

ности этнолингвистическая современность и европоцентричная современность привязаны к общему индексу, к нормативной ценности Запада, мнимая естественность которой затемняет вопрос о господстве. Это достигается в форме исключения. И действительно, диалектический субъект истории исключает себя из истории (не перенося исключение на историю), тем самым обходя молчанием постоянное присутствие относящихся к третьему члену «экстериорностей» (дополнений, исключений и смещений)¹⁴.

В историческом отношении наш способ репрезентации перевода определяет не только наше коллективное воображаемое национальных сообществ и этнических идентичностей, но также и нашу индивидуальную связь с национальным суверенитетом. Кроме того, он соучаствует в дискурсе Запад-Остальной мир, благодаря которому отношение колониального могущества постоянно воспроизводится в воображении и в реальности, а иерархический порядок современного мира вновь омоложивается.

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¹⁴ Карл Шмитт развивает этот аргумент в «The Nomos of the Earth» (Ulmen G. L., tr. New York: Telos, 2003). См.: Part III: The *Jus Publicum Europaeum*. Разумеется, он рассматривает его из европоцентристской перспективы.

Anna M. Parkinson

*Breathless Passages: Affect and Translation in Ingeborg Bachmann's Büchner Prize Speech*¹

The reader, the thinker, the loiterer, the flâneur, are types of illuminati just as much as the opium eater, the dreamer, the ecstatic. And more profane. Not to mention that most terrible drug—ourselves—which we take in solitude.
Walter Benjamin

Translation is not a makeshift, but the mode of existence by which a work reaches us as foreign. A good translation retains this strangeness even as it makes the work accessible to us.
Antoine Berman

I) TRANSLATION AS PRACTICE OF ALIENATION

The term «translation» conjures up the practice of transitional labor that renders one language as another, exchanging the «foreign» for the «known» tongue. This mediation commonly draws on the metaphoric of transaction, with loss or gain weighed on the scales of form and content, with the success of the transaction calculated by

¹ I completed this article during the academic year 2004/05 while I was working on the topic of «translation» as a Mellon Graduate Fellow at the Society for the Humanities, Cornell University. My thanks go to the Fellows at the Society for their engaged and helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. My largest debt of gratitude is to Helen Petrovsky for her encouragement, intelligent editorial suggestions, and unflagging good humor.

way of the fluency, or familiarity, that this once «foreign» work now exhibits in the reader's or listener's language. What, then, is to be made of writing that eschews the return to the familiar from the foreign, instead dwelling in the moment of alienation that characterizes all translation? Further, why prematurely curtail the exploration of the idiomatic terrain of one's own tongue to embrace and, ultimately, incorporate the strangeness of the «foreign» turn of tongue?² In her Büchner Prize Speech, Ingeborg Bachmann's practice of translation expands the comfortable terrain of what we take to be familiar processes of translation. For the movement in her text is not between languages as discrete units of exchange, but rather it suggests an ethics of memory by way of alienation and a sense of incommensurability at the interstice of the (fascist) past and the present moment (for Bachmann, the mid-1960s). Bachmann's practice of translation proceeds by way of the work of affect that binds the reader to the experience of the text and through an aesthetic adumbrated by surrealist strategies of making strange that which appears to be familiar. Affect works both as the medium and the message, denying a practice of translation that might be reduced to the transference of mere information³. For affect acts both as transferential mediator of content and as the very site for encountering the political and ethical complexity of the contorted scenes of post-war Berlin that are the material of Bachmann's address.

² In *The Experience of the Foreign. Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*, trans. S. Heyvaert, Antoine Berman argues for the development of an overarching interdisciplinary science of translation, «traductology,» with strategies that will preserve the «strangeness» («*Fremdheit*») of foreign works rather than reducing all otherness to the secure horizon of meaning in the known language. Berman argues: «*Fremdheit* is also the strangeness of the foreign in all its force: the different, the dissimilar, that which can be given the likeness of the same only by killing it. It may be the terror of difference, but also its marvel; the foreign has always appeared in this way: demon or goddess» (154–155).

³ In his essay «The Task of the Translator» Walter Benjamin argues that translation should not be seen as a practice in which information is transmitted (this is a «bad translation»). Rather, he argues that translation is a «mode» or a «some-what provisional way of coming to terms with the foreignness of languages.» It is the «mode of intention» of language that is at issue for Benjamin (69–70, 74–75).

Bachmann's speech achieves what Antoine Berman, in the context of his discussion of the practices of translation proper to German Romanticism, describes as «a positing of oneself beyond oneself» (*sich über-setzen*)⁴. That is, Bachmann weaves a tense atmospheric web of affect that translates recognizable moments of history into something frighteningly alien and yet uncannily present to the reader. The alienation inflected in the text through the affective undertow of her language illuminates the sinister remnants of recent German history that occupy the spaces and inhabitants of the city, even as the West Berliners are preoccupied with the economic *Wiederaufbau*. As I argue below, Bachmann's practice of translating the excessive undertow of affect she experienced everywhere in post-war Berlin demonstrates how translation, itself understood as the space in which our affective relation to an «Other» takes place, is a political practice demanding an ethical response from the translator-reader. In an anti-Hegelian spirit, the «Other» of the Germans' WWII politics and history translates into images infused with terrifying affect. In other words, in Bachmann's text we experience an encounter with unsublated excess, an excess necessarily sublimated into a language of distressed images that make up Bachmann's Büchner Prize speech.

II) BACHMANN IN BERLIN

On October 17, 1964, in Darmstadt, Bachmann delivered her Büchner Prize speech on the occasion of receiving this most prestigious of German-language literary awards. Framed by a short but significant preamble, the body of the speech consists of twenty-seven prose – or language – images that describe a contorted, barely recognizable landscape that none the less appears to be lifted directly from postwar Berlin. Each prose fragment swings between moments of recognizable normalcy–social rituals, districts of

⁴ *Berman*, 47.

Berlin – and details that suggest the infection of these locations by the barely subdued violence of Germany's National Socialist past and the new divisive Cold War ideology that literally marked the landscape of Berlin in the early 1960s as in no other city.

But before we turn to Bachmann's speech, let us linger with yet another level of translation in her text, one that acts as the resonant backdrop to the collective madness portrayed in her nightmare vision of postwar Berlin. After the resumption of the Büchner award shortly after the end of WWII, and most specifically in the period of social critique and student unrest characterizing the mid-to late 1960s, and the RAF attacks of the early 1970s in West Germany, socially critical recipients of the prize used the award speech to draw from the politically and aesthetically radical source of Büchner's corpus of works in order to highlight contemporary political parallels as a form of critique.⁵ Bachmann's speech opens by directly addressing certain elements of a novella by the nineteenth century writer, Georg Büchner, in whose name, but not always in his revolutionary spirit, this elite literary prize is granted. Bachmann too performs this gesture, singling out Büchner's fragmentary novella, *Lenz*, as her point of departure. Büchner's novella describes the increasing alienation of the eccentric writer Lenz, who attempts to leave behind all social norms, familial obligations, and his increasing sense of estrangement from his middle-class destiny by escaping to the family home of Pastor Oberlin in the Vosges mountains. Lenz's unstable condition provides a template of kind for the «collective madness» which, for Bachmann, had overcome Germany as a fascist regime, leaving peculiar traces of denial and bad conscience that Bachmann renders grotesque in her speech.

⁵ Dietmar Goltschnigg's excellent critical history of the figure of Buchner in both literary scholarship and the award speeches from Buchner's time onwards is by far the most comprehensive and illuminating source available. In the second of his three volumes Goltschnigg examines Buchner's impact in German literature, journalism, and feuilletons between the years 1945 and 1980. He also argues for the centrality of Buchner as an oppositional identificatory figure from the late 1950s onwards, but specifically in 1966, especially for the SPD, the Neue Linke, and the APO.

III) GEORG BÜCHNER'S *LENZ*

Georg Büchner's novella *Lenz* from 1835⁶ provides motifs that are salient to Bachmann's 1964 Büchner Prize Speech, enabling her to bind affect and aesthetics in reference to Germany's recent past. Returning to the transferential relationship between Büchner's and Bachmann's texts, it is of note that the affective internal and external landscapes that Büchner ascribes to the figure Lenz, and the discussion of aesthetics that forms the core of Lenz's relationship to his surroundings and eventual madness, resonate in Bachmann's address. Lenz's vision of poetic creation corresponds neither to realism nor to idealism⁷; rather, Lenz longs for art to approximate life in its very *affective* power.⁸ Further, his concept of art is not tied to an aesthetic of the beautiful. The possibility of life – the *(Da)sein* of bare life in its full affective force – is more important

⁶ Ironically enough, Buchner's *Lenz* is itself a «translation» – a selective and altered form of transcription from other sources – in its own right. *Lenz*, the title also being the name of the protagonist, takes its point of departure from the historical figure of the writer Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz (1751–1792). Buchner drew on the primary sources of Goethe's patronizing account of Lenz in his memoir *Aus meinem Leben. Dichtung und Wahrheit* (1811–1814) and the Alsatian Pastor Johann Friedrich Oberlin's 1778 account of Lenz's brief, difficult stay with him and his family. Translator Richard Sieburth suggests that we might think of Buchner's *Lenz* as «an experiment in speculative biography» and states that Buchner referred to himself as a «poet-historian» (167). Walter Hinderer refers to *Lenz* as dramatic in form and also underscores the emergence of a modern personal narrative style and inner monologue alongside the more traditional auctorial narrative style (271, 278–9). In terms of the novella's content, Janet K. King argues that the alterations of the original undertaken by Buchner should not be considered only in terms of aesthetics, but also in relation to socio-political aspects.

⁷ Here I am arguing against the major trend in Buchner scholarship that claims Lenz's speech on aesthetics as evidence for his disagreement with the aesthetic idealism prized in Germany at the time.

⁸ The demarcation of a strong dividing line between life and its representation has a long tradition in philosophy and psychoanalysis. Perhaps it reaches its pitch in the overlap of these two fields in the work of Marxist philosopher Michel Henry, specifically in his *The Genealogy of Psychoanalysis*. In this text Henry argues for the mutual exclusion of affect and representation or life and appearance.

than the question of ugliness or beauty as *Schein*. True artistic creation should not aim for greatness, but instead should come from the capacity to sink oneself into «das Leben des Geringsten.» If representation is to be faithful to life, it must reproduce fine, scarcely noticeable moments that belong to life, that distinguish individuals and yet make them part of a larger code of affective recognition: «und gebe es [das Leben des Geringsten] wieder in den Zuckungen, den Andeutungen, dem ganzen feinen, kaum bemerkten Mienenspiel» (87). In other words, Lenz is interested in the particular gesture that might betray the affective substance on which life and its presentation are based.

This demand for faithfulness to the affective basis of life in its «raw» form inevitably swings between the poles of what might be called a subjective realism and an affective idealism. The difficulties with representational forms that attempt to present being in its affective and immediate plenitude are evident to Büchner's Lenz. For instance, he sets the concept of «Dichtung» over and against the process of mimetic reproduction that merely creates «Holzpuppen.» For Lenz, «Dichtung» is an aesthetic practice that captures the singularity of the living being that cannot be perceived by the senses alone. Lenz states: «die Gefühlsader ist in fast allen Menschen gleich, nur ist die Hülle mehr oder weniger dicht, durch die sie brechen muss. Man muß nur Aug und Ohren dafür haben» (87). «Aug und Ohren» are metaphors for the ability to feel one's way into one's subject, where interiority plays just as important a role for the observer as do the physical signs of exteriority, whose «kaum bemerkte[s] Mienenspiel» suggests the affective life of the object. Lenz recognizes the simultaneous necessity and impossibility of this practice of representation when he exclaims: «Man mochte manchmal ein Medusenhaupt sein, um so eine Gruppe in Stein verwandeln zu können» (87). However, by the time that Bachmann writes her award speech the figure of Medusa had undergone a metamorphosis into Benjamin's Angel of History, with the paralyzed mode of helpless witnessing implied by the latter.

The destiny of the figure of Lenz as he descends into his crisis of estrangement foreshadows this crisis of aesthetic representation.

Lenz is driven by the emotions of fear, despair, and even boredom over and beyond the boundary of socially condoned behavior. Possessed to an extreme by the fluctuation between too little and too much affect, his physiognomy takes over the function of representing affect in a manner that prefigures the Freudian hysteric: «Manche Gedanken, mächtige Gefühle wurde er nur mit der größten Angst los; da trieb es ihn wieder mit unendlicher Gewalt darauf, er zitterte, das Haar sträubte ihm fast, bis er es in der ungeheuersten Anspannung erschöpfte» (89). The figure of Lenz is thus unable to gain distance from affect; affect is no longer mediated by representation.

This affective field has its own peculiar characteristics of fluctuation: manic, violent energy consumes the figure Lenz, alternating with periods of exhaustion and indifference, indeed, one might say, with depression. The contours of affect have a decidedly spatial aspect to them; he feels oceanically at one with the dimensions of life surrounding him: «Er wurde still, vielleicht fast träumend: es verschmolz ihm Alles in eine Linie, wie eine steigende und sinkende Welle, zwischen Himmel und Erde; es war ihm, als läge er an einem unendlichen Meer, das leise auf- und abwogte. Manchmal saß er; dann ging er wieder, aber langsam träumend. Er suchte keinen Weg» (90). Lenz is experiencing a state of fusion with his environment.⁹ He has no path but his oceanic attachment to affective perception, which alternates with its inverse: namely, a claustrophobic sense of engulfment by the environment: «Jetzt ist es mir so eng, so eng! Sehn Sie, es ist mir manchmal, als stieß' ich mit den Händen an den Himmel; oh, ich ersticke!» (92). Thus, the heaven that seemed to offer luminous possibilities of thought, feeling, and representation as an imagined carpet under his feet in the first paragraph,¹⁰ now becomes an abysmal prison,

⁹ This state prefigures a central theory of Freudian psychoanalysis, namely that of the death drive as elaborated in Freud's «Jenseits des Lustprinzips.» Here I am thinking particularly of the parallel between Lenz's sense of fusion with the objects that make up his life world and Freud's description of the death drive as a striving for a return to an inorganic state or nirvana.

¹⁰ This is the much-cited and much-discussed passage from Büchner's *Lenz*: «Müdigkeit spürte er keine, nur war es ihm manchmal unangenehm, dass er nicht auf dem Kopf gehn konnte» (79).

as do his surroundings: «die Landschaft beängstigte ihn, sie war so eng, daß er an Alles zu stoßen fürchtete,» filling him instead with «ein[em] unbeschreibliche[n] Gefühl des Mißbehagens» (97).

What becomes clear is that Lenz's relationship to affect, and via affect to the world around him, has lost the safety of withdrawal that representation, by placing figures at one remove from life, allowed him. In some sense, Lenz has become too close to, indeed, contaminated by, the affectivity of life. He can no longer mediate between himself and his environment – he experiences it as immediate, all-engulfing, numbing, and hence, finally, also as utterly incomprehensible, as if psychotically encoded. Paradoxically, it is by coming so close to the very affectivity that he prescribed as essential to aesthetic representation that Lenz loses his ability to represent, to read or communicate situations and emotional or physical landscapes. For Lenz, the unmediated energy of affect becomes dangerous, overwhelming, and the language through which it emerges mysterious and inaccessible: these include the furtive signs of death he associates with a girl's corpse, with the woman he loved and who he now states is dead, and with his own state of mind: «Hieroglyphen, Hieroglyphen! [...] Ja, gestorben – Hieroglyphen!» Language becomes not only immanent and hence indecipherable, but also transcendent and transparent, as when Lenz says to his host Oberlin: «die Langeweile! Die Langeweile! Oh, so langweilig! Ich weiß gar nicht mehr, was ich sagen soll; ich habe schon allerlei Figuren an die Wand gezeichnet» (95). Thus Lenz, in the true spirit of psychosis, has seen the writing on the wall.

Lenz's constant attempts to maintain a safe distance from this aching psycho-linguistic fluctuation induce his infliction of physical violence on himself – he attempts to express his hollow interior by removing his body through «Versuche zum Entleiben.» Similarly, the hydraulics of his conjugations of emptiness lead him to believe that even the very air around him has more weight and agency than his own being: «[er sagte] jetzt endlich empfinde er die ungeheure Schwere der Luft» (100). This figure of breath, or «Luft,» is reconfigured as a mode of performance of breathlessness in Bachmann's speech. Ultimately, Lenz's sense of being fades to a state in which silence has an intrusive, almost violent power of expression, risen to

the pitch of an unbearable scream, as his senses submit to the potential excesses of life in its exposed form, no longer distanced by aesthetic attempts at representation or controlled by logical forms of thinking. Lenz cries: «Hören Sie denn nichts, hören Sie denn nicht die entsetzliche Stimme, die um den ganzen Horizont schreit, und die man gewöhnlich die Stille heißt?» (100). The point at which silence can scream is also the point of proximity to death. Having failed to escape from the strictures of the social world embodied by the family, Lenz is returned under strict supervision to his father in Strasbourg.

Yet Lenz's return to «normalcy» – the talent of existing alongside others without calling undue attention to oneself – is also his departure from affect and aesthetic: «Er schien ganz vernünftig, sprach mit den Leuten. Er tat alles, wie es die andern taten; es war aber eine entsetzliche Leere in ihm, er fühlte keine Angst mehr, kein Verlangen, sein Dasein war ihm eine notwendige Last. – So lebte er hin . . .» (101). Unable to produce either affect or «Dichtung» Lenz represents – but is not in ontological terms – life minus affect. That is, his life is reduced to the biological form through which he conducts it; Lenz has lost the quilting points of libidinal significance on which his existence depended. His descent through the viscosity of madness towards an empty, enforced form of sociality moves us closer to Bachmann's particular interpellation of Lenz in her address.

IV) INGEBORG BACHMANN'S «DEUTSCHE ZUFÄLLE»: TRANSLATING BREATHLESSNESS

Interestingly, the original title under which Ingeborg Bachmann delivered her 1964 Büchner Prize speech was «Deutsche Zufälle.» However, when the talk was published in 1965 as a monograph Bachmann had changed the title to *Ein Ort für Zufälle*. This renaming makes the subject matter Bachmann deals with simultaneously more and less specific: less specific, as the adjective of national belonging falls away, and more specific, as she concentrates explicitly on the city of Berlin. Germany appears to be too overwhelming a category to take on, and the reference in the published title to «Ort»

seems to enable the Austrian-born Bachmann to locate herself as living in Berlin, and hence implicated in the day-to-day life of the city, but as non-German. This rhetorical move could be read as a strategy of disidentification, and Bachmann has certainly been seen as one of the most thorough and effective critics of Germany's postwar deflections. However, I would argue that Bachmann's speech also implies Bachmann's complex awareness of her own affective contamination by that which she observes around her in Berlin. This sense of complicity emerges in the performative strategies of her speech.

Considering the passionate renaissance of interest in the work of Ingeborg Bachmann it is surprising that very few Bachmann critics have examined this text¹¹. Those who have written on the speech tend to assess it either in terms of its aesthetic form or as an encoded comment on the historical division of the city into East and West zones that was given concrete form by the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961¹². Both aesthetic and historico-political aspects are vital to interpretations of Bachmann's speech. However, I would argue that these two elements must be examined in tandem, and that affect is what binds these aspects together—translates between these levels—in Bachmann's speech. By affect, I mean two particular aspects of the speech: first, the dimension of atmosphere and reaction produced by its performative effect and, second, its relationship to the debate about whether the German people were able or willing to evince

¹¹ Jost Schneider gives three reasons for the relatively small amount of attention paid to this prose piece in spite of the Bachmann research boom in the 1980s: first, the stylistic deviation of this work from the remainder of her corpus; second, the plenitude of subtle and distorted symbols in the piece are particularly difficult to decipher; and, third, her use of reference to concrete external details, which is unusual in her writing (127). Another possible reason for the lack of critical engagement with this text from the large feminist contingent of Bachmann scholarship might be this text's unusually limited engagement with questions of gender and sexuality.

¹² Those critics leaning towards an aesthetic critique include Hans Holler and Kurt Bartsch. The texts focused on the historical deciphering of Bachmann's speech include Jost Schneider and Michael Eggers. Sigrid Weigel's analysis of the speech in her Bachmann biography is somewhat different; she sees the images in Bachmann's text «als Struktur eines traumatischen Gedächtnisses» (373–383).

«appropriate» emotion in line with their recent horrific history. While the performative aspect has to do with the speech's effect on its audience/readers, the aspect of emotional accountability is linked to the immediate historical framing of Bachmann's speech as a radical critique of the German people's inability to mourn, three years avant la lettre of Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich's 1967 publication, their seminal psychoanalytic diagnosis of the postwar German population, *Die Unfähigkeit zu trauern*. However, I would argue that her speech is the site of a much more complex set of affective reactions and relations to both Germany's past and present, which include her own troubled sense of complicity in the events of the German nation, represented here by the divided city of Berlin.

Bachmann begins her speech with a brief, framing preamble in which she cites and interprets an utterance by Büchner's Lenz:

«Konsequent, konsequent», sagte er dann, Lenz nämlich, und wenn jemand anderer was sprach: «Inkonsequent, inkonsequent.» Es war die Kluft unrettbaren Wahnsinns, erfahren wir.

Konsequenz, das Konsequente ist in fast allen Fällen etwas Furchtbares, und das Erleichternde, das Lösende, Lebbare, das kommt inkonsequent einher. Konsequenz, das Folgerichtige, im Verfolgen des Risses – eines Risses, der für Lenz durch die Welt ging und der ihn nur traurig den Kopf schütteln ließ auf alles, was man ihm sagte [...].¹³

This tightly written, cryptic passage addresses an ethical dilemma, namely that of the frightening difficulty, «etwas Furchtbares,» that comes from living «consistently.» For that which is inconsistent is easier to live out – «das Erleichternde, das Lösende, Lebbare.» However, making the relieving choice to live inconsistently, or so it is implied, also entails living with the loss of ethical reflection. The very ambivalence of affect in the passage – from the hard choice of awful consistency to the relief of living «just so,» or inconsistently – signals Bachmann's preoccupation with the complex and ambivalent question of the form that ethical comportment might take in postwar Germany.

¹³ «Ein Ort für Zufälle» in this paper quoted as OZ (278).

Bachmann goes on to draw an explicit parallel between postwar Germany and the torn landscape of Lenz's mind by underscoring Büchner's choice of the word «Zufälle» to describe Lenz's affective condition:

Zufälle: ein merkwürdiges Wort, mit dem Büchner die Lenzsche Krankheit behaftet. Lassen Sie uns daran festhalten. Der Wahnsinn kann auch von außen kommen, auf die einzelnen zu, ist also schon viel früher von dem Innen der einzelnen nach außen gegangen, tritt den Rückweg an, in Situationen, die uns geläufig geworden sind, in den Erbschaften dieser Zeit. Denn ich vergesse nicht, dass ich in Ihrem Land bin mit seinen Zufällen, die sich der Diagnose nicht ganz, aber im Grunde entziehen, wie alle Zufälle; Zufälle, die sich mitunter aber einer Optik und einem Gehör mitteilen, das sich diesem Zufall aussetzt, dem Nachtmahr und seiner Konsequenz (OZ 278).

This passage displays the condensed ethical parameters of Bachmann's speech. Most significantly, she signals her distance from the Germany of the audience, from «Ihrem Land,» thus marking her extra-territorial relationship to Germany as an Austrian writer. At the same time, her precise references to the socio-historical geography of Berlin demonstrate her intimacy with the city. Bachmann refers to the peculiar phenomenology that enables one to experience «the nightmare [of Germany's recent past] and its consequences» as a process that is shared with or splits one (*mit-teilen*) through «ein[e] Optik» and «[ein] Gehör.» This reference to perception rephrases Lenz's statement on the ability to adequately translate into representation the affective element vital to human beings in their individual situatedness. However, this reference is complicated by Lenz's ultimate silence, which spreads across it like a stain. Further, Bachmann's own experiences of the landscape of Berlin's inhabitants are nothing short of disturbing, implying that this type of observation is made at risk to the observer, whose processes of perception cannot remain at a distance from signs of affective turbulence in Berlin.

We cannot fail to be struck by the centrality of the word «Zufall,» signaled by its prominent placement at the beginning of the

passage, as well as its repetition five times within the span of three sentences. «Zufall» is a word resonant with associations: first, as history understood as mere coincidence or accident, implying a stance cleansed of agency and responsibility. Second, the German etymological root of «Zufall» underscores the multiple strata of Bachmann's speech; originally belonging to the field of logic, the term also bears the traces of its theological deployment in the linguistic practice of the mystics.¹⁴ This semantic shift in Bachmann's speech from the understanding of «Zufall» as the logical outcome of a series of events, to that of something which comes to one from a source beyond one's control, is paradigmatic for her sense both of Germany's uncomprehending reaction to its own past and her own sense of disturbance in relation to an alien past with which she feels complicit through her naked eye's unmediated absorption of her surroundings. Bachmann's framing of the postwar period in a paraphrase of Ernst Bloch's words as «d[ie] Erbschaften dieser Zeit» implies that the speech should be interpreted through the shadow of National Socialism and the ensuing divisive optics of the Cold War.¹⁵

Finally, Bachmann underscores the synaesthetic nature of her address by referring to the distorted imagistic passages that follow as a series «von variablen Krankheitsbildern.»¹⁶ Her description of the

¹⁴ Kluge, 916.

¹⁵ A third possible interpretation of the word «Zufall» lies at the heart of the spliced word, namely in the noun «Fall,» the word used in psychoanalytical contexts to mean «case history.» Bachmann's choice of the word «Diagnose» as the next noun following the word «Zufälle» picks up on this psychoanalytical resonance, only to contend that the case of Berlin is perhaps beyond a theory of hermeneutics. Unlike the Mitscherlichs, Bachmann does not offer a diagnosis of this putative affective pathology, indeed because there can be no doubt that some form of psychic excess is at work in her presentation of Berlin.

¹⁶ One way of approaching the images is to see them as manifestations of the «Symptomkörper» Berlin. In her Bachmann biography Sigrid Weigel has taken this psychoanalytically informed approach to Bachmann's «Ein Ort für Zufälle.» She reads the city's topography as a «Symptomkörper [...] dessen Zeichen auf eine vergangene Schreckensgeschichte verweisen» (373). In this sense, I think, Weigel reads Bachmann's speech as a case history, turning the city of Berlin itself into a subject of psychoanalysis, into a «Fall,» or case history.

episodic fragments as a series of images – «images of illness»–frame the speech as a series of *Augenblicke*, translations of the condensed everyday scenes she imbibes in Berlin from the affective topology of postwar Germany's historico-political climate. In leaning on an aesthetic of surrealism, as these *Augenblicke* arguably do, they are related to practices of surrealism explored by Walter Benjamin in his essay titled «Surrealism.»¹⁷ Benjamin argues that in surrealist prose «image and language take precedence» over and above meaning and the self (179). Explaining the effect of what Benjamin famously termed the «profane illumination» produced in the reader of surrealist prose, Benjamin stresses how the experiential is expressed not as historical or subjective, but rather as political and «atmospheric.» What Benjamin calls «profane illumination» by way of «atmosphere» is not dissimilar to the movement of transmission I attribute to affect in Bachmann's address. Just as surrealism politicized the seemingly banal and easily overlooked by way of an aesthetic of defamiliarization, so too does Bachmann's translation of her experiences in Berlin into a series of affectively saturated and surreal language images imply a process of politicization of a historical situation through the aesthetic means of alienation.

Bachmann concludes the introductory passage of the speech with the following statement that both demands attention and prepares us for the performance of the affective transmission in question: «Aber Darstellung verlangt Radikalisierung und kommt aus Notigung» (279). When representation becomes an act of compulsive and necessary translation of an affectively oversaturated past, then a specific mode of reading is called for. With this statement Bachmann implicitly suggests a modality of approach to her images of illness, preparing us for the radical and compelled aesthetic that takes place in her prose by way of distortion, negation, perceptual overstimulation, and a rapid and irregular syntactic performance that quite literally induces breathlessness in several parts of the speech, most notably in the beginning and the concluding passages. In order to understand these strategies of representational radicalization, hermeneutic interpreta-

¹⁷ Walter Benjamin, "Surrealism," 178–82.

tion, such as a reading of the historical signs and locations in her text,¹⁸ remains important but insufficient. Something is always in excess of a translation that equates Bachmann's images with historical facts alone. The hermeneutic practice of Freudian psychoanalysis that aims at translating the excess of affect into language also proves to be helpful. The scarred landscape of Bachmann's speech is one of affective distortion. In order not to reduce her images to subjective impressions, which she expressly warns against in her introduction, the images could be read as a series of rebuses. In Freud's writings on dreamwork the rebus does not indicate a relationship of equivalence that would merely link an image back to an object in the empirical world; instead, a rebus signals that affect is intensely at work in an image, and that this image thus writes a script for a memory or situation that does not, or cannot exist, because of social inhibitions. This would suggest that we, as readers, need to be attuned to the surreal modality of affect that inheres in these distorted images from a history that «refuses to subside.»

Besides the hermeneutic modes of reading mentioned above, I want to stress the importance of attending to the performative modality of the speech. The performative modality is linked to two further important affective elements: that of mood or atmosphere, and the figure of breath or, more accurately, of a certain breathlessness. The first aspect, that of atmosphere, has to do with how Bachmann's speech with its startling language images affects the reader. The second aspect, that of breath or breathlessness, involves the speed and scale of certain passages that leave the reader short of breath, thus translating affect into an embodied state of distress.

In order to consider the affective transmission or translation that both mediates between and makes uncanny the aesthetic and the historical aspects of Bachmann's speech, let us now turn to Bachmann's first «Krankheitsbild»:

¹⁸ For instance, Jost Schneider offers a convincing interpretation of Bachmann's speech at the level of history, although for Schneider the history in question is only that of the Cold War, and vivid images taken from the traumatic archive of the Third Reich are passed over virtually without comment (130–39).

Es ist zehn Häuser nach SAROTTI, es ist einige Blocks vor SCHULTHEISS, es ist fünf Ampeln weit von der KOMMERZBANK, es ist nicht bei BERLINER KINDL, es sind Kerzen im Fenster, es ist seitab von der Straßenbahn, ist auch in der Schweigestunde, ist ein Kreuz davor, es ist so weit nicht, aber auch nicht so nah, ist – falsch geraten! – eine Sache auch, ist kein Gegenstand, ist tagesüber, ist auch nachts, wird benutzt, sind Menschen drin, sind Bäume drum, kann, muß nicht, soll, muß nicht, wird getragen, abgegeben, kommt mit den Füßen voraus, hat blaues Licht, hat nichts zu tun, ist, ja ist, ist vorgekommen, ist aufgegeben, ist jetzt und schon lange, ist eine ständige Adresse, ist zum Umkommen, kommt vor, kommt vor und hervor, ist etwas – in Berlin (OZ 279–280).

This passage shows signs of the «Nötigung,» or a performative modality which radicalizes Bachmann's representational practice. The representation of the mode of frantic, barely suppressed affect is evident in the anxious movement of grammar and syntax. The sheer effort required to pronounce this single sentence as the grammatical unit it intends to be produces a breathlessness that is compounded by the suspension of meaning until the end of the sentence. However, the closure promised by the sentence's conclusion is not forthcoming, suggesting that the hermeneutic function of the paragraph is less significant than the affective attitude demanded by the syntax and paragraph-length of this sentence.

On close examination, we notice the prevalence of the indefinite neuter pronoun «es.» Just what this recurring pronoun substitutes for remains unclear, even up to the sentence's (anti)climactic end; the indefinite «es» is replaced there with the equally abstract «etwas,» giving no further clue as to the object and/or cause of this anxious syntax. The repetition of «es ist» demands a predicate that, in this instance, is defined only by its ability for rapid and illogical displacement, drawing attention instead to the utter emptiness of the subject of the sentence, which is neither person nor thing, constantly approaching and retreating behind the formulaic lexical holder «es.» In this sense, the grammar also functions to empty out meaning, where a combination of the verb «sein» and its predicates have

more presence than the grammatical subject position of «es,» which refuses to be pinned down. In this sense, the syntax of ontology («sein») gives way to a form of epistemology that serves less to calculate experience as knowledge than to amass an overwhelming list of external features that place us, and «es» and «etwas,» «in Berlin.»

If grammatical markers of orientation lose ground to economic landmarks of Berlin these very temporal and spatial co-ordinates also deny us passage into either the city or the subject of this space despite referents grounded in the physical geography of Berlin. Indeed, the subject position is defined by a process of defacement, undermined by the repetitious flurry of indefiniteness: «es ist.,» «es ist.,» «es ist.» To compound the sense of disorientation, what originally appear to be concrete physical references – the names of well-known German commercial institutions – on second glance prove to be a metonymic sleight of hand; although we recognize the commercial institutions Sarotti and Berliner Kindl, this familiarity does not guarantee grounding in reality. What at first appears containable, and located, reveals itself to be a name without a physical referential index, gaining its location in relation to other less definite spatial designators: «von der Straßenbahn ab,» «ein Kreuz davor,» and the even more diffuse «so weit» and «nicht so nah.» The text moves from the apparent referential stability of proper nouns to the gathering vagueness of relativistic adverbs of place. This sliding scale of spatial reference gives way to temporal markers, characterized specifically by a stubborn lack of definition: «ist tagsüber, ist auch nachts.» Present, past, and future fuse into a single repetitive trickle in the tireless hourglass of this surreal landscape.

The prominent indefinite pronoun «es,» which also translates into the Freudian «Es» or «Id,» seeks a predicate not in order to describe itself, but rather to affect an ongoing process of displacement of this very unconscious matter. But this symptomatic displacement of meaning remains unsuccessful; the repetition of the «es» demonstrates its compulsive recurrence in spite of the growing heap of predicates. The unconscious or excessive element of Bachmann's utterance, this «Es [...] ist etwas – in Berlin,» manifests itself as uncannily present but ultimately resistant to effortless translation, like an affective blind spot in each of the twenty-seven language images.

The inhabitants of Western Berlin are the primary object of scrutiny in the *Krankheitsbildern*. In another Bachmannian «image of illness,» the illness appears to be intended quite literally as we find ourselves at the «Krankenhaus,» a less covert space of pathological anxiety. Here, the patients are so overwrought that a normal tranquilizer is inadequate. They must, quite literally, be pinned to the bed by the needle of a syringe: «Die Nachtschwester hat schon wieder alles durchschaut [...], wendet den Griff an und gibt eine Spritze, die durch und durch geht und in der Matratze stecken bleibt, damit man nicht mehr aufstehen kann» (OZ 280).

What is interesting in Bachmann's description is that each of these images is saturated with affect. Each figure conveys an emotional resonance of anxiety, desperation, joviality, or even deep despondency. This suggests that if these figures do represent a panoply of «the inability to mourn,» the emotional makeup of this «inability» defies, to a large extent, systematic categorization and instead translates into affect, transmitted as an equivocal sense of strangeness that saturates each language image. Indeed, the invalids might even be read as figures that Bachmann describes in an empathic light as those who attempt, hopelessly and against all odds, to come to terms with the lingering history that seeps through the city even as it takes new forms in Cold War ideology.¹⁹ Bachmann's sense of complicity – her phenomenological transubstantiation of experience that she in turn shares with the reader – suspends a passing of moral judgment on the crippled emotions of those around her. Instead, she is able to record the ethical and emotional nuances that emerge alongside the more familiar hints at an avoidance of empathy or mourning. She successfully infects the reader with affective atmospheres suggesting the contours of strong emotions, such as pity and repulsion, through her spoken performance of these starkly visual language images. In this sense,

¹⁹ Kurt Bartsch notes Bachmann's empathy towards the «Kranken,» whom he reads as follows: «Bachmann nimmt Partei für den konsequent bis zum Wahnsinn lebenden und denkenden Dichter Lenz und für die ebenso konsequenten Kranken [...]» (137–38).

Bachmann indicates empathy not only towards the victims of the Third Reich, whose spectral presence inhabits her entire speech, but also towards the bystanders, with figures such as the invalids, whose own estranged behavior, like that of Büchner's «invalid» Lenz, can scarcely be overlooked.

Just as the mind revives and weaves together the day's residue via displacement and condensation in the associative work of the dream, so too are many of the «images» we encounter in Bachmann's speech linked through the displaced repetition of common motifs. The specific tools of optical and acoustic perception – «ein[e] Optik und [ein] Gehör» – of this «Nachtmah,» the sound of airplane flight, of warplanes and of «Luftpost und Luftfracht,» provide an ongoing backdrop to the piece. Recalling Büchner's Lenz, who constantly hears the «entsetzliche Stimme» of «Stille,» the invalids of Berlin cannot bear the «Beinahton» that represents for them the continual droning of planes in flight – an acoustic memory of the war that surreptitiously slips into the everyday through the noise of passenger and freight planes. Lines of flight become implicit lines of fright. Further, these flights are not merely acoustic markers of memory; they threaten the very sanity of the invalids. Indeed, the flight path of what might be English bombers, or even the more benevolent American Luftbrücke, becomes an overt threat in the hospital²⁰: «Jetzt fliegt jede Minute ein Flugzeug durchs Zimmer [...]» (OZ 280). In the thicket of images and the constant surreal doubling of language, the reader is presented with no ultimate reality against which to measure the growing nightmarish flood of images, let alone to establish the luxury of a narrative structure²¹. Without a clear

²⁰ Jost Schneider's careful historical reconstruction of the Cold War events in Berlin at the time of Bachmann's stay in the city offers another source for these ubiquitous flights. Schneider writes that in 1964 the topic of air traffic often graced the headlines of the daily newspapers: «Ursache hierfür war die am 31. Mai 1964 erfolgte Eröffnung der Direktverbindung New York–Berlin durch die amerikanische Fluggesellschaft Pan American World Airways (PanAm).»

²¹ Sibley Fries makes this point nicely when she describes the «apparent lack of linear logic» in Bachmann's sequence of images with Bachmann's/Büchner's own word «Konsequenz» (276).

measure of time, we are cast ashore on the place names and the outlines of familiar objects, whose very familiarity at this point in time might tempt us into a veritable labyrinth of clichés about postwar Germany.

This pitch of excessive or inappropriate activity that deflects from reflection expands and reproduces itself in different tones throughout Bachmann's speech: there is the old pub in the district of Moabit that serves alcohol until the Spree River overflows with Korn and the Havel froths over with beer; American soldiers are secretly given cigarettes by the night nurses, and the Brandenburg gate is torn out of place and taken home as a souvenir by the «Mittelamerikanern»; physical locations gain agency and rebel against the apparent order of the city as the streets tip at forty-five degrees «wegen der Politik,» causing vehicles, trees, and people to slide together in distorted heaps. Despite these bizarre conditions of impossibility, the figures on the streets of Berlin comfort themselves with the hope that things would be worse elsewhere: «Die Fußgänger fangen sich, halten ihr Gebiß zusammen, sie sprechen nicht, aber sie schauen, mit den Händen fest über den Mund, schauen aus nach einem Halt. Mit den Augen sagt einer: am besten ist es noch hier, man bleibt am besten hier, hier kann man es noch am besten aushalten, besser ist es sonst nirgends» (OZ 285). These figures, whose gestural language betrays what they do not or cannot speak out loud, are characterized by an ambivalence that expresses complex shades of complicity, disavowal, and fear, translating into a sense of piteous contempt or even impatience in the reader.

Distinctly different dimensions of time emerge simultaneously: «Im kommen ist jetzt der Kreuzberg,» «Am Knie der Königsallee fallen, jetzt ganz gedampft, die Schüsse auf Rathenau. In Plotzensee wird gehenkt,» and the «Holzstoß ist errichtet am Kurfürstendamm, Ecke Joachimsthaler Straße,» in a sinister re-enactment of the NS *Bücherverbrennung*. Bachmann weaves together layers of history and current political events, from the coming of the new political left («die neue Religion»; «the new religion») in Kreuzberg to the faint echoes of Walther Rathenau's assassination in 1922, to the brutal

penal history of Plotzensee. This suggests that the majority of the city's inhabitants are barely engaging with the lived history that disturbs the very structure of the city of Berlin. By assaulting the reader with the performance of this inimitable flow of images Bachmann both immerses us in the affective turmoil of the city as she sees it and also demands that we perform the careful ethical work of translating memory into the present as we read her speech.

The failure to hold levels of meaning apart is suggested also by the head doctor's inability to read the «Hieroglyphen» that form the mass of his own diagnosis of the «Kranken» in his hospital (OZ 281). In Büchner, Lenz's utterance: «Hieroglyphen! [...] Ja, gestorben – Hieroglyphen!» expresses his sense of language's proximity to death and indicates his immersion in an unsolvable ethical dilemma. In Bachmann, however, the hieroglyphics become a marker of a refused and staged inability to translate between different registers and different historical moments. In other words, the head doctor refuses to read «the writing on the wall,» i.e., the ambivalent and difficult ethical truth represented by the suffering of the «invalids» who are ill because, plagued by conscience, they are unable to translate themselves from the horrific German past into the present moment of *Wiederaufbau* West Germany without an uncanny affective remainder. For the doctor, the «Hieroglyphen» represent the opportunity for euphemism, a form of translation often used to obscure critical and potentially uncomfortable socio-political truths. The condition not only of the patients, but of the entire city, is encoded in stiff euphemisms that are scarcely spoken aloud: «Der Chefarzt darf nicht belästigt werden, das Ergebnis steht schon seit Jahren auf dem Blatt, aber es wird nicht gezeigt. Es muß eine “Disharmonie” sein. In der ganzen Stadt sickert etwas durch, alle wollen “Disharmonie” gelesen oder gehört haben, manche haben es schon gedacht. Aber es steht nirgends öffentlich» (OZ 284–85). Similarly, the single drastic antidote against the «Disharmonie» that seeps through society like gradated poison is the behavior of «Diplomatie»: «Die Schwestern reden an der Hauptsache vorbei, es ist “Diplomatie”, ja, so heißt es. Es sickert langsam durch. Alle sagen, unter den niedergehaltenen Schmerzen, es sei jetzt “Diplomatie”. Man wird nichts tun können»

(OZ 292). While «Disharmonie» may refer to both the untimely return of the past and the lack of compliance between the East-West axes of Berlin, «Diplomatie» asks for tactful behavior of caution in the new aggressive mood of the Cold War. Both euphemisms create alternating atmospheres of uncomfortable dishonesty and euphoric, but painful fatalism that return us to the register of the Lenzian «Zufälle.»

It seems significant that Bachmann writes her Büchner Prize address in the style of fevered dream images, as if her performance alone might enable a state in which she can free herself of the surreal images of nightmarish proportions and the Germans themselves might find a less tormented standpoint. The language images themselves, however, offer only a space of affective ambivalence through which ethical reflection might be possible, but is not guaranteed. By translating the pertinent moments of social critique staged via an aesthetics of affect from the context of Büchner's *Lenz* into that of West Germany of the 1960s, Bachmann illustrates the powerful impetus of social critique embedded in practices of translation intent on preserving the foreignness or alienation not only between spatially or geographically defined cultures, as in Berman's argument, but also between temporal registers. With its uncompromising strategy of alienation, Bachmann's speech demonstrates the subversive potentiality of a practice of translation that preserves its *Fremdheit* towards the end of provoking an ethical confrontation here, specifically, with the «otherness» that haunted West German society. It is somewhere in the movement between these texts, as they speak to one another and transcribe the experience of the political and ethical urgencies of their day, that we might sense the vital breath of Bachmann's speech.

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Анна М. Паркинсон

Переходы на пределе дыхания: аффект и перевод в Бюхнеровской речи Ингеборг Бахманн¹

*Читатель, мыслитель, бездельник, фланёр – типы иллюминатов,
так же как любитель опиума, сновидец, экстафик.
И более профанические. Не говоря о самом страшном наркотике –
нас самих, – который мы принимаем в одиночестве.*

Вальтер Беньямин

*Перевод – не временная замена, но способ существования, с чьей помощью
творение достигает нас в качестве инородного. Хороший перевод
сохраняет эту чуждость и при этом делает творение доступным нам.*

Антуан Берман

1. ПЕРЕВОД КАК ПРАКТИКА ОТЧУЖДЕНИЯ

Термин «перевод» вызывает представление о переходной работе, передающей один язык как другой, заменяя «инородное» наречие «известным». Свои ресурсы такое опосредование черпает как правило в метафорике сделки, компромисса: выигрыши и потери взвешиваются на весах формы и содержания, успех сделки высчитывается на основании гладкости или знакомости, которые дан-

¹ Настоящую статью я написала в течение учебного года 2004/05, работая над темой «перевода» в качестве Mellon Graduate Fellow в *Society for the Humanities* Корнельского университета. Я благодарна своим коллегам за активную помощь в редактировании ранней версии статьи. Но больше всего я обязана Елене Петровской, ее поддержке, разумным редакторским предложениям и неизменной доброжелательности.