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The Representation of Forced Migration
in the Feature Films of the Federal Republic of Germany,
German Democratic Republic, and Polish People's Republic (1945–1970)

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Germanic Languages

by

Jamie Leigh Zelechowski

2017

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Representation of Forced Migration
in the Feature Films of the Federal Republic of Germany,
German Democratic Republic, and Polish People's Republic (1945–1970)

by

Jamie Leigh Zelechowski

Doctor of Philosophy in Germanic Languages

University of California, Los Angeles, 2017

Professor Todd S. Presner, Co-Chair

Professor Roman Koropecj, Co-Chair

My dissertation investigates the cinematic representation of forced migration (due to the border changes enacted by the Yalta and Potsdam conferences in 1945) in East Germany, West Germany, and Poland, from 1945–1970. My thesis is that, while the representations of these forced migrations appear infrequently in feature film during this period, they not only exist, but perform an important function in the establishment of foundational national narratives in the audiovisual sphere. Rather than declare the existence of some sort of visual taboo, I determine, firstly, why these images appear infrequently; secondly, how and to what purpose(s) existing representations are mobilized; and, thirdly, their relationship to popular and official discourses. Furthermore, I articulate to what extent and in what way the experiences of “others” (e.g. Jews, Ukrainians,

Soviets, etc.) are (or are not) integrated into these narratives of victimhood. To these ends, I conduct close analyses of ten films, focusing on those scenes that depict refugee treks and “repatriate” trains. Both as representations in a filmic narrative and as historical, real-world facts, the refugee trek and the repatriate train are specific subsets of what Mikhail Bakhtin calls the “chronotope of the road,” and function within a text as a representation of that real-world fact—indeed, many of the filmic representations clearly utilize documentary images for their own compositions. It is at the intersection of chronotope and photographic/filmic index, I argue, that the films negotiate between competing myths, politics, and collective memories with regard to the hotly contested topic of forced migration as a socio-political reality. By conducting close readings of the films and by situating the films and their chronotopic representations of forced migration in the historical, political, and social contexts that generated them, I am able to articulate the function of these scenes, find potential explanations for their paucity in pre-1970 cinema, and express to what extent they contribute to what Cornelia Brink calls the “*soziales Bildgedächtnis*” (“social image memory”) of these forced migrations in German and Polish contexts.

The dissertation of Jamie Leigh Zelechowski is approved.

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2017

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Abbreviations

AK: Armia Krajowa (Home Army; occupied Poland)
BArch: Bundesarchiv (Federal Archives; Berlin, Germany)
BdV: Bund der Vertriebenen (League of the Expellees; FRG)
ČSSR: Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
DIF: Deutsches Film-Institut (German Film Institute, Frankfurt am Main)
FN: Filмотека Narodowa (National Film Archives; Warsaw, Poland)
FRG: Federal Republic of Germany
GDR: German Democratic Republic
KC: Komitet Centralny (Central Committee; PPR)
KOS: Komisja Ocen Scenariuszy (Script Evaluation Commission; PPR)
KZ: Konzentrationslager (concentration camp)
LPG: Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft (Agricultural Production Cooperative; GDR)
LZ: Literaturzentrum (Literaturzentrum Neubrandenburg, Helmut Sakowski Sammlung)
MO: Milicja Obywatelska (Civic Militia [i.e., police]; 1944-1990; PPR)
MZO: Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych (Ministry for the Recovered Territories; PPR)
NSDAP: Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Nazi Party)
OUN: Orhanizatsiya Ukrayins'kykh Natsionalistiv (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists)
PKF: Polska Kronika Filmowa (Polish Film Chronicle)
PRL: Polska Republika Ludowa (Polish People's Republic; PPR)
PUR: Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny (State Repatriation Office)
PPR: Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Workers' Party; 1942-1948); in English: Polish People's Republic (see entry *PRL*)
PZPR: Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (Polish United Workers' Party; PPR)
SB: Służba Bezpieczeństwa (Security Service; PRL; 1956-1990)
SBZ: Sowjetische Besatzungszone (Soviet Occupation Zone)
SED: Sozialistische Einheitspartei (Socialist Unity Party; GDR)
UB: Urząd Bezpieczeństwa (Department of Security; PPR; 1945-1954)
UNRRA: United Nations Relief and Rescue Agency
UPA: Ukraińska Powstańcza Armia (Ukrainian Insurgent Army)
WP: Wojsko Polskie (Polish Army, 1944-1952)
ZBoWiD: Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację (Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy; PPR)
ZVU: Zentralverwaltung für deutsche Umsiedler (Central Office for German Resettlers; SBZ; Sept. 14, 1945-March 31, 1948)

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Zelechowski, J. (Aug. 2016). "Józef Hen und die sogenannten Wiedergewonnenen Gebiete." Paper presented at colloquium of the Deutsches Polen-Institut, Darmstadt, Germany.

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Zelechowski, J. (Oct. 2015). "How Graustadt becomes Siwowo: Chronotopes of the City in Transition." Paper presented at the 2015 Graduate Student Conference of the Department of Germanic Languages at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

Zelechowski, J. (Oct. 2013). "German-Polish Relations: J.I. Kraszewski's *Hrabina Cosel* (1873) and its Television Adaptations." Paper presented at the 37th Annual German Studies Association Conference, Denver, Colorado.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

With the publication of his novella *Im Krebsgang* (Crabwalk) in 2002, Günter Grass claimed that he had broken a taboo on the discussion and representation of the suffering of Germans (specifically, the flight and expulsion of ethnic Germans from the East toward the end of WWII and in the immediate postwar years).¹ Grass sparked a media debate and a host of scholarship proving the contrary.² And while I do not agree with Grass, I have found that, in the world of feature film, the depiction of flight and expulsion, while it exists, has been a rarity—at least before 1970.³ This is the case not only in the Federal Republic of Germany, but in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and the Polish People's Republic (PPR)—the three national cinemas to be treated in this dissertation. The experiences of forced migration create the subtext for many films (particularly those Heimatfilms in the FRG which had the expellee population as its target

¹ A view suggested by “the old man,” i.e. the ghostwriting Grass: “Das nagt an dem Alten. Eigentlich, sagt er, wäre es Aufgabe seiner Generation gewesen, dem Elend der ostpreußischen Flüchtlinge Ausdruck zu geben” (“That gnaws at the old man. Really, he says, it should have been his generation’s task to give expression to the misery of the East Prussian refugees”; 99). According to “the old man,” previous generations adhered to a taboo (whether spoken or unspoken), and did not address what he now poignantly perceives as a dire need for the treatment of the subject of expellees in art. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine. Other translators will be marked in the bibliographic reference to the work.

² W.G. Sebald provoked a similar debate upon making a similar claim about the air war several years prior to Grass’ *Crabwalk*. One of the theses in Sebald’s *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (On the Natural History of Destruction; 1999) asserts that the air war exists as a void in German literature, having left “kaum eine Schmerzensspur” (“barely a trace of pain”; 12) in the collective memory of Germans. Robert Moeller has debunked several taboo claims, from “the thesis that after the war the citizens of the Federal Republic largely avoided all memories of the years of Nazi rule” (*War Stories* 14), to Grass’ concerning the plight of expellees. See Moeller, *War Stories* (2001) and the article “Sinking Ships, the Lost Heimat and Broken Taboos” (2003). See also Bill Niven’s (ed.) *Die Wilhelm Gustloff* (2011). The titles of books and articles appear in abbreviated footnotes in the footnotes. For full titles, please see the bibliography.

³ In my study, I consider both feature films intended for cinematic release as well as those produced directly for television (with special attention given to the differences in film and television productions). I do, however, exclude documentaries; what I am interested in is the *fictional* representation of flight and expulsion in film and television. 1970 marks the primary boundary of this project. With regard to the topic of forced migration and the German-Polish border, it is a very consequential year. It is around this time period that major shifts in power and politics began to take place: in Poland, Edward Gierek replaced Władysław Gomułka (1970); in the GDR, Erich Honecker replaced Walter Ulbricht (1971); and in the FRG, Willy Brandt replaced Kurt Georg Kiesinger (1969) and initiated his *Ostpolitik*. Most importantly, 1970 marks the year in which the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) recognized the Oder-Neisse Line as Poland’s western border (the German Democratic Republic [GDR] had already done so in 1950).

audience or the Polish films that take place in Poland's formerly German territories) but the experience of flight and expulsion is nevertheless rarely made visually explicit; it remains absent, or even spliced, from the visual narrative.

This dissertation therefore examines representations of the forced migrations that took place at the close of WWII in the feature films of the PPR, GDR, and FRG (1945–1970). Most of the narratives take place, whether in part or in whole, in the German territories that the Allies ceded to Poland as a result of the Yalta and Potsdam Conferences of 1945. In the closing months of the war and in the early postwar years, these territories were traversed by mass migrations: the expulsion or flight of millions of Germans, the return of former concentration camp inmates and forced laborers, and the resettlement of Poles from what had become part of the Soviet Union. Rather than focus solely on representations in the FRG, I have chosen to consider how these forced migrations have been represented in the cinemas of the three countries most impacted by them: the FRG, GDR, and PPR.⁴ I am interested in how Polish and (East/West) German experiences of forced migration intersect with each other as well as with other marginalized groups, primarily, Ukrainians, Silesians, and Jews. Rather than pronounce the existence of a visual taboo, I will theorize why the visual representation of forced migration in feature film appears so infrequently in this period (1945–1970) as well as how the experiences of “others” are (or are not) integrated into these narratives of victimhood; and secondly, I will determine how and to what purpose(s) existing representations are mobilized, and whether they conform to or complicate popular and official discourses.

⁴ Although Germans were also expelled from other lands (Czechoslovak, Hungarian, Romanian, etc.), my focus is on the territories east and west of the Oder-Neisse Line.

What I have found is that those films which explicitly depict flight and expulsion—even if only in foreshadowed or “iconic” forms—tend to make the subject more palatable and easily digestible either through the use of genre cinema,⁵ the reorientation of the climax toward the problems associated with arrival in the new *Heimat/macierz* (“homeland” and “motherland,” respectively) (namely property and ownership), or the subjugation of the refugee/expellee figures to another discourse or victim group. In these films, all of which depict flight and expulsion in some form or at some pre-arrival stage, the experience of forced migration tends to be curtailed—that is, it does not constitute the main narrative impulse or subject of the films.⁶ Even though this is the case, images of the forced migrations play a fundamental role in the establishment of national foundational narratives in the postwar period. Simply put, these images contribute to the consolidation of the FRG as a nation of victims, the GDR as an antifascist, socialist state, and the PPR as a socialist, Polish state justified in acquiring German territories due to the victimhood status of the Polish nation at the hands of the Nazi German state.

The primary films under analysis in this dissertation include: Wolfgang Liebeneiner’s *Waldwinter* (Forest in Winter; FRG 1956), Wolfgang Schleif’s *Preis der Nationen* (Das Mädchen Marion; Prize of the Nations/The Girl Marion; FRG 1956), and Frank Wisbar’s *Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen* (Night Fell Over Gotenhafen; FRG 1959); Milo Harbich’s *Freies Land* (Free Land;

⁵ My use of the term “genre” and of genre designations is intended to be descriptive, to place the film in its film-historical context and to understand how it engages with established conventions—even if these conventions are ‘imported’ (as in the case of the American Western in Polish cinema). Furthermore, I consider “genre” both semantically and syntactically (see Altman, Loc. 818–828)—this is especially relevant in the case of the Polish Westerns and “Easterns.”

⁶ The one exception to this in all three countries is Frank Wisbar’s *Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen* (Night Fell Over Gotenhafen; FRG, 1959). *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* differs from the other films in several fundamental ways: the film creates a teleology of destruction; it is characterized by non-arrival (death as terminus/arrival rather than the open-ended possibilities that arrival in a new *Heimat* encourage); it may belong to what I will call the genre of catastrophe film (here are depicted the various “stations” of German suffering: air raids, flight [over land and the failed attempt at sea]; attempted rape).

SBZ 1946), Kurt Maetzig's *Schlösser und Katen* (Castles and Cottages; GDR 1957), and Martin Eckermann's television film *Wege übers Land* (Ways Across the Land; GDR 1968); and Jerzy Hoffmann and Edward Skórzewski's *Prawo i pięść* (The Law and the Fist; PPR 1964), Stanisław Różewicz's *Trzy kobiety* (Three Women; PPR 1957), and Kazimierz Kutz's *Nikt nie woła* (No One Calls; PPR 1960). These films, and others like them, draw upon other visual sources (e.g., Nazi and Allied newsreels) in their depictions of forced migration—an indicator of the prevalence of such images in the public sphere and their iconic status. While the focus of my analysis rests on feature film, their intertextual relations to these texts (documentary still and moving images as well as propaganda) are fundamental to understanding the representation of forced migration in these films.

Because depictions of those long winter treks or strenuous train rides are so few in feature films of the period, scholarship has largely neglected to consider the films I analyze as a source of such representations. Scholarship that does undertake the topic in film focuses primarily on the expellees as a group and on their integration into the new *Heimat*.⁷ Notable exceptions include Bill Niven's work on flight and expulsion in East Germany and on the sinking of the *Gustloff* as well as Maren Röger's research on representations of flight and expulsion.⁸ Their work has proven especially insightful for my own work on depictions of flight and expulsion in the GDR and the FRG. In the secondary literature on Polish cinema, an investigation of the interconnection between this topic and of the ex-German territories and/or of the *Kresy* remains a blind spot; the subjects

⁷ See, for example, Robert Moeller's "The Politics of the Past in the 1950s" (2006) and *War Stories*; Johannes von Moltke's "Location *Heimat*" (2007) and *No Place Like Home* (2005).

⁸ For Bill Niven's work, see his edited volumes: *Die Wilhelm Gustloff* (2011) and *Germans as Victims* (2006), as well as his monograph *Representations of Flight and Expulsion in East German Prose Works* (2014). For Maren Röger's scholarship, see "Bilder der Vertreibung" (2014), "Ereignis- und Erinnerungsgeschichte von ‚Flucht und Vertreibung‘" (2014), and "Film und Fernsehen in der Bundesrepublik" (2015).

are most often subsumed under the greater umbrella of WWII memory and representation.⁹ The very rarity of the depictions of forced migration in feature film and the subsequent reluctance of scholars to approach these films from the perspective of studies on forced migration has motivated me to analyze these films, to theorize the rarity of their scenes of winter treks and devastating train rides as well as what their inclusion brings to light about the politics of the film industries, the supposed taboos, and our understanding of representations of forced migration—from a multi-national perspective.

My thesis is that, while the images of forced migration (figured as refugee treks and repatriate trains) are rare in the feature films of the pre-1970 period, these audiovisual representations play an important role in the construction of foundational national narratives of the postwar period. Although there is overlap between the narratives and discourses of forced migration between the three national cinemas, I have organized this dissertation into five chapters: an introductory and a concluding chapter and three body chapters, each devoted to representations of forced migration in one of the three countries. This organizational structure does not necessarily impede a consideration of overlaps and exchanges between the three countries, but does make clear the ways in which these films contributed to specific national contexts. In this introductory chapter, however, I will provide the following: a historical account of the forced migrations and the integration of expellees/refugees/repatriates/resettlers into what were to become the GDR, FRG, and PPR; an explanation of the very loaded terms used to describe those who were forcibly removed from their homes; and, finally, an elucidation of the theoretical framework and methodology that guide the analyses in the chapters that follow.

⁹ See, for example, Piotr Zwierzchowski, *Kino nowej pamięci* (2013) and Piotr Zwierzchowski, Daria Mazur and Mariusz Guzek (eds.), *Kino polskie wobec II wojny światowej* (2011).

Historical Background: Forced Migration, the Second World War, and its Aftermath

A thorough historical treatment of the causes, course, and consequences of the forced migrations connected with the end of WWII and the redrawing of Poland's borders would necessitate a volume of its own. This chapter will provide a brief introduction to a complex set of phenomena in order to provide a clearer understanding of the historic events themselves that are later represented in the feature films, as well as to situate how these events were framed and perceived in the different political and social contexts, including those contexts that generated the films under analysis. In the realm of this project, it is not possible, and neither is it my intent, to provide an exhaustive historical argument about the nature of the forced migrations in question.

While the Yalta Conference of February 1945 is by no means the starting point of the history of the forced migrations that took place at the end of the war, it was in Yalta that the Allied leaders met and essentially redrew the boundaries of what was to be postwar Europe. The boundaries they drew were to create ethnically homogenous nation-states. In February 1945, this was yet a vision, for marking a new border on a map is only the first step. Populations need to be moved in order to create homogeneity on the ground and to transform the cartographical representation of Poland, for instance, into Poland proper.

When the Big Three shifted Poland to the west on the map, Poland gained German territories up to the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers and lost its eastern territories, the *Kresy Wschodnie* ("Eastern Borderlands"), to the Soviet Union. The new eastern border of Poland was to approximate the Curzon Line as modified by the USSR in the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. In terms of ethnicity, these new borders meant that Poland forfeited many of its Belarusian, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian nationals, but gained a much more sizeable German minority in their place. The various players of WWII, however, had already initiated the homogenization process

long before the Yalta Conference, with policies of ethnic cleansing (population transfers, deportations, and murder of suspected enemy collaborators) and genocide—not to mention “side effects” of war such as emigration or the flight of civilians from the fronts. In order to achieve an ethnically homogenous nation-state, postwar Poland would be faced with removing (or, as with the case of *Operation Vistula*, dispersing) East Slavic minorities from the mixed borderlands, accepting Polish “repatriates” from beyond the Bug River, removing the Germans in the north and west, and confronting the question of the other minorities who had maintained their own distinct identities (e.g., Silesians, Lemkos, Mazurians, and Kashubians). Although Poland’s prewar Jewish population had been decimated during the course of the war, thousands of Polish Jews were among those who returned from KZs, forced labor in Germany, or from the Soviet Union.

Among the many border lines that were redrawn in the wake of WWII, there were two practical reasons for this particular territorial shift: the appeasement of Stalin and the belief that minority presence instigates political unrest in a nation-state. The Soviet Union was an ally that Britain and the United States found valuable, and an ally who had suffered more casualties than Britain and the United States combined. Therefore, when Stalin insisted on retaining the bulk of the territory that he had acquired over the course of the war (largely thanks to his pact with Germany) and on extending his sphere of influence farther into Western Europe, Churchill and Roosevelt conceded. Secondly, Hitler’s initial expansion of Germany, based on the premise that German minorities in other countries were either mistreated or in fact simply belonged in German borders, merely illustrated the belief that national and international stability could be maintained only in the absence of minorities. Timothy Snyder summarizes the logic as follows: “If nationality resides in people, and national problems arise from the mismatch between people and territory, the simplest way to solve problems is by moving people” (*Reconstruction of Nations* 181).

It should be noted, however, that neither the westward expansion of Poland nor the western expansion of the USSR was a novel idea. The Oder-Neisse Line roughly corresponded to the western borders of medieval Piast Poland (from the reign of Mieszko I through that of Bolesław III [980–1138]). The Polish *myśl zachodnia* (“west idea”) articulated the desire to reacquire these western territories. Although its goal was not realized until 1945 (at the judgment of the Allies, to the exclusion of Polish leaders), the history of this line of thought extended well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, when literary interest in the former Piast territories in the west emerged.¹⁰ This interest continued into the twentieth century, becoming, for example, the dream of right-wing politicians such as Ludwik Popławski and Roman Dmowski; the idea continued to gather strength in the interwar period and during WWII. In addition to organizations such as the Greater Poland national Catholic *Ojczyzna* (“Fatherland”), organs of the *Stronnictwo Demokratyczne* (“Alliance of Democrats”) and later of the *Gwardia Ludowa* (“People’s Guard”) also published articles during the war that pressed for extended western borders.¹¹ In fact, using numerous examples of wartime publications, Radosław Domke illustrates that the Polish far left only gradually accepted the idea of extending Poland’s western borders.¹² The threat of German revanchism with regard to these territories would come to provide the Polish Communists in power with a strong justification both for its authority and its dependence on the Soviet Union.

The Curzon Line was the rough model for Poland’s post-WWII eastern border. Originally an armistice proposal for Poland and the Soviet Union in 1919–1920, it also demarcated the more or less accepted western boundary of Soviet influence. Despite Churchill’s pronouncement at Yalta

¹⁰ Literary proponents of extending Poland to the Piast borders included, among others: Stanisław Staszic (1755–1826), Adam Naruszewicz (1733–1796), Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812), Joachim Lelewel (1786–1861), Bolesław Prus (1847–1912), Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812–1887), and Stefan Żeromski (1864–1925). See Tumolska 63–64.

¹¹ See Domke 19–25.

¹² Idem, 24–25.

that “the Soviet claim to Poland’s eastern territories was both ‘just and right’” (qtd. in Kordan 705), ethnic populations did not match the territories, either. The Polish-Soviet agreement of September 1944 fixed the borders and initiated the population transfers (or expulsions) in the border regions.

Dreams of westward expansions aside, the Allies wanted to preclude the possibility of another Hitler-figure making territorial claims based on the existence of German minorities in other lands. As Snyder highlights, these claims, as well as the policies that motivated the population transfers at the close of the war, were founded on the modern idea that “nationality resides in people” as opposed to specific localities. Hitler had justified his annexations and ultimately invasions on the grounds that German minorities were being mistreated under the rule of other countries, namely in the Sudetenland and in Poland.¹³

The course of the war illustrated that Hitler by no means intended to “rescue” German minorities. He intended to colonize the territory, employing these oppressed ethnic Germans as settlers in the territory he had been eyeing for more *Lebensraum*. *Generalplan Ost* (“Master Plan East”), the code name for Nazi German plans to colonize the East, began to be implemented that year. Although the plan went through several drafts (January 1940–May 1942), as Snyder summarizes, “[t]he general plan was consistent throughout: Germans would deport, kill, assimilate, or enslave native populations, and bring order and prosperity to a humbled frontier” (*Bloodlands* 160). The German *Ostsiedler* (“east settlers”) and *Volksdeutsche* (the term used to describe ethnic Germans) would bring that necessary order. Hitler revealed his plan for ethnic

¹³ Although the Nazi German press exaggerated circumstances in Poland, affairs were not favorable for this minority, either. Especially after the death of Józef Piłsudski in 1935, Poland’s interwar government increasingly subjected its minority populations to rigorous Polonization, lending an air of truth to the “frenzied” Nazi propaganda in the months before the start of the war (see Douglas 42). During the winter preceding the outbreak of the war, as Nazi policy toward Poland became more aggressive, and in the weeks following the initial attack on 1 September 1939, the Polish government implemented harsher measures against its German minority population, banning, for example, German language newspapers and cultural festivals.

Germans in Eastern Europe on 6 October 1939. Rather than have their homes incorporated into the Reich, ethnic Germans were expected to pick up and leave for the west: for ‘old Reich’, and its newly accrued *Gaue*. As such, the program was called *Heim ins Reich* (“Homewards into the Reich”). These ethnic Germans and the *Ostsiedler* from the Reich were to continue the tradition of the German “*Kulturträger*” (“carriers of culture”); they were to spread German culture, “which in many ways was expressed in concepts such as order, hygiene, and efficiency” (Halicka 40).

The process of transporting and resettling ethnic Germans from their homes in Eastern Europe during the war (the Baltic, Volhynia, Bulgaria, Bosnia, Hungary, etc.) was particularly haphazard—not only for these “settlers,” but for those who had to make the *Lebensraum* available for them. According to Beata Halicka, most of the 630,000–720,000 ethnic Germans being resettled under the *Heim ins Reich* program were taken to Nazi Germany’s newly acquired territories.¹⁴ In order to provide homes and arable land for these ethnic Germans, Nazi Germany either expelled local Poles and Jews into the *Generalgouvernement* or to concentration camps, or simply murdered the former inhabitants.¹⁵ Yet even the evacuations of Polish or Jewish inhabitants did not go smoothly, and the recipients of confiscated properties often were confronted with obvious evidence of hasty, violent expulsion—if not with the unfortunate expropriated inhabitants themselves.¹⁶

¹⁴ Halicka 52.

¹⁵ See Piskorski Loc. 2353–2359 and Douglas 49.

¹⁶ In describing the confiscation of Polish and Jewish property in the territories that were annexed directly to the Reich, Jan Piskorski calls the proceedings “the originally ‘wild’ expulsions”—a term that tends to be more closely associated with the unofficial expulsion of Germans (closing months of the war until nearly the end of 1945). His allusion to the postwar usage of the phrase “wild expulsions” is loaded with gravity, for the wild expulsions of Poles and Jews at the hands of the Nazis, “which the Volksdeutsche Self-Defense was almost always behind, soon took place very officially, mostly in connection with the shooting or the deportations of the owners of the homes” (Loc. 2347). Here, “wild” does not denote the disorderly and unofficial nature of expulsions, but rather underscores the grim irony of the savagery that “order” and “official” action could unleash. Piskorski creates a parallel, a comparison, but in doing so, he underscores the complicity of those who were later to be expelled in performing their own “wild expulsions” under the authority of the Nazi regime.

Once the war ended, Snyder argues, Nazi German colonization “made a certain amount of forced population transfers seem inevitable. The only questions were how many Germans, and from which territories” (*Bloodlands* 313). The definition of “German” was clear neither for Nazi Germany nor for the Allies and expelling states (Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc.). In order to determine who stayed and who had to leave, expelling governments and the Allied powers had to rely on Nazi definitions of race and Germanness. The Nazi system of classification was itself modeled on an earlier set of four categories developed by the French as they attempted to determine who was to be expelled from Alsace in the 1920s. The *Volksliste*, put into full use in March 1941, also had four gradations of Germanness.¹⁷ As manpower became depleted in the course of the war (especially once the tables turned against the German forces in Russia) the definition of “German” became highly elastic. By mid-1942, Himmler announced that eligible *Volksdeutsche* who refused to register as such would be sent to concentration camps. In some areas, people were registered as *Volksdeutsche* without consent, or were moved to a higher category of Germanness (in order to enroll such people in the military).¹⁸ Nazi Germany’s increasing desperation for “German” laborers and soldiers proved to make matters extremely complicated once the Allies and postwar states began to determine who was to be expelled and who could stay.

In addition to these *Volksdeutsche* (who may have been residents of interwar Poland), the “new” minority Poland acquired with the Oder-Neisse Line was itself a diverse, heterogeneous group. Snyder identifies three basic groups within this ethnic German minority. The first group consists of about 1.5 million “German administrators and colonists, who would never have come to Poland without Hitler’s war. They lived in houses or apartments that they had taken from Poles

¹⁷ For a description of these categories, see Douglas 55–56.

¹⁸ *Idem*, 57.

expelled (or killed) during the war or from Jews who had also been killed” (*Bloodlands* 314). Secondly, “[m]ore than half a million more were Germans who were native to Poland, and had lived within Poland’s prewar borders. The remaining eight million or so were to lose their homes in lands that had been in Germany even before Hitler’s expansion, and had been predominantly German in population for centuries” (314). In addition, one must consider the existence of other minority groups such as Kashubians, Silesians, Sorbs, and Mazurians. Those who identified themselves as neither German nor Polish, and, most importantly, who did not enroll on the *Volksliste*, presented a complication to the postwar Polish state.

In part as a result of Hitler’s annexation policy and the partial colonization of the east, the Allies planned to create a Europe consisting of homogenous nation-states. Churchill and Roosevelt did not readily assent to a western border so far west as that of the Oder-Neisse Line until the Potsdam Conference in July/August 1945. Yet, even at Yalta it was clear that German populations would need to be transferred to Germany. Hitler’s own haphazard *Heim ins Reich* program would need to be completed then at the hands of the Allies, and his efforts at colonization in the east undone. Though Hitler’s and Stalin’s policies throughout the war both initiated and complicated the process of homogenizing would-be nation-states, the expulsions (rather than the planned *Heim ins Reich* resettlement) of German populations had already begun before the end of the war, even before the Yalta Conference in February 1945.¹⁹ The removal of ethnic Germans from what was to become Polish (but also Czechoslovak, Hungarian etc.) territory transpired in three phases: flight, wild expulsions, and expulsions dictated by treaty (post-Potsdam Conference).²⁰

¹⁹ Idem, 63.

²⁰ See Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 54.

With the advance of the Red Army into eastern German territory, ethnic Germans began to flee westward in droves, particularly beginning in January 1945. By the time the Soviets reached Berlin in May 1945, approximately six million Germans had either been evacuated or had fled from the advancing Red Army.²¹ Although many propaganda images distributed by the National Socialists portrayed the evacuation from the east as an orderly, well-planned course of action,²² this was not the case. Hitler declared many cities, such as Königsberg (Kaliningrad), Kolberg (Kołobrzeg), and Breslau (Wrocław) to be *Festungen* (“fortresses”) that were to be defended to the last man. The evacuation of the civilians was oftentimes either delayed so long that treks were overrun by the front or were never even organized.²³ The haste with which evacuations took place left physical evidence: “‘Along the entire flight path along the beach one saw discarded pieces of luggage, whole suitcases with their contents, valuable pieces of clothing that hindered one from hastily pressing forward,’ noted Father Herbert Venske in March between Kolberg and Swinemünde. Even more luggage was scattered around the train stations and shipping piers” (Piskorski, Loc. 5956). Even once underway, refugees were last on the list of the Reich’s priorities when it came to the railway network (following *Wehrmacht* transports and food and provisions).²⁴ Timothy Snyder summarizes the situation as follows:

Millions of people had fled the German attack in 1941; millions more had been taken for labor between 1941 and 1944; still more were forced to evacuate by the retreating

²¹ See Snyder, *Bloodlands* 315.

²² See Halicka 78.

²³ “Festungsstadt Breslau” is a case in point. The city was logistically unprepared to evacuate citizens when Reich’s Defence Commissioner Karl Hanke issued the evacuation order on 19 January 1945; thousands of residents decided to remain, and were trapped once the Soviets encircled the city. See Thum Loc. 225 and Snyder, *Bloodlands* 319.

²⁴ See Beer 72–73.

Wehrmacht in 1944. Far more Soviet and Polish citizens died after fleeing Germans than did Germans as a result of flight from Soviets. Although such displacements were not policies of deliberate murder [...], flight, evacuation, and forced labor led, directly or indirectly, to the death of a few million Soviet and Polish citizens. (German policies of deliberate mass murder killed an *additional* ten million people.) The war had been fought in the name of the German race, but ended with unconcern for actual German civilians. (*Bloodlands* 324)

Due to these delayed evacuations or the foolhardy belief in Hitler's *Wunderwaffe* that would stave off the "Asiatic hordes,"²⁵ Soviet troops often crossed refugee treks. In these confrontations, Soviets seized German men and women as forced laborers, shipping them to perform dangerous work in the east (e.g., Siberia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine).²⁶ Mass rapes were an all too common occurrence, and even provoked cases of mass suicides.²⁷ Accounts of these encounters written after the war frequently evidence strong anti-Slavic attitudes bearing similarities to anti-Slavic Nazi propaganda. Robert Moeller explains that "in their accounts, rape *in* the 'German east' became the rape *of* Germans, brutally violated by Red Army soldiers, and of a German nation, robbed of its honor and territory in eastern Europe" (*War Stories* 67). Furthermore, confrontation between refugees and the Soviets at sea proved swift and deadly for

²⁵ See Halicka 77 and Paul 88–97.

²⁶ For more about the Soviet deportation of Germans to serve as laborers, see Beer 74 and Snyder, *Bloodlands* 318.

²⁷ Scholars such as J. Glenn Gray, Norman Naimark, and Elke Scherstjanoi, and others, have located numerous motives for the behavior of Red Army soldiers towards the German civilian population, suggesting that mass rapes were a consequence not merely of blind hate, but of propaganda, to enact revenge for personal experiences of violence and humiliation at German hands. Halicka suggests that cases of mass hysteria and mass suicides, like the famous case of the town of Demmin, may be explained by the internalization of Nazi propaganda and a feeling of having been abandoned to their approaching enemy, rather than a direct experience with the events of war or occupation: "For a large part of the German population that had internalized Nazi teaching, suicide was no longer considered to be a major sin, but was felt rather as a heroic deed," 91.

the refugees. “Operation Hannibal” refers to the evacuation of refugees, the wounded, and soldiers across the Baltic Sea at the close of WWII. Although 1–1.5 million people were successfully evacuated as part of this operation, some of the greatest maritime disasters also fall under the scope of this effort: the *Gustloff*, *General von Steuben*, *Cap Arcona*, and *Goya*.²⁸ In the sinking of the *Gustloff* alone, the estimated number of dead ranges from 4,000 to 9,343.²⁹

Although the flight of the Germans from the front became enshrined in (particularly West) German memory as the rallying point for the notion of the Germans as an *Opfervolk* (“nation of victims”), flight was actually very intimately connected with the fates of other groups: Halicka details the under-researched accounts of Polish forced laborers who were (depending on the situation) dragged or simply taken along with their German “employers”; Bill Niven reminds us that “the history of the flight over the Baltic Sea is connected to the history of the continued imprisonment, abduction, and murder of particularly Jewish KZ inmates,”³⁰ with the sinking of the *Cap Arcona* on 3 May 1945 as a prime example (some 6,400 prisoners from Neuengamme and Fürstengrube were aboard; fewer than 500 survived).³¹

In addition to flight, Germans were forcibly transported across the Oder-Neisse Line during the course of so-called “wild expulsions.” Though the Potsdam Conference in July 1945 made the expulsions “official,” the expelling nations, and Poland in particular, continued to engage in “wild expulsions.” In the course of such unofficially sanctioned expulsions, Soviet and Polish soldiers

²⁸ See Niven, “Gespaltene Erinnerung?” 234.

²⁹ The first number may be found on a list from the German *Suchdienst*, with the latter estimation being the latest number after years of additive revisions by survivor and historian of the *Gustloff*, Heinz Schön. See Niven, “Vorwort” 9.

³⁰ Niven, “Vorwort” 18.

³¹ Andreas Spinrath, “Versenkung der ‘Cap Arcona’.”

and militias often deported Germans and summarily left the expellees at the border in Küstrin or Frankfurt an der Oder, expecting them to continue by foot. The term “wild expulsion” refers in part to the unofficial nature of the operations (possible even after the Potsdam Conference), but also to the generally false supposition that they were the undertakings of unruly mobs. Though this was generally not the case, the notion worked in the favor of the expelling countries, as it provided greater rationale and support for the removal of German minorities. If they were in danger of retaliation at the hands of the Polish or Czech majority, the only alternatives were either the continuance of “wild expulsions” or the implementation of transfers organized by the Allies themselves. As such, even when the Allies agreed to the expulsions, and agreed more conclusively about the location of Poland’s western border, the “wild expulsions” continued. Though expulsion became policy, the Allies did not draw up a concrete plan until late 1945.

According to the Allied Control Council Agreement (20 November 1945), expulsions were to be carried out by the expelling countries themselves (Poland, Czechoslovakia) as they had been. Here the Allies outlined the number of expellees each power was willing to accept into their respective occupation zones.³² Altogether, some 12,650,000 ethnic Germans were to be transported into the four zones of occupation within the span of about six months (December 1945–July 1946). The ACC Agreement was ambitious, to say the least, with expulsions expected to commence within ten days of signing the document with no preparations having been made—in the middle of winter.³³

³² According to Douglas, the Soviets were to accept 2,750,000 from Poland and Czechoslovakia; the British 1,500,000 from Poland once “Operation Honeybee” was complete; France 150,000 *Sudetendeutsche* currently residing in Austria; and the United States 2,250,000 from Czechoslovakia and Hungary. See Douglas 125.

³³ Ibid.

The lack of transportation resources, the continuance of expelling governments to permit “wild expulsions,” the exemption of German expellees from receiving aid from the Red Cross and UNRRA, and the haste under which the expulsions were conducted did not meet the conditions for the kind of “orderly and humane” population transfer proposed at Potsdam. Under “Operation Swallow” (which entailed the transports of Germans from Poland to the British occupation zone), for instance, many of the transports from Poland did not meet the standards specified by the receiving authorities. Though the level of the required standards differed depending on the nexus of expelling/receiving authority, requirements entailed: the number of people permitted per wagon, set minimum baggage weight, presence of medical facilities and/or staff, and a reasonable ratio of able-bodied (male) expellees to elderly and very young expellees.³⁴ In many cases, the conditions of arriving trains were so poor, that the British threatened to halt Operation Swallow entirely (they finally did so 28 July 1947). During this period of mass expulsion right after the war, the threat was empty, as an abandonment of these semi-organized transports would mean a certain return to the less agreeable “wild expulsions.” Even after “Operation Swallow” ended, transports continued to a lesser degree until 1951.

Conditions of Arrival

If the conditions of transport during this period of mass expulsions were deplorable, the situation within the occupation zones was not hospitable either. Germany had just lost a second world war and its major cities had been heavily bombed in Allied raids. This fact on the ground not only increased the reluctance of the respective Allied powers to accept refugees into their

³⁴ With the need for manpower in the population-depleted territories in the west, Polish and Soviet authorities alike were often reluctant to allow able-bodied men and women to leave. The need for laborers to bring in the harvest in 1945 offers a prime example of this need, as many reports indicated that ripe fields rotted in the sun for a lack of harvesters. See, for example, Piskorski, Loc. 5063–5067 and Thum, Loc. 2042, 2129, 2194.

zones, but also increased the number of holding camps, as well as the duration of stay for refugees in such camps. Many of the notorious concentration camps during the war were used as holding camps for Germans awaiting transports, but also as temporary housing for new arrivals in Germany.³⁵ Dachau, for instance, had been used to house about 2,000 Sudeten Germans beginning in 1948 and was only closed as a housing facility in 1965.³⁶

In addition to drawing on memories of the air raids and the atrocities Nazi Germany committed during the course of the war, yet another branch of experience will intersect with the memory of the German expulsions: the “evacuation” and “repatriation” of Poles. The former German east behind the Oder-Neisse Line was traversed by what Piskorski calls a “Pendelverkehr” (“shuttle service”) (Loc. 5145), with Poles from beyond the Bug being transported westward, Germans being transported westward or trying to return to their homes in the east, POWs returning home, and forced laborers returning home (if there was a home left) from all directions.

While Hitler’s *Heim ins Reich* program may have initiated the migration of ethnic Germans early in the war, the circumstances dictating it were fundamentally different from those at its close. In the *Heim ins Reich* program, the German state called upon people who identified themselves as belonging to the German nation to match nationality, territory, and state. At the end of the war, Germans either fled from the advancing Red Army (expecting to be able to return) or were forcibly transported across the border of one state (whether Polish or Czechoslovak)—by that “foreign”

³⁵ This is also the case for Ukrainians who were resettled in the course of Operation Vistula. Snyder states that “[a]bout 3,936 Ukrainians, including 823 women and children, were taken to the Jaworzno concentration camp, a wartime affiliate of the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex,” *The Reconstruction of Nations* 200.

³⁶ See Douglas 310. Contemporary observers, particularly from international organizations, tended to draw parallels between conditions of transport (e.g., under “Operation Swallow”) and Nazi mass deportations, of holding camps and Nazi concentration camps, or of the makeshift housing facilities for new arrivals and the London tube stations during the air raids. These kinds of comparisons are evidence of a kind of multidirectional memory, to use Michael Rothberg’s term.

state—to another (the appropriate national repository: Germany). Haphazard as the operations may have been, the migration of the *Volksdeutsche* “returning” to the Reich was initiated and executed by the government which was to receive them (even if the territory they arrived in was occupied Poland). At the close of the war, if Germans were not fleeing a perceived threat, they were being treated as unwelcome aliens in need of deportation. For these ethnic Germans in the east, this kind of expulsion was first visited upon them only towards the end of the war—for Poles and Polish Jews, forced migration at the hands of foreign (occupying) powers was an early and recurring specter of the war.

The Nazi-Soviet-Non-Aggression-Pact, signed 23 August 1939 (just days before Nazi Germany invaded Poland) contained an item under the “secret protocol” that provided for the Fourth Partition of Poland: “Für den Fall einer territorialpolitischen Umgestaltung der zum polnischen Staate gehörenden Gebiete werden die Interessenssphären Deutschlands und der UdSSR angeführt [sic] durch die Linie der Flüsse Narew, Weichsel und San abgegrenzt” (“In the case of a territorial-political reconfiguration of the domains belonging to the Polish state, the German and Soviet spheres of interests will be divided by the lines of the Narew, Weichsel and San rivers”) (“Das geheime Zusatzprotokoll”). With the Nazi invasion of Poland from the west on 1 September 1939, and the Soviet Union’s invasion from the east on 17 September, the Fourth Partition of Poland was complete, and the deportation of Polish citizens (both Jewish and non-Jewish) was well underway.

Both occupiers successfully “decapitated,” to use Timothy Snyder’s verb, Poland (and Soviet Ukraine), by murdering or deporting the educated, ruling elite (*Reconstruction of Nations* 163). Clear examples of this policy include the mass executions the NKVD carried out against more than 21,000 Polish officers and members of the intelligentsia in March 1940 in the forests

near Katyń, and Germany's internment of the professors of Cracow's prestigious Jagiellonian University in concentration camps. When Germany invaded the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Poles who remained in Soviet-occupied territory experienced a second occupation (and after the German defeat at Stalingrad and the westward advance of the Red Army, a third occupation). These new occupiers deported inhabitants, sending them as slave labor to Germany; the *Einsatzgruppen*, mobile killing units trailing behind the *Wehrmacht*, murdered inhabitants *en masse*, a precursor of the "Final Solution" to be developed at the Wannsee Conference of January 1942. These regions belong to what Snyder calls the "bloodlands"—the territories where approximately fourteen million people were murdered between the years 1933–1945 at the hands of the occupying regimes of Hitler and of Stalin (*Bloodlands* x).

Though Snyder focuses on the murders that these regimes committed in these territories, the circumstances that led to those fourteen million deaths also initiated mass migrations, whether as flight from a front or from occupiers, or as deportations to labor or concentration camps—or to the other side of this or that river. During the tumult of the war, the Bug River, for instance, may not have been the official border of any nation-state, but it was a border that the USSR had in mind:

Before and during the Second World War rivers had washed the boundaries of the homogeneous national territories imagined by nationalists: Polish nationalists called for Ukrainians to be expelled east beyond the Zbruch River; Ukrainian nationalists warned Poles to flee west beyond the San. Soviet policy was, in effect, to compromise on the river and then carry out deportations in both directions. (Snyder, *Reconstruction of Nations* 197)

During the course of the war, expulsion beyond river-boundaries applied primarily to Soviet policy towards Poles and other ethnic groups (e.g., Belarusians and Ukrainians) as ethnic cleansing in

preparation for the establishment of homogeneous nation-states. Nazi Germany, though it divided its new occupied territories into administrative districts, did not have any concrete plans to divide its own territory and create mini-nation-states. Instead, non-Germans were to make *Lebensraum* for Germans, whether by being killed, deported, assimilated as Germans or enslaved.³⁷

Although Poles were also forced to leave their homes in those territories destined to become Soviet Lithuania and Soviet Belarus, I will focus here on the Polish-Ukrainian conflict, which escalated into a civil war. The deportation of Poles to the far reaches of the Soviet Union in February and April 1940 proceeded according to class and profession (landowners, forest rangers, police officers and their families, followed by teachers, members of the army, civil servants, etc.); however, these specifications began to disappear over the course of the year. By July 1941, “people who had escaped the prior deportations by chance” were deported (Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 71). These individuals were primarily ethnic Poles.³⁸

The second stage of the expulsion of Poles from the eastern territories began in 1942, and escalated in 1943 into massacres and civil war with the Ukrainian partisan units. Both sides had their own postwar sovereignty in mind. The Ukrainian units included the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukrains'ka Povstans'ka Armiia*, UPA), among others. The UPA was the strongest of these organizations, and continued to fight on Polish territory after the end of WWII. This organization alone murdered between 40,000–60,000 Poles in 1943.³⁹ Polish partisan units—including the

³⁷ See Snyder, *Bloodlands* 160.

³⁸ Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 72.

³⁹ See Snyder, *Reconstruction of Nations* 170.

Peasant Battalions and even the Home Army—retaliated, matching atrocities committed by Ukrainian partisans.⁴⁰

In 1944, the Polish communists and the Soviet Union signed treaties to make the ethnic cleansing of Volhynia and Galicia official policy.⁴¹ Poles were to be “evacuated” or “repatriated” westward by February 1, 1945. Philipp Ther points out that “[t]his meant that the Poles from the east were supposed to leave even before space was secured for them in the western territories” (“The Integration of Expellees” 789). Although the relocation of Ukrainians eastward officially began 15 November 1944, Bohdan Kordan writes that “efforts at repatriation had begun a week prior to the agreement coming into effect. Indeed, by the official start of the campaign, the process was already well underway with 3,500 having been resettled; the plan called for the transfer of the entire population by December 31, 1945” (707). Resettlement efforts became increasingly forceful and violent, as there was much resistance on both sides of the Bug and San Rivers to the policy.⁴² Many opponents of the expulsions joined the ranks of the UPA.⁴³ Grzegorz Hryciuk notes that Polish opponents of the expulsions also engaged in minor acts of sabotage, “e.g., on Nov. 8th and 9th, 1944 in Tarnopol and Czortków [present-day Ternopil and Chortkiv], flyers saying that the

⁴⁰ Idem, 176.

⁴¹ Polish communists signed repatriation treaties with the Ukrainian SSR (6 September 1944) and the Lithuanian SSR (22 September 1944); a treaty with the USSR would not follow until 6 July 1945. See Ther, “The Integration of Expellees” 785 and Snyder, *Reconstruction of Nations* 183. Snyder reasons that, from Stalin’s perspective, creating ethnically homogeneous states approximately along the lines of the border created by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact would reduce conflict between Poles and Ukrainians within those border regions and would at least partially satisfy both parties, with each state gaining territory to the west; Soviet Ukraine and communist Poland would owe these “gains” to Stalin. Though Poland would be an independent state after the war, it would be dependent on the USSR for the protection of its western border in particular. See Snyder, *Reconstruction of Nations* 182–183.

⁴² For a discussion of the resistance of peasants to relocation, of increases in the use of force, and of the reasons why others chose to leave, see Hryciuk, “Przesiedlenia Polaków z Kresów Wschodnich II RP 1944–1946,” 105–106.

⁴³ See Kordan 709.

resettlement had been cancelled were pasted over official posters informing about the ‘evacuation’” (“Przesiedlenia Polaków” 106).

Polish military and the *Milicja Obywatelska* (MO) combated the UPA and, in turn, increased efforts at resettlement. The death of General Karol Świerczewski in this conflict (28 March 1947) initiated a change in policy. Operation Vistula came into effect (29 April–31 July 1947) and entailed the round-up of ethnic Ukrainians, members of mixed Polish-Ukrainian families, and Lemkos and the dispersal of these groups throughout the formerly German territories in the north and west (i.e., beyond the Vistula River). In total, 139,467 people were forcibly resettled in Operation Vistula.⁴⁴ According to Kordan:

The military action was to apply equally to all those of non-Polish origin, irrespective of political allegiances, highlighting the doctrine of collective responsibility. [...] [T]hose suspected of aiding or abetting the armed resistance were arrested and sent to the Jaworzno concentration camp. In excess of 3,800 were interned at the camp and, although the majority were released after 6-12 months, an estimated 15 percent of the inmates are thought to have perished there (Truhan 1990: 26). (713)

After the close of the operation until 1949, individuals continued to be forcibly relocated, virtually emptying the borderlands in the east.⁴⁵

Just as the eastern borderlands had been de-peopled, the removal of the German population similarly de-populated Poland’s new northern and western regions (the so-called *Ziemie Odzyskane* or “Recovered Territories”). Even with the arrival of Poles and Polish Jews from beyond the Bug and San, the western borderlands were sparsely populated in comparison with

⁴⁴ Idem, 720.

⁴⁵ Idem, 713.

prewar figures, as “[o]nly about 1.7 million ‘repatriates’ from the east [...] were transferred to postwar Poland, ostensibly to take the place of up to 8 million Germans evicted from the Recovered Territories” (Douglas 261). The populations of the cultural centers Wilno and Lwów/Lviv in particular were relocated largely to western Poland; the population of the latter metropolis resettled primarily in Breslau/Wrocław (Lukowski and Zawadzki 279). Contrary to the popular imagination, however, expellees from Lwów did not constitute the majority of Poles in Wrocław; rather, Lwowians shaped the cultural life of the city in very concrete ways (e.g., the transfer of the Ossolineum and the Raławice Panorama to Wrocław).⁴⁶ From 1945 to 1946 about two million Poles arrived from central Poland as well. Nevertheless, even with the influx of “repatriates” from the *Kresy*, Ukrainians forcibly resettled under “Operation Vistula,” and Polish Jews returning from concentration camps and the Soviet Union, settling the newly acquired western territories proved difficult and inspired an entire program of optimistic propaganda to encourage settlement.

Despite the best efforts of the new Polish government to crown the Recovered Territories in a halo of opportunity and adventure, one of the greatest obstacles to successful settlement was the general suspicion that postwar Germany would attempt to reclaim these territories. The Allies did little to assuage these fears. There existed no guarantee that the Allies would not change their minds about Poland’s western border, since a peace treaty was never signed to conclude the war and officially establish the new borders. During his famous “The Sinews of Peace” speech delivered 5 March 1946 at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri (the same speech in which he declared the presence of the Iron Curtain), Churchill questioned Poland’s right to the Oder-Neisse Line.⁴⁷ He distanced himself from the decisions made at Yalta, calling them “extremely favourable

⁴⁶ For more information on the relationship between Lwów and Wrocław, see Anna Veronika Wendland and Marek Zybura in *Verflochtene Erinnerungen. Polen und seine Nachbarn im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert* (2009).

⁴⁷ See Domke 76.

to Soviet Russia” and framing them as contingent wartime measures; furthermore, he expressed horror at the conditions of the expulsions, organized by “the Russian-dominated Polish Government.” The lack of support expressed in Churchill’s speech, as Domke’s work illustrates, catalyzed a host of anti-German as well as pro-Recovered Territories propaganda.⁴⁸ Additionally, at the August 1945 Potsdam Conference, Britain and the United States had only agreed to the Oder-Neisse Line on the condition that Poland would be granted free elections. As it turned out, the “free” part of Poland’s 1947 free elections was only a sham. Given the reluctant and ever waning support of Britain and the United States, as well as the recent violent colonialist aspirations of the now-dismantled Nazi state, many Poles were none too eager to settle in such potentially volatile territory.

The Recovered Territories also developed the connotation of being Poland’s “Wild West.” In many respects, the term was fitting. Many of those who were so bold as to venture out to the western territories had little or no intent of actually settling there. Looters, bandits and criminals flocked to the Recovered Territories in order to loot and/or claim *poniemieckie* (“ex-German”) properties. *Szabrownicy*, a term referring to these looters, went to the west in order to loot and return to central and eastern Poland in order to sell the stolen goods. These were not the ideal Polish pioneers of communist propaganda, but rather a second reason for those ideal “settlers” to avoid the area.

Yet it was not simply the presence of dubious opportunists alone that made the Recovered Territories as veritable Wild West—there was virtually no legal system in place to keep things in check.

⁴⁸ Idem, 65.

Overnight, the borderland areas were stripped not just of population but of agencies of government: when a German town was cleared of its residents, its local council, police force, municipal administrators, and providers of essential services like waste removal or water supplies usually went with them. Even in those relatively rare cases when replacement officials from the majority population could be found to take their place, Soviet military commanders, preferring to concentrate the skeins of power in their own hands, often prevented them from taking up positions. (Douglas 256)

In some areas, Red Army units fought against each other over loot; similar behavior occurred between Polish militias and rivaling groups of the *Urząd Bezpieczeństwa* (Department of Security; UB) as well.⁴⁹ As a result of the presence of such “lawless” activity, the Recovered Territories will long be branded, with hesitation and with romance, as the Wild West.

In order to encourage settlement, the communist government undertook campaigns to legitimize Poland’s claims to the western territories. This effort begins in effect with the name of the territory itself: *Ziemie Odzyskane* (“Recovered Territories”). As the territories had once been ruled by the medieval Polish Piast kings, the Poles could claim historical heritage of the land. Poles simply needed to “recover” the land that had once been theirs. (Re-)Polonization thus included the efforts of historians to find traces of Piast Poland in the west, and of city planners and architects to rebuild and restore the Polish landmarks of cities. In addition to this more ideological aim, the Polonization of the Recovered Territories was also intended to stabilize the area and make it more palatable to would-be as well as current settlers. Physically and conceptually, this entailed changing place names, destroying statues and plaques, painting over German signs, removing all traces of *Fraktur*, and defacing or repurposing German cemeteries. Culturally, this meant banning

⁴⁹ See Douglas 263.

the use of German language, German schools, and sports organizations. The specific measures taken against German cultural and societal manifestations differed from region to region.

Because the Potsdam Conference only provisionally declared the Oder-Neisse Line to be the western border of Poland, the stability of this line became a hot topic which would come to shape the relationship between Poland and the two German states. When, for example, the GDR recognized the Oder-Neisse Line as the official border in the Treaty of Görlitz/Zgorzelec of 1950, Poland still had reason for discomfort: not only was the GDR's current president, Wilhelm Pieck, vocally antagonistic towards the border (it divided him from his hometown of Guben/Gubin, which was itself divided by the new border), but, perhaps more importantly, the Federal Republic of Germany still refused to acknowledge its legitimacy.⁵⁰ Maps produced in the FRG in the 1960s, for example, labeled the disputed territories as being under Soviet occupation.⁵¹ In the spirit of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, Brandt and the PPR's Prime Minister, Józef Cyrankiewicz, signed the Warsaw Treaty in 1970. Through this treaty, the FRG acknowledged the legitimacy of the Oder-Neisse Line, thereby easing Polish fears of West German revanchism.⁵²

For all of the chaos of the ex-German territories, the Polish government established organizations to aid Poles who moved to the ex-German territories (whether by choice or decree). The initial administrative branch for the to-be-acquired western and northern territories was the *Biuro Ziem Zachodnich* (Bureau of the Western Territories), established 2 February 1945 under

⁵⁰ See Ther, "The Integration of Expellees" 796.

⁵¹ "Deutschland / Germany." Institut für Angewandte Geodäsie. Frankfurt am Main, 1966.

⁵² The unification of Germany in 1990 necessitated yet another official recognition of the Germany's eastern border. The "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany" (also known as the "2+4 Treaty") was signed 12 September 1990. Germany's recognition of the Oder-Neisse border was one of the stipulations for the unification of the two Germanys. Further tension concerning the security of the border since 1990 has been tied largely to the demands of organizations representing expellees. For more information, see Paweł Lutomski, "'The Law Alleviates Concerns'."

the *Prezydium Rady Ministrów Tymczasowego* (Provisional Presidium of the Council of Ministers). The *Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny* (State Repatriation Office; PUR) (7 Oct. 1944–1951), headed by Władysław Wolski, was responsible for affairs directly affecting “repatriates” or settlers:

Its tasks included organizing the evacuation [*Aussiedlung*], assisting the evacuees [*Aussiedler*] from the east as well as the resettlers [*Umsiedler*] from central Poland during their journey and upon arrival in their new place of residence, as well as organizing the evacuation [*Aussiedlung*] of the German population after the Potsdam Conference. (Halicka 140)

Already charged with a wide range of complicated tasks, PUR had difficulty in fulfilling its basic, technical duties due to personnel and vehicular shortages, poor communication between local and regional administrations, and the initial myriad of competing organizations on the territories. One such organization was the *Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych* (Ministry for the Recovered Territories; MZO) (13 Nov. 1945–1949), led by Władysław Gomułka. “As an irony of history,” writes Ther, “the Repatriation Office survived the MZO, which was dissolved in 1949 as part of Gomułka’s fall from power. Given this opportunity, PUR, however, could not win back any of its responsibilities and was likewise closed for good in 1951” (*Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 155). The abolition of these organizations follows the 1948 *Wystawa Ziem Odzyskanych* (Exhibition of the Recovered Territories) held in Wrocław, the crowning display of what had been declared to be the successfully completed (re)Polonization and settlement of the Recovered Territories.

In what was to become the two Germanys, organizations charged with helping resettlers/refugees/expellees “integrate” into their new surroundings emerged quickly in the wake

of the war (the first German one being the *Zentralverwaltung für deutsche Umsiedler* [Central Agency for German Resettlers], located in the Soviet Occupation Zone, September 1945). These displaced individuals, however, were not permitted to organize into political organizations or interest groups.⁵³ The most immediate concern for integrating expellees was the allocation of emergency, if not adequate housing. Because many cities had been bombed, and apartments were scarce, many expellees were sent to the countryside, where, although accommodations may have been comparatively easier to acquire, few jobs were available.⁵⁴

In the *Sowjetische Besatzungszone* (Soviet Occupation Zone; SBZ) and later in the GDR, the Central Agency for German Resettlers aided the government's land distribution plan. "Land reform was one of the key measures establishing the regime of the Socialist Unity Party and was aimed at creating a communist electorate in the villages and at integrating the expellees, who made up 43.3 percent of the recipients of redistributed land" (Ther, "The Integration of Expellees" 794). Unfortunately, the small parcels of land proved to be unsustainable, and SED's focus on the development of small farms neglected much needed urban reconstruction projects. With none of these problems practically solved, and expellee dissatisfaction on the rise, the government unilaterally declared in 1948 that its "resettlers" had been successfully integrated into the SBZ—a move similar to that of the Polish government, which pronounced a similar conclusion at the close of the Exhibition of the Recovered Territories that same year. As the FRG was enacting the *Lastenausgleich* (Equalization of Burdens) in the 1950s, the GDR officially bid farewell to the

⁵³ Ther, "The Integration of Expellees" 790.

⁵⁴ For more about refugee (un)employment, see Beer 112-113.

category of the “resettler,” announcing (yet again) in 1952–1953 that the resettler problem had been resolved (despite continued discrepancies between natives and resettlers).⁵⁵

Although expellees in the SBZ/GDR were not permitted to establish any kind of political organizations or interest groups in order to address their immediate material and social frustrations or to bond with other expellees on the basis of the common experience of *Heimatverlust* (“loss of homeland”), the church provided a measure of security and an atmosphere where these problems and identities could be expressed.⁵⁶ Bill Niven also notes that, at least in the 1950s, expellees succeeded in meeting illegally for commemorative purposes (e.g., at the *Bergzoo* in Halle and the Leipzig Zoo).⁵⁷ In the GDR, while public commemorations and expellee interest groups were forbidden, the memory of the formerly German east and of flight and expulsion circulated largely in the private sphere.

In West Germany, once the *Koalitionsverbot* (“coalition prohibition”) was lifted in 1949, the *Block der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten* (Expellees’ and Disenfranchised People’s Bloc) was founded in 1950, providing expellees a very vocal political organ until its dissolution in 1961. The *Bund der Vertriebenen - Vereinigte ostdeutsche Landsmannschaften* (League of Expellees – United East German Homeland Associations; BdV) was founded in 1958 and exists until this day. Its early leaders, like Waldemar Kraft, demonstrated political continuities with the Third Reich. The political representatives of the expellees took advantage of the legal ambiguity of the Oder-Neisse Line. The goals of expellee leaders, articulated in the *Charta der deutschen*

⁵⁵ See Beer 119.

⁵⁶ The Catholic church played a similar role in Poland, not only for expellees from the *Kresy*, of course, but for resistance groups against the communist regime, and those who were persecuted by the UB and later SB.

⁵⁷ See Niven, “Introduction” 3–4.

Heimatvertriebenen (Charta of the German Expellees), demanded the “right to a homeland,” a multivalent concept, which, according to Andrew Demshuk,

meant both the right to the lost *Heimat* in the East *and* the right to a home in the West. The western aspect demanded a roof and sustenance (later economic means on par with the West German natives) wherever expellees landed. The eastern aspect implied two distinct approaches: the right to commemorate the lost *Heimat* and the right to return to it. Both economic demands and commemoration were often perceived as separate from the idea of *Heimkehr*. Contrary to the intentions of the leadership, these two forms of ‘Right to the *Heimat*’ competed with and weakened it. (76)

The primary argument of Demshuk’s book *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (2012) is that memory of the lost East among expellees most often took on far different forms and assumed different positions than those vocally propagated by ultra-conservative, revanchist representatives of the BdV. This is crucial to understanding the FRG films that depict flight in the 1950s. Demshuk found that

as the years passed, millions of uprooted people were progressing through a steady process of coping with loss. At the same time that they drew solace from the *Heimat of memory*, their frail, idealized vision of the past world, they imagined the *Heimat transformed*, the contemporary Silesia they perceived as destroyed, decaying, and part of a foreign land. For the rest of their lives, they confronted the ever-widening bifurcation of *Heimat* into these two contrasting and irreconcilable images; they came to prefer residing in memory, because – painful though it was – they steadily came to understand that they could never reside in the real Silesia again. It was beyond their reach, separated by space and time, lost forever because of the tremendous changes that had occurred since their forced migration. (4-5)

The relationship that many expellees maintained with regard to their lost homelands was intensely personal, nostalgic, but ultimately pragmatic. This is not to say, of course, that they did not internalize Nazi rhetoric about the nature of the Soviets or the expelling nations, reverse victim-victimizer roles, or that they did not express desire to return, but that in most cases, the revanchist rhetoric of the expellee leaders did not necessarily find a fervent one-to-one match in the expellees themselves.⁵⁸

Separate from the expellee organizations, the West German government sponsored an extensive historical project, the *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa* (Documentation of the Expulsion of the Germans from Eastern Central Europe) (produced between 1954 and 1961), which was largely based on interviews and testimonies.⁵⁹ Among others, Martin Broszat, Hans Mommsen, Hans-Ulrich Wehler worked on the project, which was led by Theodor Schneider. Schneider had engaged in *Ostforschung* as a member of the Nazi party; his work had been incorporated into the *Generalplan Ost*.⁶⁰ These sorts of problematic affiliations became rather stereotypical of the expellee organizations. While they were attended to in the 1950s in West Germany⁶¹ (and summarily considered non-entities in East Germany), in the late 1960s, public attention shied away from these groups in part to distance itself from figures such as Kraft, but also with the recognition that the expellees' complaints of compensation and

⁵⁸ For internalization and continuation of Nazi rhetoric, see, for example, Paul, “>Alle Wege des Marxismus [...]<” 93 and Moeller, *War Stories* 5; for conflation of Nazi crimes with own experiences at the hands of Poles, see Demshuk 107–108; for German Heimat-tourism, see idem, 185–230.

⁵⁹ The PPR responded to this project with the *Zachodnia Agencja Prasowa* (Western Press Agency), which produced books and pamphlets during the 1950s which had the aim of discrediting the *Dokumentation*. See Douglas 350.

⁶⁰ Idem, 348–349.

⁶¹ Several laws were put into effect over the course of the next decade to compensate expellees and refugees, including a *Lastenausgleich*, a 1953 Expellee Law and a Refugee Pension Law. Idem, 318–319.

revanchism were out-of-line and backwards in consideration of the charged interest in German guilt and in the victims of Nazi aggression. As Andreas F. Kelletat notes, there was no work analogous to the *Ostdokumentation* for the victims of Nazi German aggression.⁶² Despite the winds of change that arrived in the 1960s and the shift from understanding (West) Germany as an *Opfervolk* (“nation of victims”) to being a *Tätervolk* (“nation of perpetrators”), another research project, *Forschungsstelle Ostsee* (Research Center Baltic Sea) (undertaken in the 1960s), aimed to counter the view that the Germans were merely a *Tätervolk*, an encroaching sentiment with the Eichmann and ongoing contemporary Auschwitz trials. Through this project, the *Wehrmacht* and *Kriegsmarine* would be shown as humanitarian (the focus of the project resting on the transport of refugees rather than soldiers or KZ-prisoners).⁶³ From the rhetoric of expellee leaders to the express revanchist or apologetic goals of refugee research projects, expellees and refugees as a whole have been branded as being backward, revanchist, and right-wing—an association that persists until the present.

Though the FRG never announced the official success of refugee integration in the manner of the GDR or the PPR, the year 1961 marks the end of a chapter of a concerted effort to integrate and insist on the unique status of refugees in the FRG. 1961 saw the official dissolution of the Expellees’ and Disenfranchised People’s Bloc, as well as the last census to request information specifically about one’s refugee or expellee status.⁶⁴ As Ther notes, the failure of the party to gain five percent of the votes in 1957 should have been the signal that expellees had been successfully integrated into West German society (i.e., the party was obsolete).⁶⁵

⁶² Kelletat 5.

⁶³ See Niven, “Gespaltene Erinnerung?” 236–237.

⁶⁴ See Beer 101.

⁶⁵ Ther, “The Integration of Expellees” 804.

My account of the historical background of the topic of forced migration as a consequence of border changes ends here, though it is by no means the end of the story of the expellees/repatriates/refugees/resettlers/new citizens in the GDR, FRG, and PPR. I will provide further historical background in conjunction with my analysis of individual films. What I have set out here is meant to serve only as an introduction to the histories, experiences, concepts, and traditions to which these films are responding and alluding, and is not intended to be an all-encompassing account of this very complex and sensitive topic.

Explanation of Terms

Forced Migration

The terms in themselves, highlighted above by my use of the forward slash, require explicit definition before I proceed to use them in subsequent chapters. The terms to be defined encompass the type of forced migration, the victims of forced migration, and the territories in question.

For the title of my dissertation, I have opted to use the term “forced migration” to denote the myriad of experiences accompanying the border changes and the arrival of the front at the close of WWII.⁶⁶ According to Ingrid Oswald, migration entails the active or passive change of place, the experience of (non-)spatial borders, and a change in social network.⁶⁷ There is, however, an important difference between the everyday phenomenon of human movement and that of forced migration. Krystyna Kersten identifies two kinds of force: direct (*przymus bezpośredni*) and situational (*przymus sytuacyjny*).⁶⁸ Halicka illustrates the difference as follows:

⁶⁶ Christian Lotz indicates that the word *Zwangsmigration* was first suggested as a kind of catch-all term in the 1980s. See Lotz 3.

⁶⁷ See Halicka 17.

⁶⁸ See Kersten 15–24.

A population that must leave its homeland under direct force *had* no other choice other than to leave, for instance, because they were driven from their homes by force of arms. Situational force, on the other hand, existed when there was no threat of direct physical violence; those affected, however, *saw*, for diverse reasons, no other option besides leaving their homeland. (17)

The cases described in this dissertation and those which are represented in the films under analysis fall under the category of “forced migration,” whether direct or situational. In most, if not all cases, permanent return to the place of origin is not permitted.

While forced migration serves as the umbrella term, there are several other terms that have been and even continue to be used to describe the manifold migrations that occurred as a result of the approach of the front and the border changes at the close of the war. The most relevant of these include the oft paired “flight and expulsion” (*Flucht und Vertreibung*), resettlement (*Umsiedlung*), and repatriation (*repatriacja*). While all terms exist in both Polish and German, I will restrict my translations to the language in which a specific term was primarily used to denote the forced migration of certain groups.

Flucht und Vertreibung

Ther defines expulsion/*Vertreibung* as “a forced form of migration across state borders. Those affected by it are required—under indirect [situational] or direct force—to leave their homeland. Expulsion is irreversible and final” (*Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 99). Halicka takes issue with limiting the definition to cases in which expellees are forced across state borders, and rightly so. She names as an example those Poles and Jews who, expelled from their homes by the Nazis and forced to labor in occupied Poland, were unable to return to their homes after the

war—they were expelled, but never crossed a state border.⁶⁹ From the perspective of the BdV and those who maintained that Germany’s postwar boundaries were to approximate those of 1937, they were expelled from their homes, called themselves expellees, but never left German territory itself. The definition in the FRG fluctuated, however, depending on the political goal at hand.

“*Flucht und Vertreibung*” has become a key phrase in West German and post-reunification discourse. The term *Flüchtling* was in use in the Western zones in 1945, and dominated as an official designation for several years after the war although the occupying American and British forces had already begun to use the complementary term “expellee” that same year.⁷⁰ According to Ther, the introduction of the term *Vertriebene* “is connected with the self-conception of the Federal Republic. The task of integrating those expelled from their homelands [*Heimatvertriebene*] was considered central by political parties across the spectrum. Furthermore, the government wanted to differentiate the expellees from the refugees from the GDR” (*Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 95).⁷¹ The term became encoded and defined in the 1953 *Bundesvertriebenengesetz* (Federal Expellee Law)—a measure following on the heels of the 1952 *Lastenausgleichsgesetz* (Law of the Equalization of Burdens) that aimed to compensate its citizens for any wartime losses (including bombing raids, expulsion, etc.). The definition conflates the different causes of forced migrations in order to inflate the number of those who died in the course of the expulsions; this was intended to bolster the argument that wrongs had been committed

⁶⁹ Halicka 23.

⁷⁰ See Philipp Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 94 and “The Integration of Expellees” 782.

⁷¹ And yet, as many as one third of the refugees fleeing from the GDR to the FRG were also expellees from the formerly German eastern lands. See Ther, “The Integration of Expellees” 800.

against the Germans, an argument intended for Allied ears. The piece of legislation defines the expellee as follows:

“Vertriebener ist, wer als deutscher Staatsangehöriger oder deutscher Volkszugehöriger seinen Wohnsitz in den zur Zeit unter fremder Verwaltung stehenden deutschen Ostgebieten oder in Gebieten außerhalb der Grenzen des Deutschen Reiches vom 31. Dezember 1937 hatte und diesen im Zusammenhang mit den Ereignissen des Zweiten Weltkrieges infolge der Vertreibung, insbesondere durch Ausweisung oder Flucht, verloren hat. [...] (2) Vertriebener ist auch, wer als deutscher Staatsangehöriger oder deutscher Volkszugehöriger [...] ohne einen Wohnsitz gehabt zu haben, sein Gewerbe oder seinen Beruf ständig in den in Absatz 1 genannten Gebieten ausgeübt hat und diese Tätigkeit infolge Vertreibung aufgeben musste.” (qtd. in Halicka 18-19)

‘An expellee is someone who, as a member of the German state or the German people, had to leave his domicile in the eastern German territories currently under foreign administration or in territories outside the 31 Dec. 1937 borders of the German Reich, and who lost his domicile in connection with the events of the Second World War as a result of expulsion, especially through eviction or flight. [...] (2) An expellee is also someone who, as a member of the German state or the German people, [...] without having had a domicile, practiced his trade or occupation in the territories named in Paragraph 1 and had to give up this employment as a result of expulsion’.

This definition includes: those who were forced across the borders at the hands of Soviet, Polish, Czechoslovak, or Hungarian officials (those who relegated to the narrow definition of “expellee”); those who fled from the approaching front (refugees); as well as those Germans who had only been in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, etc. because of the expansionist policies of the Third Reich

(these include *Ostsiedler*, members of the SS, Wehrmacht soldiers, administrators, and all those who held a post at the death camps and hundreds of concentration camps scattered throughout the territories under Nazi German occupation).

Umsiedler/Neubürger

In the GDR, both refugees (those who fled from the front) and expellees (those who were expelled by other states from their homes) were designated *Umsiedler* (“resettlers”). Of the approximately 4.4 Million *Umsiedler*, some later continued on to what would become the FRG. This term was chosen in order to avoid suggesting that the sister socialist countries of Poland and the ČSSR were in any way perpetrators and suggests instead that the move was voluntary; this became especially important with the Treaty of Görlitz/Zgorzelec, in which the GDR acknowledged the Oder-Neisse Line.⁷² As Christian Lotz argues, “language politics in the GDR and in Poland did not aim at tentativeness [as in the FRG], but rather directly at finality, by consciously highlighting the irreversibility of the concepts resettlement [*Umsiedlung*] and emigration/resettlement [*Übersiedlung, przesiedlenie*] or displacement [*Aussiedlung, wysiedlenie*]” (3). The term *Umsiedler* was replaced, however, with *Neubürger* (“new citizens”) to suggest the successful assimilation of those “former resettlers.”⁷³

Repatrianci and Przesiedleńcy

In postwar Poland, several terms were used to describe those who settled in the so-called Recovered Territories. The two most important terms include: *przesiedleńiec* (*Umsiedler*, resettler) and *repatriant* (repatriate). The first refers to those Poles who had lived within the borders of Republic of Poland but moved to the Recovered Territories. The second term, *repatriant*, is often

⁷² See, for example, Astrid Segert and Irene Zierke 168 and Ther, “The Integration of Expellees” 782.

⁷³ See Schwartz 115. Cf. Röger, “Flucht, Vertreibung und Heimatverlust der Deutschen,” 73.

used more euphemistically. “Repatriate” typically denotes citizens who return to their homeland after an extended period of time abroad—and indeed, this term was applied to Poles returning from England or from forced labor in Germany after the war;⁷⁴ however, the Polish government also used the term to refer to those Poles whose homes no longer belonged to Poland and were forcibly relocated to Poland’s postwar territory.⁷⁵

Ziemie Odzyskane

Ziemie Odzyskane (“Recovered Territories”) was the official term used to refer to the formerly German territories which were ceded to Poland at the Potsdam Conference of 1945. It excludes those territories which had been under Polish administration at some point during the twentieth century (e.g., Danzig/Gdańsk) and instead includes those territories which had been “recovered” after centuries of German “occupation.” The term was used primarily until 1948 (at which point the integration of the Recovered Territories had been officially declared complete); although replaced with the designation *Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne* (“Western and Northern Territories”), *Ziemie Odzyskane* remained in colloquial use.⁷⁶

In my writing, I will primarily use the terms contemporary to the films in order to designate different groups and places. This is not to support these dated euphemistic, exclusionary, or propagandistic practices, but rather as part of my project to understand how specific experiences, places, and groups were categorized, mythologized, and represented in the three countries in question. In summary, in the context of the FRG, I will use the term “refugee/*Flüchtling*” to refer to those Germans who had fled from the front in the winter of 1944/1945 and

⁷⁴ See, for example, *Polska Kronika Filmowa* 33/45 (13 Nov. 1945), 1/46 (14 Jan. 1946), and 5/46 (21 Feb. 1946).

⁷⁵ For more about these definitions and other terms (e.g., *wysiedlenie/Aussiedlung*), see Ther, *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 91–94, Halicka 122, and Domke 12.

⁷⁶ See Domke 5–6 and Thum Loc. 4494.

“expellee/*Vertriebener*” to refer to those Germans who had been expelled by the Polish state. By this same token, I will refer at times to the lumped group of refugees/expellees as resettlers/*Umsiedler* in the context of the GDR when the conditions of a character’s forced migration are not clear (the term itself is vague). If the circumstances are clear, however, I will use the more specific terms “refugee” and “expellee” (though the latter is rarely so specifically identified). Arrivals in Poland’s western territories who originate from the *Kresy* will be referred to as repatriates/*repatrianci* and those from central Poland as resettlers/*przesiedleńcy*. In referring to the formerly German territories that belong to postwar Poland, I will use the designation Recovered Territories/*Ziemie Odzyskane*. I do so with the full awareness that it is a loaded term and because my goal is to “unpack” everything that this term contains; furthermore, it is the only term which most specifically identifies the territories with which I am concerned (“Western and Northern Territories” is a deceptively neutral term, and includes areas that were subject to different circumstances in the postwar period).

Theoretical Framework

In this project, I will unpack these terms at the points at which they are most poignantly expressed: within two moving, narrativized “images,” namely, the refugee trek and the repatriate train, as they are represented in fictional feature films in the PPR, GDR, and FRG (1945-1970). These moving images tend to allude to iconic photographs of the forced migration of Germans, Poles, and other minority groups (e.g. Jews, Silesians, Ukrainians) at the close of WWII and in the immediate postwar years. Both as representations in a filmic narrative and as historical, real-world facts, the refugee trek and the repatriate train are chronotopic, that is, they are manifestations of a specific configuration of time and space. Moreover, they are specific subsets of the chronotope of the road and function within a text as a representation of that real-world fact. Given that the films’

representations of the “road of forced migration” function both as motivic chronotopes and as allusions to photographic icons, these representations are both aggregate (a sum of generalized images, associations, places, actors) and specific (not a general allegory of forced migration, but representations of those forced migrations that traversed what Poles would call the “Recovered Territories” and what Germans would call the “lost East” around 1945). In drawing attention to the figurative and literal nature of the representations of forced migration in feature films, I hope to challenge the boundaries of Bakhtin’s chronotope by bringing it into dialogue with the photographic/filmic index, by unpacking the point at which they intersect in the cinematic representation of the refugee trek and the repatriate train. It is at this intersection, I argue, that the films negotiate between competing myths, politics, and collective memories with regard to the hotly contested topic of forced migration as a socio-political reality. In order to understand the complexities of this nexus, however, I need to define, firstly, how I understand Bakhtin’s chronotope, as well as how photographs and films mediate between index, icons, symbols.

Bakhtin never clearly and unequivocally defines his concept of the chronotope. “Scholz rightly remarks that ‘[the] meanings only gradually unfold as the argument progresses and the examples accumulate. Bakhtin’s terms, in other words, are frequently encountered ‘in use’, without explicit statement of the rules governing such use’ (2003: 146)” (qtd. in Bemong and Borghart 5). The chronotope is the term Bakhtin assigns “to the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature” (Introduction). It is a moment of consolidation in which the abstractions of space and time become manifest, or as Bakhtin explains: “Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes changed, and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope” (Introduction). Bakhtin

identifies the road as one such manifestation of time and space fused together; other examples of chronotopes include “the castle,” “the threshold,” and the “idyll.” These intersections constitute the “organizing centers for the fundamental narrative events of the novel” (Bakhtin ch. 10), and create the conditions for events to take ‘place’.

According to Nele Bemong and Pieter Borghart, the literary chronotope functions on at least five different levels, however, the two which are of interest to my study are what Jay Ladin refers to as “major” and “local” chronotopes.⁷⁷ The first operates at the general level of the work or, as Bakhtin illustrates, even at the level of the author’s *oeuvre*.⁷⁸ This overarching or “major” chronotope unifies the many different minor chronotopes that may be present in a text. The second goes by several names: that of the “local” or minor chronotope, or even the chronotopic motif or motivic chronotope. This chronotope has a variegated history in literature, but morphs and assumes different forms (i.e., different relationships to time and space) in an individual work. The plethora of terms scholars have used to describe these chronotopes—I am speaking of those such as the road or the threshold (the two chronotopes of interest in this project)—owes to Bakhtin’s own use of the terms as synonyms, as he refers to the “motif of meeting” (Ch. 1, Loc. 1465) on one page and to the “chronotope of meeting” (Loc. 1472) on the next. I will primarily refer to these manifestations of time and space as motivic chronotopes.

Because of the different levels at which one may identify the chronotope (and Bakhtin’s tendency to demonstrate rather than define), it is difficult to define it with a simple predicate adjective or noun. For on the text-internal level—or even in consideration of literary history—one may define the chronotope as a *motif*: a recurring, ever-evolving temporal-spatial motif. At the

⁷⁷ Bemong and Borghart 6.

⁷⁸ Bakhtin, for example, speaks at length of a “Rabelaisian chronotope.” See ch. 7.

level of the “work as a whole,” there is no sense in speaking of a motif. Here the chronotope widely refers to the *relationship* between space and time; generally, this relationship is one which cannot be consolidated into a single concrete structure (the market) or conceptual motif (encounter). A work may, of course, be dominated by one such motivic chronotope; even when this is the case, a more elaborate chronotopic description may be necessary.⁷⁹

In my own engagement with the chronotope, I will first of all determine an individual film’s overall relationship to space and time, that is, its characteristic or major chronotope.⁸⁰ Once I have determined the ways in which the individual films relate to time and space, I will investigate the motivic chronotope (understood here as a motif and spatial-symbolic structures where “the knots of narrative are tied and untied” [Bakhtin, ch. 10]) common to all of the films under analysis. This shared chronotope is that of the road, which has been imprinted as a road of forced migration (whether this is coded as flight, expulsion, repatriation, or [re]settlement). Again, the two *images* which come to typify the chronotope of the road in these films as related to forced migration are the refugee trek and the repatriate train. I will compare the uses and functions of this chronotope within the different texts. This comparison will shed light first of all on the function of “the road” in the individual work and how it relates to the work’s characteristic chronotope. Secondly, and most importantly, this comparison will allow me to determine how the imposition of the representation of a specific historical event (one tied to a specific set of regions and to real roads, treks, and train tracks) onto the motivic chronotope of the road opens up our understanding of the representation of forced migration in film.

⁷⁹ Alexandra Ganser, Julia Pühringer, and Markus Rheindorf (2006) reevaluate the genre of the “road movie” through the lens of the “chronotope of the road” which tends to dominate in those films often labeled as “road movies.”

⁸⁰ A discussion of the work’s overall relationship to time and space will only be included when it can shed significant light on how forced migration is depicted in the film.

My emphasis on the “historical” event and the oxymoronic “generic specificity” of spatial settings is intended to balance the two halves of Bakhtin’s term, rather than to privilege one over the other. In translating Albert Einstein’s concept of space-time into Greek (*chronos* + *topos*) for the purpose of adapting it to literary study, Bakhtin intentionally reverses the lexical components in order to privilege time over space. While it may be true, as Bakhtin contends, that literature up through modernism is preoccupied with *time*,⁸¹ analysis of the spatiality of literature remains unfortunately *underexplored*. In conjunction with the academic “spatial turn” I aim to reassert the validity of space in chronotopic discourse that, at least in its original form, accords less importance to space than to time. In this way, I hope merely to slow the swing of the pendulum. Just as Bakhtin reversed Einstein’s *space-time* and created the *chronotope*, Glen Lebedev reversed the Bakhtinian concept to create the *topochron* (a concept having less to do with literature and more to do with archaeology and sociology).⁸² The incessant flip-flopping of terms involves twisting the firm braid of time and space to reveal one thread at a time. Each literary or filmic work itself will exhibit a different relationship: whereas one film may engage space more prominently, another may play predominantly with notions of time. In raising the prominence of space to the level of time, I aim to expose the weave of the threads of space and time that the term *chronotope* suggests, not through its lexical ordering, but by way of its fusion into a compound word, rid of the ambivalent hyphen of space-time.

⁸¹ Literature’s preoccupation with time, most apparent in the nineteenth-century historical novel, involves, on the one hand, an active conceptual grapple with history and its representation. This preoccupation, according to Lessing, exemplifies a basic trait of the medium of literature that distinguishes it from the visual art of painting: through narrative, literature and poetry are able to illustrate change *over time*. See Lessing’s *Laokoon oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* (1767).

⁸² See Boym 161.

The task of twisting the braid and leveling privilege is made all the easier by an application of the chronotope to film. As “moving pictures” the medium is a combination of the traits Lessing had identified as belonging to the literary and the visual arts, due to the fact that film operates simultaneously in the realm of narrative time and spatial relationships. In this respect, however, I am not treading new ground. Scholars such as Robert Stam, Lily Alexander, Michael Montgomery, Alexandra Ganser, Julia Pühringer, and Markus Rheindorf have already illustrated the aptness of the chronotope to film studies.⁸³ Some of these analyses strive to reform generic definitions or to relax their often artificially inflexible categorical descriptions. Though Lily Alexander’s article, for example, indicates the historical conditions which explain the fascination with towers and the symbolic rise/fall that they enable, her analysis of the “chronotope of rise and fall” is largely (post) structural, aesthetic, and generally unconcerned with historical representation. The films I am writing about do not belong to the same generic pool (though certainly one could argue that many of them could be contained under the canopy of a highly generalized Heimatfilm umbrella). Instead of generic conventions, the films to be analyzed share a concern for the fictive representation of a particular kind of historical event: forced migration at the close of WWII with the Recovered Territories/lost eastern German territories as “shared” territory (whether as a point of origin/departure [in the German case] or as a point of arrival [in the Polish case]).⁸⁴ The

⁸³ See, for example, Robert Stam’s *Subversive Pleasures* (1989); Lily Alexander’s “Storytelling in Time and Space” (Winter 2007); Michael Montgomery’s *Carnivals and Commonplaces: Bakhtin’s Chronotope, Cultural Studies, and Film* (1993); and Alexandra Ganser, Julia Pühringer, and Markus Rheindorf’s “Bakhtin’s Chronotope of the Road” (2006).

⁸⁴ Even though the trek depicted in the East German TV-film under analysis follows the same linear trajectory as those treks depicted in the West German films, the East German film is ideologically more oriented toward the prospect of arrival, with little trace of nostalgia for the lands left behind; despite the geographical-directional congruence of *Ways Across the Land* with the trek plots of the West German films, this focus on a salvational land of arrival is more closely related to the Polish films under analysis, which similarly disavow the East (though for different reasons) in an acceptance of the space of arrival.

intersection of the rhetorical chronotope with the cinematic representation of a real-life historical event in specific regions,⁸⁵ together with its allusion to photographic images, presents a unique opportunity for our understanding of how representations of forced migration negotiate between myth, politics, and collective memory.

The chronotope of the road common to these films—all set in anonymous, fictive places located in specific regions (Bavaria, East Germany, Recovered Territories)—plays a clear role in establishing *myths*: for the regions at large, as well as for the experiences of forced migration.⁸⁶ These semi-anonymous emplaced settings claim to be representative, and yet are specific in their conflicts, which align with a certain time period and to a semi-specific region (Anytown in the postwar Recovered Territories or Anytown in the Bavaria of the *Wirtschaftswunder* or “irgendwo in Mecklenburg”⁸⁷). Determining the specific function of the chronotope of the road in concert with the film’s characteristic chronotope provides an explanation not only as to just what this “representativity” entails, but as to what kinds of myths are being formed about these regions as well.

In order to be able to make a claim to representativity, the films must have some kind of real-world referent. Drawing on Bakhtin’s work, James V. Wertsch explains that narratives have

⁸⁵ Forced migration is itself a historical (real-life) chronotopic event. Occurring at specific historical junctures, it involves the rupture in both the life of an individual and in the temporal continuity of a community in a specific locale and traversing great expanses of space in a singular direction which is often unable to be re-traversed except in the realm of memory or representation at a temporal and, given the irreversibility of the trek made, spatial distance. In the case of the expulsions of Poles from the *Kresy Wschodnie* and of Germans from the East, different vectors with various points of origin move in a westward direction. Despite these differing temporal and spatial points of departure, Polish and German vectors converge in spatial and often temporal-spatial intersections.

⁸⁶ I use the term “myth” in Barthes’ sense. “Since myth is a form of speech,” Barthes writes, “everything that enters into discourse can become myth. Myth doesn’t determine itself through the object of its message, but rather through the way it expresses it: there are formal limits to the myth, not substantive,” *Mythen des Alltags* 251. According to Barthes, myth “transforms history into nature,” 278.

⁸⁷ This is how the narrator locates the fictional town of “Rakowen” for the audience at the beginning of Eckermann’s *Ways Across the Land*.

both a referential and a dialogical function.⁸⁸ Though primarily a literary term, Bakhtin also uses the term *chronotope* to indicate “the actual chronotopes of our world (which serve as the source of representation)” (ch. 10). The text-internal chronotope exists only in the world of the text. Though these textual chronotopes are in dialogue with real-world chronotopes,

[t]he relationships themselves that exist *among* chronotopes cannot enter into any of the relationships contained *within* chronotopes. The general characteristic of these interactions is that they are *dialogical* (in the broadest use of the word). But this dialogue cannot enter into the world represented in the work, nor into any of the chronotopes represented in it; it is outside the world represented, although not outside the work as a whole. (Bakhtin, ch. 10)

Just as the text-internal chronotopes only exist in the world of the text, so do the equivalent, real-life chronotopes exist solely outside the text. As indicated above, textual chronotopes are *representations* of reality—with all of the morphing, distortions, imaginations, myths, and experimentations that come with representation.

Therefore, even when the chaos of legal and administrative transition in the Recovered Territories had long since stabilized, the films’ coding of this period as a sort of Wild West does not only color that historical period alone, but comes to characterize the region, to bathe it in the aura of that myth. As Wertsch explains, “The referential function of narratives involves more than simply referring to settings, actors, and events. A crucial fact about cultural tools is that they make it possible to carry out the ‘configurational act’ required to ‘grasp together’ (Ricoeur, 1981, p.174) sets of temporally distributed events into interpretable wholes or plots” (57). We may say that narratives emplot the past, creating myths and narrative form where none existed as historical

⁸⁸ See Wertsch 57–58.

fact.⁸⁹ Through the *re*-presentation of real-existing chronotopes, the films narrativize and mythologize them. The fictive chronotopes of the films become part of an intangible mythic palimpsest of the regions and the historical experiences in question, or rather, they become part of a cultural and collective memory thereof.⁹⁰

Textual chronotopes are not only in dialogue with real-life chronotopes, but with their literary/filmic/photographic forerunners as well. They are unique products of a rhizomatic literary (or for my specific analyses, filmic) history, non-static, subject to change and reformulation, but still identifiable as belonging to a motivic map—a loaded history of associations, connotations, and assumptions to be reified, undermined, morphed, or historicized in each new instance. My emphasis on common chronotopes draws on Astrid Erll’s suggestion that literary (or filmic) allusions, what she calls “medial cues,” call up a certain tradition and national literature in large social groups;⁹¹ for even though an instance of a chronotope may not allude to a specific literary/filmic text, it may perform a similar associative function—particularly in the case of historical representation. These “medial cues” include photographic or visual *icons*, images which by their very definition are associative and rely on their resemblance as signs to a given referent. As such, in addition to the dialogue between textual and real-existing chronotopes, the chronotopes in each of the films under analysis become part of a rhizomatic, intertextual dialogue as well.

Bakhtin himself does not delve into the complications that the representation of specific lived events creates for the chronotope. This is in part because literature makes different claims to authenticity and mimesis than does, say, the media of photography and film. By investigating this

⁸⁹ See Wertsch 58.

⁹⁰ See Assmann and Frevert 49–50.

⁹¹ See Paaß 45.

issue, my dissertation opens up a new avenue for the application of the chronotope in film studies as well as for understanding the relationship between history and its representations. If we take Peirce's triad of index, symbol, and icon, the three aspects present in every photograph, and, one could argue, similarly in film, the index presents a problem for the chronotope contained in cinematic narratives—particularly when one considers that many of these representations allude to photographic or visual icons, which, though saturated with symbolic associations and myths, are also indexical (in the tradition of Barthes).⁹² If the real-world and literary (rhetorical) chronotopes are in dialogue, but set as parallel lines, the indexical quality of film and its documentarian visual allusions pierces through both registers. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the index can only provide the viewer with limited information; as Maren Röger makes clear in tracing the afterlife of the photos of the atrocities at Nemmersdorf, a photograph can be staged.⁹³ The index does not tell us the why, the how, the before and after—it merely tells us *ça a été* (“this has been”).⁹⁴ The index itself cannot be taken at face value. We are always trying to ascribe

⁹² Reading Peirce, Alexander Robins warns critics of interpreting the icon as if it were the index, that “[a] photograph and its image are not synonymous,” 5. Barthes, who understands the index in more accommodating terms, would disagree, and indeed stretches Peirce's limited definition of the index to include the referent recorded by the light rays that Peirce, due to our need to recognize its form, relegates to the icon or the symbol. For Roland Barthes, the trace of the light rays is not the only index of the flash itself, but of the flash on the body of the portrait-sitter, on the objects and bodies in what becomes framed as a “scene”—it is an index of what the light touched, that something or someone was there before the camera. Barthes moves a step further, suggesting that the photograph, in imprinting an instant, as Marianne Hirsch explains, “authenticates the reality of the past and provides a material connection to it,” *Family Frames* 6. In Barthes' own words: “I call ‘photographic referent’ not the *optionally* real thing to which an image or a sign refers but the *necessarily* real thing which has been placed before the lens, without which there would be no photograph...The photograph is literally an emanation of the referent,” 76–77. The indexicality of the photograph extends even beyond evidence of light rays and photographic referent, but also to *time*: the photograph is “an emanation of *past reality*” (88) that illustrates that “‘that has been’,” 115. The photograph's registry of the past, “imprecise” though it is, is an indexical quality that Robins overlooks when he suggests that it merely “show[s] in an imprecise way that this work is connected to a real and physical world,” 11. Robins' tense here is incorrect. What the photographic index shows is the connection that *did* exist to a real and physical world. My definition of the concept of the index encompasses both the photographic (object) and temporal referent.

⁹³ See Röger, “Bilder der Vertreibung” 272.

⁹⁴ See Barthes, *Camera Lucida* 77.

meaning to the “this has been,” and need to approach the “documentarian” photograph—index and all—critically. With regard to the chronotope, however, the presence, or even the visual echo (perhaps a kind of distorted screen memory?) of the photographic index in the context of a fictional feature film exposes a nexus where ideologies of space/time, myth, politics, memory, and generic sensibilities not only intertwine and perhaps clash, but where these issues are worked through.

As I pursue the ways in which the films’ use of the chronotope of the road is in dialogue with its history as a motif and its real-life chronotopes, part of my task involves determining how the filmic stagings of flight and expulsion interact with, challenge, re-frame, or re-purpose the *icons* of forced migration in wide circulation after the war.⁹⁵ The icon, according to Peirce, “produces meaning through its resemblance to other signs. Iconicity speaks to the subjective possibility of an interpreter freely associating a sign with past experience” (Robins 4). This definition underlies my use of the term “icon”; however, in approaching photographs depicting forced migration, I tend toward the intensified meaning conveyed in Vicky Goldberg’s modified term “secular icons,” which she describes as follows:

“representations that inspire some degree of awe—perhaps mixed with dread, compassion, or aspiration—and that stand for an epoch or a system of beliefs. Although photographs easily acquire symbolic significance, they are not merely symbolic, they do not merely allude to something outside themselves ... for photographs intensely and specifically represent their subjects. But the images I think of as icons almost instantly acquired symbolic overtones and larger frames of reference that endowed them with national or even worldwide significance.” (qtd. in Brink, “Secular Icons” 137)

⁹⁵ The images I refer to are documentary in nature, and include both still and moving images.

Even if it does conflate symbol and icon, this definition ascribes more power to the images and associative dimension that defines their iconicity than Peirce, and more thoroughly describes the status of these images in postwar (East/West) German and Polish culture.

The multiplicity of meanings loaded into individual secular icons will differ depending on the place, time, the context and manner of their reproduction and distribution, as well as national context (GDR, FRG, PPR). Many of these meanings correspond to rhetorical *topoi* such as the exile from paradise or, paradoxically, homecoming, or to (ideologically laden) discourses such as *Heimat/macierz* or guilt/retribution.⁹⁶ The taboo on giving meaning to the atrocities of the Holocaust—a major source of Cornelia Brink’s hesitation to use the term “icon” without reservations because of its religious associations⁹⁷—virtually does not exist with regard to images or narratives of flight and the forced migrations discussed in this project. These images of forced migration (and here I am referring to the German refugee treks and Polish repatriate train transports) conjure *topoi* that confer meaning on the events depicted. In the translation of these images into filmic scenes and their emplacement in a narrative, these *topoi* serve to justify and

⁹⁶ Gregor Thum explains that before WWII, Zygmunt Wojciechowski, founder of the *Instytut Zachodni* (“Western Institute”), had used the terms “macierz” (“motherland”) and “ziemie macierzyste” to refer to the Polish Piast lands. After the end of WWII, the terms filled in for “ojczyzna” (“fatherland”), “since the concept ‘fatherland’ is clearly defined in Polish and designates the land in which one was born, from which one comes, of which one is a citizen,” Loc. 4494-4503.

⁹⁷ In my own use of the term in a secular sense, I follow Cornelia Brink, and distance my use from the strictly religious meaning of “icon,” whose earliest usage—despite the neutral etymological root *eikon*, which simply means picture or even image (Brink, “Secular Icons” 139)—is ritualistic, if not ecumenical, in nature. Because the history of the general reception of these photographs is not within the bounds of this topic (I restrict reception to the realm of feature film), I do not want to suggest—rightly or wrongly—that they constitute objects of worship. Nevertheless, as Cornelia Brink illustrates in her study of the *Ikonen der Vernichtung* (“icons of destruction”) (namely, iconic photographs of the liberated KZs), the term “icon,” even as a secular photographic icon, retains some functions of the religious icon (specifically in the tradition of the Greek Orthodox Church). These similarities hold true for the photographs of forced migration, particularly in the FRG, where the images of flight and expulsion came to form what Johannes von Moltke calls “the founding moment of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)” (“Location *Heimat*” 74)—one based on the assertion of German victimhood, supported by images of “victimhood.” The first of the similarities between the secular and the religious icon concern their claims to mimesis and the “typification” of images via reproduction and distribution (see Brink, “Secular Icons” 139, 142).

rationalize what may have otherwise seemed like the arbitrariness of the Allies (and the Soviet Union in particular) in redrawing the borders or to nourish a sense of injustice and make claims on a tradition of martyrdom and exile, with all of the Judeo-Christian value those traditions confer.

Although still images can be and routinely are situated within stories, their very circulation and eventual status as secular icons presuppose that they have been ripped from their original context, that their “mooring [has become] unstuck” (Sontag, *On Photography* 71), that they have been reproduced and distributed by numerous agents in a variety of contexts and with different aims. In contrast to the photographic icon of the refugee trek or the livestock-laden train ride, the filmic citation of these images places the still image in direct relation to other similar images; within a single text, the singular image is multiplied, replicated with slight variations—the illusion of fluid movement at X frames per second; these images, coalescing into sequences and scenes, become a link in a specific story—one that unfolds rather than be suggested by likeness and subjective viewer association. What these stories rely on, however, is the viewer’s ability to recognize and read the cited icons.

Despite the photograph’s ability to register the past as evidence, its iconic function often overrides its indexical one. Severed from its original context, put in the hands of those who lack firsthand experience with the photo’s subject matter, reproduced and connected to any number of symbols and external discourses—the iconic function of the photograph undermines the ability of the viewer to *see*. The specificity of the index (Barthes’ “this has been”), once established in what Brink calls the *soziales Bildgedächtnis* (“social image memory”; *Ikonen der Vernichtung* 9), diminishes into a set of generalizations (in the case of the FRG, for example, specific time becomes winter 1944/45, specific place becomes “the East,” specific historical actors become “expellees”), and comes to represent certain ideas, myths, and *topoi* (such as victimhood, Soviet aggression, or

Heimatverlust). Once these images have been translated into fictional feature film, the index has been removed entirely, existing as a trace of a trace, leaving the audience with a reproduced rendering of an allusion to not merely one singular iconic image, but a *composite* iconic image.⁹⁸

The fact of the indexicality of the photo—even at several removes when we consider its visual echo as represented in a fictional feature film—complicates Bakhtin’s division between real-life chronotope (the roads that exist in the world) and the narrative chronotope (road as motif). Even in its attenuated, generalized state, the real-world, historical and spatial referent is present enough to merit either the tempering or the strengthening of its political potential. These generalizing or generic tendencies of the icon and the chronotope in conjunction with the ever waning, but persistently present index require that I do several things in my analysis of these filmic representations of forced migration. I must not only *look* to see *what* is being shown and *how*, but also to identify what myths, discourses, and symbols these images are connected to, and how the films negotiate the potential consequences of engaging with a historical event that has real consequences in the world of its viewers. In my work, I will work toward finding answers to the following questions:

1. How is forced migration depicted (camera angles, lighting, editing, sound, color palette, composition, *mise-en-scène*)?
2. How does this depiction create a dialogue with (in Bakhtin’s intertextual understanding) iconic images in circulation?
3. How does the film frame the “road of forced migration” narratively? What role does it feature in the narrative? How does it fit into the film’s overall visual economy or

⁹⁸ I am referencing the practice of composite photography studied by Peirce “which can aggregate and average many signs over time and space” (Robins 8) in order to determine characteristic traits of the subject under study, be it common facial traits linked to “criminality” or animal locomotion.

narrative logic? How are these scenes situated discursively? What kind of arguments/ideas do they support/undermine/call into question?

The answers to these questions ought to give us a better understanding of Polish and (East/West) German “social image memory” with respect to the legacy of forced migration.⁹⁹

The concept of “social image memory” relies on the concepts of “collective memory” (the original concept as coined by Maurice Halbwachs) and “cultural memory.” These latter two can serve as catch-all terms for the general knowledge that groups possess (whether these groups are defined as nations, ethnic groups, cohorts, etc.). As Astrid Erll explains, however, “‘*cultural memory*’ accentuates the connection of memory on the one hand and socio-cultural contexts on the other” (“Cultural Memory Studies” 4). While I will use variations on both terms,¹⁰⁰ “cultural memory” encompasses my aims most closely: I am investigating the films in question as texts which play a role in shaping what Cornelia Brink calls our “social image (or visual) memory” of flight and expulsion.

In approaching the films and their relationship to cultural memory, I draw on the work of Wertsch and Erll in particular. Wertsch claims that collective memory is not static, but ever-changing and evolving. For this reason, the title of his book is *Voices of Collective Remembering* (2002), as it is an ongoing, multivoiced, “mediated action” (6). Collective memory is formed by

⁹⁹ These questions presuppose the first assertion in my thesis—that these representations exist and constitute an object worthy of analysis. The answers to these questions will, in turn, support the second assertion—that these films situate the issue of the forced migrations within the foundational narratives of the FRG, GDR, and PPR.

¹⁰⁰ The variations on the terms “collective memory,” “cultural memory,” and other intricately defined kinds of memory abound. See, for example, Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* 3–5; Erll, “Cultural Memory Studies [...]”; and Wulf Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory* (2006). Furthermore, as I focus on films as tools of collective memory, I am concerned not with communicative memory (individual, social), but with Jan Assmann’s concept of cultural memory (*das kulturelle Gedächtnis*), which encompasses political, but more importantly, for our purposes, cultural memory. Cultural memory is transgenerational, mediated through symbolic systems. For a discussion of Jan Assmann’s memory schema, see Hirsch, *Generation of Postmemory* 32–34 and Assmann and Frevert 39–50.

the tension between the active individual agents and cultural tools (e.g., photos and narratives); these tools—as Wertsch suggests by way of theory and countless others by claiming that they are breaking taboos—are not evenly distributed.¹⁰¹ The films to be analyzed in this dissertation are thus the “cultural tools” of collective memory; however, not all tools are as influential or as “useful” as others.¹⁰² With Erll, I have to pose the question: “What is it that turns *some* media (and not *others*) into powerful ‘media of cultural memory,’ meaning media which create and mold collective images of the past?” (“Literature, Film [...]” 390). As does Erll in her contribution to *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (2008), I investigate the films’ “*intra*-medial ‘rhetoric of collective memory’” (i.e., close readings of the individual texts), “their *inter*-medial dynamics, that is, the interplay with earlier and later representations,” as well as the “*pluri*-medial contexts in which memory-making novels and films appear and exert their influence” (390). This dissertation will therefore ascertain the following: how and why flight and expulsion are represented; the specific historical and socio-cultural contexts in which they arise; and the extent to which these representations shape and are shaped by cultural and, more specifically, social image memory.¹⁰³ Each of these facets of the dissertation will serve to prove my thesis that, though the explicit representation of the forced migrations are rare in pre-1970

¹⁰¹ See Wertsch’s discussion of episodic and instrumental memory 52–55.

¹⁰² Acts of remembrance and commemoration and the construction of collective memory serve potentially two purposes: finding and constructing an accurate version of the past; or creating a usable past for the purpose of mourning, patriotism, overcoming defeat, etc. (i.e., politically charged memory, such as that exemplified by the BdV). Though seemingly opposable purposes, Wertsch claims that they operate in what he calls “functional dualism”—that is, one purpose does not necessarily dominate over the other, but that both function alternatively. Some cultural tools suit these purposes better than others. See Wertsch 31.

¹⁰³ The conclusion chapter will explore more fully the extent of the influence of these early representations as mirrored in particularly post-1989 representations of the forced migrations at the close of the war.

feature films, they do exist and are embedded in foundational narratives of the FRG, GDR, and PPR.

Chapter 2: Icy Roads to the FRG: The Refugee Trek in West German Feature Film

Introduction

While 1950s films in the FRG, and Heimatfilms¹⁰⁴ in particular, often featured hard-working expellees and refugees from the formerly German territories in the east, these eastern landscapes are rarely represented on the screen. The traumas of the lost Heimat and of the experience of the winter flight from the Soviets provide the subtext for many characters in Heimatfilms and other fictional feature films of the period, however, precious few dare to include such scenes explicitly.¹⁰⁵ To my knowledge (the caveat I must provide because I fear yet another film, lesser known or virtually unknown, may lurk in cinema's old attic) there are only three films in the FRG that actually depict flight from the front (and none depicting expulsion) in the period between its founding in 1949 and the West German government's acknowledgment of the Oder-Neisse Line in 1970.¹⁰⁶ These three films include: Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter (Glocken*

¹⁰⁴ The Heimatfilm is a film, which, situated primarily in the (German/Swiss/Austrian) countryside, typically features astounding images of nature; as the name suggests, it is defined by notions of Heimat existing, as Johannes von Moltke summarizes, "in a binary construction whose second term the films of the genre variously define as exile, as 'the foreign' (*die Fremde*), as rootlessness, displacement, or, as in this case, simply as homelessness. In their celebration of Heimat, the films regularly rely on such oppositions in order to stabilize a hierarchy of values and a moral universe that defines Heimat by expelling its various others," *No Place Like Home* 5. Semantically speaking, the Heimatfilm "offered [spectators] opportunities for identification, by means of point-of-view shots, eyeline-match editing, narrative teleology, and the casting of familiar stars," Ludewig 59. This definition is by no means comprehensive, not least because generic conventions and definitions necessarily change over time. Furthermore, I agree with Rick Altman when he writes that "[w]e need to recognize that not all genre forms relate to their genre in the same way or to the same extent," Loc. 858.

¹⁰⁵ Examples of refugee characters in 1950s films include: Marianne of Liebeneiner's *Forest in Winter*, Helga Lüdersen of Hans Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide* (Green is the Heath; 1951), Rose Bernd of Wolfgang Staudte's update of Gerhart Hauptmann's play of the same title (*Rose Bernd*; 1957), and Hubert Gerold of Alfons Stummer's *Echo der Berge* (Echo of the Mountains; Austria 1954).

¹⁰⁶ Prior to the founding of the FRG, two films included the fate of one female refugee on her westward journey: Helmut Käutner's *In jenen Tagen* (Seven Journeys; 1947) and Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Liebe 47* (1949). In Käutner's film, a Silesian widow, accompanied by her sleeping child, spends an evening with a soldier in a barn. The protagonist of *Seven Journeys*, however, is a dilapidated car that narrates the "seven journeys" that summarizes its wartime experience, and in doing so, presents a tableau of Germans and their wartime experiences. The meeting between widow refugee and soldier constitutes the final journey. The widow-refugee is, however, at the end of her trek, and seeks a small town near Hamburg. In the case of Liebeneiner's film, an adaptation of Wolfgang Borchert's *Draußen vor der Tür* (The Man Outside; 1947), Beckmann and the woman (called Anna Gehrke in the film) meet at the Elbe, where they both intend to commit suicide; instead, they tell each other their own tales of woe. Gehrke's story-telling

der Heimat; *Forest in Winter/The Bells of Heimat*; 1956), Wolfgang Schleif's *Preis der Nationen* (*Das Mädchen Marion*; *Prize of the Nations/The Girl Marion*; 1956), and Frank Wisbar's *Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen* (*Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*; 1959).

My investigation of the “chronotope of the road (of forced migration)” and the films’ engagement with the composite icons of the refugee treks will illustrate that the depiction of the treks presents specific challenges to all three films—challenges which, in part, may explain why they are such a rare image in the context of West German feature film despite their presence in the public sphere.¹⁰⁷ The main challenge that all three films share is that of reconciling the spectacle of flight with the expectations and tropes of the films’ respective genres: *Forest in Winter* may be categorized as a Heimatfilm, *Prize of the Nations* as an equestrian sports film,¹⁰⁸ and *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* as a(n) (anti)war film.

The first two films, both produced and released in 1956–1957, detach their subject matter from the revanchist political agendas associated with the Expellees’ and Disenfranchised People’s Bloc (and the League of Expellees, which was soon to take the stage) while simultaneously propagating two contradictory narratives: one of continuity (a denial of the loss of Heimat or of the trauma of flight, which permits characters to move forward with confidence into the integratory

initiates a long flashback that includes a stark, minimalist representation of her flight from the East. Andreas Kötzing argues that the primary purpose of naming and creating a story for Borchert’s “woman” was to attract women to the theaters, as women comprised the majority of all moviegoers. This alteration to Borchert’s version had the consequence, however, of expanding Beckmann’s victim narrative to include “the whole of German society,” 48. According to Peter Stettner, “[t]he refugees shown in the rubble films aren’t especially emphasized; rather, they constitute more simply an understood component of the entire postwar confusion and of the new orientation that had become necessary,” 157.

¹⁰⁷ See von Moltke, “Location *Heimat*” 74; Halicka 65, 78–79; and Elisabeth Fendl’s “In Szene gesetzt” (2010). Fendl’s article provides an account of popular images of flight/expulsion in popular forms such as postage stamps, postcards, and *Gedenkblätter* (“commemorative/memorial sheets”).

¹⁰⁸ The two titles of the film identify the split between the genres at work in the film: *Prize of the Nations* (equestrian sports film) and *The Girl Marion* (drama).

processes of modernization and commercialization in the FRG, even as these processes are predicated on suppressed losses or sufferings); and one of rupture (in which the loss of Heimat is acknowledged, and nostalgia and often melancholy reign despite the supposed opportunities available in the FRG).¹⁰⁹ Through the depiction of the iconic scenes of flight, the protagonists are inscribed as victims, but—as if the very engagement with the victim tropes were a mistake—the potential consequences of this status are either suppressed, redirected, or undermined. In the case of the (anti)war film *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, however, the scenes of flight are a crucial part of an argument against war: here we have a tension between a specificity of images (not only does Wisbar attempt to recreate events realistically, but he includes documentary footage of the treks over land as well—footage sourced, as Maren Röger admonishes, from Nazi newsreels and a narrative against war “in general” [questions of the responsibility of the different historic actors, for example, simply are not asked]).¹¹⁰

In all three of these films, the images of flight correspond to the images of refugee treks that had been published widely in picture books, newsreels, and magazines since before the fall of the Third Reich. The filmic images of these treks in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, *Forest in Winter*, and *Prize of the Nations*—if they do not consist of the documentary footage itself—strongly draw upon those well-known images of the refugee treks from East Prussia in the closing months of the war, which, as Maren Röger notes, held a “special status in German visual memory of the forced

¹⁰⁹ Svetlana Boym defines nostalgia as follows: “Nostalgia (from *nostos*—return home, and *algia*—longing) is a longing for a home that no longer exists or has never existed. Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one’s own fantasy,” xiii. I hesitate to assign either of the kinds of nostalgia Boym has identified—namely, *restorative* and *reflective*—to these films, as the contradictory narratives at work in them preclude a single or stable expression of a particular kind of nostalgia.

¹¹⁰ Röger, “Bilder der Vertreibung” 267.

migration” (“Bilder der Vertreibung” 265).¹¹¹ Both *Forest in Winter* and *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* inscribe the scenes of flight into universalizing narratives; *Prize of the Nations*, on the other hand, channels these discourses and myths through a set of different protagonists: the equine beasts of burden that go otherwise unnoticed, mere props in the iconography of flight. Although, due to the film’s subject matter, *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* also reproduces a wider canon of images (e.g., the crowded ports, makeshift camps, the murder of a French POW, and an attempted rape), all three films still reproduce a narrow, tamer image canon: the filmic compositions avoid suggesting the infamous “atrocities of Nemmersdorf” and other (East Prussian) localities as well as the death marches and the KZ-prisoners who also, historically, were to be transported westward by ship and over land. The allusions to or the presence of the icons themselves are intrusions of the “real” into the fictional cinematic world. In reading the (limited) cited icons through the motivic chronotope of the road,¹¹² I will determine the relationship between the index and the films’ (limited) cited icons in the context of the films’ narrative and symbolic currency.

Waldwinter (Glocken der Heimat; 1956)

Chronologically speaking, Wolfgang Liebeneiner’s *Forest in Winter* (1956) is the first of the three films under analysis. In Liebeneiner’s film, a small Silesian community, led by its protective baron-shepherd, flees from the advancing front to the baron’s old hunting grounds, Falkenstein, located in Bavaria. The audience joins the Silesians ten years later. The baron’s plans to establish a glassworks factory on the estate stall when the bank suddenly withdraws its promise of a loan for a new generator. Unbeknownst to him, the baron’s increasing financial difficulties are the result of his scheming steward, Stengel, who not only meddled in the baron’s business with

¹¹¹ It should be noted, of course, that *Prize of Nations* and *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* both take place in East Prussia.

¹¹² See page 42 for a discussion of motivic chronotopes.

the bank, but has been cutting down the forest and selling it for his own profit, hoping to turn Falkenstein into a hotel. The baron sends a telegram to his grandson, Martin, asking for his help. Martin, now a successful businessman in Paris, returns to the community after a ten-year absence (1945–1955). Though Martin first insists that the baron sell Falkenstein, the baron's adoptive daughter, Marianne, shows him the value of community, Heimat, and responsibility toward others. As she does so, taking him to the homes of the Silesian families, where they are busy painting nutcrackers and blowing delicate glassware, Martin begins to understand not only the sentimental importance of communal ties and of Heimat, but also the material value of the traditional glassblowing craft for the new tourism market of the 1950s. Martin uncovers the Stengel's scheme, and in the end, the factory receives its new generator—a symbol of the promise of economic prosperity and the means to continue passing down the community's traditional craft, thereby preserving the community's identity for years to come.

As reviewers note, the Heimat(s) presented in the film differ(s) from that of Paul Keller's original novel as well as that of Fritz Peter Buch's 1936 UFA-adaptation of the same title. *Forest in Winter* is not unique in this regard; Johannes von Moltke lists other remake-Heimatfilms that wrote refugees into the scripts: *Wenn am Sonntagabend die Dorfmusik spielt* (On Sunday Evenings When the Village Music Plays; 1953) (Charles Klein's 1933 original), Wolfgang Staudte's *Rose Bernd* (1957) (Alfred Halm's 1919 original, which is also based on Gerhart Hauptmann's 1903 drama),¹¹³ and Hans Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide* (Green is the Heath; 1951) (Hans Behrendt's 1932 original), among others.¹¹⁴ While these films are part of a more general re-make trend—an

¹¹³ Gustav Burmester directed a version of *Rose Bernd* for television (1962). Valentin Jeker brought the story to the screen again in 1998.

¹¹⁴ Von Moltke, "Location *Heimat*" 76.

opportunity to recast already beloved films in vivid color and, in some cases, to rescue those narratives (if not the directors themselves)¹¹⁵ from the Nazi regime—the films listed here, and *Forest in Winter* included, modernize the narratives and capitalize on the opportunity to engage a “new” demographic: refugees and expellees from the lost eastern German territories.

The booklets of advertising material, whose target audience comprised the owners of movie theaters, promoted the film as an opportunity for the theaters to target this new audience, and Silesian refugees and expellees in particular. A section titled “Wichtig für die Propaganda” (“Important for Campaigning”) (the Silesian coat of arms hovering above the text) provides the number of Silesians living in the FRG as a means of tempting theaters to show and advertise *Forest in Winter*: “We urge you to notice this opportunity—we’ve been assured by a reputable source that the Silesians ‘hunger’ for a film such as this. Please keep this in mind this when you consider your advertising tactics!”¹¹⁶ The pamphlet suggests that this number (2,204,460)—written in a larger font, center-justified on its own line—translates directly into ticket sales. Similarly, of the eight different advertising tag lines offered on a sheet of “Beilage für den Aushang” (“Supplements to Hang”), more than half of them either explicitly state that the characters are Silesians and/or that the film is about old and new homelands. The most optimistic of wording implies the film’s central topics of flight and of coping with the loss of Heimat, couching them in the warm, *gemütlich* (“cozy”) rhetoric of the genre. For example: “Ein deutscher Farbfilm von der das Alte bewahrenden und das Neue gestaltenden Kraft unseres Herzens” (“A German film in color about the strength of our heart to cherish the old and shape the new”); or the even vaguer but pithier:

¹¹⁵ Wolfgang Liebeneiner, like the other directors in this chapter (Wolfgang Schleif and Frank Wisbar), were involved in the production of UFA films under the Nazi regime. Liebeneiner was the director of the infamous propaganda film *Ich klage an* (I accuse; 1941), which argued in favor of the euthanasia of the ill.

¹¹⁶ “Waldwinter.” Werbe-Material. Microfiche 12470. Deutsches Filminstitut, Frankfurt am Main. Accessed July 2015.

“Mit der Heimat im Herzen ins neue Leben” (“with the homeland in heart on to a new life”). These taglines open up the film to a wider German audience while still keeping the profitable one in mind: (Silesian) refugees and expellees.

Reviewers lament the relocation of the original literary Heimat in the East to the FRG, calling it an “update” of Keller’s novel. This dissatisfaction rests less with the change in location, however, and more with the imposition of current problems on the supposed idyll of the past.¹¹⁷ A reviewer for the *Wiesbadener Kurier* expresses his/her frustration as follows:

Does everything in film have to be ‘updated’ in every circumstance? Why can’t we just escape from contemporary reality with Paul Keller, to lose ourselves in the dreamily isolated winter world, where Keller expresses the unity of man and nature so eloquently and poetically?¹¹⁸

According to this reviewer, Liebeneiner’s rewrite brings too much of *lived time* into the genre. This lived time consists of recent history and the socio-political reality of postwar West Germany, technological modernization, and the spatial reorganization of Keller’s Heimat which is predicated on *Forest in Winter*’s representation of the historical rupture, in this case, flight from the east in 1944/1945. “Update” and “modernization” emerge here as genre-foreign elements.

The issues raised in the advertising materials and in the press response already highlight some of the key tensions within the film. In Bakhtin’s theory, the major chronotope of a work is

¹¹⁷ Reviewer dissatisfaction with “updates” appears to be unique to *Waldwinter* (which depicts flight). Hans Deppe’s *Grün ist die Heide* is accepted as a “Zeitfilm.” Rather than lament the intrusion of the modern into the heath, reviewers criticize the way the film trivially includes and misuses refugees (see Schulte “Dürr ist die Heide [...]”, “BON,” and the anonymous review in *Montag-Morgen* [24 Dec. 1951]). Reviewers also accept that Rose Bernd has become a refugee, for without access to the *Riesengebirge*, it makes sense that Rose Bernd should be a refugee. Many reviewers express dissatisfaction because large chunks of Hauptmann’s milieu-specific dialogues have simply been dropped like erratic blocks into the film, having little to do with postwar Germany. William Asche, for example, writes: “[...] they should have just trusted the figures with a bit of baggage from our present. But that’s where they stopped with Gerhart Hauptmann – unfortunately” (18). See Asche, E.K., and “Wk.”

¹¹⁸ F.A., “Nach Motiven von Paul Keller.”

supposed to unify the disparate and conflicting minor or motivic chronotopes in a given text. If we identify the *Forest in Winter*'s major chronotope as that of its title—the eternal winter in a single forest, a type of chronotope of the idyll (the *Wiesbadener Kurier*'s “dreamily isolated winter world”)—then the chronotope of the road, marked as the road of flight, disrupts the major chronotope with its own allusion to the historic icon and its real-life—even if composite—referent: the refugee trek. The film's inclusion of this allusion complicates, if not undermines, the film's visual argument about Heimat: while not proposing any sort of revanchist agenda, the film nevertheless insists upon the continuity of the geographically locatable Heimat despite the plot's indication that the protagonists have been physically cut off from their original Heimat. Visually, the film argues that the Silesian community never left the space of Silesia. The protagonists never “arrive” in Bavaria, because, following the visual logic of the film, they never truly left—and yet, despite the film's efforts to suture together a whole, harmonious idyll, the insertion of that recognizable, iconic referent, of the refugee trek, complicates the film's visual mission. The discourse of the film only increases this tension. Discursively, the film generates a definition of Heimat that is based on shared traditions and community, and the possibility of creating an ersatz-Heimat which resembles the lost Heimat by continuing the social practices that shaped the Silesian one. It is in this context that the advertisements can suggest that the protagonists go “with the homeland in heart on to a new life,” while the visual content of the film suggests the continuity of Heimat in terms of community, tradition, *and*, problematically, space. This tension in the film can be read in the relation between the film's major chronotope and the motivic chronotope of the road.

I will first identify the temporal and spatial schema present in the film that correspond to the conflict between the major chronotope of the Heimat-idyll and the motivic chronotope of the road of forced migration. In terms of time, the film evokes two frequencies at once, namely, mythic

time, associated primarily (though not exclusively) with the chronotope of the Heimat-idyll, and historical time, which is associated in part with the chronotope of the road of forced migration. In its attempt to create harmony between these two chronotopes and their respective relations to time, the film does impose some overlap. Though *Forest in Winter* never explicitly states the dates in which it takes place, the two historic settings for the action are 1945 and 1955, or, the year of the mythic *Stunde Null* (“zero hour”) on the one hand, and the bustle of the Economic Miracle, on the other. The year 1945 is important for understanding the film’s struggle to reconcile mythic and historical time. While the film avoids treating many of the problems facing German society at the close of the war (e.g., collective/individual guilt, Nazi crimes, de-Nazification, and the return of the survivors of Nazi aggression), given that the film’s protagonists are Silesian refugees, it struggles with the consequences of forced migration and loss of homeland. At the time of the film’s production, the concept of the “zero hour” was still in common circulation, as the myth had only begun to be deconstructed in West German society in the late 1960s.¹¹⁹ *Forest in Winter*, however, avoids thematizing the supposed *Kahlschlag* or even the traumas of flight. There is no “shattered past”¹²⁰—only shattered glass (the material recycled in the Silesian glassworks). True to the genre of Heimatfilm, *Forest in Winter* seeks refuge in landscapes and communities that are pure, upright, and whole, and yet, as Johannes von Moltke has also made clear, few of the idylls of the genre are truly undisturbed and isolated.¹²¹ If the past is not “shattered,” it is at least, for the protagonists of *Forest in Winter*, cracked.¹²²

¹¹⁹ See Brockmann 3.

¹²⁰ This is how Konrad H. Jarausch and Michael Geyer refer to twentieth-century German history in their book *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (2002).

¹²¹ See von Moltke, *No Place Like Home* 82.

¹²² The world of *Forest in Winter* has its share of disturbances: embezzlement and financial difficulty, an attempted murder, the loss of Silesia. Stengel and his wife Frieda are the agents of these first two disturbances. Once the male

Beyond the dramatic disturbances that drive the plot, the historically-grounded “backstory” of the film’s protagonists—that is, the trauma of flight and loss of Heimat—complicates the veracity of the idyllic cliché in subtle ways, which, though it has little overt bearing on the development of the plot, evidences the inability of the film to reconcile the motivic chronotope of the road with the major chronotope of the idyll in its entirety. By definition, traumatic rupture and the spatial severance from Heimat define the protagonists as refugees. Reconciling these biographies with the idyll of Heimat becomes one of the significant challenges that the film faces.

While the historical timeline of the refugee should mark 1945 as a traumatic rupture, the frequency of mythic time that the film invokes is characterized by continuity and tradition. Visually, the story takes place in an eternal winter wonderland. It is as if time has stopped; life has been arrested in a jovial world of powdery snow, thick woolen sweaters, and warm hearths. Even though the snow of Silesia bears more footprints, is more *lived in*, it does not become dirty or slushy—even in the brief scene depicting flight. If there is only one season to this film, there is, with one exception, only one time in the earth’s rotation: day. The majority of the action takes place in daylight. There is only one night in the film, and it is the climactic night of angry outbursts and intrigue. Night assumes the simple symbolic function of signifying evil and intrigue, mixed accordingly with festivity.¹²³ Though night arrives—once, and as a symbolic-dramatic tool—the

protagonists apprehend the couple, justice can be served and order restored. This marital pair embodies multiple threats to the community and its communion with their Bavarian Heimat. Their financial and social meddling propels the plot, creating financial distress and eventually injuring Martin; and yet, their scheme to turn Falkenstein into a hotel for tourists creates, ideologically, the greatest threat of all: the fragmentation of the community and renewed homelessness—a condition to be cured, as Martin, the baron’s Heimat-less wayward grandson, suggests, by a move to the city. As the film’s dialogue emphasizes, community and Heimat are so interconnected that the former may embody the latter when the space of Heimat has been destroyed or removed. The threat of renewed homelessness is the greatest threat that the couple’s plan poses to the baron’s Silesians, for the film struggles to resolve the third of the “disturbances,” that of *Heimatverlust*.

¹²³ Night begins with the bar scene in which Klaus Kinski’s character, Otto Hartwig, goes into a wild rage. The drama shifts to the village dance, the scene where the following events take place: Stengel throws out the older steward, Martin bribes this dejected old man for information, Simone’s presence creates a rift between Martin and Marianne, and Stengel schemes with his angry wife.

film is readily day-oriented and fixed in a winter wonderland, thereby imparting to viewers the sense that the setting of the film is constant and whole. The title of the film encapsulates the message that the world of the film is both spatially and temporally anchored in one folkloric chronotope: *Waldwinter*.

In addition to the setting, the film also suggests a sort of timelessness inherent in its characters. Of course, select figures blossom and grow, namely Inge, who has become a lovely young woman since she left Silesia, and a handful of children, marked simply as having been “too young” to remember Silesia. With the exception of these figures, however, the community remains a constant with the baron at the helm. Even though the baron’s position destabilizes in Bavaria because of his scheming steward Stengel, and the baron requires the aid of his grandson Martin to remedy the situation, the baron manages to keep the community together and reassumes his fatherly, feudal position at the end of the film with his speech in celebration of the arrival of the generator.

In having kept the community together, both spiritually and physically, the baron indirectly preserved the community’s artisanal tradition of glassblowing. The baron expresses pride in delicate glasses that his grandfather had ordered and claims that his Silesians (“meine Schlesier”) can produce the same sort of products. His claim is supported in the scene in which Marianne takes Martin to the workshop. Three generations of glassblowers sit in one room, the older passing their knowledge, skills, and oral traditions down to the children. This tradition is itself steeped in religious mythology. Older generations not only pass down the craft, but the legends and stories associated with it as well. In this scene, a grandfather explains that the air bubbles trapped within the glass are St. Hedwig’s tears. The patron saint of Silesia cries for the Silesians who have lost their Heimat, her tears trapped as a silent, delicate memorial.

Despite the film's attempt to create a virtual, peopled snow globe, as I indicated previously, *Forest in Winter*'s references to historical time complicate its own visual argument of continuity. On the one hand, the narrative argues for compatibility between tradition and modernity.¹²⁴ Such a happy compatibility only appears to exist in the discourse of modernity as a more general condition. When it comes to the facts of recent history, however, the film moves rather to suppress the historic past in favor of a mythic past characterized by unbroken tradition in order to open up a social and economic space oriented toward the future. Though coded as mythic rather than historic, the film's "usable past," to borrow Robert G. Moeller's term,¹²⁵ encompasses tradition, skilled artisanal labor, and the coherence of the community over the span of years and even decades. The un-usable past, according to the film's troubled relationship to it, encompasses guilt, trauma, and the displacement resulting from forced migration. With regard to German guilt, Moeller notes that as Martin's and Marianne's parents are all deceased, the film manages to avoid confrontation with the generation active in Nazi Germany.¹²⁶ As Moeller summarizes: "The new Germany would build only on the best of the old, with incriminating parts of the past simply going unmentioned" (*War Stories* 140). *Forest in Winter* depicts those who, as far as the film suggests, were either too old or too young to be involved, or those who, like Martin and Otto Hartwig, were simple soldiers with no connection to the Nazi party. Other than Martin's French fiancée Simone,

¹²⁴ The generator is a prime example: this modern machine will enable the townspeople to engage in their traditional, *handmade* craft. The community celebrates both its eventual arrival and its anticipated, though failed arrival with a brass band and folksy celebration, indicating that the two worlds can happily and meaningfully coincide. Similarly, Martin "the businessman" comes to recognize the value of the Silesian glassblowers and their products in a burgeoning tourism market (see von Moltke, "Location *Heimat*" 83–84). Artisanal glassware and the modern capitalist market are not just able to coexist ritually—they can flourish symbiotically.

¹²⁵ Moeller foregrounds this term in the title of his book *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (2003).

¹²⁶ *Idem*, 139–140.

there are no outsiders in the film, nor are there any traces of the non-German victims of Nazi aggression.

Though the film grapples with Martin's unrootedness (and to a much lesser extent with Hartwig's) it glides over the community's own struggle with its displacement.¹²⁷ Heimat is transferable (from one generation to the next, not located in a specific place), a state of being, and a set of communal relations. Though the Silesians blow the *Tränengläser*, the symbolic tears are not their own—the trauma and the mourning are themselves displaced, transferred to the patron saint.

While the film tends to avoid treating the topic of trauma and suffering, it does contain several moments of slippage. In the most striking of these moments, Inge casually relates details about the flight from the front while she and Martin are stuck on the road—though a different road, it is related to flight, not only as *topos*, but in terms of the *mise-en-scène*. This scene and its

¹²⁷ According to Marianne, the wandering Martin is “ohne Beziehungen” (“without relationships”), while to his grandmother, he is “ohne Erinnerungen” (“without memories”). His grandmother's claim that Martin has no memories because he has no Heimat is consistent with the attitude of the townspeople: this is evident through the passing down of traditions most certainly. Memory is also part and parcel of the tradition of glassblowing itself: the tears of the Silesian patron saint are symbols of the tears of those who lost their Heimat. The ephemerality of air, symbolically morphed into equally ephemeral watery tears, is trapped in a glass form like the insects in the amber of Grass's Danzig. Nevertheless, Martin also proves the limitations of this charge against him when he happily greets an old horse he recognizes from his youth. Even if his memories are fragmentary, a mental base of memories is the prerequisite for understanding Heimat, for healing the modern wandering condition. His affection for the old horse is the sign that all is not lost for Martin. Perhaps he will be able to understand Heimat. And yet uprootedness and *Heimatlosigkeit* (“homelessness”) also prime Martin, just as it had the Silesians, to appreciate and understand Heimat and its demarcations. And yet, while the film focuses on Martin's fashionable, mobile self-displacement, there are strains in this narrative which remind the audience that this displacement is more than fashionably or economically “modern.” As Martin's grandmother explains to a crying Marianne: “But he was in the war, he lost his parents, just as you did, then he was lied to, deceived, just as we all were, and then he was captured, then he didn't want to be a burden to us, then he gained friends in France, [...] he must have become hard, how else should he make it through life without family, without...Heimat. I feel sorry for him. He doesn't know what that is at all: Heimat, to be at home.” In this domestic moment (Marianne is crying while ironing after all), Martin's grandmother offers an abbreviated, but historically-grounded explanation for his wandering. Rather than a symptom of “modernity” at large, Martin's inability to remain in one place is symptomatic of the undiscussed, undealt with trauma of war. If Martin needs to learn to re-attach roots, the jealous and brooding Otto Hartwig has established them by redirecting his sense of attachment not towards the “healthy” attachment to community and Heimat, but towards one individual, Inge. His fear that he has lost this human Heimat to Martin leads him to return to Silesia in order to obtain documents which would allow him to emigrate and sever his ties with the physical, communal, and “human” home. This visit, however, is only indicated through dialogue.

significance will be discussed in terms of the motivic chronotope of the road. Before delving into these slippages, it is first necessary to determine how that original trauma, the flight itself, is represented in the film. As I argue, the scene's allusion to the composite photographic icons of flight, with the poignant echo of the original referent(s), creates a problem for the film in preserving its unifying major chronotope of the Heimat-idyll, *Waldwinter*. The film adopts the formal editing strategies of elision and match cuts in order to reconcile mythic and historical time, major and motivic chronotope. I have already indicated that the film avoids dealing with Nazi guilt and complicity by establishing members of that generation as already dead (Marianne's and Martin's parents)—that is, by means of omission. While *Forest in Winter* includes the scene of initial flight, it does not include images and scenes that would create irreparable stitches in the fabric of mythic time. In concert with this strategy, the film creates bridges and visual matches to conceal these omissions and to smooth over flight.

The post-credits opening scene in Silesia provides the most meaningful and most abundant examples of these formal strategies. The action leaves Silesia abruptly, and yet very subtly, within the first ten minutes of the film. One moment, a soldier (Martin) arrives to warn the townspeople to flee. Though no doubt saddened by this news, Martin's grandfather, the baron, decides that the townspeople will leave together the next morning: "Besser wir tragen's gemeinsam—dann hilft einer dem anderen" ("It's better that we carry this burden together—then one can help the other"). Without a scene of preparation and merely a hint of crowd dispersal, the camera cuts to an old man (Seifert) who wraps his arms around a boy. Pointing at the sky, he situates the journey before them in a universal story of *Heimatverlust* and migration: "Der Stern da, am hellen Tag steht da, der bringt Unruhe über die Welt. Und wandern müssen die Menschen, von Ost nach West und Nord nach Süd. Nicht nur bei uns daheim, überall in der Welt" ("The star there, it's there during the

light of day, it brings unrest over the world. And the people must wander, from east to west and from north to south. Not only here at home, everywhere in the world”). This story of comfort becomes a sound bridge linking the initial image of dispersal and that of the actual refugee trek (see **Figures 1 and 2**). This sound bridge increases the viewer’s confusion, as it links the image of flight, which is supposed to begin the next morning, with the narrative present of crowd dispersal and storytelling.



Figure 1: Still from Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter* (1956)



Figure 2: Still from Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter* (1956)

Rather than allow the audience to experience the trek with the townspeople, the camera shies away melancholically, sweeping down and toward the snow bank in the foreground. It rests upon this snow bank momentarily; a match cut, which one at first might mistake for a continuity error, or a jump cut, replaces the image of the first snow bank with that of a second snow bank, only distinguishable from the first because it is fresh and, in comparison to the cooler, bluish tones of the Silesian snow, is warmer and yellower in hue (complementary colors). In the instant that the film cuts to this snow bank, the camera returns from whence it came, tilting up the bank and zooming deep into the new setting. Through this cut, *Forest in Winter* shows and yet simultaneously elides the representation of the traumatic experience of flight.

If the difference between snow banks is subtle, the landscape change is similarly so. The Silesian *Riesengebirge* and the Bavarian countryside look strikingly similar: rolling snow-covered slopes dotted with rustic wooden houses and stands of evergreens. The Bavarian landscape, however, differs from the Silesian in two very important ways: firstly, the Bavarian landscape is traversed by a railroad; secondly, it lacks a wooden church in a clearing. The church carries symbolic weight for the sentimental-*Heimat* strain of the narrative, as it is the landmark and communal center of the Silesian town (in fact, the *only* part of the town to which the audience is privy). Falkenstein's proximity to the railroad, however, facilitates the export of glassware, thereby connecting the townspeople not only to the Economic Miracle, but also to the West (as exemplified by Simone, who arrives by train).

Significantly, in contrast to the film, the screenplay neither attempts to show the trek, nor does it try to establish any transition from Silesia to Bavaria. Firstly, the screenplay frames Seifert as a prophet of doom and gloom. His universal story of migration continues, taking a dark, prophetic turn. Sternitzke scoffs: "Du spinnst ja, Seifert, das hast du uns schon vorigs Jahr erzählt" ("You're crazy, Seifert, you told us the same thing last year"). Seifert, looking toward the sky, prophesies: "Hunger wird sein und Durst—und das Brot bitter von Hass—und das Wasser salzig von Tränen ... Die Sterne lügen nicht" ("There will be hunger and thirst—and the bread will be bitter with hate—and the water salty with tears ... The stars don't lie") (Zibaso 11). His son Karl, a boy of ten, urges his father to be quiet, should anyone hear. Rather than use this story as a sound bridge with the images of flight (as is the case in the film), the screenplay tarries in Silesia. In the film, Martin never drives with Marianne and his grandparents to the crossroads with the direction signs. The inclusion of this scene would make the *Wegweiser*¹²⁸ scene in Bavaria make more sense

¹²⁸ Sign post, in this case, with multiple arms illustrating the directions of various locations.

and have more meaning, serving as the reestablishment of a kind of order that characterized their Silesian landscape. That is not the case in the film, however. Furthermore, the screenplay omits the depiction of flight itself, cutting from the cool palette of the Silesian snowscape to an establishing shot of “das blaue Meer, Palmen und ein wenig Strand mit weisser Gischtkaute” (“the blue sea, palms, and a bit of beach edged with white seafoam”) (16). This is Martin’s self-imposed exile, and yet, he cannot escape the cold—despite having grown up in the shadow of the snowy *Riesengebirge*, the water at the beach is too cold to enjoy. These edits from screenplay to film illustrate the importance of the Silesia scenes to the film for their contribution to the spatial construction of Heimat and the way they contextualize and emplot the experience of forced migration. In fact, the only major scene changes or omissions revolve precisely around these two issues (Heimat and forced migration).¹²⁹

The strategy of elision and similarly of *revision* through elision has its origins in the very first few minutes of the film before the Silesian townspeople enter the frame. The first image is that of tree branches, shimmering with ice and snow; icicles hang from unseen branches (see **Figure 3**). This image, which expands from branch, to tree, to winter landscape, is accompanied by the (at this point) non-diegetic chorus singing the Silesian folk song “Vom Lebensbrünnlein” (“From the little fountain of life”). No person is present on-screen: a fawn rests amid snow banks, and a tall, thin tree falls over silently, seemingly of its own accord. In this opening sequence, the soundtrack consists solely of the voice of the disembodied chorus. The composition of this soundtrack does not just link man with nature: man sings the song of nature, *is* its voice,

¹²⁹ Another screenplay scene removed from the film shows Martin driving through Paris. In the film, Paris is reduced to the interior of Simone’s hat shop, and does not include the great expanses and monuments of the city. The changes from screenplay to film reduce the spatial parameters of the film’s world. Even though the film suggests flight by alluding to the composite iconic image of flight, the space of Silesia shrinks in order to make the transition to Bavaria almost indistinguishable—to suggest a homecoming (church to home) rather than an arrival in a new homeland.

harmonious and manifold. And yet, as the song is in effect a duet, these non-diegetic singers (who only become diegetic once they are shown in the church singing the hymn “Es blühen drei Rosen auf einem Zweig” (“Three roses bloom on a branch”) simultaneously sing to and for nature, or more specifically, for Silesia.

“Vom Lebensbrunnlein,” is a song about lovers, who, though having drunk from a well of eternal youth, are forced to part ways—perhaps for as long as they are to be young. The two stanzas sung in the beginning of the film are words of parting, with a list of the utopian conditions of their reunion:

“Ade, mein Schatz, ich scheide, ade, mein Schätzelein!”	‘Adieu, my dear, I depart, Adieu, my little dear!’
“Wann kommst du aber wieder, Herzallerliebster mein?”	‘When will you come again, my heart’s dearest?’
“Wenn’s schneiet rote Rosen und regnet kühlen Wein. Ade, mein Schatz, ich scheide, ade, mein Schätzelein.”	‘When it snows red roses and rains cool wine. Adieu, my dear, I depart, Adieu, my little dear.’

(stanzas 3-4)¹³⁰

In the film, the song fades before the chorus can proceed to the next stanza, which emphasizes the unlikelihood that these conditions will be met:

¹³⁰ Though this version is a concoction of several other sources, the stanzas sung in *Forest in Winter* (1956) correspond to stanzas three and four of the text provided here. See Ramm, “Vom Lebensbrunnlein.” Cf. von Fallersleben, “Der Jungbrunne.”

“Es schneit ja keine Rosen	‘It does not snow roses
und regnet keinen Wein:	and rains not wine:
So kommst du auch nicht wieder,	so you will never come again,
Herzallerliebster mein!” (stanza 5)	my heart’s dearest!’

On the one hand, though the song cuts before evoking the certitude of eternal separation, because the song is a *Volkslied* (“folk song”), one could assume that a significant portion of the audience would have been aware of its melancholic turn. On the other hand, ending the song before the fifth stanza suggests the (perhaps naïve) hope of reunification. Whether or not the audience members are able to recognize the song as a Silesian folk song, and given that the film has recast the generic lovers of the song as Silesians and Silesia/nature, the film opens with the discourse of separation, emphasized with the anaphoric “ade.” This accords with my assertion that there is a conflict between the verbal discourse and the visual language of the film. The visuals suggest that the Silesians never left Silesia, whereas any continuity of Heimat, according to the verbal discourse of the film, can only be found in tradition, community, and memory.

The film begins with Silesian folk song, “Vom Lebensbrünnlein,” and ends with a variation on the same. The song as finale differs from the song as introduction in several ways: the song is performed firstly on the “church” organ with a transition into a choral/orchestral composition; secondly, the ending song is instrumental (the text, with its discourse of separation, is missing); thirdly, the key change in the end version of the song is more suggestive of triumphant reunion than melancholic separation. The way in which the film repeats this song at the end of the film as the townspeople enter the new, reconstructed church (the key piece of Silesia which had been missing—or rather, hidden—from the Bavarian landscape) (compare **Figures 5 and 6**) whimsically suggests that the lovers’ certainty of eternal separation is not as certain as they would

think—that perhaps it will snow roses and rain wine. With this triumphal note, the sun sets over the landscape, the composition identical to that of the film’s opening shot, but for the setting sun (see **Figure 4**).



Figure 3: Still of initial frame of Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter* (1956)



Figure 4: Still of final frame of Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter* (1956)



Figure 5: Still of the church in Silesia in Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter* (1956)



Figure 6: Still of the Silesian church reconstructed in Bavaria in Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Waldwinter* (1956)

As even these initial and final shots indicate, there is tension between the film’s discourse (that of lost Heimat) and the visual argument (that they never left Heimat). As I have illustrated, the sequence preceding and including the flight of the townspeople links an image of crowd dispersal from the church to an image of flight originating from the same location—the old man’s story of universal migration and *Heimatverlust* bridges together the two shots. Through the visual

logic of the sequence, the townspeople loaded onto wagons and horses beginning their westward flight from the church are merely the churchgoers preparing to go home. The matched location for the two shots (church grounds as background for both crowd dispersal and flight) in conjunction with the sound bridge suggests that the shots are part of the same homeward movement.

If, in the visual language of the film, the Silesians never leave “home,” they also never arrive anywhere (as the opening and closing shots indicate, this is a hermetic, but harmonious world). Instead of arrival in a new Heimat, the film thematizes the arrival of the “foreign” into the community: Martin, the prodigal son who, though originally from the community, does not know the meaning of Heimat, and has sojourned in France, experienced war, and become a money-conscious consumer; and Simone, Martin’s French lover and owner of a high-end millinery. Both arrivals are extraordinary events at Falkenstein: Martin’s (and this is his second “arrival” in the film), because he has been away for a decade; Simone’s, because she arrives with the *train* and is an unexpected stranger—fashionable, impractical, sexual—from the *West*. Structurally, both figures initiate conflict, whether willed or unwilled, and both fulfill the traditional role of the outsider in the Heimatfilm, providing outside perspectives on the Edenic, otherwise rather inert community.¹³¹

Martin arrives twice: once to warn the baron and the town of the approaching front in 1945 and again in 1955 in Falkenstein in response to a telegram from the baron. Though he has long since been released from a POW camp, he returns “home” in precisely the year when Konrad Adenauer traveled to Moscow to negotiate the return of all remaining German POWs from the USSR. In *Forest in Winter* the motif of arrival is most readily associated with Martin. This is situated firstly in historical time: Martin, in full uniform, arrives in a military jeep and informs

¹³¹ See Hake 110.

villagers of the approaching front. His second arrival is couched in myth, for he is now the prodigal son returning from a ten-year absence spent in decadence and travel. The origins of Martin's prodigality lie in the historical experience of war which regulated his first filmic arrival. Though, with the exception of his grandmother's summary, meant to elicit sympathy and understanding in both Marianne and in the audience, these traumatic experiences and memories are not dealt with in the film. Martin is no Dr. Hans Mertens.¹³² Even the symptom of Martin's trauma—his lack of Heimat and inability to establish long-lasting meaningful relationships, feature predominantly as glamorous symptoms of cosmopolitanism and over-enthusiasm for a bustling economy. Despite the general disinclination to confront the past (historical time), mythic time of the parable and historical time are combined in Martin's arrival in Falkenstein. As Robert Moeller writes: "Martin rolls into the snow-covered Bavarian town in a big car that carries the symbolic weight of modernity and success in the postwar economy" (*War Stories* 136)—symbols which, though at first antithetical to the seemingly *timeless* rural traditions of the town, become part of the film's argument that the two worlds can exist symbiotically.

Simone, the second outsider and true "foreigner," marked as such by her impractical high fashion (her dainty city shoes sink into the deep Bavarian snow as she steps out of the safety of the train), abundant sexuality, material and even linguistic femininity (her strong accent is peppered with French phrases and improper German grammar, with a notable tendency to ascribe the feminine article "die" to all German nouns). Her arrival causes excitement, if not a brief scandal—as she unknowingly competes with Marianne for Martin's affections. Though she embodies the female capitalist consumer of the West, Simone's Frenchness has further significance. As Moeller explains:

¹³² The troubled male protagonist of Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (The Murderers Are Among Us; 1946).

A year after the suspension of the western Allied statute of occupation and West Germany's entry into NATO, the movie also emphasized that France and Germany could be friends, if not lovers. Love and money were not the same. West Germans could do business in Paris, but when it came to looking for hearth and home, Germans sought Germans, and the French knew when to retreat graciously. (*War Stories* 140)

Only Simone and the generator arrive by train. If Simone is a political and business partner, and a source for incorporating the modern world into the traditional world of Falkenstein (the hats Simone sends to Marianne please all, Marianne included), the generator provides the means for the community to participate in the modern world, and more specifically, in the Economic Miracle.

In this film, the train only arrives, bringing things and people to the community. It establishes connections between disparate spaces and even disparate "times." It connects the "East" (Silesians in Bavaria, or Central Europe) with the West (France), and modern, fast-paced, fashionable, mechanized time with slow-paced, traditional, artisanal time. Never does the train sunder. The train, linked with departures, but especially anticipated arrivals, may also be considered a manifestation of a modernized, industrialized chronotope of the road. And yet, with regard to the main subject of inquiry—the means by which the film represents forced migration—the train in Falkenstein is silent. It is a manifestation of modernity, mobility, and a means of establishing business relations, and has been isolated from its other more notorious uses, as a means for traversing the continent in the service of war, genocide, or expulsion.

In the film, the chronotope of the road is associated with *flight*. It is not only a motivic chronotope, but truly a minor chronotope, for the road of forced migration is an undercurrent which wells up despite its excision (elision and match cuts) from the film. As I have described, flight is staged ambivalently at the beginning of the film: though the inevitability of flight has been

discussed and the baron sets a time for the town's departure (the next morning), Liebeneiner does not provide the audience with any images suggestive of packing and preparation. It is as if no *time* has passed at all, and the townspeople are leaving. They depart from the church, right where the specter of flight first appears. If we follow the logic of the sequence of frames, the townspeople may very well be heading home—and according to the overall visual logic of the film, that is just where they are going.

Flight as an experience only resurfaces once in the film: on the road.¹³³ While Martin is attempting to fix the broken-down car, Inge expresses disappointment at this present setback, which expands in her eyes to mean a setback to the great dream—to travel everywhere with him. Martin laughs at her naiveté and asks what Otto Hartwig, the brooding, unrequited lover, would think of that plan. The question of this relationship, itself another “setback” for Inge, prompts her to explain that her cumbersome connection to Otto Hartwig lies on the trek: “Ach, der Hartwig, der hat mich mal aus der Elbe gezogen, damals auf der Flucht als meine Mutter ertrunken ist. Und seitdem betrachtet er mich als Privateigentum” (“Ugh, Hartwig, he pulled me out of the Elbe once, back during the flight when my mother drowned. Ever since then he sees me as his private property”). Because of the film's Rapturous¹³⁴ relation to time and space, Inge's nonchalant admission of this piece of tragic history comes across as rather childish and flippant. When one stops to consider that, in the time of the story, Inge relates this tragedy from the temporal distance of ten years, however, Inge's weariness with her undesired relationship with Hartwig assumes

¹³³ In the screenplay, Inge tells Martin about the winter trek while they are driving into town, whereas in the film, this conversation happens, significantly, I argue, only once Martin's car has broken down on the road.

¹³⁴ I use the word “Rapturous” not in the sense of “joy,” but in the sense of the Christian “Rapture,” in which the believer is miraculously transported from one space-time coordinate to another (heavenly) one.

more legitimacy—and opens the possibility for the viewer to feel more sympathy for this otherwise flirtatious, naïve character.

These two scenes make clear the film's ambiguous relationship to change in time and space. Inge tells her story about the flight in response to an inquiry about Hartwig's reaction to her "unfaithful" desires; nevertheless, she tells the story *on the road*, and more than that, at a *setback on the road*. The *mise-en-scène* evokes that of the experience of flight. In fact, Inge is fleeing yet again, this time not from the Soviets, but from Hartwig. It is important to note that the car breaks down because of the setting—it is too cold. These rough parallels between the *mise-en-scène* of the wintry road and the suggested (though never shown) *mise-en-scène* of her flight from the front in 1945 are slips in the repression of traumatic memory and the irreconcilability of unbroken tradition and Heimat in the face of the facts of winter flight 1945. The trauma, whether of flight or of the war, affects the narrative and the constitution of the film's characters. The trauma, however, is not thematized. It is the "inside," folded and refolded. In moments such as the "setback on the road," or in the grandmother's retelling of Martin's misfortunes which guide his current actions (a conversation which successfully awakens empathy and understanding for Martin in Marianne), that trauma is unfolded, exposed, only to be refolded—invisible, but still part of the fabric of the narrative world.

In her book *The Future of Nostalgia*, Svetlana Boym describes the "cinematic image of nostalgia" as "a double exposure, or a superimposition of two images—of home and abroad, past and present, dream and everyday life. The moment we try to force it into a single image, it breaks the frame or burns the surface" (xiv). However apt Boym's description may be, *Forest in Winter* illustrates that this problematic doubling may occur when image tries not to just conjure home in the space "abroad," but to *be* home, all narrative events to the contrary. The film tries to construct

visual continuity and unity, to force Bavaria to be Silesia visually; this is only achievable, not by “break[ing] the frame” by superimposition, but by suture. While disparate times and places have been sutured together by match cuts, the elision of the trauma that connects these disparate times and places, trauma experienced on the road of flight, wells up, reveals itself to be *folded* rather than excised entirely. The motivic chronotope of the road provides the stage for memory, trauma, and issues of *Heimatverlust* to be dramatized—with the allusion to the composite icon of “flight and expulsion” or to its *mise-en-scène*; it problematizes the film’s major chronotope, that of *Waldwinter*—the single forest in an eternally present winter.

Preis der Nationen (Das Mädchen Marion; 1956)

In another film from the same year, Wolfgang Schleif’s *Preis der Nationen (Das Mädchen Marion; Prize of the Nations/The Girl Marion; 1956)*, the chronotope of the road of forced migration with its allusion to the composite icon of flight also creates a rift in the film. *Prize of the Nations* does not merely include scenes that invoke iconic images of flight on the road, but expounds upon them and rewrites the composite icon, displacing the trauma of flight and the loss of Heimat onto a horse. This transference of trauma to the horse Prusso safely masks recalcitrant notions of *Blut-und-Boden* ideology present in the film, but also gives a dramatic account of the West German version of the American rags-to-riches story: the success story of refugee integration.

The film opens on a bleak, blustery East Prussian landscape during the winter of 1944/45. A team of ragged men encourage a trek of prized Trakehner horses to continue pressing through the thick snow, beat back as they are by harsh winds and their own exhaustion. An older man, Kalweit, drops to his knees, bent over a collapsed colt. He struggles to animate the colt, and resolves to carry it across his shoulders like a sack of flour. Eventually, these men and their horses

arrive at a farm, empty but for its two female inhabitants: Vera von Hoff, the wife of a fallen *Wehrmacht* soldier, and her daughter, Marion. These two provide shelter and a feast for both the horses and the men (a marvel really, considering war rationing and the nearness of the front). Kalweit is dedicated to his horses, and to Prensa and her colt, Prusso, above all others; he is so dedicated, in fact, that he slips away from the warmth of human company and a blazing hearth to join Prusso in the stall. It is here that he dies of exhaustion (not unlike a beast of burden himself), but not before he bequeaths Prusso to the young Marion, who has been nothing but enraptured by this young colt since their arrival. He entrusts her with the magic spell that spurred on Prusso's own prize-winning father, Wotan, to perform as a champion jumper: "Zeig dein Mut, Trakehnerblut!" ("Show your courage, Trakehner blood!") This encounter motivates Vera to head west together with Prusso and Marion in a covered wagon drawn by two horses.

When we see the trio again, it is spring, and mother, daughter, and Prusso arrive in civilization penniless on foot. After a series of unsuccessful exchanges that are meant to impart to the audience the hardships the trio has endured over the past few months, the three are directed to another town, where the good-hearted Frau Buddensiek provides them with humble lodgings and a chance to work on the farm. When several horse thieves—one of whom claims to be from the Polish authorities with the power to confiscate Prusso as property of the Polish government—try to steal Prusso. Marion, Prusso, and Vera are saved by the brave veterinarian, Dr. Peter Meining (played by Carl Raddatz). Meining and Vera fall in love, but so, too, has young Marion fallen in love with Meining, mistaking his attention to training Prusso for romantic affection for her. Vera, unwilling to raise her daughter with a bit of sternness and hard truths, does not want to set the record straight, and when Marion finds out of her own accord, she tries to drown herself. Luckily her own protégé, Prusso, rescues her. It turns out, however, that Marion the horse-mother is no

more willing than her own mother to use tough love to train her prize horse to jump, raining down a thousand curses on the trainers who would dare use a whip to animate Prusso to jump. As Meining and Marion's young trainer-turned-love-interest, Günter Legler, illustrate, postwar society requires a bit of masculine sternness in order to raise a family, and to raise a prize-winning horse. In the end, mother and daughter have been sufficiently tamed by the males, and Prusso, the orphaned, victimized horse, overcomes these hardships (fed, too, by Marion's magic whisper of "Zeig dein Mut, Trakehnerblut!") to wear the floral wreath as a sign that he has won the *Prize of the Nations*.

I have divided this plot summary into two paragraphs intentionally, as a means of delineating the split present in the film itself. Whereas the dual titles of Wolfgang Liebeneiner's *Forest in Winter/The Bells of Heimat* (1956) convey a singularity of place (one forest and one Heimat), the two titles given to Wolfgang Schleif's *Prize of the Nations/The Girl Marion* (1956) are indicative of a fundamental split within the film: is it a story about the horse jumping competition, or is it the coming-of-age story of the girl Marion? I might suggest a third, perhaps more fitting title that manipulates the two existing ones: *The Horse Prusso*. One of the main causes of this split and the confusion about how to define the film and its subject matter stem from the scenes depicting flight from the front. While the film devotes its opening scenes to flight from the front, the film denies the emotive potential of the iconic images of flight to generate Lessing's "Mitleid und Furcht" for the human victims, and redirects instead these sentiments to the "unseen" though present figures in the iconic images of flight: the beasts of burden, the horses. The power of the icon and its human referent provokes discomfort and confusion with regard to why these scenes have been included in the film with the rug of human drama pulled out from beneath it.

An anonymous reviewer for the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeige* writes that “Igor Oberberg’s impactful images of a flight to the west are nothing more than a backdrop for the plot” (“Preis der Nationen”)—a backdrop, I would argue, that is barely discernible once these very images have left the screen. While *Heimatverlust* and the experience of winter flight underlie the motivations, attitudes, and actions of the characters in *Forest in Winter*, these facts only contribute weakly to Vera’s and Marion’s motivations and character development. In a manner less brooding or violent than *Forest in Winter*’s Hartwig, the experience of flight accounts for Vera’s protective doting on Marion,¹³⁵ and, in turn, for Marion’s overprotective doting on Prusso. Beyond establishing the tight bonds between mother and daughter and between girl and horse, this experience barely leaves a trace on the development of the rest of the film.

An event associated with immense human pain and suffering, the winter refugee treks have been disassociated from their historical context (though we are told the Soviets are coming, there are no shots to be heard, no later encounter with either army [whether on the advance or on the retreat]), its players (i.e., the victims) have been recast as protectors, and the beast of burden, the horse, recast as the victim without trauma. The film’s focus on the hardship of flight, decontextualized and centered on the experience of the horse, is “unangenehm” (“uncomfortable”), to quote the anonymous reviewer from the *Kölner Stadt-Anzeige*. The standard images of flight include women, children, and horse-drawn wagons pressing their way through a grim snowscape. The viewer’s focus is trained on the women and children depicted whether or not their expressions

¹³⁵ Vera to Marion: “Weißt du noch, als wir über das Land gezogen sind, mit dem Wagen und Prusso...Damals haben wir alle Sorgen geteilt, da waren wir doch richtige Kameraden, und heute...da...schließt du mich raus” (“Do you still remember, when we crossed the country, with the wagon and Prusso...Back then we shared all of our worries since we were real friends, and today...well...you shut me out”).

are clearly visible. *Prize of the Nations*, however, tries to redirect our gaze toward the other living creature that goes rather unnoticed in images of the treks, namely, the horse.¹³⁶

As Maren Röger and Beata Halicka remind, many of these images were produced for the Nazi press as evidence of an orderly evacuation.¹³⁷ In **Figure 7**, the composition closely resembles Vivenz Engels' widely reproduced photograph of an East Prussian trek (see **Figure 8**): the treks are central, the horses (and their cargo) are propelled obliquely towards the camera—obliquely, because the images' line of movement suggests that these treks will continue onward, forward, beyond the camera. Despite these compositional similarities and their suggestion of order and propulsion, the two instances of flight depicted in the film depart from the iconic images in two ways—not as a matter of critique, but in order to de-people and therefore (because they are anthropocentric concepts) to de-politicize and de-historicize their contents.

In the first scene, a group of plainclothes men (not women or particularly *elderly* men) struggle to lead a string of horses, the famed East Prussian Trakehner horses, to safety away from the front. While the presence of all-male, civilian refugees is already unexpected, these men are not transporting objects (e.g., bundles of blankets and pots and pans, or museum objects), but animals—though what these men transport is also coded as their livelihood and their home. In protecting the colt Prusso, son of the prize-winning Wotan, Kalweit dies of exhaustion. Even while the solitary flight of Vera and Marion appears to be more consistent with the iconography, what

¹³⁶ It must be noted that there are iconic images that focus on *dead* horses. A series of three images printed in Günter Karweina's *Der grosse Treck* (The Great Trek; 1953), for example, features a photo of a group of people sitting atop a hay-laden wagon drawn by two horses—an empty, overturned wagon spans the foreground. In the middle photo, the corpses of three horses occupy the center of the frame, their bodies surrounded by stick-like remnants of wagons scattered about the horses' thick frames. The third, bottom photo features a bleak landscape: the rows of plowed fields lead the viewer's eyes from the dead horse in the foreground to a live horse bent over wreckage and then to a tank on the horizon. When one considers the sequential ordering of these photos (peopled with horses, to de-peopled with dead horses, to dead horse and tank), it may be unclear, however, to whom the pithy caption refers: "Gehetzt und geschlagen" ("hounded and struck"). See the insert between 208–209.

¹³⁷ See Röger, "Bilder der Vertreibung" 264 and Halicka 78.

occupies the center of the frame is again not human (not mother and daughter), but the colt between them (see **Figure 9**).



*Figure 7: Still from Wolfgang Schleif's *Preis der Nationen* (1956)*



*Figure 8: Vinzenz Engel:
“Flüchtlingstreck zieht über das
zugefrorene Frische Haff”
(January/February 1945), Inv. En.
© Copyright bpk / Vinzenz
Engel.*



*Figure 9: Still from Wolfgang Schleif's *Preis der Nationen* (1956)*

Significant in this regard is the absence of a scene found in Lützkendorf's screenplay in which the horse trek crosses paths with a refugee trek and camp. The horse trek provokes astonishment and disbelief in the adults (“nur Pferde?” [“just horses?”] [6]) and rapture in the children. In light of the rest of the film, this scene serves to underscore that the horses are symbolic

of the East Prussian Heimat, as well as the strong connection between the fleeing East Prussians and the traditions of their Heimat (“Denn diese Pferde sind der Stolz ihrer ostpreussischen Heimat” [“Because these horses are the pride of their East Prussian Heimat”] [6]). The soundtrack, “East Prussian Song,” brings both of these strands together. Secondly, this scene provides much of the overt historical context which is otherwise merely implicit. Not only does Kalweit describe their trek and the search for food (a successful enterprise because “die Dörfer und Höfe stehen ja alle schon leer” [“the villages and farms are all already empty”] [7]), but the audience becomes privy to the deprivations of the refugees as well, and is permitted a glimpse into the refugee camps. The omission of this scene highlights the decontextualization of the flight being depicted and removes any “competition” for “Furcht und Mitleid” (“fear and pity”) that the audience might otherwise apportion to the Trakehner horses.

An anonymous reviewer in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (“e.”) writes: “The tragic prelude out of East Prussia really does not belong to this story. One could have probably silently presupposed that knowledge so that it wouldn’t be necessary to film these events so extensively, considering that it was all to rescue a stallion.” In the context of other disconcerted reviews, this reviewer does not seem to suggest that the film uphold a taboo on the depiction of the evacuation of East Prussia, but rather the fact that these scenes perform an unnecessary function. The “rescue of a stallion” is not significant enough to merit the lengthy depiction. In the end, the events allowing for the horse’s rescue are far less significant for Prusso’s eventual success than the twofold female submission to male authority that proves—through Prusso’s success—that a little discipline can yield results.

What makes this film so awkward, and the scenes so “uncomfortable,” is that images which routinely since 1945 have partaken in and contributed to the discourse on German suffering have

not had the ability to do just what *Forest in Winter* did—to speak about suffering, to lament the loss of *Heimat*, or even to move forward "with the homeland in heart" (even if the film's visual language tries to suggest otherwise). With the focus of the flight redirected toward the horse(s), the film avoids thematizing nostalgia, *Heimatverlust*, trauma, and victimhood precisely because the rescued horse-victim cannot speak. As if to remedy this, to scratch the itch this film leaves, an article advertising the film gives Prusso the chance to speak. Prusso speaks as an observer, an outsider able to offer moral insight into the events that unfold over the course of the film. Calling those final days of the war "the dark sides," he lists the tribulations he endured:

unsere bitterkalte Flucht aus Ostpreussen in den letzten Kriegstagen (bei denen Ihr Zweibeiner Euch mal wieder recht beschämend benommen habt), den Tod meiner lieben Mutter 'Prensa', das Ende von unserem guten alten Gestütvater Kalweit und die vielen quälenden Sorgen um die tägliche Haferration.

our bitterly cold flight from East Prussia in the final days of the war (during which you two-legs really behaved shamefully again), the death of my dear mother Prensa, the end of our good, old father on the stud farm, Kalweit, and the many agonizing worries about the daily oat ration. ("Mit ergebenstem Hufschlag" 17)

The horse-actor of the film, however, can only testify to so much.

If audiences too easily and uncritically identify with children as victims, the "horse" as victim inhibits the ability for the audience to establish a critical stance toward the kind of victimhood being portrayed. Regarding audience or viewer identification with children, Marianne Hirsch, in her book *The Generation of Postmemory*, argues that "[t]he adult viewer sees the child through the eyes of his or her own child self" (165), necessitating distancing devices so that the image of the child victim does not put the viewer into position of child witness. According to

Hirsch, viewer identification with children runs the risk of blurring important areas of difference and alterity—context, specificity, responsibility, and history.¹³⁸

This is compounded still further with the anthropomorphized horse. While we are able to relate to the animal as it is framed as a “human” character, it is nevertheless memetic, or iconic (according to Peirce’s usage). In the Western tradition, humans are perceived to be indexical and animals to be iconic (without the capacity to think *à la* Descartes, and in bearing resemblance to others of its species, and even those of related species, “the animal” becomes an exchangeable icon).¹³⁹ This is not necessarily so in the case of the animal film, a staple of fictional feature films primarily intended for children. The animal hero is an individual with a name (Prusso), a history (orphaned son of Prensa and Wotan), a personality, and a companion or two; and the animal actor is a specific animal, likely with some sort of identifying features, associated with a specific trainer.¹⁴⁰

And yet, despite the individuality of that animal actor or animal hero, *Prize of the Nations*, or most family-friendly horse or dog films for that matter (*Lassie*, *Homeward Bound*, or the television show *Ed*), do little to move cognitively beyond the human/nonhuman animal divide. This is because the animal heroes are crafted anthropocentrically.¹⁴¹ The audience is denied the possibility of identification with the horse based on its own terms—it has to become human, to operate, act, and respond like a human (e.g., save Marion from drowning). This not only is far

¹³⁸ See Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory* 167.

¹³⁹ Cf. Derrida, “The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)” (2002); Lippit, “The Death of an Animal” (2002); and Rule, “Indexical Humans, Iconic Animals” (2010).

¹⁴⁰ The press response to the film is far more sympathetic to the actor-horse than to his human colleagues (L.P. of *Nürnberger Nachrichten*, like many other reviewers, describes Marion as an unimpressive “Backfisch” and Prusso as the “Hauptdarsteller”). For information regarding the actor-horse’s background, see Enno Bernhard Bruns, “Winnie Markus, Carl Raddatz und—Prusso.”

¹⁴¹ See Derrida 405.

from the aim and critical potential of the burgeoning field of Animal Studies,¹⁴² but posits the horse as a victim, a helpless pawn—one who is more victim than the victims (Kalweit, Marion, Vera). This is a politically safe victim: apart from an admonishing advertisement for the film, the horse cannot make any arguments or claims on its status. Prusso becomes what Akira Mizuta Lippit calls an “animetaphor” for the human refugee without clamor. What we have here is a safe, displaced success story of “refugee” integration: from suffering and victimhood, to (re)training, hard work, and discipline—to success in postwar society.

Prusso, however, performs many functions. He stands in not only for the refugee, but, as I will illustrate, for Heimat. The film attempts to resolve the issue of the loss of Heimat before it is even lost. To the horse trainers, Vera declares, still at the hearth in her East Prussian home: “Wenn man einmal aufgibt, dann gibt man alles auf, nicht einmal die Heimat, sondern auch das Recht auf die Heimat” (“If you give up once, then you give up everything, not just Heimat, but the right to Heimat”). This statement not only checks any revanchist sentiment, but offers an abrupt—even if foreshadowed (for she has not left her home yet)—curtailment of nostalgia for East Prussia. In fleeing, Vera forbids Marion to look back in the manner of Lot’s wife: East Prussia as a space must be disavowed (see **Figure 9**). Beyond this scene, there is no explicit discourse of Heimat present in the film.

“East Prussia” as Heimat is not absent, however. It has been condensed into two traditions: weaving and horse training. The baroness Vera, as it turns out, is familiar with the traditional art of weaving native to her region. Like the Silesians of *Forest in Winter*, Vera recognizes the value

¹⁴² The importance of Animal Studies, as Cary Wolfe explains, “resides in its power to remind us that it is not enough to reread and reinterpret—from a safe ontological distance, as it were—the relation of metaphor and species difference, the cross-pollination or speciesist, sexist, and racist discursive structures in literature, and so on. That undertaking is no doubt praiseworthy and long overdue, but as long as it leaves unquestioned the humanist schema of the knowing subject who undertakes such a reading, then it sustains the very humanism and anthropocentrism that animal studies sets out to question,” 569.

of her traditional artisanal craft as a means of personal income and, therefore, as a means of incorporating old with new. Unlike the Silesians, Vera's craft remains isolated, individual, and has no need of modernization. The latter tradition, that of horse training, has been personified by Prusso, whose name derives from his land of origin, East Prussia. The horse embodies East Prussian strength, history ("son of Wotan"), and, not unproblematically, its "blood" as well: one reviewer from the *Rheinische Post* writes: "The young Trakehner stallion Prusso doesn't just win the 'Prize of the Nations' at the end, [...] in fact, we would gladly award the film something like a 'Prize of the Nations', namely, for being the best Blut-und-Boden product of the year" (Maro).¹⁴³ The "East Prussian song" plays during his wreath ceremony at the end of the film, in a celebration not just of the horse's and its trainers' achievement, but of East Prussia and its traditions and people.¹⁴⁴

In this film, the discourses of Heimat and victimhood condense into the figure of the Prusso. And yet, as reviewers have noted, the images of a bleak East Prussia and the scenes of suffering, while intended to provide the "backstory" for the rag-to-riches/victim-to-winner story, indicate divides in the film: extreme suffering yields to an uncannily cheerful acceptance of mild inconveniences in the FRG (smoothing over the extent of the difficulties that refugees faced);¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Given that the screenwriter, Felix Lützkendorf, had been a member of the NSDAP as well as the SS, and had written propaganda espousing the *Blut-und-Boden* ideology, it is not entirely surprising that remnants thereof are to be found in the script, transferred as they were to the figure of a horse. Nazi ideology defines Heimat as "'rootedness that has been transformed into feeling and spirit. Through the sense of Heimat, the individual, the family, and the group are tied by fate to a piece of land that dominates their soul'" (Max Hildebert Boehm, qtd. in von Moltke, *Locations of Heimat* 56). In *Prize of the Nations*, East Prussia and this "'feeling and spirit'" are present despite the characters' severance from the *Boden* of East Prussia itself.

¹⁴⁴ In Schleif's earlier film *Ännchen von Tharau* (1954), the song "Ännchen von Tharau" links main character Anna to East Prussia. This is another film espousing the magical power of kindred "blood" to attract almost magnetically a father and son separated by war. Though Otto Heinz-Jahn is the screenwriter for this film, Wolfgang Schleif's own film career includes Nazi propaganda films such as *Jud Süß* (Jew Süß; 1940) and *Kolberg* (1945) (editor for both).

¹⁴⁵ These deprivations have been foreshortened (months of wandering and rejection can be read in Vera's "niemand hat uns haben wollen" ["no one wanted to have us"]) and, as F.H. of *Hessische Nachrichten* writes, are "lauwarm temperiert" ("lukewarmly tempered").

the coming-of-age story splits between mother, daughter, and, most importantly, horse. The chronotope of the road is present solely as the road of flight; the historical and social implications of the intrusion of the referent (even if composite and displaced onto the horse) are not confronted in the film.

In each successive chronological step away from 1945, we see in these West German films an increase in melodrama and an effort to reproduce not only the iconography of flight as iconography (even if it is to rewrite and redirect the audience's gaze from one pictured subject to another), but to achieve a kind of documentary realism amidst a melodrama—to combine dramatic excess with cold, bare fact. *Forest in Winter*'s hesitation to elaborate on the images of flight gives way to *Prize of the Nation*'s hesitation to deal with flight on human terms (i.e., political and historical), but does not shy from depicting the hardship of the trek itself—at least for the horses. In 1959, Frank Wisbar's *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* leaps beyond these two 1956 features, creating a(n) (anti)war film that runs the gamut of German victim experiences: air raids, sexual compromise and rejection, flight over land and—this is the crux—over sea. *Forest in Winter* and *Prize of the Nations* reproduce the myth of successful refugee integration (or rather, of their role in reconstruction and the Economic Miracle) into postwar West German society despite the challenges and setbacks encountered during and as a result of the flight itself.¹⁴⁶ *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* stops short of arrival in the FRG, focusing instead on those who never "arrived."

Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen (1959)

¹⁴⁶ Following Paul Lüttinger, Ther explains that the facts concerning flight, expulsion, and integration do not support this widely held claim that integration was successful. Without necessarily defining "success," versions of successful integration exist in the FRG, GDR, and the PPR: "According to the official line, the expellees had been successfully integrated into East Germany by 1949–50. Poland was less quick in deceiving itself, but by the 1960s, integration was still considered to have been 'accomplished,'" "The Integration of Expellees" 782–783.

Frank Wisbar's film *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* (1959) is the third of his four (anti)war films, produced in response to West German rearmament and the founding of the *Bundeswehr* in 1955. Each depicts the tragic stories of different players in WWII: *Haie und kleine Fische* (Sharks and Small Fish; 1957) dramatizes the challenges of a submarine crew, *Hunde, wollt ihr ewig leben?* (Dogs, Do You Want to Live Forever? 1959) those of the *Wehrmacht* soldiers in Stalingrad, *Fabrik der Offiziere* (Officer Factory; 1960) those of *Wehrmacht* officers in the face of fanaticism, and *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* (1959) those of women on the home front and during the sinking of the *Gustloff*—the *Titanic* of the Third Reich. This ship, carrying thousands of German refugees and civilian passengers,¹⁴⁷ was torpedoed and sunk by a Soviet submarine on January 30, 1945. The Nazi press and expellee organizations utilized what was without doubt a horrible event to fuel anti-communist sentiments; these early inflammatory accounts tend to ascribe blame to the Soviets, neglecting to emphasize that the former *KdF*-ship¹⁴⁸ had served as a military hospital since the beginning of the war (a fact which Wisbar's film overrides with scenes of seemingly innocent "strength through joy"). On its final voyage, the *Gustloff* had been transporting civilians and members of the navy under military orders, and despite the ongoing confusion with regard to who gave what orders (i.e., who really carries the blame for the disaster), it is now generally accepted that the Soviets, at least, had no reason to consider the *Gustloff* as anything but a military target.¹⁴⁹ While eschewing the temptation to assign direct blame to individual players,¹⁵⁰ Frank Wisbar's

¹⁴⁷ For the history of the victim calculations, see Niven, "Vorwort" 9–10.

¹⁴⁸ "KdF" stands for *Kraft durch Freude* ("strength through joy"), a program of the National Socialist government to organize vacations for (Aryan) German citizens.

¹⁴⁹ See Niven, "Vorwort" 14.

¹⁵⁰ A move supported, if not encouraged, no doubt, by Heinz Schön, steward assistant and survivor of the *Gustloff*. He began to compile research about the ship even before the war had ended, publishing *Der Untergang der "Wilhelm Gustloff,"* the first of many books dedicated to the topic, in 1952. In this early account, Schön did not attempt to assign responsibility or guilt for the disaster, but rather emphasized the efforts that were made to save passengers.

Night Fell Over Gotenhafen treats the sinking of the *Gustloff* as one of many catastrophic “downfalls” that characterized the second half of the war and that became touchstones of the (West) German victim narrative. Many of the tropes central to the West German (and post-Unification) victim narratives become manifest within the intersection of icon and the film’s chronotope of the road, most importantly, the Christian *topos* of the Stations of the Cross and the iconography of the “Mother with Child.”

In this film, Sonja Ziemann plays Maria Reiser, a radio announcer married to Kurt, a soldier in the Wehrmacht. The film opens on a catastrophic scene of women and children floating lifelessly in dark, choppy water; the camera comes to rest on Maria, her body limp against a life ring marked as belonging to the *Wilhelm Gustloff*. The rest of the film is a flashback, beginning from the christening of the *KdF*-ship, aboard which Maria first encounters Hans Schott. While her husband is away at war, Schott forces himself upon Maria in a number of chance situations—including during an air raid. Rather than seek safety in the bunker, Maria chooses to stay with Schott in the apartment above her in-laws so that they do not see her with another man, even though she is irritated with him. As a result of this chaotic evening, however, Maria becomes pregnant. As her in-laws try to pry her from her bed to go down to the bunker during yet another air raid, she shares this news with them, garnering their disdain. Kurt’s parents force her to leave their home.

From Berlin—a troubled place of air raids and domestic conflict—Maria journeys to East Prussia to seek refuge with her friend Edith. There she meets the widowed Generalin von Reuss, Edith’s family, and the Pinkoweits. A baby is born, and shortly thereafter, the Soviets announce

Furthermore, the semi-documentary, semi-sensationalized tale “Das nackte Leben,” an eleven-part series in the magazine *Der Stern* (1959), also eschews assigning blame. The story and documentation both emphasize the conflicts between the civilian and military officers, the confusion about who was responsible for what, and the role of chance. The catastrophe is due, in this account (which provides the basic characters and plotline—with some significant revisions—for the film), to a series of unfortunate events and coincidences.

their arrival with the boom of heavily artillery fire. While everyone gathers in preparation to flee westward, the Soviets overtake Edith, Herr Pinkoweit, and the French POW Gaston—all three are shot to death. The small band of remaining women join the massive treks along the *Frisches Haff* (Vistula Lagoon), and cross paths with Kurt, who is wounded shortly after their reunion. The group hopes to board a ship at Gotenhafen, and does so with the guilt-induced help of Hans Schott, who has been stationed on the *Gustloff*. As we already know from history and from the film's initial sequence, the *Gustloff* sinks, struck by Soviet torpedoes. As far as the film permits the audience to know, only Generalin von Reuss survives with Maria's baby. Cradling the child, her voice heavy, resigned, and exhausted, she delivers the moralistic line toward which the whole of the film had been aimed:

Alle Kriege werden auf unserem Rücken ausgetragen. Aber wir halten ihn immer wieder hin. Vorher machen wir keinen Finger krumm, um so was zu verhindern. Blind und taub und stumpf warten wir darauf, bis uns das Herz aus dem Leib gerissen wird. Immer wieder, immer wieder...bis dann so ein Schiff untergeht oder noch größeres—ein Schiff so groß wie die ganze Welt....

All wars are carried out on our backs. But we hold it out again and again. We don't raise a finger beforehand to hinder such a thing. Blind and deaf and dull, we wait until our hearts are torn from our bodies. Again, and again...until such a ship sinks or an even bigger one—a ship as large as the whole world....

This is an (anti)war film from a different perspective: the woman's.

As indicated by the plot summary itself, the film is driven by a series of catastrophes, most of which are experienced by women: air raids, (attempted) rape, the arrest of a good,

compassionate German woman (Frau Kubelsky),¹⁵¹ the sudden arrival of the front (in addition to a few shots of soldiers in retreat), flight from the front, and the sinking of the *Gustloff*. The film's characteristic chronotope is what I will call a "teleological, emplaced catastrophe." Time and space "take on flesh" in moments of crisis, and yet, all of these crises build up to one climactic, cathartic moment: the sinking of the *Gustloff*. If the title of the film or the very mention of the *Gustloff* did not already suggest catastrophe, the film's structure encourages the viewer to view the entirety of the film with the anticipation of this climactic resolution. In the opening shots, the heroine, Maria, bobs in the water, her body limp. The entirety of the film is a *memento mori*, a flashback of warning that explains how we ended here. According to the film's teleological trajectory, the film could not have ended any other way. Generalin von Reuss' soliloquy nevertheless suggests that such fates may be avoidable if only women would protest war or at least "lift a finger;" then perhaps they would not have to bear the unseen (but through this film exposed) burden that women carry in the course of "men's war."¹⁵²

The film's characteristic chronotope ("teleological, emplaced catastrophe") reflects what Bill Niven calls the *Katastrophengedächtnis* ("catastrophe memory") of WWII: "The catastrophe memory was oriented backwards; according to this way of reading, the sinking of the *Gustloff*, *Steuben*, and *Goya*, to name just the largest naval catastrophes, symbolize the tragic end point of the history of German settlement in the East" ("Vorwort" 17). These maritime catastrophes belong to a longer list of "downfalls" (Stalingrad, Dresden, the Third Reich, Hitler), and "each of these

¹⁵¹ I have not included this episode in the plot summary precisely because it has no bearing on the plot whatsoever.

¹⁵² The film, however, does not go so far as to suggest that women should have protested the Nazis, genocidal politics, or expansionist foreign policy, but rather war in general. Both this moralistic warning and Maria's death are omitted from the *Stern* story. Maria's survival provides the readers a shocking twist of fate—she, her friend Ivonne, and the baby survive, whereas Hans Schottes and her husband Kurt Reiser do not. Wisbar's film, on the other hand, creates the argument that women bear the consequences of war most brutally and are its primary victims. The element of blind chance has also been removed from the film.

downfalls was preceded supposedly by an upswing or success that made the downfall seem all the more terrible” (250). Wisbar’s film confirms this narrative: the *Gustloff* is all the more terrifying because it had first served as a space of “classless” enjoyment. The catastrophic punctuation of these periods of either innocent peace or prosperity and success are interpreted as unexpected, sudden “Schicksalsschläge” (“blows of fate”), the causes of which are located outside of German agency or of the activities that had generated the peace and prosperity of the “inter-crisis” periods. As Bill Niven explains, in such a model of history and causality, “[q]uestions of German responsibility for the war are faded out. Naval disasters like the *Gustloff* are not only tragically dramatic, they can be adjusted to the spirit of the times in order to serve as apocalyptic warnings in the present” (“Gesplante Erinnerung?” 251).¹⁵³ Wisbar follows precisely this model in his four (anti)war films, offering the audience words of warning and wisdom from the battlefield and the sea.

¹⁵³ Despite *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*’s documentarian images, the film, like Wisbar’s other (anti)war films, crafts an argument against war in general. As the author of the article “Neue Filme ja und nein: Nacht über Gotenhafen” (the author of this article, published in *Die andere Zeitung* [Hamburg], is listed only as “n.”) suggests, however, arguments against an abstracted concept are not sufficient: “A thousand moviegoers don’t know—at least not through this film—, where and how and to what they would have to say no. Cold resolution in illuminating the causes that lead to wars and make wars possible: that alone could be an antiwar film.” The war is already underway, and the catastrophes come without warning—cause is severed from effect. Dedicated Nazis, for example, are few and far between in these films. The figures of an SS officer in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* (he arrests Frau Kubelsky and Herr Wiśniewski despite the appeals to friendship by all in the room) and of the cowardly Major Linkmann in *Dogs, Do You Want to Live Forever?* personify the whole of Nazi terror. In *Dogs, Do You Want to Live Forever?*, battle scenes cut intermittently to scenes of Hitler delivering the commands that ultimately doom the protagonists. Responsibility for the military disaster of Stalingrad is attributed to the leaders of Nazi Germany. And yet, Hitler’s back is always to the camera. At worst, one is a small-time *Mitläufer* or a confused and paralyzed bystander. Even the film’s treatment of the Soviets is tame for the time period in the context of flight and expulsion. The *Stern* article, which complements the story of Maria Reiser with “Dokumentarberichte,” includes photos from Nemmersdorf and citations from Ilja Ehrenburg’s anti-German propaganda. The narrative of *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* refuses to assign guilt directly to individuals or entities—whether Nazi, Soviet, or passive civilian. Manfred Dellling: “In addition, this film that polemicalizes so passionately against war doesn’t want to hurt anyone (other than the abstractum ‘war’ and the no-longer-existent Third Reich): not even the Russian, even Ilja Ehrenburg’s appalling call to the Red Army to massacre every German blindly is defended indirectly. And then, of course, the stock figures of our reflecting, alibi-addicted society are brought in: the officers who were always opposed; the landowning lady who was so noble to the ‘foreign workers’; a woman who is hiding a Jew—and so forth.” The film is a generic antiwar film that uses very specific historic episodes to argue a very general point that avoids placing blame or responsibility on anyone in particular.

I am framing these Wisbar films as “(anti)war” because, while they adopt an explicit stance against war (not necessarily, *the* war), the four films also exhibit a fascination with war.¹⁵⁴ The seamlessly incorporated archival footage (which had been taken primarily for political purposes) and reenacted scenes of land and naval battles are intended to shock and provoke protest against rearmament, and yet, these very scenes also fascinate and intrigue—for the theater-goer, the most gruesome images may contain a hint of the sublime.¹⁵⁵ In the case of *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, however, the specific episodes that are either reproduced or edited into the film clash with the stock melodramatic figures and situations that “fill in” the fictional story. Reviewer Volker Baer of *Tagesspiegel* claims that the film slips between “Kolportage” and “Reportage,”¹⁵⁶ an assessment confirmed by the film’s reliance on such mixed sources as eyewitness testimony, historiography, and the 1959 series “Das nackte Leben” from the sensational magazine *Der Stern*. This eleven-part series similarly mixes factual reports with the melodramatic love story. In the edition from 4 April 1959, a photograph of men and women on a ferry has been retouched, so that the face of the heroine—known to us by artistic renderings in the first two editions—has been painted over that of one of the women on the ferry.¹⁵⁷ Furthermore, the report of two eyewitnesses folded into the narrative describe the effects of one particularly fateful wave. The narrative confirms that this wave, this one wave that existed, also affected the fate of our fictional, but

¹⁵⁴ Compare with Kaes 16.

¹⁵⁵ According to our contemporary standards, the films seem to shy away from detailed, explicit violence or the results of violence. The reviews I discuss will illustrate that many viewers of *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* found the images of the ship’s sinking to be powerful and even upsetting. Cf. Seidl 36–37.

¹⁵⁶ In *Die Welt*, Manfred Delling blames the script, written by Wisbar and Victor Schuller, the latter being “a well-versed author of the magazine-press.” Delling and several other reviewers praise the persuasive power of the film’s images and lament the intrusion of “empty” melodrama: “one is disappointed in the conventional emptiness in three-quarters of the film” (F.J.R.). For other dissatisfied reviews, see Goelz, “Mathäser,” and Schulte, “‘Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen’.”

¹⁵⁷ Wehrle (4 April 1959), 23.

documentarized, heroine: “The wave that marine painter Bock saw approach, from which Baroness von Maydell was able to be saved at the last second, and which swept the woman from her house – this wave tore Maria along, too...” (12.15, 49). Fiction becomes superimposed over and intertwined with fact. The series’ and the film’s content therefore corresponds to a trend Maren Röger has observed both in documentarian and fictional representations of flight and expulsion beginning in the 1950s, namely, the increasing trend to blur the line between fact and fiction.¹⁵⁸

In *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, the powerful images the reviewers refer to (as a contrast to the unconvincing story line) consist of archival footage as well as calculated restagings. The key scenes of the film concern the reenactment of the sinking of the *Gustloff*. Because no “close up” documentary footage exists of the sinking, Wisbar and his crew called upon experts and (expert) eyewitnesses in order to faithfully reproduce the conditions within the ship, as well as the chaos within its hold, on the decks, and on the lifeboats once the torpedoes had struck.¹⁵⁹ For the “downfall-complex,” the architect Walter Haag created what Heidi Ritter of *Filmblätter* calls “a technical work of wonder” that spares the film crew from having to sink the *Westpreußen* or the *Arose Sun* (used in filming the *plein air* scenes): “a swing construction, unequalled in its dimensions, that, set into motion by two winds, conjures the impression of the real motion of the sea. The catastrophe scenes that were set for November played out in a large container that was

¹⁵⁸ See Röger, “Film und Fernsehen” 130–131. In all four films, Wisbar tries to blur this line as much as possible. In *Sharks and Little Fish*, for instance, individuals in close-ups in the archival footage closely resemble the actors. The sailors in the archival footage are woven into the film as anonymous actors, several of whom even have “speaking roles” (e.g., announcing an alarm). Their presence is uncanny due to the rapidity of the cuts between archival footage and Günter Haase’s images.

¹⁵⁹ The 1959 *Stern* article supplies the reader with pre-1945 photographs of the ship and eyewitness illustrations of its sinking. Interestingly enough, in the *Gustloff* chapter in his 2004 book *Die Tragödie der Flüchtlingsschiffe. Gesunken in der Ostsee 1944/45*, Heinz Schön—eyewitness, *Gustloff*-historian, and advisor for Wisbar’s film—creates a montage of stills from *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* and pre-1945 photographs of the ship and its interiors in order to visualize the catastrophe on paper. Schön’s use of the stills testifies to the authority conferred on these cinematic images.

mounted onto the swing, and contains 50 tons of water.”¹⁶⁰ Unlike that night on the *Gustloff*, emergency crew and a rescue ship survey the filming, prepared to intervene as the lines between play and reality blur: “Thanks to the prevailing waves during the last nights of filming and the often strong pull of the sea at the shooting location, the sensation of fear would come of its own, despite the comprehensive safety precautions” (Werner).¹⁶¹ According to reviewer Arno Werner, only those who experienced it themselves will watch with skepticism; for all others, the scenes are believable: “There is naked fear on the faces of the soaked people wrapped in winter clothes, equipped with life vests.”¹⁶² The dramatization and reproduction of the flight over sea constituted a technical feat, and with that, the intrusion of the “traumatic Real” into filmmaking.¹⁶³ These accounts of the filming indicate the existence of slippage between the imagined or artistically rendered referent (sinking of the *Gustloff*) and the staging thereof (the fishing ship becomes a microcosm of yet another *Gustloff*).

Limited archival footage exists, however, of the refugee trek. The context in which the archival footage was produced is not taken into consideration in the film. (The same may be said of the embedded archival footage in *Sharks and Small Fish* or *Dogs, Do You Want to Live Forever?*) For the flight scenes along the road, Wisbar inserts sequences from *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754 (16 March 1945), which “historian Gerhard Paul describes as the starting point of the German visual memory of the forced migration (Paul 2009b, S. 669)” (Röger, “Bilder der Vertreibung” 265) (see **Figure 10**). In this particular edition of the *Deutsche Wochenschau*, the

¹⁶⁰ Koar: “In short, Göttingen’s fire department ‘is making’ the Baltic Sea, and there has been no shortage of water noticeable thus far. Yesterday, for example, 100–150 bathtubs-full of water were necessary, in order to have 50 people ‘die’ with the help of 20 tons of water applied over and over again.”

¹⁶¹ Rolf Thoel, “Nachts bei Helgoland.”

¹⁶² Cf. C.M., “Krieg vor Helgoland.”

¹⁶³ For a discussion of this term, called also “the ‘first’ real,” see Fink 28.

flight over the Vistula Lagoon introduces a series of news stories (including graphic images of women who, as the narrator informs us, had been raped and murdered by the Soviets) used to garner support for Goebbels' emphatic speech in the newsreel's final sequence in which he calls for soldiers to fight fiercely against the "Bolshevik enemy." *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, though it ends with despair and catastrophe, does not end with a fiery diatribe against the Soviets or Bolshevism, but with a weary call to women to resist the abstractum of war. Wisbar, like the producers of many other texts (from the 1959 *Stern* article to the magazines *Geo* and *Spiegel* and scores of popular history books published in the "memory boom" of the 1990s and 2000s), uses archival footage and photographs documenting flight without questioning or verifying the conditions of their creation.¹⁶⁴ While the "genocidal gaze" has been interrogated with regard to Nazi photographs documenting their own atrocities against the Jewish people, the gaze of the Nazi propagandist has not been as critically taken into account when viewing Nazi documentation of the refugee treks or when using it as source material.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ For the term "memory boom," see Röger, "Ereignis- und Ereignisgeschichte" 60. Susan Sontag writes: "all captions wait to be explained or falsified by their captions" (*Regarding the Pain of Others* 10). Stephan Scholtz and Maren Röger have identified the origins of many photographs and still images which have been routinely mislabeled as examples of "flight and expulsion" (whether by mistake or to achieve certain ends) in archives, on book covers, and even in documentaries. See Scholz "Ein neuer Blick auf das Drama im Osten?" and Röger "Bilder der Vertreibung."

¹⁶⁵ For a discussion of the "genocidal gaze," see Marianne Hirsch's chapter "Nazi Photographs in Post-Holocaust Art" in her book *The Generation of Postmemory* (2012). Maren Röger brings necessary attention to this issue in her article "Bilder der Vertreibung."



Figure 10: Still of archival footage embedded in Frank Wisbar's *Nacht fiel über Gotenhafen* (1959); original source: *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754 (16 March 1945)

If the all too exact reproduction of the imagined or artistically rendered referent creates slippage between the real and the reenacted (as in the case of the sinking scenes), the intertwining of archival footage with the represented chronotope of the road becomes, however paradoxically, an intrusion into the narrative. The scenes are familiar, they are “real,” and while they are supposed to situate the protagonists in a particular historical moment on a particular road (the refugee trek from East Prussia to Gotenhafen along the Vistula Lagoon), these images interrupt the melodramatic narrative. As much as they are intended to establish a context for the protagonists and support the film’s claims to authenticity—as if to say, with Francisco de Goya, “this is how it happened”—¹⁶⁶ they are non-diegetic, an intrusion from the outside. The refugee treks are fact, but the events recorded in these images—even if one can imagine Maria and Generalin von Reuss among these shuffling figures in a distorted black-and-white (see **Figure 10**)—are not happening *to* the protagonists, the protagonists are not involved. For this reason, even though the hardships of flight over the frozen Vistula Lagoon, where ice was thin and prone to crack, the scenes of the ship’s sinking are more powerful, according to contemporary viewers. The “montage” of realistic,

¹⁶⁶ *Así sucedió*, title of no. 47 of the 82 prints in Goya’s series *Los desastres de la guerra* (The Disasters of War; 1810–1820).

naturalistic restaging and documentary footage creates a tension in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* that *Prize of the Nations* and *Forest in Winter* do not generate due to their reliance on restaged allusions to the icon as a means of establishing verisimilitude and context (to the extent that these aspects of the referenced icon are even profitable in the discursive economies of the films).

In terms of the motivic chronotope of the road, the flight over sea is the climactic conclusion of the many stations—or the “Passionsweg” (“Way of the Cross”)—of German (female) suffering.¹⁶⁷ Maria, the symbolic carrier of all of these burdens, experiences loneliness (her husband Kurt is at the front), stalking and rape, air raids, unplanned pregnancy and the resulting familial and social rejection, flight over the Vistula Lagoon, and ultimately, death.¹⁶⁸ As much as the road is a Way of the Cross—a journey associated with Christ—it is also marked with the iconography of the “Mother with Child.” In his study of expellee memorials in the FRG, Stephan Scholz demonstrates the importance of the Virgin Mary (next to the symbol of the cross) in the memorialization of the lost Heimat and expellee victimization:¹⁶⁹ pilgrimage statues were often redefined as “Schutzmantelmadonnas” (“protective-covering Madonnas”) or “Refugee Madonnas” (295); Mary herself was called upon as a co-sufferer, as the Holy Family once had to flee to Egypt; in other cases, she was identified as the direct incarnation of the lost Heimat in the

¹⁶⁷ *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* is not the first film to take up this *topos*. In Johannes Häubler’s documentary film *Kreuzweg der Freiheit* (1951), for example, “‘flight and expulsion’ appeared as a ‘German Passion’, without sufficient contextualization in Nazi history, mixed with massive anti-communist propaganda and the presented demand for a right to Heimat” (Röger, “Film und Fernsehen” 128).

¹⁶⁸ Paul Theodor Hoffmann of *Hamburger Echo* claims that these stations construct a “montage of a tragedy,” whose individual images, at least for Else Goelz (*Stuttgarter Zeitung*), are abrupt, bear no relation to each other, and are “mostly accompanied by unbearable hollow phrases.”

¹⁶⁹ Röger: “How important the applied victim interpretation in mother-child images was for the German discourse was made clear in comparison to Poland. Neither Polish non-fiction books, nor Polish TV contributions nor Polish press media featured mother-child images prominently (cf. Röger 2011a, S. 279),” “Bilder der Vertreibung” 277.

East (“Mutter Osten” [“Mother East”]).¹⁷⁰ As Maren Röger demonstrates, the motif of the Mother with Child was also already present in Nazi propaganda as early as 1939 and formed an integral part of the discourse of German victimhood.¹⁷¹ The most popular memorial symbol, however, was the cross, and remained so until the 1980s, when the Mother with Child motif increased in popularity.¹⁷² *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* combines both of these symbols. The Mother with Child is visually present, whereas the cross is present primarily metaphorically: in this latter-day *Passionsweg*, women “hold out their backs again and again”—to carry the generalized burden of war.¹⁷³

There are four “Mothers with Child” in the film, but only two actual children: Maria with her infant, Generalin von Reuss with Maria’s infant, another East Prussian mother with her infant (she sings “Pommerland ist abgebrannt” to the child along the trek),¹⁷⁴ and Frau Kubelsky with the elderly Jewish man Wiśnewski (see **Figures 11–14**).¹⁷⁵ While the East Prussian woman and her child underscore the motif, Maria’s child is an overwrought symbol of hope and life: as the

¹⁷⁰ See Scholz, “‘Opferdunst vernebelt die Verhältnisse’” 299 as well as Moeller, “The Politics of the Past in the 1950s” 33.

¹⁷¹ See Röger, “Bilder der Vertreibung” 274. On the basis of newspaper illustrations and other publications, Mariatte C. Denman observes that, in the early postwar years, German women displayed an unwillingness to examine the place and function of motherhood and femininity in National Socialist ideology and in the doings of the state; instead, Denman, following Robert Moeller, states that “[a]s a symbol of reconciliation, consolation, and identification, motherhood became a utopian ideal that provided many women a sense of stability against the backdrop of a collapsed society (Moeller 33)” (198). Denman draws on Robert Moeller’s *Protecting Motherhood* (1993).

¹⁷² Scholz, “‘Opferdunst vernebelt die Verhältnisse’” 307.

¹⁷³ There is a montage in the very beginning of the film in which endless fields of crosses (military cemeteries and isolated graves that stand for the German dead of Monte Cassino or Stalingrad) are cut with, or are superimposed on, images of crying women. While this montage emphasizes the metaphorical cross that women on the home front bear, it is associated with war in general rather than flight.

¹⁷⁴ The lyrics of the song are as follows: “Maikäfer, flieg / Der Vater ist im Krieg / Die Mutter ist im Pommerland / Pommerland ist abgebrannt / Maikäfer, flieg” (“May bug, fly / Father is at war / Mother is in Pommerland [Pomerania] / Pommerland is burned up / May bug, fly”).

¹⁷⁵ As I have not been able to find a source listing “Wiśnewski” as a character, I have chosen to adopt a Polish spelling that corresponds to the name as heard in the film.

child of “Maria,” it connotes salvation, hope, life; as a survivor of the catastrophe too young to remember the events of January 30, 1945, it can grow up fresh, in a world without war. Wiśniewski, on the other hand, in the symbolic currency of the film, is denied a future: not only is he physically aged, he is a Jew delivered into the hands of the SS, and the only Jew in the entirety of the film.



Figure 11: Maria with child during flight



*Figure 12: Generalin von Reuss with Maria's child during the sinking of the *Gustloff**



Figure 13: Frau Kubelsky defending Herr Wiśniewski



Figure 14: East Prussian woman singing during flight

We do not meet the Jewish cabinetmaker Wiśniewski on the road, but earlier in the film in Frau Kubelsky's apartment, where the SS have interrupted a soirée in order to arrest her and the man she has been hiding. When confronted by the SS-officer, Frau Kubelsky drapes her arms

around Herr Wiśnewski delicately as if he were a child (see **Figure 13**). Wiśnewski is silent and crestfallen, the gesture of pressing the *Judenstern* awkwardly onto the front of his sweater says far more than he does, as the star tells us “who he is.” His suffering remains not only silent, but is completely invisible: he is escorted outside the frame, from his physical hiding place (hiding from the Germans) to a hiding place out of sight and out of mind (hidden by the Germans, for the sake of the viewers). The snitch neighbor notwithstanding, Frau Kubelsky implicates everyone in the room for their silence and unwillingness to do anything to prevent the arrests underway. Otherwise anecdotal, with no relation to the main plot whatsoever, the scene serves two purposes: firstly, to create an opportunity to point the finger at Oberleutnant Dankel and Hans Schott—not for the *Gustloff* disaster specifically (a matter of historiographical dispute), but for general neglect, for a passivity attributable to all in the room (and, by extension, to all in the audience); and secondly, to provide yet another stop along women’s Way of the Cross: Frau Kubelsky exemplifies the female moral conscience, and is both a champion of empathy and a motherly protector.

Frau Kubelsky as the mother with the infantilized Jewish man prefigures the Mother with Child images encountered on the road of flight and on the *Gustloff*. Images of women (mothers) and children constitute “a victim discourse” in which children and mothers alike are considered to be the “epitome of innocence” due to their supposed lack of historical or political agency (Röger, “Bilder der Vertreibung” 274). Framed as a child, therefore, Wiśnewski becomes an empathetic, pure, guiltless victim—and yet, this move strips him of all agency as a differentiated individual. Furthermore, the trope of the infantilized or feminized Holocaust victim has its origins in Nazi documentation. The perpetrator, accordingly, is masculine and depersonalized. In this supplicatory scene, the SS-officer occupies the foreground, his back shaded, to the camera; his figure threatens to overpower the two more fragile, softly lighted individuals in the deeper plane of the frame. As

Marianne Hirsch argues: “if perpetrator images can mediate the visual knowledge of those who were not there, it is only because their contemporary reproductions mobilize some powerful idioms that obscure their devastating history and redirect the genocidal gaze that shaped them” (*The Generation of Postmemory* 130). In this case, the infantilized victim has been folded into the image of the Mother with Child. Although we have no iconic referent in this scene, Frau Kubelsky’s gesture imitates and reproduces this iconography, just as the images of Maria and her child also reproduce the trope of the Mother with Child present in German documentation of the flight.

On the physical/metaphorical road of flight, the female German victim crosses paths with the retreating *Wehrmacht*, the advancing Soviets, and one lone Frenchman (the POW/forced laborer Gaston). Gaston, Herr Wiśnewski, and the Soviets are the three “others” of the film. While Wiśnewski problematically becomes part of the mother-child victim complex, Gaston’s presence serves to emphasize the victimhood of the women. On Maria’s arrival in East Prussia, Gaston leads Generalin von Reuss and Maria around in von Reuss’ buggy, in what seems, at first, to be an expression of the hierarchy expected on the estate of the landed nobility. It becomes clear, however, that Gaston is a POW who has been conscripted for forced labor—the presence of a French POW as a forced laborer is simply taken as a fact. When the Soviets shoot Gaston, and he dies, the German women give him the best burial possible under the circumstances. The film does not confront the moral quandaries of being a “good” employer of forced laborers; von Reuss’ and Gaston’s attachment toward each other suggests, on the other hand, that in her benevolence, she is also innocent. At the end of the film, von Reuss cradles Maria’s child, an older, wiser Mother with Child, with the knowledge and experience required to deliver the film’s moral.

The chronotope of the road of flight in Wisbar’s *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* exhibits many of the tropes of the German victim narrative that characterized the discourse on flight and

expulsion in the FRG (e.g., the Mother with Child, the Cross, the German [female] Way of the Cross)—even as some of these tropes have their origins in Nazi propaganda. The motivic chronotope of the road of flight is in harmony with the film’s characteristic chronotope, that of teleological, emplaced catastrophe. While the physical/symbolic road of flight is itself one of several catastrophes, the chronotope of the road is itself coded as the *Via Dolorosa*, a compilation of the stations of the Cross which all lead to a Golgotha—in this case, the sinking of the *Gustloff*. Those that die on the *Gustloff* are not able to arrive in a new Heimat in the FRG. And while, according to the Christian imagery, death signifies the arrival of the soul into the eternal Heimat, this is not thematized in the film. We are left with the phenomenon of non-arrival.

Among all of the interpretations of the chronotope of the road of forced migration present in the films in this chapter, the Way of the Cross of *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* adds another interpretive layer onto the road of forced migration. On the one hand, the conflation or the semi-transparent overlay of the Way of the Cross with the road of forced migration is problematic. The actors and the events that take place along this road are signified as a part of a Christian (chrono)*topos*. As such, the actors are limited: others who do not belong to that particular victim group are excluded, as are those others who do not necessarily ascribe to the system of Christian belief or who are excluded a priori by the modern incarnation of that system itself (e.g., Jews or atheist Communists).

Nevertheless, precisely because the Way of the Cross *is* a road does it also demonstrate the greatest potential for intertwining memories.¹⁷⁶ Encounters with “others”—namely, Jews, French POWs, and the Soviets—are instrumental in defining German women as victims. As much as these

¹⁷⁶ The road is, after all, the chronotope most associated with the motif of meeting. See Bakhtin Chapter 1, Loc. 1465–1472.

“others” are instrumental (that is, not victims in their own right, but as supporting actors), they are nevertheless *present*. All melodrama aside, the figure of Maria Reiser illustrates the interwoven reality of the German victim narratives that in recent years have often been treated as separate victim narratives: air war victims, refugees, expellees, rape victims, etc.¹⁷⁷ To some extent, this overlap seems to have been self-evident in the first decades following the war,¹⁷⁸ but overlap has also been utilized as a pretext to conflate divergent experiences—a strategy often used to serve conservative political ends.¹⁷⁹

Conclusion

I have titled this chapter “Icy Roads to the FRG: The Refugee Trek in West German Feature Film” in order to emphasize several aspects of how the iconic images of the refugee treks have

¹⁷⁷ Although the air war debates following the publications of W.G. Sebald’s *Lufkrieg und Literatur* (On the Natural History of Destruction; 1999) and Jörg Friedrich’s *Der Brand* (The Fire; 2002) as well the “Flucht und Vertreibung” debate following the publication of Günter Grass’ *Im Krebsgang* (Crabwalk; 2002) may have melded together under the umbrella of “German suffering” or “German victimization,” the focus of these debates was centered on questions of alleged taboos on German suffering and on finding the appropriate means of representing and treating the topic of German suffering. Examinations of the possibility of the intertwined nature of “air raid victims,” “refugees” and “expellees,” *as well as* KZ inmates (who invariably were also driven westward in the last days of the war and who were also experienced the air raids) are few and fell beyond the scope of those debates. Studies with a variation on the title *Flucht und Vertreibung* abound: *Flucht, Vertreibung, Integration* (2007), *Flucht und Vertreibung. Europa zwischen 1939 und 1948. Mit einer Einleitung von Arno Surminski* (2004), *Flucht: über die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten* (2002), *Flucht und Vertreibung der Deutschen: Voraussetzungen, Verlauf, Folgen* (2011). Part of the reluctance to see these victim boundaries as porous is due to the radical conflation of victim groups or the unapologetic or uncritical use of terms associated with Holocaust victims for German experiences (e.g., Jörg Friedrich’s *Der Brand*).

¹⁷⁸ Rubble films such as *Seven Journeys* (1947) and *The Murderers Are Among Us* (1946) provide prominent and early examples of this understanding, for even if, as in the latter film, the former KZ inmate Susanne Wallner and traumatized Wehrmacht soldier Dr. Hans Mertens did not experience air raids, they must cope with their own wartime experiences and the consequences of the air war (apartment shortages, partially destroyed living spaces, makeshift living situations).

¹⁷⁹ The Pozdun Verlag’s 1966 photo book *Flucht und Vertreibung. Eine Bilddokumentation vom Schicksal der Deutschen aus Ostpreußen, Oberschlesien, Niederschlesien, Danzig, Westpreußen, Ostpommern, Ost-Brandenburg u.a. und dem Sudetenland* offers such examples; through the composition of the book’s montage, the corpses on the funeral pyres on the square in Dresden following the fire bombings of February 1945 are coded first as refugees, then as symbols of the destroyed and lost Heimat in the East (the personification of “Pommerland ist abgebrannt”). On the one hand, however, the way in which refugees and expellees of Heimatfilms become the symbol with whom all displaced and *kriegsgeschädigte* Germans can identify serves less to deny different experiences, and more to provide a common model for Germans affected by the war to cope with nostalgia, homesickness, and uprootedness. See Moeller, *War Stories* 7.

been incorporated into these films. There is not a single chronotope of the road of forced migration, but many, for even when the films are drawing on familiar or common source material, the roads and the treks are coded differently and manifest time and space differently depending on how they are emplotted.

The icons or the composite icons to which these films refer create a rupture in the first two films and generate tension in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*. In *Forest in Winter*, the road (of forced migration) creates a rift between the visual argument of the film (the Silesians never left) and the reality of the plot and the discourses of *Heimatverlust* and trauma that are prominent in the film. This rift is not acknowledged explicitly, but is revisited, via the similarity of the *mise-en-scène* of the road of flight and the road on which Inge and Martin experience a “setback” on their journey into town. In *Prize of the Nations*, the allusion to the icon proves too powerful for the purpose for which it has been inserted: while the scenes of flight are intended to establish the history of the horse, to make its success (and by extension, Marion’s and Vera’s success) all the grander because of the hardship it endured, the trauma of that flight goes unexplored in the film and rests like a weight on the first part of the film, unable to be integrated to the otherwise lighthearted melodrama. *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, on the other hand, exhibits tension between the intrusion of “the real” in the course of reenactment and “the real” of the document, the latter of which is severed from the melodramatic plot. The increase in feature film’s reliance on realism in German film towards the end of the 1950s is observable in the progression these three films from one to the next, particularly when one considers that the realistic strategies Wisbar employs in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* correspond to those he used for his other (anti)war films of the late 1950s, namely, *Sharks and Small Fishes* (1957) and *Dogs, Do You Want to Live Forever?* (1959).

In the chapter title, I have suggested that these many roads lead to the FRG. These films feature scenes of departure. The departure from Heimat for an unwilling journey on the road for the West grounds the nostalgia for that Heimat or suppresses it (redirecting it, for example, into animetaphor). In these films then, we also see *arrival* in some form. While *Forest in Winter* does not permit us to see physical arrival (this would spoil the visual allusion that the Silesians never left Silesia), but rather economic and/or social arrival, that is, integration. While the horse training timeline in *Prize of the Nations* is not clear, both *Prize of the Nations* and *Forest in Winter* espouse narratives of successful refugee integration (if integration was ever needed in the first place) in the FRG.¹⁸⁰ In *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, the protagonists do not arrive in the FRG. The horror of the film lies in its end station, death. Tragedy overrides the comedic impulses of the other two films of integration/reconstruction. Yet the road of this film, too, leads to the FRG, when we consider that the story of German victimization, with the refugee as the epitomic figure thereof,¹⁸¹ is *a* (if not *the*) founding narrative of the Federal Republic of Germany.¹⁸² This story has arrived in the FRG precisely because its protagonists meet an end in the East.

Reasons for the rarity of images of flight and the icons lie not in their origins in Nazi documentation—this is not thematized in any of the works that have been under analysis here; even in those Heimatfilms that feature expellees/refugees but not the icons of flight, recalcitrant Nazi and former Nazi characters are few and far between. The cases of *Forest in Winter* and *Prize of the Nations* demonstrate that references to the icons themselves create rifts in the films' projects, which center primarily on demonstrating the success of refugees in the FRG, of their ability to

¹⁸⁰ Johannes von Moltke writes that "Liebeneiner's narrative," and I would include Schleif's as well, "is less an allegory of integration than of reconstruction, and the refugees are cast not as aliens who need to adapt to their new surroundings but as prototypes for a new West German identity," "Location *Heimat*" 85.

¹⁸¹ Idem, 139.

¹⁸² Idem, 74.

contribute to reconstruction and the Economic Miracle while maintaining their ties to Silesian or East Prussian traditions. And while, as von Moltke suggests, films of the 1950s may simply not have needed to show scenes of flight because “viewers in the 1950s would have been sure to fill in the blanks” (*Locations of Heimat* 137), this explanation neglects to take into account the (potential) consequences of the inclusion of these scenes, something which I have tried to illuminate using the three films produced between 1949 and 1960 which do so: *Forest in Winter*, *Prize of the Nations*, and *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*.

Chapter 3: How the *Umsiedler* Built Socialism: Representations of Flight in the Feature Films of the SBZ/GDR

Introduction

Prior to 1970, the GDR released three epic films that depict flight from the Red Army: Milo Harbich's *Freies Land* (Free Land; SBZ 1946), Kurt Maetzig's *Schlösser und Katen* (Castles and Cottages; GDR 1957), and Martin Eckermann's television film *Wege übers Land* (Ways Across the Land; GDR 1968).¹⁸³ While all three depict flight in very different ways—contextualizing the event in nuanced discourses of victimhood and according to variegated interpretations of visual source material—the films all situate flight as part of the history of the founding of the GDR and its early years (because *Free Land* was produced in 1946, its timeline is comparatively very short and precedes the founding of the GDR).¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, all three may be considered “conversion films,” that is, films in which an unwilling citizen is eventually “converted” to the socialist cause: in *Free Land*, one of the reluctant *Großbauer* (“large farmers”) finally admits the benefits of the *Gegenseitige Bauernhilfe* (“Peasants’ Mutual Aid”); in *Castles and Cottages*, Anton finally acknowledges that the Count’s legal document is worthless and relinquishes his hopes in the old order; in *Ways Across the Land*, Gertrud finally agrees to cede her own private property and becomes the chairperson of the local LPG.¹⁸⁵ Similar to the films in

¹⁸³ A fourth film, Arthur Pohl's *Die Brücke* (The Bridge; SBZ 1948), begins with the conflicts between *Umsiedler* and *Einheimische* (“locals” or “natives”). While it neither shows flight nor expulsion, Pohl's film constitutes one of the few films made in the SBZ/GDR before 1970 to thematize the plight of *Umsiedler* and the difficulties of integrating into their new Heimat. Though the primary films under analysis are the three epic films, *The Bridge* remains an important touchstone for these and even later films that take up the subject of refugees and flight in the context of the GDR. See Niven, “On a Supposed Taboo” 227.

¹⁸⁴ Wolfgang Gersch, in his 1979 retrospective article, “Die Anfänge des DEFA-Spielfilms,” identifies a narrative lineage from *Free Land*, to *Castles and Cottages*, to *Ways Across the Land*.

¹⁸⁵ According to Knut Hickethier, TV novels such as *Ways Across the Land* “formed the cinematic counterpart to the so-called ‘Ankunftsliteratur’ [“arrival literature”] in GDR literary history,” 305.

the FRG, these films also utilize those who have lost their homes (the figure of the refugee, and—as did Wolfgang Liebeneiner’s *Forest in Winter*—even the figure of the returning POW) to emphasize the importance of Heimat. In these films, they do so through their participation, not in the Economic Miracle, but in building a socialist Heimat. *Free Land, Castles and Cottages*, and *Ways Across the Land* illustrate most poignantly how the topics of flight and the lost East (and by extension, expulsion) were interpreted in the SBZ and the GDR. What is unconventional about these films is their choice to *show* flight from the Red Army; the way that they integrate these scenes into the films and how they interpret them, however, do much to demonstrate the official narrative.

In his detailed study *Die Deutung des Verlusts. Erinnerungspolitische Kontroversen im geteilten Deutschland um Flucht, Vertreibung und die Ostgebiete (1948–1972)* (The Interpretation of Loss. Controversies of Memory Politics in Divided Germany on Flight, Expulsion, and the Eastern Territories [1948–1972]; 2007), Christian Lotz makes clear that, in the SBZ/GDR, the interpretation of the events of flight and expulsion were inextricably linked to the KPD’s or SED’s position on the Oder-Neisse Line.¹⁸⁶ While refugees and expellees (all officially dubbed “Umsiedler” or “Neubürger”) were never permitted to organize in the SBZ/GDR, and were declared integrated already in 1948 (despite still being more economically disadvantaged than native residents), two developments squelched any hope that they could ever legally form interest groups. The first of these developments was the inclusion of Article VI in the GDR’s constitution (7 October 1949), which declared that all citizens of the GDR were equal. This meant that those who had fled or been expelled from the East could not claim to be a distinct group with special

¹⁸⁶ Lotz 58.

needs.¹⁸⁷ The second development was the Treaty of Görlitz/Zgorzelec, signed 6 July 1950 by representatives of the PPR and the GDR in mutual recognition of the Oder-Neisse Line, as stipulated at the Potsdam Conference. This was to be a *Friedensgrenze* (“peace border”) between the two socialist states. Between Article VI and the GDR’s official acknowledgement of the “peace border,” SED officials and the *Volkspolizei* were free to interpret expellee gatherings as “Kriegshetze” (“warmongering”), a crime according to Article VI.¹⁸⁸ As Philipp Ther explains:

In addition to the SED, a new agent of expellee politics began to appear in 1949 and more strongly in 1950 in connection with the recognition of the Oder-Neisse border: the *Volkspolizei*. In its operations with regard to the expellees, the *Volkspolizei* hindered the expellees in every attempt at political and cultural self-recognition, prosecuted them when necessary, and observed them full of distrust, but also with palpable uneasiness, during the entire time span under study here. (*Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 152)

While the *Volkspolizei* and the Stasi were to repress any manifestations of memory politics in the form of expellee gatherings and publications (whether smuggled from the West or produced in the GDR), the SED’s politics with regard to flight and expulsion were refracted through other issues, “such as the general fight against political opponents, control of the press, and much more; propaganda on the one hand and repressive means on the other also intertwined in this area of politics” (Lotz 41).

¹⁸⁷ Idem, 107–108.

¹⁸⁸ “Verfassung der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 7. Oktober 1949, Artikel 6: „Alle Bürger sind vor dem Gesetz gleichberechtigt. Boykotthetze gegen demokratische Einrichtungen und Organisationen, Mordhetze gegen demokratische Politiker, Bekundungen von Glaubens-, Rassen-, Völkerhaß, militärische Propaganda sowie Kriegshetze und alle sonstigen Handlungen, die sich gegen die Gleichberechtigung richten, sind Verbrechen im Sinne des Strafgesetzbuches [...]’, Gesetzblatt der DDR, I, 1949, 1–27, hier 2,” quoted in Lotz 107.

Overall, the SED's political stance toward expellees was deeply ambivalent: while the authorities were openly suspicious of expellees and took concrete measures to repress expellee self-expression, the SED went to great pains to ensure that they gained the support of expellees and that they were well integrated into society. Philipp Ther recognizes three distinct realms in which the SED and SMAD, together with the newly created *Zentralverwaltung für deutsche Umsiedler* (Central Office for German Resettlers; ZVU; founded 14 Sept. 1945) pursued these policies: charity, redistribution, and social revolution.¹⁸⁹ As far as charity was concerned, the SED relied strongly on active shows of solidarity between natives and between natives and refugees. *Umsiedlerwochen* ("resettler weeks") were organized to gather donations for resettlers—as Philipp Ther notes, the results were generally underwhelming.¹⁹⁰ The SMAD order 304 (Oct. 15, 1946), on the other hand, provided 300 Reichsmarks directly to "resettlers," and the 1950 *Gesetz zur weiteren Verbesserung der Lage der ehemaligen Umsiedler in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Law for the Further Improvement of the Situation of the Former Resettlers in the German Democratic Republic, but otherwise known as the *Umsiedlergesetz*), comparable to the *Lastenausgleich* in the FRG, intended to aid resettlers, and new farmers and artisans in particular. As Philipp Ther notes, however, the *Umsiedlergesetz* was "timed such that it was to distract from the recognition of the Oder-Neisse border on July 6, 1950" (*Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene* 163). Redistribution entailed the redistribution of living space, which often involved prioritizing resettlers over natives who had been members of the Nazi party.¹⁹¹ Land reform, that is, the process of dividing land into small farming plots, was the most important aspect of "social-revolutionary"

¹⁸⁹ See sections 2.3.1–3 of Ther *Deutsche und polnische Vertriebene*.

¹⁹⁰ *Idem*, 162.

¹⁹¹ See Torsten Mehlhase, "Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene in Sachsen-Anhalt" 13.

policy towards resettler integration. According to Philipp Ther, expellees constituted 43.3% of the recipients of such plots (“The Integration of Expellees” 794). Through all of these measures, the SED and SMAD hoped to gain resettler support and accelerate their integration. Their own initiative and participation ensured their successful integration into the new socialist Heimat that they had helped to build.

Even though the three films are praised for the critical way that they expose the difficulties that resettlers and natives faced in postwar reconstruction, they bring these difficulties into the narrative of rebirth or resurrection—in the “end,” everything worked out. What these films eclipse, however, just as the official pronouncements that resettlers had been integrated had done, was the fact that many of these initiatives on the part of the SMAD or SED could only boast of limited success. In the manner of Socialist Realism, *Free Land*, *Castles and Cottages*, and *Ways Across the Land* all present the world as it *should be* or *should have been*, not necessarily how it was.

***Freies Land* (Free Land; 1946)**

The first of these films is the semi-documentary, semi-fictional film *Free Land* (dir. Milo Harbich, 1946). It is the second DEFA-film to be produced after the war (in fact, it premiered only three days after Wolfgang Staudte’s *Die Mörder sind unter uns* [The Murderers Are Among Us], on 18 October 1946) and the last film the Brazilian-born director Milo Harbich would direct in Germany. While Wolfgang Staudte’s *The Murderers Are Among Us* explores the effect of the war on the city and its returning inhabitants, Milo Harbich’s *Free Land* focuses primarily on reconstruction in the countryside.

The film shows the troubles, perils, and successes of the inhabitants of Westpregnitz and the German Lebus region following the end of the war in 1945. The present of the film’s narrative takes place in a castle, among the portraits of the ancestors of the noble owners who, of course,

have fled. Mayor Siebold, surrounded by attentive villagers, recounts to the villagers their own story: from refugee treks, to desolate, sacked, or destroyed villages with no bread, no tractors, no machines, and no work—to cooperation between native and new farmers (*Alt- und Neubauer*), to the successful reconstruction of old buildings and the construction of new living spaces, from pulling the plow by human strength, to acquiring livestock, from children playing among piles of rubble, to learning about husbandry in tidy little schools. The mayor's speech is the framing device that occasions the flashbacks that constitute the narrative of the film. In addition to the *Kuhle Wampe*-style compositions and editing and the documentary-style filming of the farmers sowing seed and repairing fallen roofs, the film interweaves a narrative about the East Prussian Jeruscheit family: one of Frau Jeruscheit's two daughters dies along the trek; her husband Franz eventually returns from a POW camp and slowly re-acclimates himself to civilian life, healed by family and fruitful work in the sunny fields.

To the extent that Siebold's voice occasions and interprets the flashback images—whether these are part of the fictional plot (staged, with professional and social actors) or are merely “observed” by the camera (scenes of women plowing fields and sowing seeds)—the film operates in the expository mode. And yet, the scenes are not documentary images of a “third party,” so to speak—they are flashbacks held in the collective memory of the actors and social actors on camera and, allegedly, of the audience. Siebold occupies the place of the male commentator who, from the privileged future that has finally arrived, embodies the new order (the Communist mayor and the farmers occupy the former Junker hall), the history of which he narrates back to the people who made this new order possible. At the same time, the flashbacks are staged as a collective memory. When, for example, an old man in the flashback negotiates (or rather, flirts) with an old woman in order to procure temporary shelter for his children and grandchildren, the scene cuts back to the

present of the crowded Junker hall with a close-up of this same old man's face. Even though very few people were physically present during this particular exchange between the old man and woman, everyone in the Junker hall has access to this memory-image: it exists as a collective memory, summoned by Siebold, the expository narrator of their own story. The "collective" whose memories the film visually materializes does not only include Siebold, the fictional characters of the Jaruscheit family, and the farmers of Westpregnitz and Lebus who "play themselves"—these are the "memories" of all farmers and peasants in the SBZ, and even, arguably, of those in the cities.

The film moves between specificity and generality, documentary and fiction, and in doing so, creates a factual, real-world basis to affirm the experiences of both audience and actors as well as an element of pathos via the fictional narrative thread in order to ensure audience identification on an emotional level. As the screenplay author Kurt Hahne explains: "We endeavored to connect the documentary material that was flowing to us in enormous masses with a gripping story of the fate of an individual—one which could stand as an example of other countless fates" (qtd. in "or.").

The film makes no overt distinction between documentary and fictional forms, but rather emphasizes the authenticity of what the audience sees and hears on screen. The introductory title screen assures the audience thus:

This factual report depicts the true experiences of German refugees, peasants and settlers after the collapse [of the Nazi regime] in May 1945. They featured in this film themselves and were the performers of their own fates. The settings are Westprieognitz and the Lebus disaster area.

Predating the Bitterfeld Way by many years, the crew lived among farmers and “resettlers” in order to produce a film that approximated lived life. The use of social actors, with their various dialects, highlights that “the people of the new community were actually woven together from all over” (“or.”). Furthermore, the artifices of fictional film (e.g., studios and sets) have no place: “Even the spaces in this film are not ‘built’—the mayor’s room, the hall in the castle, the peasant hallways—everything was shot on the spot.”

While the bulk of the footage consists of either staged scenes (in authentic places with mostly authentic people, of course) or observation of the residents in performing everyday farm labor, Harbich does include pre-existing documentary footage—most importantly, for the purposes of this dissertation, sequences from *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754. The two flight sequences (the newsreel footage of winter flight over the Vistula Lagoon and the restaged springtime flight) highlight two interpretive frameworks for regarding the flight from the Red Army as an event. As Otto Baecker’s camera demonstrates an individualized, inquisitive relationship to the actors and social actors who make up the springtime trek (even if because it is fictionalized and reenacted), *Free Land* underscores the impersonality of what were to become the most iconic images documenting the flight from the Red Army, that is, the images included in *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754.

As Siebold begins to narrate the trek, the scene in the castle cuts to the scenes of the winter refugee treks over the Vistula Lagoon from *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754. Siebold’s voice competes with the sounds of horse hooves, clinking metal, and creaky wooden wagons:

Millions of refugees trekked across the ice of the rivers, over soggy [...] country roads and into the unknown. They lost their homeland overnight. Over the course of the weeks-long

wanderings, they forfeited even more of the meager remnants of their belongings.

Thousands perished of hunger, exhaustion, and sickness.

The voice of *Wochenschau*-commentator Harry Giese has been replaced by Siebold and a naturalistic, diegetic soundtrack. Even though Siebold's speech addresses some of the same subjects as does Giese, Siebold's character inflects them differently. The first difference is in terms of numbers. While the newsreel claims that "hunderttausende deutsche Menschen" ("hundreds of thousands of German people") left behind "Gut und Boden" ("possessions and land"), Siebold says that these were instead "millions of refugees," an assessment that includes German refugees from other regions as well.¹⁹² Furthermore, Siebold emphasizes the deprivations that these refugees faced and the uncertainty of their futures. He describes the treks as "wanderings," with their destination "into the unknown" rather than the "Schutz des Reiches" ("protection of the Reich"). The Nazi-produced commentary reinforces the controlled, orderly images on the screen, using primarily extreme long shots to capture the long, winding, but coherent lines of the treks; the *Deutsche Wochenschau* suggests neither incompetency or disorganization on the part of the Nazi government nor its imminent collapse. Siebold's commentary, on the other hand, expands the Nazis' numbers so that these images of the flight from East Prussia come to stand for all German refugees, regardless of their point of origin; furthermore, it imposes a reading of chaos over the orderly images of the treks.

While the *Deutsche Wochenschau* framed the refugees as intrepid citizens fleeing into the protective arms of their Reich, Siebold constructs them as victims of the Nazi regime—a move which erases the complexity of the identities of those who fled, their political loyalties, wartime activities, etc. This interpretation, that the refugees/resettlers are victims, extends to the whole of

¹⁹² Timothy Snyder cites that approximately six million Germans fled before the Red Army before May 1945; see *Bloodlands* 315.

the film. In contrast to *Ways Across the Land* and even later films depicting flight, *Free Land*, like the later *Castles and Cottages*, insists that the refugees were victims, *not* perpetrators. Before the viewer even sees Siebold, we hear his voice declare that “they” (we see portraits of a noble family) supported the Nazis, not the refugees—the refugees opposed them. The perpetrators are the Nazis and the landholding gentry who, if they were not members of the Nazi party, supported and benefited from Nazi rule. In this way, flight is rewritten as a flight from Nazism, not from the Soviets. The gentry’s flight from the SBZ (i.e., from the Soviets) signified their complicity and guilt.

The newsreel images of the winter flight cut to Otto Baecker’s observational images of a reenacted springtime trek. Even without confirmation from journalists present during the filming, one could easily conclude that this scene has been staged, as this camera frames its subjects in a radically different fashion than that of the Nazi newsreels.¹⁹³ While the images of the springtime trek at first mimic the newsreel footage, beginning with a high-angle shot of the length of the trek (see **Figure 15**), the camera quickly changes its vantage point. Harbich’s scene is much more personal than the Nazi footage of the trek: here, we are at eyelevel, travelling for a moment with one woman and her children, now with an emaciated little dog plodding along underneath the wagon, now with a boy in a *Lederhose* tugging along his recalcitrant goats (see **Figure 16**). Suddenly, the pseudo-direct documentary is interrupted by plot: a wagon wheel cracks and breaks. The camera scans the trek to show us the effect of this holdup. With the broken wagon collapsed

¹⁹³ On the farmers who reenacted the trek they had taken part in a year prior, see: It. “Ein Treck fährt über Land.” It remains to be determined whether other reviews written after the premier of the film note the transition from pre-existing footage to the staged trek (“Trek 1946”); neither Fred Gehler (“‘Freies Land’,” 1986 and “Ein erstaunliches Werk,” 1987) nor Wolfgang Gersch (“Die Anfänge des DEFA-Spielfilms,” 1979) reflect on the suturing of these two scenes of flight.

onto the side of the road, the frustrated owner now has the opportunity to see and approach Frau Jeruscheit, the heroine of the fictional strain of the film. He encourages her to press on with the admonishment that “jeder von uns läßt etwas zurück” (“every one of us leaves something behind”). The camera waits patiently for Frau Jeruscheit to push the wagon out of the frame, to show us what she leaves behind: a fresh grave, marked with a crude cross made of branches; the camera zooms in and reveals that this grave is tiny, for a child. This zoomed-in image is countered in the next shot with a zoom-out of a funerary wreath of flowers resting atop a pile of rubble. As the camera zooms out, it reveals a veritable ruinscape; it sweeps to the right, where children play with rubble, constructing a chair for a doll out of broken bricks.



Figure 15: Still from Milo Harbich's *Freies Land* (1946)



Figure 16: Still from Milo Harbich's *Freies Land* (1946)

While the pre-existing footage and reenacted scenes of flight all mimic, in some form, the Nazi newsreel footage, *Free Land* conveys a vastly different interpretation of the 1944/45 flight from the Red Army. The film does not explicitly draw attention to the nature of the source of the newsreel images. Instead, Harbich employs the same tactic as the newsreel (the voiceover) to shape the way that viewers interpret and understand the images that they see. In sum, *Free Land* begins with an impersonal sequence of flight—extreme long shots explained to us by the well-known commentator Harry Giese, who provides broad explanations for who these people are, from where

and to where they are traveling, and why. While Giese frames these refugees as heroic, brave citizens seeking refuge in the Reich, Siebold—also problematically—suggests that they are instead all victims of the Nazi regime. Furthermore, Baecker’s inquisitive camera contrasts with the distanced newsreel images. In other cases, one could argue that this contrast is a matter of differing cinematic modes (documentary versus fiction), but, given the director’s emphasis on using actual refugees to reenact their plight and common use of long takes, Baecker’s camera makes the move that the Nazi newsreel does not: from general to specific. First documented by the Nazis as an impersonal, mass phenomenon, Baecker explores the (restaged) trek as a phenomenon composed of individuals and their fates. Despite this move to the individual, the film does not delve into the complexities of the backgrounds, motives, or complicities of German refugees in the Nazi regime.¹⁹⁴

The way that the film frames images of flight and refugees in general exemplifies the deep ambivalence with which refugees and expellees were met with already in the SBZ, before the founding of the GDR. While the SED and SMAD distrusted the refugees and expellees as being Hitler’s fifth column, the extreme circumstances facing the SBZ and the overwhelming numbers of refugees and expellees that the SBZ had absorbed made it necessary to make this suspicion not come true by matter of SED politics: the *Umsiedler* needed to have reason to support the SED and the native residents needed to be convinced of the need for solidarity with their fellow citizens and the *Neubürger*. The film engenders sympathy for the plight of the resettlers and shows the benefits of charity (in the form of Peasants’ Mutual Aid), housing redistribution (natives temporarily house resettlers until new apartments and farms are built), and land reform. According to the film, it is

¹⁹⁴ This lack of inquiry is understandable as far as the social actors are concerned (as such an inquiry could have very real legal consequences); however, the fictional figures of the Jaruscheit family are similarly without a pre-victim past.

thanks to these measures that the collective is even gathered in the Junker hall and that the film can reach a happy, idyllic conclusion. In this conclusion, the troubled *Heimkehrer* Franz Jaruscheit and his little family of resettlers can find joy in the restored nuclear family, traditional farm work, and socialism, scythe in hand (see **Figure 17**).¹⁹⁵



Figure 17: Still from Milo Harbich's *Freies Land* (1946)

At the end of the film, the present also becomes multivalent: it is at once the present of narration in the Junker hall as well as the idyll on the farm, with Franz smiling at wife and daughter, glowing under the sun. We have witnessed the resurrection from the ruins: from the match cut joining the child grave on the trek to an anonymous funeral wreath atop rubble in the city, we accompany the collective in its collective reminiscing from death to life—or, as Bill Niven notes, to the socialist Heimat: “As throughout DEFA cinema, harmonious images of rural life convey a sense of the indestructible, omnipresent and palliative quality of ‘Heimat’, now in its socialist incarnation” (“On a Supposed Taboo” 220). Indeed, Johannes Becher’s “Auferstanden aus

¹⁹⁵ This does not mean, of course, that audiences bought the message. Kurt Liebermann writes, for example, that, rather than show a Russian soldier giving the women two horses, the filmmakers should have showed the difficulties of the returning soldiers, the general lack of (healthy) horses, or the need to trade injured horses for other things—any of these realities would have made more sense: “That is consistent with reality more than this incident shown in the film, which surely also occurred, but is shown so disconnectedly and turns the soldiers of the occupying army into a saving angel, something that necessarily makes it laughable,” 2.

Ruinen” (“Risen from the Ruins”), written in 1949, echoes the narrative of death and resurrection through brotherly love and hard work, all blessed by the sun, espoused by *Free Land* in 1946. If the film has a characteristic chronotope, it is then that of resurrection: from devastation and want to a rural idyll of plenty.

***Schlösser und Katen* (Castles and Cottages; 1956)**

This is in contrast to the next film under analysis, Kurt Maetzig’s *Schlösser und Katen* (Castles and Cottages; 1956), which takes place in fictional Holzendorf, Mecklenburg, a place seemingly untouched by the war itself (particularly if we consider *Free Land*’s images of the devastation that rolled across the Lebus region). The film does not begin with the flight from East Prussia, nor with the roadside graves and bombed-out buildings—whether urban or rural—but rather, with a different kind of devastation: the flight of the gentry and the disruption of a centuries-old structure of power.

The film begins with the approach of the Red Army towards Mecklenburg in 1945 and ends with the 1953 workers’ uprising. The film is divided into two parts: *Der krumme Anton* (“Hunchback Anton”) and *Annegrets Heimkehr* (“Annegret’s Return”). At the beginning of *Hunchback Anton*, the news spreads that the Red Army is encroaching upon the village of Holzendorf. The Count and Countess, along with their Nazi companions, flee in a frenzy, driving the livestock along with them. The forced laborers, bewildered Holzendorf peasants, and many of the refugees (“Umsiedler”), on the other hand, remain.

Several of the peasants are unable to grasp that a new order is upon them. They furiously bury silver and porcelain objects, believing that the Count and Countess will eventually return and that the old social hierarchy will be restored. Anton has internalized the degradation of his servitude to the extent that it manifests as a physical deformity—hence, “Hunchback Anton.” A

notorious drunk who dances on command, Anton buries the silver and places all of his hopes in the Count and Countess. Above all else, he protects his potential claim to a future fortune: a document (*Schein*) that guarantees Annegret's claim to an inheritance, as Annegret, Anton's stepdaughter, is the Count's illegitimate child. The document is the source of numerous intrigues: Bröker, a large farmer, wants his son to marry Annegret and be heir to the fortune, whereas the Countess wants the document destroyed. When Annegret finally discovers the truth of her origins, she runs away—pregnant with the child of the recently returned POW and Communist, Klimm. Despite Anton's firm belief in the power of this document, the village undergoes land reform, and instead of the Count and Countess, the Communists gather and rule from the castle.

When Annegret finally returns in Part II, she has a child and a degree in zoology. Her efforts at teaching the villagers efficient methods of dealing with livestock are met with disdain, as conspirators have been spreading lies about her. In the background, Bröker, his son, and other individuals in the town plot together with the Countess, who sneaks across the border to the eastern zone. They are conspiring about what will become the 1953 uprising—the design of fascist-capitalist interference and the attempted return of the old order. In the end, Annegret marries Klimm, and at their wedding, Anton rips up the cursed *Schein*, which, as one of the wedding guests exclaims (just in case the audience missed the pun), was itself only appearance, or “*Schein*.”

Despite the film's rather formulaic Socialist Realist plot and message, this film is unique for several reasons: not only does it deal with the recent issues of the 1953 workers' uprising and of collectivization, but it also depicts the everyday problems that *Umsiedler* faced, particularly with regard to land reform.¹⁹⁶ Most importantly, for our purposes, the film also depicts the chaos

¹⁹⁶ Wolfgang Emmerich notes that, with few exceptions (e.g., Werner Reinowski's *Die Versuchung* [The Temptation; 1956] and Eduard Claudius' *Von der Liebe soll man nicht nur sprechen* [One Should Not Only Speak of Love; 1957]), the June 1953 workers' uprising was largely absent from literature of the 1950s. In the exceptions, “the topic of June 17th is introduced, but always in order to assign blame for this date to the proponents of the old school (that is, to the

of flight from the Red Army. Both flight from the Red Army and the 1953 uprising are linked insofar as they involve a transgression of borders. The border crossings are a manifestation of the rejection of the authority of the Soviet administration and of the socialist utopia under construction. All real danger to the socialist Heimat, so the film argues, comes from the gentry and those who cannot sever themselves from servitude. The gentry, and those peasants who have aided and abetted them, have committed a series of class-based crimes: they oppressed peasants for centuries, collaborated with Nazis, abandoned their peasants (taking even the peasants' livelihood away from them), collaborated with fascist-capitalists in the West, and infiltrated the East only to stir political unrest.

The equivalence that the film creates between landowners, fascism, capitalism, and crime corresponds to a trend evident in late 1950s cinema and television that constructs West Berlin and West Germany as the scheming, malevolent “other,” a source of crime and the home of capitalist fascists.¹⁹⁷ In her monograph *Envisioning Socialism: Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic* (2014), Heather L. Gumbert notes that this trope was prevalent in crime thrillers of the late 1950s and that when the Berlin Wall was erected in August 1961, news reports “placed the crisis within a context already familiar to East German television audiences, ultimately reinforcing the state’s justification of the Berlin Wall” (104). The Wall fit neatly into a familiar crime-ridden narrative world of smugglers, border-crossings, and *Republikflucht* (“flight from the Republic,” i.e., the GDR). *Castles and Cottages* may be understood in this context, that is, as an *Aufbaufilm* (“construction film”) adopting elements of the East German crime thriller genre. Here,

die-hard Nazis) and/or to the ‘evil West’,” 140—an interpretation of the events that *Castles and Cottages* also espouses.

¹⁹⁷ See Heiduschke on Gerhard Klein’s *Berlin—Ecke Schönhauser* (Berlin – Schönhauser Corner; 1957), 61–68 and Gumbert 81–104 on the series *Blaulicht* (Blue Light; 1959–1968) and film/television in the period immediately prior to and following the construction of the Berlin Wall.

flight from the Red Army is framed as pre-emptive *Republikflucht* and the June 1953 uprising as sabotage from the West—complete with a murder intrigue, secret meetings, and clandestine border crossings.

The film may also be understood as a cinematic variant of the *Landstück* genre (“plot of land”), contemporaneously popular in the theater. Between 1949 and 1961, writes Wolfgang Emmerich, “nearly every more important playwright had written his own ‘Agrodrama’ (D. Bathrick)” (152)—dramas that treated rural life and the subjects of land reform and collectivization in particular. The topic of land reform, and even of collectivization (a current, very contentious event),¹⁹⁸ allows Maetzig to incorporate resettlers seamlessly into the narrative according to the model already employed in *Free Land*. As in *Free Land*, the resettlers constitute, on the one hand, a collective *Nebenfigur* within the emerging socialist collective, and yet, the film also introduces the Sikura family as an individualized example of just how successful refugee integration can be.

As far as the film frames them, the resettlers remaining in Holzendorf are not burdened with history like Anton and the other local large farmers. In this way, they are able to be construed as guiltless. No inquiry is made into the potential Nazi pasts of the resettlers nor of their potential collaborations nor of their own social status. Though some resettlers flee along with the Mecklenburg gentry, we do not need to question whether or not the remaining East Prussian resettlers were themselves gentry—no, here, huddled together under a barn roof, cramped into makeshift compartments in the manor’s front hall, their potential for dissent and unrest is subjugated to the “real” threat from the West, itself constructed as a return of the past. The potential

¹⁹⁸ The first wave of collectivization ran 1952–1953 and resumed in 1957, with collectivization being declared complete in the spring of 1960. For the divide between the official account of the “Socialist spring” and memories of those who participated (whether by will or by force), see Arnd Bauerkämper’s article “Collectivization and Memory” (2002).

they show, however, is to integrate into society, to accept land plots and to become good communists—like Christel Sikura, who, introduced to the audience as an exhausted refugee in a barn, first becomes the communist chairwoman before becoming a martyr when Bröker murders her in frustration as the uprising begins to unfold. While the local large farmers, such as Bröker, resist collectivization and the new communist government, the film frames the resettlers as the willing and devoted actors in building socialism.

The audience encounters the resettlers, not in treks across frozen wastes, but huddled in the courtyard of the Holzendorf castle. The flight that the film depicts begins within the borders of the *Altreich*, in the Mecklenburg village of Holzendorf—not in East Prussia. Furthermore, those who flee are not the filmmakers' concern—it is those who are left behind, or rather, who choose to stay, that are to be the subject of the audience's sympathy. It is the landowning gentry, the Count and Countess and their pack, and a whirl of refugees who erupt into chaos at the announcement that “die Sowjeten kommen!” (“the Soviets are coming!”). The Count flees in a fancy automobile loaded down with suitcases—but not before he has been punched in the face by a Polish forced laborer (“Nur ein bisschen Lohn für fünf Jahre Zwangsarbeit!” [“Only a bit of payment for five years of forced labor!”]) and has ordered that the livestock be driven westward (thereby depriving the peasants who remain of a means of sustenance). Those who live in the castle embody the two great evils: the centuries-long exploiters of peasant labor and the opportunistic fascist capitalists—collaborators with the Nazi regime. “The title already says what this film is about,” writes Leo Menter for *Die Weltbühne*. “Castles are the bastions in the long history of the ruling houses, and where there were castles, the cottages weren't far away.”¹⁹⁹ In fleeing, they acknowledge their

¹⁹⁹ Leo Menter, “‘Schlösser und Katen’. Der neue Maetzig-Film der DEFA.” *Die Weltbühne* 8 [East Berlin] (20 Feb. 1957).

guilt, as “it’s well known how things were done in Russia during the war. So, there’s panic all down the line, flight, and greed—to take anything that can be taken ‘over there’.” The so-called *Herrschaften* (“rulers”) perform not merely a flight from the Red Army, but, anachronistically, *Republikflucht*. According to the *Tribüne Berlin B* reviewer “D.B.,” those who flee are even responsible for the deep division between East and West.²⁰⁰

While the flight scenes, by nature of the chaos that unfolds and of the setting, do not much resemble the images from *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754 (cited otherwise in many of the films under analysis), the images of the cattle being driven out from their stalls do in fact hearken back to those newsreel images. The camera in *Castles and Cottages* perches partially behind a wagon wheel, beyond which cows and horses race by. With this wagon wheel in the foreground, the audience is granted a safe space from the chaos. When the camera pulls back, we learn that we have been gazing at the scene next to Hede, one of the local peasant women, who confronts the men driving the cattle, yelling: “Wovon sollten wir denn leben?” (“What are we supposed to live off?”). Both men and cows stampede chaotically. While the scene recalls the cattle herding scene that forms part of the report on the flight from the front in the Nazi newsreel *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754, the two are framed very differently. Whereas a herd of cattle plods along a street, conveying a sense of order in the *Deutsche Wochenschau* (see **Figure 18**), in *Castles and Cottages*, the cows disperse hurriedly across an open courtyard, their masters chasing after them (see **Figure 19**). The entirety of the flight sequence in *Castles and Cottages* is characterized by haste and chaos, but it is not the

²⁰⁰ D.B.: “One thing is extraordinary about this place: the same sunshine that falls on this little piece of life illuminates the farmyards of the peasants in the west of our Heimat just a few kilometers away. Here is the scar of the country, the border of Germany split in two, that the barons, together with their business partners, the lords Coal and Steel, dug into the earth a dozen years ago when they left their castles and manor houses. Twelve years ago, there wasn’t any dividing trench here. British troops had advanced deep into Mecklenburg. Their soldiers fraternized collegially with the first Soviet regiments. Fascism had been defeated.” Qtd. from “Schlösser und Katen,” in *Tribüne Berlin B* (6 Feb. 1957).

historical chaos caused by a delayed evacuation of the populace, as was the case in Königsberg and Breslau; rather, it is chaos born of hubris and selfishness on the part of the ruling class. The Count and Countess do not strive to take their peasants with them, but rather to run with as much as they can carry—or drive stampeding across the border.



Figure 18: Still from *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754



Figure 19: Still from Kurt Maetzig's *Schlösser und Katen* (1957)

As far as the historic event of flight from the Red Army and the presence of resettlers are concerned, the film centers both squarely within the confines of the SBZ and the GDR. Here, flight is a sign of guilt, of an allegiance to the upper classes and to the Nazis. Though this flight also takes place in 1945, it is not the flight from the lost East, but rather, from the perspective of the 1957 viewer, *Republikflucht*. The resettlers who choose to remain in Holzendorf, therefore, are the “good” resettlers. Because they do not flee from the Soviet occupiers, they are, according to the logic of the film, guiltless victims. Their potential for agitation is stilled with land reform—how could they clamor for their homes in the East when, despite all difficulties, they have land right here? This narrative runs counter not only to the reality of private and clandestinely organized refugee/expellee sentiment in the GDR, but also to the SED’s own position on the so-called “resettlers,” which largely treated them with suspicion.

***Wege übers Land* (Ways Across the Land; 1968)**

The third film to be analyzed, Martin Eckermann's five-part television film *Ways Across the Land* (1968), treats the topics of flight, the Oder-Neisse Line, and "resettlers" with comparative complexity—not least because these issues unfold over a span of more than seven hours. Like *Free Land* and *Castles and Cottages*, *Ways Across the Land* presents the world not as it is, but as it should be—an idealized version of the past to inspire citizens to continue to advance socialism in the present. In comparison to the two films just discussed, *Ways Across the Land* offers a more nuanced version of the GDR's antifascist foundational myth for it addresses the issue of the complicity of its citizens in the Nazi regime (this complicity is rooted primarily in the selfish desire for private property). Redemption, however, can be bought through a conversion to communism. In contrast to the other films, *Ways Across the Land* places flight in the context of Nazi atrocities against others, including the expropriation of property from Jews and Poles and their subsequent deportation. Already highlighted in the film's title, the road manifests as both a metaphorical and as a literal chronotope. The road of flight is at once intertwined with questions of guilt and responsibility against the backdrop of crimes perpetrated against Jews and Poles as well as with the "road" as we encounter it in the Grimms' fairy tales. While the film depicts the *Aufbau des Sozialismus* idealistically and according to familiar tropes of Socialist Realism as applied in the GDR, *Ways Across the Land* offers a protracted, even if very carefully tailored, examination of the flight from the Red Army, in terms of its causes and actors, its resemblance to other crimes committed by Germans, and the moral responsibility of the refugee as refugee and as *Neubürger* (or, in the protagonist Gertrud Habersaat's case, as a returning citizen).²⁰¹

In 1968, that is, "on the 19th anniversary of the founding of the GDR," Helmut Sakowski and the cast and crew of the film *Ways Across the Land* received the First-Class National Prize for

²⁰¹ For an explanation of the basic tropes and tenants of Socialist Realism, see Hake 100.

Art and Literature, a high honor recognizing the film's artistic and ideological value (Hoffmeister). For Karl-Heinz Mertins and many other viewers, the film was worthy of the prize "because it helps to strengthen our Socialist awareness of the State formatively."²⁰² This popular epic film, drawing more than 54,000 viewers each night of the five-night premier,²⁰³ focuses on the fate of Gertrud Habersaat in her quest for happiness, which she defines for most of the film as respectability, dignity, and a farm to call her own. Her search for happiness begins at a large estate "irgendwo in Mecklenburg" as Nazi Germany invades Poland. She marries Emil Kalluweit (a member of the Nazi party), not for love, but for the opportunity to escape her rejected lover (and heir to the estate, Jürgen Leßtorff)—and to have land of her own. As *Ostsiedler*, Gertrud and her husband Kalluweit move to the Wartheland and take over a farm expropriated from Poles. There in occupied Poland, Gertrud adopts a Jewish girl who had become separated from her parents while the Nazis were expelling them from their homes; soon enough, the Jewish girl, Mala, is joined by a Polish boy, Stefan (in order to receive the papers of a deceased Polish girl for Mala, Gertrud needed to adopt her brother). Kalluweit enlists to fight on the front in order to avoid an SS-officer who has been coercing him to join the *Einsatzkommandos*. At the end of Part II he leaves Gertrud, but not without hesitatingly providing her with the signature needed to complete the adoption papers.

The film then skips from 1939 to the winter of 1944/45, just as Gertrud and the two children flee from the Soviet army. During the flight, a Russian soldier shoves a crying infant into her arms: her third adopted child. Rather than lead her into the unknown, however, her trek brings her back to her hometown of Rakowen, now in the SBZ. In conjunction with Gertrud's saga, the film also

²⁰² Mertins, "Eines Nationalpreises würdig." This article appears both in *Norddeutsche Neueste Nachrichten* (2 Oct. 1968) and in *Mittelddeutsche Neueste Nachrichten* (30 Sept. 1968).

²⁰³ The film enjoyed 54,200–57,700 viewers per night during the premier, and 34,300–37,600 viewers for its re-run in October. See "Dramatische Kunst. 01 Mehrteiler."

follows the path of Willi Heyer, a German Communist who not only spent years in a Gestapo jail, but also a KZ, from which he escapes as part of a plan to save a Polish professor of the Jagiellonian University. After the war, Gertrud falls in love with Heyer, who becomes the new mayor of Rakowen. Still disenchanted with their marriage, Kalluweit and Gertrud separate after he returns years later (not directly from a POW camp, but after a sojourn in West Germany), thereby freeing Gertrud and Heyer to pursue happiness together—as a couple in love and as partners in establishing the local collective farm in 1953.

The film's epic dramatic narrative encompasses the *Gründungsmythos* ("founding myth") of the GDR, which defined itself in opposition to both the Third Reich and the FRG. Wolfgang Emmerich identifies the hallmark characteristics of this myth as antifascism, opposition to the capitalist-imperialist West, and the hard-won establishment of socialism.²⁰⁴ In addition to praising the hard work of antifascist Communists, this founding myth also provides what David Bathrick calls "a prescription for political atonement on the basis of which nonresisters, nonvictims, fellow travelers, and even active Nazis could be anointed 'the victors of history' by virtue of their participation in the new society" and the commemoration of a generic group of victims (i.e., those persecuted under fascism) (17–18). While *Ways Across the Land* does not shy away from naming specific victims of fascism (namely, Jews and Poles), the film spins narratives of Communist sainthood (Willi Heyer), of the transformative incorporation of Germans who had been complicit in the Nazi regime into a socialist society (Gertrud Habersaat and Emil Kalluweit), and of the other fascist-capitalist Germany (SS-officer Schneider).

The film incorporates both of the pedagogical GDR perspectives in approaching Nazism as articulated by Wolfgang Emmerich, with Gertrud and her husband Kalluweit embodying the

²⁰⁴ See Emmerich 29.

conversion of *Mitläufer* (and even former Nazis) and Willi Heyer embodying antifascist resistance.²⁰⁵ Even if viewers may have admitted to identifying only with Gertrud's moments of human compassion or suffering,²⁰⁶ her character provides the ideal role model for the average citizen of the GDR who had also been an average complicit citizen of the Third Reich.²⁰⁷ Sakowski does not allow her to sweep her own misdeeds under a zero-hour rug or to whitewash and forget them under a fresh coat of socialist community service. As much as she would like to forget that she participated in the Nazi program of *Ostsiedlung* at the expense of Polish citizens, the film does not allow her to do so—at least not completely. Neither does her adoption of two children (one Jewish, the other Polish) exonerate her from her participation in the terror waged against the Polish and Jewish populations.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, it is because Gertrud is similarly tainted by her involvement that her voice (now enlightened thanks to the guidance of Willi Heyer) carries any weight with the people of Rakowen. The arc of Gertrud's development from ambitiously self-centered individual to self-sacrificing, willing community leader and mother provides a model for the *Neubürger* of the GDR who can turn their own compromising past into a rallying point to encourage fellow citizens to strike out in new direction away from capitalist fascism and to warn those tempted by capitalism of its dangers.

²⁰⁵ Idem, 131.

²⁰⁶ See, for example, Anni Derkow, "Ich lebte damals selbst in Polen" and Marianne Müller, "Nur bei uns kann sich wahre Menschlichkeit entfalten."

²⁰⁷ Heather L. Gumbert notes that "the 1960s was the heyday of the conversion narrative on television, culminating in the stunning *Paths Across the Country* in 1968" (154), despite the fact that, as Marc Silberman has noted, this particular trend had already subsided in the literary sphere following Bitterfeld. For more about the conversion narrative in DEFA films, see Seibert 117.

²⁰⁸ The film condemns the exploitation of such deeds as being not only manipulative, but foolishly naïve. Jürgen Leßtorff, a fellow *Mitläufer* and member of the landowning class, encourages her to broadcast the adoption so that they can both win favor with the new regime (he had aided her in attaining the paperwork necessary to adopt the children). Such an instrumentalization of a private good deed (committed more as a result of compulsion than genuine goodwill) would be a continuation of the self-serving mentality which led to their entanglement in the NS-regime.

Gertrud Habersaat's husband, Emil Kalluweit, provides hope for the redemption even of low-level Nazis. Kalluweit straddles the worlds of servants and exploiters. The third son of a landowning father, he only possesses the right to be a worker on his eldest brother's farm. Dissatisfied with his lot, Kalluweit hopes to fulfill his dream of working his own land by joining the Nazi party and participating in the Nazi government's *Ostsiedlung* program. He finds a similarly dissatisfied mate in Gertrud Habersaat, who, rejected by her lover Jürgen Leßtorff, marries Kalluweit in order to maintain her dignity and fulfill her own dream of property. Unlike the SS-officer Schneider and the host of Nazi officials who surround Dr. Frank, a historical figure, Kalluweit is a low-level Nazi who has ingested the propaganda thoroughly enough to parrot its phrases pedantically and to assert his right as a German to the property of supposedly inferior races (namely, Poles and *Volksdeutsche*). When faced with the task of committing violence against these groups, however, Kalluweit exhibits fear and moral quandary. The only acceptable bloodshed is that between soldier and soldier on the battlefield—in order to avoid Schneider's demand that he join *Einsatzkommandos* in compensation for his new farmstead, Kalluweit volunteers for this allegedly honorable bloodshed on the front. As long as his own hands do not shed civilian blood, he considers himself to be innocent. According to his logic, despite the knowledge that physical harm will come to Mala should he deliver her to the authorities, if he does not physically commit this harm, he can claim ignorance. The task of the film is to expose the hypocrisy of this logic as well as the logic of private property and its connection to Nazi racial hierarchy.

After his internment in a POW camp, Kalluweit does not return immediately to Rakowen, but ventures to West Germany, where he has been able to save a decent sum of money working as a dairy milker. Through his membership in the Nazi party and postwar sojourn in the FRG, Kalluweit represents both the Nazi regime and the capitalist West Germany, two manifestations of

capitalist-fascism, with the latter country being officially the heir of the former. As such, Kalluweit can also serve as a model for those who have flirted with fascism in its overt (National Socialist) and covert (capitalist) forms. At the end of the film, Kalluweit chooses to settle in the GDR of his own accord, persuaded by the camaraderie of East German citizens—and the promise of his very own dairy cow.

The film suggests that the Gertrud Habersaats and Emil Kalluweits need a teacher, or rather, an *Erzieher*. Willi Heyer, the good Communist with a spotless wartime record (prison, KZ, anti-Nazi collaboration with non-Communist groups, Red Army soldier), has suffered much for the ideals of Socialism without compromise. Having experienced “another way,” he is able to guide Gertrud and Kalluweit towards his path, one which is open and does not have to lead to happiness (“Warum denn suchen? Vielleicht kann man es [happiness] selber machen” [“Why search? Maybe you can make your own happiness.”]), but which permits the traveler to create happiness through work and community. At the end of the film Gertrud, and even Kalluweit, have “arrived,” that is, they have set out upon Heyer’s path.

This slow, but steady conversion of *Mitläufer* is typical of the genre of the socialist *Entwicklungsroman*, in which “[b]ourgeois individualism and egoism are supplanted by the self-understanding of the social-self whose proper place is within socialist society” (Rider 361). Just as Gertrud and Kalluweit must be taught and “raised” by Willi Heyer, so too does the audience require direction. In 1953, GDR citizens may have needed gentle guidance toward the right path; in 1968, however, with the Soviet invasion of Prague, the audience requires a warning against the dangers of capitalism and reform, as well as a reminder of how much they have accomplished as a country over the course of nineteen years.²⁰⁹ If even former members of the Nazi party can be

²⁰⁹ Contemporary responses to the film repeatedly emphasize that the work is timely because of the events in the ČSSR and valuable because of its capacity to educate and instruct its viewers in the values of socialism. The liberal reforms

persuaded of the merits and the values of socialism, so, too, can dissidents and members of the *Ausbeuterklassen* in Czechoslovakia or FRG be coaxed into supporting socialism—to taking the path to socialism.

As the title of the film suggests, the major characteristic chronotope of this film is that of the road. The film employs the chronotope of the road on three levels: as a metaphor for the “path of life”; as a physical path that characters traverse (i.e., a setting for narrative events); and as a representation of historical events and of the typified “roads” associated with certain events (e.g., the road/railroad tracks of deportation, the road of flight from the Soviet army). Through Gertrud, whose fate is intertwined with that of the German nation, these typified roads intersect. These moments of intersection are didactic; they illustrate the exclusionary evils of capitalism/fascism, contrast with the cooperative, non-discriminating teamwork of socialism, and reveal the role of the individual (Gertrud) in (national) history.

“*Ways Across the Land*” captures both Gertrud’s physical journeys from Rakowen to occupied Poland and back, as well as the decisions she makes in the pursuit of personal happiness and security (the metaphorical paths of life). Since Gertrud’s development as a character parallels

that the Dubček government initiated in early 1968, and the conflict that these plans for reform created between conservative and liberal voices provoked the Soviet Union to call upon the Warsaw Pact states to invade Czechoslovakia in order to install a pro-Soviet government and to quell cries for reform. The invasion occurred 20–21 August 1968, only one month before the premier of the first episode of *Ways Across the Land* on television in the GDR (22 September 1968). Viewers of *Ways Across the Land* interpreted Czechoslovak cries for reform as cries for capitalism and for a return to the slippery road of fascism. Like many others, Helmut Michel, a teacher from Pirna, considered the film to be a much-needed political-ideological tool for legitimizing the GDR and socialism and for educating not only for those who helped to establish them, but also for youth—and reformers in Czechoslovakia. The film was finally broadcast in Czechoslovakia in 1971. The *Informations-Bulletin Kultur* (March 1971) reports that the film was a great success, even if the article hints that viewers expressed difference of opinion with regard to the socialist values that the film espouses (see the entry “grosser erfolg von ‚wege uebers Land’,” in *Informations-Bulletin Kultur* [March 1971]). The article attributes this dissonance to the “Ausbeuterklasse,” to those voices who had called for reform in 1968. Despite the time elapsed between the 1968 invasion and the premier of the film in Czechoslovakia, the film is read in the strict terms of class struggle and the historical necessity of socialism. For viewer responses to *Ways Across the Land* in the context of the invasion of Prague, see: ed. Abteilung Zuschauerforschung, *Der Fernsehzuschauer* 49, 52, and Helmut Michel, “Lebendiger und lebensnaher Geschichtsunterricht.”

that of the GDR, the German word “Land” is to be understood simultaneously as “countryside” and “country” (nation-state) as well. Before analyzing the manifestations of the road as a chronotope, I would like to discuss the alternate titles for the film—the 1967 original working title *Kein schöner Land* (“No Country More Beautiful”), and the title of the 1969 Polish broadcast, *Kłęski i nadzieje* (“Defeats and Hopes”). A brief examination both titles will illuminate the significance of the chronotope of the road as well as the importance of *Land* for understanding the film.

The original working title of the film in 1967 is the title of a popular folk song written by Anton Wilhelm von Zuccalmaglio (1840).²¹⁰ This folk song itself appears in the film as well as in Sakowski’s “television novel” (published in 1969 after the broadcast of the film). From the early screenplay to the film, the folk song migrates from title reference to a diegetic off-screen chorus in Part I. Kalluweit’s men practice the song off-screen in preparation for that evening’s festival at the Countess Palvner’s palace. The song occupies the auditory background of the scene in which Kalluweit proposes to Gertrud in the garden at the Leßtorff farmstead. Image concurs with the mood of the song: a man courts a young woman as she gathers flowers. Yet something is amiss: the proposal is a matter of convenience, and the lover-to-be wears a swastika and speaks of *Ostsiedlung*. If irony is to be read in this particular use of the song, it is as a temptation for Gertrud to see the proposal as “a way across the *Land*” that is more beautiful than all the rest “in dieser Zeit,” though the opportunities presented to her come at the price of human suffering. In the

²¹⁰ According to Waltraud Linder-Beroud and Tobias Widmaier, the *Abendlied*, “Kein schöner Land in dieser Zeit” (1840), became highly popular with the youth singing movement of the early twentieth century. Linder-Beroud and Widmaier summarize the content of the song thus: “Through the ‘we’-form and the use of popular topoi, the song lyrics develop the ideal image of friendly rendezvous on summer evenings in the middle of nature, with everyone gathered singing together. The fulfillment of the hope of repeated (male) singing gatherings in the same circumstances is left to God’s grace, and the ‘good night’ that one wishes to one another in the final stanza should also stand under His protection.”

television novel, the irony of the song is more apparent. The chorus is to be heard again in the background as Heyer unwillingly hangs the Nazi flag. Heyer does not find himself, as the song suggests, in the peaceful company of fellow travelers or lovers of nature, but rather in the company of those hungry for power and self-fulfillment, of those who threaten him for being an outsider. The ironic potential of the song and its title are reduced in the film in favor of the metaphor of the path of life.

When the film was broadcast on Polish television in 1969, it was under the title *Defeats and Hopes*. The title shifts the focus from the chronotope of the road present in “*Wege übers Land*” to the psychological motivations and crises to be encountered on said road. Similar to *Wege übers Land*, the Polish title also may be understood on two levels: individual/national defeat(s)/failures and individual/national hopes. *Wege übers Land* is comparatively more didactic. Because this film/title combination implies continued existence of the “paths” presented in the film and the decisions required to traverse them, viewers are instructed that there are decisions to make, actions to take, paths to follow, goals to meet. In his editorial column for *Radio i telewizja*, Zbigniew Wasilewski expresses dissatisfaction with Polish title for the film precisely for its lack of teleological didacticism:

The Polish title doesn’t inspire confidence: the original “*Wege übers Land*” or rather “*Drogi przez kraj*” was very awkwardly “translated”. Let’s add what is implicit: roads that are durable, convoluted, and disparate – but which certainly lead to their goal in the first German nation of workers and peasants. (3)

In comparison with the original title, the Polish version is far more static and lacks the suggestion of journeys, choices, and teleological goals—particularly the goals of socialism.

This discussion is not intended as a critique of the working title nor of the Polish title. Each variation provides critical evidence of the suggested frameworks for interpretation and reception. *No Country More Beautiful* and *Defeats and Hopes* highlight the ideological implications of *Ways Across the Land* as a title. The importance of the title increases in each version of the script itself. In several cases, for example, the initial frame of the first scene in an episode as indicated in the screenplay undergoes a change in the director's script. Each of the initial frames in the director's script begins with the image of a *road*. Furthermore, the voiceover summary of each episode ends with a variation on the question: "Wohin führt der Weg [auf der Suche nach Glück]?" ("Where does the path lead [in the search for happiness]?"). Each time the voiceover repeats this question, a road or path occupies the frame. In its metaphorical and concrete significations, the road—or as I will discuss it, the chronotope of the road—is worked ever deeper and deeper into the visual and metaphorical language of the film.

The chronotope of the road both as physical-temporal manifestation (setting) and metaphor develops in stages clearly demarcated by the episode introductions of the original 1968 broadcast. The very first frame of the entire film features a dirt road traversing the countryside. The camera sits in the middle of the road, steadily filming a cyclist (Willi Heyer) and his short exchange with a motorcyclist. The two men part ways and the title of the series appears in large block script, Willi Heyer's figure shrinking into the distance. At the very beginning of this 438-minute-long film, the title's meaning strikes one as merely literal: dirt roads (*Wege*) traversing the countryside (*das Land*). It is not until the voiceover provides a synopsis of the first episode that the metaphorical meaning of the title becomes explicit.

By the second episode, the audience has been introduced to Gertrud. At the end of the first episode, the wedding, which was to secure Gertrud's dignity as well as a farm of her own, has

ended in chaos and disappointment. The voiceover introducing the second episode situates the story as follows: “Unsere Geschichte beginnt 1939 im Dorf Rakowen, irgendwo in Mecklenburg, es ist Krieg. Nazideutschland hat Polen überfallen, will eine Welt gewinnen. Eine junge Frau ist auf der Suche nach Glück” (“Our story begins in 1939 in the village of Rakowen, somewhere in Mecklenburg. There is war. Nazi Germany has attacked Poland, wants to gain the world. A young woman is in search of happiness”). The synopsis concludes: “Eine junge Frau sucht Glück. Wohin führt der Weg?” (“A young woman searches for happiness. Where will the path lead?”). The answer: to a desolate town in occupied Poland. Both voiceover and initial sequence link Gertrud’s physical and personal journey with that of the German state—a link noted by both Sakowski and reviewers.²¹¹

The most dramatic manifestation of the chronotope of the road occurs under the auspices of flight. In the synopsis, Gertrud’s search for happiness has been shifted into the past tense, and yet, she is still “on the road”: “Eine junge Frau ist auf der Suche nach Glück gewesen. Sie hat alle Illusionen verloren und neue Sorgen gewonnen. Sorgen für zwei fremde Kinder. Wohin führt der Weg?” (“A young woman was in search of happiness. She lost all of her illusions and gained new concerns. Concern for two foreign children. Where will the path lead?”). The refugee trek follows an abysmal, burdensome path into the geographical and symbolic unknown. In the introduction to the third episode, the camera frames two lines of movement: a refugee trek on the left side of the frame, relegated to the margin; and a series of German military vehicles driving toward and beyond the camera in the center of the frame. Snow falls, the wind howls—even the trees lining the side of the road nearest the refugees appear to be blown sideways, threatening to topple onto them. The camera tilts up and pans left in order to focus on the pedestrians in a high-angle shot. It is over this

²¹¹ See, for example, G.S., “Wege übers Land” and the Helmut Sakowski interview also titled “Wege übers Land.”

image of the refugees that the title and “Teil 3” appear. Once the titles disappear, the camera brings the viewer down to eye level with individuals. It is as if the camera is looking for someone: Gertrud, whose own line of movement runs parallel to the retreat of the German army.

The fourth episode signals the divergence of generational roads and a shift away from the film’s square focus on Gertrud. While the narrative of the voiceover converges upon Gertrud and Heyer, the opening sequence depicts her adopted children. The voiceover summarizes the events of the previous episode in terms of Gertrud’s difficult *Erziehung* through the experiences of (fascist) war and its accompanying guilt, and articulates the beginning of the divide between the potentially complicit wartime generation and the decidedly innocent postwar generation. While the voiceover introduces the discourse of guilt and responsibility, the opening images express this discourse’s counterpart: innocence. While the older generation travails under moral and spiritual weight, as well as the task of rebuilding, the younger generation is characterized instead by its innocence and freshness, by the possibilities open to the youth.²¹²

This freedom of the younger generation is figured by images of mobility. In the opening image, the frame is bisected diagonally by the edge of a road bordering on a field. In this tracking shot, the camera keeps a teenage couple on a motorcycle in the lower right corner of the frame, the

²¹² The voiceover introduction for the fourth episode reads thus: “Gertrud erlebt die Grausamkeit faschistischer Germanisierungspolitik. [...] Sie hat einen Ruf gewonnen, aber sie würde mit ihrer Menschenwürde bezahlen müssen. Sie nimmt sich zweier Kinder an, sie nimmt ein drittes Kind zu sich auch mitten in den Wirren des Krieges. Sie kommt zurück in das Dorf Rakowen und ihr ist nichts geblieben von ihrer Habe. Was sie gewonnen hat ist Sorgen für drei Kinder. [After Schneider threatens her:] Gertrud will zum zweiten Mal das Dorf verlassen. Sie ist immer noch auf der Suche nach Glück. Heyer weist ihr den Weg. Man muss das Glück erkämpfen, indem man abrechnet mit jenen die Schuld und Unglück des Volkes sind. Der Weg ist schwer zu ihr” (“Gertrud experiences the cruelty of fascist Germanization politics. [...] She has gained a reputation, but she would have to pay for that with her human dignity. She takes two children unto herself, she also takes on a third child in the middle of the turmoil of war. She returns to the village of Rakowen and nothing remains of her possessions. What she has gained is concern for three children. [After Schneider threatens her:] Gertrud wants to leave the village of Rakowen a second time. She is still in search of happiness. Heyer shows her the way. One must fight for happiness by reckoning with those who are the guilt and misfortune of the people. The way is difficult to her.”). She is not alone in the search, however, thanks to Heyer. “Wohin führt der Weg?”

field and road whizzing by. The film cuts to a dolly-out shot which holds the motorcycle and the road in the middle of the frame. Despite the camera's tendency to hold the motorcycle steadily within the frame, the camera breaks away from the motorcycle at times, speeding up ahead of the motorcycle now, falling back again. The camera's play with the distance between itself and its subject evokes a sense of experimentation, of subtle rebellion, and freedom—all underscored by the noticeably jazzy variation on the film's musical theme. This opening sequence and the first scene of the fourth episode direct the story momentarily *away* from Gertrud's personal search for happiness. In the opening sequence, Mala is spending time with the boy who is soon to be her fiancé, discovering love, and the possibility of a future career away from the farm. Once the young couple stops, Mala's fiancé hands over the motorcycle to Stefan, who is learning to ride the motorcycle so that the two of them can engage in brash "class warfare" against the stubborn large landowners. The film brings the future happiness of the next generation into focus and suggests that it is dependent on mobility—signified again by the road.

If the fourth episode introduces the divergence in the paths to be taken by members of different generations, the fifth and final episode introduces the conflict between the happiness of the individual and that of the collective (country, community). The narrator of the synopsis emphasizes "her own" in order to make this dichotomy thoroughly clear: "Durch ihre *eigene* Arbeit auf ihrem *eigenen* Land, glaubt sie, das Glück für sich und die Kinder gefunden zu haben. Sie will es festhalten" ("Through her *own* work on her *own* land, she believes she has found happiness for herself and for the children. She wants to hold tight to it."). Now the question is where "her way" will take her: whether towards the community or towards selfish, antiquated, sedentary isolation. This present conflict is exacerbated by the return of the repressed, of history—embodied by the figure of Kalluweit. The introductory sequence depicts Kalluweit's return: The stationary camera,

situated in the middle of the road, films Kalluweit as he enters the frame and walks toward the horizon, that is, toward the village. As much as Gertrud has tried to bury her own past and complicity in manual labor and childrearing, the film suggests that such efforts to suppress the past can only achieve limited success. Seated uncomfortably, nostalgically, across from each other in her kitchen, the two converse about “was früher gewesen ist” (“what used to be”). In answer to Kalluweit’s question as to how she has managed to cope with the past, Gertrud answers laconically: “Die Kinder, die Arbeit. Und der war ein neuer Tag, jeden Tag was Neues. Man hat ja gar keine Zeit immer so an früher rumzugröbeln. Aber jetzt bist du wieder da” (“The children, work. And there was a new day, every day something new. You just don’t have any time to rummage around the past. But now you’re back.”). Through her speech, Gertrud claims that the past is unproductive, a distraction from pressing matters of the present. Her body language, however, both in this scene as well as in her confrontation with Bronka, Stefan’s biological mother, reveal that this attitude is merely a front—in reality, the past is a burden, one necessitating a kind of memory work and moral reckoning more painful than physical labor.

Her encounter with the past as figured in Kalluweit makes it clear that the desire for *Hof und Gut* that motivated her to become complicit in the deportation of Jews and Poles as an *Ostsiedlerin* is the same desire that prompted her refusal of the LPG. When the townspeople interrupt them with the announcement that they have nominated Gertrud to direct the LPG, Gertrud faces the bourgeois, fascist, propertied past and the socialist, communal collective huddled around the kitchen table. The presence of this ideological dichotomy, reified and represented in the people at her side, together with her recognition of the link between fascism and private property, motivates her to orient herself finally toward the collective. “Wie einer unter den Leuten lebt” (“how one lives among the people”) becomes more important than property; even a husband can

be replaced by the collective: “ich bin nicht allein gewesen, seitdem ich mit denen zusammen bin” (“I haven’t been alone since I’ve been together with them”). The road brings Kalluweit, and through him, the FRG, the Nazi past, as well as questions of guilt and responsibility. With Kalluweit’s arrival, the existence of a second path becomes apparent: there is the socialist path, and there is the capitalist-fascist path. Until his arrival, Gertrud remains unaware that she has not deviated from her desire for private property, that is, from the path that led her to complicity in the Nazi regime.

This in-depth description of each individual prominent occurrence of the road—that is, as the introductory framing device of each episode—is intended establish the context in which the flight from the Red Army appears. In contrast to the other four segments, whose opening scenes “on the road” are brief and generally symbolic, the opening scene of Part III is not a mere introduction to the episode; rather, the road is the primary setting of that episode. The film’s dramaturge Helga Korff-Edel was not entirely incorrect when she ventured that *Ways Across the Land* was the first film in the GDR to actually depict a refugee trek.²¹³ It is, moreover, not merely a clip of documentary footage, but an extended, trudging depiction, devoid of dramatic music, with only the diegetic sound of wagon wheels and the thick crunch of snow to accompany the images. In fact, Gertrud’s flight from the Red Army constitutes approximately twenty minutes of Part III,²¹⁴ meaning that structurally, it functions as the climax of this traditional five-part dramatic structure.

This is the climax, not only of Gertrud’s personal journey, but that of the German people, for her flight from the Red Army is intertwined with that of the retreat of the Wehrmacht and the

²¹³ *Free Land* was produced in the SBZ and *Castles and Cottages* depicts flight from the SBZ, not the lost East. See Korff-Edel, letter to Liselotte Hörnke (22 April 2002).

²¹⁴ Cf. Tiews 67.

imminent fall of the Nazi state. The metaphorical death of the Nazi state prepares the way for the birth of the antifascist GDR. Therefore, in the service of this particular foundational narrative, when Gertrud encounters Soviet soldiers in a bombed-out, desolate church, it is not a brutal, physical encounter, but rather a symbolic one—a meeting in which the Soviets charge Gertrud, the German, with the responsibility to help rebuild, and in which they declare her a mother, conferring upon her an abandoned infant. The statue of the weeping Virgin Mary with Child towers in the background as Gertrud, surrounded by what are now her three children, contemplates her new responsibility (see **Figure 20**).²¹⁵ In contrast to Mala and Stefan, this third child barely plays a role in the rest of the film. The child's function is primarily symbolic; he is the token signifying Gertrud's (and by extension, the German nation's) acceptance of responsibility for rearing new life, a chance afforded her by the sacrifice of others. For the Soviet soldier who passes on the infant not only lectures Gertrud on the hardships that Soviets have endured to make "Hitler kaputt," but he becomes a victim as well, shot dramatically in the doorway as he turns with a smile to tell Gertrud something as an afterthought.²¹⁶

²¹⁵ Unlike the Mother with Child images in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, where these images inscribed the women in the discourse of victimhood and as part of a *Way of the Cross*, Gertrud becomes the new, secular Mother with Child. Rather than a victim, she becomes a caretaker charged with responsibility. Cf. Niven, "On a Supposed Taboo" 232.

²¹⁶ In the TV-novel, the baby shines as a stark, innocent contrast to the war scene; the Soviets do not die.



Figure 20: Gertrud with the children in an abandoned church (during the flight). Still from Martin Eckermann's *Wege übers Land* (1968)

While in Frank Wisbar's *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, flight is the great, unjust trauma inflicted upon women, Sakowski and Eckermann implicate Gertrud in Nazi crimes even as they do not diminish the representation of the suffering that women such as Gertrud may have experienced along the trek. Suffering, so the film argues, does not preclude culpability. This lesson is instrumental for *Ways Across the Land* as a conversion film: Gertrud, and by extension, the German people, is made to confront her own complicity and to assume responsibility for herself and others, even as she is in the midst of tribulation.

Importantly, the entirety of the flight segment is preceded by the depiction of the deportation of Jews and Poles in the Wartheland. This context is missing entirely from the other German films that depict flight, both in the GDR and the FRG. For even while Frau Kubelsky defends a Jewish grandfather whom she had been hiding in her apartment (*Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*), the scene is anecdotal—Frau Kubelsky has nothing to do with the flight from the East. Gertrud, on the other hand, becomes witness to the deportation of Poles and Jews and to Nazi indifference to the humanity of those being deported. If the hardships Gertrud suffers during the flight from the Red Army occupy a gray area (neither just nor unjust), the suffering of the Poles

and Jews reads as completely unjust.²¹⁷ Three scenes in particular illustrate Gertrud's complicity in the German-inflicted suffering of Jews and Poles in occupied Poland: the deportation of Jewish residents (including Mala's family), the expulsion of the Polish residents from the home that Gertrud and Kalluweit are to inhabit as *Ostsiedler*, and the Polish partisan Jan's speech to the Kalluweits.²¹⁸

Gertrud and her husband Kalluweit arrive in the Wartheland during a mass deportation of Jewish residents—Kalluweit shops among the livestock and horses, while Gertrud fixates on a little girl, Mala, who is fixated on the magical down feathers floating all about her—oblivious to the violence that set them free from her mother's bedding. While Nazi soldiers maliciously play “keep-away” with the girl's doll, she becomes separated from her mother. Gertrud takes the child by the hand and searches for her, not quite grasping what fate actually awaits Mala and her family, even as she momentarily finds herself locked in a cattle car along with the other deportees. From

²¹⁷ Polish responses (as recorded by *Telewizja Warszawa's* 1969 survey) are rather ambivalent. Some respondents claim that the film is being used to justify the German people and the crimes committed in their name under the Nazi regime, even to portray them as victims. Others contend that the film rightfully shows a wide range of characters and responses to the war, that the film treats and in fact *should* treat Germans as a diverse group rather than a monolithic collective of evenly distributed guilt and undifferentiated evil. From the twenty-five telephone interviews conducted after the broadcast of Part IV, one viewer who had spent five years of forced labor in Bavaria praises the film as follows: “Such films have an effect on the viewer, they illuminate many matters, they eliminate prejudice against Germans. A lot of psychological moments were shown, people were shown just as they are. Of course, there were many kinds of Germans,” *Telewizja Warszawa* 4. Though the survey does not ask viewers to describe just how the film portrays Germans specifically, 70.4% of the respondents to the *Telewizja Warszawa* survey suggest that Germans *should* be shown “both as enemies and as good people, antifascists desirous of peace, etc.,” 54. Viewers also remain divided about the accuracy and thoroughness of the portrayal of the victimhood of Poles (see *Telewizja Warszawa* 35–38).

²¹⁸ A fourth scene could be included, though it takes place well after Gertrud's flight in 1945: the return of Bronka, Stefan's mother. She brings to light that which Gertrud and the film have successfully hidden from the audience: that Gertrud lied to the Nazi officers, claiming that she, not the crying Polish woman (Bronka), was Stefan's mother. As a result of this scene, Bronka had been interned in a KZ. Bronka comes to claim Stefan and bring him to his rightful home. Home, as it turns out, is not just with his mother or among Poles—home is to be Koszalin. The Germanized Polish boy Stefan is to live in the Polonized formerly German town of Köslin/Koszalin. Bill Niven writes that “[t]he fact that, in the final part of the series, the Polish mother of Stefan comes to the GDR to reclaim her son from Gertrud suggests, at a symbolic level, that the real post-war issue of restitution concerns not the return of formerly German territory by Poland, but the return to Poland of all that was taken by Germans,” “On a Supposed Taboo” 230.

this chaotic, public scene, the film cuts to a private Polish home, similarly turned inside out by the Nazis who are searching for hidden money and valuables. Gertrud, the sleeping Mala, and even Kalluweit watch uncomfortably as the soldiers ransack the home and forcibly escort the Polish residents from the house. In broken German, the head of the household turns to Kalluweit and Gertrud, issuing a condemning, prophetic warning: “Du nicht vergessen diese Nacht. Aber Unglück kommen zurück. Dann du wissen warum” (“You not forget this night. But misfortune come back. Then you know why.”). This night, the shattered glass of a framed Black Madonna reproduction and still-warm bedsheets are too much for Gertrud, and, after arguing with Kalluweit, she opts to sleep downstairs in a corner with Mala. As she delicately plucks a down feather from Mala’s hair, evidence of Jewish and Polish expulsion occupies the same dark space (cf. **Figures 21 and 22**). At this point, Gertrud’s horror lies not so much in the violence against the Jews and Poles, but in the fact that she had to bear witness to it and acknowledge their common humanity (“Dass man hat alles ansehen müssen, Auge in Auge mit diesen Leuten, das sind Leute wie wir” [“That you had to see everything, eye to eye with these people, they’re people like us”]).



Figure 21: Mala plays with down feathers during deportations.



Figure 22: Gertrud blows away a remaining down feather during the first night in a home expropriated from Polish residents. Still from Martin Eckermann's *Wege übers Land* (1968), Part II

When we see Gertrud again, it is in an orderly, “Germanized,” brightly-lit domestic space. Yet even here, the film does not allow her to enjoy this space without consequences, for her Polish servants are partisans and partisan-sympathizers who later return to Gertrud and her husband that which had been repressed: the Polish owner of the house (now suffering a head injury), the truth about Nazi genocidal politics, and the news that Mala is a Jewish child. Through the partisan Jan, this third scene puts into words what the previous two show: that Gertrud and her husband benefit from the unjust suffering of others, regardless of whatever justifications they may use to underpin their claims to Polish property. These scenes uniquely situate Gertrud’s flight from the Red Army in the context of Nazi genocidal politics and of Gertrud’s own role as expeller.

And yet, despite the inclusion of instances delineating Gertrud’s own complicity in violence against Jews and Poles, the majority of the war is missing from the film and the television novel. Interestingly, reviewers of the film do not find this omission troubling.²¹⁹ As reviewers confirm the accuracy of the film’s portrayal of forced choices, deportations, flight, and of the

²¹⁹ Viewers are troubled by the second temporal jump: 1945 to 1953. See, for example, Gunter Schandera, “Die Beschaffenheit der Wege.”

hardships of the immediate postwar period, they implicitly acknowledge that the story of 1940–1944 is also common knowledge, that it is unnecessary to depict its course.²²⁰

Although East German viewers praise the film as an educational tool for the youth, as a means of mediating the trials and tribulations of the older generation during the Nazi period and in the early years of the GDR, they do not appear to be upset that the core years of warfare are not included. Polish viewers, on the other hand, criticize the omission of the war years and the depiction of German occupation more generally. According to the survey respondents, the film oversimplified events and did not accurately portray the complex reality of occupation, but rather “przelakierował” (“painted over”) images of the war and occupation (Telewizja Warszawa 1). This is particularly the case among those of the older generations with firsthand experience.²²¹ Bernhardt’s weak justification for the film’s shorthand hinges on the recognition of a literary allusion, one which itself only allegorically refers to World War II—a paltry defense for omission

²²⁰ Germanist Rüdiger Bernhardt suggests that the parallels that exist between Gertrud and Mutter Courage indicate the course of the war without having to trudge through it, or “without having to let the war itself speak even once.” The film establishes Gertrud’s wartime exploitation already in 1939: the expropriation of a Polish farmstead and her personal employment of Polish servants (whether paid or unpaid is not clear). Gertrud “corrects” Brecht’s *Mutter Courage*, given that her story conveys a moral message and entails the transformation of the character: “Her path back to Germany becomes a path of material loss (made visible fantastically by the camera and elevated symbolically by the director via the progressively smaller size of the vehicles. This path is marked, on the other hand, by the gain of human wealth: this offers here an inverted Courage model,” Bernhardt. Gertrud is “umgekehrt” in a twofold sense: firstly, Gertrud-Courage gains children as she loses worldly possessions whereas Mutter Courage loses children as she gains cumbersome wares; secondly, Gertrude-Courage comes to the correct recognition of Socialist ideals as dictated by Socialist Realism, unlike Mutter Courage, who, much to the disapproval of East German critics, never recognizes the evil of war-hungry capitalism. See Sabine Kebir, “Brecht und die politischen Systeme,” 5. Having sketched in the parallels between Gertrud and Mutter Courage with the events of 1939 and 1945, the only necessary task, so Bernhardt argues, is to establish Gertrud as a satisfactory Socialist Realist Courage who can be emulated as a role model. Portrayal of the war years would amount to an unnecessary repetition of the Courage story.

The claim that the omission of the war years simply establishes shorthand for a corrective Courage narrative deflects attention away from the problems that Gertrud’s presence in occupied Poland could create for imposing a clean line of development for her character. In addition, the omission of 1940–1944 removes the potential for collective guilt, for communally committed crimes. The audience will never know, for example, if the suspicious community tried to provoke the authorities despite Mala’s (false) identification papers. The “community” as actor is saved from committing Nazi atrocities. This potential is allowed to manifest against Heyer and against his measures to confiscate property for the sake of “the greater good” (hungry refugee children and later, the country as a whole).

²²¹ See Telewizja Warszawa 57.

in a film which boasts of its realism and nearness to life. This temporal jump indicates hesitation on the part of the GDR to confront fully the terrors of Nazi occupation, a problem which, for nearly half of the respondents, supports their supposition that “nothing has changed” among Germans’ stance toward war and peace.²²²

Despite these criticisms and omissions, the film’s inclusion of Jews and Poles as victims of the genocide perpetrated by the Nazi state is of absolute importance considering the undifferentiated, generic commemoration of victims of fascism promulgated within the PPR, GDR, and Soviet Union.²²³ Nevertheless, the nature of these differentiated victims as represented in the film still adheres to stereotypes. Only the Poles and Soviets are depicted as active, resisting victims. The film’s rather stilted emphasis on the unjust suffering and heroism of the Poles and Soviets reflects, firstly, the GDR’s own attempt to establish good relations, or “friendship,” with Soviet bloc member states; and secondly, the film’s adherence to an early East German categorization of the “victims of fascism” that privileges ‘active’ victims (members of a resistance) over ‘passive’ victims (members of a particular racial or ethnic group).²²⁴

²²² Idem, 43.

²²³ Wolfgang Emmerich: “Since dogmatic Marxists considered National Socialism/Fascism fundamentally as a derivative phenomenon, namely, as it were, as a superlative of capitalism and imperialism with particularly reprehensible characteristics, they didn’t grapple with the ‘Final Solution’ beyond the economic frame of interpretation. They likely had to fall short of this because appropriately taking the Holocaust seriously would have compromised their unbroken progressive thought for good,” 37. See also Hake 95–96 and Thomas Jung’s article “Nicht-Darstellung und Selbst-Darstellung,” 49–70.

²²⁴ This dichotomy corresponds to the hierarchical categories of “victims of fascism,” established in 1948–1949, in which “it was per definitionem clearly distinguished between active ‘fighters against fascism’ (with their own gradual nuances) and the other ‘victims of fascism’.” This,” continues Thomas Jung, “does not in fact exclude Jews from the circle of the entitled, but banished the majority of them into one of the lowest categories of victims. Concretely, this means that as point twelve on the official list of the ‘Recognized Victims of Fascism,’ ‘Jews and other racially persecuted’ only come after naming eleven categories of ‘resistance fighters’ and ‘the persecuted,’” 54. See also 64–65.

The genocide of the Jews, however, is a matter to be whispered, to be revealed in secret. From Mala's own quiet nature and inability to express herself as a child, to Jan's revelation of Mala's true origins, Jews and the fate of the Jews under Nazi occupation is a hushed matter. In the fifth episode, Frau Habersaat (Gertrud's *Mitläufer*-mother) furtively tells the newly returned Kalluweit about seeing "Knochensplitterchen" ("little bone splinters") mixed among ashes (where she or anyone else was during the entirety of the war is a mystery, since the film skips from 1939 to 1945). When Mala enters the room, Frau Habersaat hugs her and bursts into tears—her unspoken understanding of what would have become of Mala had she and Kalluweit succeeded in handing Mala over to the authorities in 1939. With their deportation in 1939, Jews disappear from the film and are only present through Mala. Like Herr Wiśniewski in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, Mala is infantilized and silent as a victim.

Though identified as distinct victim groups, the film paints Jews and Poles as categorically different in terms of temperament and in their ability to respond to the threat of fascism (whether during the war or as part of the "class warfare" accompanying the establishment of LPGs). For example, as an amiable and loving teenager, Mala combs Gertrud's hair and massages her shoulders while discussing her own personal loss ("Ich weiß heute nicht, wer ich eigentlich bin. Zimmerbaum. Das ist ein bloßer Name. Nicht mehr. Kein Bild von meiner Mutter, mein Vater—keine Erinnerung. Nicht einmal ein Grab. Wie es doch alle Leute haben." ["I don't know today who I actually am. Zimmerbaum. That's just a name. Nothing more. No picture of my mother, my father—no memory. Not even a grave. Like all people have."]). As she turns to Stefan for his commiseration—after all, he too can only remember his parents as "ein Umriss, ein Schatten" ("a silhouette, a shadow")—he grows angry and runs off screen. Though raised as a German, Gertrud's adopted son Stefan is by nature a revolutionary-minded Romantic Pole—stormy, rebellious and

dissatisfied, full of aspiration. This scene illustrates that, despite the film's attempt to give speech to the suffering of these different groups, the film still holds to stereotypical depictions of these groups—qualities determined, not by nurture (the children were raised by Gertrud, after all), but by nature.

These stereotypes aside, the depiction of Gertrud's flight from the Red Army is far more nuanced than the depiction of flight in *Free Land* and in *Cottages and Castles*—this is true not only in terms of context or discourses of guilt and responsibility, but of the composition of the shots and its narrative trajectory as well. Although Alina Laura Tiews is certainly right to recognize that “the staging of flight in *Ways Across the Land* draws on the iconic images of the treks” (68), she does not explore the ways in which this mere similarity presents the opportunity for a re-interpretation of the event as it was depicted by, for example, the *Deutsche Wochenschau*.

Though the flight sequence in *Ways Across the Land* also opens with a camera elevated above the trek, the camera is positioned such as to provide the audience with a bird's-eye-view. In comparison to the *Deutsche Wochenschau* footage or even the springtime trek of *Free Land*, cameraman Hans-Jürgen Heimlich limits the scope of the composition. There are no long, winding treks curving through the landscape; rather, there are two truncated, parallel lines of movement: the line of refugees (relegated at first to the margin of the frame), and the line of military vehicles that occupy the road itself as well as the middle of the screen. The camera begins with its focus on the military vehicles, but sweeps over the trees to focus on the refugee trek (see **Figure 23**). While this composition is a visualization of the parallel that the film establishes between Gertrud's life

and the history of the GDR, it also adds an element generally missing from the other representations of flight we have seen: the retreat of the *Wehrmacht*.²²⁵



Figure 23: Refugee trek and retreat of the *Wehrmacht*. Still from Martin Eckermann's *Wege übers Land* (1968), Part III

The sequence highlights the *Wehrmacht*'s comparative advantage in mobility and its general indifference to the plight of the fleeing civilians: while the army has gas-powered trucks and priority on the roads, women and children struggle to pull handcarts through thick, snowy fields. After Gertrud and her three children, separated from the main trek quite early, are picked up by a stray German military vehicle, the camera offers us a commentary on the presence of the military during the civilian treks. While Gertrud gazes out the back of the military truck, the camera offers the audience an anonymous POV shot analogous in composition to one in the *Deutsche Wochenschau* (compare **Figures 24 and 25**). Rather than provide us with a view of the other plodding wagons, however, we see the small, lonely handcart fade into the distance. Even as Gertrud is being transported by a military truck, the image evokes solitude, abandonment, immobility and—given the iconicity of the handcart as a signifier of the trek—of suffering. The divergence between military mobility and the comparative immobility of civilians ends outside of

²²⁵ The exception to this is, of course, *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*. It is only because the *Wehrmacht* is in retreat that Kurt Reiser and his wife Maria are able to reunite along the trek. In the GDR, this film is the first to depict the *Wehrmacht*'s retreat in conjunction with flight. Cf. Bill Niven, "On a Supposed Taboo" 234.

Rakowen in the symbolic, synthetic image of Gertrud and the children resting, exhausted, among overturned and abandoned military vehicles on the side of the road. Unlike the other representations of flight, *Ways Across the Land* establishes a critical parallel between civilian refugee trek (Gertrud) and that of the *Wehrmacht* (as part of the history of the GDR).



Figure 24: Still from *Deutsche Wochenschau* 754



Figure 25: Still from Martin Eckermann's *Wege übers Land* (1968), Part III

And yet, as Tiews and Niven rightly point out, Gertrud's flight from the Red Army is historically atypical: she flees not from home, but towards home (flight is then a kind of "homecoming"); the children who accompany her are not biologically hers; rather than lose children along the trek, she gains a third.²²⁶ Alina Laura Tiews concludes: "It is only because the screenplay offers Gertrud the 'alibi' of being originally from Rakowen (that is, to come from west of the Oder and Neisse) that *Ways Across the Land* can be everything: a film about the flight and expulsion of the Germans, a film about socialism in the countryside, and, finally, a GDR-Heimatfilm" (76–77).

And while it is true that Gertrud's flight is actually a flight toward her home and not toward an unknown place, reading Gertrud's flight as a kind of "homecoming" ignores additional layers of meaning: firstly, this flight is the second of three instances in which Gertrud runs away; and

²²⁶ See Niven, "On a Supposed Taboo" 230 and Tiews 72.

secondly, it ignores the film's fairy tale interpretive framework. Retrospectively, that is, with the advancement of the narrative into the postwar period, the significance of the road of flight broadens. Though Gertrud's flight from the advancing front in Part III represents first and foremost a historic event, this is not Gertrud's only instance of flight. She also attempts to flee Rakowen, her home, twice. Both attempts to flee Rakowen (first as an *Ostsiedlerin* in response to Leßtorff's rejection, and secondly, in response to SS-officer Schneider's violent threats) signify an attempt to flee responsibilities and confrontations. In the first case, the attempt to preserve her dignity fails, precisely as the voiceover introducing Part IV explains: in order to acquire house and farm, she had to relinquish her human dignity—that which she had insisted meant most. During her second attempt to flee Rakowen, Gertrud and the children pause under a tree on the outskirts of town, surrounded by the rusting remains of overturned military vehicles. Willi Heyer happens upon them and coaxes Gertrud to return to town, insisting that, just as she cannot run from herself, so she should not run from others, or from her problems. In the language of the voiceover, "Heyer weist ihr den Weg [zum Glück]. Man muss das Glück erkämpfen, indem man abrechnet mit jenen, die Schuld und Unglück des Volkes sind. Der Weg ist schwer zu ihr" ("Heyer shows her the way [to happiness]. One must fight for happiness by reckoning with those who are the guilt and misfortune of the people. The way is difficult to her"). This scene takes place under the same tree where Gertrud and the children rested at the end of their trek as refugees.

While the scenes of flight from the front are couched in questions of guilt and (un)just suffering, the parallel location of Gertrud's flight from Rakowen retroactively recasts the historical reality of flight as a personal flight from responsibility and problems. In this setting, underneath the tree alongside the road leading to/away from Rakowen, all three instances of flight converge. What does this mean for the discourse on flight/expulsion? For one, it dissolves the claim of the

individual to victimhood (at least Gertrud's possible claim); furthermore, it dramatizes history, framing the historic event as a personal event, a necessary stage in the individual's development or coming-of-age, even as her own development is to parallel that of the GDR allegorically. Nevertheless, flight from the front becomes recast into the discourse of responsibility, of choices—questions of character and biography that transcend the specificity of Gertrud's historic moment while still being contextualized within that specific wartime reality.

In addition to inscribing the historical experience of flight retroactively within the realm of biographical drama, the film also draws on the tropes of fairy tales and incorporates their typical structures, thereby also drawing the lengthy depiction of the flight away from the realm of biography or history. In his study *Morphology of the Folktale*, Vladimir Propp notes that many tales “proceed from a certain situation of insufficiency or lack, and it is this that leads to quests [...]” (Loc. 890–902). As the synopsis-narrator tells the audience at the beginning of each episode, Gertrud “is in search of happiness.” She attributes her lack of happiness (*Glück*) to a lack of property. At the first opportunity to acquire property/happiness, Gertrud marries and begins her quest—in folkloric terms, she does so as a seeker-hero; in historical terms, as an *Ostsiedlerin*. Because Gertrud misidentified the object of her search (private property as happiness rather than community and socialism), Gertrud sets out on the road as part of her quest three times. In fact, the “trebling” of fairy tales, which Propp only mentions in passing (as it “has already been sufficiently elucidated in scholarly literature” [Loc. 1552]), peppers Gertrud's story: three flights along the road; three children (one Jewish, one Polish, one presumably German),²²⁷ and three

²²⁷ Although the film concentrates on Gertrud during the trek—on her grimacing face, her feet in the snow—Mala and Stefan are with her. While Mala sleeps atop the bundles on the handcart, Stefan helps Gertrud to pull the cart. The nationality of the children is of little consequence during the flight. As two plus one make three, they are the figures who, firstly, make Gertrud a mother, and who, secondly, contribute to the fairy tale interpretation of the flight.

suitors who correspond to three systems of rule (Leßtorff and feudal power, Kalluweit and National Socialism, Heyer and socialism).²²⁸

During the third instance of flight/search, Willi Heyer puts the film's structural parallels with the fairy tale into words. In coaxing Gertrud to return to town, he tells her a fairy tale, a thinly veiled retelling of her own life.²²⁹ In it, he explicitly reinterprets her quest in search of happiness/property as flight—as trying to run away—not from the Soviets or from a blackmailing former SS-officer, but from herself: “man kann nicht weglaufen von sich selber. Und von uns schon gar nicht. Wir holen nämlich jeden ein. Man kann sich keinen Weg zwischen den Wäldern suchen. Entweder in die Drachenhöhle oder mit uns über die gläsernen Berge. Na, kommen Sie schon mit mir” (“You can’t run away from yourself. And certainly not from us. We catch up with everyone. You can’t look for a path between the forests. Either into the dragon’s cave or with us over the glass mountains. Well, just come along with me.”). Heyer, the good Communist, is not only Gertrud’s *Erzieher*, but the audience’s as well. The purpose of Heyer’s fairy tale and the film’s fairy tale structural elements is to instruct, to gently lead the listener in a desired direction (whether to coax Gertrud back to Rakowen or the East German viewer into supporting socialism rather than those alleged wayward reformists in Czechoslovakia). According to the rule of threes, there are no options left beyond socialism, home (Rakowen or the GDR), or Heyer (the “right” love interest, but also the *Erzieher*): the roads are closing and happiness is to be found “with us” in socialism.

²²⁸ Many thanks to Annette Werberger (Europa Universität Viadrina, Frankfurt an der Oder) for drawing my attention to some of these instances of trebling.

²²⁹ Heyer is not the only storyteller. During the flight, Gertrud dreamily tells the children of Rakowen in folkloric terms. When Gertrud and the children arrive at the outskirts of the village, they all discover that the Rakowen of Gertrud’s story was just that: a fairy tale. The war has turned all that was green into gray and all that was sunny into clouds.

Indeed, as Gertrud and Willi Heyer skip off screen, hand-in-hand, the evening landscape illuminated by the moon and the bright lights of the castle (now occupied by the “people”), the film ends with a “happily ever after.” The heroine has been converted to socialism, the *Umsiedler* children finally have milk, and the enchantment of private property has been broken—the formation of LPGs is underway. According to the Socialist Realist doctrine, the world must be depicted (in this case), not as it was, but rather, as it should have been. This “should have been” includes the “resettlers”: they are primarily quiet figures in the background of the greater developmental drama of the establishment of socialism in the SBZ/GDR, only really surfacing as victims of the food shortages immediately after the war, shortages due in part to the unwillingness of the local large farmers to share their supplies (they, too, need to be weaned from capitalism).

Conclusion

Already with *Ways Across the Land*, the narrative begins to change: in East German films depicting flight, there is less of an emphasis on depicting *Umsiedler* as model citizens (in the late 1960s and beyond, they are no longer the threat to peace)—rather, the focus is primarily on the youth. Erwin Stranka’s *Die Moral der Banditen* (The Morals of the Bandits; 1974), for example, explores how the experience of war, flight, and expulsion may contribute to juvenile delinquency—whether these youths experienced these events firsthand or grew up in broken households grossly affected by these traumas. In the 1980s, cinematic representations of flight overwhelmingly (though not exclusively) depict children as refugees, with some even classifiable as children’s films.²³⁰ Like *Ways Across the Land*, these films, too, situate their depictions of flight within the tropes of fairy tales.

²³⁰ These films include Jürgen Brauer’s *Pugowitz* (1981), Egon Schlegel’s *Die Schüsse der Arche Noah* (The Shots of Noah’s Arc; 1983), and Hans Kratzert’s *Der Schwur von Rabenhorst* (The Oath of Rabenhorst; 1987).

One might suppose that, given the paucity of films showing flight and refugees prior to 1970, that these later children's films and fairy tales may have provided a means of sneaking the subject into East German cinema. In his article "On a Supposed Taboo: Flight and Refugees from the East in GDR Film and Television," Niven argues against this notion,²³¹ citing that other films, such as Joachim Hasler's *Der Mann mit dem Ring im Ohr* (The Man with the Ring in His Ear; 1983), also took up the subject, and that even the children's films included adult refugee figures. And while I agree with Niven that the use of fairy tale elements in these films about refugees and flight is not merely a means for producers to slip flight in past the censors, I find, nevertheless, that the fairy tale as a framework removes the subject from becoming a direct political commentary on the past. On the basis of the three films produced prior to 1970 that show flight from the East, I have demonstrated that "flight" had to be situated in a particular kind of narrative or in particular discourses in order to make it possible. For despite the comparative "surge" in films depicting flight in the 1980s, for the forty-year history of the GDR, very few films in the SBZ/GDR actually *show* the flight from the East. While there is no "total cultural suppression" (Niven 223), there are restrictions.²³²

In the three films under analysis in this chapter—the only three to my knowledge produced between 1945 and 1970 to actually depict flight from the Red Army—flight and refugees (and their returning POW husbands) are integral parts of narratives of the *Aufbau des Sozialismus* and the founding of the GDR; actual political ambivalence and downright hostility towards resettlers

²³¹ Niven's main thesis is that flight and refugees were not taboo in East German cinema, as has often been supposed. As far as I am aware, Niven is the first to work out to what extent flight and refugees are present in East German cinema, and his work has been indispensable for my own research.

²³² Certain topics related to flight, for example, were never permitted on the screen, namely, references to Soviet violence against Germans and the expulsions. Cf. Niven, "On a Supposed Taboo" 233–234.

is counteracted by their presentation as model citizens in the films (as the three films may also be considered examples of “conversion films,” it should be noted that the *Umsiedler* never need converting—the large landowners and salvageable members of the gentry are the ones who need to be convinced of socialism). The great evil according to these films is private property and the capitalist-fascists—not the *Umsiedler*, who have lost whatever ties they had to personal, private property, and are eager participants in land reform and collectivization. In *Free Land* and, to an extent, in *Castles and Cottages*, flight from the East is understood as a flight from Nazism (the refugees are victims whose lack of property seems to absolve them from whatever burdened past they may carry); on the other hand, flight to the West, away from the SBZ/GDR, away from Soviet occupation—this flight signifies guilt, that s/he participates in reactionary capitalist-fascism or that one had been complicit in the Nazi regime. In *Ways Across the Land*, however, the “interpretation” of flight as an event, is much more complex; nevertheless, the film places Gertrud, the atypical refugee from the East, firmly within the conversion narrative. In these films, flight, the identity of the *Umsiedler*, the role of the *Umsiedler* in the SBZ/GDR, and the *Umsiedler*’s economic and social situation are depicted not as they were, so to speak, but as they ideally should have been.

The films’ audiovisual representation of the flight from the Red Army engages with the source documentary images rather critically, even if these revisions of the documentary representations are not explicitly intended to be critical. Rather than merely restage or splice in documentary images, *Free Land*, *Castles and Cottages*, and *Ways Across the Land* approach the representation of flight from different perspectives: *Free Land* highlights the impersonality of the *Deutsche Wochenschau* footage; *Free Land* and *Ways Across the Land* make the move from general and expository to specific and inquisitive, with *Ways Across the Land* forcing the audience to trudge step for step along with Gertrud and her two (later, three) children; *Castles and Cottages*

produces a scene of chaos and focuses on the selfishness of the gentry, re-interpreting, in the process, the cow-herding scene in the *Deutsche Wochenschau*; *Ways Across the Land* shows what is only implied by the cameraman in the *Deutsche Wochenschau*—the retreat of the Wehrmacht in parallel with the flight of civilians.

Furthermore, *Cottages and Castles* and *Ways Across the Land* make the move to include “others” in these representations of flight, namely Jews, Poles, and Soviets—though this move may be due largely to a need for the GDR to emphasize friendship with the PPR and the USSR (both produced well after the 1950 Treaty of Görlitz/Zgorzelec). *Free Land* (1946), by contrast, notably does not include the fates of non-Germans. In *Ways Across the Land*, however, Gertrud’s own victimhood is dramatically intertwined with her role as a witness of injustice, as a bystander, and as an agent of suffering. Due in part to the nature of the GDR’s relationship with the Soviet Union and the other sister socialist states, *Cottages and Castles* and *Ways Across the Land*, like the later DEFA films in the 1980s, bring the fates of “others” into dialogue with the plight of Germans fleeing from the Red Army in 1944/1945. As we turn to representations of forced migration in Polish cinema, we will see that these intersections—between Polish and Jewish forced laborers, Polish expellees, and German expellees, in particular—are remarkably hard to avoid.

Chapter 4: Repatriates in the Recovered Territories: Forced Migration and the Border Changes in Feature Films of the Polish People's Republic

Introduction

Any twentieth-century or post-WWII history of Breslau/Wrocław, Danzig/Gdańsk, Lwów/L'viv, or Wilno/Vilnius—or Poland and the two Germanys, for that matter—would be incomplete without a consideration of the mass forced migrations that occurred during and after WWII as a result of the war and the border changes that came into effect with Nazi Germany's surrender. In Polish literature and poetry, the works of authors as varied as Henryk Worcell, Eugeniusz Paukšta, Leszek Prorok, Wojciech Żukrowski, and Czesław Miłosz illustrate the intertwined nature of the topics of “repatriation,” the lost eastern borderlands and the so-called “recovered” lands in the west. What of film and television? While the *Polska Kronika Filmowa* (Polish Film Chronicle; PKF) championed the “return” of the territories to Poland, unveiling renovated medieval Piast architecture, and cheering “Szczęśliwej drogi! Żegnamy na zawsze!” (“Happy trails! We're saying good-bye forever!”) to the Germans with their handcarts and suitcases (all the while neglecting to explain the origins of the new Polish residents of cities like Wrocław and Szczecin),²³³ the topic of forced migration as a result of the border changes (whether as “repatriation,” “resettlement,” “evacuation,” or “expulsion”) is scarce—and if not scarce, then subtle—in feature films of the Polish People's Republic.

Given the presence of a veritable official taboo on the subject of the loss of the *Kresy* in the PPR (evidenced by nomenclature such as “repatriacja” instead of “wysiedlenie” or “wypędzenie” to describe the experiences of Poles forced to leave their homes in the *Kresy*) as

²³³ See *Polska Kronika Filmowa* 10/46 (29 March 1946).

well as the “frontier” discourse of propaganda posters and newsreels which suggests that the land in the Recovered Territories is free for the taking (i.e., there are no native populations to expel forcefully)²³⁴—it is not surprising that the plight of any such expelled population is similarly suppressed in feature film. Rather than erase these groups in their entirety, the language used to mark them and describe their experiences is euphemistic, inscribing these groups and their experiences into an ideological-mythic narrative of history.

As noted in the introduction chapter, the term “repatriate” denotes a person who returns to his/her home country (*patria*), whether voluntarily or involuntarily (by force and/or by legal action). In the early postwar newsreels of the PKF (1945–1948), the term refers primarily to Poles who had spent the war either in exile or in KZs (France, England, Germany); the newsreel segments celebrate their return to Poland. In an interview with Mirosław Maciorowski for *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Szczecin), Grzegorz Hryciuk explains that, in writing about the forced migration of Poles from the *Kresy*, he prefers the term “przesiedlenie” or even the contemporarily used term “ewakuacja”

because the Polish government entered into agreements about evacuation with the republics of the Soviet Union. Only one agreement, from July 1945, may be described as repatriation, because it concerned Poles transported away to the depths of the USSR. That the word was later also used in relation to those resettled from the *Kresy* is a result of the fact that the State Repatriation Office looked after them. That’s how it came into the language. ‘Repatriacja’ is, however, a mendacious term, and ‘ewakuacja’ not quite adequate, so I think that the most appropriate term is ‘przesiedlenie’.²³⁵

²³⁴ See Domke 30.

²³⁵ Grzegorz Hryciuk, “Jak Polacy z Kresów jechali na tzw. ziemie odzyskane.”

While the term “przesiedlenie,” if not also “wypędzenie” (“expulsion”), better describes the actual, historical situation, the term “repatriation” is encountered frequently, applied in a wide variety of contexts to a wide variety of situations and people—whether as an outright lie, a euphemism, or a gross generalization or false association.

Another group, for example, whose “resettlement” or “deportation” PUR helped to organized was that of the Germans in the so-called Recovered Territories. In PKF 10/46 (29 March 1946), two terms denoting forced migration are used: repatriation and expulsion. “The Germans are leaving Poland,” the narrator declares. The Germans on the streets of what is now Wrocław smile at the camera as they pass by with their bundles, children hold hands and play. The Germans, so the segment argues, are happy to be repatriated. This peaceful, almost jubilant exodus stands in contrast to the parallel constructed by the film: footage of the expulsion of Poles from Warsaw to transit camps and KZs in 1944. Despite this “tragic” expulsion, the Poles, so the narrator assures us, exercise self-constraint and are not out for revenge. In contrast to the manner in which Germans expelled Poles, the Poles are even well equipping the Germans for their journey. A second newsreel, similar in narrative and imagery, purports with a bit of tongue-in-cheek, to dispel any suggestion of violence or revenge: “Just look at these unhappy ones,” says the narrator, “tortured by cruel Poles” (PKF 23/46). The people seated at the edge of the open door of a train car wave emphatically and smile at the camera as the train begins to move. Although the Poles expel the Germans, they are also simultaneously repatriating the Germans, a situation that, per the newsreel, appears to satisfy both parties. The term “repatriate,” however, had been used to refer to both the Germans who were to be expelled as well as the Poles who had been expelled from the *Kresy*. In both cases, the use of the term “repatriate” or “repatriation” is euphemistic at best, for it suggests that they are returning “home,” rather than leaving it behind.

Images, however, of eastbound trains carrying home repatriates who had been in exile or in Germany as forced laborers or inmates outnumber those of Germans or Poles from the *Kresy*.²³⁶ Although the PKF may feature settlers from the *Kresy* as hard-working, successful pioneers in the Recovered Territories,²³⁷ their particular journey to the west is missing, despite the existence of the recurring newsreel segment “Na zachód!” (“To the west!”). In one such segment, the train that rushes off camera is, according to the voice-over, one of the longest repatriate trains to head to the Recovered Territories. It is not clear who these “repatriates” might be, as the only clearly identified group, the peasants from Piotrków County (near Łódź), cannot (from the information provided) be considered “repatriates” by any definition.²³⁸ Furthermore, due to the speed of the train, the angle of the shot, and the quality of the image, few details about the train are legible. In July 1945, the PKF advertised the bounty available to settlers on the Recovered Territories, providing sweeping images of lakes, heaps of potatoes, fields of roaming cows, and neat cottages. The satisfied customers, so to speak, include those who smile as they—with the help of a PUR-worker—transport their belongings into town. These may be, as the accompanying voice-over suggests, those from central Poland *and* beyond the Bug.²³⁹ Above all, as the large sign greeting these settlers

²³⁶ These repatriate trains are easily distinguishable from those trains full of repatriates that we see in the films analyzed in this chapter. The repatriate trains depicted in the PKF celebrate the return of these repatriates from the west, not to the “Piast lands” or the “motherland” but to their “fatherland.” “Wracamy do Polski” (“We’re returning to Poland”) or “Wracamy do Ciebie ukochana ojczyzna po długich latach wygnania” (“We’re returning to you, beloved Fatherland, after long years of exile”) (PKF 5/46 [21 Feb. 1946]). Though the term is the same, both point of origin (west) and destination (*ojczyzna* versus *macierz*) differ.

²³⁷ See, for example, the brief portrait of a settler from Vilnius: PKF 33/46 (1 Oct. 1946).

²³⁸ See PKF 20/47 “Na zachód! Osadnicy z powiatu piotrkowskiego” (“To the West! Settlers from Piotrków County”) (21 May 1947). An even earlier newsreel, PKF 19/45 (21 July 1945), depicts the arrival of “settlers” by foot and wagon, the distribution of keys, the tidying-up of dirt courtyards, and zooms in on the sign “Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny Punkt Etapowy.” The newsreel defines these people as “osadnicy,” in terms of their status as new arrivals and not in terms of their pasts or points of origin.

²³⁹ The text, read by Władysław Hańcza, is as follows: “Coraz więcej Polaków zza Bugu i województw centralnych znajduje pracę i chleb na Ziemiach Odzyskanych” (“More and more Poles from beyond the Bug and from the

announces, “Gospodarzem ziem zachodnich musi być lud polski” (“The steward of the western lands must be the Polish people”)—regardless of the individual’s most recent physical point of origin.

This discussion is not to discount the importance of the footage of Poles returning from exile or KZs, whose experiences perhaps better fit the definition of the term “repatriate.” Rather, it is my intention to highlight the following with regard to use of the term “repatriate” particularly as applied to PKF-images of “repatriates” and repatriate trains: firstly, the general absence of a particular group to whom this nomination had also been applied (the Poles who had been expelled from their homes east of the Bug and San Rivers); secondly, the tendency to lump together all new arrivals to the Recovered Territories as either “settlers” or “repatriates,” regardless of the reasons which motivated them to leave their most recent points of origin; and thirdly, the rather euphemistic application of the term for groups whose homes had been affected by the changes to Poland’s border (in this case, Germans and Poles). Importantly, Ukrainians and other east Slavic minorities, whose homes were also equally affected by Poland’s border changes, appear to be entirely absent from the newsreels (1945–1948), despite the fact that Operation Vistula was enacted during this period.

As such, the goal of this chapter is to identify and analyze these strategies of taming/sublimating this problematic topic (expulsion/repatriation in the context of the formerly German territories) as well as how expulsion is in fact represented in Polish feature film (with special attention given to the iconic images of the “repatriate train”). In order to provide a round treatment of the subject, I have selected four films for primary analysis: Stanisław Różewicz’s *Trzy kobiety* (Three Women; 1957), Kazimierz Kutz’s *Nikt nie woła* (No One Calls; 1960), Jerzy

central voivodeships find work and bread in the Recovered Territories”). (Hańcza, as it turns out, is also the actor who plays one of the key protagonists of *All Friends Here*, Władysław Kargul.) See PKF 18/45 (16 July 1945).

Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski's *Prawo i pięść* (The Law and the Fist; 1964), and Sylwester Chęciński's *Sami swoi* (All Our Own; 1967). All of these films depict expulsion in some form and take place in the so-called Recovered Territories. Given the ceaseless flow of human traffic across the region in the early postwar period (forced laborers and KZ-inmates returning from Germany, Germans fleeing or being expelled westward, Poles moving to the Recovered Territories from the *Kresy* and prewar Poland, Ukrainians and Lemkos being "dispersed" throughout the northern and northwestern regions), films such as these, which feature this temporal-spatial configuration as a setting are the richest sources not only of the representation of forced migration and expellees, but of the intersection of different groups of expellees and displaced persons.

Prior to the 1960s, only six films that I am aware of feature the Recovered Territories during the immediate postwar period.²⁴⁰ Although far more such films were produced during the 1960s, I have chosen to include analyses of two pre-1960s films (*Three Women* and *No One Calls*) for several reasons: these two films are of significant artistic merit; they offer extraordinary perspectives on the Recovered Territories and on the experience of forced migration; and, finally, they both continue to enjoy popularity.

During the 1960s, however, the topic of the Recovered Territories in the early postwar period (and, with it, the topic of expulsion/repatriation) appears prominently in Polish cinema.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Jan Rybkowski's *Godziny nadziei* (Hours of Hope; 1955), Stanisław Różewicz's *Trzy kobiety* (Three Women; 1957), Konrad Nałęcki's *Dwoje z wielkiej rzeki* (Two from the Great River; 1958), the chapter "Wdowa" of Kazimierz Kutz's *Krzyż Walecznych* (Cross of Valor; 1959), Stanisław Lenartowicz's *Zobaczmy się w niedzielę* (We'll See Each Other on Sunday; 1959), and Kazimierz Kutz's *Nikt nie woła* (No One Calls; 1960).

²⁴¹ Polish films produced in the 1960s in which the Recovered Territories and/or the former eastern German territories feature as the setting include: Kazimierz Kutz's *Nikt nie woła* (No One Calls; 1960), Bohdan Poręba's *Droga na zachód* (Road to the West; 1961), Witold Lesiewicz's *Kwiecień* (April; 1961), Kazimierz Kutz's *Tarpany* (Tarpons; 1961), *Skąpani w ogniu* (Bathed by Fire; 1964), Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski's *Prawo i pięść* (The Law and the Fist; 1964), Julien Dziedzina's *Rachunek sumienia* (Examination of Conscience; 1964), Sylwester Chęciński's *Agnieszka 46* (1964), Paweł Komorowski's *Pięciu* (The Five; 1964) and *Sobótki* (1965), Jean Leannot's *Bumerang* (1966), Sylwester Chęciński's *Sami swoi* (All Our Own; 1967), Kazimierz Kutz's *Skok* (Jump; 1967), Jerzy Passendorfer's *Kierunek Berlin* (Destination Berlin; 1968) and *Ostatnie dni* (Last Days; 1969), Przybył Hieronim's *Rzeczpospolita babska* (Republic of Women; 1969), Ewa and Czesław Petelski's *Jarzębina czerwona* (Red Rowan;

This is due in part to the publication of the “Resolution of the Central Committee in the Matter of Cinematography.” This document, drafted in June 1960 following the Third Meeting of the PZPR in March 1959, largely determined the course of Polish filmmaking for the rest of the decade.²⁴² In addition to, and in conjunction with contemporary concerns,²⁴³ the Central Committee (*Komitet Centralny*, KC) demanded a specific cinematic reevaluation of the past—and of WWII and the Recovered Territories in particular:

[...] it is necessary to draw themes from history and the experiences of war and occupation, from the joint struggle against National Socialism [literally, “Hitlerism”] on the part of Polish and Soviet soldiers as well as partisans from the period at the beginning of the people’s power, from the struggle for raising Poland out of ruins and wartime destruction, for the fusion of the Western Territories with the motherland. (“Uchwała Sekretariatu KC” 31)

In these specifications, the KC outlined a program that, firstly, demanded a different aesthetics and a different view of Polish history and society than that of the films of the Polish School; and, secondly, was to legitimize the Party’s own authority and its “friendship” (or rather, dependence) on the USSR. The image of WWII that the KC paints defines and glorifies the Communists as the liberators of Poland from Nazi occupation, and as the protector and rebuilder of Poland and its

1970), Jan Rybkowski’s *Album polski* (Polish Album; 1970), Jerzy Afanasjew’s *Prom* (Ferry; 1970), Zbigniew Kuźmowski’s *Raj na ziemi* (Paradise on Earth; 1970), and Andrzej Jerzy Piotrowski’s *Pułapka* (The Trap; prod. 1970, 1971). The episode *Nazajutrz po wojnie* (The Day After the War, dir. Lech Lorentowicz) of the TV-serial *Dzień ostatni, dzień pierwszy* (Last Day, First Day; prod. 1965), also takes place in the Recovered Territories.

²⁴² The production and distribution of Polish School-style films such as Tadeusz Konwicki’s *Salto* (Jump; 1965), Andrzej Munk’s *Jak być kochaną* (How to be Loved; 1962), and Andrzej Wajda’s *Popioły* (Ashes; 1965) illustrate that while the reach of the resolution and the Script Evaluation Commission was long, it was not all encompassing.

²⁴³ Amid decrying the pessimism of the Polish School, the poor artistic quality of ideologically appropriate films, and the overreliance on imported Western films (especially those of a nature questionable to socialist values), the resolution outlined the “moral-educational” topics that new Polish films were expected to address henceforth. The resolution encouraged the use of Polish literary models and genre films (in order to reach a wider audience), as well as the treatment of topics that both supported socialism and addressed contemporary social concerns.

newly acquired—but emphatically Polish—western territories. In short, films were to establish, as Wiktoria Malicka writes, “a socialist consciousness of the masses” (108)—to reshape collective visual memory of WWII and the history of the PRL through entertainment (i.e., literary adaptations and genre film) in order to legitimize the authority of the ruling party.

Polish films of the 1960s were to grapple with the recent past and wrest it away from the Polish School, whose pessimistic, martyrological, and AK-sympathetic films were becoming iconic, cinematically speaking, of the war. Although the document does not cite repatriation/expulsion as a topic recommended for new cinema, it provides guidelines as to how topics falling under the rubric of “WWII” or “the fusion of the Western Territories with the motherland” (e.g., repatriation and expulsion) are to be interpreted.

Although one could speak of an entire myth-complex concerning the Recovered Territories,²⁴⁴ the most important “myths” as relates to the subject of expulsion/repatriation and expellees/repatriates include: the return to the Piast lands, the active “recovery” or conquest of these lands, the persistent threat of German aggression, the idealization of the settlers of the ZO, the Polish Wild West, and the youthfulness of the territories, among others. Unless otherwise noted, these are the myths that I am referring to when I speak of “official narratives” and “myths.”²⁴⁵ The myths comprising the myth-complex of the Recovered Territories are observable

²⁴⁴ For more on the term “myth-complex,” see Donato Somma, “Madonnas and Prima Donnas,” 263.

²⁴⁵ I am indebted to the work of Piotr Zwierzchowski, Jakub Zajdel, and Mikołaj Kunicki for their painstaking work to outline and analyze the invented myths of the Recovered Territories and specifically of the role of the Polish Army in “recovering” and securing them. Their work highlights the many ideological commonalities between the films in the 1960s that feature these ex-German territories, and has paved the way for me to analyze these films from a different perspective: that of forced migration. See Bogumił Drozdowski, “Lubuskie lato filmowe”; Mikołaj Kunicki, “Pioniere, Siedler und Revolverhelden”; Jakub Zajdel, “Filmowy obraz Polski powojennej”; Piotr Zwierzchowski, *Kino nowej pamięci*; and Piotr Zwierzchowski, Daria Mazur, and Mariusz Guzek (eds.), *Kino polskie wobec II wojny światowej*. Also see the following pamphlet, which contains a list of films that take place in the Recovered Territories: Jacek Tabęcki, *Ziemia Odzyskane w filmie fabularnym*.

in a wide range of medial forms: posters encouraging settlement, PKF newsreels, the Resolution of the Central Committee, literature, and feature films. Even while repatriates/expellees are *en route* to the Recovered Territories, the narratives of these figures are written into and also against these very same myths.

Just as the KC did not crush the worldview or the aesthetics of the Polish School with a single blow,²⁴⁶ so did the films of the 1960s, for all appearances, not forgo all criticism or ambiguity. It is for this reason that I have chosen *The Law and the Fist* and *All Our Own* as the primary films of analysis from the 1960s. Much of my analysis will reveal the points at which films such as *The Law and the Fist* challenge or question the narratives and norms prescribed in this resolution and in the newsreels of the PKF and the ways in which these films, and *All Our Own* especially, support and contribute to the myth-complex of the Recovered Territories, particularly as concerns the role of Germans and *kresowiaci*.²⁴⁷ Furthermore, of all of the relevant films produced in the 1960s, *The Law and the Fist* and *All Our Own* also continue to enjoy popularity—in fact, the latter of these films has become a cult classic and forms the first part of a trilogy.

An analysis of the four primary films within the context of the greater range of films that treat the topic of forced migration in the Recovered Territories has led me to the conclusion that the topic of forced migration is most often obscured or made more politically palatable in several

²⁴⁶ In his article “Kino powojenne. 1945–1989,” Rafał Marszałek claims that Andrzej Wajda’s *Ashes* (1965) was the last of the Polish School films; Tadeusz Lubelski, on the other hand, writing in the *Encyklopedia kina*, claims that the films I mentioned as well as later films such as Wajda’s *Człowiek z marmuru* (Man of Marble; 1976) or even Kazimierz Kutz’s post-1989 *Śmierć jak kromka chleba* and *Zawrócony* (Death like a Slice of Bread and Reverted; 1994) may be counted among the films of the Polish School.

²⁴⁷ Even these films participate in the methods of avoiding censorship identified by Ryszard Nycz and, after him, Dobrochna Dabert: making stylistic statements in the form of metaphors, allegories and symbols; choosing historical or futuristic topics or settings; or using ellipsis as a form of commentary. See Dabert 8.

ways: firstly, through the use of genre cinema (*The Law and the Fist*, *All Our Own*); secondly, through the creation of a kind of “community of fate” (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*), of which repatriates from the *Kresy* are visible but oftentimes marginalized members (the exception being *All Our Own* and, to an extent, *No One Calls*); and thirdly, through the partial sublimation of these topics by questions of arrival (e.g., securing and Polonizing the Recovered Territories as well as issues of property and ownership, even as these very questions involve the contemplation of the Germans whose property has been left behind).²⁴⁸ Although I will engage with the images of repatriate trains, the chronotope of the road is less prominent in these films; instead, the Recovered Territories of the immediate postwar period form the primary chronotopic configuration in which the issue of forced migration comes to the fore.

***Trzy kobiety* (Three Women; 1957)**

As *Three Woman* and *No One Calls* are the two films under analysis that precede the “Resolution on the Matter of Cinematography,” I will introduce them briefly together before proceeding chronologically. *Three Women* and *No One Calls* paint psychological portraits of a select handful of characters who have been traumatized by the war; rather than find prosperity in the Recovered Territories as official propaganda had suggested, many of these characters of these suffer tragic fates.²⁴⁹ *Three Women* is unique for it is one of the few films that actually deals with

²⁴⁸ Chronologically speaking, the fourth of these films, *All Our Own*, stands in stark contrast to the other three films under analysis in several ways: the primary protagonists are all from the *Kresy*; it is the only film (not only in this group of four, but in all films depicting expellees prior to 1970) to represent the *Kresy*; it is the only film in this group to propagate firmly the official narrative that the Recovered Territories are a land of prosperity for repatriates; and, finally, it is a comedy. Before 1970, the direct, critical treatment of the lost *Kresy* and the experience of forced migration as a “repatriate” from the *Kresy* did not, if indeed it could not, exist.

²⁴⁹ According to these traits, one could categorize these films as being part of the so-called Polish School; as these films were produced in the wake of the Polish October (1956), they are contemporaries of the most famous examples of films of the Polish School (i.e., Andrzej Wajda’s *Popiół i diament* (Ashes and Diamonds; 1958), Andrzej Munk’s *Eroica* (1957), Jerzy Kawalerowicz’s *Pociąg* (Train; 1959), and—even though it, like several others, was produced in the 1960s—Wojciech Has’ *Jak być kochaną* (How to Be Loved; 1963).

the effects of the Holocaust and the experience of Jews in the Recovered Territories.²⁵⁰ Even though one of the protagonists (Lucyna) of *No One Calls* is in all likelihood a “repatriate” from beyond the Bug river and even though the film shows forced migration via the sign of the “repatriate train,” the film does not thematize forced migration itself; rather, this experience, and the displacement of its protagonists (one from Warsaw, the other presumably from beyond the Bug) serve as context for the psychological drama and love story that unfold on the screen. The films *Three Women* and *No One Calls* frame the characters’ psychological traumas by invoking the instability of the postwar situation on the Recovered Territories and juxtaposing the positive myths of progress and moral reckoning associated with the Recovered Territories with the disappointed hopes of the films’ protagonists.

Stanisław Różewicz’s *Three Women* (1957), based on Kornel Filipowicz’s story “Trzy kobiety z obozu” (Three women from the camp; 1956), is the earliest of four films under analysis. This film tells the story of three women—Maria, Helena, and Celina, and the ways in which they cope with life after the war. The film begins with a bleak scene of KZ inmates being marched through Mecklenburg. As the cannon fire grows louder and the march comes to a halt, it becomes clear that the Germans are surrounded. The prisoners—including the three women of the title—are free. The three women use their newfound freedom to trek together from Mecklenburg to Warsaw, their hometown. There they discover that they have nothing but each other—homes, families, lovers are all either dead or destroyed. Together, they start a new life in the so-called

²⁵⁰ The only other film set in the early postwar period in the Recovered Territories that even features a Jewish character is Paweł Komorowski’s *Sobótki* (1965), in which a German Jew chooses to settle in the town. In Jan Rybkowski’s *Godziny nadziei* (Hours of Hope; 1955) takes place in a town in the Recovered Territories that has been liberated by the Red Army. In this film, an SS tank division symbolically threatens to massacre all of Europe, as the town is populated by crowds of displaced persons hailing from all around the continent. As such, Jewish characters also feature in this film.

Recovered Territories. Though life in the Recovered Territories is not without its challenges (e.g., looters “confiscate” the furniture from the women’s newly acquired apartment), the three women slowly acclimate to post-war civilian life and, amid ex-German bourgeois trinkets, tea sets, and mirrors, rediscover domesticity, femininity, and a sense of self. As poverty and dire circumstances ameliorate, the bond between the women weakens. Maria receives news from her husband’s family and starts a new life with a new husband in Cracow, and Celina falls in love with a young man named Władek. Helena, the oldest of the three, proves unable to cope with the loss of this bond, particularly once she receives news that the object of her admiration, Kapitan Obersztyn, is dead. She lashes out at Maria for deserting them, and hides a letter from Celina—a letter from Celina’s father in which he urges her to join him in Palestine. In the end, Celina goes to the movies with Władek and Halina stands alone in the dimly-lit apartment, the table set for three.

The primary conflicts in *Three Women* are born of psychological trauma and the need for companionship. Female companionship among women appears to be an arrangement of necessity, a bond forged in an extreme situation (the need to survive the Nazi German KZs), but ultimately dependent on that situation for its own survival. The three women (Maria, Celina, and Helena) form a kind of mutual support group, a small family in the absence of kin. The main conflict concerns Helena’s attempt to preserve this ersatz-family. While the two younger women, Maria and Celina, prove able to move on and establish or pick up the threads of meaningful relationships in a context outside the KZs (these healthy, healing relationships are with the opposite sex), the older Helena is not. This is due in part to the news that Kapitan Obersztyn, for whom she suffered interrogation by the Gestapo, died, not as an anti-Nazi partisan, but as an executed traitor. Her own inability to relinquish the other two women so that they can “rebuild” their lives creates, first, a rift between herself and Maria, hastening the disintegration of the link they share; and secondly,

this inability motivates Helena rip up a letter to Celina that is to inform her that her father is still alive and awaiting her arrival in Palestine. Though Celina may never find out about this omission, Helena selfishly establishes herself as Celina's mother while hindering her from resuming contact with her father. This conflict corresponds to the myth of the youthfulness of the Recovered Territories already established in the PKF, but which will come into full force in the 1960s, celebrating the generation that knows no other home. In contrast to Helena, the youth are adaptable, able to re-establish their lives in the Recovered Territories.

The film establishes that the Recovered Territories offered the opportunity for renewal to all (young) Poles—whether they are “repatriated” from beyond the Bug and San rivers, are repatriated former forced laborers and KZ inmates, or are displaced Varsovians without apartment or next of kin. As is often the case in the Polish films depicting “repatriates” and the Recovered Territories, all of these groups are joined in a community of loss in search of a Promised Land. That said, however, *Three Women*, like later films such as *The Law and the Fist*, *Bathed by Fire* or *Paradise on Earth*, marginalizes those figures who are from the East, those who have lost their homes due to the forced migration of Poles from the *Kresy Wschodnie*. The *kresowiaczy* become lost in and stay in the chaotic masses at the train station. They are marked as *kresowiaczy* by their livestock, dress, and the occasional accent. Despite this mélange of people depicted in the Recovered Territories, the film's focus is narrowed down to natives of Warsaw.

And while it is not unusual that Varsovians serve as the protagonists of films taking place in the Recovered Territories,²⁵¹ one of the film's protagonists, Celina, is one of the few Jewish figures to ever feature in films with the repatriate-Recovered Territories constellation. For Celina,

²⁵¹ Andrzej Kenig of *The Law and the Fist*, for example, fought in the Warsaw Uprising. In the second episode (“Zapomnij o mnie” ‘forget about me’; 1980) of the TV series *Dom* (House; 1980–2000), Andrzej Talar suggests going to the Recovered Territories in order to acquire an ex-German projector for the local movie theater.

her Jewishness had been a difference only articulated by others—it is only upon overhearing her adoptive Polish parents (“aunt and uncle”) argue about whether or not Celina looked Jewish that Celina begins to question her dark braids and probe her own facial features; Celina becomes confronted with the accusation of physical difference again when, already in the Recovered Territories, she discovers horrific caricatures of Jews in an anti-Semitic magazine as well as the graphic evidence of the consequences of such alleged difference and of German anti-Semitism (e.g., photographs of hanged men). And yet, for all of these accusations of difference, whether from family or from mouthpieces of Nazi racial ideology, Celina bears the red triangle of the political prisoner on her KZ-uniform, arrested and tortured for not revealing what she did not know—where her uncle illegally printed oppositional flyers. Celina has suffered not as a Jew, but as a Pole, and as a political prisoner as well (even if only by association).

The anti-Semitic propaganda that Celina finds, however, constitutes one of the *topoi* of the Recovered Territories insofar as we understand it as a *poniemiecki* object, a remnant of German life in these ex-German spaces. These objects range from damning propaganda to sensible pieces of furniture to fanciful luxury items. Celina’s first impulse is to flip through the family photo album left in the apartment, to understand who these people were, but this attempt to establish a personal connection to the apartment’s former inhabitants is interrupted (like everything else in this film, as I will illustrate) by the discovery of the anti-Semitic material among scattered books. This discovery halts any further attempt to consider the fate of the Germans and their connection to these objects.²⁵² Outside the space of the apartment, however, Celina takes further interest in

²⁵² The emergence of Herr Zimmer from his upstairs apartment does not prompt further inquiry, either. We learn that this old man is a locksmith and that his wife has died, due to that “verfluchter Krieg.” Beyond repairing the lock of the women’s apartment after the intrusion of the Polish looters who steal all of their furniture, Herr Zimmer plays little role in the film.

poniemieckie goods, but primarily collects (loots) objects that stoke the imagination rather than any contemplation of the past. These fanciful objects (a gilded mirror, a porcelain deer, a conch) are relics of German bourgeois taste, and they restore a sense of self and even wonder to Celina.²⁵³ It is the space of the kitchen and the useful objects and pieces of furniture that belong to it that establish, even if only for a limited time, the community of the women. These objects do not provoke contemplation about their previous owners; rather, they help the women recover a sense of humanity, femininity, domesticity, and, with the sturdy wooden table at the center, community.

For Celina and, to an extent, for Maria and Helena, the Recovered Territories provide a fresh start. Warsaw is no longer home. The narrator sets up the scene for their arrival in Warsaw thus: “Po drogach, po których przetoczyła się wojna, wracały kobiety do kraju gnane pragnieniem odnalezienia swego dawnego życia. Towarzyszyły im w tej drodze i rozpacz, i nadzieja. A oto co znalazły na końcu swojej wędrówki” (“On roads swept by war, the woman returned to their country driven by the longing to rediscover their former lives. Both despair and hope accompanied them on this road. And this is what they found at the end of their trek”). The word “Warszawa,” etched into stone, bisects the screen diagonally—a hunk of façade lying among battered stones (see **Figure 26**). A cut, and the camera pans over the foggy ruinscape of the city. There is nothing more to see of Warsaw. A train races obliquely toward the camera, presumably away from the ruins of Warsaw. As it rolls into the station of Skołyszyn,²⁵⁴ the viewer sees the exuberant white lettering

²⁵³ Fascination with these objects is restricted to Celina. Monika Maszewska-Lupiniak suggests that these objects are “symbols of her emotional immaturity and intrinsic lightheartedness,” 59. Each of the women, moreover, is connected with a particular kind of object: Celina with mirrors, Maria with photographs, and Helena with pistols. Maszewska-Lupiniak explains that “certain objects are important constructional elements of memories. These objects occur and function as links between the past and the present of the women. The mirror, the photo, the pistol—as meaningful motifs naturally intertwined in the subjective world of the subject, but they gain real significance only once they appear in the contemporary scenes, that is, in the objective world presented,” 62.

²⁵⁴ The real Skołyszyn is a village located in southeastern Poland. The fictional Skołyszyn of the film, however, is supposed to be located in the ex-German territories to the west. The film was shot on location in Lower Silesia, in the

on the door panels: “Jedziemy na Ziemię Odzyskaną!” (“We are going to the Recovered Territories!”). While the women walk into town, the sun shines, the city is bright (see **Figure 27**). If the chunk of façade metonymically represents the destruction of the Polish state, of Warsaw, of the protagonist’s past lives, the ex-German town of Skołyszyn in the Recovered Territories, with its bright lighting, open, uncluttered compositions, and extreme-long shots, represents freedom, and a fresh start.²⁵⁵



Figure 26: Still from Stanisław Różewicz's *Trzy kobiety* (1957)



Figure 27: Still from Stanisław Różewicz's *Trzy kobiety* (1957)

The necessity of a “fresh start” constitutes one instance of what I identify as the film’s leitmotif of interruption.²⁵⁶ In fact, the film begins in *medias res*, during the “interruption” (war,

towns of Paczków and Złoty Stok, as well as near the town of Otmuchów). See the entry “Trzy kobiety” on www.filmipolski.pl (eds. Jarosław Czembrowski, et al.).

²⁵⁵ The audience has already been given a hint of the possibilities that lie in the Recovered Territories prior to their arrival in Skołyszyn. When the women walk from Mecklenburg to Warsaw, they necessarily pass through these territories. The film shows the women pass through an abandoned German town, and later, as the women walk along a country road, the sky large and open behind them, they turn to wave at Polish soldiers and a set of road signs indicate that the women are now in Poland. The signs indicate that the women have come from the direction of the West Pomeranian town of Gostomia and are headed in the direction of Margonin (the sign actually says “Margolin” in both Latin and Cyrillic scripts; however, this appears to be an error—the town of Margonin lies along this route) and, farther, Warsaw.

²⁵⁶ The motif of interruption is not chronotopic, as there is no inherent spatial component. Cf. Maszewska-Lupiniak 66, who identifies a motif of “the disintegration of the world.”

occupation, incarceration, and genocide).²⁵⁷ Flashbacks educate the audience about the nature of the intrusion of war for each of the protagonists: Maria's happy marriage punctuated by the arrest of her husband; Celina's first awareness of her appearance as being "other," her subsequent baptism, and the arrest of her uncle and aunt; Helena's arms training and her interrogation regarding the whereabouts of Kapitan Obersztyn. Furthermore, the discovery of a destroyed and desolate Warsaw described above prompts the women to seek a "fresh start" in a new place—an acknowledgement that normal life cannot resume in its previous form. From Helena's point of view, the two letters (one to Maria from her husband's family and one to Celina from her father) constitute interruptions or disruptions of the idyll of female companionship (there is, after all, even an idyllic picnic scene with the three women); moreover, they pose a threat to her position as ersatz-mother.

The chronotope of the road as it appears in this film (as the KZ march, the trek on foot to Warsaw, and the repatriate train) is also associated with the motif of interruption. The forced march of KZ inmates is interrupted, fortuitously, by the arrival of the front. The present of the film is interrupted by the women's flashbacks during the women's trek from Mecklenburg to Warsaw (i.e., along the road). Maszewska-Lupiniak underscores that "the film is divided into two temporal levels, but not into two planes of action" (53). And yet, the flashbacks, while they interrupt the flow of events in the present, also connect the past to the events in the present, that is, their search for new beginnings. The journey to the Recovered Territories aboard what I have been calling a "repatriate train" is initiated by the revelation that pre-war life is unable to be resumed.

²⁵⁷ We encounter the women while the Nazis march them across Mecklenburg as KZ prisoners. Yet even this march is interrupted: first, by a battle between Germans and Soviets; and second, by the announcement that the war is over. The women suddenly find themselves free.

Helena's own inability to relinquish the past and to embrace new connections and a new life in the Recovered Territories (or even, as in Maria's case, in Cracow, or in Celina's father's case, in Palestine) is the source of her tragedy, her immensely private suffering. In this way, the film supports the vision of the Recovered Territories as a place for the young, for those who are adaptable. This stands in contrast to the next film under analysis, Kazimierz Kutz's *No One Calls* (1960). While both the three women of Różewicz's film and the protagonist of Kutz's film, Bożek "Nieczuja," journey to the Recovered Territories in order to begin a new life, they do so for very different reasons. The women abandon Warsaw because every trace of their former lives has been destroyed; Bożek leaves home (left undetermined) because his past is too abundant. While Helena clutches at the threads of her past, Bożek tries to leave these same threads behind by running to the place of new beginnings—both protagonists, however, fail in their attempts.

***Nikt nie wola* (No One Calls; 1960)**

Kazimierz Kutz's *No One Calls* (1960), loosely derived from Józef Hen's semi-autobiographical novel of the same title,²⁵⁸ counters the propaganda depicting the Recovered Territories as a land of milk and honey, a place of success.²⁵⁹ And although the film takes place in the Recovered Territories, they serve merely as a backdrop for the psychological drama and love story. The *topoi* of the Recovered Territories establish the particular temporal-spatial context of the story (Recovered Territories in the early postwar period), but they do not motivate the plot. This is due in part to the fact that the setting of Józef Hen's novel, based on his own personal experiences, is in wartime Uzbekistan. In replacing one taboo topic (the wartime experience of

²⁵⁸ Hen's novel *No One Calls*, rejected multiple times by either the publishers or the censors, was not published until 1990, although it was written in 1956/57. Józef Hen wrote the screenplay for Kutz's film, which is based on Part II of the novel.

²⁵⁹ See, for example: PKF 18/45, 33/46, and 20/47.

[Jewish] Poles in labor camps in the Soviet Union), the film is uniquely positioned to provide commentary on the Recovered Territories and the experiences of “repatriates” from beyond the Bug and San rivers, particularly because these territories serve as a mere backdrop.

The novel *No One Calls* is composed of two parts, the first one “Boso” (“Barefoot”) and the second “W butach” (“In shoes”). In this novel, Hen narrates his own wartime experiences in Uzbekistan through the voice of his semi-autobiographical protagonist, Bogdan. As the title of Part I suggests, it is a story of dire poverty, of hunger and want. But it is also the story of love in the face of hardship: In Part II, Bogdan not only finally receives a pair of shoes (necessary for him to work), but he meets Lena as well—Lena standing for Rena, Hen’s wife. Even as Nazi Germany is waging a genocidal war, in the labor camps in Uzbekistan, Germans, Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Uzbeks, and Russians work side by side—though not entirely without prejudice or conflict, it is a world away from the events taking place in the west. After several failed attempts to join Anders’ Army (his rejection, it is suggested, likely rests with the fact that Bogdan/Hen is Jewish: “teraz bierze się tylko rasowych Polaków” [“They’re only taking purebred Poles now;” 366]), Bogdan leaves Lena for Ukraine, where he will join the Polish Army.

At the end of the Polish Thaw, “Barefoot” had been accepted for publication with the Czytelnik publishing house, but Hen wanted to finish “In Shoes” so that the book would be complete. By the time he had completed Part II, however, it was, politically speaking, too late to publish. Literary critic Andrzej Stawer first suggested that Hen transpose the setting of the novel to another country, ““for example, to a French camp in Algeria,”” since, he reasoned, ““with that reality,” that is, the reality of the tribulations Poles experienced in labor camps in the USSR, “you will *never* publish here.””²⁶⁰ Stawer was not the only one convinced that a change of setting could

²⁶⁰ Quoted from “Od autora,” (Aug. 2012) in *Nikt nie wola*, 423.

save the novel's story from oblivion. In the afterword of the 2013 edition of the novel, Hen recalls a conversation with Tadeusz Konwicki and Kazimierz Kutz held in 1959 in which they decided to salvage the remarkable love story by transposing the setting to the Recovered Territories:

Only in this way can we attain approximately similar psychological circumstances. A similar feeling of helplessness and isolation. But why does the Bożek of the screenplay have to feel isolated in this land? Let's say that he's hiding, that he's afraid of someone. He didn't fulfill an order given to him, he was supposed to kill someone—he didn't want to, he didn't kill, he blended into the crowd of repatriates. It's as if Maciek Chelmicki from *Ashes and Diamonds*—it came to us—didn't kill Szczuka.²⁶¹

In order to “naturalize” the love story, it is transposed onto a liminal space (the transitory spaces of work camps in the foreign land of Uzbekistan are replaced by the potentially transitory spaces of ex-German towns). As far as the narrative is concerned, however, the setting cannot be the overt or sole reason for the characters' isolation and loneliness—these feelings must be inscribed into Polish-Polish conflict (Home Army versus Polish communists).

The Bożek of Kutz's film, as the conversation with Kutz and Konwicki indicates, is modeled as a response to Andrzej Wajda's Maciek Chelmicki.²⁶² Maciek is a member of the Home Army who, after the war has officially ended, and after much doubt and self-questioning, ultimately fulfills the command of his superior to assassinate the newly appointed Communist secretary Szczuka and, through a mishap, dies—literally on a trash heap (of history). *No One Calls*, on the other hand, follows Bożek, the Maciek who refused to fulfill the command and has fled to

²⁶¹ Idem, 423–424.

²⁶² See also Aleksander Jackiewicz, “Gdyby Maciek nie zabił Szczuki” and Lubelski, “Z Samarkandy do Bystrzycy” 87.

the Recovered Territories in order to flee from his past and “blend into the crowd of repatriates.” He meets Lucyna at the chaotic train station of the fictional town of Zielno. Lucyna technically resides at a boarding school, but spends most of her time with Bożek at the dilapidated house he has chosen to be his home near the bridge. While he looks for work and even begins an affair with Niura, who has offered him a more comfortable abode, Lucyna prepares dinner and waits for Bożek. When comrades from his wartime past find Bożek in Zielno, he attempts to flee. The film begins and ends with Bożek aboard a train, thereby closing the film’s “compositional brackets.”²⁶³

Due in part to the film’s “experimental language,” Kutz’s *No One Calls* was generally poorly understood in 1960.²⁶⁴ It received little critical attention, and what criticism the film did receive accused Kutz and the film of “empty experimentalism, anti-dramaturgy, and formalism; [...] ‘incomprehensible geometric abstraction,’ ‘marionette-like characters,’ and the subtle connection between the internal state of the protagonists and their surrounding reality was summarized as ‘embryos of degenerated fantasies.’”²⁶⁵ As a result, Rafał Marszałek explains, the film’s international distribution was restricted for nearly twenty-five years and the film was rarely screened in Poland. It has since made a comeback and has garnered something of a cult following.²⁶⁶ Furthermore, *No One Calls* has also become one of the primary subjects of a long

²⁶³ Grodź 237.

²⁶⁴ For further explanation of the film’s “experimental language,” see Andrzej Szpulak, “Mitotwórcy i poszukiwacze mitu,” 181. In his lecture “Nikt nie woła – fabuła, walory artystyczne i recepcja filmu” (Nov. 2012), Piotr Zwierzchowski notes that not all reviews of the film were negative or indicated misunderstanding, highlighting rather that some reviewers used the word “genius” to describe the film, and Jerzy Wójcik’s photography in particular.

²⁶⁵ Hendrykowska, “1960: ‘Nikt nie woła’,” 233. Cf. Grodź 232.

²⁶⁶ Cf., Marszałek, “*Nikt nie woła*,” in *Akademia Polskiego Filmu* (2008, accessed 18 Nov. 2014, web).

debate about the existence of a cinematic Polish New Wave, and has been cited even as a precursor to European New Wave cinema.²⁶⁷

Despite the delayed success and the artistic value of the film, Hen has expressed dissatisfaction with the film's relationship with the source material: "All of the dramatic tension, the psychological confrontations—all of that is obliterated in the film" (*Dziennika* 321).²⁶⁸ Shortly after the novel's belated publication in 1990, Hanna Gosk writes that "Hen really writes about the procurement of bread and shoes, but also about the birth of first love, so subtle and delicate that it's almost absurd in these difficult extreme circumstances."²⁶⁹ She sums up the delicate balance that has, in the film, been reduced to sparse dialogue and minute gestures. For example, when Lucyna explains that she did not come to him because her new (ex-German) shoes have fallen apart, Bożek removes his shoes so that both he and Lucyna can walk the streets barefoot together. Even though he declares that he hates going barefoot, he voluntarily chooses poverty (even if only temporary poverty) in order to walk as an equal at Lucyna's side. The gesture reads as sweet and considerate; its full significance, however, is lost for the viewer, who only knows that Bożek hates going barefoot, and not why (that he spent all of Part I of Hen's novel without shoes). The asceticism of the film is most prominent in the translation of the narrative itself and the dialogue into a psychological or "internal landscape" composed of the *mise-en-scène*, Wojciech Kilar's soundtrack, and the composition of the many static frames.²⁷⁰ The extremities of the circumstances

²⁶⁷ See *ibid.*; Gazda, "Obserwacja i kreowanie"; and Goddard, "The Impossible Polish New Wave." Already in 1960, Krzysztof Teodor Toeplitz suggested that one might later be able to call this film the precursor to a "Polish New Wave" (qtd. in Lubelski, "Z Samarkandy do Bystrzycy" 94).

²⁶⁸ Cf. Hen, "Od Autora," 424.

²⁶⁹ Gosk 35.

²⁷⁰ Original by Grodz: "pejzaż[...] wewnętrzny," 230.

in Uzbekistan (lack of sustenance, proper heating, foot protection for work) did not exist in the Recovered Territories. Remnant references to these extreme circumstances take on an abstract character in the film, meaning that lines such as “I hate going barefoot,” while comprehensible, are wholly understated.²⁷¹

The film is thus burdened with understatements and silences: from the censorship of Hen’s/Bogdan’s experiences in Uzbekistan (and his rejection by Anders’ Army on account of his Jewishness), to the abstraction of the dialogue, to the way in which Hen’s own voice as novelist/screenwriter has been suppressed and unacknowledged. While Hen agreed to the temporal and geographical changes to the text, Hen has proven to be somewhat disappointed in this lack of recognition. For the 2012 screening of a reconstructed version of the film at the movie theater *Kultura* in Warsaw, Hen explains, “The invitation mentioned that the creators would be there: Kazimierz Kutz, Jerzy Wójcik, and *others*” (*Dziennika* 373). At the screening, Hen drew attention to the lack of recognition for what was, after all, a very personal work for him. Recalling the event in his book *Dziennika ciąg dalszy* (2014), Hen writes: “I talked about what went into the film from my life. The audience understood that if it hadn’t been for that experience, there would have been no banned novel (or the screenplay based on it), there would have been no ‘revolutionary’ film. And when I said that on the invitation, which talks about the creators, I am mentioned as ‘and others’, there was a burst of laughter and applause” (374). While relegating Hen’s name to “and others” may say more about the status of screenwriters in the Polish film industry, these manifold silences and understatements illustrate the limits of the cultural memory of WWII in Poland.

The change in spatiotemporal setting between unpublishable novel to film indicates the sensitivity with which certain ethnic groups, identities, and regions were treated at the end of the

²⁷¹ Cf. Hen, “Wszystkie filmy Józefa Hena.”

Thaw. Complex identities, such as those of Bożek and Lucyna, are either excised or subject to reduction. Bożek, for example, is haunted by a part of his recent past (his refusal to carry out an execution order as a member of the Home Army), but otherwise has no past and no other identity markers other than his youth (again, one of the myths of the Recovered Territories). Although he tells his *kresowiak* acquaintance (the “homeless ‘mayor’”) that he is not a repatriate (i.e., he is not from the *Kresy Wschodnie*), we have no indication as to his origins. In writing the filmic Bożek as a member of the Home Army, he ceases to be a Jewish member of the Polish Army. Furthermore, Lena’s rich heritage largely disappears once she is translated into Kutz’s Lucyna. In the novel, Lena is from L’viv, and has a rather diverse family: “Straszliwy melanz w tej rodzinie: Ukraińcy z polsko-żydowsko-ormiańsko-węgierskimi powiązaniami. A sądząc po jej oczach, nie brakło i Tatarów, choćby jako rezultat najazdów” (“A terrible mélange in this family: Ukrainians with Polish-Jewish-Armenian-Hungarian ties. And judging by her eyes, there was no shortage of Tatars, if only as a result of invasions.”) (200–201). Her mixed heritage is not only “straszliwy” because it is so very complex, but because, in the context of the war, her family has been ripped asunder by identity politics—whether these identities were chosen or imposed. In her lecture “Nowatorstwo filmu ‘Nikt nie woła’,” Alicja Helman suggests that Lucyna is not Ukrainian. I would argue, though, that a remnant of this identity remains, as Lucyna calls her beet soup not just “barszcz ukraiński” (“Ukrainian borscht”) but “moja narodowa potrawa” (“my national dish”).²⁷² The diegetic Ukrainian folk song motif played at the couple’s meeting place underscores her affiliation with a Ukrainian heritage. From novel to film, Lena’s and Bogdan’s identities have been simplified, with only traces of their pasts and ethnic or cultural identities remaining.

²⁷² Alicja Helman, “Nowatorstwo filmu ‘Nikt nie woła’.” Cf. Grodź, 237 and Lubelski, “Z Samarkandy do Bystrzycy” 87.

Because Lucyna's identity has also been abstracted, it is difficult to state with any certainty that she is a "repatriate" from the *Kresy*. With the exception of the "homeless 'mayor'," the "repatriates"—whether they are from beyond the Bug or have returned from exile or forced labor—are reduced, like many of the other *topoi* of the Recovered Territories, to mere props. The repatriates exist only as a chaotic mass at the train station or on the bridge or as a flood streaming into the empty streets (this scene, the arrival of the repatriates into town, is shot high above the town, providing a bird's-eye-view) (see **Figures 28 and 29**). In contrast, the "homeless 'mayor'" (otherwise nameless) had been Bożek's companion during the train ride to Zielno. Upon arrival, he runs to the PUR office, claiming that he will be the mayor of the town soon enough. It appears, however, that he is even unable to procure himself an apartment. He loiters habitually on the bridge (visible from the windows of Bożek's dilapidated house) (see **Figure 30**), lamenting the inferior quality of the water and the stream in Zielno in comparison to the water "back there"—a delicate, but nevertheless clear admission of the loss of homeland and the extent of the disappointment he faces as a "repatriate" in the Recovered Territories: promised an apartment, he is homeless; instead of a *macierz*, he is alienated and without a Heimat; what should be abundant, life-giving water is, instead, inadequate.



Figure 28: Repatriates enter Zielno (I)



Figure 29: Repatriates enter Zielno (II)



Figure 30: Bożek with "homeless 'mayor'" on the bridge in Zielno



Figure 31: Street brawl in the background

The territory itself has also been reduced to psychological mirror or prop. While, as Andrzej Gwóźdź argues, the film contains “gestures” that expose the origins of the land and the uncertainty of the times, and which personalize the otherwise impersonal process of Polonization, the territory as setting is not formative.²⁷³ The situation in the Recovered Territories does not

²⁷³ Andrzej Gwóźdź: “That’s why, when the water peddler on the train platform in *Nikt nie woła*, offering newcomers a bottle of precious liquid, diffidently mutters under his breath: ‘Das war die letzte’ (‘That was the last one...’), it is an explicit gesture of the artist toward ‘exposing’ the origins of the Zielno of the film; there are many such gestures both in the novela ‘Wdowa’ and in *Nikt nie woła*, but overall they are solely of a visual, symbolic character, whether as German signs removed by Poles or even as the general ‘German’ tidiness of the setting,” “Nieustająca zmiana miejsc,” 17.

motivate the plot, and the *topoi* of the Recovered Territories (from the train, to the *szaberplac*, to the throngs of repatriates) are either mere stages for the psychological and love dramas to play out or markers that orient the audience temporally and geographically.²⁷⁴ For example, in a scene in which Bożek attempts to register for work, his frustrated interaction with the informal bureaucrats takes place in front of a window through which, if one's gaze does drift beyond the immediacy of the scene, one can see a fistfight between two men growing into a brawl. This incident, however, has no effect on the plot (neither Bożek nor the other men in the room take any notice of the events transpiring outside), but rather acts as a signifier of the brutal character of life in the Recovered Territories (see **Figure 31**, above). In the film, the landscape and cityscape absorb and materialize the characters' loneliness, and in the case of the fistfight, apathy and ambivalence; in this way, the Recovered Territories are backdrop, projection screen, the materialization of existential isolation and wandering. Rather than be invoked, the *topoi* of the Recovered Territories evoke—they evoke sentiments and existential states incompatible with those accompanying the active pioneer entering a better chapter of life.

As a consequence and quasi-byproduct of his allegedly “empty experimentalism” (Hendrykowska 233), Kutz's film challenges the successful pioneer narrative, as *Zielno* turns out not to be a place of haven or of opportunity, but rather to be a place of isolation, paranoia, claustrophobia. The *mise-en-scène* and the geometric compositions of many of the frames embody or capture the psychological and emotional state of the characters: desolate, frustrated, alone, and divided. These frames consist not only of the camera lens' own frame, but of walls, doors, windows, and even fields (shot at a high-angle). Walls, whether city walls or those of the house,

²⁷⁴ For this reason, Piotr Zwierzchowski, in his 2012 lecture on the film, suggests that trying to understand the film in terms of its historical and geographic setting has limits; in the lecture, he identifies the stylistic and formal contributions of the film for telling a love story.

are omnipresent—gray and peeling or white and towering.²⁷⁵ Bożek and Lucyna are frequently featured leaning against walls, as if their figures had been painted against a monochrome background divorced from all temporal and spatial settings (see **Figure 32**). Furthermore, the only open spaces—those symbolizing freedom and opportunity—are those across which Bożek attempts doomed escapes, namely, the open top of a repatriate train wagon and a mine field in the rain (see **Figures 33 and 35**). In the case of the field, the scene is primarily shot from a high-angle, meaning that the field encompasses the entirety of the visual field; compositionally, field and wall are framed similarly. In the film, walls support, and yet they also provide the characters with a relatively smooth surface upon which they can pivot, at once toward each other, and again, away from each other. Against the wall, with no other objects to distract (other than the occasional closed door or flaked mural, which also provides another geometric frame), Kutz creates what Alicja Helman calls a “study of nuances.” The actors’ subtlest changes in facial expression and the minutest of gestures are legible, such that when they are turned away from each other, for example, there is nothing to distract visually from this stance as a signifier of their isolation—if anything, there may be a pillar in the foreground to divide one frame into two. In contrast to the wall, the two small windows of Bożek’s house are a function of the characters’ paranoia, anxiety, and even longing. Through the window, Bożek and Lucyna can see and be seen: Lucyna and Bożek contemplate each other, observe each other without the other’s knowledge. These moments hum with anticipation, anxiety, longing, and even shame—elements of the delicate love story being narrated visually. The windows, however, also permit intrusions by third parties: Bożek’s former colleague, Zygmunt, spies Bożek’s eating dinner, thereby disturbing not only Bożek and Lucyna’s fragile, infant domestic sphere, but his illusion of safety and anonymity (see **Figure 34**).

²⁷⁵ Cf. Grodź 244.



Figure 32: Still from Kazimierz Kutz's *Nikt nie wola* (1960)

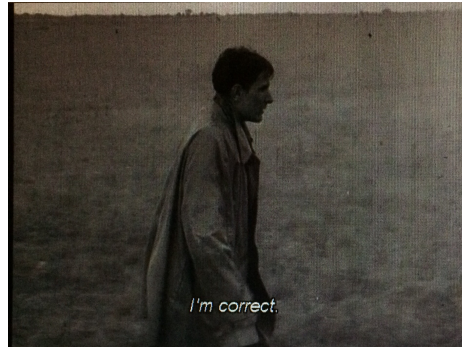


Figure 33: Still from Kazimierz Kutz's *Nikt nie wola* (1960)



Figure 34: Still from Kazimierz Kutz's *Nikt nie wola* (1960)



Figure 35: Still from Kazimierz Kutz's *Nikt nie wola* (1960)

The massive changes from novel to film indicate some of the cinematic silences with regard to the representation of expellees from the *Kresy* and of the experiences of concrete displaced peoples (Polish Jews in Uzbekistan, Polish-Ukrainian [if she is not simply from the *Kresy*] women in the Recovered Territories, Poles from the *Kresy*, etc.) in the immediate postwar period. Specifically, the erasure of Bohdan/Bożek's Jewish identity intimates what *The Law and the Fist* will clearly confirm: that despite the significant presence of Jewish communities in the Recovered Territories (primarily in Lower Silesia) in the early postwar years, the representation of their

presence in the Recovered Territories is, while not taboo, not encouraged (one should recall that even Celina's character, though Jewish, is identified with the red triangle, not the Star of David).²⁷⁶ The film's idiosyncratic language, however, does support a critique of the myth of pioneer success. And while closer inquiry into the origins and production of the film *No One Calls* indicates such silences, the film not only undermines the early optimistic propaganda, but does so through a detached, abstract cinematic style, a novelty in the context of Polish cinema.

Toast/Prawo i pięść (Toast/The Law and the Fist; 1964)

No One Calls' detachment, whether as a matter of attitude and in terms of its relation to the Recovered Territories, contrasts with the text cluster of *The Law and the Fist*, for which the setting is essential to the plot. The plot is propelled by the chance to which arriving Poles were often subjected, by the rampant criminality on the territories and the inability of the Polish administration to establish order, by the presence or threat of the presence of Germans, and the abundance of ex-German assets. Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski's film and Józef Hen's *Toast*, the novel on which the film is based, thematize the historical liminality of the territories and question the Romanticization of the territories as a Wild West (this through the very genre of the Western itself); the changes from one text to the next in the cluster, however, evince anxiety concerning the place of Jews and the legacy of the Holocaust in the Recovered Territories—even as the majority of the protagonists are survivors of Nazi German KZs. For all of this, it is the future of the territories and of the "repatriates" who are to settle them is at stake in this Polish *High Noon*;

²⁷⁶ At the close of the war, approximately 15,000 Jews found themselves in Lower Silesia. With the founding of Jewish Committees in the area, increasingly more Jews began to settle in communities in Lower Silesia. According to Bożena Szaynok in her article "Żydzi na Dolnym Śląsku 1945–1950," 90,000–100,000 Jews resided in Lower Silesia during the first half of 1946. The numerical strength of these vibrant, active communities diminished significantly after the Kielce pogrom in 1946, and again with the establishment of Stalinist practices in Poland and the founding of the state of Israel in 1948. One edition of the PKF does in fact report on the presence of Jews in the Recovered Territories—these men and women "find occupations of salvation from the Nazi pogrom" by stacking hay and plowing fields, working under a bright sun. See PKF 24/46.

the repatriates, mere recipients of the benefits of heroic sacrifice, occupy the edges of the film and its narrative.

In Hen's novel *Toast*, Henryk Koenig, a former KZ inmate, joins an operational unit spearheaded by Dr. Mielecki. The Polish administration has given this unit the task of securing the evacuated formerly German town of Graustadt (Siwowo) and ensuring its safety for the awaiting Polish settlers. Though the town should be empty, they discover: one German, a Herr Schaeffer, who, in a drunken stupor, had missed the Nazis' evacuation order; one Polish Jew, Rubin Cukierman, who survived the war and has been restoring order in the town (he restarts the water and electricity, and even broadcasts Jewish prayers and songs [whether in Yiddish or in Hebrew is never clarified] from the *Hitlerjugend* radio station); and a group of women wandering aimlessly from one deserted town to the next. Amid expeditions through the town and scenes of debauchery in the hotel where they all take up residence, Koenig gradually discovers that not only is Dr. Mielecki not who he says he is (his papers are forged), but that Mielecki and his group are in fact bandits intending to loot the empty town. Unable to rally support from anyone besides Smółka and Cukierman (both murdered for assisting Koenig), Koenig must defend his principles alone for the sake of the community of repatriates awaiting settlement. The conflict must be resolved in a shoot-out of four-against-one.

Rather than a "dobry duch" ("good spirit") (*Prawo i pięść* 60) singing ancient Jewish prayers, it is Hitler who haunts Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski's cinematic Siwowo. In the film, when the group of men and women confer together on the square, one of the men, Smółka, hurls a stone at a shop window in childish excitement. Though Mielecki reprimands him for his recklessness, the act directs attention to the broken window and its display: a plaster bust of Hitler. In an affected show of power, Wijas draws his pistol and shoots the eyes and nose off the bust;

immediately after he does so, however, his bravado is checked: the speakers on the town square begin to emit a recording of one of Hitler's speeches, followed by the German march "Wir marschieren gegen England" ("We are marching against England"). The camera cuts to close-ups of each of the characters' faces—all eyes are wide, charged with a surge of familiar fear. Here, the Poles—bandits or lone heroes alike—are on territory haunted by the ghosts of a malevolent regime.

This is the primary difference between novel and film: the exchange of the Jewish guardian angel for the hauntings of Hitler. Herr Schaeffer reports to Mielecki's group: "Nikogo nie widziałem, ale usłyszałem nagle muzykę. Ktoś śpiewał w jakimś dziwnym języku, ja myślę, że archanioł Gabriel, kiedy się rozmarzył, to nucił właśnie tak" ("I didn't see anyone, but I suddenly heard music. Someone was singing in some kind of strange language, I thought it was the Archangel Gabriel, I was lost in daydreaming, it was humming just like this") (57). These songs are accompanied by the reanimation of electricity and water in the town. After Koenig realizes that Mielecki and his pals are planning to loot the town, he tries to phone the Polish administration in Zielno from the post office.²⁷⁷ It is here that Koenig discovers Cukierman, whom Koenig recognizes by his accent: "Akcent! – uprzytomnił sobie Henryk nagle. I czuł, że jest poruszony: jeden ze skazanych uniknął zagłady. Przeżył, ale nie może sobie znaleźć miejsca i błąka się w ciemnościach jak duch" ("Accent! – realized Henryk all of a sudden. And he felt that he was touched: one of the doomed averted annihilation. He survived, but was unable to find a place and wandered in the dark like a spirit")—a spirit whose accent makes one feel "ciepło i bezpiecznie" ("warm and safe") (91). One brief conversation in this dark post office, and already, Koenig "miał sojusznika" ("had an ally") (93) in Cukierman, who later helps him protect the town's goods from

²⁷⁷ Zielno is also the setting of *No One Calls*. The names of both fictional towns (Zielno and Siwowo) are generic, derived from colors (*zielny* means "green" and *siwy* "gray"). Many thanks to Roman Koropecjy for drawing this to my attention.

Mielecki and his looters. With the disappearance of Cukierman from the film, the film annuls the novel's proposed vision of Poles and Jews securing, and ultimately, rebuilding Poland together.²⁷⁸

While Cukierman's absence constitutes the absence of Jewish life in the Recovered Territories, his is also a very personal absence for the writer Hen. For just as Bogdan represented Hen and Lena his wife Irena, so does Rubin Cukierman also represent a real-life figure close to Józef Hen: his father, Rubin Cukier, who perished in Buchenwald at the close of the war.²⁷⁹ Like his father, Cukierman lived at Nowolipie 53 in the Jewish quarter of Warsaw, ran a sewage and plumbing company, and had a daughter named Mirka. When Cukierman relates his losses to Koenig, they are not just Cukierman's losses, but Rubin Cukier's and Hen's as well.²⁸⁰ While Cukierman dreams of calling his old phone number on Nowolipie street and hearing the voice of his daughter on the other end, Hen, in creating the figure of Cukierman, dreams of his father's return.²⁸¹

²⁷⁸ Although certainly not intentional, the erasure of this joint Polish-Jewish sideshadowed narrative has been perpetuated due to the spatial and visual nature of film as a medium. In 2008, the city of Toruń installed a sculpture (artists: Karol Furyk and Małgorzata Więclawska) of a small handcart to commemorate the film. It is located on the Rynek Nowomiejski (New Town Square), where the film was shot. Given the spatial specificity of the site, the sculpture in Toruń is only able to reference the film directly, not the book; the fictional space of Siwowo and the real-existing New Town Square coincide at the commemorative sculpture. For the visitor who is familiar with the film, New Town Square becomes the palimpsestic space haunted by Hitler's voice and the lonesome trickle of a fountain, the rustling of papers; it is a place abandoned, littered with the traces of German life—but also of Nazi symbols; it is, moreover, a place without a Jewish angel, a place dominated by the dual schema of German-Polish conflict, which, as Katarzyna Uczkiewicz-Styś writes, “excludes other, sometimes unusually significant strains of the history of the region (e.g., in Lower Silesia: the presence of Jews, Czech aspirations, the epoch of the reign of the Habsburgs, the march of Napoleon's troops, and so on),” 44. For more about the sculpture, see: “Powstanie pomnik filmu ‘Prawo i pięść’.”

It should be noted that the term “sideshadowing” was coined originally by Gary Saul Morson, but defined in the context of Holocaust narrative by Michael André Bernstein in his book *Foregone Conclusions* (1994). Bernstein defines it as an alternative to fore- or backshadowing that emphasizes “the unfulfilled or unrealized possibilities of the past,” 3.

²⁷⁹ For the circumstances surrounding Rubin Cukier's death, see Hen, *Nie boję się bezsennych nocy...* 301–302.

²⁸⁰ “Nie ma tego zakładu i nie ma tej ulicy, i nie ma tego domu, i nie ma tego telefonu, nic nie ma” (“There is no more business, and no more street, and there is no more house, and there is no more phone, there isn't anything”), 92.

²⁸¹ Hen: “From the Search Center in Arolsen I received information about my father. For Mama, his trace broke off at the beginning of January 1945, when they were both evacuated from the camp in Skarżysko-Kamienna—women to Lipsk, men in some unknown direction. For several years after the end of the war we looked for him, Mama still

Given the personal significance of Cukierman and the symbolic value he carries as a signifier of Jewish survival and activity in the Recovered Territories and in postwar Poland more broadly, his absence from the screenplay and subsequent film is striking. In my e-mail correspondence with the author, I inquired why Cukierman disappeared, to which Hen responded: “Why did he disappear from the film? For a simple reason: the director crossed him out. He told me, citing the Russian saying: ‘Dla bolszej jasnosti – wyczerknij.’ He was afraid that there could be problems—such as those with the book.”²⁸² In order to publish the book, Hen continued, he was required to remove another scene referencing Polish anti-Semitic violence against Jews during the war. During an interview with Donata Subbotko, Hen explained the scene: “They’re hiding in the basement. They don’t know anything about the world at all. Suddenly, they hear hobnailed shoes and someone cry: ‘Beat the Jew!’ and they collapse into an embrace, crying: ‘Ours!’”²⁸³ These two instances of erasure illustrate that the topic of Jews, Polish anti-Semitism, the Holocaust, and the Recovered Territories created a substantial flash point in terms of Polish *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (“coming to terms with the past”) and the myth-complex of the Recovered Territories.

Given the general taboo on and ongoing debates about the role of Polish anti-Semitism in the Holocaust (with the exception of branding the *Narodowe Siły Zbrojne* [National Armed Forces, NSZ] and the Home Army as anti-Semitic), it is not surprising that the publishing house MON

waited for his return. There was no trace. He didn’t appear in any lists. It was said that a mass grave was discovered near Częstochowa.... Someone else thought that they saw father with two suitcases on his way to Poland. Pan Cukierman of *Toast* and his death—that’s actually the imagined return of my father,” *Nie boję się bezsennych nocy...* 301.

²⁸² Józef Hen, e-mail correspondence with author, 19 Aug. 2016. The Russian phrase means: “for better clarity we will cross it out.” Thanks to my colleague Anatolii Tokmantsev for his translation.

²⁸³ Hen, “Lekkie swędzenie sumienia” 216.

required Hen to remove the scene with the two Jewish figures.²⁸⁴ While the Holocaust played a substantial role in films prior to *The Law and the Fist* (1964), the topic is carefully avoided in Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski's film—and in films of the 1960s which take place in the Recovered Territories.²⁸⁵ The removal of references to Jews and the Holocaust can be seen as part of a larger trend in Polish cinema from the mid-1960s until 1980, a period which, “despite some relaxation of censorship in the 1970s,” Marek Haltof writes, “may be called the time of organized forgetting about the Holocaust” (*Polish Film and the Holocaust* 118).²⁸⁶ Hen's novel, on the other hand, is very open about the iconic horrors associated with the Holocaust, and includes dialogues about the rumors of soap being made of Jewish fat, Koenig's memories of piles of shoes at the concentration camps, and existential discussions about the human soul and the fates of those who entered the gas chambers.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁴ See Marek Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust* (2012) 17 and Joshua D. Zimmerman, *The Polish Underground and the Jews, 1939–1945* (2015). Two of the most significant recent debates about Polish complicity in the Holocaust center around the work of historian Jan Gross and, in particular, his book *Neighbors* (2001), and Władysław Pasikowski's *Pokłosie* (Aftermath; 2012). For the debates about these works, see Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic (eds.), *The Neighbors Respond* (2004) and Magdalena Nowicka's article “Polskość jako przedmiot sporu.”

²⁸⁵ Polish films about or referencing the Holocaust prior to *The Law and the Fist* include: Leonard Buczkowski's *Zakazane piosenki* (Forbidden Songs; 1947/48), Wanda Jakubowska's *Ostatni etap* (The Last Stage; 1948), Alexander Ford's *Ulica graniczna* (Border Street; 1949), Stanisław Różewicz's *Trzy kobiety* (Three Women; 1957), Jerzy Zarzycki's *Biały niedźwiedź* (White Bear; 1959), and Andrzej Wajda's *Samson* (1961), among others. Besides *Three Women*, the only other film taking place in the Recovered Territories to even feature a Jewish character, much less reference the Holocaust as a genocide against the Jews (as opposed to non-Jewish Poles), is Paweł Komorowski's *Sobótki* (1965), in which a German Jew chooses to settle in the town.

²⁸⁶ For more information about suspended, shelved, and non-realized film projects during the late 1960s, see Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust* 118–119.

²⁸⁷ Hen frames the allegation that the Nazis produced soap using the fat of Jewish victims as rumor taken as fact: “Nie słyszała pani?” (“haven't you heard?”), 61. While this rumor was very widespread, most scholars of the Holocaust assert that the proof necessary to substantiate this claim has not been found, and that, while the Nazis committed horrific atrocities, the so-called “soap myth” is not to be counted among them as fact. For the debate about this point, see, for example: Boena Shallcross, *The Holocaust Object in Polish and Polish-Jewish Culture* (2011) and Theodore R. Weeks' review of the book in *The Polish Review*, as well as Joachim Neander's article “The Danzig Soap Case.” For the soap incident, see Hen, *Prawo i pięść* 61; for the shoes, see 65; and for the discussion about the gas chambers, see 68–69.

While references to Polish anti-Semitism and violence had already been removed at the level of the literary text, the film *The Law and the Fist* steadily removes these references in the novel to the genocide perpetrated against the Jews, leaving only non-Jewish Poles as victims of the Nazi regime. In keeping with the official narrative propagated by the communist government, Poles are the victims *par excellence* of the Nazi German state. Even though Andrzej Kenig bears the Auschwitz tattoo, and Anna the striped jacket, they are not Jews and would not have been recognized as such, for, as Geneviève Zubrzycki writes: “While in Polish consciousness the camps in Treblinka, Bełżec, Chelmno, and Sobibór were and are synonymous with the extermination of Jews (because this is primarily where Polish Jews from the liquidated ghettos of Warsaw, Kraków, Łódź, and Lublin were killed), ‘Oświęcim’ became and remained the symbol of Poles’ martyrdom during World War II” (19). Therefore, while the film negotiates between different understandings of victimhood and the rights of victims to compensation or recompense, the discussion remains inscribed as an issue for ethnic Poles to work out among Poles.²⁸⁸

Although the presence or absence of Jewish figures in these territories has little to do with the forced migrations that took place as a result of the border changes or the approach of the Red Army in 1944/45, the absence of returning Polish Jews is particularly worth noting for several reasons: firstly, because the films depict the return of specifically *Polish* former KZ-prisoners to the evident exclusion of Jewish or Polish-Jewish former KZ-prisoners; and secondly, because their absence is reminiscent of the tendency to reduce “repatriates” from beyond the *Kresy* to a generalized “community of fate.” Whereas Jewish figures disappear in the transition from novel

²⁸⁸ The conflicts that erupt between the concentration camp survivors (Andrzej Kenig, Anna, and Czesiek) stem from competing interpretations of their own status as victims. While Czesiek and Anna understand the tattoo or the striped jacket to be a license to commit *szaber* (a Polish term denoting the plundering of ex-German goods) as a means of exacting material revenge and of bettering their own meager situations, Kenig, on the other hand, uses these same experiences to draw a line between the selfish survival mode that dominated life in the camps, and to convince the characters of the existence of a universal moral, socially responsible law.

to film, the figure of the “repatriate,” however, remains static, relegated to the frame of the narrative.

Like the town deserted and strewn with the evidence of a hasty evacuation, the repatriates, together with the crowded trains all decorated in garlands and patriotic sayings, constitute the *topoi* of the Recovered Territories. They signify the generic time and place of the film’s setting as well as a set of associations: “repatriation” (from the *Kresy* or as returning forced laborers and KZ-inmates), displacement, settlement, and a mix of uncertainty and promise. Unlike in *No One Calls*, however, these *topoi* charge the ethical dilemma of *The Law and the Fist*: when is it justified to use violence in the service of the law—and whose law? Present only at the beginning of the film and at its conclusion, the “repatriates” constitute the invisible, vulnerable community-in-waiting that, not unlike the community in Frank Zinnemann’s *High Noon* (1952), requires the protection of our hero, Andrzej Kenig, the Polish Will Kane. Unlike the townspeople in *High Noon*, however, the repatriates are grateful, anxiously waiting at the way station (i.e., the train station) for the town to be secured; stuck in a state of waiting, the repatriates inhabit the film’s major chronotope: that of the threshold, that is, of liminality.

The text cluster thematizes the historical liminality of the Recovered Territories (indeed, the major chronotope of the film may be identified as that of the threshold) and subtly calls into question the invented myth of the success of the Polish army on this territory from within the very genre of the Wild West which, as genre cinema, is supposed to be its mouthpiece.²⁸⁹ The film’s motivic ballad, “Nim wstanie dzień” (“Before the day awakens”), is about awaiting the arrival of a delayed dawn. The chorus reads: “Za dzień, za dwa, za noc, za trzy, choć nie dziś” (“In a day, in

²⁸⁹ The KC’s “Resolution on the Matter of Cinematography” recommended genre cinema as a means of distributing propaganda on various themes, including the incorporation of the Recovered Territories into Poland. Cf. Kunicki, 204–209.

two, in a night, in three, but not today”)—indicating from the very introduction of the film that resolution is not to be found here.²⁹⁰ Nothing is completed: Kenig does not find a new pair of pants to replace his ripped pair; the film begins and ends with movement; the bandits manage to escape with one truck of loot. Moreover, the characters find a common, liminal place of residence, the hotel. The importance of this choice of headquarters lies in its nominative function, for it defines the characters as *guests*. While new repatriates might have spent the first years in the Recovered Territories living provisionally, the figures in *The Law and the Fist* have not even allowed themselves the luxury of sitting. Whether they are big-time looters or disillusioned wanderers, the protagonists merely traverse the spaces, and nothing comes to fruition.

Only in the conclusion of the film (and not the novel, which ends with Koenig’s rejection of any kind of compensation or official recognition for his heroism) does the town begin the transformation from an abandoned no-man’s land to a re-inhabited town.²⁹¹ Those who were not killed in the shoot-out escape with one truck of loot, and Kenig, burdened with the question of the legitimacy of his violence, wanders on. As a military jeep transports Kenig’s exhausted and even defeated frame off screen, the repatriates plod toward the town below, tugging along their livestock, wagons, and families. The sun shines fortuitously on them, the anonymous, but unified community, which, in the logic of the film, is capable of claiming this territory (see **Figure 36**). Yet, for all of these suggestions of permanence, the film does not move beyond the representation of the ex-German town as a liminal space. Just as the film begins with images of movement (the

²⁹⁰ Edmund Fetting, perf., *Nim wstanie dzień*, composed by Krzysztof Komeda, lyrics by Agnieszka Osiecka. *Prawo i pięść* soundtrack, 1964.

²⁹¹ One of the main conflicts in *The Law and the Fist* involves the bandits’ vision of the town as a frontier space *à la* Manifest Destiny (the land and its goods are free for the taking) versus Kenig’s vision of the town as a no-man’s land bearing the traces or scars of German life that necessitates an ethical relationship to those traces and those who are to inhabit those emptied spaces.

repatriate train traveling toward the camera) (see **Figure 37**), so, too, does the end, with the repatriate trek ambling in one direction and the militia jeep rolling in the other. These mobile images suggest that the promise of stability in Siwowo is ambivalent, for even as the repatriates bear their livelihoods, and with them, the promise of a mix between ex-German and Polish life in a common cityscape, the film ends with movement. If stability is to be achieved in these territories, it may be, as the theme song soothes: “In a day, in two, in a night, in three, but not today.”



Figure 36: Kenig leaves Siwowo as the "repatriates" enter

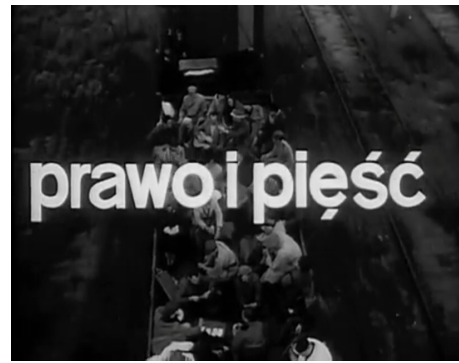


Figure 37: "Repatriate" train towards the camera. Still of opening sequence of Jerzy Hoffmann and Edward Skórczewski's *Prawo i pięść* (1964)

Genre cinema, with the Western as foremost example, neutralized the politically problematic topic of forced migration, while not erasing it completely. Battle films, for instance, primarily emphasized the role of the Polish Army (in conjunction with the Soviets) in “recovering” these territories, whereas those films associated with the Western genre emphasized the issues of settlement and of securing them. Films such as *Agnieszka 46* (1964), *The Law and the Fist* (1964), *Bathed by Fire* (1964), *Paradise on Earth* (1970), and *The Trap* (1971) exhibit traits of the American Western.²⁹² Instead of battling the “natives” (that is, the Germans), as some of these

films do, Andrzej Kenig must battle Polish bandits insistent on plundering the former German town of Graustadt (now “Siwowo” under Polish administration). Called the “Polish *High Noon*,”²⁹³ Andrzej Kenig, like Will Kane, must defend his principles alone for the sake of the well-being of the community. The films’ resolutions, while similar in structure (the hero leaves the town he has defended), are very different in meaning: whereas Andrzej Kenig leaves the town in an exhausted state, uncertain about the legitimacy of his violence in order to secure the material future of the arriving Polish settlers, his model, Will Kane (the lone sheriff of Fred Zinnemann’s *High Noon* [1952]) leaves the town with disdain for the people he saved, his moral high ground secured. In addition to the parallels between these two films, the makers of *The Law and the Fist* also incorporated characteristics of Western archetypes: the actor Gustav Holoubek’s hair has been dyed blond in order to convey youth and mimic American actor-heroes; the villain Wijas is dressed from head-to-toe in black, complete with thick gloves and slick James Dean hair to match; Wijas shoots from the hip like a traditional gunfighter; a drunken German (the comedic foreigner) serves up alcohol while women entertain the men at the bar (saloon). For some critics, these elements piled into the absurd, amounting to a parody of Polish history and of the Polish Western as a genre before it ever even had a chance to establish itself as such.²⁹⁴ Reviewers expressed hesitation concerning the efficacy of translating the American Western “fully” (Hiv.), in part due to the lack

²⁹³ See, for example, Skąpski, “Aleksandra,” and Maria Oleksiewicz’s interview with Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski titled “Polska gwiazda szeryfa.”

²⁹⁴ Jeremi Czuliński, for example, responds to Zygmunt Kałużyński’s *Polityka* review. While Kałużyński claims the film is a parody of the Western, Czuliński rejoinders that this is only partially correct. According to Czuliński, it is rather a parody of Polish history and of Polish film (“nasz film”)—which had previously tried to bring cowboys to the Bieszczady. He argues that *The Law and the Fist* created a parody without an original. Cf. K.T. Toeplitz, who calls the film a pastiche, and a “very successful filmic joke” that takes itself seriously, at no point alerting the viewer that it is actually a pastiche.

of critical success enjoyed by Wadim Berestowski's *Rancho Texas* (1958), a Polish "Eastern" taking place in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands.²⁹⁵

Parody or not, *The Law and the Fist*, like the Polish Easterns and Westerns preceding and following it, makes use of the American Western genre for reasons beyond the fulfillment of the KC's desire for more genre cinema. Although the activity of historical figures such as the German *Werwolf* may have been overrepresented in the imagination of Polish cinema, the representation of looters, bandits, settlers, and army units in the Recovered Territories according to the conventions of the Western genre seemed rather appropriate to contemporary audiences and even critics—at least as illustrated by the example of *The Law and the Fist*. By the mid-1960s, the "first days" on the Recovered Territories have already become the stuff of legends.²⁹⁶ Recognizing the value of the American Western as a vehicle for producing myths rather than relaying accurate historical truths, critics recognized the potential of this genre for the invention of myths of Poland's

²⁹⁵ The Polish "Eastern" predates the translation of the Western genre into the postwar situation in the Recovered Territories in Polish cinema (see Kunicki 205). I am calling those Polish films appropriating aspects of the Western genre that take place in the Eastern borderlands "Easterns" and those that take place in the Recovered Territories "Westerns." These are not terms readily used as categories to describe these films in Polish film scholarship, but are my own designations. While all of the films make use of the American Western genre, their geographical settings determine the scope of the issues that can be treated in the two groups of films. In using this terminology, I also remain aware of their incongruity with the "Easterns" and "Westerns" in the history of the Western genre in the history of American cinema. For this reason, I have called them Polish "Easterns" and Polish "Westerns." See Simmon 4–5, 12–18 for a discussion of the early American "Eastern Western" films (Westerns shot on the East Coast). What I call the "Easterns"—which include Wadim Berestowski's *Rancho Texas* (1958), Ewa and Czesław Petelski's *Ogniomistrz Kaleń* (Artillery Sergeant Kaleń; 1961), Jerzy Passendorfer's *Zerwany most* (Broken Bridge; 1962), and Aleksander Ścibor-Rylski's *Wilcze echa* (Wolf Echoes; 1968)—all take place in the Bieszczady, a mountain range located at the southeastern tip of Poland, which continues (by other names) into Ukraine and Slovenia. It was in this territory that the Polish army and UPA units battled each other, and where, as part of the 1947 *Operation Vistula*, Ukrainians and Lemkos were rounded up and dispersed across the western and (primarily) northern regions of Poland. K.K., writing for *Zielony sztandar*, expresses hesitation concerning the efficacy of the American Western genre to the Polish postwar situation: "Someone already tried to make a 'cowboy film' here. Envyng the exceptional success of American action films of this type – a story was made exactly according to the western model. There was thus our brave cowboy in this film, there was a beautiful girl, there was a gang of criminals, oh, and there were horses. The action took place in our 'wild west' – in the Bieszczady. The film had the title *Rancho Texas* and disappeared from the screens quickly because the theaters were empty."

²⁹⁶ See Zbigniew Klaczyński.

own “frontier” in those “first days.” After providing a brief explanation of the historical situations in the nineteenth-century American frontier and the Polish situation in 1945, Witold Dąbrowski, writing for the weekly *Zwierciadło*, admits:

There obviously isn’t a perfect or even a deeper analogy between Nebraska of 1880 and Lower Silesia of 1945; there is one common trait, however, that they certainly both share: there was pioneering both here and there, a man had to be reliant on himself to a degree much greater than he was previously accustomed to; here as there it came down to the law of the fist in the chaos at the end of the war, and a lone commanding officer of the MO [*Milicja Obywatelska*, Civic Militia] often found himself in situations like those of the lone sheriff in Nevada.

Dąbrowski’s comparative example of the MO officer and the Nevada sheriff illustrates one of the most important uses of the genre: the glorification of the Polish military in the “recovery” and incorporation of the Recovered Territories. Even those reviewers from the ex-German territories who challenge the historical accuracy of *The Law and the Fist* with their own eyewitness knowledge maintain the necessity of creating not just legends, but epics²⁹⁷—not even about the military, but about the settlers, members of a “national exodus” (“Ballada zachodnia”)²⁹⁸ who

²⁹⁷ As Zwierchowski describes, the film *Polish Album*, released at the end of the decade, provokes Drozdowski’s reflection on the representation of the “Western Territories” in Polish film precisely because it is a “national epic”: “It appears that the summaries of dozens of other films found themselves in one film,” *Kino nowej pamięci* 200.

²⁹⁸ The anonymous reviewer’s choice of phrasing (“national exodus”) merits closer attention. For this critic, the Western genre (as employed in *The Law and the Fist*) has not quite memorialized something. That “something” is the expulsion and wandering of Poles in the wake of WWII—not the frontier or the military. The writer harkens back to the ancient, epic, biblical model: the exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt (the place of slavery and servitude, here, the East) and their wanderings in the desert before finally reaching the Promised Land (here, the West, i.e., the Recovered Territories).

eventually find solace and rest in the Recovered Territories—a land flowing with milk and honey.²⁹⁹

Despite the championing of the potential for the film to establish myths about the territories, Jerzy Hoffman and Edward Skórzewski's allusions to Zinnemann's *High Noon* and to generic Western plot devices ultimately have the effect of subverting the myths of the Recovered Territories, and specifically, the role of the Polish military in "recovering" it. In accordance with the KC directive to make use of genre cinema, the director-duo creates a subtly subversive "Western po polsku."³⁰⁰

In contrast to films such as *Bathed by Fire* (1964), *Paradise on Earth* (1970), and *The Trap* (1971), which feature chivalric soldier-lawmen combating Nazi *Werwölfe* who refuse to relinquish control of the territory, Hoffman and Skórzewski's hero, Andrzej Kenig, is an outsider. He finds himself in the town of Zielno (where he is assigned to Mielecki's group) by chance: while saving a woman from rape, he misses his own westbound train. He has nothing: no papers, no family — not even a second pair of pants. We know that he is a survivor of Auschwitz and Dachau, a displaced Warsovian, an educated pedagogue, and, as his Germanic family name suggests, a possible *Volksdeutscher* (ethnic German). The lack of clarity concerning his origins and the precise nature of his activities in the underground during the war put Kenig in the tradition of the lonely lawman "without a past" (perhaps best exemplified by another gunfighter, Shane, from George Stevens' 1953 film of the same name). Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that, while the war has taught this intellectual to handle a pistol, he is not a member of the Polish Army. Rather than a crisp uniform, Kenig wears the garb of a civilian—a civilian who has indeed suffered much. We

²⁹⁹ See Tumolska 26 and Maciejewska.

³⁰⁰ See Janusz Gazda's and Mieczysław Skąpski's articles of the same title: "Western po polsku."

learn that he destroyed the seat of his pants while digging in the ruins of his home in Warsaw after the Uprising; what he does wear hangs on him, as he is thin, malnourished, and as the fist fight scenes illustrate, too weak: though he is a skilled boxer, he is still too weak.

As a survivor of Auschwitz, the tattoo on his forearm not only vouches for his reliability as a worker to join Mielecki's group, but provisionally, though not unequivocally, lends him moral authority analogous to the sheriff's badge as well. While the character Kenig makes no show of his tattoo, it is exposed to the viewer rather nonchallantly in gestures signifying his exhaustion after some act of heroism (e.g., touching his busted lip) (see **Figure 38**). Kenig, Czesiek, and Anna (all concentration camp survivors) make claims on their status as victims—albeit differently. Czesiek and Anna understand the tattoo or the striped jacket to be a license to commit *szaber*, as a means of exacting material revenge and of bettering their own meager situations. Kenig, on the other hand, uses these same experiences to draw a line between the allegedly selfish survival-mode that dominated life in the camps, and to convince the characters of the existence of a universal moral, socially responsible law: in this case, the repatriates awaiting resettlement in the town of Siwowo require these goods, and the medical equipment in particular, in order to have a future here, therefore, it is morally wrong to steal them. His argument does not convince them, and his willingness to use violence—though seen as an absolute last resort—to preserve the community ignites Czesiek's and Anna's contempt. "Shoot!" Czesiek cries, ripping open his shirt for Kenig's aim, "The Gestapo didn't kill me so you could!" A truck loaded with valuable equipment idles behind him. Dumbfounded, Kenig allows Czesiek and Anna to escape with the loot. They leave Kenig alone on the square, an anti-heroic heap under the weight of his choice to employ violence in the service of a good which he was not able to defend in whole.



*Figure 38: Kenig wipes lip, exposing Auschwitz tattoo. Still from Jerzy Hoffmann and Edward Skórzewski's *Prawo i pięść* (1964)*

Kenig subsequently questions his own moral authority when he uses violence to preserve the future of the new inhabitants of Siwowo. Rather than the frontier motto “the law of the fist,” the film’s title posits the separateness of “the law” and “the fist,” even as they are conjoined grammatically. While the first element, the law, concerns the arcane legal status of ex-German property, the second is the fist: the question of the justifiable use of violence. The film explores the following possible justifications: self-defense; the enforcement of legal law; the conservation of the well-being of a community and its future. The film does not provide a simple solution to this conflict, however. While the MO (Civic Militia) congratulates him for acting in self-defense and for protecting the town’s valuable equipment, Kenig remains uncertain whether he truly acted in self-defense. He defended a community—an absent community of whom he is not a member, and whom he refuses to join. Rejecting the MO’s job offer to have him serve as mayor of Siwowo, he wanders on, unable to come to terms with his choice to use the “fist” in the name of a moral and ambiguous legal law. With Kenig’s rejection, the film casts a longer shadow, implicating not just an individual like Kenig, but the military and the organizations that praised the actions he took and the logic that motivated them, namely, self-defense and the safeguarding of public assets.

Beyond staging a conflict of moral imperatives through an outsider hero, the film subtly critiques the KC's interpretation of history through the antithetical use of a common Western plot device: the just-in-the-nick-of-time arrival of the U.S. cavalry to save the protagonists from marauding Indians. This suspenseful plot device is commonplace in the old Westerns, particularly in D.W. Griffith's early films, and most famously in John Ford's *Stagecoach*.³⁰¹ *The Law and the Fist* alludes to this generic device, but with one decisive twist: the cavalry is late. The MO officers arrive just as the dust and strewn papers settle. The simple inversion of this common plot device, already out of place considering the film's overt references to the gunfighter film *High Noon*, creates a subtle critique of the efficacy of the Polish administrative and police forces in the territories.

Furthermore, the film criticizes the MO by showing an empty town without administration—and for this, the directors received criticism. As Janusz Gazda, writing for *Ilustrowany magazyn studencki*, explains:

Some people were already very angry at Hoffman and Skórzewski because they showed an empty town without any militia post, without even a small army division—Polish or Soviet. Well, certainly such situations occurred. Beyond that, if that town had been populated, if armed allies had introduced for the hero, the battle wouldn't have taken on such a dramatic character, its conflict wouldn't have been as intense.

While Gazda explains this choice as yet another plausible and sensible plot device, the critics he refers to question not only of the likelihood of this situation historically (that of the empty,

³⁰¹ See, for example, Simmon 37–38 for a discussion of the cavalry in D.W. Griffith's early Westerns such as *The Battle at Elderbush Gulch* (1913) and *Fighting Blood* (1911).

unattended town),³⁰² but also of what this implies about the competency of the MO and the Polish Army.

The Law and the Fist subtly calls into question the invented myth of the success of the Polish army on this territory from within the very genre of the Wild West which, as genre cinema, is supposed to be its mouthpiece. The hero, Andrzej Kenig, is an outsider, without family, without organizational ties, without friends. Most importantly, he is unassociated with the Polish Army or the Civic Militia. While his internment in Nazi concentration camps temporarily links him to an imagined community of victims, he again finds himself alone, reluctant to recognize his status as a victim as a means of justifying violence or material appropriation (and the implied expropriation of goods and property this presupposes). Furthermore, this figure rejects the praise and reward granted him by the MO for his exercise of violence in the service of material security and alleged self-defense. In addition to the complexities of the film's intellectual-turned-gunfighter hero, *The Law and the Fist* plays with generic Western plot devices to similar ends: the film inverts the punctual cavalry with a tardy civic militia; and instead of protecting a bustling frontier town, the hero protects an empty town isolated from its past and future inhabitants as well as from the administration which claims to have jurisdiction over it. *The Law and the Fist* illustrates how American Western generic tropes translated into the Polish postwar context have the potential to subvert the myths of the Recovered Territories, and specifically, the role of the Polish military in "recovering" it.

And yet, while the film does run against the grain of official discourse on the territories, the effacement of Cukierman and other traces of the genocide of the Jews from novel to film

³⁰² Halicka cites German eyewitness reports which describe similar situations. Isabella von Eck, for example, describes the "wild expulsions" as the Germans trekked through "destroyed, empty towns and villages that had been cleared of their inhabitants before us" (qtd. in Halicka 114). She names the towns of Rzepin, Torzym, and Boczów in particular.

reveals one of the silences of Polish cinema in the 1960s with regard to “repatriation” (understood here widely as used in the PKF), genocide, and the Recovered Territories. While the film builds on the novel’s framing of the town (and by extension, of the Recovered Territories) as a liminal space, the film nevertheless effaces not only a very personal autobiographical element from Hen’s text, but a narrative that suggests the vibrant possibility of renewed Jewish activity and culture in postwar Poland, and specifically, in the Recovered Territories. In concert with the official narrative, the film stages the Territories as a space that had been gained as retribution for wrongs committed by Nazi Germany against Poles, and whose integration into greater Poland is restricted to internal conflict, whether between good Poles and bandits or between members and former members of the Home Army.

***Sami swoi* (All Our Own; 1967)**

The final film under analysis, Sylwester Chęciński’s *Sami swoi* (All Our Own; 1967), restricts conflict on the Recovered Territories to Pole versus Pole. The conflict, however, has little to do with ideological differences as it does in *The Law and the Fist*; rather, it is a conflict sparked by misunderstanding and neighborly border disputes, perpetuated by the transference of a generational grudge that, with each generation, loses significance. The irrational persistence of the grudge between the Kargul and Pawlak families provides the source for much of the humor—in contrast to the overwhelming majority of films that take place on the Recovered Territories in this period, *All Our Own* is a comedy. As far as I am aware, only *All Our Own* and Hieronim Przybył’s *Republic of Women* (1969) approach the issue of (re)settlement and the Recovered Territories through humor (the latter stages a battle of the sexes when a female military division arrives as administrators and settlers in a small town in the Recovered Territories). While *The Law and the Fist* makes use of the already popular *topos* of the Wild West in the context of the Recovered

Territories, *All Our Own* ventures into generic territory that had been little pursued, and with much success.

All Our Own is the first film of what was to become a well-loved trilogy (the other two films include *Nie ma mocnych* [Take It Easy; 1974] and *Kochaj albo rzuć* [Love It or Leave It; 1977]). As Mark Haltof explains, “The situational humor of these comedies, their tempo, the protagonists’ accent, which plays a prominent role in their witty dialogues—all contributed to the box-office success of these films” (*Polish National Cinema* 140). *All Our Own* tells the story of the feud between the Kargul and Pawlak families, who due to the border changes, moved (there is no suggestion of force in the film) from the *Kresy* to the Recovered Territories, taking their feud with them. The feud began with a “border dispute” in the *Kresy*: a Pawlak accused a Kargul of having plowed the width of three fingers into the Pawlak plot. After striking a Kargul with a scythe, Jaśko Pawlak, Kazimierz Pawlak’s brother, fled to the United States.

The present of the film begins with Jaśko’s, or rather John’s, return (the aim of which is to procure a handful of dirt from their hometown, so that he can be buried with the earth of his homeland in Detroit), who not only expresses a “backwards” desire for his homeland in the *Kresy*, but still passionately hates the Kargul family, unaware that the Pawlaks and the Karguls have long since made peace with each other. Pawlak, flustered, tries to explain that the grand-niece Jaśko holds in his arms is both Kargul and Pawlak. While Kargul and Pawlak rekindle their feud, it is merely a show: the quarrels “result more from the need to preserve ‘tradition’ rather than from authentic conflict” (Hendrykowska, “Sami swoi” 278) as well as from the desire to play the appropriate role for the “rich uncle” Jaśko from America. The present is interspersed with prolonged flashbacks illustrating not only how the feud began, but how it continued in the Recovered Territories. “The truth of the matter is that neither of them can live without each other

and they need conflict ‘like air and water’” (278). This being the case, they choose to settle next to each other in the Recovered Territories, and the property battles continue. As it turns out, however, the Kargul-Pawlak feud develops into a comedic version of the Shakespearean Montague-Capulet tragedy: the Karguls and Pawlaks are reconciled, not by the death of the lovers, but by their marriage and the birth of a child. The film ends in the present, with Jaśko finally coming to accept this new reality of peace, a feat accomplished less by the story and more by a moment of laughter shared between Jaśko and his grand-niece, not to mention by witnessing Kargul and Pawlak working together to trick Jaśko (he spies them filling a bag with dirt from the courtyard to pass off as dirt from the *Kresy*). With Jaśko’s conversion, Pawlak cries “nareszcie jesteś!” (“There you are, finally!”), and they embrace.

In some ways, it is the most ambitious film to depict the forced migration of Poles from the *Kresy*: not only are its protagonists clearly “repatriates” from beyond the Bug, but the film depicts the *Kresy* as well. It is, however, in directly tackling the issue of forced migration and the lost *Kresy* that the film openly espouses the official interpretations of these same issues. More than any of the other characters, Waław Kowalski’s Kazimierz Pawlak emerges as the most ardent proponent of the Recovered Territories as a place of progress and new beginnings. He pits the East against the West, remembering their home beyond the Bug as a place ridden with ignorant family feuding and thatched houses instead of brick ones. Pawlak reminds Jaśko of the origins of the Pawlak-Kargul feud, prompting a flashback-reenactment. The cinematography of this scene reflects Pawlak’s own attitude toward the East, that it is ignorant and ridiculous. The frame rate of the scene increases dramatically at times, and the actors’ gestures devolve sporadically into the dramatic style typical of early silent films (Kowalski and Hańcza play their fathers, crowned with wigs), while a playful soundtrack of staccato-ed brass instruments ties the action into a bundle of

slapstick comedy. This is, to my knowledge, the only scene to depict life in the *Kresy*. While the East offers a faded, gray, audacious version of themselves, the West offers the promise of progress.

In the present of the film's narrative, Kazimierz Pawlak asserts that their new home is their adopted *macierz*. When his brother "John" finally returns to Poland from the United States, demanding earth from their old village for his own future grave, Kazimierz claims that such nostalgia is unnecessary: "nam tu żyć i umierać, bo my tutejsze" ("we live here and die here, because we are locals"). The Pawlaks and Karguls have thoroughly broken their ties with the East and all of the feuds and poverty associated with it, and are completely at home in the Recovered Territories. It is Jaśko, the émigré in America, who remains backward. Not only does he still hold the passé family grudge, he also has not progressed beyond identifying his homeland with their tiny village in the *Kresy*. And yet, as old as Jaśko supposes himself to be, in the end, he is still able to move on from the feud and from his attachment to the *Kresy*.

Pawlak's mother Leonia, on the other hand, appears to be the only member of either family who is unable to come to terms with the new surroundings, despite the familiar presence of their friend/foe neighbors. The family's arrival into the ex-German town is constructed of POV shots taken over Leonia's shoulder. As she hunches in the military jeep, however, she turns toward the camera, that is, to Kazimierz, in order to express her uncertainty and irritation. It is Leonia who laments the lack of a real oven in the new house (one cannot sleep on an ex-German iron-cast oven as one could on a hearth in the East), who falls ill, and dies. The earth from the *Kresy* is scattered over her grave.

For Kazimierz Pawlak, the experience of forced migration is by no means forced; it is, in its own peculiar way, a godsend. The repatriate train, as Pawlak introduces it to Jaśko, is Noah's Ark: "Posłuchaj, Jaśko, o arce Noego, co na szynach płynęła przez ten cały potop. Szarpnęło,

gwizdnęło i się potoczyło. I tak: dzień jedziesz, dwa dni stoisz... Tydzień ma dni siedem, w miesiącu tygodni cztery, a pociągu wagonów 48” (“Listen, Jaśko, about Noah’s Ark, which floated on rails through this whole deluge. It jerked, whistled, and rolled. And yes: you travel one day, stand still for two days... A week has seven, in a month four weeks, and a train has forty-eight wagons”). Though apparently long, Paweł and Kazimierz Pawlak experience the train journey as an adventure—or rather, a voyage. While the women are huddled in the recesses of the wagon, the two men remained fixed at the window, surveying the endless fields that, framed thus by Kazimierz, take on the character of an endless sea (see **Figure 39**). The journey from the *Kresy* to the Recovered Territories is framed therefore as a rescue—though the film never touches on who arranged for the train or the nature of the flood (the war in general or the Polish-Ukrainian conflict?). This remains as a matter simply understood. The Pawlak’s new home in the Recovered Territories is similarly folded into the metaphor of the ship: after Paweł has planted a Polish flag firmly at the very highest point of their new house (so that it is higher than the Karguls’ flag), Paweł pauses to survey the landscape and declares that being up there is like being on a ship. The ship/ark metaphor signifies not only safety, but power as well: the power to see, survey, and, with the Polish flag fluttering behind Paweł on the roof, dominion (see **Figure 40**). This metaphor and its significations are certainly gendered: it is only the women who experience the train journey as arduous and the new circumstances as foreign.



Figure 39: Paweł and Kazimierz Pawlak aboard the "repatriate" train



Figure 40: Paweł surveys the land from the roof of the house in the Recovered Territories. Stills from Sylwester Chęciński's *Sami swoi* (1967)

While the film overtly references neither the Polish-Soviet Ukrainian nor the Polish-East German border, the main conflict between the families is a matter of borders. Due to the fact that both families have left their homes due to the border changes in the east and that they settle in territories acquired as a result of thereof in the west, the issues of property and borders battled out between them can be read as an allegory for Poland's fraught relations with its own neighbors to the east and west. In the Recovered Territories, the Pawlak-Kargul feud even adopts the language and the trappings of war. Barely settled into their new homes, Pawlak and Kargul meet each other at the fence, uncertain whether to rejoice or to posture aggressively (see **Figure 41**). At Pawlak's request, the two remove their hats and engage in an awkwardly formal peace ceremony "na okoliczność, że nasza wędrówka ludowa już się zakończyła. I trzeba było wojny, żeby zdobyć pokój. A teraz płacz" ("On the occasion that our people's wandering has ended. And there had to be war in order to reach peace. And now, cry"). Pawlak and Kargul embrace, and as both families rush to embrace each other over the fence dividing their properties, they destroy the fence and topple over each other.³⁰³ The two men, as the respective heads of their families, jointly declare

³⁰³ This inter-familial peace proves to be short-lived, but, as the situation in the present of the film already indicates, these prank battles, too, will lose their force—what pranks remain will be the stuff of tradition.

peace; together with their families, they tear down the physical symbol of the divisions between them. This peace, however, is short-lived. The revived war/feud takes on more serious dimensions that indicate the careful allegory at play: in order to de-mine their field, Pawlak and Paweł, the latter wearing a German Nazi helmet, set fire to the field, thereby detonating the mines (scorched earth). Their “ingenuity” sparks a chaotic exodus from the town, as everyone believes that the Germans have returned to reclaim their land. In contrast to the future of Poland’s western and even eastern borders,³⁰⁴ the fence separating the Kargul and Paweł homesteads clearly demarcates the limits of each family’s sovereignty and property (see **Figure 41**).



*Figure 41: The Kargul and Pawlak families prepare to confront each other at the fence. Still from Sylwester Chęciński's *Sami swoi* (1967)*

In *All Our Own*, the material remnants of German life—the objects that incite horror, but also fantasy in characters such as Różewicz’s Celina or in Hoffmann and Skórzewski’s cast in Graustadt/Siwowo—are overwhelmingly reduced to kitsch and gags. The swastika-ed helmet in the aforementioned scene has no *meaning* for the son; its meaning exists only for the audience, to

³⁰⁴ Chęciński notes that, while preparing research for *Agnieszka 46*, many Poles still lived provisionally in the expectation that they would return to their homes in the East—this, already in the mid-1960s. See Chęciński, “Sylwester Chęciński z Platynowymi Lwami.”

provide the audience with a comedy of errors as the townspeople mistake the Pawlak boys' "ingenious" attempt at clearing the mines. The *jarmark* ("market") is full of ex-German goods, which are worth considerably less than real Polish ones—even if these goods are cats (one Polish cat, it turns out, is more valuable than one ex-German bicycle). In contrast to the other films, the traces of expelled or evacuated Germans yield little contemplation of the former inhabitants or of the property that they, too, left behind.

In Chęciński's film, the trauma of expulsion and displacement is relegated to the margins, present only as dissatisfaction in the female counterparts of the Pawlak clan. In an interview with Katarzyna Bielas, Chęciński discusses the origins of the film, which are, textually speaking, two-fold: the film has its origins in Chęciński's 1964 film *Agnieszka 46* and is inspired by the radio broadcast *I było święta* (And it was a Holiday; 1 May 1965).³⁰⁵ The reception of *Agnieszka 46* had impacted the outcome of the film *All Our Own*. *Agnieszka 46* was quickly removed from theaters after its release precisely because it violated the image of the Polish Army that the KC wanted to promote. In the interview Chęciński explains: "It was acknowledged that I presented the liberators as bandits, that I mocked the Kościuszko Army... [...] We desecrated the soldier's uniform, we show that soldiers drink vodka, that they're bandits. This wasn't our intention anyway, I only talked about a man who survived the war..." ("Sylwester Chęciński z Platynowymi Lwami"). As a result, Chęciński "paid lip service" to the military in *All Our Own*: "we tried to sell [the Russians] a little differently: we showed the army, not only as a wonderful liberator, but as a lover of moonshine." While Chęciński acknowledged his own political need to "correct" his depictions of

³⁰⁵ Andrzej Łapicki was the director of the radio broadcast, while Andrzej Mularczyk wrote the screenplay. Mularczyk also penned the the 1966 screenplays for *Sami swoi*, though these versions retain the title of the radio broadcast. See Andrzej Mularczyk, "I było święto" (versions I–II as well as the shooting script).

the military, his film also treads lightly in his commentary on the phenomena of forced migration from the *Kresy* and the acquisition and settlement of ex-German territory.

Although Chęciński did not originally envision Waław Kowalski to play the part of Pawlak, Kowalski was “the person, who gave [the film] life, spirit” (Chęciński, “Sylwester Chęciński z Platynowymi Lwami”), with his humor and dialect.³⁰⁶ Actually from the *Kresy*,³⁰⁷ Kowalski becomes a stand-in for the repatriate “type”—a silly, but lovable peasant with a heavy eastern accent. Although he is most famous for his role as the person from the *Kresy* (*kresowiak*) Kazimierz Pawlak in Sylwester Chęciński’s *All Our Own* trilogy, he plays the role in several combat films that take place in the Recovered Territories as well, namely, *Destination Berlin* (1968), *Last Days* (1969), and *Red Rowan* (1969).³⁰⁸ The figure he plays in the earlier *Agnieszka 46*, Kondera, is similarly a peasant from the lost *Kresy*, specifically from Kosina Wielka (Didžioji Kuosinė), a village in present-day Lithuania. His characters defend the western and eastern borders and even plant the red-and-white-striped Polish border post along the Oder River under German fire. As Pawlak, he travels from the “backward” East on a repatriate train to a farmstead on the Recovered Territories, where Kazimierz Pawlak promotes the Recovered Territories as a place of prosperity and new beginnings. Similarly, Kowalski’s *kresowiak* character (Ostrejko) in *Destination Berlin* (1968) is the first to recognize the value of the German territories he and his

³⁰⁶ Though the film was originally filmed in standard Polish, Chęciński found Kowalski’s off-screen translations of his own lines into dialect so wonderful, that the film was later dubbed into the Eastern dialect. See Chęciński, “Sylwester Chęciński z Platynowymi Lwami.”

³⁰⁷ Kowalski was born 2 May 1916 in what is now Gagarin, Russia, and spent his childhood near Gojno, a small locality near the Bug River (on the present-day Polish side).

³⁰⁸ Films relevant to my topic in which Kowalski plays a role include: Ewa and Czesław Petelski’s *Artillery Sergeant Kaleń* (1961) and *Red Rowan* (1969), Witold Lesiewicz’s *Kwiecień* (April; 1961), Sylwester Chęciński’s *Agnieszka 46* (1964) and *All Our Own* (1967), Jerzy Passendorfer’s *Destination Berlin* (1968) and *Last Days* (1969), Heronim Przybył’s *Republic of Women* (1969), Zbigniew Kuźmiński’s *Paradise on Earth* (1970), Jerzy Afanasjew’s *Ferry* (1970), and Jan Rybkowski’s *Polish Album* (1970).

unit are actively “recovering.” The myths of the Recovered Territories, the *Kresy*, and of the repatriates condense into one optimistic, jovial, earthy form—into Kowalski, the real-life and cinematic *kresowiak*. Through him, the repatriate and the *Kresy* are ever-present, even if these topics are not thematized explicitly. Nonetheless, his characters do not bespeak the trauma of forced migration; instead, they represent the optimistic narrative of progress and retribution, as well as of the unity of Poland’s territories and its citizens, even as the film deprecates Polish culture in the east, thereby subtly maintaining the stereotype of an inherently superior, west-oriented Polish culture.³⁰⁹

The one exception to this trend is his role as Edek in Eckermann’s *Ways Across the Land*.³¹⁰ In this film, Kowalski plays the role of Edek, a Pole in occupied Poland whom the Nazis dispossessed of his house. The protagonist of the film, Gertrud Habersaat, and her husband Kalluweit receive the house and its land as *Ostsiedler*, and arrive just in time to witness Edek and his family’s eviction. Kowalski’s only speaking line in this film is a prophetic curse to Kalluweit and Gertrud, articulated in broken German. He reappears in the film, suffering a serious cranial injury; he does not speak, but is instead spoken for by another younger Pole, Jan, a partisan fighting in the forests. Jan preaches the truth of Nazi policy toward the Polish and Jewish populations to Kalluweit and Gertrud; Kowalski’s character is the silent but visible proof thereof. In this East German film, Kowalski is the dispossessed Pole; though he is also a dispossessed Pole in the films produced contemporaneously in the PPR—whereby the fact of his characters’ dispossession is

³⁰⁹ Thanks to Roman Koropecyj for drawing my attention to the existence of stereotypes about eastern vs western Polish culture.

³¹⁰ The film was also broadcast in Poland in October 1969. For more information about the reception of the film in Poland, see page 151 of this dissertation.

suppressed: there is no losing the East, only gaining in the West. In the East German film, this silence comes to the fore.

All Our Own is the only film produced in Poland prior to 1970 to feature primarily “repatriate” protagonists from the East and to depict the *Kresy*. In doing so, the film appears to break taboos, and yet the experience of forced migration (whether as expulsion or as evacuation) is rewritten such that it does not appear to have been *forced* at all; instead, the repatriate train is a saving Noah’s Ark. The lost East stands for ignorance and poverty, whereas the West is a land of prosperity, a place with thick, golden fields of wheat, sturdy houses, and peace. Like the father-son “repatriate” duo celebrated in PKF 33/46, Kazimierz and Paweł Pawlak emerge as the ideal repatriates: neither desirous of their lost homes nor fraught with tales of victimhood, they integrate themselves into the new territory (bringing, for a time at least, their traditional feud with them) and understand themselves to be locals, not transplants.

Conclusion

The Western Institute’s contests for settler memoirs (1957, 1966, 1970) indicate explicit interest in the experiences of those who settled in the Recovered Territories (regardless of the reason why). Certain topics with regard to the forced migration of Poles from the *Kresy*, however, were widely understood to be off-limits:

Although depictions about the brutality of the Ukrainian nationalists were allowed, they were not permitted to be brought into connection with the Communist regime, which deployed itself in relocating the rebellious and recalcitrant Poles from the Polish East that had been adjoined to the USSR. Topics such as the desire for lost homelands and the sense of the provisional nature of their new homes likewise were not permitted. (Halicka 28)

Therefore, it is not surprising that the topic of forced migration, to the extent that it is depicted or thematized, is filtered in certain ways in the realm of Polish feature film: through the use of genre cinema; through the creation of a kind of “community of fate” (*Schicksalsgemeinschaft*), of which repatriates from the *Kresy* are visible, but oftentimes marginalized members; and through the partial sublimation of these topics by issues associated with arrival.

Two film genres were well adapted to the demands of the KC’s “Resolution on the Matter of Cinematography,” namely, the Western and the combat film. (As I have noted, comedies about [re]settlement and the Recovered Territories were uncommon, with *All Our Own* and *Republic of Women* being the known examples.) The KC’s resolution did not specify the Western³¹¹—or, for that matter, any other genre—as being of interest, however, the genre lent itself almost naturally to the depiction of two of the Committee’s explicitly desired topics: the reevaluation of the Communist Lublin Army and the incorporation of the ex-German territories into Poland. The idea of the ex-German territories as Poland’s Wild West grew out of the political and real-lived circumstances that characterized these border regions in the immediate postwar period. Despite the best efforts of Polish propaganda to dispel any anxiety, the fact remained that the border had only been agreed upon by the Allies provisionally.

The Wild West therefore served as an interpretive framework superimposed over personal and collective experience. Based on the American Wild West, which is itself an invented history portrayed in the service of particular political, ideological, economic or environmental aims, the image of a Polish Wild West is doubly invented: based not only on a history imagined for a

³¹¹ Although the phrase “Poland’s Wild West” was common in everyday language, the government avoided advocating the phrase because of the potential negative connotations it could carry (see Halicka 7). *The Law and the Fist* illustrates this potential in its own adaption of the American Western genre.

different national context, the themes, ideologies, dichotomies, and assumptions inherent to the American genre were incongruous with the actual circumstances in Poland.

More than providing a platform for romanticizing or immortalizing these actors, however, the genre also creates a myth of the territory as a frontier. In the American context, “the mythic space of the Western is identified with the American past and with a traditional, progressive narrative of national history” (Slotkin 352). The frontier, even if the narratives that develop on it take place in the past, is a future-oriented space of teleological progress. It is territory that is wild, unclaimed (because unfenced and unfarmed), and ripe for appropriation by those who will carve it up, organize it, cultivate it, and ultimately “civilize” it. Existing in a gray zone, where the “law of the fist” reigns over that of the U.S. cavalry at its distant outpost, as a dream, the frontier contains limitless possibilities for the strong. Physically, however, the American frontier was bounded by the Pacific Ocean (before it moved to outer space, and beyond).

For Poles, the mythic western frontier developed similar contours in propaganda. Rather than the Pacific, its limits were delineated by the natural/political boundary of the Oder and Lusatian Neisse rivers. If the American Western justified the settlement of Native American territory through the imposition of order on these lands (fences, cultivation), the Polish Western did so through the erasure of a previous order and the construction (or re-Polonization) of order in the name of the Polish people. This erasure occurs not only through the physical removal of German-language shop signs or Nazi flags,³¹² but discursively: the designation “repatriate” suggests that this territory is already Polish (thereby eliding the question of its Germanness) and

³¹² Filming the “first days” on the Recovered Territories required a temporary reversal of this erasure in the cityscapes of some of these ex-German towns. For *The Law and the Fist*, the film crew transformed the *Rynek Nowomiejski* (New Town Square), the *Centralne Piwnicy Win Importowanych* (Central Cellars of Imported Wines), and the town hall, among other older sections of Toruń—not into 1945 Thorn, but into a generically *poniemieckie* (“ex-German”) town (“J. Hoffman i E. Skórzewski przybędą na toruńską premierę”).

that the territories east of the Bug and San rivers are no longer Polish; the designation “settler” suggests that the land the settlers are settling is empty, appropriable, and subject to the American resource principle of ““first in time, first in right”” (Simmon 139)—again eliding the centuries-long presence of Germans (and civilization more broadly) on the territory. Though the strong may be the heroes, these Polish Western heroes work in the name of the national community (socialism) rather than for the good of the individual (capitalism).

Those films associated with the Western genre emphasized the issues of settlement and of securing the territories. Films such as *Agnieszka 46* (1964), *The Law and the Fist* (1964), *Bathed by Fire* (1964), *Paradise on Earth* (1970), and *The Trap* (1971) exhibit traits of the American Western film genre. In the first of these films, Joanna Szczerbic plays the role of a typical pure, pretty, strong-headed schoolmarm; like the stock figure of the Western, Szczerbic’s Agnieszka also “brings civilization with her in the form of education” (Indick 62)—not to the dusty frontier town on the prairie inhabited by rough cowboys, but to a Polish frontier town inhabited by rowdy members of a military penal colony and their commander (now *soltys* [“village administrator”] Zenon Bałcz, who is played by Leon Niemczyk). Just as in the Western, this schoolmarm’s purity redeems the impure, arbitrary, and violent male hero, Bałcz. Chivalric soldier/lawmen feature in *Bathed by Fire* (1964), *Paradise on Earth* (1970), and *The Trap* (1971). Captain Sowiński of *Bathed by Fire*, for example, tries (and fails) to prevent the forced emigration of a Silesian woman who has been blackmailed by other autochthones. In *Paradise on Earth* and *The Trap*, the Polish military protagonists combat Nazi *Werwölfe* (“werewolves”) who refuse to relinquish control of the territory without a fight. Such guerilla-style battles against recalcitrant “natives” (Germans) are common to the Western genre and to its own outgrowth in the American context—the combat

film.³¹³ The application of the Western genre to the topic of forced migration and the Recovered Territories romanticizes settlement and deals with the conflicts that settlers encountered, all while dramatizing the role of the Communist Lublin Army in the recovery and incorporation of the ex-German territories into Poland. Though, as *The Law and the Fist* illustrates, these very same narratives were questioned through the very traits of the Western genre itself.

The so-called *filmy batalistyczne* (“battle” or “combat” films) constitute a second important genre for the depiction of the Recovered Territories and of forced migration during the 1960s and early 1970s. The Recovered Territories (specifically as Recovered Territories) began to feature in WWII films that sought to establish the narrative of Polish-Soviet solidarity in defeating Nazi Germany. According to Zwierzchowski, nearly three hundred films were produced during the 1960s that dealt with the war in some fashion.³¹⁴ The battle films belong to what Zwierzchowski calls a cinema of “new memory,” created through the directives of the KC Resolution of June 1960.³¹⁵ This is a cinema of “new” memory insofar as it sets itself in opposition to the version of history propagated by the Polish School and attempted to legitimize the Communist government in power via a historical reevaluation of the role of the Polish Communists in defeating fascism and establishing the PPR.

The Cinema of New Memory is linked above all with battle films such as Jerzy Passendorfer’s *Barwy walki* (The Colors of Battle), *Kierunek Berlin* (Destination Berlin),

³¹³ For more information on the relationship between the American Western and the combat film, see Slotkin 317–318.

³¹⁴ Zwierzchowski, *Kino nowej pamięci* 74.

³¹⁵ Idem, “The main tasks of the filmic images of war in the 1960s included the creation of ‘new’ memory (at times they were to pose a completely unique counterpoint to the restored memory in films of the second half of the 1950s). In this context, the question of the political exploitation of the image of the largest defensive conflict of the twentieth century was to play a fundamental role,” 9.

and *Ostatnie dni* (Last Days), Ewa and Czesław Petelski's *Jarzębina czerwona* (Red Rowan), and finally with the popular television series *Czterej pancerni i pies* (Four Tank-Men and a Dog) by Konrad Nałęcki and Andrzej Czekalski, as well as *Stawka większa niż życie* (Stakes Larger than Life) by Andrzej Konic and Janusz Morgenstern. (Zwierzchowski, *Kino nowej pamięci* 10)

Ewa and Czesław Petelski's *Red Rowan* (1970)³¹⁶ and all but one of the Passendorfer/Żukrowski collaborations take place, at least in part, on the Recovered Territories: *Baptized by Fire* (1963), *Destination Berlin* (1968), and *Last Days* (1969).³¹⁷

Though the main drive of the battle films listed above is to place emphasis on the triumph of the Polish soldiers (mostly those of the Lublin Army and Moczar's "partisans") and the Soviets in defeating Nazi Germany, in doing so, many of them depict the conquest of the territories, i.e., the way in which they were "recovered." In linking these two issues, the films construct a justification for the "return" of the territories to Poland. In the fight against the Nazis at the end of the war, the battle films portray Nazi barbarism: in *Red Rowan*, for instance, the Nazis begin to massacre their own surrendering civilians;³¹⁸ and in *Last Days*, the Nazis murder Kurt Müller, a German soldier who had been captured by the Poles. In depicting atrocities committed against

³¹⁶ With regard to the depiction of the Recovered Territories, this film depicts the battle of Kołobrzeg/Kolberg and the arrival of the Polish units on the Baltic coast.

³¹⁷ The exception is *Barwy walki* (The Colors of Battle; 1964), which is based on the memoirs of Mieczysław Moczar, the populist, anti-Semitic, anti-Soviet general who was Minister of the Interior (1964–1968), chairman of the *Związek Bojowników o Wolność i Demokrację* (ZBoWiD, 1964–1972) (Lubelski, *Historia kina polskiego* 238), and vital actor in launching the anti-Semitic campaign of 1968. Moczar and his group called the *Partyzanci* ("partisans") "[t]ried to create a canon of knowledge about WWII, negatively judging and attacking versions that differed from their own in any way" (Zwierzchowski, *Kino nowej pamięci* 83). The film *The Colors of Battle* is a good example of such an attempt to redirect memory of WWII.

³¹⁸ The film draws a division between the *Wehrmacht* and the SS divisions, the latter of which spread lies and murder civilians.

their own people (not to mention the Poles and other groups), the films encourage an understanding that the Germans' loss of these territories constitutes a kind of punishment, and that Polish appropriation is justified.

Apart from the use of genre cinema to approach the interconnected topics of the Recovered Territories and forced migrations, the films tend to create a generalized community of fate rather than focus explicitly on those Poles from beyond the Kresy who find themselves resettled in the Recovered Territories. As I explained in the introduction to this chapter, the term “repatriate” had come to stand for a generic category of Poles: those returning from KZs, and, in the context of the Recovered Territories, those being *relocated* to the west. With the exceptions of *No One Calls* and *All Our Own*, few films include protagonists who are explicitly from the *Kresy*. In other films, Varsovians or Poles of unspecified origins constitute the protagonists. Instead, the repatriates are relegated to the margins of the narratives, and often remain in waiting at the train station—a loud, restless crowd. Whereas the repatriates at the beginning of *The Law and the Fist* are more or less resigned to their fates, cooking breakfast over a little fire next to the train tracks, in *Paradise on Earth* (1970), the repatriates are an impatient and unruly mass, unappreciative of the protagonists' difficult work to chase out German *Werwölfe*. In those films in which the repatriates remain a chaotic mass, they are, as in *The Law and the Fist*, the beneficiaries of the protagonists' struggles.

The primary conflicts revolve around issues associated with arrival or settlement, rather than issues related to the past.³¹⁹ As in the battle film and the Western, the majority of these films

³¹⁹ *No One Calls* and *Examination of Conscience* constitute exceptions to this trend, for their male protagonists (Bożek and Roman, respectively) seek escape from their wartime dealings in the Recovered Territories. While their intent is to begin a new life, this goal is hampered by the persistence of figures from their pasts. Each film draws a different conclusion: while Bożek cannot find rest, Roman of *Examination of Conscience*, after years of mistreatment and imprisonment under Stalinism, is indeed able to start a new, successful life in Szczecin.

are concerned with questions of property and ownership.³²⁰ In the battle films or in the Western-style battles against German *Werwölfe*, the issue is control of territory or of strategic structures (such as the chemical factory in *Paradise on Earth*), the conflict that precedes Polish (re)settlement. For the repatriates, property conflicts erupt between autochthones (*Bathed by Fire*),³²¹ between Polish looters and settlers (*The Law and the Fist* and *Three Women*), or—comically—between feuding families (*All Our Own*). With the exception of those films which have elements of the “psychological drama” (e.g., the earlier films *Three Women* and *No One Calls*, as well as *The Law and the Fist*, to an extent), those films which focus on issues of arrival, settlement, and property are transfixed on the problems of the present: the trauma of forced migration and the effects of the war are marginalized in comparison.

The films produced prior to the KC also exhibit the traits discussed here, as my analyses of *Three Women* (1957) and *No One Calls* (1960) should illustrate; however, these tendencies are far more pronounced in the films that follow the KC “Resolution on the Matter of Cinematography” of June 1960. All of these observations about the depiction of forced migration are subsumed under the broader topic of the Recovered Territories, which were not merely a temporal-spatial setting, but an object of national and international political importance. The chronotopic configuration of “the Recovered Territories of the early postwar period” serves as the primary register for interpretation in the films in which the forced migrations (due to Yalta and Potsdam) appear. The most prominent themes, which have come to function as myths (after

³²⁰ Thank you to Roman Koropecyk for pointing out that this theme extends back to the seventeenth century in Polish literature and is part of the Sarmatian myth.

³²¹ In *Bathed by Fire*, an allegedly Silesian family frames two German- and Polish-speaking women, forcing them to immigrate to Germany, despite the best attempts of the Polish military protagonist to insure their safety and right to stay in the town.

Barthes), include: the return to the Piast lands,³²² the active “recovery” or conquest of these lands, the persistent threat of German aggression, (idealized) settlement of the lands, the Polish Wild West, and the youthfulness of the territories, among others. Whether repatriates/expellees are *en route* to the Recovered Territories, are waiting at the train station, or are assuming control of their homesteads and apartments, the narratives of these figures are written into and also against these very same myths.

³²² With the exception of the battle films, which vie for the “recovery” of these lands, the only film which explicitly thematizes the Slavic or Polish character of these territories is *Sobótki*, which frames the story in the mysteries of Slavic mythology: at the beginning of the film, the camera revolves around a copy of the Zbruch Idol in the middle of the forest, as the narrator establishes the temporal setting: the shortest night of the year, “full of spells, myths, and legends.”

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In order to understand the representations of forced migration in the feature films of West Germany, East Germany, and the Polish People's Republic, I have turned to the chronotope as a means of establishing, not only a point of comparison between texts, but a point at which the issues of forced migration and the representation thereof come to the fore as well. While Bakhtin applies the chronotope to the identification and description of genres,³²³ I have understood the chronotope (whether as the motivic chronotope of the road or as the film's characteristic chronotope) as a tool affording a means of comparing a single issue in films produced in different times, places, and political contexts (primarily 1950s West Germany, the SBZ, West Germany, the PPR of the late 1950s and 1960s). Even within Bakhtin's own consideration of the chronotope as a marker of genre, he acknowledges that a particular *motivic* chronotope may "stubbornly" persist beyond the historical period of its relevance. While this complicates the classification and periodization of certain genres for Bakhtin, his own admission of the outlived staleness of a particular chronotope in a later age or different genre implies that it may provide a meaningful point of comparison between works of disparate historical origins. My study relied on the proliferation of a particular chronotope (namely, that of the road), "developed in different ways in the various genres" (Loc. 1465) and persistent in different periods.

There is neither one manifestation of the chronotope of the road of forced migration, nor one road, nor one singular kind of forced migration—in all of these cases, there are many. And although I intended to draw general conclusions as to the representation or the depiction of forced migration in terms of the chronotope of the road, I first had to pursue each representation in all of its particularities: the specific road, the place of this road in the world of the narrative, the kind of

³²³ See Bakhtin, Loc. 1312.

forced migration, with its own point of departure and terminus, the protagonists and extras, the time of year, the year—and the index, when applicable.

The films exhibit primarily three manners of engagement with documentary images (i.e., the index). The films under analysis either insert footage (as in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* or *Free Land*), re-stage pre-existing footage or images (as in *Prize of Nations*), or engage little with clearly identifiable documentary images.³²⁴ In this latter case, the treks or repatriate trains are only recognizable as a kind of “composite image” or iconic trope (as in *Forest in Winter* or any of the Polish films discussed).³²⁵ It is at the intersection of the historic referent (even as a composite, approximate image thereof) and the chronotope of the road that issues of memory, politics, and representation are negotiated within the films. As Bakhtin focuses his theory on the literary chronotope as a means of characterizing genres, he does not pursue the potential consequences of the intersection of the figurative chronotope with that of the represented historic event. Unpacking this intersection is necessary, I have argued, in order to understand just how forced migration is represented in these films.

And yet, in my analysis of relevant Polish films, it becomes clear that the experiences of forced migration are subject to strong myths constructed around the temporal-spatial construct of the Recovered Territories. “Repatriates” and “repatriate trains” as distinct manifestations of the chronotope of the road become subsumed under other chronotopes such as the threshold or under the motif of “interruption,” or, especially, under the Recovered Territories as chronotope. As such, the chronotope of the road does not tend to appear in these films as a strong motif. This does not

³²⁴ Cf. Röger, “Bilder der Vertreibung” 267 and “Flucht, Vertreibung und Heimatverlust” 81–82.

³²⁵ Polish battle films depicting the conquest of the Recovered Territories often include documentary footage of warfare; this trend does not extend, however, to the depiction of the repatriate trains or the arrival of “repatriates.” See, for example, the battle films *Red Rowan*, *Destination Berlin*, and *Last Days*.

diminish its significance for this project, for the scenes depicting repatriate trains are inherently chronotopic and provide critical evidence of the matter in which “repatriation” from the East was to be interpreted.

This observation exemplifies what is true of all of the films in question: as represented in the films, the topic of forced migration (due to the advance of the Red Army and Poland’s border changes in 1944/45) is entangled with contemporary political or ideological categories. Despite the cantankerousness of the BdV in the FRG, for example, none of the West German films argue for the return of the lost East nor set out to defame the Soviet Army in an act of Cold War posturing. This, one could argue, is even the case in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*. For while the film does depict the sinking of the *Gustloff* and the death of three characters at the hands of individual Soviet soldiers, these events are far less brutal than those depicted in the source material, *Der Stern*’s story *Das nackte Leben*; more importantly, they are situated in the reciprocal actions of attack and defense. Even when the films espouse few or no political arguments, their representations of forced migration adhere to certain coded understandings of the course and the consequences of WWII in terms of categories such as victimhood, justice or retribution, reconstruction, and the integration of displaced peoples.

These categories correspond neatly to the foundational narratives of the FRG, GDR, and PPR. In the self-understanding of the FRG, the term “expellee” became the privileged term with regard to the forced migrations due to the Oder-Neisse Line.³²⁶ The term “expellee” conveys a sense of injustice as well as a religious connotation. Stephan Scholz explains that “the causal

³²⁶ This is due in part to the 1953 *Bundesvertriebenengesetz*. By privileging the term “expellee,” the government could also distinguish between “*Flüchtlinge*” from the GDR (though this particular definition is not used in the contexts of the films analyzed here).

connection as it exists in the biblical story (expulsion as the consequence of the fall) was implicitly transferred to the expulsion of the Germans, but was simultaneously explicitly rejected as being unjustified with the indication that the theory of collective guilt was untenable” (“Opferdunst vernebelt die Verhältnisse” 291). In *Forest in Winter*, Seifert’s narrative of wandering is reminiscent not only of the expulsion from Paradise, but of the Exodus from Egypt and wanderings in the wilderness. In the West German films that contain refugee/expellee figures, both interpretations are at play: nostalgia for the lost Paradise and enthusiasm for the new idyllic Heimat. The expellees constitute one prominent established victim group whose fates are intertwined with other West Germans similarly defined as victims (e.g., POWs, DP, air raid or rape victims). In the East German films, there is no lost Paradise—only a socialist Heimat to be constructed. The necessity of flight (coded in these films as a flight from Nazism rather than from the Soviets) evolves into the apparent choice to resettle as *Umsiedler* (*Umsiedlung*, the East German term, indicates an act of free will and omits the suggestion of the use of force).³²⁷ The *Umsiedler* are eager to participate in land reform and collectivization and are, due to their very lack of private property, either innocent of fascism or converted *Mitläufer*. In short, the *Umsiedler* are model citizens of the GDR, committed to the *Aufbau des Sozialismus*. In Poland, “repatriates” are settlers, the beneficiaries of land “recovered” by the Polish Army (representative of the government in power) as recompense for Nazi atrocities against the Polish nation. These settlers—whether from beyond the Bug and San Rivers or from a devastated Warsaw—are charged with the task of (re-)Polonizing the ex-German territories. As the loaded nature of the terms *repatriant*, *Umsiedler*, and *Vertriebene* indicate, these groups and their experiences performed specific

³²⁷ See Ther, “The Integration of Expellees” 782.

functions in the justification of the three states' existence and in the establishment of those states' foundational narratives.

For all of the nuance and complexity involved in the representation of forced migration in these films, these representations nevertheless figure within older interpretive frameworks and traditions. The West German films *Prize of Nations* and *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, for example, take up the trope of the Mother with Child—a trope that, as I will explain in the context of recent television productions, has a long tradition in German representations of German victimization. In addition, West (and to a lesser extent, East) German memory and cultural products evince traces of earlier prejudices or stereotypes about Soviets and Slavic groups. Nevertheless, extreme anti-Bolshevist and racial stereotypes that scholars such as Gerhard Paul and Robert Moeller observe even into the 1960s in the FRG are tamed, if not absent, in the three West German films under analysis.³²⁸ The West German films betray a careful attempt to avoid overt revanchist, anti-communist rhetoric of the BdV and its vocal proponents. The East German films *Castles and Cottages* and *Ways Across the Land*, on the other hand, portray Poles as passionate revolutionaries and antifascists. Whatever negative stereotypes about the Soviets may have existed among the general East German populace, negative portrayals of the Soviets as a rule were not permitted in film.³²⁹ More importantly, however, the films in which flight from the Red Army is depicted situate Nazism, the eventual flights from the Red Army, and the function of the *Umsiedler* in the Marxist discourse of class conflict. Finally, the Polish films tend to draw on strains of a long tradition of thought, the *myśl zachodnia* (“west idea”), which proposed that Poles had a right to the medieval

³²⁸ See Paul 92. This is due, in part, to the fact that there are no Soviets in *Forest in Winter* and *Prize of Nations*; even in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*, the atrocities depicted in the source material, *Das nackte Leben*, have been domesticated for Wisbar's film.

³²⁹ See Moeller, “The Politics of the Past in the 1950s,” 30.

Piast lands. Although the “west idea” is at least a century older, Inga Leśniewska notes that “both the concept ‘recovered’ and the idea of shifting the western border of Poland at the expense of the German regions were ‘borrowed’ from prewar *Endecja* by the Communists” (15). The Communists had to adapt the “west idea” to suit the current geopolitical situation. In the long history of the “west idea,” the forfeiture of the eastern territories had never factored into the appropriation of those in the west. The representation of forced migration and its function in the films are entangled in these and other discursive traditions.

All of the films also work through diverse issues of rehabilitation. The narratives of the East German films, for example, are concerned in part about the integration or *Umerziehung* (“re-education”) of dubious *Umsiedler* and Nazi-*Mitläufer* in an allegedly anti-fascist socialist state, while those of the Polish films question the place of autochtones, Germans, Poles (whether from Warsaw, Central Poland, the *Kresy*, or from abroad), and (to a much lesser extent) Jews in the Recovered Territories, including the rehabilitation or rather re-Polonization of those territories. While the West German films in question were also concerned with the integration of refugees, expellees, and other displaced people (strictly German), the West German film industry in particular was engaged with the rehabilitation of its filmmakers, screenwriters, and even film genres.

The continuities between the Nazi-run UFA and the West German film industry in particular should not go unmentioned. As noted in the chapter on West German film, many of those who played a role in the production of *Forest in Winter*, *Prize of Nations*, and other popular (Heimat)films in the 1950s had also been involved in the production of some of the most notorious propaganda films of the Third Reich.³³⁰ The director of *Forest in Winter*, Wolfgang Liebeneiner,

³³⁰ While Frank Wisbar did direct films during the Third Reich, he was often at odds with Goebbels and emigrated to the United States with his Jewish wife Eva after *Reichskristallnacht*. More study would be needed in order to determine

directed the infamous propaganda film *Ich klage an* (I Accuse; 1941), an argument for the euthanasia of those leading “worthless lives” (Moeller, *War Stories* 134) and was chosen by Goebbels to lead production for UFA in 1943.³³¹ Wolfgang Schleif directed *Prize of Nations*, but had also been the editor for the vehemently anti-Semitic film *Jud Süß* (Jew Süß; 1940) and the *Durchhaltefilm* (“endurance film”) *Kolberg* (1945).³³² The screenwriter of *Prize of Nations*, Felix Lützkendorf, had been a member of the NSDAP and the SS and had written propaganda espousing *Blut-und-Boden* ideology as well as the screenplays for Karl Ritter’s *Legion Condor* (1939) and *Stukas* (1941), two war films. Carl Raddatz, the actor who plays the veterinarian in *Prize of Nations*, also played major roles in *Heimkehr* (Homecoming; 1941) and *Stukas* (1941). Michaela S. Ast cites Hans-Peter Kochenrath, who “reports about a list from the year 1966 that contains 189 directors and screenplay writers that were employed in film both in National Socialism as well as in postwar Germany. Until 1958, the proportion of directors and screenplay writers in the FRG who had already worked in this branch in the Third Reich accounted for over 60% and for over 54% until 1960” (287).

In his article, “Zwischen Demokratisierungsbemühungen und Wirtschaftsinteressen: Der Film unter der Besatzung der westlichen Alliierten” (“Between Democratizing Endeavors and Economic Interests: Film under the Occupation of the Western Allies”), Stephan Buchloh proposes and well supports the thesis that, despite the goal of utilizing the film industry as a means of re-education, economic concerns ultimately determined Allied policy toward the postwar German

to what extent Wisbar’s UFA films were inoculated with Nazi ideology, however, none of his UFA films were markedly propagandistic.

³³¹ Moeller, *War Stories* 134. Cf. Katharina Seibert 111–112.

³³² On the genre of the *Durchhaltefilm*, including the difficulty of the translation of the term into English, see Joachim Schroth.

film industry in praxis.³³³ In order to produce films during the Third Reich, one had to be a member of the *Reichsfilmkammer* (“Film Chamber of the Reich”) and have one’s work supported institutionally. For this reason, there were few members of the German film industry who were untainted by any association with the National Socialists. Since the Allies saw little harm in most of the *Unterhaltungsfilme* (“entertainment films”) produced during the Third Reich, they allowed the films to be screened and the creators of such films to resume film production. Therefore, “the express goal of keeping former National Socialists away from important positions in the film industry and allocating work permits for such important positions only to applicants with established democratic sympathies was not in fact realized” (Buchloh 184). Thus, even Wolfgang Liebeneiner, director of *I accuse*, was among the directors to receive permission to direct films.³³⁴ In 1949, he directed the film adaptation of Borchert’s *The Man Outside*, *Liebe 47*.

Furthermore, *Forest in Winter* (1956), *Green is the Heath* (1951), and *On Sunday Evenings When the Village Music Plays* (1953), among others, are remakes of popular Heimatfilms produced during the Third Reich.³³⁵

“These movies [...] reproduced scenes that had been the bread and butter not only of Nazi cinema but also of theatrical and literary traditions that stretched back to the late-nineteenth-century celebrations of rural society and tradition. The *Heimat* represented hearth and home, local culture and identity, values that postwar *Heimatfilme* could portray

³³³ In considering the goals of the Potsdam Agreement, the Re-Education Program, and the Military Government Program, Buchloh concludes that the Allies subsequently held the following goals for the German film industry: “The reconstruction of the German film industry as a decentralized, non-subsidized branch independent from the state, / the production and dissemination of films that are free from Nazi ideology and that defend ‘universally valid principles of law’, / forgoing former National Socialists in the employment of important positions in the film industry as well as the allocation of appropriate work permits ultimately to prospects who meet political and moral requirements,” 165.

³³⁴ See Wilharm 271.

³³⁵ Cf. von Moltke, “Location *Heimat*” 76.

as a German bedrock that had escaped the devastation of war and National Socialism. [...]

The *Heimat* was the real Germany, distinct from the aberrational epiphenomenon of the Third Reich.” (Moeller, *War Stories* 128)

Not only Nazi-era films were remade during the 1950s, however. Whether the original film was tainted by the NS-period or not, money stood to be made in the production of remakes. Von Moltke writes, “In advertising the use of up-to-date color patterns, anamorphic lenses, and the resulting visual pleasures, the *Heimatfilm* of the decade was part of a broader set of strategies for keeping spectators in the theaters, even as these investments were used to produce aesthetic effects that we associate exclusively with the *Heimat* genre” (84). In addition to the allure of new technology and the stunning images that this technology made possible, the remakes could also update classics (and flops) in order to capture the new realities and demographics of postwar Germany. Thus, *Rose Bernd* (1957), *Schwarzwaldmädel* (Black Forest Girl; 1950), *Forest in Winter* (1956) and a host of other films wrote refugees as well as other contemporary issues (e.g., the Economic Miracle, the return of POWs, and the loss of homeland) into their scripts. In this way, the remakes, whether or not one may classify the films in question as *Heimatfilms*, provide redemption for films otherwise potentially tainted by the association with Nazism as well as an audiovisual spectacle to draw and distract the masses. This is a case unique to the West German film industry.

As much as I have emphasized the distinctness of the national and historical context of these films and their representations of forced migration, this discussion should also highlight that these concerns also transcend the borders of the three countries in question. Because the forced migrations depicted entail players from all three countries (and, importantly, the Soviet Union), their interpretations of these events take these players into account: it is not by accident that the East German films portray their socialist Polish sisters and brothers as victims and resistance

fighters; or that *Bumerang* (PPR; 1966) distinguishes between repentant, mournful East Germans and ignorant, money-loving West Germans; or that, in both the Polish and East German films, the Soviets are fun-loving, generous comrades-in-arms and liberators; or that the horse thieves in *Prize of Nations* pose as Polish officials trying to claim Prusso as property of the Polish state. By means of their subject matter, the films of one national cinema all participate in commentary on the role of the other states and its citizens—their role in WWII, in causing past or present suffering, or as caretakers of homes left behind.

It is for this reason that none of the films actually claim to represent the *expulsion* of Germans or Poles. Even when the term “expellee” is used in the context of the West German films, those West German films that actually depict forced migration only depict the refugee trek—flight from the Red Army, not expulsion at the behest of Polish, Soviet, or Czech officials. This is also the case in the East German films, which also only show flight from the Red Army—whether from the East or from the SBZ. In the Polish films, the empty ex-German towns are empty because they have been evacuated or because their inhabitants have fled. Jerzy Passendorfer’s *Baptized by Fire* (1964) comes closest to including expulsion, and yet, Rutka Hajdukówna, of mixed German and Polish heritage, emigrates to Germany not because Kapitan Sowiński or the MO force her to leave by official decree or brute force—no, Kapitan Sowiński, in love with Rutka Hajdukówna, has been fighting to prove that her Silesian neighbors, desirous of her property, had framed her by sneaking a gun into her home. While certainly a case of forced migration, it is not by any official decree. As far as the expulsion of Poles from the *Kresy* is concerned, only *All Our Own* and *No One Calls* explicitly identify protagonists as being from the *Kresy*, and yet, little but the forlorn musings of Bożek’s acquaintance on the bridge suggests *forced* migration. For Kazimierz Pawlak of *All Our Own*, the repatriate train is a Noah’s Ark, a miracle that saves him and his family from “the

deluge.” The state-sanctioned expulsion of Germans and Poles (and, by extension, of Ukrainians and East Slavic minorities), is not thematized in the films; it may be, however, obliquely alluded to or may be decipherable within the euphemistic or generalizing language and *topoi* indicating (forced) migration.

As I have written of the films’ continuities with earlier traditions despite that mythic “Zero Hour” of the German context, the question remains to be asked: to what extent have the representations under analysis in this dissertation had a lasting effect on the German and Polish “soziales Bildgedächtnis” (“social image memory”) (to use Cornelia Brink’s term)? More research would be necessary in order to answer this question definitively; however, some texts already indicate, if not the lasting impact, then at the very least, evidence of allusions to these pre-1970 texts and their interpretations of forced migration in later representations of the forced migrations under study here.

The topic of “flight and expulsion,” for example, garnered significant attention in the 1980s and 1990s and again in the new millennium—both in Germany and Poland. In the 1980s, for example, the television documentary mini-series *Flucht und Vertreibung* (Flight and Expulsion; dirs. Eva Berthold and Jost Moor; 1981) offered a counterpoint to the popularity of the American series *Holocaust* in the FRG.³³⁶ Even in the GDR, one may be able to speak of a cluster of films about the flight from the East beginning with *Moral der Banditen* (The Moral of Bandits; 1975). Alicja Kisielewska identifies a group of “nostalgic” Polish films about the *Kresy* produced in the 1980s, including Tadeusz Konwicki’s *Dolina Issy* (The Issa Valley; 1982), Andrzej Wajda’s

³³⁶ See Helbig 75–76 and Kansteiner 157–158. According to Wulf Kansteiner, the popularity of *Holocaust* “made it painfully clear that German television had neither recognized nor satisfied a popular demand for contemporary history,” 157. In addition to *Flight and Expulsion*, the German-Polish co-production *Narben* (Scars; ZDF; 1981), a three-part documentary about the history of the city Danzig/Gdańsk, was intended to facilitate German-Polish reconciliation as well as to satisfy audience desire for documentaries about recent German history.

Kronika wypadków miłosnych (A Chronicle of Amorous Accidents; 1986), and Zbigniew Kuźmiński's *Nad Niemnem* (On the Niemen; 1987).³³⁷ And yet these films are exceptional for their depiction of the pre-war *Kresy* and do not depict the forced migrations due to the border changes in the wake of WWII.

With the fall of communism in Poland and the unification of Germany, however, the alliances which drove certain topics out of the public sphere collapsed. Though these issues had begun to emerge in the 1980s,³³⁸ after 1989, topics such as the loss of the *Kresy*, atrocities at the hands of the Soviets, the expulsion of ethnic Germans from Poland and Czechoslovakia had been released into the public sphere.³³⁹ In newly united Germany, Bill Niven writes, “the CDU-Liberal coalition set about repoliticising the theme of German suffering for its own purposes” (“Introduction: German Victimhood” 5)—that is, for the establishment of some kind of common ground between East and West Germans. Between 1989 and 2011, Ast notes, there were twenty television documentaries in Poland and sixty in Germany that treated the topic of flight, expulsion,

³³⁷ Kisielewska 312–313.

³³⁸ See, for example, Paweł Huelle's novel *Dawid Weiser* or Krzysztof Zanussi's film *Rok spokojnego słońca*. According to Ruth Wittlinger, Hellmuth Auerbach's literature review “clearly illustrates that there was a steady flow of publications on the topic [the expellees] from the 1950s right through to his cut-off date in the mid 1990s. Although there might have been a slight drop in interest in the 1960s, the 1980s with their renewed interest in the immediate post-war history – probably encouraged by the revisionism of the *geistig-moralische Wende* – was characterised by and extensive revitalization of the academic discourse on the fate of the expellees. A bibliography published in 1989 by Gertrud Krallert-Sattler counted nearly 5000 titles on the topic,” 72. The Auerbach literature review, titled “Literatur zum Thema. Ein kritischer Überblick,” may be found in Wolfgang Benz's *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten* (1995), 77–294.

³³⁹ Although there are many other works which could be named here, a few examples of post-1989 works in Germany and Poland that touch on issues related to flight/expulsion and the lost *Heimats/ojczyzny* include: Helke Sander's documentary *BeFreier und BeFreite* (Liberators Take Liberties; 1992) about the rape of German women by Soviet soldiers; Stefan Chwin's *Hanemann* (Death in Danzig; 1995) about the transition from Danzig to Gdańsk; and Günter Grass's *Unkenrufe* (Call of the Toad; 1992), which confronts both the loss of the “German East” and the loss of the *Kresy* through two lovebirds, Alexander and Aleksandra. Robert Gliński later directed the German-Polish co-production *Wróżby kumaka/Unkenrufe* (2005). This film, along with Grass's novella *Im Krebsgang* (2002), belong to the newest wave of interest in flight and expulsion.

and the lost Heimat/*ojczyzna* all together.³⁴⁰ This is not to speak of the number of novels, films, theatrical pieces, and scholarly monographs that have tackled the subject.

There are no clear boundaries between one wave of interest and the next, however, there are two, if not more, nexuses from which works dealing with flight and expulsion seem to emanate: the fall of Communism in 1989/1990; a cluster of debates about W.G. Sebald's *Luftkrieg und Literatur* (The Natural History of Destruction; 1999), Günter Grass's *Im Krebsgang* (Crabwalk; 2002), Jörg Friedrich's *Der Brand* (The Fire; 2002); and debates concerning Erika Steinbach, the Center against Expulsions, and the court case *Prussian Trust vs Poland* (Dec. 2006 – Oct. 2008).³⁴¹ Bill Niven states that "[b]ecause German suffering was not a significant component of post-1998 memory politics, the shift to Red-Green represented, as it were, a 'handing over' of the theme to the public realm. It could be talked about without fear of high-level political instrumentalisation which had obtained before" ("Introduction: German Victimhood" 8), as in the early 1990s.³⁴² Ruth Wittlinger, on the other hand, suggests that the two key moments in postwar German discourse about German victimization include the media campaign *Aufruf gegen das Vergessen* (Appeal Against Forgetting; to remember May 8th "as the beginning of a new oppression in Eastern Europe" [246]) and the Walser-Bubis debate.³⁴³ Regardless of the potential text-external impetuses for the

³⁴⁰ Ast 285.

³⁴¹ Sebald's 1999 publication is based on a series of lectures that he gave at the university in Zürich in 1997. The major contributions to the debate about Friedrich's publication may be found in *Ein Volk von Opfern? Die neue Debatte um den Bombenkrieg 1940–45* (2003), edited by Lothar Kettenacker. For more details about the court case as well as Gerhard Schröder's 2006 declaration that Germans could not seek restitution for lost property or other damages, see Lutomski 72–80. The debate concerning Bogdan Musiał's *Rzeczpospolita* article "Niewinny Stalin i źli Polacy" (2–4 May 2008) revolves around the relationship between Polish historiography and historians and the topic of flight and expulsion, Erika Steinbach and the Center against Expulsions. These articles have been collected, with an introduction by Andrea Genest titled "Geschichtspolitik, historische Forschung und persönliche Eitelkeit," on www.zeitgeschichte-online.de.

³⁴² Germany's support of Poland's entry to the European Union (1 May 2004) also presents another political context for these debates/dialogues about the expulsions.

³⁴³ Wittlinger 75.

debates mentioned above, each of these debates touched on different aspects of German victimization, including the place of narratives of German victimhood in German and Polish public discourse and memory as well as in a European or even global context; the way that the topic has been divided into mutually exclusive modes of either victimization or perpetration; and questions of the ethics of representation.³⁴⁴

Given the explosion of interest in the topic of the forced migrations due to the 1944/1945 border changes in post-1989 Germany and Poland, it should not be surprising that some of these products would draw on earlier sources and texts such as those investigated in this dissertation. Kai Wessel's television docudrama *Die Flucht* (March of Millions; 2007) offers perhaps the best explicit example of an allusion to a pre-1970 cinematic text, namely, Frank Wisbar's *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen*.³⁴⁵ Though the images of the flight themselves re-enact the newsreel images that Wisbar inserts into his film,³⁴⁶ DVD commentary and making-of segments exhibit a similar dedication to a realistic recreation of events, with filming sessions on the ice attended by emergency aid workers and sub-zero temperatures. As far as the film's characters are concerned, Lena von Mahlenberg of *March of Millions* embodies both Maria and Generalin von Reuss: mother to a fatherless child, Lena also faces parental rejection; like Maria, Lena, too, departs from Berlin

³⁴⁴ Although slightly later than the other debates in question, the debates about Wojciech Smarzowski's most recent film *Wołyń* (Hatred; 2016) (the subject of the film is the massacre of Polish civilians by Ukrainians in Volhynia during WWII) revolve around narratives of Polish victimization in the Polish-Ukrainian context as well as the current political tensions between Poland, Ukraine, and Russia. It should be remembered that for many Poles in this region, the Polish-Ukrainian civil war expedited registrations for resettlement.

³⁴⁵ In contrast to the aforementioned works produced during the early 2000s, *March of Millions* did not spark any sort of widescale debate. See Kai Artur Diers 2.

³⁴⁶ In her account of television broadcasts about flight and expulsion, Röger has found that "at most, [they] repeated the National Socialist newsreel footage prominently; the feature films re-staged the historical footage and the documentaries made use of so-called re-enactments, that is, the (re)enactment of historical events in order to compensate for missing variance in material," "Flucht, Vertreibung und Heimatverlust" 81–82.

to stay in East Prussia, only to have to flee from the front in the winter of 1944/1945; while Generalin von Reuss merely respects the French POW Gaston, Lena's tender feelings toward the French POW François develop into the promise of a German-French reconciliation in the form of a postwar romance; and finally, in both films, the experience of flight disintegrates traditional social hierarchies, resulting in a form of democratic equality, even if the promise of a democratic future is less developed in *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* as it is in Kai Wessel's *March of Millions* (2007).³⁴⁷

More importantly, however, the docudrama *March of Millions*, like many others in the post-1989 era, makes use of images already present in early films that either depict the refugee trek or thematize the plight/integration of refugees/expellees, namely, the Mother with Child and landscape images associated with the Heimatfilm genre.³⁴⁸ The DVD jacket of *March of Millions* features an image of the Mother with Child: a close-up of Lena holding her daughter tightly—dusted with snow, faces red from the cold; this image is situated above a still of the winter trek.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ An anonymous reviewer of *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* writes for *Mindener Tagblatt*: “Everyone is equal, servant or general's wife. And from a community of suffering, in search of refuge and on the ship that promises rescue, they suddenly become part of a community of death.” In the commentary available on the *March of Millions* DVD, the film's screenwriter Gabriela Sperl states that the docudrama “narrates an epic story of a world that no longer exists and the emergence of a new democratic world” (translation provided by Heckner; qtd. in Heckner 82).

³⁴⁸ Unlike Wisbar's film (or any of the other pre-1970 films for that matter), which largely avoids explicit reference to the topic of rape, *March of Millions* includes a graphic rape scene, the violent evidence of which consists of facial bruising reminiscent of photographs of a badly beaten Sudetenland German woman. “The image of the raped women,” Scholz writes, “served as a symbol for the collective rape of the expellees and of the Germans as a whole and contributed to the construction of an imaginary community of suffering of Germans” (“Opferdunst vernebelt die Verhältnisse” 309). (Cf. Moeller, *War Stories* 67.) Nevertheless, despite all of the stereotypes, stock characters, and iconic phrases or scenes (derived largely from famous firsthand accounts) that pepper Gabriela Sperl's script, the docudrama breathes complexity into them. The “good” characters are not without their faults or complicities, and the “bad” characters are not without their historically conditioned motivations either—this includes the women who have become the victims of rape as well.

³⁴⁹ Cf. Röger, “Bilder der Vertreibung” 274–277. Unlike Wisbar's Maria, however, Lena of *March of Millions* is far more secular: like Gertrud of *Ways Across the Land*, her character is the symbolic mother of a new Germany. Whereas the Soviets charge Gertrud with building socialism, Lena's uncle Rüdiger von Gernstorff charges her with carrying on his legacy. She is to adapt her aristocratic upbringing and traditions to a new, egalitarian, democratic order. Cf. Heckner 79.

In her comparison of Polish and German productions on the topic of forced migration and the lost territories (both the “German East” and the *Kresy*), Röger finds that the Mother with Child imagery is unique to the German films.³⁵⁰ This Mother with Child iconography, moreover, has had a long history in representing German victimhood—instrumentalized by the National Socialists and postwar expellee groups, among others.³⁵¹ After 1989, the pietà iconography was invoked in the national (but allegedly transnational) memorial at the *Neue Wache* (‘New Guardhouse’) in Berlin. The enlarged replica of Käthe Kollwitz’s sculpture *Mutter mit totem Sohn* (Mother with her Dead Son; 1937), installed at the behest of Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1993, was to commemorate, not unproblematically, all of the “victims of war and totalitarianism.”³⁵² For although the plaque claims that the memorial represents this broad group, it subtly excludes those who are not of a Christian confession. The implications of the pietà memorial also apply to representations of forced migration—they promote a narrow, exclusionary model of identification.

In addition to demonstrating the persistence of the Mother with Child iconography in post-1989 films treating the subject of flight/forced migration (and German victimhood more generally), *March of Millions*, again, like many other films in this period, also incorporates the long, gentle pans of landscapes associated with the Heimatfilm genre. This is true not only of German films, but of Polish films as well.³⁵³ In *March of Millions*, extreme long shots of Lena riding her horse majestically across expansive fields evoke nostalgia for a temporal-spatial configuration that no longer exists (a long tradition of German aristocratic life in East Prussia).

³⁵⁰ See Röger, “Flucht, Vertreibung und Heimatverlust” 81.

³⁵¹ See Scholz, “‘Opferdunst vernebelt die Verhältnisse’” 307.

³⁵² For a summary of the critical responses to the installation of the sculpture, see Mariatte C. Denman 189–193.

³⁵³ See Röger, “Flucht, Vertreibung und Heimatverlust” 79, 83.

These images are complemented at the end of the film by a scene pregnant with the promise of romance between Lena and François—situated again among verdant fields in Bavaria. In contrast, in the pre-1970 films, the landscapes of Bavaria, the Lüneburg Heath, or, far less frequently, the Recovered Territories, had the task of evoking simultaneously nostalgia for the lost Heimat/*ojczyzna* as well as wonder and awe at the new Heimat/*macierz*.³⁵⁴ Docudramas such as *March of Millions* or documentaries such as Volker Koepp's *Schattenland* (Shadowland; 2005) or the television series *Boża podszewska I* and *II* (1997-1998, 2005-2006), therefore do what the pre-1970 films could not: present the viewer with authentic images of the homes they or their families left behind.

In her comparison of the image of the settler of the Recovered Territories in early postwar articles of "Polska Zachodnia" ("Western Poland") and in post-1989 articles of "Borussia," Maria Tomczak observes an about-face, generally speaking, from "conquerors" to "victims." Neither term quite applies to the settler figures depicted in the Polish feature films that thematize settlement in the Recovered Territories (and, by extension, expulsion from the East).³⁵⁵ Both the articles and the films (viewed as a corpus) acknowledge the diversity of the settlers: Poles from Central Poland (resettlers); repatriates or re-emigrants returning to Poland after a period of exile or imprisonment; "repatriates" from the *Kresy Wschodnie*; and autochthones.³⁵⁶ Nevertheless, the films entertain a diverse image of the settler of the Recovered Territories (even if those from the *Kresy* typically

³⁵⁴ In the genre of the *Spurensuch-Dokumentation* ("search for traces" documentary") in particular, Röger notes that the shots of nature take on a similar function to those in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985); that is, they serve as "substitute images for unavailable footage of the historic events of the forced migration from individual places" and "virtually guard the secret of the past," "Flucht, Vertreibung und Heimatverlust" 83.

³⁵⁵ The "battle films" (e.g., *Red Rowan*) that glorify the conquest of the territories fit into this schema, though these films typically end before settlement (military or civilian) begins on the territories.

³⁵⁶ Interestingly enough, between the articles in Tomczak's study and the films, only the films feature military settlements.

occupy the background thereof)—from a gaggle of complainers at the train station (*Paradise on Earth*), to greedy *szabrownicy* (“looters”) and lone gunslingers (*The Law and the Fist*), industrious schoolmarms and dissipated soldiers (*Agnieszka 46*), distrustful fathers eager to secure a future for their children (*Bumerang* and *All Our Own*), men on the run from the past (*No One Calls* and *Examination of Conscience*), to women without a home who are determined to make a home (*Three Women*, “Widow” of *Cross of Valor*, and, to an extent, *Republic of Women*). In all of their diversity, what these characters have in common with conquerors *and* victims is this: that the Recovered Territories offers them a new beginning. The drama lies in how the figures go about establishing a fresh start, and to what extent that endeavor is permitted or hindered either by the past, by those with conflicting blueprints for change, or by the former inhabitants of those territories, the Germans.

The intertwined themes or *topoi* of settlement, fresh starts, and Wild Wests are, with the limited research already conducted, what may persist later films that take place in the Recovered Territories and thematize forced migration and settlement. As is the case in Krzysztof Zanussi’s *Rok spokojnego słońca* (Year of the Quiet Sun; 1984) and the much later film *Róża* (Rose; dir. Wojciech Smarzowski; 2012), the characters’ attempts at making a break from the past are deeply troubled, if they are even achieved at all. These themes continue to be connected to the territories in question: Tadeusz of *Róża* defends the “homestead,” wielding, not the pistol of the American gunslingers, but an axe; Zyga of Piotr Mularuk’s *Yuma* (2012) turns his sleepy border town into a den of bandits, growing rich from robbing stores across the border in Frankfurt (Oder) as he styles himself as a cowboy boot-wearing gangster (the name of the film may be read as a reference to Delmer Daves’ *3:10 to Yuma* [1957]); the title of Ute Badura’s 2002 documentary film, *Schlesiens Wilder Westen* (Silesia’s Wild West), alone indicates the continued presence of this *topos*. While

I cannot claim that the myth of borderlands or ex-German lands as Wild West persists due to these films, these earlier films do play a key role in the establishment of this *topos* in connection with the Recovered Territories in the realm of cinema.

The tropes, *topoi*, and recurring images that appear in post-1970 works such as these did not emerge from nothing. In fact, further research would be needed to determine whether or to what extent the FRG's acknowledgement of the Oder-Neisse Line in 1970 really had an effect on representations of forced migration due to the border changes and the approach of the front. As the thematic and tropic continuities between the films of the 1950s and 1960s with those of later films suggest, 1970 does not appear to constitute any kind of major break in how these events and places figured in audiovisual media—and this despite the relative infrequency with which the refugee trek or the repatriate train appeared in movie theaters or on television screens.

Therefore, when Günter Grass proclaimed the existence of an age-old taboo against talking about flight and expulsion in 2002, he dismissed the manifold ways in which literature and, as this project proves, even film have tried to work through the subject. If *Crabwalk* (2002) was to right the wrong of silence, Grass neglected to hear the screams of women aboard Frank Wisbar's *Gustloff* in the film *Night Fell Over Gotenhafen* (1959) or the minutes upon minutes of howling winter winds in *Ways Across the Land*. Günter Grass' insistence on the existence of a taboo illustrates an instrumental use of memory and the imperfect distribution of knowledge and of memory attributable to the concept of collective or rather cultural memory. And yet, few scholars have even considered the significance and the conspicuousness of the rare presence of scenes of the forced migrations in feature film (whether in a mono- or multi-national context), focusing instead on the figure of the refugee or expellee. Nevertheless, all oversight or claims of taboo-breaking to the contrary, the ways in which forced migration has been depicted in the feature films

(the discourses, compositions, and myths) have found resonance in both Germany and Poland—observable in intertextual allusions, in slow, sweeping pans across a quiet landscape, or in the city of Toruń, where a sculpture of the handcart from *The Law and the Fist* haunts the New Town Square and where statues of Pawlak and Kargul stand, bronzed, suitcases in hand, their chins held high.

Filmography

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