of interest in the notion of Heimat, and the novels discussed in this volume are no exception. The concept itself is of course by no means a new phenomenon; as a number of recent volumes have shown, Heimat has a long history in the German imagination.⁴⁰ Located at the intersection of the private and the public, the idea of Heimat simultaneously denotes geographical space, familial

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ties, a sense of belonging and collective self-understanding, and yet it is more than merely that; as Peter Blickle argues, Heimat is at once ‘emotional, irrational, subjective, social, political, and communal’.⁴¹ The fact that over the years, the concept of Heimat was appropriated by various different regimes to promote a vision of German nationhood demonstrates on the one hand its remarkable malleability as a marker of Germanness and on the other, exposes problematic connections with instruments of power.⁴² For this reason, and also as a consequence of its association with the sentimental genre of the ‘Heimatfilm’, the notion of Heimat fell out of favour around the end of the 1960s.⁴³ Nonetheless, Celia Applegate is justified in asserting that for ‘almost two centuries, Heimat has been at the centre of a German moral – and by extension political – discourse about place, belonging and identity’.⁴⁴

As Linda Shortt discusses in her chapter in this volume, the concept of Heimat has experienced something of a comeback since the Wende, although it is noteworthy that its meaning and resonance have altered in accordance with the intense and rapid transformation that Germany has experienced during these years. The unification of the two Germanies entailed not only political and economic change, as the former GDR made the transition from state-controlled to market-based economy and from socialist state to democracy; it also brought with it a period of radical social transformation, which has in turn had repercussions in the cultural arena. In addition to the unification of the two Germanies, changes in the immigration laws since the beginning of this century have also given rise to new definitions of what it means to be German in the Berlin Republic. New citizenship laws which came into force on 1 January 2000 allow immigrants who have been living and working in Germany for more than eight years, and their children, to obtain German citizenship by naturalization. Since that year, over 1.4 million foreigners, almost half of whom are women, have become German citizens.⁴⁵ Of these new Germans, the biggest group by far, at almost half a million, are those of Turkish origin. Although these new regulations allow for a more inclusive legal interpretation of what constitutes Germanness, questions still remain about the relationship of these new Germans to their adopted home.⁴⁶

In the light of these changes, it is not surprising that the 1990s and the first decade of this century have seen a number of novels explore ideas of belonging and exclusion in relation to a changing understanding of Heimat.⁴⁷ Since, as Blickle argues, Heimat is often associated with an unconscious and regressive desire to avoid change and to ‘bury areas of

repressed anxiety', the resurgence of interest in cultural representations of Heimat would seem to indicate a certain level of unease in contemporary German culture.⁴⁸ On the one hand, this can be associated with anxieties regarding globalisation, transnationalism, cosmopolitanism, and the growing power of communication technologies and new media; on the other, unification and the shifting borders of Europe since 1989 have understandably brought to the fore new concerns about national self-perception as well as European identity. Now more than ever, writers and readers seem keen to explore meaning of Heimat in a globalised context and within what is imagined to be one nation.

As a number of analyses have pointed out, Heimat has long been linked to the feminine; on the one hand, this is expressed as a (feminine) sentimental connection to the land, and on the other in the guise of an association between the home and the mother.⁴⁹ Confino describes the fusion of Heimat with the feminine as follows:

While men were on the move, women were fixed to one place. In a changing world, home, family, and women were symbols of stability. The Heimat idea used these symbols in the same way and projected their meaning onto the national as a whole. By embracing women and home, Heimat became the favoured site of fond memories, sweet dreams, and ideal relationships.⁵⁰

It is significant that within this constellation, woman features as the image of reliability and steadfastness, both origin and destination, past and future. Moreover, according to Blickle, Heimat is in many senses the ideal woman, an idealisation of any given society's image of femininity.⁵¹

In the post-Wende period in Germany and the rapid transition to a unified state, the shifting concept of Heimat has a particularly gendered dimension. The absorption of the German Democratic Republic, its territory, and its citizens, into the Federal Republic occurred at a pace that no-one quite expected, and some critics have argued that the process of transition has had its greatest impact on East German women, who had enjoyed a certain level of gender equality in the former GDR. Ingrid Sandole-Staroste concludes from her interviews with women from the former GDR that 'the newly imposed institutional structures – political, economic, social, cultural – have been implemented by a predominantly male elite in whose interest it is to redefine East German women's social roles and space'.⁵² Rita Süßmuth, former President of the 'Bundestag' voices her criticism of the unification process in stronger terms:

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Niemand wird bestreiten können, daß sich die Vereinigungspolitik des Jahres 1990 mit Namen von Männern, nicht von Frauen verbindet. [...] Das „Männliche“ kommt nicht in bewußter Ausgrenzung der spezifischen Interessen von Frauen und Kindern zum Ausdruck, sondern darin, daß die unterschiedlichen Lebenslagen von Männern und Frauen nicht berücksichtigt werden. [...] Es fehlt vielen Männern die Sensibilität für die ökonomische Abhängigkeit der Frauen ohne eigenes Einkommen, für die geringe Bewertung der in der Familie geleisteten Arbeit, für die unzureichende eigenständige soziale Sicherheit im Alter.⁵³

Although Süßmuth's assumption here that the majority of women do not work outside of the home may seem outdated, there can be no doubt that women with young children were particularly hard-hit by the changes to their living conditions.⁵⁴ Thus, it is not surprising that East German women's experiences of and attitudes towards a newly unified German Heimat differ starkly from those of their male counterparts, and indeed, from those of women from the former West.

Given the association of Heimat with the feminine and the relationship of women to home, it is not surprising that images and representations of Heimat play a particularly strong role in texts by women. Many of the texts featured in this volume reflect on contemporary notions of Heimat and on the questions of local, regional, and national identity that are inextricably bound to it.

In Jenny Erpenbeck's *Heimsuchung*, as discussed by Gillian Pye, the house by the lake stands as an icon for the German Heimat, but the political and the gendered aspect of its ownership raise some interesting questions regarding the possibility of attaining Heimat, and of *whose* Heimat is at issue. In particular, the idea of female ownership is problematised. The landowner's daughters are the property of their father, and his apportioning of the land to them reflects his ownership of them rather than their independence. The architect designs the house for his wife as an expression of his love for her and of his desire to construct a home; however, for her, it is a space of isolation and ultimately oppression. Erpenbeck's novel indicates that although the desire for Heimat is universal, the experience of home is not.

Larissa Boehning and Julia Franck each offer an individual perspective on the notion of Germany as Heimat. Boehning, as Emily Jeremiah argues, undermines the clichéd image of a German Heimat in *Lichte Stoffe* by emphasising the lasting legacy of the Second World War and by associating Germany with racism and prejudice; Nele's estrangement from her mother is symbolic of her alienation from her

Heimat. Moreover, Evi's and Nele's black skin serves as a reminder that German identity in the contemporary era is hybrid and heterogeneous. The fact that Nele ultimately returns to her mother in Germany and that the women manage to find a way of patching up their differences suggests the potential for homecoming; however, it is significant that this can only be achieved by means of compromise. Valerie Heffernan focuses on Franck's *Lagerfeuer*, and she discusses how the novel offers an original take on a potential (West) German Heimat by probing the limitations of the German-German relationship during the Cold War era. Nelly, as mother, does her best to create a sense of home for her two young children in an improvised situation, but the prejudice and intolerance that the family experience in the West destabilise the clichéd image of the German Heimat. The fact that at the end of Franck's novel, three of her four narrators have not managed to make the transition to life in West Germany emphasises that for many, Heimat can only ever exist as a fantasy.

The inclusion of Austrian and Swiss writers in this volume allows for a wide panorama of views on Heimat, and two of these authors locate their texts very strongly within national borders. Eva Menasse's *Vienna*, as the title indicates, focuses on the life of a Viennese family and their efforts to fashion a strong and stable Heimat through crafting their family story. As Daphne Seemann shows in her analysis of Menasse's text, the traditional image of the ideal woman holding the fort at home while the men make history at the front is in part upheld in the narrative; however, the women's struggles to play their assigned roles in this scenario highlight the inappropriateness of those roles. Nevertheless, the city of Vienna appears as a binding force in this narrative, drawing the family home and enabling them to achieve some form of togetherness, however farcical and insincere it may appear. The Swiss countryside is more than a mere backdrop to Lea Gottheil's *Sommervogel*, as Siobhán Donovan shows; the protagonist's love of nature actually helps her in her recovery from cancer. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that she opts to move away from the countryside to the city in an attempt to reconfigure a sense of home for herself. Thus, Heimat is presented here as something that can and must be adapted to suit one's circumstances.

The novels by Eleonora Hummel and Ilma Rakusa featured in this volume raise some fascinating questions about the meaning and value of Heimat in today's globalised world. Their texts focus on female strategies for retaining a sense of Heimat while on the move. In their resistance to the limitations of one location, they reveal the constructedness of the

idea of Heimat. As Carmel Finnan shows, for Rakusa, Heimat can be found in the sounds of language or in the pages of a book; for Hummel, Heimat is always in motion, never quite arriving. Both writers indicate that Heimat is something that one carries within oneself as a mosaic of previous memories. Like the image of the suitcase, another motif that features strongly in many of the novels discussed in this volume, the concept of Heimat proves to be a portable idea; each trip to new place sees the desire for home packed up, carried along and then unpacked – or kept in the suitcase and staved off until some point in the future.

Lives in transit: Globalisation and the dissolution of boundaries

As the above examples indicate, the resurgence of interest in Heimat shown in recent German-language writing should be understood not only in the context of European history and recent developments in the European political landscape, but also against the background of globalisation more generally. As a ‘term that has a broad and elastic meaning’, globalisation is not easily reduced to a single definition, but might nevertheless be generally understood as

the process in which economic, financial, technical, and cultural transactions between different communities throughout the world are increasingly interconnected and embody common elements of experience, practice, and understanding.⁵⁵

These interconnections are facilitated by the increased mobility offered both by transport networks and new media technologies, which have in turn transformed our experience of the everyday. The dynamics of globalisation, in which seemingly disparate points are drawn into contact with one another and are implicated in the constant movement and flow of information and of people, shape the contemporary sense of transit outlined at the outset of this chapter. As current debates show, responses to such flow are mixed, with some commentators warning of homogenisation, disorientation, and increasing gaps between haves and have-nots⁵⁶ whilst others argue that the ‘establishment of worldwide networks facilitated by new media [...] might serve democratisation and promote an enriching cultural mixing’.⁵⁷

Regardless of whether the experience of transit is one of joyful freeflow or of anxious instability, the phenomenon of globalisation has certainly focused renewed attention on questions of attachment and

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location, highlighting in particular the ever-shifting and constructed nature of belonging.⁵⁸ As Stuart Taberner argues in his assessment of German literature in the age of globalisation, ‘the spectre of globalisation is ever present’ and is intimately entwined with debates about cultural and social values in Germany.⁵⁹ The question therefore is not whether or not globalisation is an issue in contemporary German-language literature, but rather in what ways the local is inflected with the global and vice versa. In a recent essay on globalisation in contemporary women’s writing, Beth Linklater argues that it is in fact more pertinent to talk of the ‘glocal’ rather than the ‘global’ in German literature.⁶⁰ She argues that globalisation makes itself felt in a move away from a ‘national’ setting to a more fluid notion of travel or escape. Moreover, she identifies a shift away from Germany as setting towards an emphasis on ‘individuals and their relationships, to momentary emotion, to light, to atmosphere, to the body, to sex, to love – or at least the very possibility of love within a context of increasing isolation’.⁶¹ Linklater argues that such concerns, which would at first sight appear to be private and individualistic, are in fact global, reflecting as they do the anxieties of contemporary society.⁶²

This tendency towards a refraction of global concerns through the personal is borne out by many of the texts covered in this volume, which address issues such as placed and placeless identity, particularly through an engagement with personal and family relationships. Within this, the experience of the shift, dissolution or dematerialisation of boundaries emerges as a recurring theme. This is perhaps particularly apt in a post-9/11, post-Wall world, in which there is a heightened sensitivity towards this issue. For Jeffrey Peck, the attacks on the World Trade Centre on September 11th 2001 were, in fact, ‘the globalizing experience par excellence’, because not only did they unmask the illusion of secure boundaries, but they also served as a reminder that ‘location in a definable or recognizable space no longer suffices to define who belongs and who does not’.⁶³ As the subsequent tightening of security measures for travellers – and their variegated forms of enforcement contingent on perceptions of national, ethnic and religious affiliation – has demonstrated, boundaries are far from stable entities. Rather, they are constantly in flux and are not merely external, but are internalised and absolutely intertwined with constructions of self and other. In Europe, the collapse of communism coupled with European enlargement, has triggered lasting debates about the past, present, and future and about the interrelationship between boundaries and belonging. In the case of Germany, unification has also engendered debates about what it means

to belong in the Berlin Republic and it has promoted the awareness of a 'different notion of boundaries than expected'.⁶⁴ In other words, although physical borders may have disappeared, psychological boundaries have asserted and continue to assert themselves, sometimes in unexpected ways.

Several of the texts covered in this volume are concerned with the issue of the dissolution or dematerialisation of boundaries, focussed through the personal experiences of female protagonists. In Larissa Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe* Nele and Evi's search for identity takes place across boundaries of time, space, and ethnicity. In her analysis of this novel, Emily Jeremiah shows how Boehning reveals selfhood as multi-layered, evolving and transitional, and this reflects both the globalised environment and the German historical context. Nele's relatively wealthy, privileged and highly mobile life in the USA seems on the one hand to render her ethnic origins as the child of a so-called German 'Besatzungskind' superfluous. Her assimilation into the capitalist environment is marked by her design work which deals with camouflage and invisibility. On the other hand, however, her longing to discover her roots forces her to confront the historical and social circumstances that have defined her, and previously invisible contours of time and space start to reveal themselves once more.

In the case of texts by Ilma Rakusa, Julia Franck and Eleonora Hummel, the experience of boundaries is triggered by the move away from a closed socialist society and the beginning of an intense period of movement and travel. In her discussion of Ilma Rakusa's *Mehr Meer*, Carmel Finnan explores a transitional identity based on constantly shifting boundaries between space and time, the fictional and experiential, the sensual and the linguistic. Though it is not without hardship, the transition occasioned by the liberation from the closed boundaries of Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia is experienced here as an exciting linguistic game. Shifting and changing, the identity of the narrator forms and reforms like the patterns in a kaleidoscope. Conversely, in Julia Franck's *Lagerfeuer*, discussed by Valerie Heffernan, Nelly is enclosed in a refugee camp, which is rather paradoxical, considering that she has fled across the border from a life of restriction and surveillance in East Germany to 'freedom' in West Germany. Her experience is defined on the one hand by the extreme restrictions – financial, physical and psychological – of living in a camp, but on the other hand, as a stateless person, her existence is profoundly formless and liminal. Moreover, Nelly's struggle to assert herself in this transitory

space is a gendered one. She suffers the repeated attempts of male figures to colonise and possess her, which suggests the double assault on selfhood suffered by the female refugee.

As this example shows, the experience of evolving identities and shifting boundaries explored in some of the texts covered in the volume is not only historically and politically rooted, but also gendered. In this sense, these texts offer insights into female identities against the backdrop of an increasingly globalised world. This reinforces the fact that even though both men and women are affected by risk and uncertainty, and although experiences vary enormously depending on a complex interplay of issues including ethnicity, education and nationality, in general women nevertheless remain ‘especially vulnerable to the forces of global change’.⁶⁵ As the texts discussed here show, this applies both to situations of war and political conflict, as well as current global economics.

In her discussion of Hummel’s portrayal of Russian German emigration, Linda Shortt illuminates some of the gendered strategies adopted by Hummel’s protagonists in a situation of transition. The female characters, particularly, adopt a flexible approach to waiting and to performing multiple identities, which in some cases suggests their particular ability to survive a period of instability and change. At the same time, however, Hummel’s novels also highlight the particular susceptibility of female protagonists to such instability. For example, older female family members are uprooted by actions instigated by male figures: Alina’s grandmother is displaced from village to village during the war and the ensuing redrawing of ethnic and national boundaries, but stoically waits for her husband’s return. Later, Alina’s father uproots his family to follow his dream of a return to the German Heimat, only to abandon this quest – and his family – when he is unable to obtain work commensurate with his qualifications. The experiences of instability and of non-arrival endured by both mother and grandmother are passed down the matrilineal line to Alina, who struggles to form personal attachments and to establish herself in her new home in Berlin. Moreover, the legacy of insecurity and non-arrival which locks Alina into a perpetually in-between state is compounded by her failure to gain access to a full-time career. Her difficulties in transitioning from education to full-time employment as an architectural technician reflect the effect of globalisation on women’s attachment to the labour force.⁶⁶ Although the male-dominated ‘career mystique’ of the post-war period – education followed by full-time, continuous employment – has been

eroded for both men and women,⁶⁷ evidence suggests that in their working lives, women are particularly susceptible to instability. They are more likely to experience difficulties in accessing, retaining and returning to work and feel more fully the effects of trying to combine caregiving with a working life.⁶⁸

Bodies, gender and states of transition

The female body as site of social, historical, existential, and political struggle has a long history at the heart of feminist activism, theory, and art. In many variants, theoretical writings have explored the dilemma of the female body, and the female subject, as visible and invisible, fleshy-material nature and dematerialised construct. Hence, early Freudian interpretations of sexual identity as a product of a libidinal economy of bodily and psychic drives paved the way for post-structuralist notions of femininity, which interpreted sexual difference as part of a system of linguistic signification.⁶⁹ Such a focus on language has had an enormous impact on the concept of female creativity and has hugely influenced women both as writers and as readers, giving rise, for example, to questions about whether there might be a specifically female writing or 'écriture féminine'.⁷⁰ More recently, especially under the influence of thinkers such as Michel Foucault, interest has shifted towards the issue of gender as social construct. Theorists such as Judith Butler argue that 'it is impossible to separate out "gender" from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained'.⁷¹

In a broad sense then, the female body has long been understood as a shifting set of markers and as subject to multiple and repeated processes of disassembly and reassembly. This explains why, describing the impact of globalised working practices on both men and women, Donna Haraway refers to the subjugation of human bodies in post-industrial capitalism as a form of feminisation. As Haraway puts it, in the post-industrial world of work,

to be feminized means to be made extremely vulnerable, able to be disassembled, reassembled, exploited as a reserve labour force, seen less as workers than as servers, subjected to time arrangements on and off the paid job that make a mockery of the limited work day.⁷²

In this sense, in a globalised context, not only are women revealed to be particularly susceptible to states of transition, but the state of

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fragmentation and dissolution associated with an information environment might itself be conceived of as reflecting female identities, long formed in processes of othering and appropriation. Haraway's rather abstract use of the term 'feminization' here, which associates it more generally with power relations rather than purely with female sexual characteristics, is indicative of the way in which recent feminist thought conceives of the body as 'interface or threshold'.⁷³ In other words, the body 'is to be understood as neither a biological nor a sociological category, but rather as a point of overlap between the physical, the symbolic and the material social conditions'.⁷⁴ Against this background, gender itself may be seen as a transitional process, inhering in 'multiple states of transition between the metaphysical anchoring points that are the masculine and feminine'.⁷⁵

Feminists such as Rosi Braidotti and Karen Barad work with the concept of the body as threshold and gender as transitional process, celebrating the 'transformative flows that destabilise all identities' as part of a drive to understand the subject as multi-layered and processual.⁷⁶ Crucially, for thinkers like Braidotti and Barad this involves bringing the body-as-substance back into view by redirecting attention to its construction in particular material circumstances.⁷⁷ Such an emphasis on materiality aims not to reinstate the 'pejorative' notion of difference, but rather to enable 'a collective reappraisal of each subject in her/her complexity'.⁷⁸ For Barad, such an appraisal of complexity may even extend beyond the human world. In her analysis of performativity and matter, in which she draws on feminist and queer theory, she seeks to challenge the 'positioning of materiality as either a given or a mere effect of human agency'. Her posthumanist perspective goes far beyond the notion of gendered bodies as sites of difference, offering instead a view of "humans" as part of the world-body space in its dynamic structuration'.⁷⁹ Such shifts in thinking are shaped by the contact with a feminist tradition as well as by the contemporary globalised environment with its rapid developments in technology. What is particularly important for the present discussion is that they reveal not only the transitional nature of selfhood in general, but also the importance of the concept of transition for an understanding of what might be meant by the feminine or female.

Given the longstanding nature of debates about the relationship between the body, materiality and the gendered self, it is hardly surprising that at the beginning of the twenty-first century, this theme continues to feature strongly in writing by women. In the introduction to

their 2006 volume on German women writers, Bartel and Boa note that ‘the body and its cultural meanings in the discourse of gender [...] proves to be one of the most frequently recurring motifs’ in a significant number of texts covered in the volume.⁸⁰ This affirms the continuation of a postmodern tradition in German-language writing by female authors in the 1980s and 90s. According to Margaret Littler, this writing engaged intensively with questions of gender and difference against the background of the ‘increasingly homogenous, market-orientated societies of the capitalist West’.⁸¹ Littler identifies the theme of ‘writing the body’ as central to this period and within this, the trope of bodily damage and illness features particularly as a means of exploring the constraints of female existence.⁸² In texts such as Libuše Moníková’s *Eine Schädigung* (1983) and Anne Duden’s *Übergang* (1982), Littler argues that ‘damage to the female body can be read as a metaphor for alterity’.⁸³ In her comparative analysis of Libuše Moníková, Kerstin Hensel, and Herta Müller, Lyn Marven supports this view, pointing out that recent women’s writing has taken issue with the conventional split between women as object and subject by making the link between female subjectivity and the expression of authentic bodily experiences.⁸⁴ Citing Sigrid Weigel, Marven notes that this has, in particular, been expressed in images of sickness or suffering, which act as a ‘reminder of the irreducible physicality of the body’.⁸⁵

Several of the contributions to this present study indicate that writing by women continues to explore the relationship between the (female) body, gendered identity and selfhood. Moreover, some of the contributions to this volume reflect an awareness of the body as threshold and of gender as a transitional, socially mediated process that is anchored in material circumstances. Elaine Martin’s analysis of Kathrin Röggla’s *wir schlafen nicht* explores the apparent negation of bodily boundaries in the total assimilation of the workforce to post-industrial capitalism. Although gender appears to be completely neutralised in the twenty-four hour, high-performance environment where workers operate in a virtualised world, Röggla’s text reveals the extent of bodily damage inflicted upon the new economy zombies, who consider even the need for sleep as an indicator of weakness. Such damage to the body is not restricted to women, but in its relegation of bodies to totalising discourses it is, in Haraway’s terms, a ‘feminizing’ dynamic.

In their analysis of Juli Zeh’s novel *Spieltrieb*, Carrie Smith-Prei and Lars Richter show how Zeh reveals the body as the site of interpersonal and political power struggles. In a manipulation of discourses of military

and ethnic/national identity, female and male bodies are involved in a game of displacement, projection, and simulation. Here, the physical body engaged in the sexual act is seen as inseparable from the notion of the socially-constructed, gendered, and racialised body. The brutal outcomes of the discursive games played in *Spieltrieb* show how the body is the threshold across which the self comes into being. Moreover, they are a harsh reminder that power politics are gendered and that the enactment of power results in real bodily suffering.

Some of the contributions in this volume also suggest a continued interest in the link between the female body and illness, revealing it as an in-between space of transition and potential transformation. This itself, as Siobhán Donovan shows in her chapter, links in with a longer tradition of sickness as a source of creativity and transcendence. In her analysis of Lea Gottheil's *Sommervogel*, Donovan explores the protagonist's experience of breast cancer, an illness which has a strong presence in contemporary discourses of the female body. The surgical removal of female biological characteristics through mastectomy and hysterectomy, as well as the loss of hair caused by chemotherapy, are an encounter with a male-dominated medical discourse. In addition, this experience prompts a process of reflection, which permits Gottheil to see her family legacy in its gendered dimensions. Katrin Schmidt's *Du stirbst nicht*, discussed by Deirdre Byrnes, also explores the idea of illness as a space of transformation. Having suffered an aneurysm, Helene must puzzle back together the fragmented links between language and the world around her, but she must also rediscover her body in its specifically female form. Helene's recovery also involves an encounter with a medical profession that treats her as an object, and so recovery implies overcoming objectification and finding her voice as a woman. This involves retracing her past and her relationships with both her husband Matthes and her lover, the transgender figure Viola/Viktor. Both in her own dawning awareness of the material realities of her experience as a woman, and in her reflection on Viola's complex transition from a male to a female body, Schmidt's narrator reveals gender as a transitional process; multi-layered and arising from a complex mix of biological characteristics, social performances, and material circumstances.

Conclusion

The present volume represents an introduction to the work of ten female authors writing in the German language who approach the issues outlined above from various different perspectives. In focusing on women on the one hand and emerging writers on the other, it attempts to shed new light on a group of authors that have yet to receive the attention they deserve from academic criticism. The volume builds on previous research whilst at the same time attempting to broaden its focus; this approach is reflected also within the individual chapters, which use current theories and discourses in literary analysis to elucidate one or two key works by an emerging woman writer.

The following chapters point to a number of exciting new avenues for research. The emerging forms of maternal subjectivity or the subversive discourse of ‘girlishness’, for example, both of which are beginning to make their presence felt in contemporary writing by women, offer some fascinating new directions for research and link into questions regarding the future of feminism more generally. The issue of materiality and its relationship to gendered identities, too, is an area that offers rich potential for future exploration. The question of belonging as a multi-layered process is touched upon in several of the chapters in this volume and would seem to provide an interesting counterfoil for comparative analysis. This could offer an important contribution to contemporary discussions about the diversity of German-language culture. The editors hope that some of the ideas discussed in the chapters of this volume will pique the reader’s interest and inspire further research in the field.

Notes

¹ Karen Leeder, ed., *Schaltstelle, Neue Deutsche Lyrik im Dialog*, *German Monitor* 69, Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2007, pp. 1-30, (here: p. 1).

² The usage of the term in contemporary jargon perhaps testifies to this fact. In the scientific domain for example the term appears in combinations such as: ‘transition element’ (chemistry) or ‘transition mutation’ (genetics). Economists talk about ‘transition economies’ whilst computing/telecommunications experts use the term ‘transition band’.

³ Male prizewinners include Eugen Ruge (2011), Uwe Tellkamp (2008) and Arno Geiger (2005); female prizewinners comprise Ursula Krechel (2012),

Melinda Nadj Abonji (2010), Kathrin Schmidt (2009), Julia Franck (2007) and Katharina Hacker (2006). For further information on the Deutscher Buchpreis, see <http://www.deutscher-buchpreis.de> (accessed 18 February 2013).

⁴ Between 2000 and 2012, the Mara-Cassens-Preis, which is judged by a lay jury of readers, was awarded to seven men (Peter Märthesheimer, Erwin Koch, Matthias Göritz, Clemens Meyer, Lukas Bärfuss, Roman Graf, Max Scharnig, and Andreas Martin Widmann) and five women (Annette Pehnt, Zsuzsa Bánk, Terézia Mora, Larissa Boehning and Sabrina Janesch). This compares to eleven male and four female winners in the preceding fifteen-year period from 1985-99. For further details, see: <http://www.literaturhaus-hamburg.de/lit/page/90/index.html> (accessed 18 February 2013). Similarly, in the period 1985-99, the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis was given to a total of eleven men and four women, but between 2000 and 2012 this gap narrowed to a ratio of five women to eight men. For further information on the winners of the Adelbert-von-Chamisso-Preis, see: <http://www.boschstiftung.de/content/language1/html/14196.asp> (accessed 18 February 2013).

⁵ Three of these writers – Jenny Erpenbeck, Julia Franck and Eva Menasse – are featured in this volume. For further information on the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, see: <http://www.booktrust.org.uk/prizes-and-awards/7> (accessed 18 February 2013). Erpenbeck has also figured on the shortlist for the US-based Best Translated Book Award; for further information, see: <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepcent/index.php?s=btb> (accessed 18 February 2013).

⁶ Between 2000 and 2012, the main Bremer Literaturpreis was awarded to a total of nine male and four female authors. For further information on the prizewinners, see: <http://www.rudolf-alexander-schroeder-stiftung.de/preistraeger.html> (accessed 18 February 2013).

⁷ BücherFrauen Studie, *MebrWert. Arbeiten in der Buchbranche heute. Kurzpräsentation der Ergebnisse*, published online at: http://www.buecherfrauen.de/uploads/media/20110314buecherfrauen_studienpraesentation_final.pdf (accessed 18 February 2013), p. 6.

⁸ Romy Fröhlich, 'Büchermenschen in Deutschland. Eine aktuelle Studie über die berufliche Situation und die Bedingungen beruflicher Karrieren von Männern und Frauen im deutschen Buchhandel und Verlagswesen', in: *MebrWert. Arbeiten in der Buchbranche heute*, Köln: Ulrike Helmer, 2010, pp. 20-81. It is noteworthy that Fröhlich's findings also suggest that the working conditions of women in this sector are not ideal, especially when compared to those of their male colleagues. For example, although most of the women

surveyed have a university degree, they are more likely to work in lower levels of the business and to earn less than their male colleagues with equivalent educational qualifications.

⁹ 'Der Beitrag der Frauen an der Beschäftigung in der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft ist überdurchschnittlich hoch. So erreicht der Anteil der Frauen in der gesamten Erwerbstätigkeit innerhalb der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft im Jahr 2008 einen Wert von 53 Prozent. Bezogen auf die Gesamtwirtschaft schaffen dort die Frauen lediglich einen Anteil von 43 Prozent.' Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Technologie, *Monitoring zu wirtschaftlichen Eckdaten der Kultur- und Kreativwirtschaft 2009*, Forschungsbericht Nr. 594, p. 30.

¹⁰ Julia Karolle-Berg & Katya Skow, 'From *Frauenliteratur* to *Frauenliteraturbetrieb*. Marketing of Literature to German Women in the Twenty-First Century', in Katharina Gerstenberger and Patricia Herminghouse, eds, *German Literature in a New Century: Trends, Traditions, Transitions, Transformations*, New York: Berghahn, 2008, pp. 220-36, (here: p. 220).

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 231-2.

¹² Of the volumes surveyed, five showed a rough balance between male and female writers, two included more women than men and the remaining fifteen volumes featured significantly more male names than women (i.e. a ratio of roughly 2:1 or higher). The volumes surveyed included the following: Heinz-Ludwig Arnold, ed., *Literatur und Migration*, München: Text+Kritik, 2006; Elena Agazzi, *Erinnerte und rekonstruierte Geschichte: drei Generationen deutscher Schriftsteller und die Fragen der Vergangenheit*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2005; Michael Braun, *Die deutsche Gegenwartsliteratur: Eine Einführung*, Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2010; Stephen Brockmann, *Literature and German Unification*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999; Fabrizio Cambi, ed., *Gedächtnis und Identität: die deutsche Literatur nach der Vereinigung*, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2008; Gerhard Fischer and David Roberts, eds, *Schreiben nach der Wende; ein Jahrzehnt deutscher Literatur 1989-1999*, Tübingen: Stauffenberg, 2001; Carsten Gansel and Pawel Zimniak, *Das Prinzip "Erinnerung" in der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur nach 1989*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2010; Katharine Gerstenberger and Patricia Herminghouse, eds, *German Literature in a New Century: Trends, Traditions, Transitions, Transformations*, New York: Berghahn, 2008; Martin Kane, ed., *East and West German Literary Responses to Unification*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002; Thomas Kraft, ed., *Aufgerissen. Zur Literatur der 90er*, München: Piper, 2000; Lyn Marven and Stuart Taberner, eds, *Emerging German-Language Novelists of the Twenty-First Century*, Studies in German Literature, Linguistics and Culture, Rochester, NY: Camden House,

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2011; Heinz-Peter Preusser, *Deutschsprachige Gegenwartsliteratur diesseits und jenseits der Apokalypse*, Heidelberg: Winter, 2003; Kerstin Reimann, *Schreiben nach der Wende. Wende im Schreiben. Literarische Reflexionen nach 1989/90*, Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2008; Dirk Schröter, *Deutschland einig Vaterland: Wende und Wiedervereinigung im Spiegel der zeitgenössischen Literatur*, Leipzig, Berlin: Kirchhof und Franke, 2003; Stuart Taberner and Paul Cooke, eds, *German Culture, Politics and Literature into the Twenty-First Century*, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006; Stuart Taberner, *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond: Normalization and the Berlin Republic*, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2005; Stuart Taberner, ed., *The Novel in German since 1990*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011; Volker Wehdeking, *Generationenwechsel: Intermedialität in der deutschen Gegenwartsliteratur*, Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2007; Volker Wehdeking and Anne-Marie Corbin-Schuffels, eds, *Deutschsprachige Erzählprosa seit 1990 im europäischen Kontext. Interpretationen, Intertextualität, Rezeption*, Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2003; Volker Wehdeking, *Mentalitätswandel in der deutschen Literatur zur Einheit (1999-2000)*, Berlin: Erich Schmidt, 2000.

¹³ A recent and welcome exception to this rule is the edited volume *Emerging German-Language Novelists of the Twenty-First Century*, which features a number of writers, many of them female, who are truly emerging writers, chosen for inclusion on the basis of the quality of their writing. *Emerging German-Language Novelists of the Twenty-First Century*, ed. by Lyn Marven and Stuart Taberner, Studies in German Literature, Linguistic and Culture, (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2011).

¹⁴ Lyn Marven, 'German literature in the Berlin Republic – Writing by Women', in Stuart Taberner, ed., *Contemporary German Fiction: Writing in the Berlin Republic*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp. 159-76 (here: p. 159).

¹⁵ Volker Hage, 'Ganz schön abgedreht', *Der Spiegel*, 12 (1999), 244-6 (here 245).

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³⁵ In Menasse's *Vienna*, the main protagonist makes his premature and dramatic entry into the world when he is born on his mother's fur coat; in Franck's *Lagerfeuer*, Krystyna holds onto her memories of her affluent past life in Poland by wearing the fur coat her mother had left her; and in Boehning's *Lichte Stoffe*, Evi keeps her mother closer to her than she was in life by wearing her mother's fur coat.

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³⁶ Tess Cosslett, "Feminism, Matrilinealism, and the 'House of Women' in Contemporary Women's Fiction," *Journal of Gender Studies*, 5:1 (1996), 7-17 (here 7).

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³⁸ Marianne Hirsch, *The Mother/Daughter Plot, Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989, p. 163.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁴⁰ See in particular Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat*, Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990; Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*, Oxford Studies in Modern European Culture, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000; Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland*, Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2002; Alan Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance: Promises and Limits of Writing History*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

⁴¹ Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory*, p. 8. Blickle further describes the difficulty of defining Heimat in clear-cut terms: 'Heimat is a crucial aspect in German self-perceptions; it represents the fusional anti-Enlightenment thinking in German Romanticism; it is the idealisation of the pre-modern within the modern; it unites geographic and imaginary conceptions of space; it is a provincializing, but disalienating, part of German bourgeois culture; it reflects modern German culture's spatialized interiority; it combines territorial claims with a fundamental ethical reassurance of innocence; and, to achieve this combination, it uses a patriarchal, gendered way of seeing the world.' (pp. 1-2).

⁴² Alan Confino's essays on the use and abuse of Heimat images by a succession of German regimes underline the flexibility of Heimat. Confino concludes thus that Heimat is an 'empty' concept tied not to ideology but to 'sentiments and associations that conveyed loyalty and identification.' *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, p. 101.

⁴³ See Boa and Palfreyman's discussion of the 'Heimatfilm' in *Heimat – A German Dream*.

⁴⁴ Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*, p. 4.

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⁴⁵ Figures according to the 'Integrationsreport' (2010) of the Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge at http://www.bamf.de/SharedDocs/Anlagen/DE/Downloads/Infothek/Forschung/Integrationsreport/Einbuengerung/einbuengerung-tabelle-3-1-pdf.pdf?__blob=publicationFile (accessed 18 February 2013).

⁴⁶ On Turkish-German feelings towards Germany, see for example Zafer Şenocak, 'Deutschland - Heimat für Türken?', in *Atlas des tropischen Deutschland*, Berlin: Babel, 1993, pp. 9-19.

⁴⁷ Writing in 2002, Peter Blickle pointed out that since 1995, over 400 books containing the word 'Heimat' in the title had been published by German publishers, and the number of titles was increasing every year. Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory*, p. 154.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁹ See in particular Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory*, especially Chapter 4 'Heimat and the Feminine', pp. 81-111. See also Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat – A German Dream* and Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*.

⁵⁰ Confino, *Germany as a Culture of Remembrance*, p. 49.

⁵¹ Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory*, p. 84.

⁵² Ingrid Sandole-Staroste, *Women in Transition: Between Socialism and Capitalism*, Munich: Praeger, 2002, p. 5.

⁵³ Rita Süßmuth, in: Michael Haller, ed., *Bezahlen die Frauen die Wiedervereinigung?*, Munich: Piper, 1992, pp. 44-5.

⁵⁴ Heather Hofmeister and Hans-Peter Blossfeld make the interesting argument that women in Germany still 'tend to choose between employment and family careers rather than maintaining both simultaneously'. They interpret this circumstance in the light of enduring attitudes towards family life: 'This seemingly modern welfare state and robust and sophisticated economy is grafted onto a strongly traditional society where the expectations for men's and women's roles, deeply rooted in tradition and church teachings, play an invisible but strong hand in constructing women's and men's life courses.' 'Women's careers in an era of uncertainty: conclusions from a 13-country comparison', in: Hans-Peter Blossfeld and Heather Hofmeister eds, *Globalization, Uncertainty and Women's Careers*, Cheltenham, and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2006, pp. 433-50 (here p. 439).

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⁵⁵ Ruth Pearson, 'Moving the Goalposts: Gender and Globalisation in the Twenty-first Century', *Gender and Development*, 8:1 (2000), 10-9, (here 10).

⁵⁶ A huge number of recent studies have been devoted to outlining the key positions in the globalisation debate. These include David Held, *A Globalizing World: Culture, Economics, Politics*, London: Routledge, 2000, Frank J Lechner, John Boli, eds, *The Globalisation Reader*, Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 4th edn, 2012. On literature and globalization see Liam Connell and Nicky Marsh, eds, *Literature and Globalization: A Reader*, London: Routledge, 2011.

⁵⁷ Stuart Taberner, 'Introduction', in Taberner, ed., *German Literature in the Age of Globalisation*, pp. 1-24, (here: p. 1).

⁵⁸ Marco Antonsich offers a very useful overview, which gives a good insight into the very wide range of scholarly interest in this topic. Marco Antonsich, 'Searching for Belonging. An Analytical Framework', *Geography Compass*, 4:6 (2010), 644-59, (here 653).

⁵⁹ Taberner, 'Introduction' in *German Literature in the Age of Globalisation*, p. 15

⁶⁰ Beth Linklater, 'Germany as background: Global concerns in recent women's writing in German', in Stuart Taberner, ed., *German Literature in the Age of Globalisation*, Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2004, pp. 67-88, (here: p. 84).

⁶¹ Beth Linklater, 'Germany as background', p. 83.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Jeffrey M. Peck, 'The World is Full. Changing Discourses of Space after September 11', in John A. McCarthy, Walter Grünzweig and Thomas Koebner, eds, *The Many Faces of Germany*, Oxford: Berghahn, 2004, pp. 347-54 (here: p. 349; p. 352).

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 350.

⁶⁵ Phyllis Moen, 'Foreword', in Hans-Peter Blossfeld and Heather Hofmeister eds, *Globalization, Uncertainty and Women's Careers*, pp. xvi-xx, p. xviii.

⁶⁶ For a brief overview of the impact of globalisation on women and work see Pearson, 'Moving the Goalposts'.

⁶⁷ Moen, 'Foreword', p. xviii.

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⁶⁸ See Hans-Peter Blossfeld and Heather Hofmeister, 'Women's careers in an era of uncertainty: Conclusions from a 13-country comparison' in *Globalization, Uncertainty and Women's Careers*, pp. 433-50.

⁶⁹ Amongst most prominent theorists in this area are Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva. For an introduction to their theories see Susan Sellers, *Language and Sexual Difference. Feminist Writing in France*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991.

⁷⁰ This term was originally derived from the work of Cixous, but has also been associated with the ideas of other theorists.

⁷¹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*, London: Routledge, 1989, p. 3.

⁷² Donna Haraway, 'A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, technology and socialist feminist in the 1980's', in *The Haraway Reader*, New York and London: Routledge, 2004, pp. 7-45, (here: p. 26).

⁷³ Rosi Braidotti, 'Becoming Woman: Or Sexual Difference Revisited', *Theory Culture and Society*, 20:3 (2003), 43-64, (here 44).

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 47. Here Braidotti describes a Deleuzian perspective, which is heavily influential in her own thinking.

⁷⁶ Braidotti, 'Becoming woman', p. 52.

⁷⁷ Claire Colebrook, 'From Radical Representations to Corporeal Becomings: The Feminist Philosophy of Llyod, Grosz and Gatens', *Hypatia*, 15:2 (2000), 76-93, (here: 77).

⁷⁸ Braidotti, 'Becoming Woman', 45.

⁷⁹ Karen Barad, 'Posthumanist performativity: Toward and Unerstanding of How Matter comes to Matter', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28:3 (2003), 801-31, (here 829).

⁸⁰ Bartel and Boa, 'Introduction', pp. 8-9.

⁸¹ Margaret Littler, 'Women's writing of the 1980s and 1990s' in Weedon, ed., *Postwar Women's Writing in German.*, pp. 101-29, (here: p. 102).

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⁸² On the centrality of the body to German women's writing see also Leslie Adelson, *Making Bodies, Making History*.

⁸³ Littler, 'Women's writing of the 1980s and 1990s', p. 108.

⁸⁴ On the split between women as object and subject, see Sigrid Weigel, *Die Stimme der Medusa*, Dülmen-Hiddingsel: Tende, 1987.

⁸⁵ Lyn Marven, *Body and Narrative in Contemporary Literatures in German*. Herta Müller, *Libuše Moníková and Kerstin Hensel*, Oxford: Clarendon, 2005, p. 9.