

Landscape, space and place in  
English- and German-  
language poetry  
1960-1975

Nicola Thomas

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

July 2017

# Abstract

This thesis examines representations of space, place and landscape in English- and German-language poetry of the period 1960-1975, a key transitional phase between modernity and postmodernity. It proposes that the impact certain transnational spatial revolutions had on contemporary poetry can only be fully grasped with recourse to comparative methodologies which look across national borders.

This is demonstrated by a series of paired case studies which examine the work of J. H. Prynne and Paul Celan, Sarah Kirsch and Derek Mahon, and Ernst Jandl and Edwin Morgan. Prynne and Celan's *Sprachskepsis* is the starting point for a post-structuralist analysis of meta-textual space in their work, including how poetry's complex tectonics addresses multifaceted crises of representation. Mahon and Kirsch's work is read in the context of spatial division, and it is argued that both use representations of landscape, space and place to express political engagement, and to negotiate fraught ideas of home, community and world. Jandl and Morgan's representations of space and place, which often depend on experimental lyric subjectivity, are examined: it is argued that poetic subject(s) which speak from multiple perspectives (or none) serve as a means of reconfiguring poetry's relationship to space at a time when social, literary and political boundaries were being redefined.

The thesis thus highlights hitherto underexplored connections between a range of poets working across the two language areas, making clear that space and place is a vital critical category for understanding poetry of this period, including both experimental and non-experimental work. It reveals weaknesses in existing critical taxonomies, arguing for the use of 'late modernist' as category with cross-cultural relevance, and promotes methodological exchange between the Anglophone and German traditions of landscape, space and place-oriented poetry scholarship, to the benefit of both.

# Acknowledgements

Writing this thesis was a pleasure thanks to the support I received from colleagues, friends and family. I am grateful to my excellent supervisory team, each of whom brought different qualities to our lively meetings. Many thanks to Heike Bartel, who was always so generous with both her encouragement and her ideas; to Andrew Harrison, for his insight and unparalleled attention to detail; and to Dirk Götsche, from whose experienced guidance I have benefited greatly throughout my training as a researcher.

I am indebted to academic, administrative and postgraduate colleagues in the School of Cultures, Languages and Area Studies (CLAS) and the School of English at the University of Nottingham, who have been extremely helpful at every stage of this research project, in too many ways to mention.

I would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council for the studentship which funded this research, and the Renate Gunn Fund, Yuill Memorial Fund and CLAS Research Fund for supporting various research trips. Thanks are also due to the archivists and staff of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, the British Library and the University of Glasgow Special Collections – to the latter, in particular, for granting permission to reproduce a short unpublished excerpt from Morgan and Jandl's letters. I am grateful to staff and students at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster for making me feel very welcome as a visiting scholar.

Articles based on the research presented here have appeared in the journals *Tropos* and *German Life and Letters*.

Finally, above all, to my friends and family for their love, patience, and support: thank you.

# Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Contents</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>List of figures</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Historical and literary contexts . . . . .	5
1.2 Intellectual contexts and theoretical framework . . . . .	19
1.3 Recent research . . . . .	24
1.4 Approach and key findings . . . . .	37
<b>2 Language as landscape in J. H. Prynne and Paul Celan</b>	<b>44</b>
2.1 A shared ‘textual landscape’ . . . . .	44
2.2 Language and space: the meridian . . . . .	62
2.3 Language and place: huts, graves, crypts . . . . .	67
2.4 Language and landscape: geology and excavation . . . . .	74
2.5 Linking and dividing lines: ‘In der Luft’ and ‘From End to End’	81

2.6	Excavation, expansion and enclosure: 'Engführung' and 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' . . . . .	100
2.7	Conclusion . . . . .	126
<b>3</b>	<b>Negotiating home in Derek Mahon and Sarah Kirsch</b>	<b>130</b>
3.1	World, community, home . . . . .	130
3.2	Negotiating world . . . . .	134
3.3	Negotiating community . . . . .	149
3.4	Negotiating 'home' . . . . .	163
3.5	Form and community: 'Beyond Howth Head' and the 'Wiepersdorf' cycle . . . . .	179
3.6	Conclusion . . . . .	214
<b>4</b>	<b>Remapping space and place in Edwin Morgan and Ernst Jandl</b>	<b>219</b>
4.1	Why is remapping needed? . . . . .	219
4.2	Subjectivity, perspective, and polyvocality . . . . .	233
4.3	Polyphony and asperspectivity in sound and concrete poems .	245
4.4	Interplanetary space . . . . .	262
4.5	'kleine erdkunde' . . . . .	266
4.6	Public space and power: 'The Starlings in George Square' and 'wien: heldenplatz' . . . . .	269
4.7	Conclusion . . . . .	292
<b>5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>294</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>310</b>

# List of Figures

4.1	Edwin Morgan, ‘The Chaffinch Map of Scotland’ ( <i>CP</i> 179) . . .	250
4.2	Edwin Morgan, ‘Construction for I. K. Brunel’, ( <i>CP</i> 190) . . . .	257
4.3	Edwin Morgan, ‘The Tower of Pisa’ ( <i>CP</i> 192-93, arranged to show layout across two pages) . . . . .	257
4.4	Ernst Jandl, ‘karwoche: ein turm’, ( <i>W</i> 179) . . . . .	261
4.5	Edwin Morgan, ‘Unscrambling the Waves at Goonhilly’, ( <i>CP</i> 191)	264

# Abbreviations

Abbreviations are used for primary texts by the six authors discussed in detail in this thesis, as follows. Citations, after the first instance, are given in abbreviated form in the text.

- G* Paul Celan, *Die Gedichte. Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe* ed. by Barbara Wiedemann (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2003)
- SG* Sarah Kirsch, *Sämtliche Gedichte* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2013)
- NC* Derek Mahon, *Night-Crossing* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- L* Derek Mahon, *Lives* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972)
- SP* Derek Mahon, *The Snow Party* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975)
- CP* Edwin Morgan, *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2006)
- WI/II* Ernst Jandl, *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, ed. by Klaus Siblewski, 6 vols (Munich: Luchterhand, 2016), I/II
- P* J. H. Prynne, *Poems* (Folio/Fremantle Arts Centre Press: South Fremantle, WA; Bloodaxe: Newcastle upon Tyne; Dufour Editions; Chester Springs, PA, 1999)

# 1. Introduction

On 12 September 1962, in a speech which was widely reported around the world, President John F. Kennedy explained his ambition to land a man safely on the moon before the end of the decade.

We set sail on this new sea because there is new knowledge to be gained[.] [...] There is no strife, no prejudice, no national conflict in outer space as yet. Its hazards are hostile to us all. Its conquest deserves the best of all mankind, and its opportunity for peaceful cooperation may never come again. But why, some say, the Moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask, why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? [...] We choose to go to the Moon!<sup>1</sup>

This speech marked a key moment in the Space Race and, indeed, in the cultural history of space more broadly. Although the rhetoric of his speech suggested continuity with the daring spatial explorations of the past, the introduction of extraterrestrial space as a potential realm of human conquest demanded a radical expansion of people's understanding of the spaces which surrounded them.

The US's technological ambition was informed by changing geopolitical contexts much closer to home, which also exerted significant influence over

---

<sup>1</sup> John F. Kennedy, quoted in Arlin Crotts, *The New Moon: Water, Exploration, and Future Habitation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 68.



contemporary understandings of global space. The speech's allusions to the threat of intergalactic conflict were a reminder of the military need for new space technology. A month after Kennedy's speech, the Cuban Missile Crisis began, ushering in a new phase of the Cold War. Such was the impact of the Cold War on global spatial consciousness that by 1967 commentators had begun to speak of the world itself not as one contiguous domain, but rather as divided into 'First', 'Second' and 'Third World' countries, as if the three geopolitical groupings belonged on different planets entirely.<sup>2</sup>

These terms form part of a new vocabulary of space which emerged in the 1960s and early 1970s. The OED records the first use of the term 'space race' as occurring in 1955.<sup>3</sup> Google's Ngram viewer, which charts the frequency of chosen terms in a large corpus of published texts over time, can be used to assess the extent to which the public discourse shifted throughout the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> The phrase 'outer space', first recorded in the mid-nineteenth century, also entered the public consciousness at this time: instances of its use rose over 600% between 1950 and 1960.<sup>5</sup> An Ngram of the most common adjectives associated with the noun 'space' between 1930 and 1980 shows that 'outer space' even overtook 'open space' in terms of frequency

---

<sup>2</sup> The terms themselves originated in an article by the French anthropologist Alfred Sauvy, first published in 1952. See Alfred Sauvy, 'Trois Mondes, Une Planète', *L'Observateur*, 14 August 1952, p. 14; 'First World, n. and adj.', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/249401>> [accessed 24 August 2016]; 'Third World, n. and adj.', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200854>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>3</sup> See 'Space, n.1', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/185414>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>4</sup> See J. B. Michel and others, 'Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books', *Science* (New York, N.Y.), 331.6014 (2011), 176–82.

<sup>5</sup> "'Outer space", 1950-1980'. Corpus: English. Smoothing: 3. *Google Books Ngram Viewer* <<http://books.google.com/ngrams/>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

of occurrence between 1960 and 1965, while terms like ‘free space’ and ‘empty space’ display a gradual decline.<sup>6</sup>

It is no coincidence that it was in this decade that European theorists like Michel Foucault, Henri Lefebvre and others began to think of space in new ways, revealing it to be constructed by discourses, rather than being a neutral container for experience or simple physical reality. ‘Outer space’ was brought closer to everyday experience precisely because the terminology to describe it had become a part of everyday parlance.

The discovery of outer space was not the only spatial revolution which influenced the perception and representation of space in the 1960s and early 1970s. Critics now speak of the ‘global’ 1960s, highlighting the effect of new technological developments such as an increase in the speed of long distance travel and the circulation of global mass media, and their role in shaping political and popular discourses with a global reach.<sup>7</sup> Looking backwards, perceptions of space were also profoundly affected by the trauma of the two World Wars, and attempts to memorialise atrocity by mapping history onto certain spaces led to the emergence of what Pierre Nora has since theorised as ‘realms of memory’.<sup>8</sup>

Literary representations, in poetry and other forms, were necessarily affected by these shifts. In light of the Space Race, the moon was no longer merely a distant symbolic locus of longing, romance and desire, as it had been

---

<sup>6</sup> ““\*\_adj space”, 1930-1980’. Corpus: English. Smoothing: 3. *Google Books Ngram Viewer* <<http://books.google.com/ngrams/>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness*, ed. by Karen Dubinsky and others (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009); *The Global Sixties in Sound and Vision: Media, Counterculture, Revolt*, ed. by Timothy Scott Brown and Andrew Lison (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. by Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), I.

for Shakespeare, Goethe, Percy Shelley and hundreds of others. Instead, Kennedy's speech positioned it as a key battleground within a new spatial hierarchy. Philip Larkin's 1968 poem 'Sad Steps' can be read in these terms as perhaps the first post-Space Race moon ode:

High and preposterous and separate –  
Lozenge of love! Medallion of art!  
O wolves of memory! Immensements! No,

One shivers slightly, looking up there.<sup>9</sup>

The poem's title is taken from Sir Philip Sidney's Sonnet XXXI in *Astrophil and Stella*, but earlier literary conventions for describing the moon are sarcastically eschewed. Larkin's speaker 'shivers slightly' when imagining the physical reality of being on the moon. Before the technological advances of the 1960s, that physical reality would have been both unimaginable and largely irrelevant to the moon's symbolic status. Larkin's poem marks the 'invention' of the moon as a place which might be experienced, even if only imaginatively, in its physical reality rather than as an abstract space or symbol.

'Sad Steps' is but one example of how the rapidly changing spatial paradigms of the 1960s and 70s were reflected in poetry of the period. This thesis examines several others, namely the intriguing spaces of language and memory which feature in the work of two linguistically experimental writers, J. H. Prynne and Paul Celan; the 'unpartitioned' poetic representations of space in politically divided cultural spaces, reflected in the work of the Irish writer Derek Mahon and the German Sarah Kirsch; and the shifting perspectives on space and place offered by Edwin Morgan and Ernst Jandl's concrete poetry. My thesis situates these representations within the context of the cultural history of space and spatial theory, and in doing so reveals hitherto

---

<sup>9</sup> Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems*, ed. by Anthony Thwaite (London: Faber & Faber, 2003), p. 169.

underexplored relationships between poetry of the two major European language areas. It addresses the question of how space is represented in English- and German-language poetry of the 1960s and early 1970s, asking what patterns of representation exist and what aspects of contemporary society and theory such representations reflect.

It also aims to address the lack of comparative studies of space and place in later postwar European poetry. It asks what relationships exist between the works of poets writing in different traditions; it considers the extent and nature of the similarities or differences; and it explores how their representations relate to contemporary political, historical, social and literary contexts. Fredric Jameson has suggested that '[a] certain spatial turn has often seemed to offer one of the more productive ways of distinguishing postmodernism from modernism proper'.<sup>10</sup> Using the poets discussed in this thesis as case studies, I will also examine how a focus on space and place might contribute to critical understanding of poetry in the period between modernism and postmodernism.<sup>11</sup>

### 1.1. *Historical and literary contexts*

Kennedy did not live to see the vision outlined in his speech become reality on 20 July 1969, just a few months before the end of the decade. His speech was delivered during the period of most intense rivalry between the two

---

<sup>10</sup> Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1992), p. 154.

<sup>11</sup> Several of the contributors to Manfred Schmeling and Monika Schmitz-Emans's edited volume on landscapes in modernist and postmodern literatures adopt a similar approach, albeit with a focus on prose texts alongside poetry and without detailed discussion of the 1960 and early 1970s as a transitional phase. See *Das Paradigma der Landschaft in Moderne und Postmoderne*, ed. by Manfred Schmeling and Monika Schmitz-Emans (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007).

superpowers, shortly after the USSR had succeeded in launching the first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, into space in April 1961. The Apollo moon landing of 1969 marked the climax of the Space Race, after which the conflict – military, ideological and technological – began temporarily to de-escalate. The crises of the late 1950s and early 1960s were replaced by a *détente* between Richard Nixon's administration and the Soviet Union under Leonid Brezhnev which held until the late 1970s.<sup>12</sup>

European powers may not have played a key role in the Space Race (the European Space Agency was not established until 1975), but the shift from confrontation to collaboration nevertheless reflected to some extent the trajectory of European involvement in global geopolitics. In particular, West Germany's move from refusing to engage with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) or its allies in the early 1960s to the *Ostpolitik* of 1969 onward mirrored the overall status of US-USSR relations.<sup>13</sup> The events of 1968 were undoubtedly a turning point on both sides of the Iron Curtain, demonstrating the power of countercultural and counterhegemonic movements around the world. March 1968 saw political violence in Poland, foreshadowing the Prague Spring which took place in the summer of that year. At the same time, student movements in Berlin and Paris found their aims aligned with those of the broader New Left movement, leading to the famous mass protests and general

---

<sup>12</sup> See Craig Daigle, 'The Era of *Détente*', in *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War*, ed. by Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 195-208.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, M. E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Julia Von Dannenberg, *The Foundations of Ostpolitik: The Making of the Moscow Treaty between West Germany and the USSR*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

strikes of May 1968. Protests also took place in the UK, albeit on a smaller scale.<sup>14</sup>

In the UK, one of the most notable developments was the rapidly accelerating demise of colonial power structures.<sup>15</sup> Three British colonies (Sudan, Ghana and Malaysia) had gained independence in the 1950s: the 1960s saw the transfer of power to autonomous governments in almost three times as many places, including Nigeria (1960), Jamaica (1961), Barbados (1961), Trinidad and Tobago (1962) and Kenya (1963).<sup>16</sup> There had been little expectation of a long-term future for the British Empire in its existing form since at least the end of the Second World War, and decolonisation continued into the 1980s and beyond.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, the period between 1960 and 1975 saw a striking acceleration of this process. Neil Lazarus has argued that the

<sup>14</sup> For background to the events of 1968, see *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*, ed. by Daniel J. Sherman and others, 21st Century Studies, 7 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); and *Wo '1968' liegt: Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, ed. by Christina von Hodenberg and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006). Student and civil rights protests took place in West Germany and Austria, as well as in Anglophone cultural spaces, in each case with different contexts and consequences. In particular, it is worth highlighting the 1968 civil rights march in Londonderry which is often cited as the starting point of the Irish 'Troubles', and after which civic protest in Northern Ireland took on a different significance. See Paul Bew and Gordon Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles, 1968-1999* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999).

<sup>15</sup> John Darwin, 'Decolonization and the End of Empire', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography*, ed. by Robin Winks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 541-57; Wm. Roger Louis, 'The Dissolution of the British Empire', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Judith Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 329-57.

<sup>16</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, 'Field Listing: Independence', *The World Factbook*, 2016 <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2088.html>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>17</sup> Historians have debated whether decolonisation should be viewed as an ongoing process occurring between the early twentieth century and the present day, or as the 'virtually simultaneous collapse of all the European empires' between c. 1945 and the mid-1960s. See Darwin, 'Decolonization and the End of Empire', p. 544.

late 1960s and early 1970s were a crucial period, as postcolonial discourses and theories began to emerge against the backdrop of growing cynicism about the likelihood of equitable international relations emerging as a consequence of decolonisation.<sup>18</sup>

The consequences for Britain were far-reaching. Economic decline was a feature throughout the 1960s and 1970s: growth was slow, traditional manufacturing and heavy industry began to disappear, and unemployment grew.<sup>19</sup> Accelerated decolonisation also led to the acceleration of migration patterns based on colonial relations: in particular, Indian, Pakistani and West Indian immigrant populations in the UK increased significantly over the course of the decade.<sup>20</sup>

Migration in Germany was affected by quite different factors, most notably the active recruitment of migrant workers ('Gastarbeiter') by the government of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) beginning in 1960-61.<sup>21</sup> These workers came predominantly from southern Mediterranean countries including Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Turkey. Similarly, the GDR welcomed contracted workers from Mozambique, Vietnam and other Communist countries from the 1970s onwards.<sup>22</sup> There was significant migration into the GDR from other Eastern Bloc countries (and vice versa), but limited migration from the GDR to West Germany after the late 1950s, due to

---

<sup>18</sup> Neil Lazarus, 'The Global Dispensation since 1945', in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, ed. by Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 19-40.

<sup>19</sup> N. F. R. Crafts and Institute of Economic Affairs (Great Britain), *Britain's Relative Economic Performance, 1870-1999* (London: IEA, 2002).

<sup>20</sup> Patterns of migration shifted throughout the period, as Randall Hansen notes. See Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> See Klaus J. Bade, *Deutsche im Ausland, Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1992), pp. 393-401.

<sup>22</sup> See Almut Zwengel, *Die 'Gastarbeiter' der DDR: politischer Kontext und Lebenswelt* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2011), p. 5.

movement restrictions imposed by the GDR government. Ethnic German ‘Aussiedler’ from other parts of Eastern Europe resettled in both West Germany and the GDR.

The Cold War undoubtedly drove some parts of the globe further apart in terms of physical accessibility and mutual understanding. At the same time, through changing patterns of mass migration and the development of new technology, it also linked parts of the globe in new ways – for example, through a rise in the influence of advertising and cinema. One clear consequence of this was the emergence of new forms of transnational popular culture, particularly teen culture, music, fashion and entertainment.<sup>23</sup>

Television and commercial radio expedited the advertisement and distribution of these cultural products. In the British context, cultural exports began to replace exports from the manufacturing industries, reflecting the emergence of a new idea of global British identity. The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Twiggy, and many others all came to represent the ‘Swinging Sixties’ in the global imagination. British popular culture naturally influenced West German cultural life too, although youth culture also developed distinctively in both German states during the 1960s and early 1970s. In the West, attitudes to both American and British popular culture were more relaxed, with jazz in particular playing an important symbolic role as a symbol of democracy and freedom. Rock music began to feature on West German radio from the mid-1960s. East German cultural policy, on the other hand, remained relatively conservative until the early 1970s.<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, Mark Donnelly, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005); Brown and Lison, *The Global Sixties in Sound and Vision*.

<sup>24</sup> See Uta G. Poiger, ‘Generations: The “Revolutions” of the 1960s’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. by Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 640-62 (p. 642).



The circulation of transnational cultural products was paralleled by the rise of significant countercultural global movements.<sup>25</sup> The mass protests and other events of 1968 in Western Europe (including West Germany) and the US, for example, were enabled by transnational networks of New Left groups, civil rights organisations and student movements. These also intersected with transnational anti-war movements, which peaked with anti-Vietnam protests across the world from the middle of the 1960s onwards. Moreover, postcolonial attitudes took the form of 'Third World' discourses which began to position so-called 'developing countries' as a global other.<sup>26</sup> Anti-nuclear, hippie, feminist and environmentalist movements also began to form during the first part of the decade and remained an active feature of popular culture until at least 1975, sometimes in forms co-opted by the mainstream.

The legacy of the Second World War and the fear of future global conflict were important factors in shaping these protest movements. The period from 1960 onward saw the emergence of what Kathryn N. Jones calls the 'second wave' of Holocaust memory, which engaged from a position of greater distance and reflection with the question of how (and where) the Holocaust should be remembered.<sup>27</sup> In particular, the Frankfurt Auschwitz trials (1963-1965) provoked significant journalistic and popular debate in Germany and beyond. Memories of the war also played a key role in British public debate at the time,

<sup>25</sup> See Jeremi Suri, 'The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960-1975', in *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*, ed. by Daniel J. Sherman and others, 21st Century Studies, 7 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 93-119.

<sup>26</sup> Christoph Kalter, 'A Shared Space of Imagination, Communication and Action: Perspectives on the History of the "Third World"', in *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, ed. by Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, Protest, Culture and Society, 8 (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), pp. 23-38. These discourses were also reflected in contemporary European literature: see Rüdiger Sareika, *Die Dritte Welt in der westdeutschen Literatur der sechziger Jahre* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> Kathryn N. Jones, *Journeys of Remembrance: Memories of the Second World War in French and German Literature, 1960-1980* (Oxford: Legenda, 2007).

again from a period of greater distance now that immediate postwar rebuilding work was complete. Military conflict was a very real possibility in both the GDR and West German contexts, as discussed above, and an immediate reality in the Anglophone one: the ongoing consequences of the British colonial presence in Ireland were felt in the so-called Troubles beginning in the late 1960s. Military and terrorist violence were a regular feature for the next three decades.

‘High’ culture, including literary culture and poetry, was affected by these cultural events in both the German and Anglophone contexts. In both cases, the period was characterised by a range of interests and styles. In West Germany, an energetic new generation of poets emerged (including Günter Grass, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and Hans Magnus Enzensberger) who, through varying degrees of experimentalism, displayed a pointed desire to break with earlier literary traditions. Indeed, the generational conflict provoked by their politically motivated anger was a key factor in the terminal decline of postwar Germany’s most influential literary grouping, Gruppe 47.<sup>28</sup> Enzensberger, a key figure in this movement, was characterised as a ‘zorniger junger Mann’.<sup>29</sup> The so-called ‘1968 generation’ – most of whose members were publishing many years in advance of the mass protests of 1968, and in some cases more than a decade before – were strongly motivated by their desire to move away from

<sup>28</sup> See *Die Gruppe 47: ein kritischer Grundriss*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1980); Friedhelm Kröll, *Die ‘Gruppe 47’: soziale Lage und gesellschaftliches Bewusstsein literarischer Intelligenz in der Bundesrepublik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977).

<sup>29</sup> Alfred Andersch, ‘Hans Magnus Enzensberger: Verteidigung der Wölfe’, *Frankfurter Hefte*, 1958, pp. 143-45. The term is, clearly, a direct German translation of the ‘Angry Young Men’ designation which had been applied to British novelists and playwrights (most famously, John Osborne) from the mid-1950s. The gendered emphasis of this description is appropriate, since the majority of prominent poets of Enzensberger’s generation were indeed male. See also Fabian Lampart, *Nachkriegsmoderne: Transformationen der deutschsprachigen Lyrik 1945-1960* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), p. 412.

the perceived hermeticism of earlier generations, and from traditions of nature poetry which had come to be regarded as politically suspect.

The key concern of Enzensberger and his generation was the development of Western capitalism in general, and German politics in particular. Stylistically, they sought to restore narrative and perspectival clarity to the poetic text, with the ideal of 'die Konzeption eines unpräntiösen, schlichten, unverstellten, zugleich wirklichkeitsfreudigen und optimistischen Gedichts'.<sup>30</sup> These poets explicitly saw themselves as participating in neo-Brechtian traditions of political critique. They rejected the tendency towards *Sprachskepsis*, silence and difficulty present in the work of the immediate postwar generations: Karl Krolow wrote of the 'Gedicht nach der Rückkehr aus dem Schweigen'.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, as Hermann Korte notes, 1960 cannot be considered a definitive turning point after which hermetic traditions ceased to exert influence. Some have suggested that the hermetic poetry of the 1950s lost 'die Intensität ihrer Anfänge' in the subsequent decade.<sup>32</sup> It is apparent from the continuing output of Rose Ausländer, Ernst Meister and Johannes Bobrowski – not to mention Paul Celan's later work, as discussed in section two of this thesis – that this assessment is misleading.

Nevertheless, the hermetic tradition certainly played a less prominent role after the early 1960s in light of the emergence of new styles. One of the most dramatically innovative new developments was the concrete poetry movement, which resembled neither the 'difficult' hermetic poetry of Celan and others, nor the more accessible polemic of Enzensberger and his peers.<sup>33</sup> This

---

<sup>30</sup> Hermann Korte, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik seit 1945* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989), p. 82.

<sup>31</sup> Karl Krolow, 'Das Problem des langen und kurzen Gedichts - heute', *Akzente*, 13 (1966), 271-87 (p. 272). See also Korte, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik*, p. 104.

<sup>32</sup> Jürgen Theobaldy and Gustav Zürcher, *Veränderung der Lyrik* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1976), p. 24.

<sup>33</sup> Liselotte Gumpel, *'Concrete' poetry from East and West Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976); *Poesie-Konkret: Zur internationalen*

transnational grouping had one of its multiple centres in German-speaking cultural space, across Switzerland (where Eugen Gomringer, sometimes cited as the father of the movement, was based), West Germany and Austria. In Austria, the nascent interest in concrete poetry combined with the still-active presence of the avant-gardist Wiener Gruppe (including H. C. Artmann, Gerhard Rühm and others) to provide a dynamic context for the work of Friederike Mayröcker and Ernst Jandl, the latter of whose concrete poems are discussed in the final case study, below.

The poetry of the GDR had been developing in a different direction since the 1950s. As in West Germany, the period from the 1960s onward saw the emergence of new generations which to some extent rejected the traditions of their predecessors. In the GDR context, this meant a turn away from socialist realism and overt political engagement, towards a form of more or less oblique dissent which conformed to the strict cultural policy of the era. The group of young poets who adopted this style were known as the ‘Sächsische Dichterschule’, and key figures included Volker Braun, Wolf Biermann, Adolf Endler, Reiner Kunze and Sarah Kirsch; the latter’s work is discussed in the second case-study presented by this thesis.<sup>34</sup>

The period can be seen as coming to a close (in West Germany at least) with the rise of the so-called ‘neue Subjektivität’, itself in part a response to the political tendencies of mainstream poetry around 1968.<sup>35</sup> ‘Neue Subjektivität’

---

*Verbreitung und Diversifizierung der Konkreten Poesie*, ed. by Anne Thurmman-Jajes, Weserburg Museum für Moderne Kunst, and Poetry on the Road (Bremen: Salon, 2012).

<sup>34</sup> See Gerrit-Jan Berendse, *Die ‘Sächsische Dichterschule’: Lyrik in der DDR der sechziger und siebziger Jahre* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 1990) and Gerrit-Jan Berendse, ‘The Politics of Dialogue: Poetry in the GDR’, in *Rereading East Germany: The Literature and Film of the GDR*, ed. by Karen Leeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 143–59 (pp. 149–52).

<sup>35</sup> Korte, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik*, p. 160.

rejected any sense of optimism about the political possibilities of poetry without returning to hermeticism, concentrating instead on subjective experience and emotion constructed around a dominant lyric subject. At the same time, the avant-garde began to develop in new and quite different directions, as in the later work of Helmut Heißenbüttel and the performance-motivated early works of Thomas Kling and others.

As this brief overview of different tendencies demonstrates, the period between 1960 and 1975 in German poetry was characterised by transition and development. As Korte puts it,

[A]lle Richtungen und Genres [hatten sich] vor dem Horizont eines sich verändernden politisch-sozialen und kulturellen Kontextes neu zu definieren [...]. Tendenzen und Positionen überlagerten sich, Grenzziehungen wurden unübersichtlich, lösten sich auf, und es entstand insgesamt – in Ost und West gleichermaßen – eine Produktivität des Umbruchs.<sup>36</sup>

Similar tensions between radicalism and conformism also informed British poetry during this period, leading to an equally productive period of turmoil. In a 1954 article, the journalist J. D. Scott identified a trend toward ‘sceptical, robust, ironic’ conservatism in postwar British poetry, which he called ‘the Movement’.<sup>37</sup> Movement poets such as Larkin, Donald Davie, and Thom Gunn, and those on the fringes of this grouping such as Ted Hughes, continued to publish throughout the 1960s. However, there was also a growing desire to move away from the Movement and its dominant concerns, particularly among the younger generation, which was most clearly expressed in Al Alvarez’s

<sup>36</sup> Korte, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik*, pp. 83–84.

<sup>37</sup> J. D. Scott, ‘In the Movement’, *The Spectator*, 1 October 1954, pp. 399–400 (p. 400).

introduction to the 1962 anthology *The New Poetry*.<sup>38</sup> Alvarez strongly criticised contemporary British poetry for its failure to engage satisfactorily with history, including the history of 'evil' in the twentieth century. Instead, he suggested, it had retreated into 'gentility' and formal conservatism.<sup>39</sup>

Although Alvarez's intervention clearly had a lasting and significant influence, it did not immediately galvanise a new, coherent movement of experimental poetry. Instead, the poetry of the next decade and a half was characterised by groupings so fragmented and diverse that their richness has sometimes been overlooked entirely: Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion describe 'a stretch, occupying much of the 1960s and 70s, when very little – in England at any rate – seemed to be happening, when achievements in British poetry were overshadowed by those in drama and fiction'.<sup>40</sup>

Motion and Morrison's assessment overlooks numerous interesting developments, perhaps most notably the emergence of what Eric Mottram later termed the British Poetry Revival.<sup>41</sup> In contrast, Geraldine Monk's 'collective autobiography' of British poetry during this period is quite clear about the fruitful uncertainty of the period 'between World War II and the advent of the World Wide Web'.<sup>42</sup> Two small press periodicals, *The English Intelligencer* (edited by Andrew Crozier and Peter Riley and published between 1966 and

<sup>38</sup> Al Alvarez, 'The New Poetry; Or, Beyond the Gentility Principle', in *The New Poetry*, ed. by Al Alvarez (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), pp. 21–32.

<sup>39</sup> See Alvarez, 'The New Poetry', p. 22. Although Alvarez's essay is sometimes considered an outright rejection of the entire Movement, it is worth noting that his anthology features work by some poets strongly associated with the Movement, including Larkin himself. The borders between 'conservative' and 'innovative' should not be oversimplified.

<sup>40</sup> *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry*, ed. by Blake Morrison and Andrew Motion (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> Eric Mottram, 'The British Poetry Revival 1960–1975', in *New British Poetries: The Scope of the Possible*, ed. by Robert Hampson and Peter Barry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 15–50.

<sup>42</sup> Geraldine Monk, 'Preface', in *Cusp: Recollections of Poetry in Transition*, ed. by Geraldine Monk (Bristol: Shearsman, 2012), pp. 7–14 (p. 7).

1968) and the *Grossteste Review* (edited by Tim Longville and John Riley and published between 1968 and 1984) were the engines of the British Poetry Revival.<sup>43</sup> The periodicals published formally experimental work by Tom Raworth, Lee Harwood, Barry MacSweeney, Gael Turnbull and others. Both publications also contributed actively to the development of an experimental feminist poetics during the period in question, publishing work by Denise Riley, Veronica Forrest-Thompson, Wendy Mulford and Frances Presley. J. H. Prynne, whose work is discussed below, was a central figure in this scene: he was responsible for printing *The English Intelligencer* and regularly contributed to it.

‘Revival’ is a key word in the designation of this grouping. The work of Prynne, Geoffrey Hill, Forrest-Thompson and others should be contextualised within the re-emergence of writers explicitly drawing on Anglophone modernist traditions, such as Basil Bunting.<sup>44</sup> C. D. Blanton argues that the publication of Bunting’s *Briggflatts* in 1966 ‘consolidated’ the emergence of an alternative to the Movement mainstream during the 1960s.<sup>45</sup> This late modernist tendency was informed by new readings of, and engagements with, American modernism, which provided new points of reference beyond postwar British poetry.

Transnational exchange and migration began to provide another sort of challenge to the lingering Movement, through the work of postcolonial writers

<sup>43</sup> See Alex Latter, *Late Modernism and The English Intelligencer: On the Poetics of Community* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); *Certain Prose of the ‘English Intelligencer’*, ed. by Neil Pattison, Reitha Pattison, and Luke Roberts (Cambridge: Mountain Press, 2012).

<sup>44</sup> See Basil Bunting, *Complete Poems* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2000). The critical categorisation of Bunting and others’ work in this period as late modernist is discussed in more detail below.

<sup>45</sup> C. D. Blanton, ‘Transatlantic Currents’, in *A Concise Companion to Post-War British and Irish Poetry*, ed. by Nigel Alderman and C. D. Blanton (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 134–54 (p. 149).

such as Derek Walcott.<sup>46</sup> Walcott's influential work can be situated alongside that of Bunting and David Jones in light of its explicit engagement with Anglophone modernism. Towards the end of the period covered by this thesis, a new generation of writers with Caribbean backgrounds (including John Agard, Grace Nichols, Lorna Goodison and Linton Kwesi Johnson) emerged, although arguably the impact of their work was not fully realised until the late 1970s and 1980s.

Other non-English Anglophone traditions had a significant impact on the poetry of this period. The contexts of Irish and Scottish writing are the most relevant for the purposes of this thesis. In the Northern Irish context, the Belfast Group, which was founded in 1963 and continued intermittently until 1972, led to early publications by Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley, Paul Muldoon, Ciarán Carson and Edna Longley.<sup>47</sup> Derek Mahon, whose work is discussed in the second case study presented by this thesis, was a central figure in this group. Few generalisations can be made about the work of the poets associated with the Belfast Group, some of whom reject the notion that the Group influenced their writing. Although their work clearly displays modernist influences, it was not as pointedly experimental as that of the members of the British Poetry Revival. The beginning of the Troubles in the late 1960s is often foregrounded as a key concern in their work.

Scottish poetry lacked a similarly organised centre, but the period was nevertheless a highly interesting and productive one in Scotland.<sup>48</sup> As the

---

<sup>46</sup> See Jahan Ramazani, 'Poetry and Decolonisation', in *A Concise Companion to Post-War British and Irish Poetry*, ed. by Nigel Alderman and C. D. Blanton (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 111–33.

<sup>47</sup> See Heather L. Clark, *The Ulster Renaissance: Poetry in Belfast, 1962-1972* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>48</sup> For background, see Christopher Whyte, *Modern Scottish Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004); *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry*, ed. by Colin Nicholson and Matt McGuire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).



influence of the modernist Hugh MacDiarmid began to wane, young poets responded in a variety of ways to the changing cultural and political context. As discussed in the third case study, Edwin Morgan emerged as a key experimental voice looking beyond Anglophone literatures for his influences and inspiration. Vernacular, dialect and Gaelic poetry thrived during this period, for example in the work of Robert Garioch, as did overtly political poetry in the form of work by several Glasgow writers, most notably Tom Leonard.<sup>49</sup>

In 1971, the tensions evinced by these disparate groups, and in particular the underlying sense of division between conservatism and avant-gardism they reveal, broke into open hostility when Mottram and other 'radicals' staged a de facto takeover of Poetry Review, the traditionalist publication of the London-based Poetry Society.<sup>50</sup> Mottram's editorship came to an abrupt end in 1977, when the Arts Council regained control, marking the end of this period of productive conflict and contradiction in British poetry.

This is also roughly the end point of the period covered by this thesis, which examines poetry published during a period of around fifteen years, approximately eight years either side of the key milestone of 1968. It encompasses a coherent phase of literary, political and cultural history: it begins around 1960, two years before Kennedy's famous moon speech, and ends shortly after the last manned spacecraft, Apollo 14, landed on the moon in 1972. The Apollo 14 landing marked the beginning of the end of this period of aggressive and competitive exploration of space on the part of both the US and

---

<sup>49</sup> Leonard's often polemical poetry can be compared to another strand of political poetry of the 1960s not discussed here, namely the 'Mersey Sound' writing associated with the work of Roger McGough, Adrian Henri, Brian Patten and (by extension) Adrian Mitchell. See Peter Barry, *Contemporary British Poetry and the City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 137–64.

<sup>50</sup> See Peter Barry, *Poetry Wars: British Poetry of the 1970s and the Battle of Earls Court* (Cambridge: Salt, 2006).

the USSR. In July 1975, a joint space mission enabled by the détente Nixon and Brezhnev had negotiated three years earlier led to the docking of a Soviet with an American spacecraft. The Cold War entered a period of reduced tensions from around 1972 which lasted until Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, with significant implications for Europe; the success of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* led to a significant rapprochement between the FRG and GDR in the early 1970s. The urgency of the global ideological conflict which underpinned the Cold War lessened, albeit temporarily.

1960 to 1975 can also be considered a coherent phase in the history of ideas, since 1975 marked the beginning of a new period of cultural production and countercultural activity. The left-wing political and peace movements which had gained momentum from the late 1950s, reaching a peak in 1968, were succeeded by narrower, more violent and explicitly far-left groupings such as the Rote Armee Fraktion and Revolutionäre Zellen in Germany. The end of the draft in the US in 1973 was a significant moment in the demise of hippie culture, as was the end of the Vietnam War in April 1975 after several years of declining public support. By the late 1970s, disco and punk had replaced earlier transnational youth trends in music and fashion. In literary terms, this period saw a second generation of postwar writers emerge in both German and Anglophone cultural spaces.

## 1.2. *Intellectual contexts and theoretical framework*

The radicalism of the anti-establishment political and cultural movements which existed between 1960 and 1975 was matched by intellectual radicalism in a range of disciplines. Established ideas were challenged in almost every field. In this intellectual climate, new ways of thinking about space developed. The texts discussed in this thesis demonstrate the extent to which space was a

recurrent concern for contemporary writers, with new poetry exploring the spaces of memory and the consequences of political division, exile and migration, changing international relationships and the need to revisit national identity. The body of theory relating to the social and literary construction of space which provides the theoretical and methodological framework for my thesis also began to emerge during this period.

The existence of a so-called ‘spatial turn’ in the humanities is now taken for granted, but the history of the widespread interest in reintroducing space to social and literary theory is extensive and complex. The first use of the term dates to 1989, when Edward W. Soja applied it to the renewed interest in matters of space and place which had been a feature in the work of certain human geographers starting with Lefebvre’s *The Production of Space* (1974).<sup>51</sup> Soja regarded an emphasis on space and place as essential to the project of ‘Western Marxism’, noting that ‘postmodern critical human geography’ had its origins in French theory of the 1960s onwards.<sup>52</sup> Lefebvre’s two most influential texts were *The Production of Space* (1974) and *The Critique of Everyday Life* (1947-1981).<sup>53</sup> One of his main interests was in how the actions and discourses of the individual shaped and were shaped by perceptions of space more broadly. As he puts it in a later essay, ‘space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations, but it also is

---

<sup>51</sup> See *Spatial Turn: das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften*, ed. by Jörg Döring and Tristan Thielmann (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008), p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Edward W. Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London; New York: Verso, 1989), p. 40. Kristin Ross and Thomas F. McDonough have pointed out the flaws in Soja’s assertion, on the basis that the notion of socially constructed space pre-dates Lefebvre’s work. See Thomas F. McDonough, ‘Situationist Space’, *October*, 67 (1994), 59–77; Kristin Ross, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2008).

<sup>53</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991); Henri Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. by John Moore, 3 vols (London: Verso, 1991).

producing and produced by social relations'.<sup>54</sup> Lefebvre also engaged with and inspired phenomenological interest in the quotidian, and others, notably Michel de Certeau, have since developed Lefebvrian thinking on the practices of everyday life into new forms of critique of power structures affecting the perception and representation of space.<sup>55</sup>

Foucault's short but influential lecture 'Of Other Spaces' (delivered 1967; first published 1984) is also considered a founding text of 1960s spatial theory.<sup>56</sup> Foucault was the first to suggest that space would be as important in the later twentieth century as time and history had been in the early part of the century. Foucault's theory of the 'heterotopia' is applicable to many everyday spaces and, like Lefebvre, Foucault also emphasised the discursive constructs which underpin our perceptions of space. However, Lefebvre was critical of Foucault's work in this area, regarding it as 'a lot of pin-prick operations which are separated from each other in time and space. It neglects the centres and centrality; it neglects the global.'<sup>57</sup> In light of the relatively narrow focus of Foucault's essay – his major contribution to spatial theory, although the issue of space does arise elsewhere in his work – Lefebvre's critique seems valid.

Guy Debord and the Situationist International (1957-1972) developed Lefebvre's ideas in their own radical geography. They coined the term 'psychogeography' to describe the subversive approach to human geography

---

<sup>54</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, ed. by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, trans. by Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), p. 186.

<sup>55</sup> Michel de Certeau, 'General Introduction', in *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Oakland: University of California Press, 2011), pp. xi–xxiv.

<sup>56</sup> See Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16.1 (1986), 22.

<sup>57</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Survival of Capitalism*, trans. by Frank Bryant (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), p. 116.

which they sought to pioneer.<sup>58</sup> Like Lefebvre, they saw space as socially and politically constructed. As Thomas F. McDonough notes, they attempted to re-appropriate space, particularly in an urban context, by changing the way it was used.<sup>59</sup> Moreover, some of their approaches foreshadowed Jameson's idea of cognitive mapping as a tool of postmodern resistance to hegemonic representations.<sup>60</sup>

Soja convincingly argues that French, rather than Anglo-American or German, theory was the most successful in restoring notions of spatiality to political critiques. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning an entirely different tradition of thought which arose in a North American context and which also sought to re-evaluate and politicise global spatial relations from the 1960s onwards. Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964) theorised the 'global village' as a consequence of the rise of mass communications media.<sup>61</sup> The British social geographer David Harvey made similar assertions, albeit with an explicitly Marxist theoretical perspective, in his work on space-time compression and postmodernity.<sup>62</sup>

The ideas discussed thus far were proposed by sociologists and political theorists of the 1960s and developed by later theorists in the same disciplines. The application of these ideas to literature has a slightly separate history. An influential early text is Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (1958), which

<sup>58</sup> See Vincent Kaufmann, *Guy Debord: Revolution in the Service of Poetry*, trans. by Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), pp. 100–126.

<sup>59</sup> McDonough, 'Situationist Space'.

<sup>60</sup> Jameson, *Postmodernism*, pp. 51–52.

<sup>61</sup> Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962); Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge Classics, 2001).

<sup>62</sup> David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).

applied psychoanalytic theory to literary representations of the domestic interior.<sup>63</sup> De Certeau's work on 'everyday life' and Foucault's concept of the heterotopia also readily lend themselves to the study of literature. However, only quite recently have theories of the cultural and social history of space been used to frame readings of literature more systematically.

For example, Bertrand Westphal and Robert T. Tally both draw heavily on Lefebvre (in addition to other theorists not discussed in detail here, such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Yuriy Lotman and Mikhail Bakhtin) when formulating their theory of 'geocriticism'.<sup>64</sup> According to Tally, the recognition of literary products as part of a Lefebvrian network of social relations is fundamental: 'all writing partakes in a form of cartography, since even the most realistic map does not truly depict the space but, like literature, figures it forth in a complex skein of imaginary relations'.<sup>65</sup> Tally glosses Westphal's methodology in *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces* as 'an exploratory critical practice, or set of practices, whereby readers, scholars and critics engage with the spaces that make life, through lived experience and through imaginary projection, meaningful'.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, Westphal emphasises the distinction between this approach and an 'ego-centred' spatial analysis, which focuses on the representation of spaces in which the writer (and not the space itself) is the 'ultimate object of critical attention'.<sup>67</sup> This thesis avoids such an ego-centred approach, concentrating instead, as Westphal and Tally do, on

---

<sup>63</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by M. Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1994).

<sup>64</sup> See Bertrand Westphal, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, trans. by Robert T. Tally Jr. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>65</sup> Tally, 'Introduction' in Westphal, *Geocriticism*, p. x.

<sup>66</sup> Tally, 'Introduction' in Westphal, *Geocriticism*, p. xii.

<sup>67</sup> Westphal, *Geocriticism*, p. 111.

spatial discourses as cultural and literary products rather than expressions of individual subjectivity.

### 1.3. Recent research

Westphal and Tally's geocriticism is just one of many more or less theoretically motivated approaches available to those writing about literature and landscape, space and place today.<sup>68</sup> The radical heritage of the Situationists and the concept of 'psychogeography' are regularly invoked by members of the current generation of British authors (including Will Self, Iain Sinclair, Robert McFarlane, Owen Hatherley and Patrick Keiller) to contextualise their own reflections on space and place.<sup>69</sup> There have been many recent contributions in this vein to popular discourses on space, place and literature.<sup>70</sup> Some of these popular works recapitulate received ideas about space, place and nation, translating the radical impetus of the Situationist psychogeography movement into the context of nostalgic British conservatism and introducing features of

<sup>68</sup> Another, which will not be discussed in detail here, is geopoetics. See Kenneth White, *On the Atlantic Edge: A Geopoetics Project* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2006); Tony McManus, *The Radical Field: Kenneth White and Geopoetics* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2007).

<sup>69</sup> Will Self, *Psychogeography* (London: A&C Black, 2013); Iain Sinclair, *London Orbital* (London: Penguin, 2003); Richard Mabey and Iain Sinclair, *The Unofficial Countryside* (Dorchester: Little Toller Books, 2010); Iain Sinclair, *Lud Heat: A Book of the Dead Hamlets* (Cheltenham: Skylight, 2012); Robert Macfarlane, *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot* (London: Penguin, 2012); Owen Hatherley, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (London: Verso, 2011); Patrick Keiller, *The View From The Train: Cities And Other Landscapes* (London: Verso, 2013); Patrick Keiller, *Robinson in Space* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999).

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Simon Armitage, *Walking Home* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012); Simon Armitage, *Walking Away: Further Travels with a Troubadour on the South West Coast Path* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015); Owen Sheers, *A Poet's Guide to Britain* (London: Penguin Classics, 2010); Michael Symmons Roberts and Paul Farley, *Edgelands* (London: Vintage, 2012).

older forms of British nature writing.<sup>71</sup> As Sinclair puts it, 'I'm just exploiting [psycho geography] because I think it's a canny way to write about London. Now it's become the name of a column by Will Self, in which he seems to walk about the South Downs with a pipe'.<sup>72</sup>

The body of populist writing on space and place in contemporary British literature is complemented by an academic strand which synthesises literary approaches informed by theories about the social history of space with the British tradition of radical geography (as developed by the work of Harvey and Doreen Massey, for example) in useful and interesting ways.<sup>73</sup> Examples of this type of work include recent texts by Neal Alexander and David Cooper, Damian Walford Davies, Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, Zoë Skoulding, Ian Davidson, Peter Barry and Katharine Cockin.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Eric Falci touches on the relationship between this broad genre and the 'scopic', pastoral and romantic traditions of British poetry in his overview of space, place and landscape in postwar poetry. See Eric Falci, 'Place, Space and Landscape', in *A Concise Companion to Post-War British and Irish Poetry*, ed. by C. D. Blanton and Nigel Alderman (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 200–220.

<sup>72</sup> Iain Sinclair quoted by Stuart Jeffries, 'On the Road', *The Guardian*, 24 April 2004, <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/apr/24/featuresreviews.guardianreview14>> [accessed 24 August 2016]. See also Merlin Coverley, *Psychogeography* (Harpending: Pocket Essentials, 2010).

<sup>73</sup> See Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*; David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012); Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994).

<sup>74</sup> *Poetry & Geography: Space and Place in Post-War Poetry*, ed. by Neal Alexander and David Cooper (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013); Damian Walford Davies, *Cartographies of Culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012); Zoë Skoulding, *Contemporary Women's Poetry and the Urban Space: Experimental Cities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Placing Poetry*, ed. by Ian Davidson and Zoë Skoulding (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2013); Ian Davidson, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Ian Davidson, *Radical Spaces of Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Barry, *Contemporary British Poetry and the City; The Literary North*, ed. by Katharine Cockin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Elmer Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home: Poetry and Place in Northern Ireland, 1968–2008* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2008).



Though several of these critics, including Walford Davies and Cockin, do not focus exclusively on poetry, all adopt an approach which situates individual texts within the broader history of space and place in Britain and/or Ireland. The various contributors to Alexander and Cooper's study of postwar poetry, in particular, pay attention to the specificity of individual texts in order to draw broader conclusions about the relationship between poetry and the social production of space in postwar Britain.

Those contributions (by Walford Davies, Kennedy-Andrews and Cockin) which explicitly focus on counterhegemonic representations of space in Welsh, Irish and northern English writing fulfil the important function of complicating the nation-state oriented, Anglocentric perspectives which continue to dominate the critical literature. Other critics, including Skoulding, Barry and Davidson, focus explicitly on experimental literature as well as (in some cases) on the urban spaces in which it is produced. Their approach is fruitful in demonstrating that the connection between space and poetry need not necessarily be configured along Romantic lines, as is frequently assumed in the popular discourse of space and place in English literature.

In the German-language context, the relationship between space, place and literature has historically been theorised somewhat differently. Although Soja cites the influence of the Frankfurt School as a key factor in shaping the 'despatialized' Marxism of the period 1918 to 1960, there is clearly a long tradition of thinking about space in German philosophy and literary criticism which builds on Kant and Lessing, among others.<sup>75</sup> In particular, Lessing's *Laokoon* reflects two important areas of emphasis in the German tradition

---

<sup>75</sup> Soja, *Postmodern Geographies*, p. 40; see also Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie: mit beiläufigen Erläuterungen verschiedener Punkte der alten Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2010). Kant engaged with space as a transcendental category of experience: see Nathaniel Jason Goldberg, *Kantian Conceptual Geography* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Thomas C. Vinci, *Space*,

which set it apart to some degree from its Anglophone equivalent: the relationship between space and time, and the specific aesthetic qualities of text as a medium.

As far as the first of these two areas is concerned, some highly productive uses of spatial theory in other humanities disciplines depend on a sophisticated approach to the space-time relationship.<sup>76</sup> The Bakhtinian concept of the chronotope is a key point of reference here.<sup>77</sup> Perhaps as a consequence of its emphasis on space-time dynamics, German-language criticism has sometimes adopted a sceptical approach to the 'spatial turn' in general. Sigrid Weigel, for example, argues for the use of the term 'topographical turn', rather than 'spatial turn', to preserve an emphasis on the historical specificity of spatial relations and representations.<sup>78</sup> Likewise, Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann are critical of a tendency they identify in some contemporary spatial theory to allow the interaction between space and time to retreat into the background in favour of a broader focus on space for its own sake.<sup>79</sup>

The second strand of spatial theory which plays a much larger role in the German context than in equivalent Anglophone texts relates to the mediality of the literary text as a means of negotiating the relationship between time and space, particularly within a structuralist or post-structuralist philosophical framework. According to this semiological approach, 'man fasst [die Literatur]

---

*Geometry, and Kant's Transcendental Deduction of the Categories* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

<sup>76</sup> Karl Schlögel, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (Munich: Hanser, 2003).

<sup>77</sup> See Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981); *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur: die Literaturwissenschaften und der Spatial Turn*, ed. by Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009), p. 18.

<sup>78</sup> Sigrid Weigel, 'Zum >topographical turn<. Kartographie, Topographie und Raumkonzepte in den Kulturwissenschaften', *kulturpoetik*, 2.2 (2002), 151–65.

<sup>79</sup> Hallet and Neumann, *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur*, p. 15.

als eigenen Raum auf und hebt dabei klar ihre Autonomie hervor'.<sup>80</sup> Key points of reference here are the work of Lotman, Maurice Blanchot and Jacques Derrida. According to Lotman's structuralist linguistics, the symbolic space of literature is produced by the interaction between socially determined signifiers; for Blanchot and Derrida, the play of signifiers in the medium of text constructs a literary space characterised by simultaneous presence and absence.<sup>81</sup> As Hallet and Neumann note, it is this concept of literary space which provided the framework for several 'phänomenologische oder strukturalistisch orientierte Ansätze' in the 1970s, 80s and 90s, and this approach has only recently been superseded by approaches which discuss space 'als eine [...] kulturell geprägte [...] Wahrnehmungskategorie'.<sup>82</sup>

There are several handbooks and case studies which map out the territory of contemporary and historical spatial theory in a German-language context, in relation to both the humanities in general, including explicitly interdisciplinary contributions, and to literature in particular.<sup>83</sup> However,

<sup>80</sup> Xavier Garnier, 'Der literarische Raum', in *Handbuch Literatur & Raum*, ed. by Jörg Dünne and Andreas Mahler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 88–95 (p. 88).

<sup>81</sup> See Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982); Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001).

<sup>82</sup> Hallet and Neumann, *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur*, p. 19. For examples of this tendency, see Gerhard Hoffmann, *Raum, Situation, erzählte Wirklichkeit: poetologische und historische Studien zum englischen und amerikanischen Roman* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1978); Elisabeth Bronfen, *Der literarische Raum: eine Untersuchung am Beispiel von Dorothy M. Richardsons Romanzyklus 'Pilgrimage'* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986); Karin Wenz, *Raum, Raumsprache und Sprachräume: zur Textsemiotik der Raumbeschreibung* (Tübingen: Narr, 1997).

<sup>83</sup> General and interdisciplinary texts include those by Susanne Rau, *Räume: Konzepte, Wahrnehmungen, Nutzungen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2013); *Raum: ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch*, ed. by Stephan Günzel (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2010); Stephan Günzel, *Raum/Bild: zur Logik des Medialen* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2012); *Raum*, ed. by Petra Ernst and Alexandra Strohmaier (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013); Döring and Thielmann, *Spatial Turn; Kommunikation - Gedächtnis - Raum: Kulturwissenschaften nach dem 'spatial turn'*, ed. by Moritz Csáky and Christoph Leitgeb (Bielefeld:

critics in the latter category have tended to pay relatively scant attention to the specificity of spatial representations in the lyric genre. Where lyric texts are discussed, two issues generally arise: lyric or other poetic texts are either treated uncritically in the same terms as narrative texts, or they are linked explicitly and solely to traditions of landscape poetry, and particularly to Romantic traditions.<sup>84</sup> Michel Collot, for example, describes ‘die lyrische Sprechsituation in der ersten Person’ as a central feature of literary representations of landscape.<sup>85</sup> Although his statement is clearly justified in the context of his discussion of the development of ideas of ‘landscape’ in the nineteenth century, his analysis fails to account for the complexity of subjectivity in modern and contemporary poetry.

A brief survey of recent critical texts in German which can broadly be considered literary-geographical in their approach confirms that, even more so than in the Anglophone context, a large majority focus on narrative texts and representations.<sup>86</sup> Some of these explicitly draw on the work of Franco Moretti, whose *Atlas of the European Novel* gave rise to the methodology of ‘distant reading’.<sup>87</sup> However, as Barbara Piatti acknowledges, this approach to situating

---

Transcript, 2009). Those which focus on literature include Hallet and Neumann, *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur; Handbuch Literatur & Raum*, ed. by Jörg Dünne and Andreas Mahler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

<sup>84</sup> Hallet and Neumann’s text is something of an exception: it includes a useful contribution from René Dietrich on postmodernism, spatial theory and the poetry of Frank Bidart. See René Dietrich, ‘Postmoderne Grensräume und Endräume in der Gegenwartsliteratur: Bewegungen ins Dazwischen und ins Nichts in Frank Bidarts “The War of Vaslav Nijinsky”’, in *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur: die Literaturwissenschaften und der Spatial Turn*, ed. by Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009), pp. 355–70.

<sup>85</sup> See Michel Collot, ‘Landschaft’, in *Handbuch Literatur & Raum*, ed. by Jörg Dünne and Andreas Mahler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015), pp. 151–59 (p. 157).

<sup>86</sup> Notable examples include *Topographien der Literatur: deutsche Literatur im transnationalen Kontext*, ed. by Hartmut Böhme (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2005); Barbara Piatti, *Die Geographie der Literatur: Schauplätze, Handlungsräume, Raumphantasien* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008).

<sup>87</sup> Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1998). Piatti’s *Die Geographie der Literatur* is one example.

literary texts geographically requires critics to extract precise data from them, often overlooking the inherent polysemy of the text – an approach which is particularly ill-suited to the discussion of lyric poetry.<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, there is a growing number of recent contributions to the study of space and place in German poetry, including Uta Werner's *Textgräber*, which is a significant starting point for this thesis's analysis of Celan.<sup>89</sup>

Research on other major poets of the twentieth century has also profited from contributions in this vein, such as Jennifer M. Hoyer's work on meta-textual space in Nelly Sachs and Cettina Rapisarda's study of space in some poems by Ingeborg Bachmann.<sup>90</sup>

The relatively stable polycentrism of the German language to some extent eliminates the need for reappraisals such as those by Walford Davies and Cockin, which explicitly seek to refocus critical discussions on underexplored regions and 'other' traditions. The notion of regionalism has its own history in a German context, not least in the guise of various historic Heimat traditions.<sup>91</sup> As in the British context, city studies and studies of urban writing (including poetry) are an established subfield.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Piatti, *Die Geographie der Literatur*, p. 10.

<sup>89</sup> Uta Werner, *Textgräber: Paul Celans geologische Lyrik* (Munich: Fink, 1998).

<sup>90</sup> Jennifer M. Hoyer, *'The Space of Words': Exile and Diaspora in the Works of Nelly Sachs* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014); Cettina Rapisarda, *Raumentwürfe: Studien zu Gedichten Ingeborg Bachmanns* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 2013).

<sup>91</sup> For background, see *Regionale Literaturgeschichtsschreibung: Aufgaben, Analysen und Perspektiven*, ed. by Helmut Tervooren and Jens Haustein, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*. Sonderheft, 122 (Berlin: Schmidt, 2003); *Regionalität, Nationalität und Internationalität in der zeitgenössischen Lyrik*, ed. by Lothar Fietz, Paul Hoffmann, and Hans-Werner Ludwig (Tübingen: Attempto-Verlag, 1992).

<sup>92</sup> See, for example, Michael Pleister, *Das Bild der Grossstadt in den Dichtungen Robert Walsers, Rainer Maria Rilkes, Stefan Georges und Hugo von Hofmannsthal* (Hamburg: Buske, 1982); Manuel J. K. Muranga, *Grossstadteland in der deutschen Lyrik zwischen Arno Holz und Johannes R. Becher* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 1987); Ron Winkler, *Dichtung zwischen Grossstadt und Grosshirn: Annäherungen an das lyrische Werk Durs*

There are numerous other potential approaches to analysing how space is represented in literature which this thesis does not adopt. Westphal and Tally's geocritical approach, for instance, is limited by its uncertain application to poetic texts, in which the forms of language used do not oscillate between real and fictional space in the same way as in narrative texts. Tally proposes that an appropriate methodology for the geocritical study of poetry would emphasise the affective dimension of the poetic text, citing the work of Heather Yeung as one example.<sup>93</sup> This approach would require engagement with sense and affect theory through Deleuze and Guattari, Jean-Luc Nancy and others; it is not the approach taken here, since my work concentrates instead on poetic discourse as a social and cultural product.

Nor does my approach draw on the other major family of contemporary space based theories and methods: those, like Moretti's 'distant reading', which depend on the digital and quantitative analyses of literary texts, including through the use of Geographical Information Systems (GIS). These methods have mostly been applied to narrative rather than poetic texts, and even there, the value of the insights they offer has yet to be irrefutably demonstrated.

Although space and place studies have underpinned a useful range of critical analysis across both languages and critical traditions, there are several important areas in which further research is necessary. Firstly, the full potential of a space oriented approach to postwar and contemporary German-language poetry has not yet been realised. Given the complex and dynamic history of German-speaking cultural spaces during this period, and the interesting ways in which this history is reflected in literature, there is a

---

*Grünbeins* (Hamburg: Kovac, 2000); *Die verewigte Stadt: Rom in der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1945*, ed. by Ralf Georg Czapla and Anna Fattori (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

<sup>93</sup> See Heather H. Yeung, *Spatial Engagement with Poetry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

great deal of scope for further investigation, both in relation to specific poets and in relation to the period more broadly.

Secondly, in the context of research into European Anglophone literatures, the majority of existing work focuses primarily and explicitly on Anglophone areas other than England (i.e. Wales, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and, less often, Scotland). These studies make an important contribution to rebalancing the canon of European Anglophone literature. It is necessary to pay attention to the specificities of Welsh, Irish and Scottish identities when discussing Anglophone or British literature in general. However, as Christopher Whyte has argued in relation to contemporary Scottish literature, frames of reference oriented towards the idea of nation (including cultural nations like Wales and Scotland) do not necessarily provide the most useful lens through which to read a pluralistic, polycentric literary tradition.<sup>94</sup> Moreover, given a historical context in which national, transnational and international relations were so rapidly shifting, political boundaries can no longer be assumed to neatly divide different literary traditions, nor to provide the most appropriate framework for discussing them.

A third, and related, gap in the existing research relates to the relative lack of comparative studies adopting a space and place oriented methodology. In the context of the recent revival of interest in 'world literatures', it is surprising to note that the majority of the studies of space and place in British and/or German-language poetry of later modernity adopt a monolingual or monocultural approach. Given the transnational nature of unfolding spatial relations during this period, the literature lends itself to comparative analysis, not just within the various political groupings of Anglophone literature, but also beyond them. In addition to their long-standing patterns of cultural interaction, cross-border dissemination and influence, English and German

---

<sup>94</sup> See Whyte, *Modern Scottish Poetry*, pp. 6–7.

language areas were among the European cultural spaces most deeply affected by the changing historical contexts of the 1960s and 70s. A comparative analysis of the poetry of this period in these two areas is therefore timely and appropriate.

These are the main gaps in existing research addressed by this thesis. A further, related, issue arises in the existing critical literature which also intersects with my research – namely, the question of periodisation. It is broadly accepted that literary modernism originated in the late nineteenth century and lasted until at least the beginning of the Second World War.<sup>95</sup> Similarly, critics usually speak of the 1980s as the era of postmodernism in literature without undue hesitation.<sup>96</sup> The intervening years are generally viewed as a period of transition between modernism and postmodernism.

<sup>95</sup> Even scholars who disagree on other issues accept this perspective. Walter Fähnders focuses precisely on the period 1890-1933 (suggesting, like others, that the first part of this period was dominated by ‘Moderne’ and the last decade by various forms of literary avant garde). Tyrus Miller does not explicitly challenge accepted accounts of modernism’s origins in ‘the spirit of revolt against the nineteenth century’, contending only that critics’ fascination with this “‘Book of Genesis’” has resulted in insufficient attention being paid to the important decades of the 1920s and 1930s, which he defines as the period of late modernism. Helmuth Keisel adopts the longest historical perspective, discussing both the putative origins of modernism around 1880 and developments up to the 1950s, including Celan’s work. Finally, Mellors, like Miller, does not contest the assumption that the origins of modernism lie in the late nineteenth century, but instead focuses on how its ‘afterlife’ extended into the post-Second World War period. See Walter Fähnders, *Avantgarde und Moderne 1890-1933: Lehrbuch Germanistik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998), pp. 4–5; Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts between the World Wars* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1999), p. 5; Helmuth Kiesel, *Geschichte der literarischen Moderne: Sprache, Ästhetik, Dichtung im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2004), pp. 20, 438; Anthony Mellors, *Late Modernist Poetics: From Pound to Prynne* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, Brian McHale, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 7; Redell Olsen, ‘Postmodern Poetry in Britain’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry*, ed. by Neil Corcoran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 42–56.



However, key dates and phases are represented differently in the work of various critics. Moreover, it is not clear whether this period, and in particular the period 1960 to 1975 which is the focus of this thesis, belongs to the history of modernism, postmodernism, both or neither, and there is an equally striking lack of consensus about this issue in both German and Anglophone literary historiography.

Relatively few scholars in either tradition have proposed that literary modernism ended with the onset of World War II.<sup>97</sup> Rather, most agree that forms of writing which might be considered modernist continued to be produced into the 1940, 50s and beyond.<sup>98</sup> In terms of British poetry, the later works of Bunting and Prynne are usually read as examples of late modernism. Anthony Mellors makes a strident case for the 'powerful force' modernism continued to exert throughout this period of its 'afterlife', and names Prynne in the title of his monograph as an example of this tendency.<sup>99</sup>

The Anglophone concept of late modernism is not regularly invoked in German criticism. ('Spätmoderne' clearly exists, but it refers to a sociohistorical paradigm and not a literary one and is therefore translated as 'late modernity' rather than 'late modernism'.) For obvious reasons, 1945 is generally considered a much more definitive historical watershed in the German-language context, and studies of contemporary literature regularly take this date as their starting point.<sup>100</sup> The very concept of

<sup>97</sup> Miller, who argues that the late phases of modernism occurred in the 1920s and 30s, is a notable exception. See Miller, *Late Modernism*, p. 5.

<sup>98</sup> Lawrence S. Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 6; Kiesel, *Geschichte der literarischen Moderne*, p. 438; Mellors, *Late Modernist Poetics: From Pound to Prynne*, p. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Mellors, *Late Modernist Poetics: From Pound to Prynne*, p. 23. Mellors's reading of Prynne and Celan's work is discussed in more detail in the relevant section of this thesis.

<sup>100</sup> See, for example, Korte, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik*, p. 1; *Deutsche Lyrik nach 1945* ed. by Dieter Breuer (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), p. 7. In

‘Kahlschlagliteratur’ and associated critical vocabulary (‘Stunde Null’, ‘Trümmerliteratur’ etc.) depends on the rejection or dissolution of earlier models. However, scholars, including scholars of poetry, have begun to argue for some degree of continuity in the literature of the pre- and postwar eras, extending at least as far as 1955 and sometimes until 1960.<sup>101</sup> In this context, the term ‘Nachkriegsmoderne’ is sometimes used.

Nevertheless, even this extension of the period of modernism’s influence does not account for the 1960s and 70s. Nor do these decades appear to belong definitively to the history of postmodernism, although Jean-François Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition* (1979) is certainly informed by the sociohistorical context of the previous decade.<sup>102</sup> Perry Anderson traces the prehistory of the term to the 1930s, but describes the continuity between the intellectual climate of the 1960s and the modernist one as ‘striking’.<sup>103</sup> Jameson’s description of postmodernism in literature can hardly be said to encompass these decades, since it refers explicitly to ‘the past few years’ preceding the 1991 publication date of his founding text.<sup>104</sup> Jameson himself allows the transitional phase of late modernism to last until the 1980s, encompassing the later works of Samuel Beckett.

Unsurprisingly, then, there is a good deal of ambiguity in both the definition and application of the terms ‘late modernism’ and ‘postmodernism’.

---

fact, both are circumspect about their choice of start date and note that identifying 1945 as a definitive caesura is problematic in light of the continuation of modernist traditions after this date.

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, *Modern Times?: German Literature and Arts Beyond Political Chronologies; Kontinuitäten Der Kultur: 1925-1955*, ed. by Gustav Frank, Rachel Palfreyman, and Stefan Scherer (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2005); Lampart, *Nachkriegsmoderne*; Kiesel, *Geschichte der literarischen Moderne*, p. 438.

<sup>102</sup> Jean François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

<sup>103</sup> Perry Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1998), p. 12.

<sup>104</sup> Jameson, *Postmodernism*, p. xii.

In relation to Anglophone poetry, the period of postmodernism as described in the criticism certainly overlaps with that of late modernism: indeed, the same names (including Prynne's) are regularly invoked in connection with both definitions.<sup>105</sup> By the same token, individual poets are variously described as post- or late modernist, sometimes within the same volumes. Larkin proves a particularly interesting example: he is described by Stephen Regan as a late modernist poet, and by Mellors (as part of the Movement more generally) as 'distinctly *anti-Modernist*' (emphasis orig.).<sup>106</sup> Concrete poetry also deserves particular mention in this context as a genre which has provoked significant debate.<sup>107</sup>

These perspectives offer a range of readings of British or German poetry of this period. As discussed above, critics have noted how fractured and diverse

<sup>105</sup> For example, Olsen names Prynne as a key figure in his discussion of the origins of postmodern poetry in Britain; yet Prynne is also a major figure in Mellors's discussion of late modernism. See Olsen, 'Postmodern Poetry in Britain', p. 44; Mellors, 'Obscurity, Fragmentation and the Uncanny in Prynne and Celan'.

<sup>106</sup> Stephen Regan, 'Philip Larkin: A Late Modern Poet', in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry*, ed. by Neil Corcoran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 147–58; Mellors, *Late Modernist Poetics: From Pound to Prynne*, p. 17.

<sup>107</sup> Concrete poetry is often associated with historical avant-gardes which are generally considered modernist, such as Futurism, Surrealism and Dada. Its origins are also traced to early modernist or even pre-modernist texts such as those by Stephan Mallarmé. Haroldo de Campos, one of the founders of the Brazilian concrete poetry movement, argues that Paul Celan's work possesses 'the contemporaneity of concrete poetry'. (See *Experimental - Visual - Concrete: Avant-Garde Poetry since the 1960s*, ed. by K. David Jackson, Eric Vos, and Johanna Drucker (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 1996), p. 173.) On the other hand, some critics read concrete poetry as a precursor or manifestation of postmodernism. For example, see McHale, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism*, p. 12; Caroline Bayard, *The New Poetics in Canada and Quebec: From Concretism to Post-Modernism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989). Marjorie Perloff resolves this apparent contradiction by speaking of the concrete movement as an 'arrière-garde'. (Marjorie Perloff, 'Writing as Re-Writing: Concrete Poetry as Arrière-Garde', *CiberLetras*, 17 (2007) <<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v17/perloff.htm>> [accessed 24 August 2016].)

the poetry scene was in both Britain and German-speaking countries during the 1960s and 70s. In Britain, the 'Poetry Wars' reflected the difficult relationship between those writers who were continuing the 1950s tradition of nostalgic conservatism and those who wished to explore new, more experimental forms of writing. Groupings in German-speaking countries were even less unified, with the obvious geopolitical division leading to the bifurcation of literary movements between the GDR on the one hand, and West Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Luxembourg on the other. In light of this, the prevailing critical uncertainty about the application of terminology such as late modern and postmodern is understandable. The use of methodologies emphasising space and place may provide a useful alternative to these problematic categories.

In summary, it is clear that current research has not yet fully exploited the potential of a space and place oriented approach to poetry of the 1960s and early 1970s. Transnational and international discourses were extremely important during this period, but the dearth of comparative studies means that existing analyses do not account for literature which engages with, reflects and participates in these discourses in different languages. Moreover, available analyses demonstrate that existing periodisation struggles to account for this transitional period between late modernism and postmodernism.

#### *1.4. Approach and key findings*

This thesis addresses these gaps in existing research using a language based comparative approach. César Domínguez, in an essay arguing for the use of linguistic, rather than literary, maps to orient comparative study, notes that

it is evident that the problems and challenges faced by a comparative literature sensitive to the notion of literary geography

are multiple and complex. In general terms, these problems are associated with the diminishing relevance of the nation state (i.e., with regard to language and culture but not in the political sphere) as the only referent in the literary development of a homological space amid clear and stable frontiers, immersed in an apparently contradictory double process, with globalization (which fragments and dissolves sovereignty amid various agents) on one hand, and localization (emergence of substatel spaces such as global cities and new areas) on the other.<sup>108</sup>

For the reasons Domínguez outlines, it is neither desirable nor appropriate to consider the representations of space and place in groups of poems divided by ‘clear and stable frontiers’ – for example, to consider a cross section of Scottish, English, Welsh or Irish writing followed by similar surveys of writing in West Germany, the GDR or other German-speaking spaces. Instead, a language oriented approach is adopted in which an English-language and a German-language poet are brought together, and their work compared, in a series of case studies. The pairings are designed to highlight shared interests, shared formal concerns and common approaches to the representation of space and place which illuminate the work of these writers in particular but also resonate more widely.

Various sociohistorical contexts can be identified as influencing Anglophone and German-speaking cultural spaces during the period in question, sometimes in very different ways. Experiences in the GDR were naturally different from those in West Germany, Austria and Switzerland, and all of these were different from experiences in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, not to mention the Republic of Ireland. The poets discussed

---

<sup>108</sup> César Domínguez, ‘Literary Geography and Comparative Literature’, *Comparative Literature and Culture*, 13.5 (2011).

in my thesis are drawn from across these cultural spaces, and for the sake of brevity I will consistently refer to 'Anglophone' and 'German-language' poets throughout the thesis, without claiming to offer a comprehensive overview of either category. The 'Anglophone' poets discussed are British nationals, although two of them have expressed their uneasy relationship to this designation. The three German-language writers are from the Bukowina, the GDR and Austria.

The poets discussed were chosen to reflect something of the diversity of poetic styles and movements during the 1960s and early 1970s, including the hermeticism which continued to be influential in the West German context, and the complex forms of political engagement which arose in East German poetry, as well as both the British Poetry Revival and other, more formally conservative traditions in Anglophone writing. The emergent concrete poetry movement is also represented. Some of the poets discussed – such as Jandl and Celan – are very well-known, whereas others – for example, Kirsch and Prynne – are less familiar figures. Some work within relatively traditional forms, whereas others are more experimental. They are drawn from across the spectrum of cultural spaces (England, Scotland, Ireland; Austria, West Germany and the GDR) in both languages, in order to give a cross section of perspectives on and insights into the social and cultural production of space during the period. They are not intended to be representative of the totality of poetic production in both language areas in the decade-and-a-half which is the focus of this thesis. To provide full representation of 1960s and 1970s poetry across both language areas would be impossible, and there are obvious omissions.<sup>109</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> For example, there is no evidence of the work of any writers with a non-European migration background; and only limited representation of women's writing (in the figure of Sarah Kirsch). No Welsh or Swiss poets are discussed, and relatively few poets working outside metropolitan centres. Several very well-known and much researched writers whose work has

The aim of the research is to test the efficacy of its methodology for comparative research and to examine the specific qualities of, and relationships between, the chosen poets.

This will be achieved by scrutinising the work of each pair of poets in turn to ascertain what types of spaces are depicted in their poetry, and in what ways these reflect on, or contribute to, contemporary cultural, literary and theoretical ways of thinking about space and place. Relevant key concepts from the theoretical field mapped out above will be applied to each pairing in order to illuminate shared qualities. Each case study consists of two complementary parts: a broad discussion of the two poets' work in general, and then a close reading which compares two or more key texts in detail, in order to support and complicate the preceding discussions.

The first case study uses post-structuralist theory as a starting point for comparing the representation of text as space (and space as text) in the work of Paul Celan and J. H. Prynne. Prynne and Celan share a distinctive spatial vocabulary of hostile landscapes, subterranean spaces and contingent dwellings. In both cases, this is underpinned by some form of scepticism regarding language's capacity to produce meaning, balanced against a belief in the potential of poetry to resolve this aporia. Drawing on Derrida's concept of 'trace', and the notion of literary space more broadly, my analysis explores the role of archaeology and geology in Prynne and Celan's work of the 1960s and early 1970s. It reads Celan's theory of the meridian in the context of this critical discourse of meta-linguistic or meta-textual spaces, suggesting various ways in which both writers conceive of the poem itself as a literary space of intersubjective encounter in difficult terrain.

---

regularly been discussed in the context of its relationship to space and place are not discussed.

Close readings examine two pairs of poems relevant to this overall argument: firstly, Prynne's 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' (P 65-69) is read alongside Celan's 'Engführung' (G 113-18) as an expression of *Sprachskepsis* reflected in the creation of anti-metaphorical subterranean geological and archaeological spaces, as a means by which language might be redeemed and the possibility of meaning restored in an altered form. Secondly, Prynne's 'From End to End' (P 62-63) is compared with Celan's 'In der Luft' (G 166-67), since both poems engage with the vocabulary of linearity, cartography and encounter in globalised spaces. What emerges is an understanding of Prynne and Celan's non-metaphorical, meta-textual spaces as 'maps' to their own meaning, which are an attempt to engage with, and a gesture towards resolving, the aporia of language crisis.

The second case study adopts a different theoretical approach. The two poets whose work is examined – Derek Mahon and Sarah Kirsch – share a cultural affiliation with the politically divided spaces of Ireland and Germany respectively. This chapter examines the representations of these spaces in their poetry, showing how these representations participate in and contribute to discourses of home, community and world. Conspicuously absent in both cases is the grand narrative of national identity or overt political affiliation. Instead, both poets consciously pay attention to alternative spaces – the overlooked, marginalised and quotidian – as a means of subverting dominant discourses. The work of Bachelard, a key influence on Mahon in particular, provides a theoretical context for their discussion of domestic space, and de Certeau's theories of the practices of everyday life help to make sense of their rejection of established, normative spatial representations.

This is supported by detailed readings of Mahon's 'Beyond Howth Head' (L 33-39) and Kirsch's 'Wiepersdorf' cycle (SG 137-43). Both of these long poems draw on eclectic sources and reflect configurations of communities and



identity, particularly writerly identity, which reject any notion of national belonging or a national literary canon. For Kirsch, this self-created writerly identity also has a feminist dimension, albeit one which does not precisely overlap with contemporary feminist discourses. As in other poems by both Mahon and Kirsch, border crossings and liminal spaces are crucial to their rejection of the monolithic categories of political affiliation which shape normative ideas of home, community and world.

The final case study focuses on the work of Ernst Jandl and Edwin Morgan. These two poets were specifically selected to reflect the large body of twentieth-century poetry which represents space, place and landscape in highly experimental and abstracted forms. Their work does not generally feature the stable lyric persona which is often assumed to constitute an indispensable organising principle for the representation of space in poetry. Morgan and Jandl's work adopts a range of forms, in which the lyric self plays a variety of roles, from highly abstract concrete poetry to more linear but still ludic and linguistically experimental texts. Some manifestations of aperspectivity, polyperspectivity and polyvocality are discussed and exemplified with reference to a range of texts which construct or map space in innovative ways.

The second part of this section focuses on two poems with relatively stable lyric perspectives, which nevertheless are linguistically and formally playful. Ideas of public space, adapted from the work of social geographers including Harvey, frame a discussion of how public space is represented in Jandl's most famous poem, 'wien: heldenplatz' (*W* 126) and Morgan's 'The Starlings in George Square' (*CP* 165-66). Both poems model, through their experimental use of language, the polyvocality and polysemy which is a crucial feature of democratic public space.

The concluding section reviews these case studies and situates the detail of each within the context of the literary, cultural and social history of space in the 1960s. It evaluates the efficacy of the chosen methodology for revealing hitherto underexplored connections between the work of Anglophone and German-language poets during this period.

## 2. Language as landscape in J. H. Prynne and Paul Celan

### 2.1. *A shared 'textual landscape'*

Das Gedicht, das ich meine, ist nicht flächenhaft; daran ändert auch die Tatsache nichts, daß es noch jüngst, so bei Apollinaire oder bei Chr. Morgenstern, das Figurengedicht gegeben hat, das Gedicht hat vielmehr Räumlichkeit und zwar eine komplexe: die Räumlichkeit und Tektonik dessen, der es sich abfordert, und die Räumlichkeit seiner eigenen Sprache, d. h. nicht der Sprache schlechthin, sondern der sich unter dem besonderen Neigungswinkel des Sprechenden konfigurierenden und aktualisierenden Sprache[.]<sup>1</sup>

One cannot help but be struck by certain vivid similarities in the work of J. H. Prynne and Paul Celan, and particularly by their central engagement with poetic landscapes, spaces and places. Images of stone, rock, crystal, ice, frost, snow, and the diurnal cycle of moon, sun and stars abound in their poetry, reflecting shared interests in geology, geography and astronomy.<sup>2</sup> These

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Celan, *Mikrolithen sinds, Steinchen. Die Prosa aus dem Nachlaß* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005), p. 144.

<sup>2</sup> The importance of geology and geological imagery in key texts is explored in more detail below. For evidence of a shared interest in stars, planets and

similarities are constructed on the common ground of shared cultural points of reference, from poetic, biblical and philosophical citations to music and musical form.<sup>3</sup> However, this shared cultural heritage does not explain the most intriguing common feature of Prynne and Celan's textual landscapes, namely their linguistic self-reflexivity: the sedimented, historicised landscapes which

---

astronomy, see, for example, Prynne's 'Smaller than the Radius of the Planet' (P 115), 'Moon Poem' (P 53-54), 'Star Damage at Home' (P 108-09) and Celan's 'Oben, Geräuschlos' (G 109-10), 'Soviel Gestirne' (G 127-28) or 'Hinausgekrönt' (G 154-55). For the diurnal cycle, see Prynne's collections *Day Light Songs* (1968), *A Night Square* (1971) and *Into the Day* (1972), as well as individual poems from *The White Stones* (1969) including 'Night Song' (P 119), 'First Notes on Daylight' (P 69), 'The Wound, Day and Night' (P 64) and Celan's 'Halbe Nacht' (G 29-30), 'Nachtstrahl' (G 36) and 'Nacht' (G 101-02). For examples of music in Prynne's work see 'Señor Vasquez and Other Soft Music to Eat By' (P 97-98) and 'Thoughts on the Esterházy Court Uniform' (P 99-100); and in Celan, see 'Todesfuge' (G 40-41), 'Ein Lied in der Wüste' (G 27), 'Chanson einer Dame in Schatten' (G 25-26), 'Engführung' (G 113-18) and others. See also 'Musik im Werk Celans' in *Celan-Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung*, ed. by Markus May, Peter Gossens, and Jürgen Lehmann (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2008), pp. 272-75; Axel Englund, *Still Songs: Music in and around the Poetry of Paul Celan* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012). Here, and throughout, page references in Prynne's work are to J. H. Prynne, *Poems* (Folio/Fremantle Arts Centre Press: South Fremantle, WA; Bloodaxe: Newcastle upon Tyne; Dufour Editions: Chester Springs, PA, 1999). References to poems by Celan are to Paul Celan, *Die Gedichte. Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Barbara Wiedemann, 4th edn (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005). Subsequent page references to these primary sources are given in abbreviated form in the text.

<sup>3</sup> For example, one might note the reference to 'white stones' in the title of Prynne's collection *The White Stones* and of 'weiße' or 'helle Steine' as a recurrent motif in Celan's work, as described by Joachim Schulze and Hugo Bekker. The term refers to Revelations 4:17, in which the faithful are promised 'a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it'. For both, this biblical citation may be understood as signalling concerns about naming and authorship. See Joachim Schulze, *Celan und die Mystiker: Motivtypologische und quellenkundliche Kommentare* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1983), pp. 97-104; Hugo Bekker, *Paul Celan: Studies in His Early Poetry* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008), pp. 19-20. For more on naming in Celan, see Dietlind Meinecke, *Wort und Name bei Paul Celan: zur Widerruflichkeit des Gedichts* (Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1970); Winfried Menninghaus, *Paul Celan: Magie der Form* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1980); Antti Eemeli Salminen, 'No Name: Paul Celan's Poetics of Naming', *Kritike*, 4.1 (2010), 123-37.

feature in their work are not (or not only) mimetic representations of some real or imagined place with emotional, metaphorical or symbolic resonance, but explicitly meta-poetic.<sup>4</sup> In spite of the persistent (and justifiable) critical tendency to read Celan's work through the prism of the Shoah, the spaces of his poetry are not only spaces of memory which stand in for the Holocaust memorial, execution site or internment camp, although all of these spaces are important points of reference. The topography of spaces in both Prynne and Celan's poetry, the challenges they present and our routes through them as readers mirror the features of poetic language. Prynne and Celan create 'textual landscapes' which are not simply landscapes described in text, but landscapes *of* text, explicitly conceived of in non-metaphorically textual terms and as intrinsically textual constructs. This analysis contends that their shared interest in the complex tectonics of poetic representation is a means of making the complexity of linguistic representation itself visible, and therefore of addressing the problems of language crisis which feature in both writers' work.

After introducing the post-structuralist theory which provides a framework for approaching Prynne and Celan's poetry, this case study will examine the abstract spaces of encounter in both poets' work, and then offer a close analysis of more tangible places of encounter, including huts, graves and crypts. Next, the analysis will turn to linguistic landscapes, focussing in particular on how these reflect the quasi-geological and archaeological processes by which language accrues meaning and the ways in which this meaning can be excavated.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Peter Szondi was the first to discuss this aspect of Celan's work in his essay on 'Engführung', which is discussed in more detail below. See Peter Szondi, *Celan-Studien* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973), pp. 70–74.

<sup>5</sup> The conflation of poetic with archaeological or geological practices is a common trope in recent British poetry and criticism, which has been discussed in relation to the work of Bunting, Heaney and Geoffrey Hill, among others. This broad discursive context encompasses ideas as diverse as agricultural digging and harvesting, an exploration of 'roots' in the botanical

Although there are numerous important differences in the cultural and biographical backgrounds of the two writers, which necessarily inform their work, this analysis situates these differences within a comparative framework which spans both traditions. Prynne and Celan also occupy complex positions in relation to literary modernism and postmodernism, and focussing on how their work represents space and place contributes to existing critical debates on this issue.

The tendency to represent space in innovative ways is most pronounced in particular collections of the very late 1950s and 1960s, namely Celan's and cultural senses, archaeological burial and excavation, and geological sedimentation, used as a means of exploring language and etymology, history and identity by both poets and critics. For example, Heaney and Bunting's writing about soil, earth, stone and related materials is often seen as part of a general sense of regional or national 'rootedness' in poetic language, sometimes in an overly simplistic fashion. (See, for example John Tomaney, 'Keeping a Beat in the Dark: Narratives of Regional Identity in Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts*', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25.2 (2007), 355–75; Christopher T. Malone, 'Writing Home: Spatial Allegories in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney and Paul Muldoon', *ELH*, 67.4 (2000), 1083–1109.) More germane to my own analysis, however, are those discussions of Hill's poetry which reflect on the meta-linguistic nature of ideas of landscape in his work. Heaney, for instance, famously used the poetic language and formal concerns of various poets (including Hill) as a means of conceptualising their 'Englands of the Mind'. Bode, Getz, Hart and Sherry have all argued, in various ways, that Hill's poetic reflects a sense of the weight of history and/or the 'strata' of a landscape. Bode states that reading Hill involves the excavation of a 'play of difference', which he conceives of in archaeological terms. The overlap with my own arguments about Prynne's work are evident. See Christoph Bode, 'A Mercia of the Mind: Geoffrey Hill's "Mercian Hymns" and the Poetical Transcendence of Time and Place', in *Regionalität, Nationalität und Internationalität in der zeitgenössischen Lyrik*, ed. by Lothar Fietz, Paul Hoffmann, and Hans-Werner Ludwig (Tübingen: Attempto-Verlag, 1992), pp. 313–42 (p. 331); Seamus Heaney, 'Englands of the Mind', in *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968–1978* (London: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), pp. 150–69; Thomas H. Getz, 'Geoffrey Hill: History as Poetry; Poetry as Salutation', *Contemporary Poetry: A Journal of Criticism*, 4.3 (1982), 4–23 (p. 13); Henry Hart, *The Poetry of Geoffrey Hill* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), p. 173; Vincent Sherry, *The Uncommon Tongue: The Poetry and Criticism of Geoffrey Hill* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1987), p. 31.

*Sprachgitter* (1959) and *Die Niemandrose* (1963), and Prynne's *The White Stones* (1969). It is therefore these collections, together with selected critical texts of the same period (particularly Celan's Büchner Prize acceptance speech of 1960, *Der Meridian*), which will be examined in detail in this chapter.

For both Prynne and Celan, the search for a new, spatialised and non-mimetic approach to poetic language is a consequence of the rejection of particular traditional models of poetic representation implicitly or explicitly held to be inadequate for the expression of modern experience – a new manifestation of the so-called *Sprachkrise* which is a familiar trope in German-language literature since Hugo von Hofmannsthal.<sup>6</sup>

Prynne and Celan's work is regularly read against this theoretical context. For Celan, the linguistically self-reflexive aspects of his work are generally considered an important feature of his engagement with the Shoah and its

<sup>6</sup> For an overview of the theoretical background to this modern *Sprachkrise* and its manifestations in literature since Hofmannsthal, see Martina King, 'Sprachkrise', in *Handbuch Literatur und Philosophie*, ed. by Hans Feger (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2012), pp. 159–77. For an analysis of *Sprachkrise* and its impact on German prose before and after Hofmannsthal, see Dirk Götsche, *Die Produktivität der Sprachkrise in der modernen Prosa* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1987). Erich Kleinschmidt has discussed the impact of *Sprachkrise* and *Sprachskepsis* on modern poetry, and Áine McMurtry's work on crisis in Ingeborg Bachmann explains in detail the background to postwar scepticism regarding language and its ability to signify. See Erich Kleinschmidt, *Gleitende Sprache: Sprachbewusstsein und Poetik in der literarischen Moderne* (Munich: Iudicium, 1992); Áine McMurtry, *Crisis and Form in the Later Writing of Ingeborg Bachmann: An Aesthetic Examination of the Poetic Drafts of the 1960s* (London: MHRA, 2012). Given the term's roots in the German-language philosophy of Mauthner, Wittgenstein and others, it is hardly surprising that talk of a *Sprachkrise* is less prominent in critical discussions of modernist literature in English, although it is nevertheless commonplace for critics of Anglophone literature to refer to a more generalised 'crisis of representation' affecting the literary and visual arts. See, for example, Ben Hutchinson, *Modernism and Style* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 4, 59, 145; Pericles Lewis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 3, 64.

consequences for poetic representation.<sup>7</sup> Writing in a language which, according to his own formulation, ‘distrusts beauty’ after the trauma of the Holocaust, Celan’s recourse was to ‘precision’, to naming and positing, in order to resist the temptation ‘eine Metapher [...] mit einer Mandelblüte [auszustaffieren]’, as his long-term correspondent and friend Ingeborg

<sup>7</sup> An interest in the possibility of poetry in the language of the perpetrator constitutes the basis of Celan’s (indirect) response to Adorno’s statements regarding the ‘barbarism’ and ‘impossibility’ of poetry after Auschwitz. As Robert von Hallberg notes, Celan’s engagement with the Shoah is primarily as a ‘philological event’ rather than through any direct poetics of testimony or description. Critical responses to Celan’s engagement with the aporia of poetry after Auschwitz are varied and occasionally unhelpfully superficial. Szondi glosses Celan’s position as follows: ‘Nach Auschwitz ist kein Gedicht mehr möglich, es sei denn auf Grund von Auschwitz.’ (Szondi, *Celan-Studien*, p. 102). Schnurre picks up the argument, but his position is weakened by his assertion that post-Auschwitz poetry is *intrinsically* different from its pre-Auschwitz counterpart, as though the language itself need not change given the changed context. Bonheim is more circumspect, arguing convincingly for the changed focus and poetic of lyric poetry after Auschwitz rather than its intrinsic difference. However, he shares the view espoused by Steiner, Fioretos and others that Celan’s poetry, or post-Auschwitz poetry in general, is, as Fioretos puts it, ‘essentially other’ or (to paraphrase Steiner) not meant to be understood at all. This position is somewhat problematic in light of Celan’s insistence on the ‘realism’ of his imagery and his disavowal of hermeticism and metaphor. Michael Hamburger, in contrast, notes that ‘in their own inimitable and difficult way, Celan’s poems are attempts to communicate’. Katrin Kohl’s discussion of the trope of ‘Flaschenpost’ in Celan (and others) reflects a similar position, concluding that however remote the prospect of communication may seem, it remains a possibility. See Robert von Hallberg, ‘Celan’s Universality’, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 155.2 (2006); Wolfdietrich Schnurre, *Der Schattenfotograf: Aufzeichnungen* (Munich: List, 1978), p. 125; Günther Bonheim, *Versuch zu zeigen, dass Adorno mit seiner Behauptung, nach Auschwitz lasse sich kein Gedicht mehr schreiben, recht hatte* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002), p. 8; Aris Fioretos, ‘Preface’ in *Word Traces: Readings of Paul Celan* ed. by Aris Fioretos (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. ix-xxii (p. x); George Steiner, ‘On Difficulty’, *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 36.3 (1978), 263; Michael Hamburger, ‘Town and Country: Phenotypes and Archetypes’, in *The Truth of Poetry: Tensions in Modernist Poetry Since Baudelaire* (London: Anvil Press, 1996), pp. 267–68 (p. 291), Katrin Kohl, ‘“Flaschenpost”: Sprache als Metapher in der Lyrik des 20. Jahrhunderts’, *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007), 329–47.



Bachmann put it.<sup>8</sup> Celan's poetry attempts to transform the basis on which poetic language communicates by rejecting the dynamics of identity on which metaphor depends as fundamentally dishonest. Instead, it self-consciously explores other ways in which poetic language can convey meaning under difficult circumstances. That this linguistic crisis arises within and is informed by its traumatic historical context must be acknowledged, as must the personal trauma suffered by Celan after the deaths of his mother and father in work camps in the 1940s, and his own period as a prisoner in a similar camp.<sup>9</sup>

Prynne's meta-poetic interests, and his expressions of linguistic crisis, are not similarly rooted in personal or historical trauma. Instead, they must be read as a product of a particular literary-historical context, as a reaction to the conservative dogma of accessibility which dominated British 'Movement'

<sup>8</sup> 'Keine Delikatessen' in Ingeborg Bachmann, *Werke*, ed. by Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum, and Clemens Münster, 4 vols (Munich; Zürich: Piper, 1993), I, pp. 172–73. Celan's view of metaphor is a much-debated issue amongst critics. He expressed distrust of metaphor, criticising 'das Versteckenspiel hinter Metaphern' (Hugo Huppert, "Spirituell". Ein Gespräch mit Paul Celan', in *Paul Celan*, ed. by Werner Hamacher and Winfried Menninghaus (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 319–24 (p. 319).) He insisted: 'Ich habe nie eine Zeile geschrieben, die nicht mit meiner Existenz zu tun gehabt hätte – ich bin, Du siehst es, Realist auf meine Weise' (Celan, quoted in May, Gossens and Lehmann, *Celan-Handbuch*, p. 1), which some critics have understood as a complete rejection of metaphor as a whole and taken as a cue to interpret each image in his work as having a concrete grounding in life and experience. However, Englund, Menninghaus and Hamacher have pursued readings of Celan's imagery which permit a specific understanding of metaphor, in which the dialectic of identification and difference through which the technique operates is explicitly acknowledged and manipulated. Kohl views language itself as a form of metaphor which allows for precision. See Englund, *Still Songs*, pp. 14–15; Menninghaus, *Paul Celan*, p. 172; Werner Hamacher, 'The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure through Celan's Poetry', in *Premises: Essays on Philosophy and Literature from Kant to Celan*, trans. by Peter Fenves (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 337–88; Kohl, "Flaschenpost": Sprache als Metapher in der Lyrik des 20. Jahrhunderts'.

<sup>9</sup> For biographical context, see John Felstiner, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Israel Chalfen, *Paul Celan: A Biography of His Youth* (New York: Persea Books, 1991).

poetry of the 1950s.<sup>10</sup> The work of Prynne and his contemporaries has been characterised (sometimes in derisive terms) as self-consciously intellectual; the desire to move away from a poetry of seemingly transparent communicability and towards one which problematises and scrutinises the materiality of language underpins Prynne's linguistic self-reflexivity. Sam Ladkin and Robin Purves contend that the so-called Cambridge School, with which Prynne is associated, is (often unfairly) 'held to stand for a deliberately inaccessible mode of writing, engorged with critical theory, often held to be "only about language itself" and written purely for the delectation of a smug coterie of reclusive adepts'.<sup>11</sup> Exaggerated and inaccurate though this characterisation may be, it nevertheless signals the linguistically reflexive qualities of Prynne's work.

Again, this aspect of his work is regularly discussed by critics.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> See Neil Corcoran, *English Poetry since 1940* (London; New York: Longman, 1993), p. 83.

<sup>11</sup> Sam Ladkin and Robin Purves, 'Introduction', *Chicago Review*, 53.1 (2007), 6–13 (p. 8).

<sup>12</sup> As with Celan, some of these attempts to account for Prynne's distinctive poetic are more successful than others. Arguing against critics such as Douglas Oliver and Rod Mengham, the latter of whom proposes that reading Prynne requires the 'suspension of the conscious search for meaning', Reeve and Kerridge convincingly demonstrate how Prynne's interest in questions of scale and perspective necessitates the adoption of an external, commenting voice, but one which does not conform to our expectation that it filter, prioritise and make comprehensible the vast complexity of experience. Instead, Prynne 'immerse[s] subjectivity in the roar, not of different individual viewpoints, but of different social discourses'. In their reading, this decision has its basis in postmodern ethics and is thus construed as a response to post-'liberal humanist' language crisis. Sutherland is more precise about the heritage of *Sprachskepsis* in Prynne's work, arguing for its political radicalness on the basis that it confronts the problems of expressing experience in language, which Sutherland terms 'the radical commensuration of man and world': 'Prynne is the only poet in English whose language is permanently impacted not only by the truth of this intellectual disinheritance, but by the trauma of its necessity'. See Douglas Oliver, 'J. H. Prynne's "Of Movement Towards A Natural Place"', *Grossteste Review*, 12 (1979), 93–102; Rod Mengham, "'A Free Hand to Refuse Everything": Politics and Intricacy in the Work of J. H. Prynne', in *A Manner of Utterance: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne*, ed. by Ian Brinton (Exeter: Shearsman, 2009), pp.

Each writer's work therefore occupies a quite different position in relation to the historical contexts outlined in the introduction to this thesis. While Celan's work might broadly be considered as part of an emerging discourse of Holocaust memory, as theorised by Nora – particularly insofar as his work implicitly critiques such discourses – Prynne is of a slightly younger generation, and his work can be read as a reaction against certain literary traditions, because it seeks to restore to contemporary British poetry explicit engagement with intellectual contexts such as post-structuralism. Traces of the globalised social and political networks of the 1960s are also regularly present in Prynne's work, from the early engagement with global financial networks in his first collection, *Kitchen Poems* (1968), not discussed here, to the vocabulary of modern technocratic society which is a key feature of later texts.

The acknowledged importance of meta-linguistic constructs in Prynne and Celan's work has yet to inform critical discussions of their representations of landscape, space and place. Existing work on landscape, nature and geology in the work of both writers provides a solid foundation for such an analysis, but falls short where it fails to acknowledge the meta-linguistic nature of these tropes and themes or, in the case of Celan, where it places too great an emphasis on their function as spaces of memory and memorialisation at the expense of considering their meta-linguistic nature.

This strand of research is far more developed in relation to Celan's work than Prynne's. Szondi, one of Celan's earliest and most influential critics, provides the touchstone for the debate, arguing as he does that Celan's poems are non-metaphorically, non-mimetically spatial. As both Michael Hamburger and Michael Hofmann have noted, drawing on terminology proposed by

---

69–82; N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995), pp. 28–30; Keston Sutherland, 'X L Prynne', in *A Manner of Utterance: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne*, ed. by Ian Brinton (Exeter: Shearsman, 2009), pp. 104–32 (p. 123).

Northrop Frye, Celan comprehensively rejects the 'low mimetic'.<sup>13</sup> Szondi suggests that the poems are literal 'textual landscapes' which reflect new modes of authorship and reading.<sup>14</sup> Werner Hamacher, on the other hand, contends (without drawing specifically on the trope of landscape) that Celan's work self-consciously performs the passage from object to metaphor.<sup>15</sup> Neither reading is wholly adequate here: as Marlies Janz and others have pointed out, Szondi's argument about the non-mimetic nature of space in 'Engführung' is somewhat undermined by his clear identification of the space the poem depicts as a more or less direct representation of the death camps.<sup>16</sup> Hamacher's reading is more convincing, since despite Celan's insistence on his 'realism' and his apparent rejection of metaphor, there are clear metaphorical dimensions to the representations of landscape in his work. However, the transition from object to metaphor is not a simple, one-way process which leaves us with textual landscapes which can be read as ciphers or images which encode external reality: adopting Hamacher's approach to Celan's landscapes diminishes the significance of their metalinguistic nature, as spaces into which the reader can be taken and within which encounters may occur.

Werner and Ulrich Baer approach Celan's textual landscapes with processes of memorialisation as a key concern. Werner's forensic analysis of Celan's library of geology books and her work on highlighting geological metaphors in individual texts is undoubtedly useful, but her broad reading of

<sup>13</sup> Hamburger, 'Town and Country: Phenotypes and Archetypes', p. 290; Michael Hofmann, 'Paul Celan', in *Behind the Lines: Pieces on Writing and Pictures* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001), pp. 105–15 (p. 107).

<sup>14</sup> Szondi, *Celan-Studien*, pp. 50–52.

<sup>15</sup> Hamacher, 'The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure through Celan's Poetry', p. 351.

<sup>16</sup> See Marlies Janz, *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie: zur Lyrik und Ästhetik Paul Celans* (Frankfurt a.M.: Syndikat, 1976), p. 75. Hainz has argued against this and other critiques of Szondi's work on Celan; see Martin Hainz, *Masken Der Mehrdeutigkeit: Celan-Lektüren mit Adorno, Szondi und Derrida* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2001).

Celan's geological poems as 'Textgräber' does not take account of the variety and complexity of textual landscapes in his work, beyond those texts which deal explicitly with spaces of burial and memorialisation.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, Baer's close reading of Celan's poems succeeds in making the complex interrelation of language, trauma, memory and landscape clear, but it is necessarily limited in focus.<sup>18</sup>

Rochelle Tobias, who has also criticised Baer and Werner's overemphasis on memory discourses, picks up on Hamacher's reading of Celan.<sup>19</sup> Her work convincingly accounts for the ways in which Celan's textual spaces (which, for Tobias, also include celestial and corporal 'landscapes') encode and reflect temporality. However, like Hamacher, she makes no mention of the linguistic self-reflexivity which is characteristic of the various types of space found in Celan's work.

N. H. Reeve and Richard Kerridge's discussion of scale in Prynne certainly gestures towards the issues surrounding Prynne's representations of landscape, space and place – particularly place in abstract terms, which is intrinsically linked with their readings of distance, proximity and perspective.<sup>20</sup> However, they do not explicitly analyse the linguistically self-reflexive nature of Prynne's

<sup>17</sup> See Werner, *Textgräber*.

<sup>18</sup> Baer, with particular reference to 'Engführung' (G 113-18) distinguishes between Celan's terminology of 'Gelände' or terrain and that of 'Landschaft' or landscape: 'When lyric poetry relies on geographic sites in order to situate the self, this act always takes place where nature has already been transformed into landscape' (Ulrich Baer, *Remnants of Song: Trauma and the Experience of Modernity in Charles Baudelaire and Paul Celan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), p. 223). This distinction is central to Baer's overall psychoanalytical argument about the relationship between space, self and modernity in Celan (and Baudelaire's) work; it is not essential for my analysis of meta-textual landscapes in Celan's work, and I use both terms as appropriate without emphasising their difference.

<sup>19</sup> Rochelle Tobias, *The Discourse of Nature in the Poetry of Paul Celan: The Unnatural World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006).

<sup>20</sup> Reeve and Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much*, pp. 1–36.

textual landscapes. Keston Sutherland comes closer to the issue, forcefully arguing that questions of scale in Prynne are equated with questions of the politics of representation.<sup>21</sup> Ian Brinton offers an introduction to Prynne's reading in human geography, explaining the influence of Ed Dorn (and through him, Charles Olson) on Prynne's representation of landscape and emphasising the archaeology of fragments which emerge in his work, but he fails to draw any firm conclusions on the basis of these interesting observations.<sup>22</sup> Thomas Roebuck and Matthew Sperling have briefly touched on the meta-linguistic nature of landscape in Prynne's 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' (*P* 65-67) in their extended commentary on this poem, which will be discussed in more detail below: although their approach is not developed into a systematic reading, it nevertheless usefully highlights the equivalence of language and landscape in that text.<sup>23</sup> My own reading extends Roebuck and Sperling's approach to text as landscape while also applying Celan's ideas of the text as a place or space of encounter to readings of Prynne.

There are few existing comparative studies of the two writers. This may be a consequence of the somewhat marginal position of both poets in relation to the mainstream literary traditions of their respective languages, from which generalising comparative studies regularly draw their impetus.<sup>24</sup> Yet Prynne has undoubtedly been influenced by his attentive reading of Celan, as Matthew

<sup>21</sup> Sutherland, 'X L Prynne', p. 105.

<sup>22</sup> Ian Brinton, "His Brilliant Luminous Shade", in *A Manner of Utterance: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne*, ed. by Ian Brinton (Exeter: Shearsman, 2009), pp. 11–22.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Roebuck and Matthew Sperling, "'The Glacial Question, Unsolved': A Specimen Commentary on Lines 1-31", *Glossator*, 2 (2010), 39–78.

<sup>24</sup> Prynne is, as Reeve and Kerridge observe, 'a lonely writer' who prefers to publish his work in small press chapbook and pamphlet editions, while Celan was equally (and understandably) wary of the German literary mainstream of his time. See Reeve and Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much*, p. 2; May, Gossens and Lehmann, *Celan-Handbuch*, p. 19.

Hall's analysis of Prynne's 1971 poem 'Es Lebe der König' (P 169-70) demonstrates.<sup>25</sup>

Hall's essay does not attempt to offer a wider reading of the relationship between the two writers, though such a reading – and any study of Prynne's relationship with German poetry more broadly – is clearly overdue.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, while Celan's influence on and relationship to French poetry has been fairly well researched, the same cannot be said of his position in relation to Anglophone traditions.<sup>27</sup> One of very few exceptions here is Geoffrey Ward's

<sup>25</sup> The poem, which draws its title from Celan's citation of Georg Büchner's play *Dantons Tod* in his 1960 Büchner Prize acceptance speech, is the only text Prynne has ever dedicated to another named poet. The textual spaces of Celan's work, and particularly of Celan's 'Mit wechselndem Schlüssel', are a crucial intertext to this poem. See Matthew Hall, 'Prints in the New Snow: Notes on "Es Lebe Der König", J. H. Prynne's Elegy to Paul Celan', *Cordite Poetry Review*, 1 September 2013  
<<http://cordite.org.au/scholarly/prints-in-the-new-snow/>> [accessed 24 August 2016]. The extent of Prynne's engagement with Celan is also evident in his essay 'Huts', which will be discussed in more detail below. See J. H. Prynne, 'Huts', *Textual Practice*, 22.4 (2008), 613–33.

<sup>26</sup> Johansson summarises some important influences on Prynne from German poetry and philosophy. Stone-Richards gives a detailed reading of 'Again in the Black Cloud' which explores many interesting links to various German contexts and influences, including Heidegger, Trakl, Celan, Büchner and others, but does not seek to draw conclusions about the broader influence of German poetry and thought on Prynne's work. Mellors has also drawn some similar links (including to Heidegger and Trakl in particular) but again, without providing a systematic reading. See Birgitta Johansson, *The Engineering of Being: An Ontological Approach to J. H. Prynne*, Acta Universitatis Umensis, 135 (Umeå: Umeå University, 1997), p. 53; Thomas Stone-Richards, 'The Time of the Subject in the Neurological Field (I): A Commentary on J. H. Prynne's "Again in the Black Cloud"', *Glossator*, 2 (2010), 149–244; Mellors, 'Obscurity, Fragmentation and the Uncanny in Prynne and Celan', p. 153. Prynne's essay on German poetry and modernism also demonstrates his expertise in this area and signals the influence of German literature on his own work. See J. H. Prynne, "'Modernism' in German Poetry", *The Cambridge Review*, 1963, 331–37.

<sup>27</sup> Although May and Gossens's *Celan-Handbuch* covers Celan's translations of Shakespeare and his engagement with sixteenth and seventeenth century English poetry, as well as devoting a short section to his brief stay in London in 1968, it does not give any details about the reception of his work in

comparative essay on the two poets' work, a reading which links Prynne and Celan on the grounds of their difficulty, and examines their work within the context of linguistic crisis and self-reflexivity which also informs my own analysis.<sup>28</sup> Another is Mellors's examination of the uncanny in Prynne and Celan, which (like Ward) discusses the formal and linguistic 'difficulty' of the two poets' work, this time in light of Mellors's account of the poetics of late modernity.<sup>29</sup>

What follows, therefore, will extend Ward, Hall and Mellors's comparative work on Prynne and Celan through a specific focus on the spaces, places and landscapes which feature in the two poets' work, and the ways in which these serve as meta-linguistic constructs which enable access to new modes of representation and, by extension, reading.

Interpreting landscape as text and text as landscape clearly demands a specific theoretical approach to the ideas of space, place and landscape. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the 'spatial turn' in the arts and humanities has brought a multiplicity of approaches to representations of (real and imagined) spaces in literature and culture, from Foucault's heterotopias to Lefebvre's socially-constructed spaces and Westphal's geocriticism.<sup>30</sup> Yet none of these seems to offer a robust framework for dealing with a poetic space

---

English-speaking countries. Von Hallberg and Perloff are among those who have begun to explore the reception of Celan in Anglophone cultures, although both restrict themselves to critiques of those limited readings which make Celan's work 'sacred' by identifying him (and his poetry) directly and exclusively with the Shoah. See von Hallberg, 'Celan's Universality'; Marjorie Perloff, 'Sound Scraps, Vision Scraps: Paul Celan's Poetic Practice', in *Reading for Form*, ed. by Susan J Wolfson and Marshall Brown (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 177–202.

<sup>28</sup> Geoffrey Ward, 'Nothing but Mortality: Prynne and Celan', in *Contemporary Poetry Meets Modern Theory*, ed. by Antony Easthope and John Thompson (New York; London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp. 139–52.

<sup>29</sup> Mellors, 'Obscurity, Fragmentation and the Uncanny in Prynne and Celan'.

<sup>30</sup> See Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces'; Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Westphal, *Geocriticism*.



which is linguistically self-reflexive. While each can allow us, in various ways, to examine narratives and texts and the spaces in which they unfold, none offers an adequate approach to texts which use space as a metaphor for language and use language to represent space. Some elements of each of these theories are nonetheless relevant: for example, the phenomenological distinction drawn by Lefebvre, de Certeau and others between space as an abstract, mathematical or geometrical construct and place as its lived correlative remains useful even when the spaces and places under examination serve a non-mimetic function.<sup>31</sup>

For a solid theoretical framework, we must turn to theories of language rather than of space or place. As noted above, some theoretical approaches do explore the nature of literary space as a specific function of language, rather than examining how specific types of spatial experience are depicted in language – an approach which (starting with Blanchot) can generally be associated with structuralism and post-structuralism.<sup>32</sup> Given that the focus here is on language, or (more specifically) language crisis, in its post-Auschwitz, destabilised and decentred form, post-structuralist linguistic theory will provide an important frame of reference for my discussion. It is no coincidence that post-structuralist thinkers have repeatedly engaged with Celan's work in various ways, including most notably Derrida and Phillip Lacoue-Labarthe.<sup>33</sup>

Derrida's essays on Celan take various approaches to the poet's work which will be useful throughout this chapter in addressing the trope of text-as-landscape. In addition to this direct critical engagement, Derrida's work

<sup>31</sup> See Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, pp. 15–16; de Certeau, 'General Introduction', p. 117.

<sup>32</sup> See Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*.

<sup>33</sup> See Jacques Derrida, *Sovereignties in Question: the Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. by Thomas Dutoit, trans. by Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005); Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience*, trans. by Andrea Tarnowski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

can also help us to understand language as having layers, depths, stages of development and multiple histories, like a landscape. A Derridean vocabulary of 'trace', particularly as it is used in *Of Grammatology*, will help to explain the importance of this metaphor as a meta-linguistic construct.

When Derrida talks about 'trace', he refers to what is always already absent in the chain of *différance* – or, as Gayatri Spivak describes it in her preface to *Of Grammatology*, 'the part played by the radically other within the structure of difference that is the sign.'<sup>34</sup> Like other related terms which Derrida uses and complicates – 'logos', 'spectre', 'pharmakon' – 'trace' refers not to something which might be present or is available to discover, but to the absence which is implicated within presence.<sup>35</sup> 'Trace' is integral to the sign, as the means by which the structural binary of the sign can be deconstructed and continually erased or effaced – but also as the means by which it comes to signify.

Derrida makes it clear that traces cannot be excavated to a point of origin, an arche-trace:

The trace is not only the disappearance of origin – within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin. From then on, to wrench the concept of the trace from the classical scheme, which would derive it from a presence or from an originary nontrace and which would

<sup>34</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Translator's Preface', in *Of Grammatology*, by Jacques Derrida, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. ix–lxxxix (p. xvii).

<sup>35</sup> The term itself cites and adapts Levinas and Freud, and therefore has specifically theological and neuroanalytic dimensions which are not explored here. For the relationship to Levinas, see Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, p. 131ff; and to Freud, see Derrida, *Writing and Difference*, pp. 246–91.

make of it an empirical mark, one must indeed speak of an originary trace or archetrace. Yet we know that that concept destroys its name and that, if all begins with the trace, there is above all no originary trace.<sup>36</sup>

To 'trace' (the word is a verb as well as a noun) is to follow the network of *différance* in all directions indefinitely – to deconstruct, or, as Derrida himself puts it in a letter to his Japanese translator: to undo, decompose, desediment.<sup>37</sup> As Spivak reminds us, the word *trace* in French, more strongly than its English equivalent, 'carries strong implications of track, footprint, imprint', and is therefore also itself a term with obvious links to the geological discourses which are important in both Prynne and Celan's work.<sup>38</sup>

Derrida's 'trace' translates to the German 'Spur', a word with its own literary and philosophical lineage. Martin Heidegger uses the term to refer to 'eine Andersheit [...] die die neuzeitliche Autonomie des Subjekts relativieren soll'.<sup>39</sup> According to Hans-Jürgen Gawoll, '[w]as Heidegger der technischen Instrumentalisierung der Welt entgegensetzt, ist eine nicht objektivierbare, dichterische Sprache wie die Hölderlins, in der sich die S[pur] zum Heilen und Göttlichen erhält'.<sup>40</sup> For Heidegger, the 'Spur' is the trace of pre-ontological

<sup>36</sup> Spivak, 'Translator's Preface', p. lxi.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques Derrida, 'Letter to a Japanese Friend', trans. by David Wood and Andrew Benjamin, in *Derrida and Différance*, ed. by David Wood and Robert Bernasconi (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), pp. 1–5 (p. 2).

<sup>38</sup> Spivak, 'Translator's Preface', p. xv.

<sup>39</sup> Hans-Jürgen Gawoll, 'Spur', in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. by Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, 9 vols (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt, 1995), IX, 1550–58 (p. 1555).

<sup>40</sup> Gawoll, 'Spur', IX, p. 1555. See also Martin Heidegger, 'Wozu Dichter?', in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 2003), pp. 269–320. The specifically theological dimension of Heidegger's use of the term also recalls Levinas – see note 35, above. The reference to poetic language as 'Spur', and especially to the poetry of Hölderlin, provides a clear link to Celan's work. The relationship between Heidegger, Hölderlin and Celan has been explored by several critics: Celan's personal encounters with Heidegger prove fascinating

holiness which is lost in the movement from *Sein* to *Dasein*. In the sense that the Heideggerian 'Spur' refers to an absence-in-presence, it therefore also overlaps to some extent with Derrida's term, 'trace'. Though both are of course aware of the theological connotations of the word, acquired through its use in various philosophical works from Plotinus to Levinas, Heidegger foregrounds these more pointedly than Derrida (in *Of Grammatology*, at least): Derrida's focus is on trace as a function of language in particular. Given that the focus of my reading is explicitly on linguistic self-reflexivity, my use of the term will refer to Derrida rather than Heidegger, despite the significant contextual justification for reading both Celan and Prynne's work through a Heideggerian lens.

It is this search for trace, 'trace' or 'Spur', the process of writing and erasure, of simultaneously layering and 'desedimenting' writing and speech, which is enacted in Prynne and Celan's engagements with geology and landscape.

Derrida's work on Celan also offers another approach to the intersection of language, space and place: his essay 'A Shibboleth for Paul Celan' explores the structural and linguistic implications of the meridian in various Celan

---

to many. James K. Lyon provides a detailed analysis of Celan's reading of Heidegger and the meetings between the two men which he uses as a basis for drawing confident conclusions about their relationship. Lacoue-Labarthe's position is far more nuanced and concentrates on the relationship between Hölderlin and Heidegger's characterisations of subjectivity, and that espoused by Celan in certain key poems, resulting in a refined understanding of the intellectual relationship between Heidegger and Celan. See James K. Lyon, *Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger: An Unresolved Conversation, 1951-1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006); Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience*. For more on Celan and Heidegger, see also Otto Pöggeler, *Spur des Worts: zur Lyrik Paul Celans* (Freiburg: Alber, 1986); Martin Jörg Schäfer, *Schmerz zum Mitsein: zur Relektüre Celans und Heideggers durch Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe und Jean-Luc Nancy* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003); Bernhard Paha, *Die 'Spur' im Werk Paul Celans: eine 'wiederholte' Lesung Jacques Derridas* (Marburg: Tectum, 2001).

poems. While ideas of trace and geology can help us to interpret representations of particular places and landscapes in meta-poetic terms in Prynne and Celan's work, the idea of language as *space* requires a different approach, one which can account for a higher level of abstraction. The concept of the meridian offers an appropriate critical tool, uniting as it does ideas of spatial extension, connection and separation according to geometrical, mathematical co-ordinates with notions of linguistic distance, proximity and encounter in poetry.

## 2.2. *Language and space: the meridian*

The concept of the meridian, as set out by Celan in his Büchner prize acceptance speech of 1960, speaks specifically to the notion of the poem as a space of intersubjective encounter.<sup>41</sup> Defined by the *OED* as the 'great circle' passing through the poles of the earth, corresponding to a line of longitude, the meridian is the quintessential meta-linguistic spatial construct in Celan's

<sup>41</sup> Paul Celan, *Der Meridian: Endfassung - Entwuerfe - Materialien*, ed. by Bernhard Böschstein and Heino Schmull (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999). There are various readings of the notion of 'encounter' in Celan's work: Schäfer uses concepts of 'Unterwegsein' as articulated by both Celan and Heidegger to explore many of the references in the Meridian speech, arguing convincingly that Celan's conception of the possibility of encounter is significantly more positive than Heidegger's, and carries a different political weight – 'Indem Celan Heidegger hier bei seinen Worten nimmt, verabschiedet er gleichzeitig Heideggers Ziel, mit diesen Worten Welt – für Heidegger immer auch eine "deutsche" Welt – zugänglich zu machen'. (Martin Jörg Schäfer, "'Weg des Unmöglichen" - Celans Gespräch mit Heidegger im Meridian', *Die Zeitlichkeit des Ethos: poetologische Aspekte im Schreiben Paul Celans*, ed. by Ulrich Wergin and Martin Jörg Schäfer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), pp. 113-64 (p. 163).) Ivanovic has also used the term to describe Celan's engagement with Russian literature and thought. See Christine Ivanovic, *Das Gedicht im Geheimnis der Begegnung: Dichtung und Poetik Celans im Kontext seiner russischen Lektüren* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996). See also Nicola Thomas, 'Meridians: The Poem as a Place of Encounter in Paul Celan and J. H. Prynne', *Tropos*, 2.1 (2015).

work.<sup>42</sup> The concept of the meridian combines proximity and distance, linkage and rupture, abstract and concrete, in a way which mirrors the features of poetic language. The trope is more than just a metaphor: Celan insists on the reality of the meridians he discusses, down to the final line of the speech where he professes to have ‘touched’ the meridian in the company of his audience. Yet it is not simply a mimetic representation of the actual meridians which encircle the globe, since it has a specifically meta-linguistic force. Instead, like the various forms of space, place and landscape discussed in this chapter, it is a space which is both constructed within and representative of language.

Celan’s Meridian speech offers a complex and often enigmatic commentary on his own writing and approaches to poetry, and on aesthetics and the nature of art more broadly. It begins with an exegesis of the political and poetic commitment demonstrated by Georg Büchner’s Lucile in his play *Dantons Tod*. In the play, Lucile sacrifices herself to the monarchist cause during the French Revolution with an impassioned utterance – ‘Es lebe der König’. (This is also the title of the poem Prynne dedicated to Celan in his 1971 collection *Brass*.) Lucille’s statement is taken as one model for poetic art, bridging the gap between language and action.

Celan’s description of this process is heavily inflected with spatial metaphors:

---

<sup>42</sup> The *OED* distinguishes between the celestial and terrestrial meridians, with the former defined as ‘[t]he great circle of the celestial sphere which passes through the celestial poles and the zenith of a given place on the earth’s surface’ and the latter as ‘the great circle of the earth which lies in the plane of the celestial meridian of a place, and which passes through that place and the terrestrial poles; (also) that half of the latter circle which extends from pole to pole through the place, corresponding to a line of longitude; a line representing this, or part of it, on a globe, map, etc.’. See ‘Meridian, n.’, *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116769>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

Kunst fordert hier in einer bestimmten Richtung eine bestimmte Distanz, einen bestimmten Weg. [...] Dann wäre die Kunst der von der Dichtung zurückzulegende Weg – nicht weniger, nicht mehr.<sup>43</sup>

The spatial metaphor is subsequently supplemented by a temporal one, based on the significant date, 20 January, during which the key action of Büchner's novella *Lenz* (another text cited in the speech) occurs. 20 January was also the date of the Wannsee Conference which confirmed the Final Solution in 1942. The poem, we are told, 'is mindful of its dates', written 'from and toward' its dates, enabling an encounter between itself and a 'wholly other' to arise in the compression or, to use Celan's loaded word, 'Konzentration' of the from-date, the toward-date, and the annual cycle of dates and anniversaries. Amid all this, Celan reminds us:

Das Gedicht ist einsam. Es ist einsam und unterwegs. Wer es schreibt, bleibt ihm mitgegeben. Aber steht das Gedicht nicht gerade dadurch, also schon hier, in der Begegnung – im *Geheimnis der Begegnung*?<sup>44</sup> (emphasis orig.)

Thus we come to the crux of the paradox of intersubjective encounter: despite the profound awareness, situatedness (in space and time) and proximity affected by poetry's 'bridging of the gap', there is also 'mystery' and a sense of rupture, difficulty and distance embedded within poetic communication. (The

<sup>43</sup> Celan, *Der Meridian*, p. 6. Another important spatial metaphor for poetry which Celan uses in the Meridian speech is the trope of the poem as 'Flaschenpost', which is discussed in various contributions to *'Flaschenpost': German Poetry and the Long Twentieth Century*, ed. by Karen Leeder, *German Life and Letters* 60.3 (2007), special issue. See, in particular, Karen Leeder, 'Introduction: The Address of German Poetry', *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007), 277–93; Michael Eskin, 'Of Sailors and Poets: On Celan, Grünbein and Brodsky', *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007), 315–28; Kohl, "Flaschenpost": Sprache als Metapher in der Lyrik des 20. Jahrhunderts'.

<sup>44</sup> Celan, *Der Meridian*, p. 9.

idea of ‘encounter’ means, of course, not only the encounter between reader and poet, but also between various subject positions adopted by the poet himself, and between the poet and other – real or imagined – subjects, not least the authors of other texts and other discourses.) The author stays with the poem, but the poem is also lonely. The poem seeks to create a particular, special kind of place where we can be both close and distant at once, in a condition of possibility:

Wir sind, wenn wir so mit den Dingen sprechen, immer auch bei  
der Frage nach ihrem Woher und Wohin: bei einer  
‘offenbleibenden’, ‘zu keinem Ende kommenden’, ins Offene und  
Leere und Freieweisenden Frage – wir sind weit draußen.

Das Gedicht sucht, glaube ich, auch diesen Ort.<sup>45</sup>

Finally, then, it is in this context that the image of the meridian is invoked, since it offers the possibility of reconciling closeness and distance, of linking while also acknowledging difference. One can, after all, stand on the same meridian at opposite poles of the earth. Celan writes:

Ich finde das Verbindende und wie das Gedicht zur Begegnung  
Führende. Ich finde etwas – wie die Sprache – Immaterielles, aber  
Irdisches, Terrestrisches, etwas Kreisförmiges, über die beiden Pole  
in sich selbst Zurückkehrendes und dabei – heitererweise – sogar  
die Tropen Durchkreuzendes –: ich finde ... einen *Meridian*.<sup>46</sup>  
(emphasis orig.)

The meridian is inherently recursive and paradoxical, at once both immaterial and terrestrial, crossing both poles and tropics. A meridian can be

---

<sup>45</sup> Celan, *Der Meridian*, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> Celan, *Der Meridian*, p. 12.



said to really exist insofar as the land it transcribes really exists, but it is also obviously and inherently a cartographic construct.

Derrida has analysed Celan's perspective on the nature of poetic utterance, as expressed in the Meridian speech, at length in his essay 'A Shibboleth for Paul Celan'.<sup>47</sup> Derrida, focusing his attention on the temporal, rather than spatial, 'concentration' which Celan describes when he refers to 'dates', and particularly to the notion of a '20 January', posits the recursive, paradoxical nature of the 'datedness' of the poetic text as part of a network of ciphers or shibboleths which encode the particular nature of poetic utterance. All dates recur (annually) of course, and thus disparate events which occur on the same date are thrown into unlikely union: their anniversaries may be celebrated on the same day, even though they occurred years apart. These events are therefore similar yet heterogeneous, both close to and distant from one another in time.

Discussion of the meridian in spatial terms offers another road towards Derrida's conclusion that the poem fosters 'encounter as random occurrence, as chance, as luck or coincidence [...] the ineluctable singularity from which and destined to which a poem speaks'.<sup>48</sup> Derrida brings the words 'ring' and 'year' (or rather, the French *anneau* and *année*) sharply into focus in his essay, and I would suggest that just as the 'ring' of the year unites heterogeneous events, so the meridian links heterogeneous spatial co-ordinates and subject positions.

This blend of singularity and connection reflects a specifically poetic distance-proximity dynamic, and it is this which defines the poetic 'encounter': 'heterogeneous *events*' (emphasis mine), Derrida writes, though we might just as easily say '*locations*', become 'suddenly neighbours to one another, even

<sup>47</sup> See Jacques Derrida, 'A Shibboleth for Paul Celan', in *Word Traces: Readings of Paul Celan*, ed. by Aris Fioretos, trans. by Joshua Wilner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 3–74.

<sup>48</sup> Derrida, 'A Shibboleth for Paul Celan', p. 9.

though one knows that they remain, and must remain, strangers, infinitely. It is just this which is called the “encounter”.<sup>49</sup> Hence, according to Derrida, ‘the Meridian [binds]’ and ‘provokes in broad daylight, at noon, at midday, the encounter with the other in a single place, at a single point, that of the poem.’<sup>50</sup>

Given the specific nature of the meridian as a linking line, it is able to imply both connection and linkage, as well as rupture and singularity. Like the cycle of years which unites dates, the meridian is a ring, a circle which binds and connects. At the same time, it marks distance, singularity, situatedness – both in its capacity as navigational tool and also because, at a structural level, the meridian relies on the existence of two separate poles. It is also no specific ‘place’, but rather represents a schematic linking of places, as Otto Pöggeler points out – it is at once (as Celan’s description also makes clear) both earthly, terrestrial, and immaterial.<sup>51</sup> In all of these respects, it reflects the qualities of poetic language and is ‘textual space’ – a space of text, described within text – rather than a metaphor, conceit or mimetic representation.

### 2.3. *Language and place: huts, graves, crypts*

Prynne and Celan’s poems also feature more concrete metaphors for the poem as a ‘place of encounter’. The poem is, by turns, constructed as a kind of library or archive; a monument, memorial or grave; or a primitive hut. For Celan, the association between text and spaces of memorialisation is very strong, and there are numerous poems which create a notional equivalent between natural and human landscapes as grave sites or monuments and the textual landscape

<sup>49</sup> Derrida, ‘A Shibboleth for Paul Celan’, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> Derrida, ‘A Shibboleth for Paul Celan’, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> See Otto Pöggeler, ‘Ach, die Kunst! Die Frage nach dem Ort der Dichtung’, in *Der Mensch und die Künste: Festschrift für Heinrich Lützeler zum 60. Geburtstag*, ed. by Günter Bandmann, Peter Bloch, and Wilhelm Perpeet (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1962), pp. 98–111.

of the poem itself. For Prynne, the poem is explicitly conceptualised as a kind of hut, both in his theoretical writings and his poetry.

The persistence of the poem-as-grave metaphor in Celan's work, from 'Todesfuge' (G 40-41) to 'Engführung' (G 113-18) and beyond, has, as Werner explains, a clear relationship to his interest in geology and the subterranean.<sup>52</sup> Above all, Celan's interest in the spaces of memorialisation and their relationship to language is motivated by the particular difficulties presented by attempts to memorialise the victims of the Holocaust, whose physical remains were entirely destroyed, and could not therefore be interred, subsumed in the sacred (physical) spaces of conventional memorials. Nora's theory of 'lieux de memoire' and associated later postwar memory discourses (the so-called 'second wave' of Holocaust memory) are important contexts which Celan's work both develops and challenges.<sup>53</sup> His work shares the contemporary desire to create 'sites of memory', but acknowledges that such sites are often problematic, since they can prioritise certain forms of memory over others and are therefore not appropriate for representing the trauma of the Shoah.

Instead, from his earliest work, Celan examined the possibility of creating 'ein Grab in den Lüften', with words ('Todesfuge', G 40-41). Digging is persistently associated with writing, including in the two collections which are the focus of my analysis. In 'Es war Erde in ihnen' (G 125), the problems inherent in creating a memorial in language are dramatically expressed:

sie wurden nicht weise, erfanden kein Lied,  
erdachten sich keinerlei Sprache.  
Sie gruben.

The act of digging is here represented as an eternal project, incompatible with the temporary and fleeting nature of speech and cultural production. Those who dig invent no songs, create no language – their act negates the possibility

<sup>52</sup> See Werner, *Textgräber*, p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> See Nora, *Realms of Memory*, I.

of doing so. Singing in this poem ('Das Singende dort') takes place at one remove from this activity: it is, at best, background noise. Yet the rhythm of the text, the simplicity of interweaving two- and three-stress end-stopped lines, invokes the rhythms of a work song or nursery rhyme, those most primitive and immanent forms of poetic creation. The acts of digging and singing are incompatible, but they are also inseparable: like the 'Ring' of the final line, which recalls Derrida's recursive *anneau/année* formulation, they bind us to each other and to future generations. As Lehmann notes, the 'ring' also symbolises the possibility of romantic relationships.<sup>54</sup> The grave space, the space of romantic encounter and the space of the text, of poetry, are intimately linked.

'Sprachgitter' (G 99-100), as Marjorie Perloff notes, appears to represent another sacred memorial space: the church (or cloister).<sup>55</sup> Yet in this space, too, silence and speech are inseparable from one another, and the problems of speaking are everywhere in evidence. In the poem's title, which refers to the lattice separating the silent representative of a holy order from his or her interlocutor in circumstances where speech is deemed absolutely necessary, the concept of a problematic speech form in a sacred space is clearly signalled. As Perloff points out, the 'eiserne[ ... ] Tülle' and 'blakende Span' are also symbols that locate the poem in the context of Christian worship, and specifically in a Catholic tradition (G 100). The configurations of 'du' and 'ich' ('Wär ich wie du. Wärest du wie ich') in the third stanza offer an indication of the possibility of proximity and connection – of speech and encounter – while

<sup>54</sup> The 'ring' may also reflect the possibility of romantic relationships- although, as Hendrik Birus notes, this reading is less persuasive than one which emphasises 'eine Reaktualisierung, als die metaphorisch ausgedrückte Bekräftigung einer eingegangenen Bindung'. See Hendrik Birus, 'Es war Erde in ihnen', in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Die Niemandrose'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann and Christine Ivanović (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp. 51–56 (p. 56).

<sup>55</sup> See Perloff, 'Sound Scraps, Vision Scraps: Paul Celan's Poetic Practice', p. 177.

simultaneously negating this with the statement 'Wir sind Fremde' (G 100). In the external space (possibly the courtyard or graveyard of the church), the tension between speech and silence, encounter and separation, is crystallised. A pair of puddles are 'herzgrau[...]', suggesting a frustrated or problematic romantic or emotional connection (G 100). Despite their proximity, reflecting a desire to connect or communicate, they contain only 'zwei | Mundvoll Schweigen' (G 100). An equivalence is established between this space and textual space, those difficult places in which speaking is possible.

Prynne addresses the trope of poem as place in modified form. Sometimes the poem is seen as a kind of archive or library, the repository of other (textual) traces, as demonstrated by his inclusion of bibliographies for certain poems in *The White Stones*.<sup>56</sup> The structure of 'Aristeas in Seven Years' (P 90-95) also seems to hinge on the historical interpretation of certain textual fragments, as in an ancient manuscript or library.

The most persistent image of poem-as-place which informs Prynne's work is that of the hut or simple dwelling.<sup>57</sup> This image has significance for Celan too, and its power is intensified by the understanding that a hut, in contrast to a grave or monument, is a place of temporary and contingent accommodation, provided to ease one's passage through a difficult landscape.

Prynne's 2008 essay on the subject makes the significance of this motif in his work absolutely explicit. In it, he traces the history of huts in English literature, from the eighteenth-century poet William Collins to Shakespeare, probing the persistent appeal of this image. He gathers examples of symbolic huts, drawing on his own memory of performing National Service in the 1950s, the temporary office structures at Bletchley Park and the huts of nomadic

<sup>56</sup> Namely, 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' (P 65-67) and 'Aristeas, in Seven Years' (P 90-95).

<sup>57</sup> See Nicola Thomas, 'Stark, Necessary and Not Permanent: Huts in the Work of Paul Celan and J. H. Prynne', *German Life and Letters*, 69.3 (2016), 350-64.

tribespeople in the Kudinsk Steppe. What emerges is a conceptualisation of the hut as a 'marginal world', a place which permits a certain kind of poetic reflection.<sup>58</sup> But Prynne takes this motif a step further. With the help of Heidegger's conceptualisation of '[d]ie Sprache [als] der Bezirk (templum), d.h. das Haus des Seins...[der] Tempel des Seins', he approaches the notion of language-as-dwelling place, asking under what conditions and in what philosophical and ethical contexts we might speak of (poetic) language as a kind of dwelling-place.<sup>59</sup> He concludes:

The house of language is not innocent and is no temple. The intensities of poetic encounter, of imagination and deep insight into spiritual reality and poetic truth, carry with them all the fierce contradiction of what human language is and does. There is no protection or even temporary shelter from these forms of knowledge that is worth even a moment's considered preference, even for poets or philosophers with poetic missions. Because the primal hut strips away a host of circumstantial appurtenances and qualifications, it does not represent an elemental form, a kind of sweat-lodge; but it is confederate with deep ethical problematics, and not somehow a purifying solution to them. Yet the hut presents always a possible aspiration towards innocence, residual or potential, and towards transformation, so that a cynical report would be equally in error. [...] The house of language is a primal hut, is stark and is also necessary, and not permanent.<sup>60</sup>

This paragraph is illustrated with a photograph of a military watchtower hut, behind barbed wire, which, along with the story of Heidegger and Celan's

---

<sup>58</sup> Prynne, 'Huts', p. 628.

<sup>59</sup> Heidegger, 'Wozu Dichter?', p. 310; quoted in Prynne, 'Huts', p. 628.

<sup>60</sup> Prynne, 'Huts', p. 631.

encounter at the philosopher's Black Forest hut in 1967, offers a key touchstone for Prynne's ethical reading of the hut as a place of poetic encounter.

Several of Celan's poems contain images of the kind of temporary linguistic structures which Prynne describes, from 'das Haus, wo der Tisch steht' of 'Hüttenfenster' (G 157-59, 159), which is linked metaphorically to the Hebrew alphabet, to the 'Zeltwort' of 'Anabasis' (G 147-48, 148).<sup>61</sup> We can therefore read Celan's influence on Prynne through the motif of the hut in Prynne's own work both as an explicit intertextual reference to Celan and as a sign of their shared interest in representing poetry in spatial terms.

The poem 'Chemins de Fer' (P 123) explores these issues in poetic form: it is clearly identifiable as a poetic engagement with the Holocaust, from the opening image of prisoners 'eating snow in handfuls' in a 'forest of young pines' to the 'double eagle' of the third stanza and the 'machine gun in | a Polish scenario' of the final stanza. The 'huts' in this poem are empty watchtowers

[...] which when the light topsoil is warm  
again will carry the firewatchers. From here there  
is no simple question of *preparing to leave*, or  
*making our way*.'

'The plants stare at my ankles in | stiffness, they carry names I cannot recognise', Prynne writes, invoking and inverting Celan's litany of flower names in 'Todtnauberg' (G 282). Among other things, Prynne is here

<sup>61</sup> This cluster of images is also central to Prynne's engagement with Celan in 'Es Lebe der König' (P 169-70), which draws on the 'house' and 'key' of 'Mit wechselndem Schlüssel' (G 74-75), as Matthew Hall has observed. Interestingly, the architect Daniel Libeskind has also discussed the influence of this aspect of Celan's poetic on his designs for buildings including Berlin's Jewish Museum. See Yvonne Al-Taie, 'Gebaute Worte: Zur architektonischen Transformation Celanscher Lyrik bei Daniel Libeskind', *theologie.geschichte*, 2 (2007); see also Eric Kligerman, *Sites of the Uncanny: Paul Celan, Specularity and the Visual Arts*, Interdisciplinary German Cultural Studies, 3 (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 233-89.

addressing the possibility of poetry ‘after Auschwitz’, working out in poetic form those ‘deep ethical problematics’ which he describes some forty years later in ‘Huts’. The poem seems to refer to the instability and ethical questionability of its own form: ‘The approach, here, of streamy recall | seems like the touch of Europe, an invert logic | brought in with too vivid a pastoral sense’. In ‘Huts’, Prynne is clear that the appeal of the (poetic) hut ought not to be a yearning towards innocence, a primitive rural idyll, since depicting too vivid a pastoral scene is ethically dubious. Thus the pastoral touches in ‘Chemins de Fer’ are regularly undermined by reminders of the grotesque, the horrific and the violent, right up to the poem’s conclusion, where the ‘copse, water rusted in, an adventure!’ is juxtaposed with the gruesomely surreal image of a ‘strange body, its limbs gorged & inert’, and the appeal of ‘a possible aspiration towards innocence, residual or potential’ (to return to Prynne’s formulation in ‘Huts’) is denoted by the childlike exclamation.

Both Prynne and Celan, for different reasons and in different contexts, are interested in examining what kind of place poetry can be or can create, what kind of structures it can construct and occupy. For Celan, the aporia of the Holocaust’s empty Cenotaph is the motivating factor behind this drive to create a place of encounter in concrete terms which extends beyond the abstract metaphor of the meridian. Prynne approaches the question more dispassionately, but nevertheless with a powerful ethical imperative. He is aware of what is at stake should poetry conclude that its rightful place is in some grand palace or opulent museum. His ‘hut’ as the house of language – stark, necessary, and impermanent – serves well as a metaphor for both Prynne and Celan’s views of the possibility of poetic encounter.



#### 2.4. Language and landscape: geology and excavation

The search for geological – and by extension, linguistic – traces is frequently apparent in the work of both writers. Processes of digging, linked to memory and memorialisation, is evident everywhere in Celan's work, from the 'wir schaufeln ein Grab in den Lüften da liegt man nicht eng' of 'Todesfuge' (G 40-41, 40) to the precise and technical geological vocabulary of many poems in *Sprachgitter*. Reading these landscapes in meta-linguistic terms helps to illuminate how Prynne and Celan conceive of the connection between landscape and language as a means of exploring and addressing linguistic crisis, taking advantage of poetry's complex spatiality and the links between history, geology and etymology.

The extent of Celan's engagement with scientific literature on geology and physical geography is clear from his working notebooks and marginal annotations in material from his personal library.<sup>62</sup> Roland Brinkmann's *Abriß der Geologie*, Franz Lotze's *Geologie* and Siegmund Günther's *Physische Geographie* are three key texts.<sup>63</sup> In each case, Celan made numerous annotations in his personal copies and, while one must be wary of assigning excessive significance to such annotations, there are some general points which can be made about Celan's reading of the scientific literature which allow a direct link to be made to his poetry.<sup>64</sup> His annotations often entail

<sup>62</sup> Werner notes that Celan's personal library contained some fourteen books on geology and others on physical geography, crystallography, petrology and related topics. As Werner highlights, this is unlikely to represent the full extent of Celan's reading in this area, since various poems contain technical terminology which does not feature in any of these texts. See Werner, *Textgräber*, p. 54.

<sup>63</sup> See Roland Brinkmann and Werner Zeil, *Abriß der Geologie 1: Allgemeine Geologie*, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Enke, 1956), I; Franz Lotze, *Geologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1955); Siegmund Günther, *Physische Geographie* (Stuttgart: Göschen, 1895).

<sup>64</sup> For example, his attention is repeatedly drawn to certain aspects of geology – the *Urkontinente*, plate tectonics, the composition of the centre of the Earth,

underlining an unusual word, frequently a geologically specific compound or foreign loan word, a fascination which clearly overlaps with the philological dimension of his poetic imagination. The language of geological processes itself reflects the (metaphorical) geological process of linguistic investigation, and these new words borrowed from a technical discourse require, by their very nature, philological investigation to become meaningful - i.e. at the very least, we must look them up in a dictionary. In some cases – for a word such as ‘Schuttwälle’, a Germanic compound used to refer to glacial moraines – we might also consider their etymological roots (here: ‘Schutt’ for rubble, ‘Wälle’ for ramparts), compare the Germanic with the Latinate terminology, and contemplate related terms and compounds (‘Strandwälle’, etc.). These words appear in one of several word lists prepared in notebooks for the collection *Sprachgitter*, and they probably relate to a section of Lotze’s *Geologie* which discusses submarine physical geography and the formation of beaches, coastlines and shores.<sup>65</sup> This strand of research and note-taking also informs the poem ‘Niedrigwasser’ (G 111):

NIEDRIGWASSER. Wir sahen  
 die Seepocke, sahen  
 die Napfschnecke, sahen  
 die Nägel an unsern Händen.  
 Niemand schnitt uns das Wort von der Herzwand.

(Fahrten der Strandkrabbe, morgen,  
 Kriechfurchen, Wohngänge, Wind-  
 zeichnung im grauen  
 Schlick. Feinsand,  
 Grobsand, das  
 von den Wänden Gelöste, bei

---

glaciers and shorelines. A more thorough assessment of each motif and its function in Celan’s work would be a valuable project, but is beyond the scope of this chapter, which focuses only on those constructs which can be read as broadly meta-linguistic.

<sup>65</sup> See Lotze, *Geologie*, pp. 34–35; Paul Celan, *Sprachgitter: Vorstufen, Textgenese, Endfassung*, ed. by Heino Schmull (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1996), p. 112.

andern Hartteilen, im  
Schill.)

Ein Aug, heute,  
gab es dem zweiten, beide,  
geschlossen, folgten der Strömung zu  
ihrem Schatten, setzten  
die Fracht ab (*niemand*  
*schnitt uns das Wort von der –*), bauten  
den Haken hinaus – eine Nehrung, vor  
ein kleines  
unbefahrbares Schweigen.

Brinkmann's *Abriß der Geologie* appears to have been the source of much of the technical vocabulary in this poem.<sup>66</sup> In the description of a beach during the period of basal or drought flow, the relationship between the processes of oceanic erosion, which produces sand grains of various sizes from biological matter (the shells of barnacles and other molluscs) in order to form a beach, and the process of speaking (and silence) is suggestive and enigmatic. The images of sea creatures in the first stanza clearly suggest the starting point, the raw material which produces 'Feinsand | Grobsand' by means of erosion and dissolution, mixed with inorganic material (stones, 'das | von den Wänden Gelöste') to form the shingle of the beach at the lowest point of the tide. Throughout, this beach and the material of which it consists is intertwined with linguistically self-reflexive expression, such as the '[Z]eichnung' (markings, sketches, signs) in the grey mud-slick. These also suggest processes of silencing or interpretative difficulty: the 'Niemand schnitt uns das Wort von der Herzwand', is ironically truncated in its second iteration to suggest precisely the kind of truncation it disavows. The italics suggest the

<sup>66</sup> Although the words 'Schuttwälle' and 'Schuttwalzen' do not themselves appear in the poem, the geological context is nevertheless clear. Sources for the technical vocabulary include not only Brinkmann but also Lotze and Günther, *Physische Geographie*, pp. 134–38. See Wiedemann's notes to this poem in Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 664.

interruption of the voice of another speaker. Finally, these ideas cohere somewhat in the final stanza, where the two eyes (active agents) trace the geological process and deposit the water's cargo (its shale, single, particles of sand and shell) to construct a snag or spit of land – temporary, contingent, bordering on 'ein kleines | unbefahrbares Schweigen'. Like the organic matter of shells and 'Hartteile[...]', language is consistently broken down into smaller and smaller units, until its presence (or absence) is virtually undetectable. The temporariness, in geological terms, of a beach or spit of land is compared to the transience of linguistic structures.<sup>67</sup>

Similar traces of geological thinking are present elsewhere in *Sprachgitter*, from the 'Laven, Basalte' of 'Entwurf einer Landschaft' (G 107-08, 107) to the 'Kies und Geröll' of 'Nacht' (G 101-02, 101). Many of these references have been forensically examined by researchers working on Celan, and their links to geology, geography and architecture explained from a variety of different perspectives.<sup>68</sup> The central argument of my own analysis is that they are constructed as linguistically self-reflexive: rather than simply serving as metaphors for language and linguistic representation, they both enact and describe the processes of sedimentation, accumulation, transformation and excavation through which language acquires meaning.

The same observation can be made in relation to Prynne's work in *The White Stones*.<sup>69</sup> The clearest example of this is in the poem 'The Glacial

<sup>67</sup> See Werner's analysis of the poem, which draws specific links to the language and memory of the Holocaust. 'Ewige Landgewinnung des Schweigens: das Textgrab in "Niedrigwasser"' in Werner, *Textgräber*, pp. 120–45.

<sup>68</sup> See, for example, Klaus Manger, 'Entwurf einer Landschaft', in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Sprachgitter'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann, Markus May and Susanna Broch (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), pp. 350–57; Baer, *Remnants of Song*, pp. 241–48; Tobias, *The Discourse of Nature in the Poetry of Paul Celan*, pp. 36–41.

<sup>69</sup> Prynne is clearly widely read in geology and associated scientific disciplines, as demonstrated by the bibliography of references provided at the end of 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved'. Prynne's work of this period also demonstrates the influence, via Edward Dorn, of the American human geographer Carl

Question, Unsolved' (P 65-67), which, as Roebuck and Sperling note in their critical close reading, 'frequently implies an analogy between geological processes and the way words accumulate historical significance from their etymological root and across their developing history'.<sup>70</sup> The poem 'Song in Sight of the World' (P 76-77) offers something similar, an historically inflected landscape where geological metaphors work together to express the complexity and sedimentation of human history and memory:

[...] We are a land  
hammered by restraint, into  
a too cycladic past. It is  
the battle of Maldon binds  
our feet: we tread  
only with that weight & the empire  
of love, in the mist. The name of this  
land, unknown, is that. Heavy with sweat  
we long for the green hills, pleasant with  
waters running to the sea  
but no greater love. The politics  
of this will bear inspection. They are  
the loss of our each motion, to history.  
Which is where the several lost stand  
at their various distance from the shore  
on gneiss or the bones of a chemical plan  
for the world's end. This is it, Thule,  
the glyptic note that we carry  
with every unacted desire felt  
in the continent of Europe. Lot's  
wife, the foreshore of the world.

(P 76)

---

Sauer. Dorn, to whom Prynne's collected *Poems* is dedicated ('his brilliant luminous shade'), is noted for his expansive depiction of the American landscape in the long poem *Gunslinger* – a depiction heavily influenced by Sauer's work *The Morphology of Landscape*, which Olson gave to Dorn, who (according to Brinton) gave it to Prynne. One can thus trace an intellectual lineage in terms of the presentation of human geography through Sauer, Olson, Dorn and Prynne. See Brinton, "His Brilliant Luminous Shade", pp. 15–16. See also Edward Dorn, *Gunslinger* (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 1989); Carl Ortwin Sauer, *The Morphology of Landscape* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1925).

<sup>70</sup> See Roebuck and Sperling, "The Glacial Question, Unsolved": A Specimen Commentary on Lines 1-31', p. 43.

Here, the attempt to forge an unmediated, immanent connection with a neutral landscape (the ‘green hills’ for which we long, the ‘waters running to the sea’) is repeatedly frustrated by the intrusion of a culturally determined relationship to place, through history and language – or rather, through language which reminds us of history. Through all these contexts we are (like stones in the process of erosion or sedimentation) ‘hammered by restraint’. Again, as in Celan’s work, it is the etymological and philological echoes of the words themselves which do much of the poetic work in reinforcing this metaphor: ‘cycladic’ (usually capitalised) might associatively suggest ‘cyclical’, but at a semantic level it invokes ancient history: specifically, an historicised place – the Cyclades being the Greek islands after whose culture the Cycladic era of the later Bronze Age was named. This is the past we are ‘hammered into’ – one where language and cultural history will be metonymically used to locate us, in space and time, despite our yearning to be free from both. ‘It is the battle of Maldon binds | our feet’: here, again, these various dimensions of historicised and culturally determined landscape brush up against geological processes, the Battle of Maldon as an actual historical occurrence being, for most modern readers, secondary to its literary representation in the form of the Old English poem of the same name. Maldon, of course, is also significant for physical geographers, the location of vast flats, tidal marshes which are a noted site of salt production.

As for Celan in ‘Niedrigwasser’, the relation of sea to land at coasts and shores is a central metaphor in this poem, and once again it brings together various aspects of history, language and geology. Like the densely packed, minutely fractured shale on the beach in Celan’s text, Prynne’s ‘land’ reflects the splintering of historical and cultural references to an overwhelming ‘weight’, a landslide of worldly and linguistic experiences. ‘The several lost stand | at their various distances from the shore | on gneiss or the bones of a

chemical plan | for the world's end', just as in Celan's poem we stand on shingle or organic matter from crustaceans. And again, writing and reading are as ingrained in the landscape: in contrast to the blank, unhistoricised and undifferentiated (one might say 'silent') sea, the land exerts a huge weight of history and expectation. It is 'Thule', an ancient name for the far north of Europe, a symbolically unattainable space; or the shore is 'Lot's wife', a metaphor which is particularly apt in light of the connection to salt manufacture, making links to Christian literary and cultural heritage. It has a 'glyphic note', in that it cannot escape the processes of inscription and reinscription which produce this multilayered landscape of linguistic and historical significance.

Thus, landscape and language are made to serve as interdependent metaphors: geological processes reflect the processes by which language accumulates meaning, and by which history is constructed in language and inscribed and reinscribed in landscape.

The echoes of post-structuralist linguistics could hardly be clearer: for Celan and Prynne, as for Derrida, the sedimentation and accumulation of meaning is an ongoing process without an end, and without any stable underlying basis of truth or signification. Language – and particularly poetic language – is uniquely positioned to explore this chain of traces, to invoke the various layers of language and history which defer what is always already absent in our speech. In both 'Niedrigwasser' and 'Song in Sight of the World', the coast or shoreline is a key location because the ocean represents the inverse of land, an undifferentiated, dehistoricised space associated with the opposite of the overdetermined human (and linguistic) landscape. If the land, like language, can be examined for traces, the sea cannot: it must remain silent. Thus Celan and Prynne both describe and create small spits of land, beaches at the border between language and silence which can continually be formed and

reformed by poetry with the help of geological metaphors which reflect these all-important processes of (de)sedimentation and excavation.

### 2.5. *Linking and dividing lines: 'In der Luft' and 'From End to End'*

The above analysis describes some shared features of Celan and Prynne's textual spaces. Both posit the text as a place of encounter between subjects, as a difficult and layered landscape, as a transient and stark hut or troubling but necessary grave marker or memorial. The following sections of this case study will develop these descriptions of Celan and Prynne's relationship to landscape, space and place in two pairs of close readings. The first of these two close readings pairs Celan's 'In der Luft' (G 166-67), a poem from *Die Niemandrose* which has attracted relatively little critical comment, with Prynne's 'From End to End' (P 62-63), comparing their representations of grids, meridians and networks and examining the relationship of these constructs to poetics and poetic representation. The second deals with two texts which have received extensive attention from critics: Celan's longest published poem, 'Engführung' (G 113-18), and Prynne's 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' (P 65-69), both of which afford entry, in various ways, to difficult and multilayered terrain with the help of spatial constructs.

In his commentary on *Die Niemandrose*, Jürgen Lehmann points out the pervasiveness of images of spatial division, geography and cartography in that collection. Vertical as well as horizontal dividing lines criss-cross the text in all directions: circles, arcs, meridians, rings, rays, crowns and threads are everywhere.<sup>71</sup> 'Dieser so konstituierte sprachliche Raum wird als dynamisch, als in ständiger Bewegung befindlich begriffen. Die Linien werden zu

---

<sup>71</sup> Jürgen Lehmann, "Gegenwort" und "Daseinsentwurf": Paul Celans "Die Niemandrose". Eine Einführung, in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Die*



Kreatürliches und Sprachliches verbindenden Wegen [...] dem für *Die Niemandrose* so wichtigen Motiv des Unterwegseins korrespondierend.<sup>72</sup>

Lehmann links these motifs to an overall reading of *Die Niemandrose* as an 'exile' collection, in which Celan's relationship to an international community of writers (including Osip Mandelstam and Nelly Sachs) come to the fore.

*The White Stones* is similarly replete with 'Motiven des Unterwegseins' – journeys by train, foot, road, air and water take place in landscapes traversed by networks of lines: rays of sun, roads, railways, moraines, and borders. The following comparative close reading examines motifs of 'Unterwegsein' in abstracted, geometrical space as they appear in 'In der Luft' and 'From End to End'. Both of these poems make specific use of the motif of the meridian, and both texts will therefore be read against the Meridian speech as offering versions of the meridian, and associated tropes, as meta-poetic 'spaces of encounter' between subjects. Lehmann's insight that, for Celan, this complex of images is linked to the themes of exile, instability and literary and linguistic community is useful. However, reading Prynne and Celan alongside one another in the context of landscape, space, place and linguistic self-reflexivity reveals a broader function of these motifs: they can be read as part of a search for spaces of poetic encounter.

Celan's 'In der Luft' (G 166-67) is the final poem in *Die Niemandrose*, and it encompasses several of the major themes of that collection, including exile, intersubjective encounter, Jewish mysticism and Celan's problematic relationship to various cultural and literary traditions.<sup>73</sup> The poem centres on

---

*Niemandrose*', ed. by Christine Ivanović and Jürgen Lehmann (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp. 11–35 (p. 24).

<sup>72</sup> Lehmann, "Gegenwort" und "Daseinsentwurf", p. 25.

<sup>73</sup> The poem's references to Jewish mystical and literary traditions, including Kabbalah and the work of Osip Mandelstam, will not be analysed in detail below. For a detailed discussion of the poem in this context, see Jean Marie Winkler, 'In der Luft', in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Die Niemandrose'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann and Christine Ivanović (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp.

an encounter between two mouths, suggesting that their connection – their kiss – ‘brennt einer Sprache den Sinn ein’ and therefore engenders poetry (and romantic love) in otherwise apparently hostile circumstances. In common with ‘Engführung’, the poem depicts the search for a new language, an altered mode of representation, framed by references to the Shoah. And again, as in ‘Engführung’, this search is pointedly depicted as a journey through spaces and places: space and place are conceived of not in symbolic or metaphorical terms, but as linguistic constructs which are both made in language and are a representation of language.

IN DER LUFT, da bleibt deine Wurzel, da,  
in der Luft.  
Wo sich das Irdische ballt, erdig,  
Atem-und-Lehm.

(G 166)

The poem’s first line, from which the title is drawn, suggests rootlessness, disorientation and a lack of fixed purpose or expression.<sup>74</sup> The second clause inverts this implication, undermining the cliché of rootlessness with the insistence that ‘da bleibt deine Wurzel, da’. What does it mean to have roots in the air? On one level, this is clearly intelligible as a metaphor for the condition of the permanent exile, a condition equated throughout *Die Niemandsrose* and in popular discourse with that of the Jewish people, in the pre- and post-Holocaust era. Ezekiel 19:12 uses the metaphor of an uprooted vine to describe the condition of the tribes of Jerusalem, and notes in Celan’s own library suggest a reference to this biblical metaphor.<sup>75</sup> However, given Celan’s

368–76. For discussion of Kabbalistic and religious symbolism in *Die Niemandsrose* more generally, see Schulze, *Celan und die Mystiker*.

<sup>74</sup> Michael Hamburger, the poet-critic and prominent translator of Celan’s work, uses the opening lines of this poem as the title of one of his own collections. See Michael Hamburger, *Roots in the Air* (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1991).

<sup>75</sup> ‘But the vine was plucked up in fury, cast down to the ground; the east wind dried up its fruit; they were stripped off and withered. As for its strong stem,

fraught relationship with metaphor – his insistence that the metaphors he adopts in his work should be understood primarily in quite concrete terms – one must also read the allusion as specifically botanical, referring to the aerial roots commonly seen on tropical plants such as orchids.

In the following sentence, earth balls itself around the roots of the plant in question, perhaps suggesting an unnatural ‘rooting’ of the fundamentally unrootable in the terrestrial. Plants which have aerial roots experience the environment of solid earth as hostile. It is worth emphasising the reference to the geometrical form – ‘wo sich das Irdische *ballt*’ (emphasis mine) – reminding us of the globe shape of the earth as a whole, prefiguring the references to global space and our routes across it which appear later in the text. This act of capturing the aerial roots is equated with the creation scene, with reference to the ‘Atem-und-Lehm’ which are said to give birth to man in Genesis 2:7: we are reminded that it takes both the terrestrial and the ethereal to create man, both breath and clay.<sup>76</sup> The tension between fixity and transience, solid and gaseous, distant and proximate, is thereby established in the opening lines and remains important throughout the text.

Groß  
geht der Verbannte dort oben, der  
Verbrannte: ein Pommer, zuhause  
im Maikäferlied, das mütterlich blieb, sommerlich, hell-  
blütig am Rand  
aller schroffen,  
winterhart-kalten  
Silben.

(G 166)

---

fire consumed it.’ (Ezekiel 19:12). Wiedemann notes that Celan underlined a relevant passage in his copy of Margarete Susman’s *Deutung biblischer Gestalten*. See Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 716.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being’ (Genesis 2:7)

The man who has ostensibly been created in this way is introduced in the opening lines of stanza two: ‘der Verbannte/Verbrannte’, ‘ein Pommer’: an exile with no land and who is only ‘zuhause’ in the Maikäferlied of German folk tradition. In this children’s rhyme, the maybug is represented as a refugee from the Thirty Years War, his home in the Pommerland described as ‘abgebrannt’ and his mother and father implicitly understood as victims of that conflict.<sup>77</sup> This intertextual reference gives a biographical resonance to the adjective ‘mütterlich’, the violence of the intertextual context inevitably reminding us of the violence Celan’s family endured and his complex relationship to the German language.<sup>78</sup>

What is telling about the ‘Pommer’ who is the subject of the next two stanzas is his unearthly status: not only is his path described as being ‘dort oben’, aligning him with the aerial sphere in which the first stanza is situated and the flight of the ‘Maikäfer’, but he is also ‘zuhause | im Maikäferlied’. His home (given that his real home, we must conclude, is ‘abgebrannt’) is in a poetic text as an autonomous space in a non-metaphorical sense: he exists only in words and is ‘zuhause’ in them.<sup>79</sup> Jean Marie Winkler notes the contrast

<sup>77</sup> There are several versions of the rhyme: one of the earliest recorded is in Otmar’s *Volcks-Sagen* of 1800:

Maykäfer, flieg!  
Der Vater ist im Krieg.  
Die Mutter ist im Pommerland.  
Und Pommerland ist abgebrant.

One cannot help but draw connections to Celan’s biography: both of Celan’s parents died in labour camps during the Second World War. See Otmar, *Volcks-Sagen* (Bremen: Wilms, 1800), p. 46; Felstiner, Paul Celan, p. 15.

<sup>78</sup> There are many discussions of the complexity of Celan’s relationship to German and the biographical context which underpins it. See, for example, Felstiner, *Paul Celan*; Theo Buck, *Muttersprache, Mördersprache* (Aachen: Rimbaud, 1993).

<sup>79</sup> Compare also the use of ‘zuhause’ in ‘Engführung’ to refer to the position of the subject in relation to the text: ‘Du bist | bist zuhause’.

between the ‘schroffen | winterhart-kalten | Silben’ of the final line of stanza two and the ‘sommerlich, hell- | blütig’ *Maikäferlied*, proposing that these represent a dichotomy of models of poetic art between which the poem negotiates a path.<sup>80</sup> An analysis of the terrestrial/ethereal dichotomy of the opening lines suggests a further, complementary binary, that of earth and air, which is also embodied in the figure of the man from Pommern. The conflict between the earthly and the celestial is reflected in the vocabulary of fire, here associated with the ‘Verbrannte’ both directly and implicitly through his link to the *Maikäferlied*. Elsewhere, as we shall see, fire imagery takes on a different role.

Mit ihm  
wandern die Meridiane:  
an-  
gesogen von seinem  
sonnengesteuerten Schmerz, der die Länder verbrüdet nach  
dem Mittagsspruch einer  
liebenden  
Ferne. Aller-  
orten ist Hier und ist Heute, ist, von Verzweiflungen her,  
der Glanz,  
in den die Entzweiten treten mit ihren  
geblendeten Mündern:  
  
der Kuß, nächtlich,  
brennt einer Sprache den Sinn ein, zu der sie erwachen, sie –:  
(G 166)

At the beginning of the third stanza, various echoes of Celan’s Büchner Prize acceptance speech (such as ‘Rand’, which mirrors the Meridian’s description of the poem as ‘am Rand von sich selbst’) crystallise in a direct reference to the ‘Meridiane’, which are said to ‘wander’ ‘mit ihm’ – with the man from Pommern who is the subject of the previous stanza. This image is the quintessential meta-poetic spatial construct in Celan’s work, the place where

<sup>80</sup> See Winkler, ‘In der Luft’, p. 369.

poetic encounters are enabled and occur. Importantly, the word is followed by a colon, just as two colons surround the two-line stanza in which the poem's central encounter occurs (stanza four). Like poetic encounters (and kisses), the colon enables clauses and words to touch paratactically and, in so doing, creates new constellations of meaning.

The paradox of the earthly and the ethereal is also encapsulated in the image of the meridian itself, that dividing line which has a physical presence insofar as the earth it traverses certainly exists, but is also an intangible cartographical construct. It is, as Celan unambiguously points out in his Büchner Prize speech, 'etwas[ ... ] Immaterielles, aber Irdisches, Terrestrisches'.<sup>81</sup> Moreover, the recursive nature of the meridian – its ring-like structure – at once unites and divides disparate places and spaces, enabling them to encounter one another, as Derrida describes in his 'Shibboleth for Paul Celan':

Encounter – in the word 'encounter' two values come together without which there would be no date: 'encounter' as it suggests the random occurrence, the chance meeting, the coincidence or conjuncture that comes to seal one or more than one event *once*, at a given hour, on a given day, in a given month, in a given region; and 'encounter' as it suggests an encounter with the other, the ineluctable singularity out of which and destined for which the poem speaks. In its otherness and its solitude (which is also that of the poem, 'alone', 'solitary'), it may inhabit the conjunction of one and the same date. This is what happens.<sup>82</sup> (emphasis orig.)

The formulation 'Aller- | orten ist Hier und ist Heute' encapsulates this function of union through connection which is central to the trope of the

<sup>81</sup> Celan, *Der Meridian*, p. 12.

<sup>82</sup> Derrida, 'A Shibboleth for Paul Celan', p. 11.

meridian, again in terms which are more than merely symbolic or metaphorical: the meridian links points which belong to the same time-zone, so all times (and places) along this linking line are 'Hier und [...] Heute'. This formulation also conflates place and time, reflecting how closely linked the two dimensions are in Celan's poetics. Much has been made of Celan's insistence that the poem must remain conscious of its dates ('seiner Daten eingedenk'): one might also stress that it should remain conscious of its places and spaces, particularly when these are transitory and difficult.<sup>83</sup>

Paradoxes between the tangible and the intangible, the disparate and the united, the at home and the exiled run throughout the poem, just as they run throughout Celan's Meridian speech.<sup>84</sup> The poem might be described as an exploration of the thesis of the Meridian speech in poetic form. Unlike in the Meridian speech, here the meridians are said to 'wander', remaining difficult and unstable in the context of actual poetic creation. They are apparently influenced by the 'sonnengesteuerten Schmerz' of the 'Pommer', the pain of the exile which is, through the connection of the sun at its meridian, also made to draw its point of reference from the meta-linguistic trope. The compound 'Mittagsspruch' makes the concept of the meridian (or 'Mittagslinie') explicitly linguistically self-reflexive, once again in connection with simple, childish rhyming forms.<sup>85</sup>

The pain felt by the exile attracts and distorts linguistic representations, creating wandering meridians, but his pain, and his 'Mittagsspruch', also unite

<sup>83</sup> Celan, *Der Meridian*, p. 8.

<sup>84</sup> See, for example, the Meridian speech's references to the poem as 'am Rande seiner selbst', 'einsam und unterwegs', and as an 'ins Offene und Leere und Freieweisenden Frage'. Celan, *Der Meridian*, pp. 8, 9, 10.

<sup>85</sup> 'Mittagsspruch' literally refers to a 'midday proverb' or saying, generally the simple rhymes spoken by and with children before partaking of a midday meal.

– make brothers of – countries.<sup>86</sup> Thus, the distance and instability his exiled status precipitates is also ‘liebend[...]:’ the word is given its own line, emphasising its significance but also mimetically demonstrating its distance from the words which surround it. This contradiction is echoed in the pairing of ‘Verzweiflung[...]:’ and ‘Glanz’ later in the same stanza, in lines which suggest that those who have been ‘verbrüderet’ under the influence of the ‘Verb(r)annte’ – but who also remain, in another typical contradiction, ‘die Entzweiten’ – ‘treten’ in the ‘Glanz’ – step into the radiance. In so doing, they cross the threshold between the earthly and ethereal, between the concrete and the linguistic, which constitutes a major motif in the poem.

The consequence of this movement is expressed in the next two-line stanza, deliberately marked off from the text by the colons mentioned above, and in which the crucial action of the poem occurs: the kiss, which ‘brennt einer Sprache den Sinn ein, zu der sie erwachen’. This engendering of a new language occurs through a profound intersubjective encounter, like the meeting of subjects at the meridian described in the Meridian speech, although here also couched in the vocabulary of romantic love – both the ‘liebende[...]: | Ferne’ and the ‘Kuß’ refer to a romantic, even physically sensual, meeting in a particular space, rather than the abstract intellectual encounter alluded to in the Meridian speech. This short stanza, bookended as it is by colons and consisting of one clause with an adjective in apposition and a final fragment, ‘sie’, is also syntactically unusual and suggests the interruption of the action of the previous stanza, which is then interrupted in turn by the stanza which follows as the tense shifts into the past. This gives the ‘kiss’ a formal as well as

<sup>86</sup> Winkler points out the ironic relevance of Schillerian notions of international fraternity or ‘Verbrüderung’ in this context. See Winkler, ‘In der Luft’, p. 372. The poem contains numerous references to Schiller’s ‘An die Freude’, such as the ‘Kuß der ganzen Welt’ which features in that poem, and the ‘Sternenzelt’ and ‘Firmament’ which are the site of Schiller’s ‘Verbrüderung’. See Friedrich Schiller, *Gedichte*, ed. by Norbert Oellers (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999), pp. 34–38.



thematic position at the centre of the poem, further emphasising its importance as a turning point: after it takes place, the new language into which the 'Sinn' has been 'eingebrannt' emerges. Note, again, the resolution of earthliness and ethereality into fire symbolism which is here associated with the force of poetry. That this encounter takes place 'nocturnally' is also significant, given the various resonances of night and darkness (contrasted with light) in Celan's work. Ideas of fire and night are also combined in star imagery, another complex of symbols which is invested with great significance for Celan, and which is central to the final two stanzas of the poem:

heimgekehrt in  
den unheimlichen Bannstrahl,  
der die Verstreuten versammelt, die  
durch die Sternwüste Seele Geführten, die  
Zeltmacher droben im Raum  
ihrer Blicke und Schiffe,  
die winzigen Garben Hoffnung,  
darin es von Erzeugelfittichen rauscht, von Verhängnis,  
die Brüder, die Schwestern, die  
zu leicht, die zu schwer, die zu leicht  
Befundenen mit  
der Weltenwaage im blut-  
schändrischen, im  
fruchtbaren Schoß, die lebenslang Fremden,  
spermatisch bekränzt von Gestirnen, schwer  
in den Untiefen lagernd, die Leiber  
zu Schwellen getürmt, zu Dämmen, – die

Furtenwesen, darüber  
der Klumpfuß der Götter herüber-  
gestolpert kommt – um  
wessen  
Sternzeit zu spät?

(G 167)

As soon as the vital encounter at the end of stanza four occurs, the nature of the poem's textual landscape is radically altered, suddenly 'heimgekehrt'

from exile, instability and wandering.<sup>87</sup> Remembering that the figure who dominates the second and third stanzas was said to be ‘zu Hause’ in poetry, it is hardly surprising that the creation of this new, fiery language should amount to a homecoming. The various lexical doublings of this section (‘heimgekehrt’/‘unheimlich’, ‘Verstreuten’/‘versammeln’) echo the ‘Verbrannte’/‘Verbannte’ pairing of the second stanza; they are read by Winkler as an expression of an ‘allmählichen Präzisierung’ which runs throughout the text. Winkler’s suggestion is persuasive in light of Celan’s own description of the transformed German language after the Holocaust as ‘nüchterner, faktischer [...] sie nennt und setzt, sie versucht, den Bereich des Gegebenen und des Möglichen auszumessen’.<sup>88</sup> As we see a new language created in ‘in der Luft’, so we also see that language seeking precision and accuracy, refining and revisiting previous terms in a search for stability.

The following lines describe the ‘Verstreuten’ who are ‘versammelt’ by the ‘unheimlichen Bannstrahl’ – another image of light, radiance and intangible force which is a ‘line’ in space much like the meridian. These scattered people pick up once again on the theme of exile which runs through the text, and once again evoke the specific contexts of postwar Jewish exile which are so central to *Die Niemandsrose*. The stars appear for the first time in this stanza, cementing the transition from the midday scene of stanza three, brought about by the all-important kiss. Not only does the reference to stars draw on a well-established repository of star tropes in Celan’s work more generally, it also situates the textual landscape within the context of navigation by the stars

<sup>87</sup> This ‘homecoming’ into a celestial space clearly also resonates with religious metaphors for death and therefore once again reflects the post-Holocaust context of the text. The community who are united and return home are, at least partly, identifiable as the victims of the Shoah. See Winkler, ‘In der Luft’, p. 372.

<sup>88</sup> See Winkler, ‘In der Luft’, p. 368; Paul Celan, *Gesammelte Werke in Sieben Bänden*, ed. by Beda Allemann and Stefan Reichert, 2nd edn, 7 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000), III, p. 167-68.

and sun ('Raum | ihrer Blicke und Schiffe'), according to the science of a quasi-medieval cartography which echoes the meridian imagery of the third stanza.<sup>89</sup> In this way, as well as in the reference to a 'Heimkehr' which we already know to be meta-poetic, the space of language (and of poetry) is described in abstract terms which recall maps, navigational aids, grids, meridians, the zeniths and azimuths of astrological charts. Rather than a concrete *place* which constitutes poetry (like the huts, graves and landscapes described above), this is poetry as abstract *space* in which we encounter one another.

The remainder of stanza five and the poem's final stanza elaborate on this vision of the 'Verstreuten versammelt' in language. These stanzas contain multiple images of religious fertility, blending Judeo-Christian and pre-Abrahamic points of reference: as Winkler points out, the wheat sheaf is a persistent symbol of fertility which features in Jewish and pagan folk traditions, and the 'fruchtbare[r] Schoß' expresses notions of fertility, neatly reflecting the encounter which 'brennt einer Sprache den Sinn ein' at the climax of the poem.<sup>90</sup> '[S]permatisch bekränzt von Gestirnen' extends the fire and star imagery from the climactic kiss into these images of conception. The surreal frenzy of images and their religious overtones are reminiscent of the pre-Renaissance religious paintings of Hieronymus Bosch, and share the same grotesque and sinister undercurrents: the 'Leiber', 'schwer | in den Untiefen lagernd', offer an explicit reminder of the grotesque violence of the concentration camps. However, references to 'Gestirne [...]', 'Sternzeit' and the 'Weltenwaage' (as a constellation) suggest a dramatically expanded textual

<sup>89</sup> Winkler also highlights the non-metaphorical force of the term 'Sternwüste', which refers to the inhabitability of cosmic space, pointing out parallels with Celan's 'Huttenfenster'. See Winkler, 'In der Luft', p. 373.

<sup>90</sup> Winkler, p. 373.

landscape which implies a kind of escape, gesturing towards the irrelevance of earthly events in the cosmic sphere.

In the final stanza, the 'Klumpfuß der Götter' (in its pagan, plural form) has various associations, particularly recalling the club foot of the Greek smith and god of fire, Hephaestus, and suggesting the difficulty of movement forward or beyond obstacles. Clearly, the creation of this new fiery language is not unequivocally positive or redemptive – it does not allow past horrors to be erased or forgotten. This is also echoed in the shift from the astral sphere of constellations to the piles of bodies which are situated in an earthly landscape. 'Furtenwesen' or ford-creatures return us to the earth-and-water based pagan religious context, as opposed to the more abstract celestial discourse of Abrahamic redemption narratives. The question of the final lines implies that the intervention of the 'Klumpfuß der Götter', perhaps their role in the fiery creation of a new language earlier in the text, comes 'zu spät' for those whose corpses are piled up in 'Schwellen' and 'Dämmen'. Nevertheless, these liminal locations themselves – thresholds and fords – suggest a transition or turning point of some kind.<sup>91</sup> This is compounded by the tone of the question and the idea of a 'Sternzeit' which makes the scale of human history irrelevant. It is on this grand, cosmic scale that the poem operates, both in its evocations of the exile affecting Jewish people after the Shoah and in the 'textual landscape' it creates to house them.

Prynne's 'From End to End' (P 62-63) is equally concerned with the creation of a textual space, or place, of encounter. The poem has a clear central trope – that of 'length', the 'line' – which is evident from the very start of the poem:

<sup>91</sup> The notion of a 'Schwelle' or threshold reprises the motif which gave Celan's second collection, *Von Schwelle zu Schwelle* (1955), its title.

Length is now quite another thing: that is,  
waiting or coming right up slap into the sun,  
spreading into the land to cross, the smell of  
diesel oil on the road. The friends there are,  
as if residing in what instantly goes with it,  
as if longer than the infinite desire, longer  
and across into some other thing. Keeping  
the line, running back up into the mountains,  
denied. And so, in the actual moment dis-  
honest, actually refusing the breakage, and  
your instinct for the whole purpose  
again shows  
how gently it is all broken  
and how lightly, as you  
would say, to come in.

(P 62)

The line the poem describes cannot be read as specifically mimetic or even straightforwardly metaphorical. The word ‘line’ is not merely used as shorthand for a road, a pathway, the meridian traced by the sun’s trajectory across the sky, or a rainbow, although all of these readings are made possible by the poem’s ambiguous syntax and rich imagery.<sup>92</sup> ‘The smell of | diesel oil on the road’, the presence of ‘friends’ and the journey towards the sun or

<sup>92</sup> As Stanley points out in passing, the poem's final line quotes Wordsworth's 'My heart leaps up':

My heart leaps up when I behold  
A rainbow in the sky:  
So was it when my life began,  
So is it now I am a man,  
So be it when I shall grow old  
Or let me die!  
The child is father of the man:  
And I could wish my days to be  
Bound each to each by natural piety.

This introduces the possibility of reading the ‘line’ which is the focus of the poem as a rainbow. See Thomas Stanley, ‘Back On Into The Way Home: “Charm Against Too Many Apples”’, *Glossator*, 2 (2010), 11–37 (p. 12). See also ‘My Heart Leaps Up’ in William Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 246.

mountains all suggest an adventurous road trip or journey. But the motif of length also goes ‘longer | and across into some other thing’, before seeming to fragment and break in the final lines of the stanza, confounding any attempt to read the ‘line’ of the poem as the literal route of a journey.

As well as exploring these various geographical lines, like those on a map or globe, the lines traced by roads and paths across the earth's surface, and meridians, 'From End to End' also explores and manipulates its own lines – the lines of poetic verse. There are no stanza breaks in the poem, but rather blocks, of varying lengths, of full lines (all the way across the page) followed by short, four-line sections of truncated, indented line fragments. These are also semantically marked off as belonging to some kind of 'breakage': 'how gently it is all broken', we read in the first fragmentary interlude, quoted above; 'down the cancelled line', in the third.

The meta-linguistic nature of the trope of lines and length is laid bare: the poem, with its problematic, broken and interrupted lines, plays with the dichotomy of distance and proximity, connection and rupture. Like the line itself, which appears as fragile and temporary, the poem's form constantly interweaves union and schism, self-consciously manipulating the reader's path through the poem. This is evident in lines such as 'Keeping | the line, running back into the mountains, | denied' where the last word both semantically and formally negates the fluidity of the preceding clause.

All the milky quartz of that sky, pink and  
retained, into the sun. See such a thing climb  
out of the haze, making the bridge straight  
down into the face – which way, this way,  
length beyond this, crossed. The dawn thing  
suddenly isn't tenuous, and the reach back to  
the strand is now some odd kind of debris:  
how strange to  
say this, which abandons of  
course all the joy of not

quite going, so far.  
 I would not have recognised it if the sun  
 hadn't unexpectedly snapped the usual ride,  
 and with you a real ironist, your length  
 run off out into some other place. Not the  
 mountains, nothing to do with the sacred child.

(P 62)

As the poem continues, it develops the lyrical note which was already present in the opening section. At one level, this can be understood as a gesture towards the poem's intertexts, and particularly to Romanticism and William Wordsworth.<sup>93</sup> Equally, though, descriptions of the beautiful landscape under 'all the milky quartz of that sky, pink and | retained, into the sun', can be seen as a poetic cliché adopted self-consciously by an erudite author, a reminder that we are reading a text which is poetically (as well as linguistically) self-reflexive.

The poem repeatedly points beyond itself, allowing its line to run into the indescribable and intangible, and thereby giving a sense of infinite extension in all directions: 'length | run off out into some other place'. (Compare 'across into some other thing', cited above). The vagueness of these two locations ('some other thing' | 'some other place') is testament to the metalinguistic nature of the line motif: as the lines being described 'run out', so too do the words to describe them.

As in Celan's poem, the sun appears as a central motif, but here its path across the sky is distorted and disorienting. At first, it is low, as at sunset, so that we come 'right up slap into' it, then we climb 'out of the haze', then

<sup>93</sup> See footnote, above. Given the prominence of motifs of lines and delineation and the references to a relationship between lovers, the poem can also be read as drawing on Donne's 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning' which features the typically metaphysical conceit of two lovers joined like a pair of compasses, their interrelation characterised by spiritual proximity even under circumstances of physical distance. Unlike in the Donne poem, of course, here the lines are faltering and broken. See 'A Valediction Forbidding Mourning' in John Donne, *The Collected Poems of John Donne*, ed. by Roy Booth (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994), p. 33.

‘unexpectedly snap[ ... ] the usual ride’, ‘even in the dawn | as almost a last evening’. Although the meridian it traces is familiar, the path of the sun in the poem is also unpredictable and uncanny. As much as we would like the meridian to unite, restore and connect, it refuses to do so simply and unproblematically.

The same point might be made about the poem’s syntax which, like the fragmented lineation of the ‘broken’ line ‘denied’ to the reader earlier in the poem, continues to perform the criss-crossing, deliberately incoherent structure it describes. Two clauses which start with verbs (‘See’ and ‘making’) are followed after a hyphen by a string of fragments in which the verb (‘crossed’) is postponed until the end, performing the inversion which the language semantically denotes.

The continued quality I know is turned down,  
pointed into the earth: love is a tremor, in  
this respect, this for the world without length.  
Desire is the turn to a virtue, of extent  
without length. How  
I feel is still alone this path,  
down the cancelled line and  
even in the dawn  
as almost a last evening, coming back the  
day before.

(P 62-63)

‘From End to End’ measures and describes length in lyrical and expansive terms, but it also continually undermines and disorients this sense of infinite expansion. This is performed both by disrupting the actual line of the poem, as I have described, and in the poem’s descriptions of breakage and contraction. In this section of the text, a lack of ‘length’ is equated with ‘love’, recalling the tension in Celan’s ‘liebende[ ... ] | Ferne’. The desire to root and make concrete is implied by the ‘quality [ ... ] pointed into the earth’ and the geological word ‘tremor’. ‘Love is a tremor’ we are told, ‘in | this respect, this for the world without length. | Desire is the turn to a virtue, of extent | without length.’ Of



course, extent without length – the ultimate desire, the sought-after perfect synthesis of distance and proximity – is mathematically and geographically impossible. A world ‘without length’ is unimaginable. Here again, therefore, a yearning for extension and linkage is undermined by a contrasting desire for proximity and connection.

How would that  
ever have been so, the length taken down and  
my nervous rental displayed. Not just holding  
or drawing the part. You are too ready, since I  
know you still want what we’ve now lost, into  
the sun. Without either, the mark of our light  
and the shade as you walk without touching  
the ground. Lost it, by our joint throw,  
and the pleasure, the breakage is no longer, no  
more length in which we quickly say  
good-bye, each to each at the meridian. As now  
each to each good-bye I love you so.

(P 63)

Yet it is this movement which occurs towards the end of the poem. The final lines give a sense of something rapidly contracting, disappearing – as it were – into the sunset, along the lines of a perspective grid. Unlike in earlier sections of the poem, where the desire to be connected, to be linked by lines and proximate to one another, is continually frustrated by ‘broken’ syntax and lineation, here the syntax is contrastingly and naïvely paratactical. It appears that we are listening to the voices of two speakers who echo one another in the chiasmic phrases ‘good-bye, each to each’ and ‘each to each good-bye’, allowing for a kind of echoing simplicity as the words ‘meet’ each other and then recede. The parataxis gives the impression of a slight breathlessness, of time running out, and as such the conclusion of the poem appears to represent a fleeting encounter between lovers. That the declaration of love follows a ‘good-bye’ is testament to the temporary and fragile basis of the encounter.

Given that Prynne was such a sensitive reader of Celan's work, and in light of the contexts of length, language and encounter described above, it is certainly possible to read in these final lines an intertextual reference to Celan: the 'meridian', the place of poetic encounter, represents both the place where 'the breakage is no longer' – that utopia of 'extent | without length' – and the place where we say good-bye to each other, the place of a temporary and fleeting encounter between subjects.

As such, an overall interpretation of the poem as an exploration of the meta-linguistic trope of the poem as a place of encounter suggests itself. The poem, criss-crossed by lines and meridians, becomes a place where subjects can encounter each other, temporarily and mysteriously. Rather than simply describing a place of meeting or a landscape circumscribed by lines, Prynne gives us a text which is a meeting place, albeit one in which our attempts to encounter each other are almost continually frustrated by fractured syntax and broken lines – until the final lines of the poem, where a provisional and ambiguous encounter does occur, albeit one which is preceded by its own negation (in the form of two 'good-byes'). The reality of the encounter is, however, undeniable, as is the 'love' it is able to communicate. Thus, we see once again the tension between distance and proximity which is at the centre of poetic communication expressed and explored through the metaphor of the meridian, and the associated tropes of length, extension, measuring, navigating, traversing and transcribing the world with lines and networks.

Both 'In der Luft' and 'From End to End' present us with motifs of movement, transport in abstract space and romantic encounter. In neither case are these spaces or these encounters directly mimetic of actual spaces or actual meetings. Nor are they metaphorical conceits. They take place within and are predicated on spaces, lines and meeting places which are pointedly linguistically self-reflexive. For Celan, the encounter itself creates a new

language which precipitates a kind of problematic homecoming for those whose home is in a purely textual space. In Prynne's text, the encounter is momentary but undeniable and occurs in spite of the fragility of the textual constructs which enable it. Both are textual spaces created within and descriptive of text itself, with all the difficulties and possibilities that implies.

## 2.6. *Excavation, expansion and enclosure: 'Engführung' and 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved'*

The significance of geology for Prynne and Celan's work has already been noted, establishing that both writers frequently equate geological processes of sedimentation, compression and metamorphosis with the processes by which language accumulates meaning. In this close reading of Celan's 'Engführung' (G 113-18) and Prynne's 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' (P 65-67), the inverse correlative of these processes will be explored: the processes of desedimentation, decompression and the fragmentation of meaning, which can be considered a form of poetic 'excavation'. Both texts, I will argue, explore the consequences of such processes of excavation when applied to certain difficult, non-metaphorical landscapes and subterranean spaces, and the way these processes can expand and/or restrict interpretative possibility.

At first glance, there may not appear to be much to unite Celan's 'Engführung' and Prynne's 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved'. Both are poems which demonstrably negotiate complex territory, but the resulting texts differ greatly in form, tone and mood. 'Engführung' attempts to excavate the multilayered personal and historical traumas of the Shoah, resulting in a stuttering, halting poem constantly on the brink of exposing its own fragility, predicated on the unspeakability of its subject matter – calling into question, as Dietlind Meinecke puts it, 'eine äußerste Möglichkeit des Sprechens

überhaupt'.<sup>94</sup> Prynne's text glides with virtuoso agility between the different layers and dimensions of an historicised landscape. What they share is a reading of language as landscape, and an interest in 'excavating' the depths of linguistic expression and the assumptions which underpin it. In neither text is the landscape in question a mimetic representation of a particular place, real or imagined. Rather, in both poems, the text is the landscape into which we are driven, through which we travel, and out of which we emerge with an altered understanding of the nature of the linguistic sign and our position, as readers, in relation to the text being read.

'Engführung' has been read in explicitly spatial terms since shortly after its publication, when Szondi suggested that the position of the reader in relation to the text undergoes a radical transformation in the poem's first few lines, opening up the possibility of a new mode of reading which is neither mimetically representational nor straightforwardly metaphorical, but rather renders the reading subject identical to the subject of the text being read.<sup>95</sup> As a consequence, this poem has featured prominently in various studies of space, place, nature and geology in Celan's work, and critics have disagreed about whether its landscapes – or, more accurately, its terrain – should be construed as metaphorical, mimetic, neither, or both.<sup>96</sup> In the reading which follows, I argue for understanding the spaces of 'Engführung' as linguistically self-reflexive, a position which does not exclude reading them in part as

<sup>94</sup> Meinecke, *Wort und Name bei Paul Celan*, p. 158.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Szondi, 'Durch die Enge geführt. Versuch über die Verständlichkeit des modernen Gedichts', in *Schriften II* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1978), pp. 345–89 (p. 345).

<sup>96</sup> As discussed above, there are varying responses to Szondi's suggestion that the landscape (or more accurately, the terrain) of 'Engführung' cannot be construed as metaphorical in any way, with Hamacher in particular arguing that Celan's distinctive form of metaphor enacts the passage from object to metaphor rather than rejecting metaphor entirely. See Hamacher, 'The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure through Celan's Poetry'. For the distinction between landscape and terrain, see Baer, *Remnants of Song*, p. 227.

metaphors or mimetic representations, but proposes instead that they are most usefully understood as spaces of language, created within language.

The search for a new model of representation commensurate with expressing the trauma of the Shoah is central to the project of the poem, and is realised in primarily spatial terms. 'Engführung' is a poem which closes in on itself, which investigates limitation, restriction and constriction, albeit ultimately appearing to pass through this narrowness and emerge having salvaged something of language's representational capacity: 'Gedichte sind Engpässe: du mußt hier mit deinem Leben hindurch'.<sup>97</sup> Critics disagree on the extent to which this movement can be understood as redemptive of poetic signification 'after Auschwitz'. Aris Fioretos, for example, describes the absent centre of the poem in post-structuralist terms which do not necessarily afford the possibility of redeeming meaning in the wake of the Shoah and the breakdown of signification it precipitates.<sup>98</sup> This contrasts with the position of early readers of the text such as Szondi and Meinecke, who read the poem's ending as broadly redemptive.

My argument focuses on the process which occurs in the poem, and, for the purposes of this reading, it is content to describe the outcome as highly ambivalent. The poem reflects a project of excavation, which starts with a search for trace and, ultimately, circles back to its starting point on the surface of the terrain, having explored the depths of language and signification. The structural interplay of surface and depth is vital to reading the poem as a project of excavation: the poem subverts or excavates the illusion of surface, both literal surface (i.e. the surface level of the landscape) and figurative surface (i.e. the smooth surface of language). This is the means by which the excavation of a textual landscape is able to offer new modes of writing and

<sup>97</sup> Celan, quoted in Lehmann, "Gegenwort" und "Daseinsentwurf", p. 432.

<sup>98</sup> See Aris Fioretos, 'Contraction (Benjamin, Reading, History)', *MLN*, 110.3 (1995), 540–64.

reading through which we can approach difficult territory – historical, linguistic and poetic.

The temporal proximity of phrases and voices overlapping one another is implied by the musical metaphor of the poem's title: the 'Engführung' or stretto refers to the closing section of a fugue whereby related phrases are superimposed on one another, so that a response-phrase commences before the main phrase is completed. This musical motif extends and develops themes introduced in Celan's earlier, most famous (and most frequently misread) poem, 'Todesfuge'. Hans Mayer went as far as to suggest that 'Engführung' constitutes a withdrawal of the earlier poem, provoking a resounding correction from Celan: 'Ich nehme nie ein Gedicht zurück, Hans Mayer!'<sup>99</sup>

'Engführung' certainly employs and adapts musical forms and structures, particularly in the overlapping voices and dense phonological patterning. However, the poem is as much concerned with spatial 'straitening' and passing through as with temporal or musical overlapping, as evidenced by the strongly spatial connotations of the adjective 'eng'. The musical term is as ambivalent as the process the poem enacts. The enclosure, constriction and limitation implied by an 'Engführung' cannot be seen as exclusively negative, but should also be understood as a productive process of condensation, compaction and 'concentration' which brings disparate elements closer and closer together in order to intensify and distil their meaning.<sup>100</sup> Similarly, the process of

<sup>99</sup> See Hans Mayer, 'Erinnerung an Paul Celan', *Merkur*, 24.12 (1970), 1150–62 (p. 1158).

<sup>100</sup> The *New Grove Dictionary of Music* notes that '[t]he value of this technique for fugal composition has been recognized since the mid-seventeenth century, when musicians including G.M. Bononcini and Reincken began to advocate its use near the end of a piece as *a means of increasing excitement and intensity* and thus leading the piece towards a suitable close' (emphasis mine). See Paul M. Walker, 'Stretto', *Grove Music Online* <[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article\\_citations/grove/music/26948](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article_citations/grove/music/26948)> [accessed 24 August 2016]. The notion of 'Engführung' as 'concentration' also reminds us of the concentrating function of the motif of

excavation the poem enacts and the new model of reading it can be said to inaugurate may be troubling, difficult and restrictive, but it is also ultimately productive.

\*

Verbracht ins  
Gelände  
mit der untrüglichen Spur:

Gras, auseinandergeschrieben. Die Steine, weiß,  
mit den Schatten der Halme:  
Lies nicht mehr – schau!  
Schau nicht mehr – geh!

Geh, deine Stunde  
hat keine Schwestern, du bist –  
bist zuhause. Ein Rad, langsam,  
rollt aus sich selber, die Speichen  
klettern,  
klettern auf schwärzlichem Feld, die Nacht  
braucht keine Sterne, nirgends  
fragt es nach dir.

(G 113)

From the outset, the movement of the poem draws the reader below ground into a hidden, sepulchral space. After we are '[v]erbracht ins | Gelände' in the opening line of the poem, the focus immediately shifts to ground level (and below) – traces on the earth, the grass, stones and shadows all draw our gaze downwards. The wheel, which 'climbs' on the 'schwärzlichem Feld', appears to have come from a subterranean space which is opened up by this first part of the poem, as the grass is 'auseinandergeschrieben'. The lexical field here is more than just generically sepulchral: the dispassionate *officialese* 'verbringen' was used to describe the forced deportation of Jewish people

---

the meridian, another structural conceit Celan uses to discuss the possibilities of poetry in the post-Auschwitz era.

during the Holocaust.<sup>101</sup> Here we encounter the first of several intertextual echoes of Celan's translation of the script of Alan Resnais' film *Nuit et brouillard* (*Nacht und Nebel*), demonstrating unequivocally that we are in the specific domain of the Holocaust dead.<sup>102</sup>

It is also telling that this 'deportation' takes us to a 'Gelände' or terrain rather than a landscape, a clear signal that a post-structuralist decentring of the reading or viewing subject is at hand.

At the beginning of the second stanza (quoted above), the writing apart of the grass opens a gateway to subterranean space, commencing the process of poetic excavation in pursuit of the 'untrüglichen Spur'. Grammatically speaking, 'auseinanderschreiben' (emphasis mine) is, of course, a form of *schreiben* and not any kind of literal excavation. One might read the trace or *Spur* in literal terms as a visual marker of human presence on the terrain – perhaps a sign in the grass or, as Lehmann proposes, a reference to the 'Spurweite' of the railways used to carry Jews to their deaths – but a Derridean interpretation of the term precludes such an interpretation, since 'trace' is not the mark of something which can be identified in positive terms as origin or evidence, but of the always-already absent.<sup>103</sup> If the trace or *Spur* were visible and legible above the ground, there would be no need for the 'auseinanderschreiben' the poem enacts.

\*

Nirgends  
fragt es nach dir –

Der Ort, wo sie lagen, er hat

<sup>101</sup> Jürgen Lehmann, "Engführung", in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Sprachgitter'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann, Markus May, and Susanna Broch (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), pp. 431–80 (pp. 436–37).

<sup>102</sup> For the relationship to *Nuit et brouillard* (*Nacht und Nebel*), the script of which Celan translated in 1956, two years before composing 'Engführung', see Lehmann, "Engführung", p. 432. See also Wiedemann's commentary in Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 668.

<sup>103</sup> See Lehmann, "Engführung", p. 437.



einen Namen – er hat  
keinen. Sie lagen nicht dort. Etwas  
lag zwischen ihnen. Sie  
sahn nicht hindurch.

Sahn nicht, nein,  
redeten von  
Worten. Keines  
erwachte, der  
Schlaf  
kam über sie.

(G 113-14)

The first lines of part two bring us to the specific absence in the tombs of the Holocaust dead. ‘Der Ort, wo sie lagen’ is presumed to be below ground, in a space which has a particular, anonymous, status: ‘er hat einen Namen – er hat | keinen’. We are reminded of the empty cenotaph at the heart of the memorialisation of victims of the Shoah, an image which haunts Celan’s work – but we are also prompted to think of the victims of atomic warfare, which, as Meinecke and Janz emphasise, forms a crucial context to this poem.<sup>104</sup>

The impossibility of naming this space which both has a name and has no name directly signals the problems of language and signification which arise when talking about such difficult terrain. The poem, like the subject of its sentences, ‘red[et] von Worten’: it is metalinguistic, its meaning is self-referential and recursive. It is possible to read the commonplace ‘Schlaf | kam über sie’ in metaphorical terms – sleep (or rather, death) ‘came over them’ – but here it also has a literal meaning, since what separates us (the living reader) from ‘them’ is what is ‘over them’, the earth over the grave. This literal meaning is foregrounded over the metaphorical implication, since the syntax inverts the usual idiomatic phrasing (‘Schlaf *überkam* sie’ – ‘Sleep overcame them’). It is significant that the poem also addresses ‘you’ directly in this part

<sup>104</sup> Janz, *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie*, p. 75; Meinecke, *Wort und Name bei Paul Celan*, p. 177.

of the poem, if only to tell us that '[n]irgends | fragt es nach dir'. This develops the implication, set out in the first part of the text, that it is we (as decentred reading subjects) who are being 'driven into the terrain', taken underground into this sepulchral text-space to encounter the dead.

\*

Kam, kam. Nirgends  
fragt es –

Ich bins, ich,  
ich lag zwischen euch, ich war  
offen, war  
hörbar, ich tickte euch zu, euer Atem  
gehörte, ich  
bin es noch immer, ihr  
schlaft ja.

(G 114)

The third part of the text appears to develop this further, introducing the interaction between 'Ich' and 'euch' (now plural), in a scenario where 'we' are now also 'asleep', and therefore able to occupy the same space as 'they' are said to in the preceding part. At one level, it seems clear enough that this is a grave space into which we, the readers, are being taken, and that this space is occupied by closely packed bodies. The 'ticken' of the fourth line is, as Meinecke notes, a reminder 'dass Bomben in diesem Gedicht ticken': the atom bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the potential future bombs under construction across the world at the time of the poem's composition.<sup>105</sup> But at the level of syntax and grammar, achieving any kind of logical reading requires a complex analysis of pronouns and place-deictics: who are 'we', 'you', 'they', 'I', and 'it' in this context? Where are 'dort' and 'nirgends'? Although the third line of this part appears to offer a kind of resolution to this difficulty – 'Ich bins, ich' – this apparent certainty has no illuminating force, since still we do not know who is speaking. The instability of language and its referents is clear.

<sup>105</sup> See Meinecke, *Wort und Name bei Paul Celan*, p. 177.

\*

Bin es noch immer –

Jahre.  
 Jahre, Jahre, ein Finger  
 tastet hinab und hinan, tastet  
 umher:  
 Nahtstellen, fühlbar, hier  
 klafft es weit auseinander, hier  
 wuchs es wieder zusammen – wer  
 deckte es zu?

(G 114)

Part four seems to describe in more detail how this space is opened up by the poet's words. Ostensibly, we are still in the sepulchral space of the long-dead: 'Jahre' seem to have passed since the last part of the poem. 'Bin es noch immer', we are told: notice the absence of the subject in the repetition of this phrase from part three, which implies an erosion of subjectivity further compounded by the introduction of a disembodied finger in the following lines. This 'umher tasten' of the disembodied finger, as well as seeming to imply that the buried dead are searching for an escape, is like writing, in that it helps find the places where the 'seams' which provide access to hidden spaces are open, and where they are concealed. The repetition of 'auseinander' recalls the compound verb 'auseinandergeschrieben', which is so important to the opening and closing parts of the poem, referring once again to the same process of 'writing apart' the terrain to provide a point of entry for the reader. Finally, the question 'wer | deckte es zu?' suggests a search for a perpetrator, the concealment of trace or *Spur*, which (of course) remains dramatically unanswered.

\*

Deckte es

zu – wer?

Kam, kam.  
 Kam ein Wort, kam,

kam durch die Nacht,  
wollt leuchten, wollt leuchten.

Asche.  
Asche, Asche.  
Nacht.  
Nacht-und-Nacht. – Zum  
Aug geh, zum feuchten.

(G 114)

Part five is perhaps the most austere in terms of its language. It begins (as usual) with a modified repetition of the final lines of the preceding stanza ('Deckte es | zu – wer?'), the duplication suggesting a double covering which takes us still deeper underground. This is reinforced by the darkness of the images in this section, particularly those of night and ash, which again suggest that a grave or crypt space is being described. At the same time, the repetition intensifies, even in comparison to earlier parts of the poem. Out of thirty total words, nineteen are repeated at least once, with 'kam' appearing five times in the first stanza. The gradual lengthening of lines and the rhyme of 'leuchten' and 'feuchten' also contribute to the extremely dense sound patterning which comes to closely resemble the musical cadences of the fugue, with the stanza also highlighting in its stuttering and halting prosody the difficulty and intensity of self-expression. This is the closest the poem comes to silence.

\* Zum Aug geh, zum feuchten –

Orkane.  
Orkane, von je,  
Partikelgestöber, das andre,  
du  
weißt ja, wir  
lasens im Buche, war  
Meinung.

War, war  
Meinung. Wie

faßten wir uns  
an – an mit  
diesen  
Händen?

Es stand auch geschrieben, daß.  
Wo? Wir  
taten ein Schweigen darüber,  
giftgestillt, groß,  
ein  
grünes  
Schweigen, ein Kelchblatt, es  
hing ein Gedanke an Pflanzliches dran –  
[...]

(G 115)

The poem's sixth part is, by a large margin, the longest in the text: only the first half is quoted above. This part marks something of a departure from the first five: at once, we appear to be back above ground, in a world of weather systems and vegetation. However, something is still evidently being concealed, marked by the abrupt ending of the first sentence fragment, and hidden beneath 'ein Schweigen [...] ein | grünes | Schweigen, ein Kelchblatt'.

The living, organic matter on the surface of the terrain serves to conceal the subterranean dead who have been 'giftgestillt'. The 'Orkane' and 'Partikelgestöber' refer once again, more or less directly, to the spectre of atomic warfare. The text links this allusion to the atom bomb with a citation attributed to Democritus, 'Es gibt nichts als die Atome und den leeren Raum; alles andere ist Meinung'.<sup>106</sup> As Celan explains in a letter to Erich Einhorn: 'An

<sup>106</sup> In fact, the quotation, which Celan highlighted in a text from his personal library, is of uncertain origin: what Democritus appears to have actually written is 'by convention sweet and by convention bitter, by convention hot, by convention cold, by convention color; but in reality atoms and void'. See Wiedemann's notes on 'Engführung' in Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 668; Sylvia Berryman, 'Democritus', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2010, 2010  
<<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/democritus/>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

einer zentralen Stelle steht, fragmentarisch, dieses Wort von Demokrit[.] [...] Ich brauche nicht erst hervorzuheben, daß das Gedicht um dieser Meinung – um der *Menschen* willen, also gegen alle Leere und Atomisierung geschrieben ist’ (emphasis orig.).<sup>107</sup> The paradox is evident: only by exploring the fragmentation – or atomisation – of language, can one create a poem which argues against, or finds something productive in, atomisation and emptiness.<sup>108</sup>

This perverse productiveness of the fragment is also described by Fioretos:

[F]ragments remain unreadable, in entire part or in fragmentary whole. Certain of their elements may be understood only in light of other elements which are absent. They constitute fragments because they say less than they could and should. At the same time, according to the law that every fragment instantiates, this shortage of meaning corresponds to an abundance of signs. Because of everything in a fragment that is understandable only in regard to what is missing, a fragment, without fail, contains too much.<sup>109</sup>

Fioretos’s theory of the fragment is clearly Derridean: the fragment contains an ‘abundance of signs’ which lack the simple 1:1 referentiality of signifier and signified. In this way, they highlight *différance* and inaugurate the never-ending search for ‘trace’, each sign constantly pointing beyond itself to the absence which is ingrained in its structure. This search is grounded in shortage, but it results in abundance – because in the end, the fragment ‘contains too much’.

<sup>107</sup> Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 669.

<sup>108</sup> Emmerich links ‘Meinung’ and ‘Liebe’. See Wolfgang Emmerich, *Paul Celan* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999), p. 182.

<sup>109</sup> Fioretos, ‘Contraction (Benjamin, Reading, History)’, p. 543. For a full discussion of fragmentation in Celan, see Leonard Olschner, *Im Abgrund Zeit: Paul Celans Poetiksplitter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007).

Fioretos's reading can be usefully extended to apply specifically to the textual spaces of 'Engführung'. Rather than mapping a coherent 'landscape' perceived by the eye of a dominant poetic subject, Celan's poem presents a series of small, fragmentary spaces: an enigmatic and seemingly empty 'terrain', various spaces which we are led to believe are the inside of graves or crypts; and (later) glimpses of walls which recall places of execution in concentration camps. Each of these fragments, by virtue of its fragmentary form, not only reflects the restriction and intensification which one expects from an 'Engführung', but also gestures beyond itself to other spaces and places: the contraction experienced as part of excavation can also be read as a form of expansion.

Körnig,  
körnig und faserig. Stengelig,  
dicht;  
traubig und strahlig; nierig,  
plattig und  
klumpig; locker, ver-  
ästelt -: er, es  
fiel nicht ins Wort, es  
sprach,  
sprach gerne zu trockenen Augen, eh es sie schloß.

Sprach, sprach.  
War, war.

Wir  
ließen nicht locker, standen  
inmitten, ein  
Porenbau, und  
es kam.

Kam auf uns zu, kam  
hindurch, flickte  
unsichtbar, flickte  
an der letzten Membran,  
und  
die Welt, ein Tausendkristall,  
schoß an, schoß an.

In the final four stanzas of part six, the focus returns underground, to a familiar motif in Celan's work, stone. Here, the stone is described in terms which blend the organic and the inorganic. The description uses geological terminology which is itself borrowed from botanical science and biology: 'Porenbau' and 'Membran' are juxtaposed with the almost geometrically inorganic 'Tausendkristall'.<sup>110</sup> 'Porenbau' blends the organic and inorganic in a single neologism. It is as though the stone were being brought to life: as we move below ground, the link is made between the excavation of geological traces and language, so that the stone itself has a voice ('es | sprach, | sprach gerne [...] Sprach, sprach. | War, war') which appears to reveal something 'zu trockenen Augen, eh es sie schloß'. However, the poem is not explicit about the content of this revelation, and again we must note that the process of passing underground, hearing the stone speak, is the poem's central concern, rather than any firm statement of historical truth or fact.

\*

Schoß an, schoß an.

Dann –

Nächte, entmischt. Kreise,  
grün oder blau, rote  
Quadrate: die  
Welt setzt ihr Innerstes ein  
im Spiel mit den neuen  
Stunden. – Kreise,

rot oder schwarz, helle  
Quadrate, kein  
Flugschatten,

<sup>110</sup> The source of this vocabulary and description is a reference book in Celan's library on the identification of crystals and stones, which contains descriptions of individual minerals which use a very similar vocabulary: 'körnig, faserig, stengelig, stätig, dichte, erdige Aggregate, Versteinerungsmineral'. See Rudolf Börner, *Welcher Stein ist das? Tabellen zum Bestimmen der wichtigsten Mineralien, Edelsteine und Gesteine* (Stuttgart: Franckh, 1955). See also Wiedemann in Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 669.



kein  
 Meßtisch, keine  
 Rauchseele steigt und spielt mit. (G 116-17)

At the end of part seven and the beginning of part eight, the focus is on upwards vertical movement through the ‘Rauchseele’ which ascend into the sky and the ‘Eulenflucht’, which takes us once again away from the earth.

These sections appear to take place above ground, although the reminder of the underground world through which the poem has previously taken us is still visible. We are through the ‘Engpass’, perhaps, but our perception has been fundamentally altered by it. This is most clear in part seven, where the dense textures described in the previous section give way to purely abstract geometrical form without texture – ‘Kreise’ and ‘Quadrate’. The aesthetic detail has been removed from these constructs (although they retain their colours) in a manner which recalls Celan’s statement about the ‘grauere Sprache’ of poetry after the Holocaust. The ‘Rauchseele’ of the final line reminds us once again of the physical absence of the Holocaust dead, their empty tombs, and the excavated spaces through which the poem has so far guided us.

\*

Steigt und  
 spielt mit -

In der Eulenflucht, beim  
 versteinerten Aussatz,  
 bei  
 unsern geflohenen Händen, in  
 der jüngsten Verwerfung,  
 überm  
 Kugelfang an  
 der verschütteten Mauer:

sichtbar, aufs  
 neue: die  
 Rillen [...]

In der Eulenflucht, hier,

die Gespräche, taggrau,  
der Grundwasserspuren.

(G 117)

Similarly, the ‘Kugelfang’ and ‘verschüttete[...] Mauer’ of part eight are neither wholly visible nor wholly submerged. These are some of the ‘Spur[en]’ which have been excavated, and which now inform our new perspective. At the end of part eight, as the poem begins to reach its conclusion, we eventually settle once more on the ‘Grundwasserspuren’, that liminal point between the everyday world and the excavated one where the poem began. Here, and in the poem’s final part, phrases are repeated from the opening section of the poem, but with their lineation and syntax altered. Most importantly, perhaps, they are now between brackets, suggesting a return to the starting point which is fundamentally altered and necessarily parenthetical, and in which we can read the tentative redemption of representation which Szondi comments on in his analysis of the poem – a redemption which is enabled by the processes of excavation which have occurred throughout the poem.

These processes of excavation are not only literal, in the sense that the text literally takes us into underground, tomb-like spaces, but also meta-linguistic, identifying the processes of excavating, salvaging, repeating and reordering linguistic fragments. For example, the modified repetitions which link each part of the text make clear that each is a fragment of a larger whole.

However, the prominent modified repetitions between sections are not the only form of repetition in the poem. Frequently, single words are repeated in syntactically unusual positions. These doublings give the impression that the phrase is unable to move on or to be completed until the key word has been repeated – acting as a kind of stutter which enacts ‘stuck-ness’. For example, ‘du bist – | bist zuhause’ in part one implies an uncertainty about the reader’s

location.<sup>111</sup> This is highly significant, given the way in which this opening section deliberately conflates text and space as the terrain into which we go. The uncertainty which enters into this gap between the two repeated instances of 'bist' implies numerous possibilities, which are closed down by the following two words. Other repetitions serve to furnish more detail to specific images, and still others seem to have no semantic implications but rather simply reinforce the feeling of restriction which pervades the poem more broadly. The 'Kam, kam' of the opening of section three or the 'Jahre. | Jahre, Jahre' of section four exemplify this latter pattern, since both words are performing the same syntactical function. It is as though there are not enough different words: the same ones must be repeated until their meaning becomes more profound and more settled.

'Engführung' also encourages us to 'excavate' other discourses, particularly those of botany and geology. Terminology borrowed from these scientific discourses appears throughout the text – 'nierig' and 'stengelig', for example, being unusual words drawn from mineralogy, botany and biology. Elsewhere in the poem, we read of membranes, millicrystals and a 'Porenbau', which serves as a metaphor for the plural subject 'we'. What is the effect of the inclusion of this scientific language? As I have argued above, the very inclusion of terms with scientific overtones amounts to an exploration of linguistic depth and surface. Celan invites us to consider the precise meaning, history and use of these terms, given as they are in a non-scientific context. We are asked to scrutinise these strange words closely, as they interrupt the smooth surface of poetic discourse, and to consider their history, etymology and usage. In this way, the words themselves become a site for excavation and close examination. Even reading these images as metaphors, one might argue

---

<sup>111</sup> The word 'zu Hause' should also be read as a reference to Hölderlin's *Der Rhein*. See Wiedemann in Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 668.

that they are concerned with the scrutiny of surface (or the illusion of it): the vision of the human body as a 'Porenbau', for example, suggests that the apparently smooth surface of our skin would look much deeper under a microscope. Similarly, the membrane, the thin surface which holds a cell together but which is inherently permeable, suggests the fragile relationship between a surface and what lies beneath it.

Overall, then, we can conclude that the poem investigates this fraught relationship between the superficial and the profound – between the surface and its excavated depth – in many different ways. The obscurity of the language, structure and syntax forces us to consider the difficulty of reading past an apparently impermeable surface into the tangled, yet profound, connotations of individual words and phrases. The apparent movement of the poem, insofar as we can trace the process of a narrative, seems to move us between the daylight world above the surface and a subterranean, sepulchral space inhabited by different, difficult voices. Even the fact that the repetitions are significantly modified, in syntax and in alignment, means that we could easily make the mistake of (superficially) considering each repetition to be the same phrase, when in fact a close, in-depth reading proves that this is not the case. The biological and scientific lexicon offers another way of thinking about this relationship between depth and surface.

This move to explore the hidden depths of language could, of course, be conceived of as a move to expand the possibilities of language, by opening up new spaces of interpretative possibility. However, the overwhelming mood of the poem, the troubling images of death, decay and disembodiment which run throughout the text, the jarring cacophony of different voices, and the unsettling labyrinthine structure which links the various sections of the poem, suggest that this process is highly ambivalent. Motifs of enclosure, limitation and restriction run from the title of the poem to the closing section: these are

the 'Engpässe' through which we travel with our lives at stake. At the same time, though, the possibility that such a process might enable a new form of poetic expression to emerge, working against the atomisation and emptiness which Celan explicitly rejected in his letter to Einhorn, is ever-present.<sup>112</sup>

Like 'Engführung', Prynne's 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' examines the relationship between surface and depth in a number of ways. It also incorporates and scrutinises scientific discourses, and involves a journey into subterranean space. In both cases, anxiety about the representational capacity of language is at stake. Existing critical readings of the poem foreground the way in which the poem's recontextualisation of scientific language probes discourses of knowledge, undermining the assumption that science, modernity and truth are synonymous, 'resist[ing] parochial claims to the exact truth and objectivity of scientific discourses by inviting the reader to historicise them'.<sup>113</sup> I would like to extend these by proposing that it is significant that these reconfigurations of objectivity, truth, surface and depth are conceptualised with reference to space, place and landscape, and therefore serve as an example of the kind of textual landscape described above, once which might be excavated in search of trace.

In order to probe these issues, 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' (P 65-67), like 'Engführung', takes the reader into a subterranean space – in this case the space of geological time, tracing glacial history downward through layers of rock.

In the matter of ice, the invasions  
were partial, so that the frost  
was a beautiful head  
                    the sky cloudy  
and the day packed into the crystal

<sup>112</sup> Quoted by Wiedemann in Celan, *Die Gedichte*, p. 669.

<sup>113</sup> Roebuck and Sperling, "'The Glacial Question, Unsolved': A Specimen Commentary on Lines 1-31", p. 41.

as the thrust slowed and we come to  
 a stand, along the coast of Norfolk.  
 That is a relative point, and since  
 the relation was part to part, the  
 gliding was cursive; a retreat, followed  
 by advance, right to north London. The  
 moraine runs axial to the Finchley Road  
 including hippopotamus, which isn't a  
 joke any more than the present fringe  
 of intellectual habit. They did live as  
 the evidence is ready, for the successive  
 drift.

(P 65)

The poem begins with a short stanza which introduces us to the surface qualities of the landscape, and more particularly to the 'matter of ice': the double meaning of 'matter' directs our attention to both the subject and substance which is being investigated.<sup>114</sup> At the beginning of the next stanza, our gaze is lifted upwards to the 'sky cloudy', reinforcing our sense of being bounded both by natural forces above and below. This second stanza then seems to enact the process of drawing a diagrammatic 'line' from place to place, the line which will prove central to the poem's concern, from the perspective of a ground level subject (or group of subjects, as the inclusive 'we'

<sup>114</sup> This kind of paronomastic deep word play is typical of Prynne's work. Roebuck and Sperling explain how it functions in the first lines of the poem: at one level, 'invasions' refers literally to the spread of ice from the north of Britain to the south during the most recent ice age. 'Partial' describes the incomplete extent of these 'invasions'. Roebuck and Sterling point out the possible double meaning, highlighting other 'invasions' from the north of Britain – of Viking and other military forces – which furnish the Germanic roots of many English words. 'Partial', of course, can also mean 'favouring one side in a dispute above the other; biased', and 'matter' could refer either to the physical substance of ice or the 'topic, issue' of ice (a word of Germanic origin). If we favour the 'submerged' or alternate readings, the sentence is transformed from a description of the extent of glacial ice in the physical space of the British Isles to a comment on the competing historical and linguistic influences on the English language (and specifically on the word 'ice'). See Roebuck and Sperling, "'The Glacial Question, Unsolved': A Specimen Commentary on Lines 1-31", p. 43.

implies). Note that here the poem is not describing the line as viewed from above, but rather as it moves through the earth ‘retreat[ing]’ and ‘advanc[ing]’.

Hunstanton to Wells is the clear  
margin, from which hills rise into  
the “interior”; the stages broken through  
by the lobe bent south-west into the Wash  
and that sudden warmth which took  
birch trees up into Scotland. As  
the 50° isotherm retreats there is  
that secular weather laid down in pollen  
and the separable advances on Cromer (easterly)  
and on Gipping (mostly to the south).  
The striations are part of the heart’s  
desire, the parkland of what is coast  
*inwards from which*, rather than the reverse.  
And as the caps melted, the eustatic rise  
in the sea-level curls round the clay, the  
basal rise, what we hope to call “land”.

(P 65)

In the third stanza, we are afforded an aerial view, with a perspective which penetrates through the surface level to which we were previously introduced. Furnished with a ‘map’ of the area in question, a sizeable part of East Anglia, we are able to look with a kind of x-ray vision through human geography (towns such as Hunstanton, Wells-next-the-Sea and Gipping) and topographical features (hills, coastline, the Wash) to the underground ‘striations’ which are the real subject of the poem: the ‘heart’s | desire’, it is implied, is to be able to penetrate down into these, read them – like a text – and draw objective conclusions about the so-called ‘glacial question’.<sup>115</sup>

<sup>115</sup> The title of the poem refers to the unresolved debate about the extent of glaciation in Britain during the last ice age: scholars remain uncertain how far to the south the glacial ice penetrated. The formulation ‘Glacial Question’ is Prynne’s own, and, as Roebuck and Sperling point out, deliberately invokes the vocabulary of nineteenth century positivist science. See Roebuck and Sperling, “‘The Glacial Question, Unsolved’: A Specimen Commentary on Lines 1-31’, p. 40.

And the curving spine of the cretaceous  
ridge, masked as it is by the drift, is  
wedged up to the thrust: the ice fronting  
the earlier marine, so that the sentiment  
of “cliffs” is the weathered stump of a feeling  
into the worst climate of all.

Or if that's  
too violent, then it's the closest balance that  
holds the tilt: land/sea to icecap from  
parkland, not more than 2°-3° F. The  
oscillation must have been so delicate, almost  
each contour on the rock spine is a weather  
limit.

(P 65-66)

The following two stanzas continue to pay close attention to the subterranean features of the landscape, namely the curving ‘spine’ of rock which lies beneath the hills and cliffs which the poem examines. This section of the poem begins to trace the process which created the current topography, again implying a journey below the surface to examine older layers of rock, which equates the digging down into subterranean space with the ability to look backwards through time. The sixth stanza (not quoted here) crystallises this: the layers of the earth are ‘facts in succession, they *are* succession’ (P 66). Here, temporality, like language, is spatialised and excavated.

We are rocked  
in this hollow, in the ladle by which  
the sky, less cloudy now, rests on our  
foreheads. Our climate is maritime, and  
“it is questionable whether there has yet been  
sufficient change in the marine faunas  
to justify a claim that  
the Pleistocene Epoch itself  
has come to an end.” We live in that  
question, it is a condition of fact: as we  
move it adjusts the horizon: belts of forest  
the Chilterns, up into the Wolds of Yorkshire.  
The falling movement, the light cloud  
blowing in from the ice of Norfolk  
thrust. As the dew recedes from the grass



towards noon the line of recession  
slips back. We know where the north  
is, the ice is an evening whiteness.  
We know this, we are what it leaves:  
the Pleistocene is our current sense, and  
what in sentiment we are, we  
are, the coast, a line or sequence, the  
cut back down, to the shore.

(P 66)

The final two stanzas emphasise more clearly the contingent nature of the temporospatially situated scientific knowledge which is easily mistaken for truth, by calling into question our certainty about the surface perception of the world which we take for granted. Digging down into geological history has demonstrated that we live in a 'question' which our normal powers of observation are unable to resolve: as each word appears and can be scrutinised, its apparent certainty is effaced by its relative position in relation to the layers of cultural history, etymology, philology and semantics. Yet the final lines of the poem seem to offer some comfort as far as our ability to 'know' is concerned: 'We know where the north is' and 'We know this, we are what it [the ice] leaves'. 'Sense' and 'sentiment' are, in a way, synonymous: our experiences and our 'sentiments' are the only possible 'sense' we can make of the world. This is what Prynne's journey into the subterranean mystery has demonstrated.

As in 'Engführung', Prynne is concerned with the relationship between surface and depth: between the appearance of truth and certainty, and a complex and elusive underlying reality. Prynne complicates the surface of his poem by incorporating various types of repetition, which generate syntactical and semantic ambiguity, and the use of an unfamiliar scientific lexis which, like Celan's inclusion of the vocabulary of biology, invites us to consider the word itself as a contested site in which history, memory and 'truth' interact.

Repetitions and various types of doublings and double meanings are frequently used here just as they are in 'Engführung'. Roebuck and Sperling are diligent in following Prynne and 'excavating' these words for their hidden meanings, a project which is beyond the scope of this close reading: it is sufficient for our purposes to note the plethora of subtexts and connotations with which the poem plays. There are also a few examples of word-for-word repetition, another type of doubling, such as in the syntactically complex final sentence, where the doubling of 'we are' undermines the apparent certainty of the assertion: 'what in sentiment, we are, we | are' would communicate a much more firm conclusion, without the second (and irregularly delineated) 'we are'. The unexpected lineation in the second iteration of the phrase places unusual emphasis on both words, rendering a phrase we would usually take for granted unfamiliar and problematic, and therefore also complicated its meaning: who are 'we'? What 'are' we?

The incorporation of a technical geological lexis also contributes to the sense that the poem is attempting to take us deeper into a familiar space and a familiar language. The use of terms such as 'moraine', 'Pleistocene', 'cretaceous' and others, serves two functions. Firstly, it calls attention to the superficial relation we have with our environment, by describing it in technical terms which suggest that we might look at it differently (and perhaps more deeply) than we would in our habitual interactions with the world. For example, the poem orients the geological 'moraine' which marks the extent of glaciation against the mundane space of the Finchley Road, North London, to alienating and unsettling effect. This is extended by the suggestion that we think of ourselves as (possibly) living in the Pleistocene Epoch. Prynne's poem suggests that this scientific discourse itself does not have a monopoly on truth-claims or on representing the world 'honestly', so that the 'glacial question' of the poem's title cannot be resolved entirely by science.

Prynne's poem contains many references to form without texture, notably the idea of points and lines which flows from the near-beginning of the poem ('a relative point [...] the gliding was cursive') to the very end – 'a line or sequence, the | cut back down, to the shore' – tracing on the way a gamut of axes, borders, frontiers, timelines, ridges and similar linear formulations. In a sense, Prynne's poem takes as its key concern the function of this and other lines which seek to schematise and describe abstract patterns in response to textured reality. '[T]he relation is part to part', and the flow from place to place through the poem by means of various lines and points does give the impression that, rather than supplying us with a textured, mimetic representation of reality, it is instead sketching a kind of diagram of the 'real' space to which it refers (such as the many English coastal towns, the image of the 'moraine run[ning] axial to the Finchley Road').

The idea that we might probe our discourses, be they poetic or scientific, more deeply, and approach more critically the truth-forming function of language, is clearly a key theme in 'Glacial Question', just as it is in 'Engführung'. Both poems are interested in language as a site of meaning, and in the relationship between its semantic surfaces and its etymological, connotative and poetic depths.

Yet there is a crucial difference here: Prynne's poem contains an almost euphoric note which is at odds with Celan's ambivalent and tortured 'straitening'. As has already been noted, at several points the perspective on the subterranean or excavated spaces seems to be that of an aerial observer, and there are many images of expansion and expansiveness which undercut the claustrophobia one might expect to accompany a journey into geological history. The sky – at first 'cloudy', then 'less cloudy now' – serves as a dramatic counterpoint to the earth. The movement of the poem – the line which 'advances' and 'retreats' beneath our feet – is almost playful, and the

perspective which leaps from London to East Anglia to Scotland is panoramic and expansive. Unlike Celan's process of enclosure, tightening and narrowing, 'Glacial Question' seeks to open up and expand the ground beneath our feet and the potential of language to mean, rather than relating this interplay of depth and surface to the sinister and the sepulchral. There is a sense of play in Prynne's poem which is absent from Celan's.

The equation of underground striations with 'the heart's desire', a curiously lyrical phrase which is found at the centre of the poem, also marks a dramatic point of departure from 'Engführung'. Where Celan's poem offers us disembodied body parts, Prynne's offers us an *embodied* landscape, with hearts, spines and emotions, where the 'sentiment | of "cliffs"' is the 'weathered stump of a feeling'. This, in conjunction with the tentatively affirmative conclusions of the poem and the overall mood of movement, expansion and play which is present throughout 'Glacial Question', suggests a quite different emphasis from Celan's 'narrowing' of meaning: the purpose of calling into question the truth-claims of scientific discourse, and of language itself, seems to be to expand rather than narrow down or restrict interpretative possibilities. In this sense, it does not seem too much of a stretch to read the final word of the poem as another Prynnean pun: a 'shore', signifying not only a coastline but also 'a prop or strut': a support which holds open a cavity, as in a mine or other excavated space.<sup>116</sup>

Both Prynne and Celan's poems equate text and landscape, using the motifs of digging, excavation and unearthing as metaphors for the potential of poetry to explore the history, etymology, and truth-value of language itself. The link between text and place is clearly established in both poems. In 'Engführung', the reader is 'driven into the terrain' at the same time as he or

<sup>116</sup> See 'Shore, n.3', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1914) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/178551>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

she enters the space of the poem. Poetry has the power to ‘write the grass apart’, in the sense that it enables us to examine deeper meanings of a language which otherwise appears as an interderminate ‘blackish field’. The poem provides access – as far as access is possible – to those submerged voices which are concealed beneath everyday speech.

Likewise, Prynne’s ‘Glacial Question’ quite deliberately equates the landscape under scrutiny with a text to be read and interpreted: the ‘cursive’ of the line which is the poem’s key focus, marking the extent of glaciation in Britain, is a clear play on the image of a handwritten script, and the reference to ‘*margin*’ (emphasis orig.) is another textual pun. ‘Glacial Question’ can be said to describe three spatial configurations: firstly, a ‘real’ landscape consisting of various British landmarks, towns and geographical features; secondly, a diagrammatic overlay offering a scientific map of glaciation, like the diagrams one finds in Prynne’s academic sources, with the focus being on the ‘line’ which marks the apparently critical threshold between glacial and non-glacial landscapes; and finally, the ‘language map’ produced by the poem itself, which destabilises the first two through double meanings, shifting discourses and polysemy. As in Celan’s poem, Prynne’s aim is to demonstrate that this ‘language map’ is as tentative as all maps in representing our relation to the world.

## 2.7. *Conclusion*

This chapter has compared the textual landscapes which exist in the work of Prynne and Celan, and has sought to demonstrate their shared interest in exploring new models of poetic representation which do not rely on metaphor, mimesis or the presence of a coherent poetic subject. It has examined several of the key spatial constructs which recur in the two writers’ collections of the

1960s and early 1970s, such as the use of the trope of the meridian as a meta-linguistic space of poetic encounter, including in the texts 'In der Luft' and 'From End to End'. It has also examined the notion of the poem as a place of encounter, drawing on Prynne's conviction that the temporary, unstable hut is the most fitting construct which serves as the house of poetry. Finally, it has described the ways in which Prynne and Celan's work equates layered, difficult landscapes described in geological language with the layered, difficult and historicised features of language itself. The close readings of 'Engführung' and 'The Glacial Question, Unsolved' above illustrate some of the implications of this process, and particularly demonstrate how they can also be excavated and used to problematise the relationship between linguistic surface and semantic, historical, philological and poetic depth.

All of these spatial constructs serve a dual function: they explicitly reflect on the qualities of language and how it creates meaning, and they are also constructed within language. The epigraph to this chapter quotes Celan's view that poetry possesses its own 'tectonics': that it is spatial in underlying ways which do not necessarily relate to the predictable ways in which one can talk about, for example, concrete poetry as a 'spatial' construct. Celan relates this description to all poetry of a certain type and quality, even that which does not make its own tectonics visible. The studies in the current chapter examine poems in which the tectonics are not merely visible, but also explored in deliberately spatialised ways using a variety of textual constructs.

This new model of poetic representation rejects the notion that the 'lyrische Ich' can speak directly to a reading subject using transparently communicable language, or draw on imagery and symbolism which clearly speaks to a shared cultural history and encodes unproblematic lived experience. Instead, it is a poetic of fragmentation and difficulty, where the assumptions underlying language and the implications of discourse are constantly

examined, and the materiality of the signifier constantly foregrounded. Rather than committing to the linear, stable mode of representation which characterised other poetry in both nations in the period in question, whereby an identifiable speaker relates experience in a more or less chronological and realistic fashion, Prynne and Celan both adopt a non-linear, non-hierarchical approach to representation which juxtaposes images paratactically, distorting traditional syntax and using strikingly obscure words, including those borrowed from other discourses and neologisms.<sup>117</sup>

These textual landscapes suggest a new way of writing and reading poetic texts, informed by modernist attempts to create new paradigms of representation. However, the explicit linguistic scepticism which is a crucial context for Prynne and Celan's work is also identifiable as a precursor of postmodernist poetry: both writers incorporate linguistic experimentation, and experimentation with the concept of meaning, in a manner which foreshadows the more pronounced destabilisation of meaning which characterises postmodernism. This tension is revealed in their approach to representing space as a metaphor for language in extremis, which does not abandon belief in the ability of the poetic text to create meaning.

The two poets' *Sprachskepsis*, and thus their shared approach to representing space, is underpinned by historical and cultural contexts. As discussed in the introduction to this chapter, Celan's Holocaust trauma is inevitably read as the source of his complex relationship to the German language, and the impact of this can clearly be seen in his poetry of this period. In particular, contemporary discourses of memory and Celan's ambivalent attitude to the creation of so-called 'sites of memory' are crucial contexts for

---

<sup>117</sup> The lack of a coherent, perceiving 'I' is also central to Reeve and Kerridge's discussion of 'scale' in Prynne, a discussion which raises important issues of perspective, spatiality and representation. See Reeve and Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much*, pp. 1-36.

his attempts to create a linguistic memory-space based on the necessity of excavating language itself. For Prynne, more immediate cultural contexts of the 1960s are important: both intellectual contexts, in the form of post-structuralist theory, and cultural ones, as his work reflects networks of connection, distance and exchange in language, including across historical periods.

The relationship between Prynne and Celan's work is multifaceted and complex. The aim of this study was to scrutinise one aspect of it: the common features of their representations of space and place as meta-textual or metalinguistic. Comparative analysis reveals various correspondences, underpinned by and reciprocally influencing contemporary cultural, historical and poetic contexts. Above all, analysis of the spaces and places represented in their work demonstrates how they seek to adapt ideas of landscape, space and place – and their relationship to language – to suit a new phase of literary and intellectual history.



### 3. Negotiating home in Derek Mahon and Sarah Kirsch

#### 3.1. *World, community, home*

We are  
Holing up here  
In the difficult places –<sup>1</sup>

In the rapidly shifting historical context of the 1960s and 1970s, both Derek Mahon and Sarah Kirsch can be positioned as writers for whom geopolitical and cultural division was a day-to-day reality: the former in light of the partition of Ireland during the years of the so-called ‘Troubles’ from the late 1960s onwards, and the latter as she moved from East to West Germany during the same period. This is the context in which this chapter examines their work, asking how the reality of spatial and political division is reflected in the spaces and places represented in their poetry.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the fraught political circumstances within which they were writing, both poets occasionally came under pressure to participate in certain mainstream political discourses. They were expected to declare affiliation with certain political movements or parties or to use the

---

<sup>1</sup> ‘Entropy’ in Derek Mahon, *Lives* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 30.

platform afforded by their literary celebrity to speak on behalf of others.<sup>2</sup> Both resisted this pressure as far as possible, declaring instead a commitment to ‘authentic’ forms of representation which remain faithful to their own experience and the experiences of the communities to which they express a sense of belonging. Mahon, for example, wrote that:

Battles have been lost, but a war remains to be won. The war I mean is not, of course, between Protestant and Catholic, but between the fluidity of a possible life (poetry is a great lubricant) and the *rigor mortis* of archaic postures, political and cultural. The poets themselves have taken no part in political events, but they have contributed to that possible life; for the act of writing is itself political in the fullest sense. A good poem is a paradigm of good politics – of people talking to each other, with honest subtlety, at a profound level.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, Kirsch stated in an interview:

Ich bin nicht für irgendeine politische Partei und werde mich keiner feministischen Bewegung anschließen. Ich versuche Kunst zu machen, die mit Menschen zu tun hat, mit den Menschen, mit denen ich lebe – und der Mensch ist auch, aber nicht nur ein

<sup>2</sup> James Hewitt, Stan Smith, and Edna Longley were among those who either criticised Mahon directly for his failure to engage sufficiently in contemporary Irish politics or appeared to dismiss his work through their general critiques of ‘apolitical’ poetry. (See Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home*, p. 46.) Kirsch’s perceived lack of ideological commitment was also the subject of numerous critiques from SED party officials and peers both before and after her move to the West. See Rhys W. Williams, “‘Ich bin kein Emigrant, ich bin kein Dissident’: Sarah Kirsch und die DDR”, in *Deutsch-deutsches Literaturexil. Schriftstellerinnen und Schriftsteller aus der DDR in der Bundesrepublik*, ed. by Jörg Bernig and Walter Schmitz (Dresden: Thelem, 2009), pp. 385–400 (p. 385).

<sup>3</sup> Derek Mahon, quoted in Hugh Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 76.

politischer Gegenstand. Wer meinen Texten gesellschaftspolitische Bedeutungen entnehmen will – ich werde ihn nicht daran hindern.<sup>4</sup>

Earlier in the same interview, she said 'ich habe Politik nie plakativ betrieben'.<sup>5</sup>

On the one hand, therefore, both Mahon and Kirsch seek to articulate certain shared experiences and realities, using the language of their respective communities and associated literary forms; on the other, they resist the reduction of their poetry to crass sloganising on behalf of mainstream political doctrines.

Nowhere is the productive tension which results from this complex understanding of the relationship between poetry and politics more evident than in their representations of spaces and places. In this chapter, the navigation of a course between these two seemingly contradictory positions is described as a process of negotiating home, and is examined through a close analysis of the types of space and places Mahon and Kirsch represent in their poetry. I will argue that the poets' negotiation of 'home' takes place on various levels: firstly, through attempts to situate their own voices in a transnational or global context; secondly, as they seek to determine and declare affiliation to particular human communities, including literary communities; and finally, through the exploration of domestic and mundane spaces and their relationship to identity and belonging. Negotiating 'world', 'community' and 'home' are key themes in Mahon and Kirsch's work, and each will be examined in turn in the following chapter in order to build up a picture of the intersection between politics, experience, space and place in their poetry. This

---

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', in *Hundert Gedichte* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1997), pp. 123–34 (p. 130).

<sup>5</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 129.

will then be substantiated by a close reading of Mahon's 'Beyond Howth Head' (L 33-39) and Kirsch's 'Wiepersdorf' cycle (SG 137-43), which both express the complexity of literary and personal community.

Although Mahon and Kirsch have both enjoyed long literary careers, the poems examined in this chapter are all drawn from their earlier collections, those published in the 1960s and 70s.<sup>6</sup> Both Mahon and Kirsch paid particularly close attention to the negotiation of 'home' during these years, for two reasons: firstly, due to the necessity, incumbent on young writers, of determining and demonstrating their position within literary and cultural spheres as they began to reach out to a growing audience; and secondly, because these were the years of most dramatic upheaval in both writer's personal circumstances.<sup>7</sup>

Examining the layers of spatial dynamics (world, community and home) in Mahon and Kirsch's work will reveal the complexity of the relationship

<sup>6</sup> These are: Derek Mahon, *Night-Crossing* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968); Mahon, *Lives*; Derek Mahon, *The Snow Party* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975); Sarah Kirsch, *Landaufenthalt* (Berlin; Weimar: Aufbau-Verlag, 1967); Sarah Kirsch, *Zaubersprüche* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1974); Sarah Kirsch, *Rückenwind* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1977). Kirsch's *Drachensteigen* (1979) is not included in this analysis as it was written and published after her move to West Germany in 1976 and belongs to a different period of her work. Poems by Kirsch are cited from Sarah Kirsch, *Sämtliche Gedichte* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2013). Poems by Derek Mahon are cited from their original editions, unless otherwise specified: Mahon habitually revises, rewrites and reprints his work in selected and collected editions, and several of the poems discussed in this chapter are either significantly amended or removed entirely in later editions of his work. Subsequent references to primary texts are given in abbreviated form in the text.

<sup>7</sup> Derek Mahon moved away from Dublin in the late 1960s to travel and work in the United States, Canada and France. In the early 1970s, he worked as a journalist in London and returned only sporadically to Ireland. Kirsch moved from Leipzig to Berlin during the same period and emigrated from East to West Berlin in 1976, in the wake of the Wolf Biermann affair. For Mahon's biography, see Stephen Enniss, *After the Titanic: A Life of Derek Mahon* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2014). For Kirsch's biography, see Christine Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin: Sarah Kirschs Lyrik* (Tübingen: Francke, 1990).

between self, world, experience and poetry in their work. Rather than simply reproducing the persuasive spatial paradigms of the pre-war era, such as the assumed dominance of the nation-state model, Kirsch and Mahon both opt to explore versions of global and local space, social and literary communities, which are significantly more fragmented and marginal.

This has implications for the issues of periodisation raised in the introduction to this thesis. Both Kirsch and Mahon are interested in and influenced by the modernist canon: Kirsch, for example, inherits a particular mode of travel writing and associated motifs from the proto-modernist work of Arthur Rimbaud, and Mahon owes debts of various kinds to James Joyce, Samuel Beckett, W. B. Yeats, W. H. Auden and others. Both poets adapt and develop these traditions in order to address a historical context in which the teleology of the nation-state was violently called into question by geopolitical and social division. However, their work certainly does not conform to prevailing understandings of postmodernist poetry, given the lack of emphasis on radical formal and linguistic experimentation. What results is an innovative approach to representing the processes of negotiating home and belonging in literature – an approach which shows both continuity and development from modernist precursors, contradicting readings of Mahon and Kirsch as apolitical writers.

### 3.2. *Negotiating world*

Mahon and Kirsch are writers with a sense of the world beyond the confines of their (divided) nations. This manifests itself in various ways in their work. For example, both poets regularly cite or allude to writers working in other languages and traditions. Moreover, their work regularly features motifs of border crossing and travel: either domestic, international or ambiguous. They

approach the idea of representing a global space in ways which relate to their particular historical, social and cultural circumstances, and they can therefore be said to negotiate a sense of the world which balances a perspective on their own communities and home locations with a broader sense of their place within a global community.

In Mahon's early work, this translates into attempts to examine the relevance of two 'troubled' Irish states within an ever-changing world order. Europe possesses an enduring cultural appeal – as does England, despite fraught political relations and the sense that British influence around the world is in decline. The United States and Canada appear to exert an ever-greater influence over Irish politics and culture, which is not always welcome. The title of Mahon's first collection, *Night-Crossing* (1968), speaks volumes about these furtive cultural and political exchanges. The collection as a whole is composed in a manner which 'maps' various cultural influences. Roughly the first third of the collection, including poems such as 'In Carrowdore Churchyard' (NC 3), 'Glengormley' (NC 5), 'In Belfast' (NC 6) and others, display an interest in various domestic Irish landscapes and affiliations. These give way in the middle third of the collection to poems drawing on French and other continental European influences, such as 'Four Walks in the Country near Saint Briec' (NC 17-18), 'Van Gogh among the Miners' (NC 19) and 'Gipsies' (NC 24). Several poems in the final third of the collection look further afield to the United States and Canada, such as 'Canadian Pacific' (NC 27), 'April on Toronto Island' (NC 30) and 'As God is my Judge' (NC 31).

*Lives* (1972), Mahon's second collection, charts roughly the same three broad groupings of cultural and spatial affiliation, albeit through a more sophisticated lens, that of the homecoming émigré. This is signalled by the position at the start of the collection of 'Homecoming' (L 1), a wry poem reflecting on the speaker's return to Ireland after time spent in the US.

Subsequent poems frequently juxtapose the speaker's experience of 'elsewhere' against a new sense of 'home' mediated by a worldly wise (and in places, world-weary) voice. 'Ecclesiastes' (L 3), for instance, excoriates the rhetorical posturing which turns figures of religious authority into the worst kind of politicians, blending a specific sense of the Irish context ('the | dank churches, the empty streets, | the shipyard silence, the tied up swings [...] the Antrim hills, the bog meadows, the heaped | graves of your fathers') with the suggestion of a peculiarly American tradition of individualism and oratory ('Bury that red | bandana and stick, that banjo, this is your | country, close one eye and be king.') 'Beyond Howth Head' (L 33-39), the final poem in *Lives*, which was also published separately in 1970, explicitly navigates or negotiates an identity between Irish, European and American points of reference, as described in section two of this chapter.

Poems in *The Snow Party* (1975) adopt similar positions, always treading a course between Irish, British, European (particularly French) and global influences. In this collection in particular, Mahon's engagement with culture and politics constantly interweaves the local and the global, so that instead of reflecting explicitly on the 'Irish question', precedents from distant cultures are linked to particular characteristics of contemporary Irish life. In 'The Last of the Fire Kings' (SP 9-10), for example, the framing trope of a self-reliant, exotic persona who is '[t]hrough with history' is situated within an Irish landscape of 'milk churns', 'a world of | Sirens, bin-lids | And bricked up windows'. The poem 'Thammuz' (SP 11), named for the Babylonian god of food and vegetation, explores a post-apocalyptic yearning for a simpler life.

What will be left  
After the twilight of cities,  
The flowers of fire,

Will be the soft

Vegetables where our  
Politics were conceived.

When we give back  
The cleared counties  
To the first forest,

The hills to the hills  
The reclaimed  
Mudflats to the vigilant sea,

There will be silence, then  
A sigh of waking  
As from a long dream.

Once more I shall rise early  
And plough my country  
By first light [...]

The longing for a peaceful life devoid of the messy complexities of modern politics can be read as a response to contemporary Irish politics – the same desire to be ‘through with history’ which is expressed in ‘Last of the Fire Kings’. However, the agrarian landscape and routines described in the poem are decidedly universal. Whether the speaker of the poem is an Irish peasant farmer or an ancient Babylonian, the pull of ‘my country’ and the yearning to escape an apparently doomed civilisation are constants. This blend of frequently ironic nostalgia, and meditations on the cyclical nature of history and universal qualities of human existence, marks the tone of both *Lives* and *The Snow Party*.

A sense of the global and universal, in both spatial and cultural terms, is a key feature of Mahon’s poetry between 1968 and 1972. Sometimes, this global space exists as a counterpoint to the stiflingly domestic preoccupations of contemporary Irish literary circles – the Irish and the worldly are occasionally juxtaposed as a source of mockery, as in ‘Ecclesiastes’. More often, it is Mahon’s desire to demonstrate the ‘fluidity of a possible life’ which is apparent



in his explorations of space beyond Ireland: many poems conclude that ‘we’ – Irish people, Europeans or simply human beings – have a responsibility for each other which extends beyond national borders. His most famous poem, ‘A Disused Shed in County Wexford’ (SP 36), demonstrates this. The mushrooms to which the poem gives a voice may be located within a specified rural and almost comically parochial Irish environment, but the marginalised masses of history which they represent are by no means exclusively Irish. They are the ‘[l]ost people of Treblinka and Pompeii’. It is implied that they have counterparts in ‘Peruvian mines’ and ‘Indian compounds’. The poem articulates a sense of global space, giving voice to a global community of marginalised people which transcends spatial and historical boundaries. It does not ignore the context of Irish political violence, but neither does it examine ‘the Irish question’ in the narrow terms of Protestant and Catholic or north and south. Instead it examines the relevance of these groupings in a broader historical and geographical context and thus negotiates a sense of Ireland’s position within the world, and particularly in the context of a globalised memory discourse. Mahon’s shed is not a ‘lieu de mémoire’ of the type theorised by Nora, but the poem reflects globalised discourses of spatial memory which emerged during the 1960s and 70s, as part of the second wave of Holocaust memory.

One could read the polemical tone of ‘A Disused Shed in County Wexford’ critically, as an attempt by a relatively privileged speaker to appropriate the voices, and struggles, of a marginalised community, eliding their individual circumstances under a banner of collective isolation and abjection. Mahon’s speaker assumes that the ‘lost people’ of Treblinka and Pompeii are begging to be ‘saved’, and assigns a voice to them on his own terms. Doing so demonstrates a potentially troubling disregard for the specificity of individual historical and political circumstances: the marginalised of Treblinka experience

different traumas and obstacles to those of County Wexford, Pompeii, Peru or India.

Elsewhere, Mahon's negotiation of Ireland's position within global space offers a more nuanced analysis of transnational community and belonging. This is evident in several poems which explore transatlantic relationships through the lens of Irish migration to North America, a persistent feature of Irish-American relations since at least the seventeenth century, peaking in the early to mid-nineteenth century. Mass migration to the US and Canada had a considerable impact on Irish politics in the twentieth century, not least because émigrés offered significant financial support to Irish political causes, both Republican and Unionist.<sup>8</sup> In 1970, there were approximately 1.45 million first and second generation Irish immigrants in the United States.<sup>9</sup> The combined population of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland in 1971 was 4.5 million, meaning that the Irish-American population represented almost one third of the 'native' population of Ireland itself.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 297. See also *Irish Nationalism in Canada*, ed. by David A. Wilson (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2009).

<sup>9</sup> See Meaghan Dwyer-Ryan, 'Irish Catholics and Irish-Catholic Americans, 1940-Present', in *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, ed. by Elliott Robert Barkan (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012), pp. 1011-1020 (p. 1012). Before the 1990s, the US census did not ask respondents to self-report their ancestry, listing only details of 'foreign-born' residents or those with at least one foreign-born parent. It is likely, therefore, that many more than 1.45 million Americans had some sense of an Irish identity in 1970, on the basis of their grandparents or great-grandparents having emigrated in the nineteenth century. This is borne out by more recent statistics on self-reported Irish ancestry in the United States: as of 2010, 34.7 million Americans reported having Irish ancestry, more than seven times the population of Ireland itself. See US Census Bureau Public Information Office, 'Facts for Features: Irish-American Heritage Month (March) and St. Patrick's Day (March 17): 2012 - Facts for Features & Special Editions - Newsroom - U.S. Census Bureau' <[https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb12-ff03.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb12-ff03.html)> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>10</sup> Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 'Northern Ireland Census 2011: Historic Population Trends (1841 to 2011) - Northern Ireland and

This context informs several poems from these first three collections. Poems in *Night-Crossing*, particularly 'April on Toronto Island' (NC 30) and 'Canadian Pacific' (NC 27), offer a melancholy, although sympathetic, portrait of the North American-Irish connection. 'Canadian Pacific' examines migratory trends and global connections through a highly critical political lens:

From famine, pestilence and persecution  
Those gaunt forefathers shipped abroad to find  
Rough stone of heaven beyond the western ocean,  
And staked their claim and pinned their faith.  
Tonight their children whistle through the dark,  
Frost chokes the windows. They will not have heard  
The wild geese flying south over the lakes  
While the lakes harden beyond grief and anger –  
The eyes fanatical, rigid the soft necks,  
The great wings sighing with a nameless hunger.

This 'night crossing' is transnational, unlike other journeys in the volume. The descendants of Irish economic migrants – presumably Protestant migrants, as were the majority who moved to Canada in the nineteenth century – return to the 'old country' in aeroplanes. References to frost which 'chokes' the windows, the lakes 'harden[ing] beyond grief and anger', implies a rigidity of mentality which may be identified with a particular form of political engagement: that '*rigor mortis* of archaic postures' which Mahon explicitly condemns.<sup>11</sup> Unlike their 'gaunt forefathers', for whom the opportunities afforded by a new country seemed heavenly, this new generation of Irish-Canadians appears to be motivated to return home on the basis of spurious political affiliations. Comparing their movement to that of migratory birds enables the poem's voice to maintain its distance, describing 'their' movement as inevitable and natural. The final two lines, although evidently

---

Republic of Ireland', 2011 <[http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/Historic\\_Population\\_Trends\\_%281841-2011%29\\_NI\\_and\\_RoI.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/Historic_Population_Trends_%281841-2011%29_NI_and_RoI.pdf)> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>11</sup> Derek Mahon, quoted in Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 76.

referring to the ‘wild geese’, could also be understood as referring to the subject of the sentence (‘they’) – is it the geese whose eyes are ‘rigidly fanatical’ or those of the second and third-generation immigrant returning home? What kind of ‘nameless hunger’ prompts their return? Perhaps a hunger for belonging, affiliation, or a sense of home.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast to the somewhat naïve and potentially problematic general overview of global space afforded by ‘A Disused Shed in County Wexford’, here the relationship between Ireland and the rest of the world in an age of mass migration and complex transnational political connection is negotiated precisely, with reference to the specificity of historical circumstance. The indictment of mainstream Irish politics, a disdain for the parochial and a sense of affiliation to a community which extends beyond the borders of Ireland is common to both.

Kirsch’s sense of the world, and its relationship to the GDR, is equally strongly inflected by contemporary political circumstances and yet also open to accusations of idealism and naivety. Her first collection, *Landaufenthalt* (1967) describes, as her friend and fellow poet Elke Erb puts it, ‘Land- und Länderaufenthalt, der nirgends eine Bleibe zeigt, nur Bewegung, Flüge, Fahrten, Verwandlungen in Gestalten, Excursionen’.<sup>13</sup> The vast majority of these journeys take place within the GDR itself, to Brandenburg and other familiar locations, and many poems express a complex affection for ‘home’,

<sup>12</sup> A link to the ‘forefathers’ of Irish literary history is also worth noting. Mahon’s ‘great wings sighing with a nameless hunger’ contain strong echoes of two poems by Yeats: not only do they seem a melancholy recasting of the ‘great wings beating still’ in Yeats’s ‘Leda and the Swan’, but their flight also recalls that of ‘The Wild Swans at Coole’, in which the flight of the swans marks the loss of Romantic innocence, the passage of time and changing generational approaches to notions of home and national identity. In keeping with the poem’s transnationality, Mahon translates Yeats’s Irish swans into Canada geese. See William Butler Yeats, *Poems*, ed. by Seamus Heaney (London: Faber & Faber, 2004), pp. 43, 80.

<sup>13</sup> Elke Erb, quoted in Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 23.

‘mein kleines wärmendes Land’ (‘Fahrt II’, SG 10).<sup>14</sup> Texts such as ‘Bäume lesen’ (SG 70), and various poems which include references to the Vietnam War, appear to a large extent to conform to officially sanctioned perspectives and national ideologies.<sup>15</sup> However, the volume also contains poems which reflect critically on GDR travel limitations, as well as expressing the ‘Innerlichkeit’ and focus on the domestic for which Kirsch was later censured.<sup>16</sup> Three poems – ‘Wohin bin ich geraten hin’ (SG 62), ‘Sinaia’ (SG 63) and ‘Wodka trinken’ (SG 64) – describe travel beyond the borders of the GDR, to Romania, reflecting explicitly on the relationship between the two Germanies and between Germany and its European neighbours.

The collection *Zaubersprüche* (1974) develops the motif of travel in new directions: firstly, into the realms of the magical, such as in ‘Anziehung’ (SG 77) which invites its reader to cross a sea of breaking ice; secondly, as a means of exploring the theme of romantic entanglement and separation which features prominently in this volume and the next; and thirdly, as a mirror for introspection and a means of reflecting on subjectivity and existential crisis. International travel and a sense of the world beyond the borders of the GDR features most prominently in the context of a series of poems under the subheading ‘Lichtbilder’ (in the original publication) which deal with a trip to the Soviet Union Kirsch made in the 1970s. Rimbaud’s *Illuminations* clearly

<sup>14</sup> Although the boundary between ‘home’ and ‘world’ in Kirsch’s work is often deliberately unclear, this subsection deals predominantly with poems which either explicitly depict international travel or appear to explore ‘foreign’ landscapes, spaces and places which are not identifiable as familiar, home territory. Poems which explore ‘home’, in the sense of domestic space and *Heimat*, are discussed below.

<sup>15</sup> For example, ‘Eines Tages’ (SG 31) and ‘Legende über Lilja’ (SG 32-34).

<sup>16</sup> ‘Schwarze Bohnen’ (SG 79) was famously held up at the annual GDR Writers’ Congress in 1969 as an example of bourgeois ‘Innerlichkeit’. See, for example, Simone Barck and Siegfried Lokatis, *Zensurspiele: heimliche Literaturgeschichten aus der DDR* (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2008), p. 184.

offer the formal impetus, particularly for the cycle of vignettes which feature in 'Georgien, Fotographien' (SG 88-90)

The primary motifs of border crossing and international space in *Rückenwind* (1977) reflect relationships between the two Germanies: Christine Cosentino characterises the volume as Kirsch's 'West-östlicher "BRD-DDR" Divan'.<sup>17</sup> In fact, the volume was international in a quite literal sense, appearing in slightly different form first in the GDR then in West Germany in 1976 and 1977 respectively. Alongside the explicit references Cosentino notes to German unity and the trauma of separation between East and West, which are often framed in the context of a romantic relationship, there are also several poems dealing with a global space beyond the two Germanies: with Lake Ohrid in Macedonia, for example, as well as with France and Italy.<sup>18</sup>

Common in Kirsch's work during this period are motifs of flight which complement the regular explorations of new landscapes, spaces and places. Sometimes the flight is in an aeroplane – as in 'Der Wels ein Fisch der am Grund lebt' (SG 9) – but more often it is the flight of birds. Birds perform a wide range of symbolic and structural functions in Kirsch's work: sometimes they connote the mystical natural power of witches, as in the various 'Rufformel' and 'Fluchformel' in *Zaubersprüche* (e.g. SG 111, 112, 113); often they introduce folklorish aspects to narrative poems, such as 'Die Vögel singen im Regen am schönsten' (SG 37) or 'Der Meropsvogel' (SG 146); More

<sup>17</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 75.

<sup>18</sup> Interestingly, if we assume that the content is to some extent autobiographical, the poem 'Warum die wilde sich bäumende Musik am Ohrid-See plötzlich schweigt' (SG 130) suggests that Kirsch met the Irish writer John Montague. Montague was somewhat older than Mahon and already an established presence in Irish literary circles by the time Mahon's work began to appear in print, but the two poets were acquainted: Mahon cites Montague as an early influence and both writers explore the relationship between Ireland and America in detail in their poems. See Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 58.

frequently, the motif of birds in flight appears to offer imaginative alternatives to oppressive realities. In *Landaufenthalt*, 'Kontaktfreudigkeit' is the dominant mood, and although this is replaced in later collections by existential despair and regret, both personal and political, the positive impulse to cross borders, witness and explore new landscapes and situate 'home' within an unbounded 'world' space is a constant feature across the three collections in question.

The poem 'Ausflug' (SG 14) expresses a desire for freedom and liberation, allowing the speaker to inhabit the perspective of a bird:

Ach Vogel, fremde Pfeifente, verirrt im Springbrunnenteich, sag nicht  
Daß ich das nicht kann:  
Nachts besteig ich den Nylonmantel, bezahl  
Die Helfer im voraus mit Knöpfen, flieg einfach los  
Nicht schlechter als du, Graufedrige  
Die Sterne, Poren in meinen Flügeln  
Umtanzen den kleinen Mond in der Tasche  
Wind in den Ärmeln hebt mich in maßlosen Schornsteinruß  
Ich häng überm Land, seh nichts vor Nebel und Rauch  
Fort reiðts mich über den Fluß, die aufrechten Bäume, den Tagebau  
Hier werf ich scheppernd Ersatzteile ab – bloß so, die  
Brauchen sie immer, du, Vogel, pfeif nicht, ich singe, da trägts mich  
Schwarz von der Arbeit des Fliegens bis in die Vorstadt  
Durchs Fenster fall ich in weiße Decken  
Kissen gefüllt mit Entendaunen (hüte dich, fremder Vogel)  
Und mein Freund, der Schmied aus dem Rauchkombinat  
Gibt mir ein duftendes Seifenstück

Like other poems in the collection, notably 'Der Wels ein Fisch der am Grund lebt', this poem offers a fantastical aerial perspective on a contemporary landscape. It is possible to read the speaker's flight from her everyday existence as a form of imaginative resistance or an exploration of female subjectivity. Her return to her sleeping partner in bed in the final lines implies the possibility of a gendered reading, in which nocturnal flight (as with later symbols of witchcraft in Kirsch's work) represents sexual freedom and female self-determination. Certain details of contemporary industrial cityscapes are

discernible: the open-cast mine, for example, as well as chimney stacks and suburbs. This, along with the suggestion that when the woman returns from her flight, she is dirtier than her partner, 'der Schmied aus dem Rauchkombinat', implies a possible ecopoetic reading, as a reflection on environmental pollution. However, such readings remain only background possibilities: the poem does not explicitly explore these themes. Instead, its long lines, lack of full stops and regular enjambment suggest exhilaration, hinting that imaginative nocturnal flight is experienced as joyful and pleasurable in itself, rather than as a symbol of social or sexual liberation. This is supported by the lack of detail concerning the landscape below the speaker. One might expect a poem which engaged with social themes to focus on the inhabitants of the landscape being surveyed, but instead the poem's landscapes are dream-like, rendered indeterminate by smoke and fog.

'Ausflug' is, to a certain extent, typical of Kirsch's depictions of travel and flight in *Landaufenthalt*. Global space and travel through the world is depicted in free-flowing forms. As in 'Ausflug', it is often unclear in Kirsch's poetry whether the travel depicted transcends national borders, since these borders are insignificant in comparison to the freedom afforded by the idea of travel. Ultimately, therefore, political questions and explorations of social problems fade into the background. Although the specificities of life in the GDR are represented in passing, there is no sustained engagement with the particularities of the GDR's relationship to the wider world. The Romania poems in *Landaufenthalt* also illustrate this point: although they thematise the relationship between GDR and West German citizens abroad, critiquing the history of German imperial intervention in Eastern Europe, they cannot be said to give voice to the perspective of marginalised non-German people.<sup>19</sup> This

<sup>19</sup> Instead, they concentrate their ire on West German citizens on holiday. See 'Wodka trinken' (SG 64), 'Sinaia' (SG 63) and 'Wohin bin ich geraten hin' (SG 62).



offers a point of comparison with Mahon's naïve depictions of global space as a means of escaping or diminishing national political problems, and it is similarly problematic, since it too depends on a simplistically utopian vision of global unity and demonstrates a lack of sensitivity to the specificity of life 'elsewhere'.

Kirsch was aware of the difficulty, but also sought to justify her approach to representing the world beyond the GDR in her poems:

Was [Adolf] Endler an mir kritisiert: den Wunsch nach Welt, das  
Überall-zu-hause-sein-Wollen, ist nicht ohne weiteres  
Substanzlosigkeit. Ich lebe von der Entdeckung, von der  
Eroberung immer neuer Landschaften; ich erobere sie mir dann  
auch schreibend. Das war so, wenn ich in Rumänien war, oder in  
Frankreich und in Italien. Ich hoffe, daß meine Reisebilder  
trotzdem keine Tourismus-Gedichte geworden sind. [...]  
Natürlich kann da jeder sagen: Das ist alles so leicht und  
unverbindlich; wo bleiben die gesellschaftlichen Probleme? Aber  
man kann die Gedichte, glaube ich, immer nur in der Summe  
beurteilen und muß auch die Dinge, die nicht geschrieben worden  
sind, mit dazu rechnen.<sup>20</sup>

This attempt at self-justification may allude to the restrictions placed on her writing by GDR censorship: in the same interview, she explains that towards the end of her time in the GDR, she became the subject of official interest and Stasi surveillance.<sup>21</sup> It is implied that since she was unable to express herself with absolute freedom, the absence of a direct engagement with 'gesellschaftlichen Problemen' should not be taken as a lack of concern for

<sup>20</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 129.

<sup>21</sup> 'Daß ich in der DDR am Schluß nicht mehr sehr produktiv war, sein konnte, hatte damit zu tun, daß ich mich um tausend andere Sachen kümmern mußte, weil die Politik sich um mich zu kümmern anfang.' (Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 130.)

such issues or a silent acquiescence in a majority viewpoint. Her work also occasionally reveals an awareness of the limitations on travel experienced by the vast majority of normal citizens of the GDR, which Kirsch largely escaped thanks to her privileged status as a writer, at least during periods when she was in official favour, and before her participation in protests against Wolf Biermann's expatriation.

However, as in Mahon's work, certain texts do demonstrate a much more nuanced awareness of global space and its historical and political contexts. 'Der Milan' (SG 154), from *Rückenwind*, explores the longing for union, wholeness and liberty through the motif of a bird in flight. Unlike 'Ausflug', in which the political implications of free flight are not explicitly thematised, here the ability to transcend the boundaries of divided space functions as a political metaphor:

Donner; die roten Flammen  
 Machen viel Schönheit. Die nadeligen Bäume  
 Fliegen am ganzen Körper. Ein wüster Vogel  
 Ausbreitet im Wind und noch arglos  
 Segelt in Lüften. Hat er dich  
 Im südlichen Auge, im nördlichen mich?  
 Wie wir zerissen sind, und ganz  
 Nur in des Vogels Kopf. *Warum*  
*Bin ich dein Diener nicht ich könnte*  
*Dann bei dir sein.* In diesem elektrischen Sommer  
 Denkt keiner an sich und die Sonne  
 In tausend Spiegeln ist ein furchtbarer Anblick allein

Here, rather than joyfully and imaginatively inhabiting the form and perspective of the bird, by means of a rhetorical question the speaker signals that her interpretation of the kite's perspective is speculative. The chiasmic syntax ('dich | Im südlichen Auge, im nördlichen mich?') emphasises the trauma of separation, as does the use of italics which suggests the inclusion of a second voice within the text. The mood, weather and tone are less ecstatic and joyful than in 'Ausflug'. Moving away from the specific circumstances of the speaker and her lover, the poem generalises the personal experience of

division into 'tausend Spiegeln' of the same situation. The 'rote Flammen' suggest that the bird is a red kite, and thus the colour palette and image of a solitary bird of prey echo the politically loaded symbol of the German imperial eagle (and the 'Roter Adler' which is the symbol of Brandenburg), combined with the symbolism of a phoenix rising from the ashes. Rather than simply expressing 'das Überall-zu-hause-sein-Wollen' in terms which strive to be apolitical, here the by-now familiar motif of a bird in flight is used to explore a vision of transnational space with specific political and historical resonances.

Although there are examples of this type of engagement with division and transnational space throughout Kirsch's work – and more regularly in her later collections – these cannot entirely exonerate Kirsch of the accusation of naivety. Not all readers will be persuaded that her poems written during trips abroad are more than 'Tourismus-Gedichte'. In addition to the problematic emphasis on ideological differences between the two Germanies in the early Romania poems, later trips to Georgia, the Soviet Union and France resulted in similar texts which, though they often deal with conventional political subject matter, generally either conform uncritically to mainstream discourses or else reflect primarily on questions of subjectivity and identity. For example, Kirsch's officially sanctioned trip to France in the early 1970s provided inspiration for three poems which explore a temporary romantic, personal and creative utopia, but Kirsch's growing scepticism regarding official GDR ideology (as reflected in 'Der Milan') is not linked to a complex exploration of that nation's role in relation to the rest of Europe, or indeed the world. The extent to which experiences of the harsh reality of political censorship and restricted personal freedom are communicated by Kirsch's travel poems and the sense of global space they convey is debateable.

Cosentino suggests, in reference to the volume *Landaufenthalt*, that Kirsch 'verspricht sich [...] wenig von einer operativen Sprengkraft der

Literatur', but rather balances 'Gedanken der Bewegung' against a contrasting interest in the static domestic sphere.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Kirsch herself contrasts the 'eher leichtlebige[ ...] Wunsch zum Fliegen' in her work with the more directly political motifs of travel and flight as they feature in the work of fellow GDR writer Erich Arendt.<sup>23</sup> These attempts to minimise the politically provocative implications of the motif of travel in Kirsch's work are only partly successful: it cannot be denied that images of bird-like freedom, uninhibited border crossing, and being light-hearted and noncommittal, have a clear political resonance in the context of German division. Sometimes the implications of this are explored in detail and situated within an immediate historical and political context. Often, however, global space and the idea of the 'world' serve only as blank symbols for freedom and liberation. Nevertheless, when they encounter and describe the very real restrictions and limitations imposed on travel in the GDR, and when they imaginatively erase those divisions, Kirsch's poetic journeys cannot help but be inherently political.

### 3.3. *Negotiating community*

Although travel beyond the borders of the GDR was not always easy for Kirsch, the desire to discover and occupy 'immer neue[ ...] Landschaften' is enacted not just through poems which narrate actual journeys abroad, but 'auch schreibend', through reading, writing and translating. Mahon and Kirsch both worked as translators: Mahon of various French poets including Gérard de Nerval, Rimbaud and Philippe Jaccottet, as well as the theorist Gaston

<sup>22</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 23.

<sup>23</sup> 'Erich Arendts Flugoden sind mit diesem eher leichtlebigen Wunsch zum Fliegen, zum einfach Losfliegen und Weiterfliegen, wie das in meinen Texten oft drin ist, tatsächlich nicht zu vergleichen' (Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 129.)

Bachelard; and Kirsch of Russian poetry including that of Anna Akmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva and Eduard Bagritsky.<sup>24</sup>

Although neither writer had an entirely comfortable relationship to local communities – literary or otherwise – both sought to situate themselves within certain literary traditions, movements and groupings through their engagement with the work of other writers. This process had a historical dimension as well as a spatial one and in some respects it undermined and subverted canonical national literary traditions, including the canon of modernist poetry. These poets were not content to allow their work to be read as a continuation of a mainstream national literary heritage. Instead, they were constantly in dialogue with an eclectic range of writers who are important to them for different reasons. This serves as a means of negotiating their positions in relation to historical and contemporary literary traditions and communities, and it has implications for how we read their work between modernism and postmodernism. Although both draw heavily on modernist poetry, they do not do so in a spirit of simple continuity: each engages with a very particular subset of modernist writers, rather than drawing the broad modernist mainstream. For example, Mahon's decision not to engage explicitly with the Anglo-American high modernism of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, but rather to focus on European (and particularly French) modernist and Romantic writers, can be seen as a means of declaring certain affiliations and rejecting others. Nor does either writer work with earlier texts in a manner which suggests postmodern pastiche. Literary communities are carefully negotiated, and

---

<sup>24</sup> On Mahon and translation, see Rui Manuel G. de Carvalho Homem, *Poetry and Translation in Northern Ireland: Dislocations in Contemporary Writing* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009). Kirsch's translations have not yet been the subject of detailed research, but are mentioned briefly in Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 21.

Mahon and Kirsch engage with ideas, rather than combining eclectic references for chaotic and dramatic effect.

The following analysis focuses on the two levels at which the process of negotiating literary community can be said to occur: firstly, by documenting some instances of intertextuality, more or less explicit references to contemporary and historical work and direct citations of other writers; and secondly, through an analysis of the complex use of form to signal relationships to other writers and literary traditions. Particular attention will be paid to the relationship between form, gender, space and literary community, a crucial feature of Kirsch's engagement with literary tradition which is notable by its absence in Mahon's work.

Kirsch's occasionally fraught relationship with some of her literary contemporaries is well-documented elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> Even before her move to West Germany in 1976, she only partly conformed to the state-sanctioned model of a politically engaged poet and, despite the considerable literary celebrity she later enjoyed, she was notoriously individualistic, even reclusive, and unwilling to participate in the trappings of popular success, such as large public readings, award ceremonies and similar activities. However, it is clear in her poetic works that this distance from certain contemporary literary circles – either in the GDR prior to 1976 or in the BRD afterwards – did not reflect a broader lack of interest in engaging with the work of other writers.<sup>26</sup> All three of the volumes under discussion here contain numerous citations and more or less explicit intertextual references, both to other GDR writers and to German and European literary history.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Williams, "Ich bin kein Emigrant, ich bin kein Dissident": Sarah Kirsch und die DDR'; *Sarah Kirsch*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1989).

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, her comments about the influence the small circle of Leipzig poets including Volker Braun, Rainer Kirsch et al. had on her work throughout her life in Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 123.

This is perhaps less pronounced in *Landaufenthalt* than in later collections, but references to canonical German writers are still present throughout: Andreas Gryphius is evoked as a symbol of the tragic elements of German identity in 'Fahrt II' (SG 11); 'Der Milchmann Schäuffele' (SG 47-48) recalls Celan's 'schwarze[...] Milch der Frühe'; other poems draw on motifs from folk narratives and *Märchen*. Literary community beyond Germany is referenced in poems including 'Der kleine Prinz' (SG 67), which draws on and satirises Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's famous children's story, developing the themes of individualism and flight; the Soviet writer Vladimir Mayakovsky is mentioned in 'Bäume lesen' (SG 70) as a model of socialist engaged poetics, and 'Brueghel-Bild' (SG 25) takes its cue from a Bruegel the Elder's 'The Hunters in the Snow'. Three poems are dedicated to the poet Johannes Bobrowski, a writer born in Kaliningrad whose work was influenced by his contact with Slavic and Baltic culture.<sup>27</sup> Overall, the collection demonstrates an interest in these varied influences and negotiates a position for Kirsch's work, in her first published collection, within a German canon, while also looking beyond to a global literary community.

As discussed above, the flight motifs which feature in the work of Arendt are reflected through Kirsch's own exploration of flight, particularly in *Zaubersprüche*, although Kirsch distanced herself from the motif of flight in Arendt's more explicitly political writing. Non-GDR influences are also evident in the poems 'Der Droste würde ich gern Wasser reichen' (SG 107), in which the speaker imagines herself in dialogue with Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, and 'Vorortzug' (SG 119), which can be read as a reworking of Rimbaud's 'Rêve

<sup>27</sup> These are 'Geh unter schöne Sonne' (SG 56), 'Ich in der Sonne deines Sterbemonats' (SG 57), 'Eine Schlehe im Mund komme ich übers Feld' (SG 58). The dedication is absent in the recent edition of Kirsch's collected poems, but is recorded in the index of the 1977 Langewiesche-Brandt edition of *Landaufenthalt*. See Sarah Kirsch, *Landaufenthalt* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1977).

pour l'hiver'.<sup>28</sup> 'Lithographie' (SG 101) recalls Celan's symbolic vocabulary of stone used to explore the theme of memory. The cycle 'Georgien, Fotografien' (SG 88-90) from *Zaubersprüche*, which forms part of the subsection of that collection entitled 'Lichtbilder', offers a series of vignette-style travel snapshots clearly inspired by the form of Rimbaud's 'Illuminations'.<sup>29</sup> Notable too is the significance of folk history and folk tales, particularly narratives of witchcraft, which function symbolically to situate the collection within a particular literary tradition.

*Rückenwind* also demonstrates the influence of German *Märchen* in Kirsch's early poetry, including Grimm tales and other folk and oral traditions – often developing motifs of separation and twinning from these intertextual sources, such as 'Schneeweiß und Rosenrot' (SG 131). 'Tilia cordata' (SG 129) similarly explores separation and togetherness, through the image of a heart-shaped leaf, recalling Goethe's 'Gingo Biloba'.<sup>30</sup> In addition to the influence of Droste-Hülshoff, other Romantic writers including Bettina von Arnim serve as key points of reference for the creation of a female literary community, which builds on the motifs of witchcraft in *Zaubersprüche*.

Mahon's range of explicit and implicit intertextual references is just as extensive. Brian Burton has analysed the significance of several key figures who serve as points of reference for Mahon, all of whom were important influences on his early work: Beckett, Yeats, Louis MacNeice, Auden, Charles

<sup>28</sup> Arthur Rimbaud, *Collected Poems*, trans. by Martin Sorrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> Rimbaud, *Collected Poems*, pp. 256–312.

<sup>30</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 79. Goethe's 'Gingo Biloba' (later republished as 'Gingko Biloba') draws on the conceit of the two-lobed Gingko leaf as a polyvalent symbol of unity and division in the context of his *West-östliche Divan*. See Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Werke*, ed. by Erich Trunz, 14 vols (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1994), II, p. 66.



Baudelaire, Albert Camus, Nerval and Hart Crane.<sup>31</sup> Just as important are the contemporary and non-canonical writers with whom Mahon was associated: not only the ‘Belfast Group’ of Seamus Heaney, Michael Longley and others, but also Padraic Fiacc, Jeremy Lewis, James Simmons, Douglas Dunn and J. G. Farrell. A great many poems in the original publications of Mahon’s early editions are dedicated to friends and fellow writers, reflecting his desire to situate his writing as part of an ongoing literary dialogue with both mainstream and marginal writers.

*Night-Crossing* explores Irish identity and Mahon’s origins in detail, and correspondingly, many of the cited influences are distinctly Irish. In particular, the placement of Mahon’s famous elegy for MacNeice, ‘In Carrowdore Churchyard’ (NC 3), near the beginning of the collection, is no coincidence. Several poems in this volume reference MacNeice directly or indirectly, including ‘Death of a Film Star’ (NC 10) and ‘An Unborn Child’ (NC 25).<sup>32</sup> MacNeice is taken as a model of the Irish writer as global citizen, resisting attempts to press the Irish lyric into the service of violent nationalist tendencies. However, the influences in *Night-Crossing* are not exclusively Irish, nor are they exclusively poets: ‘Van Gogh among the Miners’ (NC 19) and ‘The Forger’ (NC 20) demonstrate an interest in the intersection between poetry and the visual arts which extends into later more explicitly ekphrastic poems. A version of a poem by François Villon closes the collection (‘Legacies’, NC 35).

The breadth of intertextual references in *Lives* is wider still than in *Night-Crossing*. Although the volume is notionally situated in an Irish literary

<sup>31</sup> See Brian Burton, “‘A Forest of Intertextuality’: the Poetry of Derek Mahon” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Durham, 2004).

<sup>32</sup> For more on Mahon’s complex and ever-changing relationship to MacNiece, ‘a father-figure whom we had only recently been getting to know’, see Derek Mahon, ‘An Honest Ulsterman’, in *Journalism: Selected Prose 1970-1995*, ed. by Terence Brown (Loughcrew: Gallery Press, 1996), pp. 92–94; Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home*, p. 46–49; Burton, “‘A Forest of Intertextuality’”, pp. 93–144.

and cultural landscape – with the opening poem marking Mahon’s ‘Homecoming’ (L 1) to Ireland – references to other places, writers and traditions are numerous and diverse. The final poem in the collection, the long verse letter, ‘Beyond Howth Head’ (L 33-39), makes a structural and thematic feature of the breadth and eclecticism of its intertextual and formal points of reference. Elsewhere, a ‘version’ of a poem by C. P. Cavafy (‘After Cavafy’, L 24) and a poem about a painting by Edvard Munch (L 4) introduce a transnational dimension to the collection’s literary community which counterbalances the continuing influence of Irish literary heritage, as reflected in ‘An Image from Beckett’ (L 8), ‘I am Raftery’ (L 32) and ‘Folk Song’ (L 19).

*The Snow Party* is the most truly global of Mahon’s collections: starting with a poem of split location and homecoming (‘Afterlives’, SP 1), it continues to explore Irish literary history in a range of complex and straightforward ways. ‘Flying’ (SP 35) draws on Yeats’ ‘An Irish Airman Foresees his Death’, and ‘An Epitaph for Flann O’Brien’ (SP 28) playfully memorialises the innovative and notoriously curmudgeonly novelist.<sup>33</sup>

Alongside these references to a national literary community and heritage are many references to writers from within and beyond Europe: Bashō; Cavafy (again); Giorgos Seferis; French writers including Rimbaud and Nerval, from whom Mahon inherits an interest in Romantic ontology and the ‘life of things’; Jaccottet; the Bible; Ancient Babylonian myth; classical literature and philosophy. Mahon’s delight in confounding expectations and drawing on unusual sources is evident throughout, and the poems continually demonstrate his sense of himself as ‘a twig in a stream’ of literary traditions.<sup>34</sup>

This process of participating in a literary dialogue and engaging with a literary community also extends, in both cases, to the careful use of formal and

<sup>33</sup> Yeats, *Poems*, p. 48.

<sup>34</sup> Mahon, ‘An Honest Ulsterman’, p. 94.

generic precedents and influences. Although Kirsch's work is tonally distinctive, characterised by long lines and phrases and regular enjambment, she also draws on established forms, frequently adopting or subverting them for her own ends. For example, the 'Wiepersdorf' cycle (SG 137-43) explicitly invokes and then rejects the elegiac meter, and the various 'Ruf- und Fluchformeln' (SG 112, 113) in *Zaubersprüche* innovatively adapt traditional oral forms. 'The Bird' (SG 112) reads bottom-to-top, in the manner of a magic charm or spell. Mahon regularly works in received forms which signal his relationship to other writers, such as the epistolary form of 'Beyond Howth Head', the dramatic monologue 'As God is My Judge' (NC 30), or the irregular tercets of 'An Image from Beckett' (L 8), 'Lives' (L 14) and 'What Will Remain' (L 26). His use of the 'singing line' (i.e. a carefully crafted iambic pentameter with a 'sprung' rhythm in the style of Gerard Manley Hopkins) and tendency towards formal conservatism has been widely noted by critics.<sup>35</sup> Both poets also experiment with the prose-poem form which has its roots in Francophone modernism.

Kirsch's formal innovations, her characteristic blending of established forms and subversion of generic boundaries, situate her within contemporary literary communities, both national and international, and also demonstrate her desire to transcend these communities. As such, they are a key means by which she negotiates a relationship to a literary 'homeland' and tradition as an East German female writer. Gender plays a key role in these interactions, and is discussed separately below, although it is worth noting that her conceptualisation of female literary community is grounded in playfulness,

<sup>35</sup> The term 'singing line' was coined by Michael Longley, who called Mahon 'our bravest and most stylish wielder of the singing line' (quoted in Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 3.) See also Edna Longley, 'The Singing Line: Form in Derek Mahon's Poetry', in *Poetry in the Wars* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1987), pp. 170–84.

freedom and dialogue rather than in any abstract notion of solidarity or adherence to mainstream political doctrine.

Indeed, it is this sense of playfulness which colours Kirsch's approach to form and literary community in many of her poems. For example, 'Rundreise' (SG 105-06) from *Zaubersprüche* contrasts with the sombre and melancholy tone of 'Georgien, Fotografien' (SG 88-90) and the reverence with which that poem treats its Rimbaudian influences:

Mir war ich war  
– Kurzer Rasen Schurobst –  
Auf einem englischen Parkplatz  
Auf einer preußischen Postmeilensäule  
Sitzend in blue jeans like a gipsy  
Fingernägel maßlose lange keine Schere  
Und alle Leute  
Die ich seit Jahren nicht sehen konnte  
Warn nicht mehr da nur ein Ersatzpferd  
Ich trug eine Frisur diesen Tag  
Wie ehemals Johann Sebastian  
[...]  
Gar keine Menschen drei hatte ich immer gemocht  
Nur dieses Pferd noch da zog ich  
Lieber in den Dom orgelspielen  
Die Luft kam elektrisch alles OK  
Ein fester Gott ist eine Burg auch ich bin  
Ein Schwede wie du – aber weiter wie  
Du mußt irgendwo zu finden sein Herr Bellman  
[...]  
Ich die Welt braucht dich – machen wir Spaß  
Brennen einem Wasser den Faden ab verdampfen  
Dieses Verlagshaus hab Drops im Schuh  
Später müssen wir einbrechen gehn  
Sind darauf angewiesen mach dir nicht  
Draus –

These excerpts give a sense of the poem's playful use of montage. It offers a 'Rundreise' not only in space – as far as it is possible to discern – but also through German literary and cultural history. The speaker 'sitzend in blue jeans like a gypsy' is both literally and metaphorically travelling, first into

another language entirely, and then through a series of landscapes associated both symbolically and intertextually with German traditions. As one can tell by the reference to her 'Friseur [...] Wie ehemals Johann Sebastian', she does not treat the great figures she encounters with reverence, juxtaposing citations from Luther ('Ein fester Gott ist eine Burg') with references to FDJ songs.<sup>36</sup> She invokes American popular culture ('Hat WINSTON aber kein Feuer') and maintains a colloquial register throughout, regularly omitting the 'du' from her address and using phonetic spellings ('he auf auf!'). In a section of the poem not quoted here, she bathes in the perfumed Rhein, a potent symbol of German culture. Barbara Mabee has examined the reference to Martin Luther in more detail and suggests that Kirsch intends a critique of his 'Identitätsdenken' and anti-Semitism in the lines cited from his work.<sup>37</sup> Cosentino approaches the poem from a quite different angle, exploring motifs of isolation and separation from the masses.<sup>38</sup> Both readings are persuasive, but the most striking aspect of this text is surely not the specific resonance of its references, but rather its playful montage technique and the ways in which it negotiates a position for its poet-speaker both within and apart from mainstream and popular culture and literature.

Mahon too is frequently irreverent in his approach to literary community. Early poems such as 'The Poets Lie Where They Fell' (NC 34) satirise a sense of literary identity predicated on drunkenness, absent-mindedness and misogyny. 'Epitaph for Flann O'Brien' (SP 28) is satirical, imaging the old novelist writing a drunken lament from beyond the grave ('Not much here to write home

<sup>36</sup> The line 'Ich die Welt braucht dich' plays on a line from the FDJ song 'Du hast ja ein Ziel vor den Augen': 'Denn die Welt braucht dich genau wie du sie!' See Barbara Felsmann, *Beim kleinen Trompeter habe ich immer geweint: Kindheit in der DDR, Erinnerungen an die Jungen Pioniere* (Berlin: Lukas, 2003), p. 55.

<sup>37</sup> Barbara Mabee, *Die Poetik von Sarah Kirsch: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsbewusstsein* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989), p. 117.

<sup>38</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 55.

about | Give us a sup of that.')

His borrowings from literary history and various poems 'after' Villon, Cavafy and Nerval are copious and irreverent – 'After Nerval' (*SP* 23) opens:

Your great mistake is to disregard the satire  
 Bandied among the mute phenomena.  
 Be strong if you must, your brusque hegemony  
 Means fuck-all to the somnolent sun-flower  
 Or the extinct volcano.

It is worth noting that Mahon's literary community, as it appears in the analyses above and below, consists entirely of male writers: one struggles to find a direct reference to a female writer in his work of this period, with the possible exceptions of Lady Augusta Gregory, Eavan Boland and Edna Longley.<sup>39</sup> Mahon's attitudes to gender – like his attitudes to race – in his early work occasionally appear problematic.<sup>40</sup>

Although a thorough critique of the representation of gender in Mahon's early work is beyond the scope of this chapter, a brief analysis of the very early poem 'First Principles' (*NC* 33) may prove instructive:

<sup>39</sup> Haughton discusses Mahon's lasting friendship and literary relationship with Boland. See Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 26.

<sup>40</sup> In a series of texts entitled 'Gipsies' (*NC* 24), 'Gipsies Revisited' (*L* 29) and 'The Gipsies' (*SP* 24), which appear in each of the three collections analysed in this chapter, Mahon offers first a romanticised portrait of the nomadic lifestyle, then a retraction of this perspective which acknowledges the complex reality of social exclusion, in which he declares himself 'ashamed - fed, - clothed, housed and ashamed'. However, even his 'apology' starts with an egregiously derogatory term: 'Sorry, gippos'. Finally, the third text in the sequence, 'The Gipsies', examines the 'fear' experienced by a non-'gipsy' speaker and his community when encountering these marginalised people and recasting it as a manifestation of empathy – 'for fear you should die'. Throughout this sequence of texts, 'gipsies' are referred to as 'you', with the speaker articulating on behalf of a 'we'. This oppositional, 'othering' relationship is one of various troubling features of these texts, which render the members of an oppressed minority symbols of the marginal voices unaffected by modernity. Mahon was wise not to include them in his most recent *Collected Poems*.

The one poem I want  
 To write will never feature  
 Women you meet in daydreams,  
 Perfect beyond nature,  
 Vermouth in sculptured hand  
 Records and magazine –

Or praise poetic wives  
 Who leave hairs in the bath  
 And fart in bed, and remain  
 Loveable unto death.  
 They live their private lives  
 In the sun and the rain.

[...]

No, it will so derange  
 The poor bitches, that they  
 Will come round on their knees  
 At all hours of the day,  
 Crippled with visceral rage  
 And croaking please, please.

Mahon's numerous critics are suspiciously silent on this text, which was never reprinted after the initial editions of *Night-Crossing*. However we attempt to divide poet and lyric persona, it is clear that the speaker in this poem is himself a poet, discussing the position of women within his literary community, both within his texts and for his readership – and concluding that they are to be pointedly, misogynistically excluded. It may be unfair to draw firm conclusions on the basis of one text which appears to be little more than a youthful indiscretion – but it is nevertheless implied by this and the general absence of female figures who make a meaningful literary contribution in the collections in question that Mahon's literary landscape is no place for women.

Kirsch, in contrast, constructs her own pantheon of female literary figures, including, most notably, Droste-Hülshoff and Bettina von Arnim.<sup>41</sup> It is

<sup>41</sup> The role of Bettina von Arnim in the 'Wiepersdorf' cycle is discussed in more detail below. Georgina Paul has argued, with specific reference to GDR poetry,

tempting to situate these engagements with female writers from German history in the context of a mainstream feminist perspective, one which would read Kirsch's work as finally affording these important writers the attention they deserve, in common with other readings of von Arnim and Droste-Hülshoff's work during the same period. However, when asked in 1979 whether she felt the urge to engage with 'female questions', Kirsch replied:

Fast eher im Gegenteil. Ich bin da sehr vorsichtig, seit ich in der Bundesrepublik bin, wo es wiederholt Versuche gegeben hat, mich für die Frauenbewegung zu vereinnahmen. Mich interessiert überhaupt nicht, wer schreibt – ob ein Mann oder eine Frau –, es kommt auf das Ergebnis an. Wobei ich einschränke, daß Frauen es manchmal schwerer haben, jedenfalls es schwerer gehabt haben, überhaupt zu produktiver Arbeit zu kommen, weil sie viel Abhaltung haben und es Gott sei Dank genauso wichtig finden, ein Kind gut durchzubringen, und sich ein Buch leichter verkneifen.<sup>42</sup>

As with the citation from the same interview provided in the introduction to this chapter, Kirsch's scepticism regarding all forms of political dogma is clear. Her interest in and representation of a female artistic community must therefore be understood in a rather more nuanced way: as an articulation of female independence and right to self-determination, rather than an expression of a sense of belonging to some nebulous sisterhood with all other female literary figures. Kirsch selects for her canon those women in literary history who are non-conformist, rebellious and stubbornly individualistic, rather than

---

for a new model of female poetic influence which contrasts with the historical, male-oriented understanding of poetic influence as an oedipal struggle; my reading of female literary community in Kirsch's work is in line with Paul's general approach. See Georgina Paul, 'Ismene at the Crossroads: Gender and Poetic Influence', *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007), 430–46.

<sup>42</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 131.



replacing one version of mainstream (male) literary tradition with its female equivalent.

This fits in well with her approach to the figure of the witch, in *Zaubersprüche* and elsewhere. Qianna Shen does not hesitate, in her interpretation of the witch motif, to align Kirsch's work with contemporary radical feminism, reading *Zaubersprüche* as 'the first to be published among GDR feminist texts that employ the witch as a symbolic subversive figure'.<sup>43</sup> However, Kirsch's witch symbolism is as interested in isolationism, individualism and violence as in female solidarity or community – and the majority of the 'spells' cast in *Zaubersprüche* are designed to seduce, harm or otherwise gain the attention of a male lover. As such, it is difficult to read them as straightforwardly feminist or emancipatory.<sup>44</sup>

Mahon and Kirsch select their own literary communities which transcend national and linguistic borders, creating a metaphorical 'space' for their work within highly individualised canons of both mainstream and marginal writers. By bringing the work of such a broad range of writers into contact with each other in this way, they undermine the notion of a standard national literature or literary tradition. By means of intertextuality and citation, and in their use of mixed forms with varied histories and connotations, Mahon and Kirsch declare affiliations, and express a sense of belonging, which, like their articulation of global, transnational and domestic spaces, undercuts dominant

<sup>43</sup> Qianna Shen, 'Shedding, Witchcraft, and the Romantic Subject: Feminist Appropriation of the Witch in Sarah Kirsch's "Zaubersprüche" (1973)', *Neophilologus*, 93.4 (2008), 675–89.

<sup>44</sup> On the other hand, as Paul has noted, 'Sarah Kirsch's poetry of the late 1960s and early 1970s appeared so radical at the time precisely because it eschewed any political posturing, instead articulating private concerns, including emotional conflict within the male-female couple, sketched against acutely observed scenes of rural domesticity'. See Georgina Paul, 'Gender in GDR Literature', in *Rereading East Germany: The Literature and Film of the GDR*, ed. by Karen Leeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 106–25 (p. 120).

narratives. In Kirsch's case, experimentation with marginal and gendered genres and the inclusion of a pantheon of female literary figures imply a connection between 'home', form and gender which reflects her commitment to representing all aspects of experience honestly and without reductive recourse to sloganised politics.

### 3.4. *Negotiating 'home'*

Discussion of Mahon and Kirsch's work and its sense of the world beyond the domestic sphere and national borders, as well as an analysis of the intertextual strategies each uses to create a sense of an international literary community, has demonstrated that for neither writer is it possible to speak of a single 'home' landscape, space, place, form or literary tradition. For both poets, these ideas of home and elsewhere, community and belonging, are continually being negotiated within broader political, social and historical contexts. Thus, although their work does not engage explicitly with mainstream political movements or 'take sides' in contemporary political debates, it is itself political 'in the fullest sense', to quote Mahon.<sup>45</sup> It explores the intricacies of identity and belonging and takes a nuanced view of contemporary politics.

The aspects of this process of negotiation which relate to transnational space were explored above. The following analysis examines the other half of the home/elsewhere binary: Mahon and Kirsch's sense of the domestic, the mundane and 'home' landscapes which provide a counterpoint to everyday spaces.

The German term *Heimat* may be useful in this context, since it defines a sense of local and community affiliation not readily translatable into English. Rachel Palfreyman and Elizabeth Boa conclude that the term involves both

---

<sup>45</sup> Mahon, quoted in Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 76.

spatiotemporal and psychological dimensions and senses of belonging: 'a physical space, or social space, or bounded medium of some kind which provides a sense of security and belonging' as well as 'an antithetical mode of thinking in terms of identity and difference, of belonging and exclusion' and, ultimately, 'a process of identification signalled by a spatial metaphor'.<sup>46</sup> This sense of mental and physical *Heimat* is useful for reading Mahon and Kirsch's work in terms of a complex affiliation with home and community which encompasses not simply mainstream patriotic viewpoints, in which identity would mean 'belonging' to a grouping defined by the boundaries of a contemporary nation state, but a sense of 'identity and difference, belonging and exclusion' which disregards these arbitrary boundaries while nevertheless expressing an equally strong attachment to ideas of 'home'. Mahon and Kirsch's interest in the domestic space and its interactions with the outside landscape, and the interactions between native landscapes and 'elsewhere', can be read in the context of Peter Blickle's description of *Heimat* as 'both a spiritualised province (a mental state turned inside out) and a provincial spirituality (a spatially perceived small world turned outside in)'.<sup>47</sup>

The use of this term in relation to Kirsch's work is particularly appropriate given the resurgence of *Heimat* discourses in the 1970s. According to Palfreyman and Boa, the importance of *Heimat* during this era can be attributed to the 'reconsideration of German national identity which accompanied the sense of growing distance from the Nazi past', as well as changes in GDR-FRG relations prompted by Ostpolitik and a 'shift in political fashion' away from explicitly Marxist and Socialist politics towards Green and environmental

<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth Boa and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat - A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 23, 27.

<sup>47</sup> Peter Blickle, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (New York: Camden House, 2004), p. 7.

movements.<sup>48</sup> Kirsch's increasing focus on the local and regional as opposed to the national and metropolitan in the collections under discussion can be seen as an early (if indirect) contribution to these discourses – and in poems such as 'Landaufenthalt' (SG 35), one may note the origin of an 'ecopoetics' which grew much more pronounced following her move to the West in 1976.

The negotiation of 'home' takes various forms in Mahon and Kirsch's work. Firstly, both focus on domestic interior and home landscapes, and concentrate on a close description of mundane details of everyday life which undercut grand political narratives. They express the sense of a liminal or marginal *Heimat*, on the edge of towns and cities and in semi-rural space. Moreover, in Mahon's case, the motif of coastlines and beaches also plays an important role.

Their focus on the domestic is aligned with their rejection of the mainstream, 'plakativ' politics of national identity. By describing in detail the spaces of domestic interiors, inner life and quotidian experience, Mahon and Kirsch not only signal their unwillingness to participate in dogmatic ideological debates between Protestant and Catholic, or capitalist and socialist, world views, but also demonstrate a commitment to describing experience 'authentically' and at a personal level, with what Mahon calls 'honest subtlety'. This perspective is radical in the sense that it is profoundly rooted in everyday experience, as well as being a departure from political orthodoxy.

One way of understanding how Mahon and Kirsch relate to everyday experience and behaviour is through Michel de Certeau's theory of the practice of everyday life. De Certeau has argued that individual and collective engagement with culture at the level of everyday practices has the potential to disrupt or subvert hegemonic structures.<sup>49</sup> In the context of Irish and German

<sup>48</sup> Boa and Palfreyman, *Heimat - A German Dream*, p. 17.

<sup>49</sup> See de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xix.

everyday life in the 1960s and 1970s, experiences of the everyday would undoubtedly have interacted in interesting ways with the recent, dramatic shifts in the political categorisation of identity and national affiliation. It may have been meaningful to describe some aspects of life in the north of Ireland or east of Germany as distinctly 'Northern Irish' or 'East German', but these categories must also be seen as superimposed on existing structures of social organisation, consumption and identity formation. As de Certeau puts it, 'users make (*bricolent*) innumerable and infinitesimal transformations of and within the dominant cultural economy in order to adapt it to their own interests and their own rules'.<sup>50</sup> This is evident in Mahon and Kirsch's representations of the practices of everyday life in their poetry.

Mahon's 'Glengormley' (L 5), for instance, offers a lightly satirical perspective on his place of origin, a suburb of Belfast, in which the mundane details of everyday life undercut any sense of the grand political struggle:

Wonders are many and none is more wonderful than man  
 Who has tamed the terrier, trimmed the hedge  
 And grasped the principle of the watering can.  
 Clothes-pegs litter the window ledge  
 And the long ships lie in clover. Washing lines  
 Shake out white linen over the chalk thanes.

[...]

The unreconciled, in their metaphysical pain,  
 Strangle on lamp-posts in the dawn rain

And much dies with them. I should rather praise  
 A worldly time under this worldly sky –  
 The terrier-taming, garden-watering days  
 Those heroes pictured as they struggled through  
 The quick noose of their finite being. By  
 Necessity, if not choice, I live here too.

<sup>50</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xiv.

Glengormley is the suburb of Belfast where Mahon lived as a child, and his poem starts off as a kind of tender satire of this environment, a modern estate in which the cultural and literary heritage of Irish mythology and history are submerged. The epigraph comes from *Antigone*, but this grand classical pedigree is undercut by bathos: the ‘terrier’ has been ‘tamed’, and the ‘long ships’ and ‘chalk thanes’ of ancient history are suppressed by suburban banality. In the final two stanzas, the poem explores the irrelevance of modern political rhetoric to this comfortable community. The image of bodies ‘strangl[ing] on lamp-posts in the dawn rain’ evokes the victims of political violence, but these are not the actual victims of sectarian conflict. Rather, they are those ‘unreconciled’ in their ‘metaphysical pain’ – a comment on the self-indulgent, tortured public intellectual labouring to adopt the ‘correct’ political position in this difficult era.

The poem rejects this image of the tortured poet or public intellectual. Mahon writes that ‘I should rather praise | a worldly time under this worldly sky’; this statement implies a political commitment with an immediate connection to those ‘terrier-taming’, ‘garden-watering’ people who were lightly satirised in the opening stanza. The scene of postwar banality, suburban mundanity, far from being comically petit-bourgeois and inauthentic, is actually to be celebrated as the outcome of generations of political turmoil, the hard-won peace ‘[t]hose heroes pictured as they struggled through | The quick noose of their finite being’. It offers a perspective on an everyday social existence which, as de Certeau observes, is often ‘at play with the order which contains it’.<sup>51</sup> This is the basis of Mahon’s political commitment: however banal, easily dismissed, distasteful and inauthentic the people of Glengormley and their way of life might seem, ‘by necessity, if not choice’ he must commit

<sup>51</sup> de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xxiv.

himself to living amongst them, in the 'real world', and not in the world of myth and legend, historical adventure or abstract intellectual posturing.

Kirsch's 'Der Wels ein Fisch der am Grund lebt' (SG 9) has much in common with 'Glengormley' in its perspective on the mundane details of everyday life in a particular *Heimat*, and in its understanding that to represent this is a form of political commitment.

Der Wels ein Fisch der am Grund lebt  
Hat einen gewölbten Rücken der Kopf ist stumpf  
Der Bauch flach er paßt sich dem Sand an  
Der von den Wellen des Wassers gewalzt ist  
Von dieser Gestalt wahn ich mein Flugzeug  
Das hoch über der Erde steht, aus seinem Fischbauch  
Ins Riesge gewachsen laden noch Flügel  
Stumpf winklig in windzerblasene Wolken  
Unter mir Wälder Nadel- und Laubgehölz  
Leicht unterscheidbar von hier  
Der Herbst ist sichtbar dumpfes Braun bei den  
Buchen Eichen und Lärchen, die Winterbäume  
Haben ihr Grünes zu zeigen, mehr noch  
Rufen die Straßen Flüsse und Städte mich an  
Schön liegt das Land die Seen wie Spiegel  
Taschenspiegel Spiegelscherben  
Das ist meine Erde, da  
Werden Demonstrationen gemacht weiß  
Werden die Transparente getragen mit schwarzer Schrift  
Gegen Schlächtere Ungleichheit Dummheit  
Es schwimmen Kinder auf Gummischwänen es schlafen  
Immer noch Alte auf Bänken an Flüssen, Straßenfeger  
Holn jeden Morgen den Abfall zusamm  
Erde die ich überflieg auf die Regen und Schnee fällt  
Nicht mehr so unschuldig wie eh wie der Schatten des Flugzeugs  
Ich höre Bach und Josephine Baker das ist ein Paar

Kirsch's poem starts off with a strange, surreal imaginative leap from observing a catfish on the riverbed to picturing herself in an aeroplane flying above the earth. From this distant vantage point the speaker contemplates the landscape in rather pedestrian terms: the 'Wälder Nabel und Laubgehölz', the 'Herbst' 'dumpfes Braun'. The poem depicts human landscapes in similar terms,

from the vantage point of a detached observer, but demonstrating a political perspective: 'da | Werden Demonstrationen gemacht'. The social problems – 'Straßenfeger' and old people sleeping on benches – are everyday images of urban and suburban discontent, juxtaposed against the politically neutral image of 'children on plastic swans'. In the last three lines, the focus shifts back to nature and the natural world, now described as '[n]icht mehr so unschuldig': even the apparently neutral landscape is, as the site of everyday human experience, implicated in political questions. Like 'Glengormley', 'Der Wels' states its commitment to 'mundanity' in the most literal sense of daily experience of a particular place in the world: 'Das ist meine Erde, da' (compare Mahon's 'I live here too'). The inclusion of various textual details, both political and apparently neutral, passively recorded by the speaker, gives a sense that 'der Mensch ist auch, aber nicht nur, ein politischer Gegenstand'.

The same degree of concentration on the mundane can also be found in other poems by Mahon and Kirsch. For example, we might note Kirsch's focus on the everyday and rather drab landscapes of her GDR *Heimat* in travel poems such as 'Fahrt II' (SG 10) and 'Fahrt I' (SG 26), 'Vorortzug' (SG 119) and others, and in the litany of poems in *Rückenwind* named for the passing of the seasons or small details of the natural world, such as 'Ende Mai' (SG 148), 'Im Juni' (SG 149), 'Im Sommer' (SG 153), 'Der Wald' (SG 150), 'Ein Bauer' (SG 151). In Mahon's case, poems such as 'The Apotheosis of Tins' (SP 27) and 'Lives' (L 14) explore the 'insolent ontology' of object and their inner existence. 'A Hermit' (SP 26) fetishises the isolated, uneventful life of the ascetic: 'I have been working for years on a four-line poem about the life of a leaf. I think it



may come out right this winter'.<sup>52</sup> Its form – a prose poem, at least in its original published version – mirrors the prosaic quality of its content.<sup>53</sup>

Another aspect of apparently mundane existence which is explored in detail in the work of both writers is the domestic sphere of the home and its surroundings. For both poets, the idea of 'home' is regularly communicated in perspectives on domestic interiors (houses, rooms, kitchens and their contents). This type of space is, historically, highly gendered, and the intersection between domestic interiors and notions of female emancipation is a feature of Kirsch's work (though not of Mahon's). For example, in 'Sieben Häute' (SG 77), the focus on the inner life and emotions of female figures corresponds with the exploration of domestic interiors:

Die Zwiebel liegt weißgeschält auf dem kalten Herd  
 Sie leuchtet aus ihrer innersten Haut daneben das Messer  
 Die Zwiebel allein das Messer allein die Hausfrau  
 Lief weinend die Treppe hinab so hatte die Zwiebel  
 Ihr zugesetzt oder die Stellung der Sonne überm Nachbarhaus  
 Wenn sie nicht wiederkommt wenn sie nicht bald  
 Wiederkommt findet der Mann die Zwiebel sanft  
 und das Messer beschlagen

<sup>52</sup> This fetishisation of the hermit's marginal life stands in direct opposition to the derision Mahon's poetry directs at bland, suburban domestic spaces. He explained the difference between the two types of domestic space in a 1984 interview with Paul Durcan: 'Glengormley was devoid of what Mahon calls "barraka" - an Arabic word meaning the holiness that household utensils acquire through age. "The culture I grew up in was devoid of barraka. I was brought up deprived of a sense of the holiness of things. Protestantism is a rejection of barraka. The historical sources of Protestantism are rooted in a fear of disease, syphilis and plague. Cleanliness is next to Godliness or, rather, Cleanliness is Godliness."' (Paul Durcan, 'The World of Derek Mahon', *Magill*, December 1984 <<http://politico.ie/archive/world-derek-mahon>> [accessed 24 August 2016].)

<sup>53</sup> In selected and collected editions of Mahon's work published after 1972, the text is lineated as a non-prose poem and rhythms slightly altered to account for this. The poem has also been renamed 'The Mayo Tao'. See Derek Mahon, *New Collected Poems* (Loughcrew: Gallery Press, 2011), p. 67.

Here, 'die Hausfrau' performs an act of symbolic rebellion by abandoning her domestic task, possibly affected by the onion's potency or a glimpse beyond the domestic sphere to 'die Stellung der Sonne überm Nachbarhaus'. Her movement within the house is a source of instability, both in her relationship with 'der Mann' who will return home to find her absent, and in the normal structure of time itself as the process by which the knife becomes tarnished is accelerated. The parallel with the German proverb 'Die Zwiebel hat sieben Häute, ein Weib neun' reflects the 'Innerlichkeit' for which Kirsch was censured and locates this within the context of gender discourses. Other poems in *Zaubersprüche* such as 'Schwarze Bohnen' (SG 79), 'Widerrede' (SG 80) and 'Die Nacht streckt ihre Finger aus' (SG 81) all depict the position of a speaker in a domestic interior and explore the relationship between internal space and inner life. Elsewhere, the domestic interior is variously a site of romantic bliss ('Dann werden wir kein Feuer brauchen', SG 22) or danger ('Schneehütte', SG 121), always reflecting the complexity of individual experience, a means by which individual identity is negotiated in relation to 'home' spaces and communities.

Although Mahon's work does not display a corresponding interest in the relationship between gender, domestic space and inner life, the spaces of the domestic interior are nevertheless regularly represented in his work. 'Body and Soul' (NC 12) draws an explicit parallel between inner space and inner life:

Body is open house, and no  
Ghosts that are not woven

Into the very carpets,  
The wallpaper, the woodwork.

There are no trapped starlings  
Beating against the windows,

Running behind the armchairs  
Crashing into the clock.

Mahon cites Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* as a key influence.<sup>54</sup> In this text, one can read a Bachelardian interest in the psychology and poetic resonances of the domestic interior. In particular, Mahon's interest is in the marginal aspects of the domestic: the nooks and crannies of houses; floors, windows, roofs; and other details which would otherwise go unnoticed, as well as the derelict and run-down. 'A Disused Shed in County Wexford' (SP 36) is typical of these interests, as are the derelict, squalid and deserted buildings which feature in 'A Refusal to Mourn' (SP 32), 'The Banished Gods' (SP 30), 'Rage for Order' (L 22), 'Edvard Munch' (L 4) and in the background of the long poem 'Beyond Howth Head' (L 33-39). Stanza sixteen of that text, for example, lists the contents of various rural houses:

Spring lights the country: from a thous-  
and dusty corners, house by house,  
from under beds and vacuum cleaners,  
empty Kosangas containers,  
bread bins, car seats, crates of stout,  
the first flies cry to be let out;  
to cruise a kitchen, find a door  
and die clean in the open air

(L 37)

The impulse to catalogue the spaces of 'home' and then move away from them is present throughout Mahon's work before 1975.<sup>55</sup> Many of the

<sup>54</sup> Nicholas Wroe, 'Interview: Derek Mahon: "A Sense of Place"', *The Guardian* <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/jul/22/featuresreviews.guardianreview11>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>55</sup> The use of a paratactical cataloguing style, often applied to mundane objects, is a common technique in Mahon's work: compare 'Deckchairs, train corridors, | American bus stations, | Park benches, open boats' ('The Poets Lie where they Fell', NC 34), 'Prams, pianos, sideboards, winches' ('As God is my Judge', NC 31), 'chairs, faces and old boots' ('Van Gogh among the Miners', NC 19), 'mirrors, cushions and a light-switch', 'A knife, a loaf of bread, | A milk jug and a half-empty mug of tea.' ('The Last Dane', L 11), 'nails, key-rings — Sword hilts and lunulae | Rose hash, bog-paper | And deciduous forests' ('Deaths', L 14), 'the dank churches, the empty streets, | the shipyard silences, the tied up swings' ('Ecclesiastes', L 3).

representations of domestic spaces described in this analysis depend on the speaker's dual position in relation to the landscape, space or place being described: s/he is initially in one location, then another, moving from one space to another, literally and imaginatively. For example, since windows and doors are key sites of liminality between home and elsewhere, many poems feature lyric personae who gaze out of windows, and stand in or pass through doors.<sup>56</sup> Similarly, speakers who are described as being in one place but imagine themselves elsewhere, or who travel from one location to another during the course of the poem, both literally or figuratively, are key tropes in both Kirsch and Mahon's work. Marginality and liminality are thematised in the exploration of spaces which are themselves marginal: for example, the suburb or edge of town between city and country, or the coastline between sea and shore.<sup>57</sup>

The archetypal model for the 'dual' location in Mahon's work is the poem of homecoming: his first three collections contain numerous poems which explore the return to a familiar *Heimat* from abroad, where both spaces are dealt with in turn or overlaid onto one another. For example, 'Afterlives' (L 1-2) is explicitly divided into two sections, one featuring the speaker in London and the other depicting him returning home by boat to Belfast.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, 'The Prisoner' (NC 32), 'Spring Letter in Winter' (NC 11), 'De Quincey in Later Life' (NC 22), 'In the Aran Islands' (L 5) and others. The motif functions differently in each text, but the regularity with which it occurs is testament to Mahon's fascination with these threshold spaces.

<sup>57</sup> In recent English writing and criticism, the term 'edgelands' has been used with increasing frequency to refer to these marginal spaces between rural and urban landscapes (after a text of the same name by poets Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts). Interest in these spaces is currently resurgent, but not new, as a close reading of Mahon and Kirsch's work demonstrates. See Symmons Roberts and Farley, *Edgelands*; Mabey and Sinclair, *The Unofficial Countryside*.

1.

I wake in a dark flat  
To the soft roar of the world  
Pigeons neck on the white  
Roofs as I draw the curtains  
And look out over London  
Rain-fresh in the morning light.

[...]

What middle-class cunts we are  
To imagine for one second  
That our privileged ideals  
Are divine wisdom, and the dim  
Forms that kneel at noon  
In the city not ourselves.

2.

I am going home by sea  
For the first time in years.

[...]

But the hills are still the same  
Grey-blue above Belfast.  
Perhaps if I'd stayed behind  
And lived it bomb by bomb  
I might have grown up at last  
And learnt what is meant by home.

The speaker's position is literally liminal, in between 'home' and 'elsewhere'.<sup>58</sup> The rational perspective afforded by distance in the first half of the poem allows him to decry the dangerous narrow-mindedness of those who see themselves as engaged in tribal conflict, from a safe distance which precludes unselfconscious belonging to one tribe or the other. His subsequent return to Belfast by sea prompts complex nostalgia for the '[g]rey-blue' hills

<sup>58</sup> Mahon described his own position in an interview: 'he recalled the story of the Irishman who'd lived in London for thirty-five years and said 'It's all right... but I wouldn't want to live here'. See Terence Brown, 'Interview with Derek Mahon', *Poetry Ireland Review*, 14 (1985), p. 19.

above the city, and a reminder that if he had 'lived it bomb by bomb' he might have experienced a less conflicted sense of belonging and 'learned what is meant by home'. The 'home'/'bomb' rhyme reminds us of this conundrum: a fierce identification with home and community is matched by a corresponding ferocity in excluding others, sometimes with violent consequences. This shows in action the inclusion/exclusion binary on which *Heimat* is predicated.

The speaker's crossing of the Irish Sea in 'Lives', recalling the title of Mahon's first collection *Night-Crossing*, suggests the importance of the ocean as an indeterminate space in Mahon's work: a neutral anti-*Heimat* which represents connection, fluidity, and the absence of fixed identities. However, this is almost always balanced against its opposite (the space of home, belonging or identity in the form of land) and thus the coast or shoreline emerges as a key motif exploring the means by which 'home' is negotiated. It is striking to note how many Mahon poems feature coastlines, shores, ports or sea-crossings in some form: see, for example, 'At Carrowdore Churchyard' (NC 3), 'The Chair Squeaks' (SP 22), 'Four Walks in the Country Near Saint Brieu' (NC 17), 'An Image from Beckett' (L 8), 'Beyond Howth Head' (L 33-39) and 'Bird Sanctuary' (NC 14). The short poem 'The chair squeaks...' (L 22) provides a neat illustration:

The chair squeaks in a high wind,  
Rain falls from its branches,  
The kettle yearns for the  
Mountain, the soap for the sea.  
In a tiny stone church  
On the desolate headland  
A lost tribe is singing abide with me.

The 'lost tribe' in their tiny church are surrounded by the sea, on a 'desolate headland', defending their sense of community in hostile conditions which appear to threaten it with erasure. The material objects described (the chair, the soap, the kettle) all appear to be yearning for their origin, a more

abstract form, or release into a greater whole. On one level, the snapshot image of the community singing in defiance of its hostile physical surroundings implies the tenacity of community and identity, but do they also secretly yearn to be absolved and absorbed into the sea surrounding the headland, as the chair, soap and kettle strive to return to nature? This short poem leaves the question open, but elsewhere the attraction to oblivion and the absence of human identity represented by the sea is much clearer. In 'Day Trip to Donegal', the catch laid out on fishing boats becomes a symbol of the futility and inevitability of human violence: 'ours are land-minds, mindless in the sea. [...] That night the slow sea washed against my head, | Performing its immeasurable erosions' (NC 22).

The other type of periphery which features strongly in Mahon's poetic imagination is the semi-rural or suburban 'edgeland' which connotes a particular form of post-industrial decline combined with a neo-Romantic return to the solace of nature and landscape. In 'The Banished Gods' (L 30), these spaces are occupied by the discredited deities of the title:

Down a dark lane at the arse-end of nowhere  
 A farm dog lies by a dead fire  
     Dreaming of nothing  
 While a window turns slowly grey  
 Brightening a laid table and hung clothing.

Where the wires end the moor seethes in silence,  
 Scattered with scree, primroses,  
     Feathers and faeces.  
 It shelters the hawks and hears  
 In dreams the forlorn cries of lost species.

Similar spaces also feature in 'A Refusal to Mourn', ('a small farmhouse | At the edge of a new estate', SP 32), 'Ecclesiastes' ('the shipyard silence | the tied-up swings', L 3), 'The Gipsies', ('the fringes of cities', SP 24), 'Gipsies Revisited' ('waste ground beside motorways', L 29), and 'Deaths' ('grey-blue

hills at the end of every street', *L* 17). In each case, this type of space represents the margin between inclusion and exclusion which Mahon seeks to portray as a carefully negotiated *Heimat*: one which expresses complex identities rather than resorting to the reductive or mainstream.

These poems recall Kirsch's own peripheral and marginal spaces: her work displays a similar interest in suburbs, industrial wastelands and semi-rural 'edgeland' environments. 'Vorortzug' (SG 119), 'Fahrt II' (SG 10-11), 'Fahrt I' (SG 26), 'Engel' (SG 68), 'Das Grundstück' (SG 116), 'Der Waldrand' (SG 148) and 'Landaufenthalt' (SG 35) all demonstrate this tendency.

In 'Landaufenthalt', the 'edgeland' is a means of negotiating identity which also balances different approaches to political engagement:

Morgens füttere ich den Schwan abends die Katzen dazwischen  
 Gehe ich über das Gras passiere die verkommenen Obstplantagen  
 Hier wachsen Birnbäume in rostigen Öfen, Pfirsichbäume  
 Fallen ins Kraut, die Zäune haben sich lange ergeben, Eisen und Holz  
 Alles verfault und der Wald umarmt den Garten in einer Fliederhecke  
 [...]  
 Die Vögel und schwarzen Schnecken dazu überall Gras Gras das  
 Die Füße mir feuchtet fettgrün es verschwendet sich  
 Noch auf dem Schuttberg verbirgt es Glas wächst  
     in aufgebrochne Matratzen ich rette mich  
 Auf den künstlichen Schlackenweg und werde wohl bald  
 In meine Betonstadt zurückgehen hier ist man nicht auf der Welt  
 Der Frühling in seiner maßlosen Gier macht nicht halt, verstopft  
 Augen und Ohren mit Gras die Zeitungen sind leer  
 Eh sie hier ankommen der Wald hat all seine Blätter und weiß  
 Nichts vom Feuer

Although the rural idyll sounds attractive to begin with, the excess of nature quickly becomes too much and the speaker retreats to a more familiar semi-urban space, with its 'aufgebrochne Matratzen' and 'künstlichen Schlackenweg'. This edgeland is valorised as more authentic and closer to political realities. In the country, one is 'nicht auf der Welt', the newspapers are 'leer', and the people and environment are ignorant of violence and struggle



(‘der Wald [...] weiß | nichts vom Feuer). Attraction to the peace and freedom of the countryside is balanced against the responsibility to be politically engaged and aware, resulting in the necessity to occupy a liminal space which reflects the negotiation of a *Heimat* which is politicised but not dogmatic, engaged but not ‘plakativ’. As in Mahon’s work, this interest in liminality results in distinctive perspectives, with many lyric personae looking out of – even passing through – windows, doors and other thresholds.<sup>59</sup> Speakers are also regularly at home but thinking of another location, or elsewhere but thinking of home, as in the ‘Wiepersdorf’ cycle.

The similarities between Mahon and Kirsch’s work in this regard are numerous. Both poets are repeatedly drawn not to the traditional symbolic topographies of national identity, such as grand landscapes or impressive civic centres, but rather to a series of marginal or liminal spaces which reflect the necessity to negotiate their own sense of home or *Heimat* in the practice of everyday social life, rather than relying on inherited or received identities. This is evident not only in their focus on the marginal semi-urban landscapes, but also in their representations of domestic spaces, domestic interiors, windows, doors and other types of threshold. Although the analysis provided here cannot catalogue in detail each instance of this trope in both writers’ work, the examples given above illustrate how both writers use certain characteristic types of landscape, space and place to demonstrate how a sense of ‘home’ is negotiated.

---

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, ‘Ausflug’ (SG 14), ‘Der Wels ein Fisch der am Grund lebt’ (SG 9), ‘Dann werden wir kein Feuer brauchen’ (SG 22), and ‘Suß langt der Sommer in Fenster’ (SG 49).

### 3.5. *Form and community: 'Beyond Howth Head' and the 'Wiepersdorf' cycle*

Mahon and Kirsch's work demonstrates similar forms of engagement with space as a way of avoiding the normative political discourses which dominated discussions of space and place in the contemporary Irish and German contexts. Their poetry is, in many respects, very different, particularly in formal terms: Kirsch's varied rhythms contrast sharply with Mahon's controlled, often more traditional, verse forms. However, this comparative reading demonstrates a surprising set of shared interests and concerns which are revealed in their approaches to depicting space and place – approaches which reflect contemporary transnational historical contexts in similar ways.

Mahon's long poem 'Beyond Howth Head' (L 33-39) and Kirsch's 'Wiepersdorf' cycle (SG 137-43) exemplify certain features of each writer's formal engagement with literary tradition and community, and are concerned with the processes of negotiation which occur between particular spaces, identities and literary communities. Although both poems depict and describe specific local landscapes, spaces and places, they also continually gesture beyond these spaces. In this way, Kirsch and Mahon's poems make clear that the lens of local political affiliation is limiting and inadequate as a means of understanding ideas of 'home' in their work. Instead, they juxtapose and interweave the local and the global, the contemporary and the historical, the individual and the communal.

Kirsch's 'Wiepersdorf' cycle invites multiple interpretations: as a record of the aftermath of a failed relationship, as a political protest poem foreshadowing Kirsch's move to West Berlin, or as a feminist rereading of the work of Bettina von Arnim. All of these readings are valid, but none fully accounts for the complexity of the relationship between politics, poetry and place in the text.

‘Wiepersdorf’ is a multifaceted poem which describes personal experience in the context of political engagement, but avoids taking a reductive approach to either national politics or the politics of gender. The tropes of place and space offer a key means of mediating various levels of experience (personal, political, and gendered). These dynamics of experience also influence the poem’s form.

Kirsch’s dissatisfaction with sweeping political statements about national politics or gender politics is frequently evidenced in her comments on her own work. As discussed above, her desire to encapsulate human experience in all its fullness without resorting to reductive political posturing or, conversely, denying the impact of politics on individuals, is the source of a productive tension in Kirsch’s work in general and in the ‘Wiepersdorf’ cycle in particular.

The cycle consists of eleven poems, consecutively numbered – the last also being titled – which do not follow a narrative structure but rather offer a series of vignettes, realistic and fantastical, of the speaker’s residence at Schloss Wiepersdorf, a manor house in East Germany which became a writer’s retreat in the postwar era. At one level, ‘Wiepersdorf’ appears to narrate the lyric subject’s attempts to come to terms with the end of a romantic relationship during this retreat away from her normal living circumstances and day-to-day life.<sup>60</sup> If there is a narrative impulse in the text, it is afforded by

<sup>60</sup> This reading is informed by biographical information about Kirsch’s experiences during the time of the poem’s composition. Throughout the following analysis, in the interests of clarity of expression, ‘the speaker’ of the ‘Wiepersdorf’ cycle is identified as a poetic projection of Kirsch herself. However, it is important to remember that the lyric persona is still nevertheless a literary construct. The autobiographical content of many of Kirsch’s poems has been noted by several critics (Cosentino, Babee, Williams and Mohr among others). However, the problems associated with assuming a direct equivalence between author and speaker are evident: as Williams points out, ‘Kirschs Lyrik und Prosa erwecken den Eindruck einer direkten Verbindung zu persönlich Erfahrenem und evozieren nachdrücklich das Gefühl von Ernsthaftigkeit und Authentizität – und doch sind sie Produkte eines kunstvollen Prozesses von Umformung und Rekonstruktion’. In ‘Wiepersdorf’, the intersection between personal experience and its artistic

references to the speaker's doomed relationship with a male lover. Some of the most striking lines in the poem are those addressed to 'Du Schönhäutiger Schwacher Verfuckter | Dichselberliebender schöngraues | Schielendes Aug': a sudden irruption of passion and anger into the text's otherwise laconic tone. There are also repeated references to loneliness and difference: 'doppelt | Allein bin ich da', 'Immer | Sind wir allein', 'lediglich ich | Bekam keine Schlüssel'. The intended addressee may be the West German poet Christopher Meckel, with whom Kirsch apparently began a relationship in 1975.<sup>61</sup>

This personal narrative of isolation is intertwined with direct addresses to Bettina von Arnim, the writer and social campaigner who lived at Schloss Wiepersdorf between 1814 and 1816 and regularly visited the Schloss throughout her life.<sup>62</sup> Addresses to von Arnim reflect the poem's attempts to

---

representation – the responsibility of poetry to depict inner life in all its complexity – are part of what is at stake. Thus, it is important to explicitly distinguish between Kirsch herself and the speaker of the poem. See Williams, "Ich bin kein Emigrant, ich bin kein Dissident": Sarah Kirsch und die DDR, p. 387; Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 75.

<sup>62</sup> The choice of name for (Bettina) von Arnim in this analysis is considered. Frederiksen and Goodman emphasise the distinction between 'Bettine' (subject of von Arnim's autobiographical literary works) and the historical figure 'Bettina'. They opt to retain von Arnim's unmarried surname in addition to her married one for their discussion, styling her 'Brentano-von Arnim' in order to 'preserve her independence as a writer/artist' (Elke Frederiksen and Katherine Goodman, "Locating" Bettina Brentano-von Arnim, *A Nineteenth Century German Woman Writer*, in *Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: Gender and Politics* ed. by Elke Frederiksen and Katherine Goodman (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), pp. 13–34 (p. 32). However, this strategy is rendered problematic by the prominent association of the Brentano family name with her brother, Clemens Brentano, and the fact that von Arnim herself did not choose to retain her unmarried name after her marriage to Achim von Arnim. Although Kirsch refers to von Arnim intimately as 'Bettina', also the chosen appellation of many critics during the 1960s and later, Frach notes that this pattern does not conform to the usual style adopted by critics discussing male poets of the same period. As such, this close reading uses von Arnim's surname only throughout to refer to Bettina von Arnim.

situate its voice within the context of female authorship, with the two voices united not only by shared formal concerns and themes but also, at a very literal level, by a shared space.<sup>63</sup> The initial address to ‘Bettina’, which interrupts melancholy thoughts about the misery of life in Berlin, is prompted by a strong sense of shared spatial experience: ‘*Hier | Hast du mit sieben Kindern gegessen*’ (emphasis mine).

However, the passionate identification Kirsch feels with von Arnim while staying at Schloss Wiepersdorf is far from a straightforward statement of feminist solidarity. Von Arnim’s work has had a mixed reception in Germany, both during her lifetime and posthumously, and despite repeated attempts to reclaim her legacy as a proto-feminist social campaigner and author, some aspects of this interpretation remain problematic. Although she was dismissed as ‘an emotional and naïve admirer of Goethe’s genius’ after the publication of her first novel, *Goethes Briefwechsel mit einem Kinde*, critics in the GDR sought to reread von Arnim as a ‘vibrant and provocative’ writer who ‘developed narrative strategies anticipating much of our feminist thinking today’.<sup>64</sup> Christa Wolf contributed much to this project in her afterword to the 1979 edition of von Arnim’s *Die Götterode*, which poignantly charts von Arnim’s life and the history of her political engagement.<sup>65</sup> According to Wolf, von Arnim’s literary impulse and inventiveness stem from her rejection of the

<sup>63</sup> It is worth noting that Schloss Wiepersdorf was significantly redesigned by the grandson of Bettina and Ludwig Achim von Arnim, the painter Achim von Arnim-Bärwalde, in the latter part of the nineteenth century. As such, many features of the symbolic topography described in Kirsch’s text, including the landscaped park and Callot statuary, would not have existed when Bettina von Arnim was at Wiepersdorf. The feeling of shared space explored in Kirsch’s poem is to some extent illusory. See Friederike Frach, *Schloss Wiepersdorf: das ‘Künstlerheim’ unter dem Einfluss der Kulturpolitik in der DDR* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2012), p. 8.

<sup>64</sup> Frederiksen and Goodman, “Locating” Bettina Brentano-von Arnim, A Nineteenth Century German Woman Writer’, pp. 13–14.

<sup>65</sup> See Bettina von Arnim, *Die Götterode*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Insel, 1914).

competing models of bourgeois femininity available to her at the time: '[she] did not consent to be an ineffective outsider on the one hand, or a well-adjusted philistine on the other'.<sup>66</sup> Wolf juxtaposes the fierce social campaigner and formal innovator von Arnim became after the death of her husband with the image of the young Bettina as 'impish, untameable [...] enigmatic, dusky, fey' – a juxtaposition which also engages with the problem of her position in relation to Romanticism and the *Junges Deutschland* movement.<sup>67</sup> Wolf's reading of von Arnim's life and work deliberately minimises the significance of the period of her life spent raising children in Berlin and at Wiepersdorf, only describing the misery she apparently felt during this time. Wolf recasts von Arnim as a heroine of feminist literary production who felt trapped by marriage and domestic life.

Yet as Elke Frederiksen and Katherine Goodman point out, von Arnim 'associated herself with no identifiable feminist and/or political movement [...] Her activities might be called individualistic, were it not for the extremely un-individualistic way in which she formulated notions of identity'.<sup>68</sup> Similarly, Kirsch did not wish to be associated with any mainstream feminist movement and even expressed a certain impatience with liberal feminist views like those of Wolf.<sup>69</sup> Kirsch views (female) literary production as a self-indulgent luxury in comparison to other, more practical tasks. This is in line with von Arnim's own apparent willingness to subsume her identity as a writer and campaigner under her role as a mother during the years she spent raising her children. The

<sup>66</sup> Christa Wolf, 'Your Next Life Begins Today: A Letter About Bettine', in *Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: Gender and Politics*, ed. by Elke Frederiksen and Katherine Goodman, trans. by Jan van Heurck (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), pp. 35–70 (p. 39). See also Karoline von Günderrode and Christa Wolf, *Der Schatten eines Traumes* (Munich: dtv, 1997).

<sup>67</sup> Wolf, 'Your Next Life Begins Today: A Letter About Bettine', p. 41

<sup>68</sup> Frederiksen and Goodman, "Locating" Bettina Brentano-von Arnim, A Nineteenth Century German Woman Writer', p. 25.

<sup>69</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 131.

address to 'Bettina' in 'Wiepersdorf' should not be read as one self-proclaimed feminist addressing another, but rather understood in the context of an alignment of perspectives regarding the relationship between experience, gender, politics and writing: the specificities of female experience are of course important and deserve to be discussed, but they should not at any cost be crudely instrumentalised or reduced to the 'plakativ' or party-political.

This conception of the relationship between gender, experience and poetry also influences the formal qualities of the poem: it informs not only the unconventional tone of elegy, which subverts the strictures of a male-dominated genre while remaining true to the atmosphere and situation of the speaker at Schloss Wiepersdorf, but also the text's epistolary qualities and its blending of formal and informal discourses. The first poem in the cycle playfully declares: 'Hier ist das Versmaß elegisch | Das Tempus Praeteritum.' The elegiac distich is a form clearly associated with male writers from Catullus and Ovid to Goethe and beyond.<sup>70</sup> 'Wiepersdorf' declares its intention to adopt this form, but subverts expectations by not conforming to the anticipated syllabic pattern. The cycle is not written in elegiac couplets but rather in Kirsch's typically long lines, encompassing a great variety of rhythms and metres which lends them a prosaic or conversational quality.

Also unexpected in light of the reference to the elevated genre of classical elegy is the text's eccentric blending of registers, from the archaic and formal to the colloquial or even vulgar. The opening reference to the elegiac form is soon revealed to be ironic: rather than adhering to the artificial rhythms of classical elegy, the tone of melancholy is generic. The long lines and lack of

<sup>70</sup> See, for example, Dieter Lamping, *Das lyrische Gedicht: Definitionen zu Theorie und Geschichte der Gattung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989), p. 50; Mathilda Skoie, 'The Woman', in *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, ed. by Thea S. Thorsen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 83–96.

overt rhetorical patterning mean that the poems at times resemble irregularly lineated prose or speech. This is most clear in the lines directed suddenly at the absent lover in poem eight, quoted above: the unconventional orthography of ‘ach geh weck’, which follows the curse, reinforces a sense of very contemporary, lively and prosaic irritation. This is in sharp contrast to certain elevated and archaic turns of phrase, such as the use of the French spelling ‘Meubeln’ for ‘Möbel’ in the fourth poem. Similarly, the cycle’s final lines place the elevated ‘O wie mir graut!’ next to the colloquial, casual ‘die schleppen | Nur das Nötige mit die Kinder, die Arbeit’.

Various effects are achieved by mixing discourses in this way. Not only does the element of surprise inherent in this blending of registers amount to a deliberate subversion of the male-gendered genre of elegy, but the poem’s language is also enlivened through the variety of its rhythms and the adoption of a conversational, colloquial lexis. It is in line with the conversational tone one would expect of a private letter, and it therefore feeds into the gender discourses surrounding the epistolary form and its relationship to politics and feminine experience, as described above.<sup>71</sup> More broadly, one can also read this blending of discourses as another aspect of Kirsch’s stated commitment to representing the world – including the world of female experience – in all its diversity and complexity, rather than as filtered through the lens of mainstream politics or conventional poetic form.

The use of direct address from Kirsch to von Arnim throughout the text lends the cycle a broadly epistolary quality which can be read as a formal engagement with von Armin’s own writings. The choice of the epistolary form has a number of implications, both political and spatial: it generally implies a

<sup>71</sup> Lorely French, *German Women as Letter Writers, 1750-1850* (Madison; Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996); *A History of Women’s Writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland*, ed. by Jo Catling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 7.



largely domestic focus on the 'internal' world of self and home, rather than appearing to address public matters for the purposes of publication. In light of this, it is regarded by many as a highly gendered form, and von Arnim is far from the only prominent female letter writer in German literary history. A letter is always written from and to particular places and individuals, and thus expresses not only individuality and domestic experience but also affiliation, connection and community with a clear spatial dimension. The epistolary form is therefore very appropriate for both Kirsch and von Arnim's texts, which are clearly written for a public audience rather than being 'authentic' private letters, since it is able to express both the nuances of individual experience and the importance of literary, cultural and political affiliations without becoming 'plakativ'. Again, the use of spatial constructs and dynamics proves effective in helping to negotiate these issues.

The adoption of the conventions of folk tales and narratives of witchcraft also plays a role in mediating the triad of place, gender and form. There is a general mood of the magical and mystical throughout the 'Wiepersdorf' cycle: there are (for instance) several references to witchcraft, such as the mention of animals generally understood, in German folklore, to be used by witches as 'familiar' animals. Aspects of the 'märchenhaft' are present throughout the text: the representation of the garden at night in poem four, the mention of the 'Tränklein Vergessen' and the description of the speaker playing 'Herrin der Bilder und Meubeln', create a carnivalesque mood which supports the reading of Schloss Wiepersdorf as a place of retreat, removed from everyday life and exempt from normal rules. The concluding poems in the sequence, which directly reference the Callot statuery at Wiepersdorf and introduce the figure of a monstrous hermaphrodite, also draw on motifs from fairytales and fantasy narratives.

The inclusion of these fantastic elements into the cycle can be read in various ways. It links Kirsch's cycle of poems to the tradition of folktale writing, collecting and editing in German, as perpetuated by the von Arnims and Clemens Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* (1805-1808).<sup>72</sup> It thus reminds us of the Romantic heritage of Wiepersdorf and the pivotal role this location and the figures associated with it played in German literary history. However, the fantastic is also a gendered genre, much like the epistolary form with which Kirsch also experiments in 'Wiepersdorf': it is not a mainstream, hegemonic genre like the elegy or ode, but a genre whose roots are in oral traditions, popular culture and the domestic sphere traditionally associated with women's (and children's) experience.

These explorations of the intersections between gender and form are not the only signs of political engagement within the text. The complexities of national politics also emerge in various ways and are explored through the tropes of space and place. Kirsch was notoriously reluctant to comment openly on GDR politics or to allow her work to be instrumentalised in the service of GDR *Kulturpolitik*. She was surprised by interpretations of 'Wiepersdorf' which saw the text, in the wake of the Biermann scandal, as '[ein] prophetisches Vorzeichen von Stasi-Psychoterror'.<sup>73</sup> She repeatedly insisted that her relocation to West Berlin was little more than 'moving house', and was clear that she did not see herself as a political 'emigrant' or 'dissident'.<sup>74</sup> Although the extent to which these assertions can be taken at face value is

---

<sup>72</sup> Clemens Brentano and Ludwig Achim von Arnim, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn. Alte Deutsche Lieder. Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987).

<sup>73</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 96.

<sup>74</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 128.

debatable, Kirsch's reluctance to adopt the explicitly political role expected of writers during this period is consistently in evidence.<sup>75</sup>

Given Kirsch's inclination towards understatement when it comes to discussing life in the GDR, her mention of the 'difficulty' of life around the time of the composition of the Wiepersdorf cycle is telling. '[I]ch [mußte] mich um tausend andere Sachen kümmern [...] weil die Politik sich um mich zu kümmern anfang', she explains, citing this as the cause of diminishing productivity: 'Dabei sind die Grenzen dessen, was man sagen und besser nicht sagen kann, in der DDR immer viel enger gesteckt.'<sup>76</sup> Williams highlights the significance, in later works, of the high-rise apartment block on Berlin's Fischerinsel in which she lived before leaving the GDR, a place clearly associated with trauma, anxiety and difficulty which provides the dramatic counterpoint to the spaces described in 'Wiepersdorf':

hier spiel ich  
Die Herrin der Bilder und Meubeln bis dann  
Nach Tagen das Leben im praktischen Hochhaus  
Mich wieder nimmt, in dem ich wie vorher  
Bin [...]

(SG 139)

The whimsical spelling of 'Meubeln' for 'Möbel', combined with the active and joyful verb 'spielen', signals a degree of freedom conferred by the stay in Wiepersdorf. This contrasts sharply with the sinister manner in which the

<sup>75</sup> Cosentino claims that Kirsch's work 'läßt [...] die traumatische Zäsur des Staatenwechsels spüren', although this seems somewhat overstated. Williams has also shown how Kirsch's post-1977 writings and critical interventions to some extent contradict her overt statements of indifference towards her move from East to West Germany, arguing that '[d]ie Spannungen und auch die Sprache, in der sie dabei gefangen sind, rufen die erbitterten Debatten zwischen den "inneren" und den "wahren" Migranten nach 1945 in Erinnerung. In diesem Sinn (und in diesem Sinn allein) ist Sarah Kirsch zweifelsohne eine "Emigrantin"'. See Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 1; Williams, "Ich bin kein Emigrant, ich bin kein Dissident": Sarah Kirsch und die DDR', p. 398.

<sup>76</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 130-31.

high-rise will ‘take [her] back’ when she returns to the city. Early in the poem, this high-rise apartment is described as ‘[die] verletzte[...] viereckige[...] Gegend’. The ambiguous reference later in the cycle to the sudden fear felt ‘Wenn auf der anderen Seite des Hauses | Ein Wagen zu hören ist’ might also be read as implying a desire to secretly escape the narrow confines of life in the GDR.

This apparent desire to escape is combined, both in ‘Wiepersdorf’ itself and in the rest of the collection, with an emphasis on the structural binary of ‘wholeness’ on the one hand and divisions or doublings on the other. Cosentino describes the intersection of the personal and political in this set of images:

‘Ganzheit’ ist ironischerweise das fatale Schlüsselwort des Bandes.  
Die Tragik dieser Liebesgeschichte der an der deutsch-deutschen  
Spaltung leidenden Ostberlinerin und eines Westberliners quillt  
aus seiner völlig unideologisch verstandenen Wunschvorstellung  
von staatlicher ‘Ganzheit’ und von ‘Ganzheit’ in der  
Zweierbeziehung.<sup>77</sup>

In ‘Wiepersdorf’, motifs of doubling and division, with both personal and political resonance, are explored specifically in images of space and place, from the ‘zwiefachen Dach’ of the building itself to the contrast between the ‘geschorenen Hecken’ which divide the space of the Schlosspark and the ‘liebe freie Land’ which lies beyond it.

The importance of the cycle’s location in a particular place, and the ability this place has to reconcile the various layers of the speaker’s experience – as a poet, lover, woman and citizen of the GDR – is signalled throughout the text, from the very first poem. The first word of the first poem, ‘Hier’, locates the

<sup>77</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 76.

reader immediately in a specific place. It introduces this place and links it to the tone of ‘Melancholia’ which persists throughout:

Hier ist das Versmaß elegisch  
Das Tempus Praeteritum  
Eine hübsche blaßrosa Melancholia  
Durch die geschorenen Hecken gewebt.

(SG 137)

Although the deixis permits a degree of ambiguity – it refers as much to the poem itself as to the place it describes – the setting conforms to our expectations of an aristocratic manor house (*Schloss*), as established by the cycle’s title. The garden or park described here functions throughout the poem as a liminal space between the resolutely domestic interiors of the building and the open countryside beyond.

There is also a clearly meta-textual focus, with the poem describing its own meter and tense, which are associated with the place itself. As discussed above, the meter does not conform to the conventions of classical elegy, but rather switches freely between long and short lines, with very little end stopping and only occasional punctuation. A parallel can be drawn between this choice of form and the dynamics of spatial partition as described in the first section of the poem. On the one hand, the ‘geschorenen Hecken’ rigidly reinforce separation and distance; on the other, the ‘hübsche blaßrosa Melancholia’ is able to weave through freely and to subvert this rigidity. The colouring of the ‘Melancholia’ and its flexibility in opposition to the fixity of the hedges invites a reading of both space and form as gendered: in the poem’s imagery as well as in its formal qualities, an acute awareness of limitation and convention is balanced against flexibility. The arabesque quality of the image also links the poem to the literary history it explicitly invokes, given that the

concept of the arabesque was newly emphasised and interpreted in Romantic aesthetic theory.<sup>78</sup>

The speaker's perspective oscillates between internal and external spaces throughout the cycle, since at some points the speaker is trapped indoors by bad weather and at others able to go walking in the park with a view beyond to the open countryside. In the second poem, the speaker addresses Bettina for the first time, implicitly comparing their experiences as women and linking this to political contexts by referring to Bettina's writing about contemporary social problems, and particularly to her epistolary novel *Dies Buch gehört dem König* (1843).<sup>79</sup> As discussed above, the apostrophic address lends the cycle an epistolary quality which situates Kirsch's text in a tradition of women's letter writing. The spatiotemporal aspect – writing a letter from one location and historical moment to another – intersects with the political, since it expresses affiliation and community.

Hier  
Hast du mit sieben Kindern gesessen, und wenn  
Landregen abging  
Muß es genauso geklappert haben Ende Mai  
Auf die frisch aufgespannten Blätter – ich sollte  
Mal an den König schreiben.

(SG 138).

The demarcations between indoor and outdoor spaces are here gendered in complex ways: the park – a liminal location which is neither entirely

<sup>78</sup> See Carsten Strathausen, 'Eichendorff's 'Das Marmorbild' and the Demise of Romanticism', in *Rereading Romanticism*, ed. by Martha B. Helfer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 368–88 (p. 375–377); Günter Oesterle, "'Vorbgriffe zu einer Theorie der Ornamente': Kontroverse Formproblem zwischen Aufklärung, Klassizismus und Romantik am Beispiel der Arabeske', in *Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der bildenden Kunst im späten 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Herbert Beck, Peter C. Bol, and Eva Maek-Gérard (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 1984), pp. 119–39.

<sup>79</sup> Bettina von Arnim, *Dies Buch gehört dem König*, ed. by Wolfgang Bunzel (Munich: dtv, 2008).

domestic (like the house itself) nor entirely wild – is policed not only by the ‘geschorenen Hecken’ mentioned earlier in the text, but also by male statues which mark the point ‘[w]o der Park mit dem Wald schläft’. Spatial relationships pointedly mirror sexual, gendered ones. Moreover, the link between this gendered spatial division and restrictions imposed upon female writing and speech is laid bare not only by the reference to von Arnim and her writing, but also by the image of the ‘zierlichen Knebeln’ which hold the doors of the dining room window closed. The double meaning of the word ‘Knebel’ (both a bolt or handle and a gag) is significant, and could be read as implying that women’s speech and writing are inhibited by domestic surroundings. However, the fact of the cycle’s existence and its blending of the domestic, personal narrative of a failed relationship with explorations of politics, gender and female literary community prove the fallacy of this assumption: both Kirsch and von Arnim refused to be silenced.

Since the speaker is able to imaginatively inhabit von Arnim’s domestic milieu, her residence at Wiepersdorf also represents liberation from her own restrictive domestic circumstances, in the ‘verletzenden viereckigen Gegend’ of her Berlin high-rise apartment. Female experience, it is suggested, is more complex than either misogynistic or liberal feminist assumptions imply: domestic life is neither a paradise nor a prison for women (though it can be both), but rather one aspect of female experience among many. Life beyond the domestic sphere features prominently throughout the poem, including in the third poem in the cycle, in which the central female figure goes walking in spite of the bad weather. This part of the text places the female speaker firmly in a position of agency and command of the surrounding environment:

Eine Bannmeile schöner frischer Wald  
Mit Kuckucken Holztauben und Rotbrüstchen  
Habe ich um mich gelegt: unempfindlich  
Geh ich im Wind, und der trägt

Nicht einen Seufzer mir zu. Gepanzert  
 Und obendrein  
 Einen Minengürtel Einzelheiten  
 Zierlich drapiert will ich nun bleiben  
 Auf freiem Feld.

(SG 138)

The speaker appropriates the politicised vocabulary of military defences to describe her own ability to resist the elements, and describes herself as ‘zierlich drapiert’ in armour which otherwise has masculine connotations. The list of bird names, on the other hand, invokes ideas not only of freedom and flight in general, but also specifically of witchcraft, a trope Kirsch has frequently used to explore transgressive female community and the role of the female writer. The idea of a ‘Bannmeile’ links this trope to political circumstances through the use of a spatial metaphor: the word ‘Bannmeile’ (lit. ‘banned mile’) refers not only to the exclusion zone enforced to restrict political protest in certain areas (i.e. a ‘no-protest zone’ such as that which surrounds certain government buildings) but also to the ‘no-go zone’ or cursed area which encircles enchanted castles in stories involving witchcraft or sorcery.<sup>80</sup> Although the setting in the open countryside contrasts with the domestic spaces described elsewhere in the text, and the park which appears in the first poem in the cycle, once again the text represents a particular spatial experience as a means of exploring multilayered subjective experience – as a woman, as a writer and as political subject. It does so by combining fantastic and overtly political discourses.

*Märchen* and the carnivalesque are key motifs throughout. In poems four, five and six, the night has drawn in and an open window allows the curtains to billow out of the room and tear on the rough stone of the balustrade. The *Schlosspark* becomes a zone of darkness, mystery and oblivion to which the

<sup>80</sup> *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. by Hanns Bächtold-Stäubli and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, 10 vols (Berlin; Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1936), VII, p. 1213.



speaker is drawn, and which contrasts sharply with her daily existence in the 'praktischen Hochhaus' (SG 139) back in Berlin. The sense of darkness and seductive oblivion fits into the personal narrative woven throughout the poem: the desire to forget, to play at being someone else, is consistent with the notion that the poem explores a retreat after the break-up of a relationship.

This is reflected when the speaker comments on her desire to capture 'Ein hübsch klopfendes menschliches Herze [...] Vergebens' (SG 140). Images of doubling and twinning abound, symbolic not only of the gender binary and of the failed relationship which is thematised throughout the text and but also, Cosentino suggests, of German division.<sup>81</sup>

However, the break-up and retreat are not unambiguously negative. Despite the gruesome note struck by the description of '[die] Leichen | Der neugeborenen Katzen' and the potentially negative implications of 'das Tränklein Vergessen', there is nevertheless a freedom afforded by the imaginative possibility of playing 'die Herrin der Bilder und Meublen' (SG 139). Again, it is the place which serves as the catalyst for linking personal, artistic and gendered experience: it acts as a retreat and a place of leisure (as implied by 'spielen'), and as the means by which the speaker links her own experience to von Arnim's, the true 'Herrin'. Wiepersdorf, for the speaker, represents a place of connection, play and exploration in which personal, political and artistic narratives are layered and complex.

The cycle blends images from folklore with hints of political dissatisfaction. In the sixth poem, the political dimensions of space are manifested in the tension between Schloss and village: between the writerly community of the manor house, local people and the military. Each belongs in a distinct space, but the boundaries between these domains are eroded. The local community, invoked with reference to the local shop ('Konsum', a standard

<sup>81</sup> Cosentino, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin*, p. 23.

feature of life in the GDR), is threatened by the hostile presence of a convoy of tanks which passes through in the night, and which marks the landscape, destroying a house and injuring inhabitants of the village.<sup>82</sup> Although the speaker crosses the liminal space of the wood to temporarily participate in the life of the town, she is nevertheless an outsider in this community. She does not fully belong to the community of writers in the Schloss itself, because she has not been given a key ('lediglich ich | Bekam keinen Schlüssel', SG 140). Images of flight and escape reflect a desire to leave the domestic spaces of the manor house and park, if only temporarily. This feeling of freedom is mirrored by the free-flowing syntax of the text. The only short lines, at the centre of the poem, are 'Rufen: es muß | Abwechslung geben' (SG 140), emphasising the centrality of difference, change and separateness as the orienting motifs of the passage. This is further reinforced by the folkloric symbolism of nocturnal flight and witchcraft in the opening lines of the stanza, and by the otherworldly image of the speaker running wildly in the moonlight and the suggestion that the landscape looks 'verwunschen' (SG 140) even by daylight.

Various narratives therefore come together quite pointedly in this poem. The speaker is revealed as an individualist and outsider with no clear affiliation to any of the various communities featured in the cycle. This can be understood either as a consequence of the break-up of the romantic relationship, as an artistic problem (whereby she does not feel at home in the writers' retreat along with other writers and the spectre of Bettina von Arnim) or on a political level, since she feels little empathy with the villagers affected by the incursion of the military onto their territory.

Domestic space, the interior of the Schloss and its outbuildings, features again in the seventh poem in the cycle.

---

<sup>82</sup> Frach explains that the woods near Schloss Wiepersdorf housed a major complex of Russian barracks and military housing. See Frach, *Schloss Wiepersdorf*, p. 37.

Ich sitze im Schloß – Edi und Elke  
 in ihrer Mühle.  
 [...] hier in diesem  
 Volkseignen Schloß wo private  
 Unken Kummer mir vorschrein.<sup>83</sup>

(SG 141)

The tension between various forms of isolation and belonging is again evident here. The speaker imagines herself in a different space to other members of the contemporary artistic community who are connected to her, and to one other, by means of their shared intellectual engagement with ‘die älteren Dichter’ (SG 141). The clarity of her image of their domestic situation demonstrates that she is part of their circle: she knows enough to assume, for example, that Edi will be lying on the camp bed and Elke pacing the house in ‘verblichenen Schuhen’ (SG 141). There is a gendered aspect to this intimacy, since Kirsch and Erb both later published edited volumes of Droste-Hülshoff’s work with commentaries; these are notable engagements with the female literary community which also form one of the contexts to the ‘Wiepersdorf’ cycle.<sup>84</sup> The image of the sparrowhawk, a solitary bird of prey, reminds Elke of the speaker, once again reflecting the theme of individualism. Finally, the ironic juxtaposition of ‘volkseignen Schloß’ and ‘private | Unken’ adds a sarcastic political dimension to the relationship between domestic and ‘wild’ space also explored elsewhere in the text. The natural world defies political strictures, remaining ‘private’ in spite of GDR norms and dogmas.

<sup>83</sup> Elke is Elke Erb, a poet and translator with whom Kirsch was acquainted, and Edi is the critic Adolf Endler. See Ruth J. Owen, *The Poet’s Role: Lyric Responses to German Unification by Poets from the GDR* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), p. 34; Berendse, *Die ‘Sächsische Dichterschule’*, p. 34; Adolf Endler, *Nebich: Eine deutsche Karriere* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013), p. 82.

<sup>84</sup> Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, *Gedichte*, ed. by Elke Erb (Leipzig: Insel, 1989); Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, *Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. Ausgewählt von Sarah Kirsch.*, ed. by Sarah Kirsch (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1986).

The intrusion of a male figure into the text in the eighth poem in the cycle is accompanied by a change in the rhythm of the verse, from longer sentences and phrases to a nearly paratactical, staccato vituperation: ‘Du Schönhäutiger Schwacher Verfuckter | Dichselberliebender schöngraues | Schielendes Aug ach geh weck’ (SG 142). This ‘curse’ follows a detailed description of frogs, a suggestion of submerged violence in the image of cats and mice, and the speaker smoking ‘die dunkelsten Schwaden’ (SG 142). All of these images reinforce the fantastical, occult tone of the text and situate the address to ‘du’ as a curse, a form of ‘Zauberspruch’, but one with a decidedly modern and colloquial force. It confirms that the retreat to Schloss Wiepersdorf is not only a means of encouraging creative productivity, but also an attempt on the speaker’s part to isolate herself from the negative consequences of the end of a romantic relationship.

Towards the end of the cycle, the elegiac tone is reinstated and a series of links expressed: between past and present political circumstance; between domestic and political concerns; and between the speaker and von Arnim.

Dieser Abend, Bettina, es ist  
 Alles beim alten. Immer  
 Sind wir allein, wenn wir den Königen schreiben  
 Denen des Herzens und jenen  
 Des Staats. Und noch  
 Erschrickt unser Herz  
 Wenn auf der anderen Seite des Hauses  
 Ein Wagen zu hören ist.

(SG 142)

The direct address to ‘Bettina’ once again implies some continuity between past and present and articulates the speaker’s affiliation with earlier generations of female authors. The statement of isolation contradicts this gesture of solidarity and renders the apparent union of the speaker and Bettina’s voices in the latter half of the stanza paradoxical: speaker and

addressee are united to the extent that the poem is able to speak of 'unser Herz', but both remain nevertheless also 'allein' in their creative endeavour. The connection between the domestic sphere of romantic relationships and public affairs of state, negotiated by both Bettina's own writing and this text itself, is expressed by the conflation of '[die Könige] des Herzes und jenen des Staates'. Neither sphere is valued more highly than the other: rather, they co-exist as equally valid facets of female (indeed, human) experience. The 'Erschecken' of the heart in response to the sound of a car engine 'auf der anderen Seite des Hauses' is enigmatic, perhaps referring to the possibility of the former romantic partner returning, the possibility of border crossing, fear of deportation, a more generalised possibility of escape from retreat and isolation.

The last two poems take place once again in the liminal space of the *Schlosspark*. The tone is no longer melancholy but rather affectionate, light-hearted and, in the final section, satirical. The penultimate section continues in the voice of the central female figure in the poem, who describes a fantastical situation complete with 'Hermaphrodit', 'Zwergen' and an 'Un-Mensch' who appears to have been turned to stone or cursed, perhaps by the speaker's own earlier utterance (SG 142). In the last section of the poem, a heavily ironic coda to the rest of the text, the voice of a 'Männliches Steinbild' bemoans and expresses fear about the changing social position of women (SG 143). It is evident that this 'Männliches Steinbild' is deprived of agency and freedom, precisely as the speaker herself is able to demonstrate her own: the contrast represents an inversion of the standard image of the Romantic woman as a pale, passive entity with a purely decorative purpose.

The 'Wiepersdorf' cycle uses a series of interlinked spaces and places to bring together various narratives of self, home, identity and belonging. On the most literal level, the poem tells the story of a woman's response to the end of a relationship and her retreat from an unhappy life in the city to the freer and

more pleasant surroundings of Schloss Wiepersdorf. However, there is much more to the poem than this: the overlaying of this narrative onto the history of the Schloss, and particularly the address to von Arnim, also enables the poem to explore notions of female authorship and women's domestic experience. Interactions with fantastical figures such as the male statues in the park, motifs from folktales and the subversion of genre constraints also feed in to this exploration of gender through form. The spatial dynamics of local and national politics suggest another narrative still: the story of a woman who seeks to engage with a local community but remains an outsider, and who perhaps also wishes to escape from oppressive political circumstances.

It is the poem's setting – Schloss Wiepersdorf, with its various interconnected spaces – which unifies these various narratives, and which makes it possible for them all to co-exist within the text. Kirsch uses Wiepersdorf to explore the various themes of the poem without being reductive, or oversimplifying experience. This is particularly evident in relation to the gender dynamics in the text, where the address to Bettina von Arnim and the exploration of various domestic spaces makes it clear that the speaker is reluctant to replace one dogmatic narrative of female inferiority with another of female oppression: Bettina von Arnim is neither the capricious Romantic muse she has historically been perceived as being, nor the victim of male oppression awaiting liberation by representatives of the GDR women's movement. At Wiepersdorf, and in Kirsch's poetic cycle, the richness and diversity of women's experiences of 'home' are laid bare. The text seems to represent these experiences honestly and without regard to conventional categories, in line with Kirsch's stated commitment 'Kunst zu machen, die mit Menschen zu tun hat, mit den Menschen, mit denen ich lebe'.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 124.

Mahon's 'Beyond Howth Head' (L 33-39) participates in a long tradition of epistolary verse in English, invoking not only Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and Lord Byron but also, most explicitly, Auden's *New Year Letter* (1940), the deceptively glib rhythm of which is mimicked by Mahon's relentless rhyming couplets and strong iambic tetrameter.<sup>86</sup> Auden's poem is an appropriate model for Mahon's, for various reasons: not only does Auden's brand of transatlantic late modernism offer a clear precedent for Mahon's own engagement with the relationship between Europe and the US, but his interest in the relationship between poetry and politics is well documented.<sup>87</sup> Like Mahon, Auden habitually revised or removed from his oeuvre texts which he felt

<sup>86</sup> Auden, *Collected Poems*, pp. 195–241. The iambic tetrameter, in both texts, creates a strong sense of metric regularity. Although not a traditional oral form, this syncopated rhythm is reminiscent of oral metres such as the ballad form, in which lines of iambic tetrameter and iambic trimeter alternate. Like the ballad form, regular iambic tetrameters encourage a rapid, 'sing-song' delivery. However, Mahon and Auden's poems are clearly far more self-consciously intellectual than the ballad forms to which they owe their metrical inspiration. There are also obvious links to another of Auden's epistolary poems, *Letter to Lord Byron* (1936). (See 'Letter to Lord Byron' in Auden, *Collected Poems*, pp. 79–113). Although *Letter to Lord Byron* is written in seven-line stanzas of rime royal, rather than the pair-rhymed iambic tetrameters of both 'Beyond Howth Head' and *New Year Letter*, the tone of laconic satire in 'Beyond Howth Head' more closely resembles that of Auden's earlier poem. Moreover, as suggested below, *Letter to Lord Byron* shares the focus of 'Beyond Howth Head' on specific landscapes and communities (both that of Iceland, where Auden was travelling when the poem was written, and the 'home' landscape of northern England), in contrast to the highly abstracted survey of intellectual landscape in *New Year Letter*. For further examples of epistolary poems in English, see Byron's 'Epistle to Augusta', in Lord George Gordon Byron, *Lord Byron - The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford; New York: Oxford Paperbacks, 2008), pp. 268–71. See also Pope's 'Epistle to Bathurst', 'Epistle to Cobham' and 'Epistle to a Lady', in Alexander Pope, *The Major Works*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 250–64, 319–27, 350–58; and Swift's 'The Humble Petition of Frances Harris' and 'To Stella', in Jonathan Swift, *The Major Works*, ed. by Angus Ross and David Woolley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 57–59, 396–99.

<sup>87</sup> See Lucy McDiarmid, *Auden's Apologies for Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

misrepresented his political viewpoint or were ‘unethical’ in that they sacrificed authenticity of viewpoint for greater rhetorical effect.

Like *New Year Letter*, ‘Beyond Howth Head’ is a ‘state of the nation’ poem which surveys and describes the political, cultural and intellectual landscape of Ireland at a particular historical moment.<sup>88</sup> However, Mahon’s poem also describes a physical landscape and its inhabitants. In sharp contrast to the abstract philosophising of *New Year Letter*, ‘Beyond Howth Head’ depicts concrete places and circumstances: communities in the process of negotiating domestic, national and global affiliations. In this sense, ‘Beyond Howth Head’ might more helpfully be read alongside Auden’s ‘Prologue at Sixty’, in which

Radial republics, rooted to spots,  
bilateral monarchies, moving frankly,  
stoic by sort and self-policing,  
enjoy their rites, their realms of data,  
live well by the Law of their Flesh.<sup>89</sup>

‘Prologue at Sixty’ is explicitly concerned with tracing what it calls a ‘numinous map’ of spaces, places and landscapes, as well as the literary and intellectual points of reference which underpin the position from which it speaks.<sup>90</sup> In *New Year Letter*, the places mentioned are schematic, prompting

<sup>88</sup> This is particularly true of Mahon’s poem in its original form, as published in *Lives*. Mahon has made various, including many significant, amendments to the poem over time, including to remove many of references to historical and cultural contexts. These amendments minimise the importance of the historical context of the poem’s composition and, to some extent, stabilise the originally highly eclectic points of reference in the text. In order to better demonstrate the processes of negotiation the poem enacts, the earlier text of the poem is the one discussed in this analysis. For the most recent version of the poem, see Mahon, *New Collected Poems*, pp. 52–56.

<sup>89</sup> ‘Prologue at Sixty’ in Auden, *Collected Poems*, p. 829.

<sup>90</sup> According to Rudolf Otto, the Austrian theologian who coined the term, the numinous is the non-rational mystery which is an essential quality of religion, ‘felt as objective and outside the self’. See Rudolf Otto, ‘The Numinous’, in *Readings in Philosophy of Religion: Ancient to Contemporary*, ed. by Linda Zagzebski and Timothy D. Miller (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 119–22 (p. 119). ‘Prologue at Sixty’ also deals



only abstract conclusions; poets, artists and thinkers serve simply as cyphers for philosophical positions. ‘Prologue at Sixty’ and ‘Beyond Howth Head’, by contrast, associate places, spaces and people with specific memories: ‘sites made sacred by something read there, | a lunch, a good lay, or sheer lightness of heart’.<sup>91</sup> The aim of the following analysis is to re-examine ‘Beyond Howth Head’ as a poem of place by studying its ‘numinous map’. It will consider how the text counterbalances references to local circumstance, sensory and lived experience against evocations of a broader – national, European and transnational – cultural landscape and community. In doing so, it will argue that ‘Beyond Howth Head’ represents local and global spaces as contributing to intricate processes of negotiation and transfer, rather than as fixed determinants of individual identity. It will show how Mahon moves between local and global spaces through his use of what I will call ‘doubly encoded’ references or citations – those which, rather than referring to or citing a single author or source, use one reference as a means of invoking not only that author or work but also other, submerged contexts and sources. The poem’s form is exemplary in this regard: it most strongly recalls Auden, but it recalls Auden *recalling* Byron, and gestures beyond Byron to Swift, Pope and Horace.

The poem’s self-conscious intellectualism and sophisticated intertextuality are extremely important, not only because they are a key feature of Mahon’s poetic method, but also because they are themselves thematised: they demonstrate the sheer complexity of affiliation, identity and belonging. As Haughton observes, ‘the poem is caught up in situating and resituating writing itself, revealing the ways Irish culture is inextricably involved in larger cultural

---

explicitly with many other themes, not least mortality and religious faith. Although the question of faith, and particularly of faith-communities, is important in ‘Beyond Howth Head’, which draws its epigram from Pascal’s *Pensées*, this aspect of the text is not the focus of the following analysis.

<sup>91</sup> Auden, *Collected Poems*, p. 831.

networks'.<sup>92</sup> 'Beyond Howth Head' is also a portrait of a changing nation, from the opening stanzas' scene-setting lament on the decline of rural communities to the painterly evocation of the city of Dublin in the poem's final stanzas.

Beneath the complex web of literary and cultural citations, the poem alludes to real, lived spatial experience. This fact is underemphasised by many critical approaches to the text, including Haughton's own forensic and illuminating exegesis of its many cultural contexts and intertextual points of reference.<sup>93</sup>

Central to these cultural networks is the dynamic of Europe, the US and Britain as a triad between which Ireland must negotiate a position. The 'crumbling shores' (L 33) of Europe signal a continent in decline, whereas the cultural influence of America has begun to make itself felt in earnest. Politically speaking, the US asserts its dominance over Europe and Ireland, appearing as a sinister technocratic intelligence regime signalling the future of capitalist democracy:

sleepless, cold, computed stars  
in random sequence light the bars;  
and the United States, whose swell  
intentions pave the road to hell,  
send in the CIA to make  
Cambodia safe for Dick von Dyke.

(L 36)

The attitude to this new global power expressed in 'Beyond Howth Head' is ambivalent at best. At times, the poem acknowledges and even, perhaps, celebrates the vitality and novelty the US offers in contrast to a sclerotic and troubled Europe. However, the 'cool courts of Cambridge, Mass.' (L 34) emerge as a not altogether positive influence on global cultural and literary exchange.

<sup>92</sup> Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 74.

<sup>93</sup> Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 74. See also Kathleen Shields, 'Derek Mahon's Poetry of Belonging', *Irish University Review*, 24.1 (1994), 67–79; Kennedy-Andrews, *Writing Home*.

The complex relationship between the US and Ireland in the 1960s and 1970s, financial, political, cultural and in terms of the movement of people, informs the poem's perspective on transatlantic relations.

Exchange is a crucial concept in the text which affects the framing of the intertextual references. Rather than serving as simple encoding signs whereby, for example, Shakespeare would represent a mainstream English national identity, the intertextual citations and allusions have unexpected layers of complexity. They frequently give the impression of invoking a single figure, text or idea, but in reality doubly or even triply encode their referents. In some cases, such as in the final set of allusions in the poem, this can be understood as a means of equivocating between the twin poles of European and American cultural influence – declaring allegiance with neither, but expressing an understanding of, and affiliation with, both.

and here I close my *Dover Beach*  
scenario, for look! the watch-  
ful Baily winks beyond Howth Head,  
my *callín bán* lies snug in bed  
and the moon rattles the lost stones  
among the rocks and the strict bones  
of the drowned as I put out the light  
on Mailer's *Armies of the Night*.

(L 38)

In this final stanza, the political implications of human and literary community are brought to the fore through the intertextual link between Matthew Arnold's 'Dover Beach' and Norman Mailer's classic documentary novel about the Vietnam War, *Armies of the Night* (1968). By refracting the allusion to Arnold through Mailer's use of the same text, the poem explores the tensions between the 'old' world, as represented by a very traditional European cultural heritage, and the 'new', which also brings a new brand of politics, in the form of conflicts such as the Vietnam War, and a new literary canon.

This double encoding also takes place elsewhere in the text. By referring to the myth of the Children of Lir, for example, Mahon invokes and explores the history of Christianity in Ireland, as well as the nationalist adoption of the story in the twentieth century. Given that the story – like many Irish myths and folk tales – also features in the work of Lady Augusta Gregory, the reference also necessarily links the text to Gregory, Yeats, Synge and their circle, who are referred to on several occasions elsewhere in the poem. In a comparable fashion, the reference to ‘the Spartan code of Dylan Thomas’ (L 35) in stanza nine reminds us not only of Thomas himself but also of his friendship with MacNeice, and the fact that MacNeice cast Thomas as Aristophanes in his 1946 radio play *Enemies of Cant*.<sup>94</sup> A reference to Milton’s *Lycidas* in stanza eleven draws in traces of that poem’s classical namesake (from Herodotus) and the tradition of pastoral elegy upon which Milton draws. ‘Chomei at Toyama’ is mentioned in stanza nineteen not only as an example of an artistic exile, but also, as the notes accompanying the text make clear, to demonstrate an awareness of Basil Bunting’s work.<sup>95</sup>

A significant number of references in the text function in this multilayered way. In doing so, they demonstrate that the map of global literary space is as complex as that of local landscapes and circumstances: it is another kind of ‘numinous mapping’, this time of those members of the literary community in a global space made sacred by their personal significance, but, as in the case of the ‘numinous map’ of local spaces, the points of reference are complex, multifaceted and unstable. It is precisely these features which render both local space and the global literary community ‘numinous’ in the first

<sup>94</sup> The war between Athens and Sparta was a regular subject of Aristophanes’ drama. See Louis MacNeice, *Louis MacNeice: The Classical Radio Plays*, ed. by Amanda Wrigley and S. J. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 256–57.

<sup>95</sup> See Bunting, *Complete Poems*, pp. 83–94.

place, since instability demonstrates the complexity of identity and community relationships: this complexity is the larger presence, the non-rational force which is 'felt as objective and outside the self' in both 'Beyond Howth Head' and *New Year Letter*.

However, to discuss 'Beyond Howth Head' as though it were little more than a checklist of knowing references to high and popular culture and contemporary politics in Europe, Ireland and the US would be to misrepresent the poem's lyricism and rootedness in a particular location and historical circumstance. Auden's phrase is appropriate not only because of 'Beyond Howth Head's interest in questions of faith, but also because the numinous links individual subjective experience to an instinctive appreciation of something much larger (strictly speaking, to a divinity or divine presence). In 'Beyond Howth Head', as in 'Prologue at Sixty', numinous experience is only partly a function of religious faith: it is also, and perhaps more importantly, prompted by an awareness of the fascinating mystery of human community and the manifold influences it exerts over individual identity and behaviour. For Mahon, any analysis of these aspects of identity – home, belonging and community – which fails to acknowledge their irreducible complexity is necessarily flawed and politically suspect. The responsibility of poetry, he wrote, is to depict the negotiation of identity authentically and without regard to reified political categories.<sup>96</sup>

It is difficult to ignore the feeling that 'Beyond Howth Head' is addressed, from the outset, from a speaker (or rather, author) at Howth Head, just outside Dublin, to a recipient in London.<sup>97</sup> However, a close reading of the text

<sup>96</sup> Mahon, quoted in Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 76.

<sup>97</sup> The speaker of 'Beyond Howth Head' – who we can clearly interpret as a literary representation of Mahon himself – is evidently writing a letter to friend and fellow poet Jeremy Lewis. The title encourages us to assume Mahon is writing at or near Howth Head, a headland to the northeast of Dublin, although this is not stated outright until the poem's final lines. We

demonstrates that the situations of the author and addressee are rather more ambiguous than this initial reading might suggest, and it is this ambiguity which enables the text to approach and describe a series of different landscapes as though they were 'local' and immediate.

The first three stanzas adopt a position of privileged seeing, as though on a map or globe, which immediately undercuts the tentative expectation on the part of the reader that the poem will be specifically situated at or near Howth Head, and that the speaker will report only what he can see from that vantage point.

The poem's very first image demonstrates the complexity of the text's geography. The title sets up expectations of a coastal location, which is described in the opening stanza.<sup>98</sup> This coastal space turns out to be an inversion of the vantage point we expect, namely one which looks outward from the west coast of Ireland to the Irish Sea and beyond that, to England. The focus is instead on the east coast and the incoming wind from the Atlantic. Clearly, such a perspective would be unavailable to a speaker who was situated at Howth Head. The speaker's perspective is that of the wind itself, able to witness and describe the 'black-and-blue' Atlantic, as well as the 'dark doors of the declining west' (of Ireland, and of Europe) and its 'rock-built houses' on the 'crumbling shores | of Europe' (L 33). Ireland finds itself – both geographically and metaphorically – caught between a Europe in decline and the United States, which offers no straightforward remedy for Ireland's post-industrial decay.

The opening stanzas explore American-Irish-European cultural networks. There are references to Yeats ('embroidered cloths') and hints of Mozart ('night

---

may be aware, or learn through research, that Lewis lived in London at the time of the poem's composition in March and April 1970 - the date is provided at the end of the text.

<sup>98</sup> The title clearly invokes a tradition of place-name poetry, in the vein of Wordsworth's 'Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey' or 'Composed upon Westminster Bridge'. See Wordsworth, *The Major Works*, pp. 131, 285.

music') (L 33). However, for a younger generation, American pop culture comes to replace the old traditions in a way which cannot be seen as entirely negative: the 'lightning rod | of "young girls coming from a dance"' suggests a certain positive, youthful energy which balances the melancholy tone of the 'single | garage sign [spinning] behind the shingle' (L 33). Likewise, the choice of BBC rather than Telefís radio reflects a haughty 'contempt' for the latter, but the poem also gives a vivid sense of an ambivalent relationship to Britain: the 'old gratitude' is tempered by a hint of menace in the allusion to 'Birnam Wood' (L 33).<sup>99</sup> The poem specifically invokes 'Long Island' and 'Cape Cod', images of small town or rural east coast America which invite comparison with Ireland's own small town coastal communities. In the subsequent stanza, a specific image of a radio set 'shaking' because of the popular music it plays is again made non-specific by its extension into a series of (identical) images in living rooms 'from the Twelve Pins to Dublin Bay' (L 33).

The poem demonstrates a strong sense of place – a declining seaside town on the Irish coast, after dark and in the cold – but by a poetic sleight of hand, we are prevented from locating these images at a specific geographical location, be that Howth Head or anywhere else along the Irish coast. This is characteristic of 'Beyond Howth Head': until the final stanza, the poem constantly shifts between a map-view of an entire country and detailed snapshots of its people and communities, regularly confounding the reader's expectation of geographical specificity. In stanza four, for example, after a brief rejection of archaic moralising, the poem offers a vignette of young lovers

<sup>99</sup> Birnam Wood is, of course, the wood in *Macbeth* from which troops camouflaged as trees attack Dunsinane and kill Macbeth, in defiance of the witches' prophecy. The implication is, therefore, that the BBC covertly imposes English identity on Irish people through the perpetuation of cultural hegemony, in spite of the perception of independence.

which is both comic and approving, and which, despite its apparent specificity, could take place anywhere in 1960s Europe:

A little learning in a parked  
Volkswagen torches down the dark  
and soon disperses fogged Belief  
with an empiric joie de vivre.

(L 35)

The European specificity of the term 'joie de vivre' and the image of the Volkswagen are combined with the clichéd Hollywood image of a young couple 'making out' in a parked car. This enacts the same US-European tension described in relation to earlier parts of the poem.

Stanzas eight and nine unite speaker and addressee, first in the space of shared reading, then over a (hypothetical) 'foaming pint' in a London pub, and finally through letter writing, where each 'sign[s] off with a pounding pen | from Cheltenham or Inishmaan' – the only difficulty, of course, being that we do not expect the speaker to be on Inishmaan nor the addressee to be in Cheltenham (L 35).

Elsewhere, the poem range over territories as wide as County Cork, Spain, Denmark and 'Cambridge, Mass.' in a survey of forms of political resistance in Ireland and elsewhere. It expresses a longing for the return of what Spenser called the 'Lewde libertie' of the Irish, which the speaker exhorts, ironically, should not take the form of 'tight-arsed, convent-bred disdain'. Rather, it should recall a visionary, Romantic ideal of Irishness as embodied in the *aisling* topos or in Yeats' poetry. This vision of political resistance also encompasses non-Irish precedents, including motifs from *Hamlet* and a reminder that the Gaelic Irish leaders of the Nine Years' War (1594-1603) 'looked to Spain' to enlist troops for their campaigns, on the grounds that both Catholic nations were united by their common enemy.



Other stanzas purport to make things a little clearer, as the focus settles on Dublin and the surrounding area. Howth Head itself does not become visible until the final stanza: instead, the poem depicts the Martello tower to the south of the city in which Joyce slept the night before beginning *Ulysses*. The speaker can ‘hear | church bells of Monkstown through the roar’ – a detail which may just about be realistic, since Monkstown is less than two kilometres away from the Martello tower at Sandycove Point (L 35). The poem does not settle long on this evocative ‘local’ image, instead connecting the situation to the legend of the Children of Lir, which features three other bodies of water spread across Ireland and is associated both with Irish nationalism and with the Gaelic, pre-Christian heritage of Ireland.<sup>100</sup> At the beginning of stanza eleven, this train of association is interrupted by a call – ‘It calls oddly through the wild | eviscerations of the troubled | channel’ (L 35) – which can only be that of the ‘Christian bell’ mentioned in stanza 10, but here relocated once more to the speaker’s apparently ‘real’ surroundings of the east coast of Ireland. Its sound rings out across the Irish Sea, provoking an association with Milton’s *Lycidas*, another narrative which blends Christian and pagan elements (‘where Lycid’s ghost for ever sails’).<sup>101</sup> This outward movement to the Irish

<sup>100</sup> These are the Straits of Moyle at the northeastern tip of Ireland, between County Antrim and Scotland; Lough Derravaragh, County Westmeath; and Sruwaddacon Bay in County Mayo. These bodies of water are the three locations, in Irish mythology, where the Sons of Lir were said to swim for 900 years while transformed into swans. The legend is also associated with Irish nationalism, and with the ‘rebirth’ of the Irish nation after 900 years of English and British rule. A statue in Dublin’s Garden of Remembrance depicts the legend in this context. Lady Augusta Gregory included a retelling of the story in *Gods and Fighting Men* (1904). In some versions of the legend, the swans are retransfigured into men upon hearing the sound of a church bell tolling, and baptised before they die. See Lady Augusta Gregory, *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland* (Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1970).

<sup>101</sup> *Lycidas* was written as a pastoral elegy for a friend of Milton’s, a trainee minister, who died when his boat sunk in the Irish Sea.

Sea and its grand invocation of Milton's pastoral elegy is quickly interrupted by a corresponding inward movement, carrying a more prosaic cargo of industrial and household waste. The metaphysical and the earthly are brought into sharp proximity by this image. Each concrete image of local circumstance is matched by a string of associations, referencing other places at one remove from the speaker's position.

Stanzas eighteen and nineteen (L 37) explore the motif of rural retreat, and particularly of the writer in self-imposed exile. However, it is clear in these stanzas that all possible locations of self-imposed isolation are imagined rather than immediately perceived, since the 'I' still speaks from within 'the general mess' of urban life. The text draws on imagined hermitages in Ireland (the 'small island in a lake' recalling Yeats' 'Lake Isle of Innisfree') as well as Japan (through a reference to the poet Kamo no Chomei in exile at Toyama), America (Henry David Thoreau's Walden Pond) and the fictional isolated idyll described in Spenser's *Faery Queene*. Stanza eighteen also quotes Auden's *New Year Letter*: 'we are changed by what we change'. Even when fantasising about isolation from human community, the speaker draws on a community of other literary hermits – European, Asian and American – for company. The text thus starts from a more or less vividly imagined, apparently geographically specific location, and then extends and subverts this perspective by drawing on references to other places, speakers or communities.

Indeed, stanza 20 could be describing precisely this poetic method, suggesting that Chomei, Thoreau and Spenser

might serve as models for a while  
but to return in greater style.  
Centripetal, the hot world draws  
its children in with loving claws  
from rock and heather, rain and sleet  
with only Kosangas for heat  
and spins them at the centre where

they have no time to know despair.

(L 38)

‘Beyond Howth Head’ seems to possess its own ‘centripetal force’ which draws other places, writers and communities in ‘with loving claws’. What might initially appear to be a straightforward poem of place, set on or near Howth Head, and exploring local circumstances through comparisons and intertextual references, is in fact a highly complex text which never settles on the expected individual lyrical perspective.

There is, however, plenty of lyricism between the erudite citations. The penultimate stanza contains a vivid depiction of Dublin in the evening light, referring to the River Liffey as ‘Anna Livia’ in reference to its personification as Anna Livia Plurabelle in *Finnegans Wake* (1939). The apparent stability of perspective afforded by the reference to Dublin is illusory: if we assume that the speaker is still situated at the Martello tower near Monkstown, he would not be able to see the city centre in this level of detail. Moreover, the citations frame this picture within global space with reference to Dover and the US, and (by association) Vietnam. The poem may be a ‘triumph of dissociated sensibility’, as Hugh Haughton puts it, but this ‘dissociated sensibility’ depends on geographical precision and complexity, as well as articulating a particular moment of political uncertainty or prevarication between East and West, Europe and America.<sup>102</sup> A strong sense of the global is offset by close attention to the local and to place in a most concrete sense. The delicate balance of local and global is representative of ‘home’ in the process of negotiation, rather than as a static and stable location delineated by clear borders.

It is no coincidence that ‘Beyond Howth Head’ and ‘Wiepersdorf’ are both addressed more or less directly to fellow writers. In Mahon’s case, the address to Jeremy Lewis situates the poem in the context of Anglo-Irish relations and

<sup>102</sup> Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 77.

signals its intention to survey the contemporary literary scene of Ireland with a sweeping perspective. For Kirsch, the sometimes plaintive address to Bettina von Arnim indicates a subversive approach to gender binaries and acts as a tribute to a writer who successfully blended domestic and political interests. In both cases, the dedication is a means of conveying affiliation to a particular literary community.

Representations of space are central to this exploration, and play a crucial role in the two texts. In many ways, Mahon and Kirsch's depictions of space contrast sharply: Mahon's unstable perspective and panoramic viewpoint which switches from rooted lyricism to abstract citation conveys a sense of space in which the global and the local collide and co-exist. Despite the specificity of the place-name in the title 'Beyond Howth Head', it is difficult to grasp the location of the speaker in Mahon's poem, and the spaces represented are frequently both specific and general, creating a disorienting effect which mirrors the difficulty of negotiating one's place in uncertain political territory. Nevertheless, there is something utopian about the eclectic community of figures who appear in 'Beyond Howth Head', and the various locations from which they speak. The fluidity of the perspective expresses what Mahon has described as his vision of the ability of poetry to transcend geopolitical boundaries and successfully negotiate a sense of belonging, community and identity in troubled times. The broadest political question in the text – how to navigate American and European cultural influences – remains unresolved even at the very end.

Kirsch's cycle of poems expresses this same desire to transcend spatial and social boundaries. In spite of the sharp contrast between Mahon's unbounded perspective and Kirsch's often clearly demarcated borders, one can nevertheless detect the same gesture towards the utopian effacement of boundaries in the poems. For Kirsch, this is linked to the erasure of limitations

imposed by gender norms. The blending of public and private space is central to this endeavour, as the connection the poem implies between domestic affairs (including romantic relationships) and affairs of state demonstrates. Belonging to a community of fellow female writers is essential to this project, since it enables – as the motif of witchcraft demonstrates – transgressive and subversive desires to be fulfilled.

For both poets, despite their differences, these explorations of affiliation and transcendence depend on the representation of physical space. In both cases, the poems present us with ‘numinous maps’ in which the complex factors influencing individual identity are intrinsically related to spatial experience and ‘felt as objective and outside the self’. Mahon’s poem expresses the sense of being an Irish writer affiliated not only to an ‘unpartitioned’ nation but also to a wider global community. Kirsch’s poem positions her as a female writer and GDR citizen who, like others before her, seeks to expand the horizons and efface the boundaries of her gender and state. These perspectives are expressed through representations of the spaces, place and landscapes each inhabits.

### 3.6. *Conclusion*

Spatial division is hardly a hidden context in Mahon and Kirsch’s work. It is clear throughout both of their oeuvres, and particularly the collections published before the mid-1970s, that the division of Ireland and Germany respectively had a major impact on their poetry. In both cases, as has been demonstrated in the above analyses, it creates a context in which the idea of ‘home’ is inherently unstable and must be negotiated on a number of levels. This negotiation of home is necessarily a political process, as Mahon reminds

us when he claims that 'a good poem is a paradigm of good politics'.<sup>103</sup> Mahon and Kirsch are keen to represent people 'talking to each other, with profound subtlety, at an honest level'.<sup>104</sup> The politics of headlines, slogans and mainstream ideologies is anathema to them both; they replace what they perceive as inauthentic dogma with a close attention to the texture and detail of everyday life in all its aspects, and a commitment to being 'in the world'.

At the level of global space and transnational politics, Mahon and Kirsch both explore the expanding and accelerating world of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Several of their poems draw on their travels, real and imagined, within Europe and beyond. Mahon's relative freedom to travel and return home at regular interval structures his approach to representing global space during this period. His representations of global space are, in certain poems (such as 'A Disused Shed'), slightly naïve, both in their tendency to assign voices to 'other' people and communities, and in their representations of a globally undifferentiated space in which all cultures share common characteristics or are in a common state of decline. However, Mahon evokes a sense of balanced and complex global networks of social, political and cultural exchange, situated within the contemporary historical context. Thus, the idea of 'Irishness' and the place of Ireland in the modern world is explicitly negotiated.

Kirsch's sense of the world is also, as she acknowledges, open to accusations of naivety. A tendency towards 'Überall-zu-hause-sein-wollen' is evident, whereby poetry's apparent solution to troubling forms of political division is to imaginatively erase borders by means of flight or magic.<sup>105</sup> GDR travel restrictions are also likely to play a role in this, since Kirsch was not always free to literally cross borders as Mahon was. Motifs of travel in her poetry are often ambiguous, neither national nor transnational but instead

<sup>103</sup> Mahon, quoted in Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 76.

<sup>104</sup> Mahon, quoted in Haughton, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon*, p. 76.

<sup>105</sup> Kirsch, 'Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch', p. 129.

evoking a general dichotomy between 'home' and 'elsewhere'. Nevertheless, various poems evoke explicitly transnational space and other countries, including Romania, Georgia and France and they represent the negotiation of German identities from within these contexts.

Both Mahon and Kirsch's sense of the world is informed by a strong sense of literary community, domestic and international. Regular allusions to and citations from other writers' work serve as a means of exploring contemporary and historical literary 'spaces'. Again, in neither case do these communities and the identities they construct map neatly onto national canons and traditions. Mahon repeatedly draws on a selection of writers – Irish and non-Irish – for whom identity and belonging are complex and multifaceted terms, and thus situates his own work in dialogue with international literary communities. This sense of literary exile or 'homelessness' extends to the careful consideration of form and genre, as well as an interest in translation as a form of literary border crossing and a means of negotiating hybrid and complex identities.

In Kirsch's work, a similar sense of international literary community is balanced against an interest in gendered communities of writers. However, even in this regard her work focuses on the marginal, peripheral and fragmentary rather than adhering to mainstream feminist practices of re-reading and re-appropriation. Her use of particular gendered genres and motifs – notably epistolary forms and the inclusion of certain tropes from oral and folk traditions – cannot be said to be overtly feminist according to the contemporary convention. Instead, she draws on several literary 'outsiders', including female figures, in order to shape a canon within which she situates her work. This awareness of the gendered dynamic of literary community contrasts sharply with Mahon's somewhat troubling representations of women in his poetry during this period.

The final level at which ideas of belonging are negotiated in Mahon and Kirsch's work is through their focus on domestic spaces and everyday life, which mirror de Certeau's theory regarding the potentially subversive qualities of quotidian practices. Various conceptualisations of what can loosely be termed *Heimat* are represented in their work, both in terms of interior domestic space and familiar landscapes and places, and the inclusion/exclusion dynamic of *Heimat* is repeatedly problematised through an emphasis on the marginal and liminal. For Mahon, this generally means rejecting the position of the mainstream, urban (or suburban) public intellectual, and retreating to a position of self-imposed marginality which is reflected in semi-rural, isolated and abandoned spaces. In Kirsch's case, the emphasis is very strongly on the domestic interior itself, with poems regularly adopting a dual position which imaginatively transcends the boundaries between interior and exterior space. Like her negotiations of literary community, for Kirsch this focus on home space has a gendered dimension. The margins of the city, nation, landmass and domestic space are the characteristic physical spaces explored in their poetry, from 'edgelands' and coastlines to domestic margins such as doors and windows.

Reading Kirsch and Mahon's work together reveals these important correspondences, and shows how their poetry of this period can be seen as a response to contemporary historical contexts. Their representations of space and place share key features which enable us to understand their work as having a similar approach to political engagement, in contemporary contexts which – although markedly different – were both affected by geopolitical division, political violence and nationalist discourses.

Their approaches represent a significant departure from pre-war modernism, with its teleological narratives of national identity and belonging, and its focus on (generally urban) spaces and places with particular resonances.



Mahon and Kirsch's work acknowledges the importance of this tradition, while also moving away from it and choosing instead to concentrate on the various ways in which individuals and communities navigate a personal relationship to space, place and nation. They insist on the specificity of experience in governing this relationship, which is not seen as a proto-postmodernist play of interacting forces and influences, but rather as something consciously and carefully constructed. Thus, we can read their work as part of a longer phase of transition from modernism to postmodernism in poetry of this period, and as an example of the role played by representations of space in enabling poets of this period to respond to, and engage with, contemporary historical and political contexts.

## 4. Remapping space and place in Edwin Morgan and Ernst Jandl

### 4.1. *Why is remapping needed?*

The two case studies above examine the shared features of representations of space and place in selected English- and German-language poetry of this period. They reveal that approaches to home, belonging, language, etymology, history and the formation of individual identity transcend national boundaries and the boundaries of literary tradition. Moreover, they demonstrate that representations of space in poetry of this period can be read as forms of engagement with a transnational sociohistorical, political and cultural context which was rapidly changing. This is equally true for the third case study, which examines the work of Edwin Morgan and Ernst Jandl and assesses how their representations of space relate to contemporary historical contexts, given that their work varies in form from apparently traditionally lyrical to highly experimental poetry. Examining the representations of space and place in their work will allow us to situate it within contemporary literary and historical contexts, rather than considering it (and the broader concrete poetry movement) as an historical anomaly.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See Perloff, 'Writing as Re-Writing: Concrete Poetry as Arrière-Garde'.

The work of these two poets is different to that of the poets analysed in the earlier case studies in at least one important respect: none of the poets discussed thus far can be said to revel in the process of imaginatively redefining space in a manner which foreshadows postmodern *jouissance*. Some of their work is undoubtedly humorous on its own terms: Prynne and Celan's wordplay rewards close attention with witty double meanings and occasional flashes of cerebral humour, while Mahon and Kirsch can both be irreverent and sarcastic when seeking to define and explore 'home' space. However, the weight of historical and political circumstance limits their optimism about the possibility of redrawing spatial boundaries or introducing new perspectives.

Although Morgan and Jandl are profoundly interested in and motivated by the past, both in terms of literary traditions and historical events, their shared vision of space and its representation in poetry is forward-looking, playful and humorous. They undoubtedly followed Ezra Pound's advice to 'make it new', experimenting with form and perspective in order to develop a poetic appropriate for representing modern experience. However, unlike Pound and his contemporaries, they did not write against the backdrop of radical ideological conflict about how best to secure progress towards a social and scientific utopia. Instead, it appeared to writers of their generations that the prospect of ongoing progress towards an ideal civilisation had been radically called into question by the events of World War II and other catastrophes of modernity. As Jean-François Lyotard argues in his discussion of postmodernism, the work of many writers whom he characterises as postmodern was not fraught with the same ideological weight as during the era of high modernism; instead, writers were able to innovate with a sense of *jouissance* or playfulness.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> See Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*. Their *jouissance* does not mean that they are 'comic' writers in a reductive sense, or that play and light humour are the only tones their work adopts – indeed, in both cases, playfulness is

This description certainly applies to Morgan and Jandl's work, and we might therefore be tempted to categorise their work as definitively postmodernist. However, this also appears overly simplistic when one considers what Nicholas Zurbrugg has described as the "ethical" abdication' of postmodernism (in contrast to the profound ethical concerns espoused by many concrete poets).<sup>3</sup> Marjorie Perloff considers the concrete poetry movement as an 'arrière garde', an historical anomaly which is best understood as a precursor of later work informed by the digital age.<sup>4</sup>

Regardless of whether we characterise their work as modernist, postmodernist, both or neither, it is clear that Morgan and Jandl seek to radically alter the terms on which poetry represents space and place through their experimentation with form. Although their poetry shows a keen awareness of tradition, the innovation which permeates their work reflects a conscious attempt to create new models for the representation of space and place, rather than critiquing existing constructs or negotiating difficulties in the postwar paradigm of nation-statehood. Mahon and Kirsch negotiate home in their work by adopting ever-changing forms to reflect a complex conception of its meaning. Prynne and Celan conceive of the intersection between form and space metalinguistically: the abstract spaces they describe are the spaces of language itself. Morgan and Jandl, however, represent 'real' spaces – identifiable as Scottish, Austrian, European or global – but the innovative form of their work reflects a new approach to 'mapping' these spaces which

---

tempered by anger, including politically-motivated anger, as well as melancholy and black humour. For a full discussion of Jandl's humour (and other modes) see Anne Uhrmacher, *Spielarten des Komischen: Ernst Jandl und die Sprache* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Nicholas Zurbrugg, 'Iain Hamilton Finlay and Concrete Poetry', in *Contemporary British Poetry: Essays in Theory and Criticism*, ed. by James Acheson and Romana Huk (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 113–42 (p. 137).

<sup>4</sup> Perloff, 'Writing as Re-Writing: Concrete Poetry as Arrière-Garde'.

radically expands our understanding of what constitutes a map and the function which mapping serves.

To begin with, it is necessary to examine precisely which contexts inform Morgan and Jandl's approaches to space, place and tradition during the period in question.<sup>5</sup> In both cases, changing literary traditions and ambivalence towards the national language and history undoubtedly play a role. Scotland and Austria are both relatively small nations: Austria is slightly larger, with a population of 8.6 million compared to Scotland's 5.3 million.<sup>6</sup> Both nations share a dominant language with a neighbouring, larger nation-state, and they have colourful histories where relations with these neighbours are concerned. To different extents, both Scottish and Austrian literatures also incorporate works in minority languages.<sup>7</sup> There are clearly grounds for comparison, since writers in both countries sought to redefine the existing national literary tradition and national culture in the postwar period (albeit for quite different reasons).

<sup>5</sup> The poems examined in this chapter are drawn from various collections by each writer written and/or published during the period in question: Morgan's *The Second Life* (1968) and *From Glasgow to Saturn* (1973); and Jandl's *Laut und Luise* (1966), *Der künstlichen Baum* (1970) and *Dingfest* (1973). Morgan poems in this chapter are cited from Edwin Morgan, *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990). Jandl poems are cited from Ernst Jandl, *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, ed. by Klaus Siblewski, 6 vols (Munich: Luchterhand, 2016), I. Subsequent references to primary texts are given in abbreviated form in the text.

<sup>6</sup> For population data for Austria, see the The World Bank, 'Total Population (2014)', *World Development Indicators* <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>> [accessed 24 August 2016]. For population data for Scotland, see National Records of Scotland, 'Mid-2014 Population Estimates', 2013 <<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates/mid-2014>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

<sup>7</sup> Scots and Gaelic in Scotland; Carinthian Slovene in Austria. See Peter Mackay, 'The Gaelic Tradition', in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 177–131; Johann Strutz, *Profile der neueren slowenischen Literatur in Kärnten* (Klagenfurt: Hermagoras, 1998).

There are also major differences. Most significantly, it is important to note that there is no Scottish equivalent to the long period of imperial dominance and vibrancy which characterised Habsburg society before World War I, nor for the scope and significance of Austrian thought and literature in the modernist period. Although Scotland had its own literary Renaissance, an extraordinarily productive period dominated by the influence of MacDiarmid, this has been read by later critics (both within Scotland and beyond) as a movement which aimed to integrate Scotland, and the Scots language, into the mainstream of international modernism and 'English Literature'.<sup>8</sup> Although the validity of such Anglocentric readings may justifiably be contested by those who defend the existence of a distinctive and diverse Scottish literary canon, there is no doubt that the discourse which sees England and Scotland as 'centre' and 'periphery' is accepted by many on both sides of the border, and that this model has exerted a clear influence on the self-conceptualisations of both Scottish and English writers.<sup>9</sup> The same cannot be said for the dynamics of German-speaking literature, where – despite the scant attention paid to postwar Austrian literature in certain influential studies – Austria's literary

<sup>8</sup> For example, Scott Lyall writes that 'MacDiarmid sought a fusion of the disparate and often divided parts of Scotland into a unified cultural whole and of the Scottish linguistic past with the international modernist present' (Scott Lyall, 'Hugh MacDiarmid and The Scottish Renaissance', in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 173–87 (p. 177).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Sanderson's descriptions of Scottish literature as 'peripheral' in his discussion of the difficulties of translation. Watson and Cairns Craig, on the other hand, argue persuasively for the difference and diversity of the Scots canon. Stewart Sanderson, 'Peripheral Centre or Central Periphery: Two Approaches to Modern Scots Translation', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 11 (supplement) (2014), 93–108; Roderick Watson, 'The Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance', in *Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, ed. by Ian Brown and Alan Riach (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Cairns Craig, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999).

heritage and sense of cultural independence has rarely been read as simply subordinate to that of its German neighbour(s).<sup>10</sup> However, German language and culture has instead typically been read as polycentric, without the rigorous colonial hierarchies which govern the relationship between various Anglophone nations.

Both nations therefore have their own narratives of cultural identity, shaped over several centuries of social and cultural relationships with nations beyond their own borders. In both cases, the mid-twentieth century posed particular challenges for these national identities, language and literatures.

For Morgan, the discussion of poetry's role in exploring nation, language and identity must necessarily be oriented around the towering figure of MacDiarmid, the modernist poet whose self-consciously nationalist project to revive the Scots language shaped approaches to linguistic plurality from the 1930s onwards.<sup>11</sup> Literature in Scotland has historically been produced in a plurality of languages and dialects, each with its own complex history and relationship to the Anglophone – and specifically, the English – mainstream. Broadly speaking, one might simplify these languages into three groups: Scots, English and Gaelic. The reality is rather more complex, given that Scots dialects are highly flexible and regionally specific, and MacDiarmid's 'synthetic Scots' (to use his own term) represents an attempt to standardise a version of Scots which is an artificial blend of diverse regional dialects. MacDiarmid's Scots is synthetic in that it is not the dialect of a living community, but a political project designed to offer an alternative to the language of the

---

<sup>10</sup> See for example, Korte, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik* which contains only brief reference to postwar Austrian poetry. Between 1949 and 1990, Austria had more than one German 'neighbour'.

<sup>11</sup> See Duncan Glen, *Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve) and the Scottish Renaissance* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1964); Scott Lyall, 'Hugh MacDiarmid and The Scottish Renaissance'.

coloniser (i.e. English) and therefore gives access to an alternative teleology of Scottish cultural (and social/political) independence.

It seems logical, therefore, to divide the history of Scottish poetry in the twentieth century into pre- and post-MacDiarmid eras, as Colin Nicholson and Matt McGuire do in the *Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry*, but it is possible that this picture overstates the influence of MacDiarmid on a highly pluralistic national literature.<sup>12</sup> What is clear is that by the time Morgan's first collection was published in 1952, the modernist project had to some extent lost its appeal, and MacDiarmid was – to say the least – a highly divisive figure. Morgan, and others of his generation, such as Ian Hamilton Finlay and Tom Leonard, helped to shape a national literature which was distinctively Scottish without being narrowly nationalistic, and which could accommodate a diverse range of domestic languages, as well as numerous international influences. They did so despite considerable resistance, not only from MacDiarmid himself, whose personal animosity against Hamilton Finlay is well-recorded, but also from critics and anthologists such as Norman MacCaig.<sup>13</sup> As Morgan's career developed into the 1960s – the period with which this study is concerned – so too did the crisis of Scottish cultural and

<sup>12</sup> Colin Nicholson and Matt McGuire, 'Edwin Morgan', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry*, ed. by Colin Nicholson and Matt McGuire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 97–110.

<sup>13</sup> MacCaig and Alexander Scott included several of Morgan's concrete poems in their 1970 anthology *Contemporary Scottish Verse*, but were clear about their reservations: 'The token representation of concrete work is due to our doubt as to whether this is in fact poetry – whatever else it may be.' See *Contemporary Scottish Verse 1959-1969*, ed. by Norman MacCaig and Alexander Scott, Scottish Library (London: Calder & Boyars, 1970), p. 22. For background on the conflict between MacDiarmid and Hamilton Finlay, who were initially close friends, see Glen, *Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve) and the Scottish Renaissance*, pp. 218–20; Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Ugly Birds without Wings* (Edinburgh: Allen Donaldson, 1962); Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. by Alan Bold (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984).



political identity, with the decline of traditional industries such as shipbuilding in Glasgow fuelling economic decline, and the redevelopment of many of the city's slums according to modernist architectural principles meeting fierce resistance from inhabitants.<sup>14</sup>

The ambivalent status of these late modernist housing developments, such as the recently demolished Red Road estate, mirrors the complex position of concrete poetry in relation to modernist and postmodern artistic principles. On the one hand, both can be read as developments of modernist ideals, reflecting a level of continuity with earlier forms of modernism in their emphasis on innovation and progress. On the other, both appear somewhat anachronistic: it was barely five years before Red Road's reputation as a site of antisocial violence was established in the popular imagination, ostensibly proving that the modernist 'city in the sky' project had failed once and for all.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the international concrete poetry movement was relatively short-lived, and by the late 1970s Morgan, along with others, had shifted their interest to other forms of linguistically innovative work.

Whether one reads the concrete poetry movement as a late manifestation of high modernism (as Ken Cockburn does) or, like Marjorie Perloff, as part of an 'arrière-garde' which is related to more recent avant-garde poetic practices, it is clear that the movement arose at a moment when the need for new terms of definition for a pluralistic, outward-looking society and a new cultural self-confidence were particularly pressing.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> See Robert Crawford, *On Glasgow and Edinburgh* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 214.

<sup>15</sup> See John R. Gold, *The Practice of Modernism: Modern Architects and Urban Transformation, 1954–1972* (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 180–82.

<sup>16</sup> See *The Order of Things: Scottish Sound, Pattern, and Concrete Poetry* ed. by Ken Cockburn and Alec Finlay (Edinburgh: Pocketbooks, 2001), p. 18; Perloff, 'Writing as Re-Writing: Concrete Poetry as Arrière-Garde'; Perloff, *Radical*

Similar conditions arose in the Austrian cultural and literary context, albeit in a rather different configuration. Anthony Bushell has described at length the necessity of 'recovering' lyric poetry in the immediate postwar era, linking this to a need to develop a distinctly Austrian literary culture capable of articulating the concerns of modern nation-statehood (rather than the older model of imperial power). Bushell pays brief attention to Jandl and his relationship to the traditions of the postwar period, noting that '[f]or many of the younger generation of poets in the 1960s and 70s the concerns of early postwar poetry in Austria, the very forms in which it was written, and the literary and personal feuds between an older generation of poets who had returned from exile and those who had never left the country, held little attraction.'<sup>17</sup> Just as Morgan, Hamilton Finlay and his contemporaries sought to develop a new model of poetic expression which neither openly rebelled against nor drew upon the work of MacDiarmid and his contemporaries, but simply had new interests and concerns, so too Austrian poets of the generation after that which Bushell discusses sought new poetic models free from excessive reliance on recent history. They did so in the context of modern pluricentric German-language identity with strong links to German and Swiss movements.

Importantly, both Morgan and Jandl relied on a strong relationship with writers from earlier generations in literary history and national traditions as they drew these new maps. Indeed, the era is spoken of in similar terms in both countries. In Austrian literary studies, it has been referred to as the 'restoration' of values associated with pre-war models of political and social organisation. In this way, the era of Nazi imperialism could be dismissed as an

---

*Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>17</sup> Anthony Bushell, *Poetry in a Provisional State: The Austrian Lyric, 1945-1955* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007), p. 151.

aberration, rather than scrutinised as a key part of modern Austrian history.<sup>18</sup> In the Scottish context, the entire period from MacDiarmid's first publications onward is known as the Scottish literary Renaissance – even though (as discussed above) there is a marked shift in the contexts informing MacDiarmid's work and that of the generation which succeeded him. Nevertheless, the reprisal of certain folk traditions continued to play a central role.

Morgan's formal and linguistic innovation is not predicated on the wholesale rejection of tradition, as his use of citations from the Bible, the early Scottish Christian saints, Robert Burns and Robert Louis Stevenson, his adoption of traditional Scots speech rhythms and rhymes, and the production of numerous translations from both old Scots and old English demonstrates.<sup>19</sup> For Jandl, the influence of previous generations centred around two key groups: the Wiener Gruppe (including H. C. Artmann, Konrad Bayer and Gerhard Rühm) who were his immediate predecessors and helped to shape the radical innovation which typified the Viennese poetry, performance and cabaret scenes, and older Dada writers who had conducted influential experiments in the fields of collage, concrete and sound poetry (Tristan Tzara, Kurt Schwitters, Hugo Ball and Hans Arp, for example). Thus, the term 'remapping' is used throughout this case study to describe not only the

---

<sup>18</sup> For discussion of postwar Austrian writing as 'restoration', see Matthias Konzett, 'Austria: Post-1945', in *Encyclopaedia of German Literature*, ed. by Matthias Konzett (Chicago; London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2015); Anthony Bushell, 'Writing in Austria after 1945: The Political, Institutional and Publishing Context', in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, ed. by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (London: Camden House, 2006), pp. 163–81.

<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Morgan was, in some contexts, more well-known for his 1952 translation of *Beowulf* than for his untranslated work. See Edwin Morgan, *Beowulf* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002). See also Hugh Magennis, 'Edwin Morgan: Speaking to His Own Age', in *Translating Beowulf: Modern Versions in English Verse* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), pp. 81–108.

innovative representations of space and place in Morgan and Jandl's work, but also their redrawing of the parameters and territory of literary history: the remapping of tradition.

The poets' remapping of tradition includes a significant literal expansion of its boundaries beyond those of nation or state. The concrete poetry movement was as markedly international as the high modernism which preceded it, and Morgan's approach to translation is a striking illustration of his belief in the fundamentally international character of literary representation. Working from languages as diverse as Old English, Hungarian, Russian, Spanish, German, Portuguese and many others (as well, of course, as English and Scots), Morgan's eclectic translations offer important insights into his literary practice and his rejection of any nationalistic parochialism. He exchanged many warm letters with Gomringer and others within the international concrete poetry movement, and travelled abroad several times to meet with them.<sup>20</sup> Unlike other poets discussed in this thesis, Morgan and Jandl knew one another and even corresponded over a period of several years in the mid-1960s.<sup>21</sup> They were introduced by Ian Hamilton Finlay, with whom both were close, and Morgan produced translations of Jandl's work.<sup>22</sup>

The international character of the concrete poetry movement is inextricably linked to its philosophical underpinnings. Viktor Suchy invokes the work of various sociologists when discussing concrete poetry's emphasis on the primacy of *poesis* over 'Poesie': Jean Gebser's theory of the

---

<sup>20</sup> See Edwin Morgan and Eugen Gomringer, University of Glasgow. Edwin Morgan Papers, MS Morgan DG/8.

<sup>21</sup> See Morgan and Jandl, MS Morgan DJ/5

<sup>22</sup> For background on Finlay's role in introducing Morgan and Jandl, see Edwin Morgan and Ernst Jandl, University of Glasgow. Edwin Morgan Papers, MS Morgan DJ/5. Morgan's two translations of Jandl's work, '16 yearth' (from Jandl's '16 jahr') and 'you were a good girl to me' (from Jandl's 'du warst zu mir ein gutes mädchen'), are included in Edwin Morgan, *Collected Translations* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1996), pp. 406–07.

‘aperspektivische Welt’ and Hans Freyer’s concept of ‘Sekundärschöpfung’ explain, for Suchy, concrete poetry’s novel expressions of spatiality and temporality, the qualities which enable it to produce an ‘andere Wirklichkeit’.<sup>23</sup> The non-mimetic character of concrete poetry is linked to the absence of perspectives rooted in conscious subject positions (i.e. the lyric ‘I’).

This, in turn (to develop Suchy’s argument), leads to the erasure of national boundaries, since an aperspectival consciousness can hardly express a national identity. The critical practice of many who discuss concrete poetry testifies to this: Stéphane Mallarmé’s writing in French and Gertrude Stein’s in English are generally held up as seminal influential texts for a range of writers, and Gomringer and Augusto de Campos’s influential definitions of concrete poetry are also cited by poets and critics working in many different languages.<sup>24</sup> Gomringer himself was sanguine about the possibilities of concrete poetry ‘als Mittel der Kommunikation einer neuen universalen Gemeinschaft’.<sup>25</sup> The ‘original’ language of production of a concrete poem hardly seems to matter as long as the form and visual impact can be transposed, or grasped by those who do not speak the language. Though he was undoubtedly a skilled linguist, it is not clear, for example, that Morgan

<sup>23</sup> See Victor Suchy, ‘Poesie und Poesis: Dargestellt am Werke Friederike Mayröckers’, in *Formen der Lyrik in der österreichischen Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler and Hermann Möcker (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1981), pp. 95–109 (pp. 96–97).

<sup>24</sup> See Eugen Gomringer, ‘konkrete dichtung (als einföhrung)’, in *Theoretische Positionen zur konkreten Poesie: Texte und Bibliographie*, ed. by Thomas Kopfermann (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1974), pp. 38–41. For various essays on the international character of the concrete poetry movement, and analysis of the differences and similarities of national and linguistic groupings, see Jackson, Vos and Drucker, *Experimental, Visual, Concrete*.

<sup>25</sup> Eugen Gomringer, ‘Konkrete Poesie als Mittel der Kommunikation einer neuen universalen Gemeinschaft - Ein Rückblick auf die Ursprünge in den frühen 1950er Jahren’, in *Poesie-Konkret: Zur internationalen Verbreitung und Diversifizierung der Konkreten Poesie*, ed. by Anne Thurmann-Jajes, Weserburg Museum für Moderne Kunst, and Poetry on the Road (Bremen: Salon, 2012), pp. 203–8.

spoke anything beyond a rudimentary German, yet his translation of Jandl's 'du warst zu mir ein gutes mädchen' (WI 143) is perfectly adequate in its reproduction of the permutative experimentation with vowel sounds which is the key feature of the original text.<sup>26</sup> Sound poems, likewise, often depend on auditory effects which are not necessarily language specific (the repetition of certain phonemes, explosive contrasts, regular rhythms and so on).

Gomringer's utopian belief in the potential of concrete poetry as a universal language reflects the historical context of its development. It is clear that concrete poetry drew political impetus from the historical, technological and philosophical developments which occurred in the immediate postwar era, culminating in Gomringer and de Campos's first manifestos on the genre in the early 1950s. Gomringer explains that, in addition to the influence of concrete art on his writing from 1944 onwards

[e]twas anderes trat nun jedoch hinzu, eine Veränderung im Lebensgefühl der Zeit, nämlich die Kürze – die Kürze der Zeit, die Kürze der Mitteilung, das sich in kürzerer Zeit ins Bild setzen wollen. Jahre später, als die ersten Texte der Konkreten Poesie sich schon festgesetzt hatten und die Manifeste nachgeholt werden mussten, konnte ich mir selbst bestätigen, dass der heutige Mensch (der Mensch der Nachkriegszeit) rasch verstehen und rasch verstanden werden wollte, und dass für rasche Kommunikation das Ferngespräch geeigneter sei als der Brief, der Funk geeigneter als die Presse.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Morgan, *Collected Translations*, p. 407.

<sup>27</sup> Gomringer, 'Konkrete Poesie als Mittel der Kommunikation einer neuen universalen Gemeinschaft - Ein Rückblick auf die Ursprünge in den frühen 1950er Jahren', p. 205. The manifesto to which he refers is Eugen Gomringer, 'vom vers zur konstellation', in *Konkrete Dichtung: Texte und Theorien*, by Siegfried J Schmidt (Munich: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 1972), pp. 76-79 (p. 76).

The compression of space-time precipitated by technological advances, the onset of a new phase of globalisation and the new experience of urban space during the 1950s and 1960s all informed the nascent concrete poetry movement. Moreover, developments in linguistics, such as Noam Chomsky's concept of Transformational Generative Grammar (TGG), espoused the new belief that human language is predicated on 'deep structures', which might have universal resonance.<sup>28</sup> Morgan and Jandl expressed enthusiasm regarding such developments: in April 1965, Jandl wrote to Morgan of his excitement about air travel, and noted that he felt 'greatly attracted' to Glasgow 'as it is said to be a big and ugly industrial town'.<sup>29</sup> Morgan's own choice of 'From Glasgow to Saturn' as the title of his 1973 collection, and the inclusion in it of a number of 'science-fiction poems', demonstrates the influence of contemporary technological developments on his work and their consequences for many people's experience.<sup>30</sup>

It should be noted that while Jandl's writing during this period is, almost without exception, 'concrete' in the strict sense that its visual presence on the page contributes fundamentally to its meaning, Morgan's work encompasses a much wider variety of styles including many non-concrete lyric texts alongside

<sup>28</sup> See Noam Chomsky, *Syntactic Structures* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002); Noam Chomsky, *The Minimalist Program* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014). For a full overview of the history of TGG, see Robert Freidin, *Generative Grammar: Theory and Its History* (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2007).

<sup>29</sup> Ernst Jandl, 'Letter to Edwin Morgan', 9 April 1965, University of Glasgow. Edwin Morgan Papers, MS Morgan DJ/5.

<sup>30</sup> In his essay 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard', Morgan bemoans Scottish literature's 'unwillingness to move out into the world with which every child now at school is becoming familiar – the world of television and sputniks, automation and LPs, electronic music and multi-story flats, rebuilt city centres and new towns, coffee bars and bookable cinemas, air travel and transistor radios, colour photography and open-plan houses, paperbacks and water-skiing, early marriage and large families: a world that will be more fast, more clean, more 'cool' than than one it leaves behind'. Edwin Morgan, 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard', in *Essays* (Cheadle: Carcanet, 1974), 166–76 (pp. 174–75).

his concrete work. Morgan's concrete and traditional poems alike contribute to the project of remapping space and tradition, and both are therefore dealt with in this case study. Poems such as 'Canedolia' (CP 156-57) (subtitled 'An off-concrete Scots fantasia') seem deliberately to elude categorisation and blur the boundaries between concrete poetry and lyric. Even traditionally 'lyric' poems such as 'The Starlings in George Square' (CP 165-66) adopt certain techniques which are also present in the concrete work, such as the use of Scots dialect, comic puns, imagined dialogues and references to place names. In the close analyses which follow, no attempt is made to explicitly differentiate between Morgan's concrete, visual and sound poetry, and his more 'traditional' work. Not only is this distinction impossible to draw in meaningful terms, it is also unhelpful, since the 'remapping' of space, place and language occurs in both types of work, often due to the use of similar techniques.

This chapter will examine Morgan and Jandl's work across the spectrum of formal experimentation, arguing that even those texts which adopt a more traditional form contribute to shifting understandings of how space might be represented in poetry. Lyric subjectivity is systematically disrupted, at first in relatively subtle ways in poems such as Morgan's 'London' (CP 249-52) or *Instamatic Poems* (CP 215-29), and then in increasingly challenging ways in Morgan and Jandl's concrete and sound poems. The overall project which emerges is one which involves fundamental shifts in the hierarchies of perception and perspective which govern representations of space and place.

#### 4.2. *Subjectivity, perspective, and polyvocality*

There are multiple ways of conceiving of the role of the subject and its relationship to space in lyric poetry. In the model of western Romanticism, which continues to exert a powerful influence today, lyric subjectivity offers a



particular perspective on landscapes, spaces and places which can be considered analogous to that of landscape painting.<sup>31</sup> The perceiving subject apprehends and internalises the landscape available to his or her eye, and represents it in language with symbolic, metaphorical or metonymic qualities which reflect subjective experience and emotions.<sup>32</sup> Most well-known Romantic landscape poetry, from Wordsworth's 'Daffodils' to Goethe's *Italienische Reise*, functions according to this paradigm. Much popular contemporary poetry continues to take this approach, adopting the position of an apparently stable 'lyrisches Ich' which is often (mis)identified as the poet her- or himself.

This construct, referred to in the following analysis as 'traditional' lyric subjectivity, conceals a number of assumptions about the nature of subjectivity, language and experience: it assumes the existence of a single 'self' capable of perceiving and understanding its surroundings, a stable sense of space and time, and a common language with straightforward communicative capacities. By the 1960s, these assumptions had been called into question by physicists, semioticians, linguists, philosophers and psychoanalysts alike, and no longer appeared tenable. In both Austria and Scotland, emergent poetic movements which aspired to move beyond older, more narrowly nationalist models, had

---

<sup>31</sup> There are, of course, also other ways of conceiving of the relationship between voice, self and space in poetry. Some of these, such as the dramatic and epic genres of Classical poetry, or the conventions of medieval German *minnesang*, pre-date the rise of western Romanticism. Others, such as postmodern experimental writing, computer poetry and performance poetry, are more recent developments.

<sup>32</sup> The relationship between the emergence of subjectivity and the representation of landscapes in poetry and visual art is well-theorised. Joachim Ritter has discussed the emergence of modern subjectivity with respect to Petrarch's description of his ascent of Mount Ventoux. See Joachim Ritter, *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989). For a fuller historical overview of theories of landscape and subjectivity, see 'Introduction' in Schmeling and Schmitz-Emans, *Das Paradigma der Landschaft in Moderne und Postmoderne*, pp. 7-20.

also to address this decline in the persuasive power of the lyric subject as an organising principle for experience.

It is perhaps surprising, therefore, to note the important role the (apparently traditional) lyric subject continued to play in Morgan's work. In the collections *The Second Life* (1968) and *From Glasgow to Saturn* (1973), concrete or otherwise linguistically experimental poems are placed side-by-side with 'traditional' lyric poems. Many of these involve depictions of space and place: for example, the countryside outside Glasgow in 'Strawberries' (CP 184-85) or the city itself in 'Glasgow Green' (CP 168-69), 'The Starlings in George Square' (CP 165-66), 'Glasgow Sonnets' (CP 289-92), and 'In the Snack Bar' (CP 170-72). All of these poems appear to be mediated through the perspective of a single speaker, a lyric persona whom we are invited to identify as the poet himself. However, close reading reveals greater complexity to the lyric perspective in these texts than first meets the eye.

'London' (CP 249-52), first published in *From Glasgow to Saturn* in 1973, is an instructive example. At one level this is a straightforward love poem adopting the perspective of a single lyric persona. The text is divided into three sections, each of which is named after a London location (St James's Park, Soho and the Post Office Tower respectively). It describes the lovers' passage through these spaces, ostensibly as tourists, observing the natural and man-made spaces around them. In the first section, the lovers appear content in the tranquil park before falling asleep and having a surreal dream involving both desert and frozen landscapes. The second section examines the 'shop soiled' language of Soho street life, juxtaposing this with the notion of preserving a poem for posterity. Finally, the pair survey London from the Post Office tower. In all three sections, the nature of the imagery and the fluidity of perspective suggest a 'queer' remapping of urban spaces which foreshadows, to some degree, the more radical 'aperspectival' qualities of concrete and sound poetry.

The poem's queerness operates on two levels: firstly, in the obvious sense that the text addresses homosexual desire and depicts the gay scene of contemporary Soho; and secondly, in the imagery and form of the text, which emphasise the marginal and peripheral over the normative. It is this second aspect which I would like to emphasise here: the means by which 'queer texts challenge and deconstruct the identity-based logic of fixed social categorization whereby understandings of gender, sexuality, nationhood, race, ethnicity, religious culture, and other social categories are constructed'.<sup>33</sup>

'London' employs a montage technique as far as imagery is concerned: in the first section, the busy city surroundings are compared to 'orient wheat' (CP 249), then overlaid with images of waves, snow and desert sand which suggest the passage of time in a dream-like description of the intimacy of a relationship between two lovers. The dream they share occurs in a desert landscape, but the desert imagery ('the tent-door flaps and burning sand knocks | on your tight-shut eyes', CP 249) is interspersed with images drawn from other fields of reference, including London ('grey pigeons', CP 249) and tundra or snowy landscapes ('you shivered in the sledge, a wolf had smelt | the runners', CP 249). The stability of the individual perception of space and time is explicitly called into question:

but where is summer, winter? Where is the world?  
When we've lost time we have lost everything.

(CP 250)

<sup>33</sup> Eric Keenaghan, 'Queer Poetry', in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, by Roland Greene and others, 4th edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 1139–41. Queer re-readings of Morgan's work have proliferated since his literary coming out in 1990 at the age of 70. '[I]n fact all the love poems which I have published are gay', he told interviewer Hamish Whyte. See Edwin Morgan, 'Power from Things Not Declared', in *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on His Life and Work*, ed. by Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 144–87 (p. 144). For further background, see James McGonigal, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2012).

Section II of the poem begins with a highly sexualised, homoerotic linguistic montage of found language in Soho: ‘dutch straps mr universe jock caps 1001 nights genuine rechy | fully tested adolescence & box 5/- only velazquez’ (*CP* 250), setting this against the self-important drama of writing a poem for ‘posterity’:

Now bury this poem in one of the vaults  
of our civilisation, and let the Venusian  
computers come down, and searching for life  
crack our ghastly code.

(*CP* 251)

There is a bitter undertone to this suggestion that the traces of our civilisation which may be communicated to future, more advanced societies could be those which record the seedy, sexually explicit and homoerotic aspects of urban experience. This form of desire is not openly communicable in the context of contemporary society, but may nonetheless prove to have a lasting legacy.

This foreshadows the poem’s final section, which focuses on the Post Office Tower. The tower functions as a symbol of brisk, successful communication, but the poem itself zooms in on the in-between spaces surrounding the tower, which all suggest loss, decline or difficulty:

an old man  
on a hard chair, his hands in his lap,  
stares at nothing [...]  
a young man mends an aerial far down the central haze,  
[...] his hair  
is blown across his arms  
as he moves the metal arms  
[...]  
It is its own  
telegrams,  
what mounts, what sighs,  
what says it is  
unaccountable  
as feelings moved

by hair blown over  
an arm in the wind.  
In its acts  
it rests there.

(CP 252)

Instead of focusing on the broad cityscape vista afforded by climbing the tower, the speaker and the companion are ‘drawn’ to the details of the cityscape, including those which would hardly be visible to such a distant observer. The poem’s perspective on London ‘queers’ the city by looking away from the celebrated tourist sites and instead zooming in on individual characters who appear isolated or strange, such as a woman in ‘a severe white suit’, ‘an old man | on a hard chair’, and the man fixing the aerial. In the context of the poem’s romantic narrative arc, the images of ‘hair blown over | an arm in the wind’ in this final section reappear as physical reminders of a lost lover, marked by ‘sighs’ and ‘feelings moved’. Yet it is not clear whose hair is blown across which arm, nor is the analogy between this sensation and the function of the communication tower fully explained.

In common with other Morgan poems which focus on the space of the city, such as ‘Glasgow Green’ (CP 168), ‘London’ takes as its starting point an inexpressible, sublimated desire. In light of the visceral exploration of Soho’s sex shops in section II, and the phallic symbolism of the Post Office Tower, Morgan’s ‘London’ can be read as a queer remapping of urban space, and one which focuses not on the usual tourist landmarks and obvious messages, but on the sensual detail of a desire which cannot clearly be communicated. Snapshots of marginal scenes, constantly shifting and overlaid, serve as one means of doing this.

Contrary to initial appearances, then, the presence of an apprehending, temporally and spatially stable subject in ‘London’ cannot be taken for granted. The montage effect created by the surrealistic imagery challenges linear

temporality and the perceptive powers of the lyric persona; the long section of 'found language' in Soho similarly destabilises the assumption that we are being presented with the perspective and voice of an individual subject. Finally, the snapshots of marginal or otherwise overlooked street scenes in the concluding stanza link this sense of a deconstructed, destabilised self and fragmented perspective with loss, sadness and the impossibility of communication and expression. Even in this relatively traditional lost-love lyric, with the city as its symbolic backdrop, the space is not presented through the eyes of an authoritative *flâneur* or mapped by an omniscient narrator – rather, the perspective continually shifts, capturing the impossibility of self-expression which can be read as a reflection of queer subjectivity.

Morgan's *Instamatic Poems* are similarly deceptive: although they appear at first to be snapshots of scenes perceived by an individual subject, in fact they are pointedly polyvocal and offer a global, decentred representation of space. Morgan describes their genesis:

I began a while ago by writing short poems which were directly about events which I had either read about or seen in newspapers or on television. So it's a poetry which is very closely related to real life in that sense, but I gave myself the kind of restriction that the poem must be presented in such a way as to give a visual picture of this event, whatever it was, as if *somebody* had been there with an Instamatic camera and had just very quickly snapped it[.]<sup>34</sup> (my emphasis)

These poems ventriloquise a series of nameless 'somebodies' whose perspectives are intended to be overlaid to form a polyvocal representation of

<sup>34</sup> Edwin Morgan, *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on Work and Life*, ed. by Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 26–27.

global space. Each text is named after the place and date which it describes: 'Glasgow 5 March 1971' (CP 217), 'Venice April 1971' (CP 221), 'Translunar Space March 1972' (CP 224), 'Campobasso Italy Undated Reported March 1971' (CP 226). Morgan's explanation that the majority of the poems were inspired by photojournalistic images suggests an interest in the role of poetry as reportage. Charlotte Ann Melin, describing the work of Hans Magnus Enzensberger, calls this technique 'Momentaufnahme', the capturing of a moment as if with a camera.<sup>35</sup> There is thus an intermedial dimension to their form which further complicates the position of the lyric subject, since we are asked to conflate the subject position of the lyric persona with that of the photographer, which is equally uncertain.<sup>36</sup>

Like many of Jandl and Morgan's formal experiments, the technique of 'Momentaufnahme' draws on modernist influences. Pound's 'Ideogrammic Method' and the early Modernist technique of Imagism depend on a similar technique involving juxtaposing concrete images without excessive discursive framing.<sup>37</sup> The combination of various 'snapshot' images to form an overall impression of a particular space, place, and time, also draws on later, high modernist montage and collage. The global – indeed, interplanetary – range of places described in Morgan's poems suggests an explicit desire to create a wide-ranging record of human experience and endeavour in the early 1970s.

Morgan's *Instamatic Poems* map a post-industrial, post-imperial world which is characterised by absurdity, excess and violence. Unsurprisingly, given

<sup>35</sup> Charlotte Melin, *Poetic Maneuvers: Hans Magnus Enzensberger and the Lyric Genre* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003), p. 11.

<sup>36</sup> For full discussion of subjectivity, literature and photography in this period, see *Photography and Literature in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by David Cunningham, Andrew Fisher, and Sas Mays (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005).

<sup>37</sup> Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions, 2010), pp. 21–26; *The Ezra Pound Encyclopedia*, ed. by Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos and Stephen Adams (Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 2005), p. 140.

the source of the images, many poems deal with crime, death and murder: the robbery of a jewellery store, a violent arrest, a street fight and an attempted murder in Glasgow, and the exhumation of a corpse in Surrey ('the torso visited by foxes | a woman once, her bluebell bed' (CP 220).

Other poems deal with Stravinsky's funeral in Venice, the consequences of a suicide and infanticide in Campobasso, Italy, and similarly dark themes. The second 'death' of a corpse being used as a crash-test dummy in Germany is described:

Under his dropped jaw  
an inflatable safety air bag,  
waiting to be tested on impact,  
has just flown up  
and broken his neck.

(CP 218)

Car accidents also feature in a poem which describes the excesses taking place at the opening of an exhibition of Eduardo Paolozzi's work in London. The 'crashed car' exhibition attracts a drunken, degenerate audience who 'drift and mill [...] thick as flies on carrion' (CP 221-22). This tone of excess, greed and degeneracy also marks a poem about the dedication of the Kennedy Centre for the Performing Arts in Washington, and one about a circus in Aviemore. There are poems too which retain a whimsical or humorous note in their descriptions – of children watching snow fall in Nice, for example:

The mimosas are white!  
The railings are white!  
The car roofs are white!  
Only the cat is black.  
Oh but the sea is black –  
look how the sea is black!

(CP 218)

All the poems are written in the historic present tense, with a detached descriptiveness which testifies to their journalistic inspiration and intent.



Almost all the figures are described simply as ‘a man’ or ‘a woman’; when they are named, they are sometimes given full titles in the style of newspaper reportage (‘Herr Rudi Ulenhaut | the development engineer’, *CP* 218).

Nevertheless, a sharp social critique is expressed. ‘Chicago May 1971’ describes the protest actions of an environmental campaigner:

A man has placed a miniature coffin  
on the vice-president’s couch, and in the coffin  
you can see frog, perch, crawfish, dead.  
They have swallowed the laborious effluent  
of U.S. Steel in Lake Michigan.

(*CP* 218)

The poem makes no explicit statement about its position in relation to the two characters described: the campaigner and the vice-president of U.S. Steel. However, the inclusion of this text in a sequence which features so many diverse portraits of late capitalist decline, social collapse, death and violence suggests a weary anger about contemporary politics, society and technology. The texts depict a world in which technological advancement has not led to utopian enlightenment, but to environmental destruction, capitalist excess and violent disorder. A poem about the inclusion of a plaque depicting human figures in the space probe Pioneer-10 is more explicitly, wryly critical:

A deodorized American man  
with apologetic genitals and no pubic hair  
holds up a banana-like right hand  
in Indian greeting, at his side a woman,  
smaller, and also with no pubic hair,  
is not allowed to hold up her hand,  
stands with one leg off-centre, and  
is obviously an inferior sort  
of the same species. However,  
the male chauvinist pig  
has a sullen expression, and the woman  
is faintly smiling, so  
interplanetary intelligences may still have  
homework.

(*CP* 224)

Here, even outer space becomes part of Morgan's map of human stupidity, frailty and failure. The situation of the perceiving subject is highly ambiguous: according to Morgan's statement on the method of composition, we might assume that the lyric persona is looking at the image reproduced in a newspaper or magazine, but the opening lines of the poem suggest that the speaker is actually on board the spacecraft, looking at the original plaque in context. Yet we are reminded that 'no crew' are on board, and we must therefore conclude that the scene (and the space) are being described imaginatively, in the absence of a perceiving eye or 'I'.

Regardless of how plausible we believe the lyric perspective to be in each of the individual *Instamatic Poems*, the overall effect is of polyvocality. Instead of representing the earth as perceived by a single subject, fixed in space and time, what emerges is a series of snapshots which act like pixels in a larger image. We are invited to fill in the spatial and temporal blanks ourselves in order to generate an overall picture of global late-capitalism.

Jandl's own explorations of 'Momentaufnahme' techniques were directly influenced by the work of Stein, as he acknowledges.<sup>38</sup> The long poem 'prosa aus der flüstergalerie' (WI 163-69) demonstrates his use of this technique as a form of travel writing, inspired by Stein's distinctive style:

england ist niedrig und grau. alles ist in england niedrig und grau.  
aber alles grau in england ist grün, und das ist das wunderbare.  
alles ist in england niedrig und grau. aber alles niedrige sind anker  
des himmels über england. das ist das wunderbare.

england ist. das ist seine geschichte. das ist englische geschichte.  
england ist niedrig und grau ist nicht seine geschichte, sondern das  
wunderbare. das ist das wunderbare an seiner geschichte.  
[...]

<sup>38</sup> Ernst Jandl, "Das Öffnen und Schließen des Mundes": Frankfurter Poetikvorlesungen', in *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, ed. by Klaus Siblewski, 6 vols (Munich: Luchterhand, 2016), VI, 296-401 (pp. 352-53).

grün ist das englische grau. und was für ein grün. blau [und was für ein blau] ist das grau des grünen himmels auf england. rot ist das grau des blauen grüns der rot-roten briefkastensäulen an den ecken, und die gärten sind [und was für gärten erst] gartengrau in allen grau-arten - in rot-rot grünen und gelbgrauen gartenfrühligen.

zum sommer geht ein herbstweg, und ein mann macht aus runzeln einen herbstmann, der sommer macht aus einem mann runzeln, und der herbst macht aus runzeln einen weg für den mann.

(WI 163)

The opening stanzas of this prose-poem pay particularly close attention to the colours of the English landscape. Jandl's title describes the text as 'prosa', further distancing its voice from the conventional expectations of lyric poetry. Various snapshot images of the English countryside and suburbs appear, including red pillar boxes and green gardens. As the poem develops, images from English history – Churchill, Elizabeth I and so on – are juxtaposed with images of contemporary tourists in museums, and the streets of London and its architectural history. Unlike in Morgan's text, Jandl's images are far from naturalistic – indeed, they are highly surrealistic at times, particularly where colour is concerned ('england sei eine große violette zitrone', WI 169). Thanks to the repetitive and hypertactical style, images of particular moments or encounters follow one another in rapid succession. The cumulative effect is of a landscape viewed through a zoetrope or from the window of a moving vehicle. Thus, the 'flüstergalerie' is evoked through a plurality of snapshots and snippets of different voices and perspectives. The poem ends in the whispering gallery of St Paul's:

eine winzige nasse wasserrose erkletterte die sieben sprossen des mondes. unter der kuppel der sankt pauls-kathedrale flüsterte sie: sind sie die flüstergalerie? ja, flüsterte die flüstergalerie zurück.

(WI 169)

At the poem's conclusion, the protracted search for a definitive image of England appears to reach its culmination in the metaphor of fragmentation, indistinctness and ambiguity suggested by the whispering gallery of St Paul's Cathedral. Flower symbolism, which runs throughout the text, implies a search for national identity ('das bisherige england war eine rose als trabant einer hutschachtel [...] das bisherige england war ein hut ohne dornen, eine rose in der schachtel', *WI* 165) from an outsider's perspective. Certain images also capture a similar sense of post-industrial decline to that expressed in Morgan's 'Instamatic Poems':

aber auf der mausgrauen haut des herbstgewordenen grafen, der  
als hunderte umgekippte eiserne sessel am rand des künstlichen  
sees den hyde-park-winter durchkniete, öffnen die märlzturbinen  
ihre gierigen schnäbel. [...] aber was wären alle fernsehtürme, die  
ihre hutnadeln an den horizont stecken, hätten die rostroten  
hundewalzen aus wales für kuhfüße keine zähne mehr.

(*WI* 165)

Although Jandl's poem does not depict global space, as the *Instamatic Poems* do, it adopts a similar approach to representing the spaces and sights of London and its environs as they appear to an outsider. The poetic language is equally simple, while also adopting the surrealist imagery and repetitive style which characterised Stein's prose. Most importantly, Jandl's text – as suggested by its title – is polyvocal and adopts a surrealist perspective which undermines any attempt to read it as the voice of a single, stable lyric persona moving at normal speed through a landscape.

#### 4.3. *Polyphony and asperspectivity in sound and concrete poems*

The declining role of the lyric subject and the corresponding emphasis placed on spatial perspectives which are poly- or aperspectival is more clearly evident in Morgan and Jandl's sound poems than in those texts which retain some

semblance of a lyric persona. In several of these sound texts, the connection between space, place and language is explicitly explored, as in the national soundscape of 'Canedolia' (CP 156-57). Sometimes the sound poems are only implicitly spatial, since they consciously reproduce the sensory experience of being in a particular space or location, as is the case with Morgan's 'Loch Ness Monster's Song' (CP 248) or Jandl's 'schztngrrmm' (WI 127). Sometimes – as in Jandl's dialogic poems which manipulate rhythm and play with sound – the connection to space and place is little more than incidental.

All the examples discussed below configure the relationship between space, subject and language in different ways, but in all cases no single perceiving lyric persona serves to structure the text according to the principles of traditional landscape art, painting or poetry. These poems are quite different from those which retain a tentative lyric subject, such as 'London', 'prosa aus der flüstergalerie' and the *Instamatic Poems*. They are significantly more formally radical and innovative, and their challenge to the singularity and coherence of the lyric subject and its perspective on space is thus more pronounced.

In the case of Morgan's 'Canedolia' (CP 156-57), the evocation of a Scottish soundscape, and landscape, is achieved through the manipulation of place names. The names no longer refer to particular geographical locations, but serve instead as a series of 'Scottish-sounding' words which evoke the nation in general, impressionistic terms. The poem lists or exclaims the names of Scottish places as though in response to meaningful questions on the part of a Standard English-speaking interlocutor, resulting in a deliberately nonsensical dialogue. The names of the places mentioned grow gradually longer throughout the poem, and the title itself is, of course, a scrambled play on the Latin name for Scotland, Caledonia. The poem destabilises the relationship between place, sound and meaning by making the place names

strange, both through repetition and by removing the expected semantic context and replacing it with an entirely unexpected one.

oa! hoy! awe! ba! mey!

*who saw?*

rhu saw rum. garve saw smoo. nigg saw tain. lairg saw lagg. rigg saw eigg. largs saw haggs. tongue saw luss. mull saw yell. stoer saw strone. drem saw muck. gask saw noss. unst saw cults. echt saw banff. weem saw wick. trool saw twatt.

*how far?*

from largo to lunga from joppa to skibo from ratho to shona from ulva to minto from tinto to tolsta from soutra to marsco from braco to barra from alva to stobo from fogo to fada from gigha to gogo from kelso to stroma from hirta to spango.

*what's it like there?*

och it's freuchie, it's faifley, it's wamphray it's frandy, it's sliddery.

[...]

*but who was there?*

petermoidart and craigenkenneth and cambusputtock and ecclemuchty and corriehulish and balladolly and altnacanny and clauchanvrechan and stronachlochan and auchenlachar and tighnacrankie and tilliebruaich and killieharra and invervannach and achnatudlem and machrishellach and inchtamurchan and auchterfechan and kinlochculta and ardnawhallie and invershuggle.

*and what was the toast?*

schiehallion! schiehallion! schiehallion!

(CP 156-57)

Not only are the place names deprived of their capital letters, giving the impression that they are functioning as other parts of speech, but they are also deployed according to lexical conventions which suggest that they have meanings beyond their labelling function. For instance, one would expect adjectives to feature in the answer to the question '*what's it like there?*' – and the choice of place names ending in '-ie' or '-y' in the response leads one to

read the words as though they *are* adjectives. Similarly, the ‘names’ which form the answer to the question ‘who was there?’ are place names which are suggestive of people’s names, such as ‘petermoidart and craigenkenneth’. That these superficially meaningful answers to the italicised questions quickly prove to be nonsensical creates the impression that the questioner, who speaks in Standard English, is in dialogue with a wildly eccentric or otherwise incoherent speaker of Scots dialect. This effect is strengthened by the Scots speaker’s exclamations, marked by regular exclamation points, and injections such as ‘och’ and ‘it was pure strontian!’ The Scots speaker appears as a local guide to the nation, describing the ‘best’ and ‘worst’ of the country in equally meaningless terms, as well as explaining for the questioner the origin of an imagined sound in the middle of the poem: *‘listen! what’s that? | catacol and wauchope, never heed them’*.

The text manipulates the relations between sound and space in order to undermine traditional maps and cultural hegemonies, which would give the Standard English speaker full authority to understand and make meaning from this ‘other’ place and its phonetic landscape. It functions by evoking a particular soundscape, unfamiliar to a Standard English reader or listener but familiar to a speaker of Scots. The poem’s key innovation is to make otherwise recognisable Scottish place names sound like nonsensical local dialect words. In this way, the poem creates a very distinctively Scottish sound-landscape and mood. However, it does not ‘map’ Scottish space in any meaningful way, such as by telling us the locations of the places named or providing subjective descriptions of them. As such, it does not offer the outsider (i.e. the Standard English speaking interlocutor in the poem or the reader outside it) a means of making sense of the place s/he is experiencing in sound. A Scots speaker would be ‘in on the joke’, certainly, but would not be able to parse the place names as meaningful answers to the questions posed.

Although there are two defined speakers, there are no statements with a logical subject-object relationship which contribute to a traditionally 'meaningful' representation of space. The relationship between innovative concrete poetry and sound poetry is well-established, and although 'Canedolia' is not perhaps a 'concrete' text in the strictest sense (it would lose little by being printed with a different typographic arrangement on the page) it conforms to some key conventions of concrete poetry, including the lack of traditional perspective and the foregrounding of other properties of language over transparent 'meaning'.

Morgan's 'Chaffinch Map of Scotland' (CP 179, Figure 4.1) also scrutinises Scots languages and dialects. The text is roughly the shape of Scotland (with smoothed edges) and formed from the dialect words used for a chaffinch in the respective parts of the nation, which range from 'chaffinch' to 'chye', 'chaffie', 'shilfy', 'shilly', 'shiely', back to 'chaffie' and finally to the utterly different, Gaelic-derived 'brichtie'. It is difficult to trace the relationship between word and place in this highly stylised map: the Western isles and Shetlands are not clearly marked, the size of the Firth of Forth is exaggerated and a section of the Central Belt appears to be missing. Although it may be possible to read this 'map' as a simplified sociolinguistic study, or a celebration of the diversity of Scottish dialects, a detailed linguistic guide to the particular isoglosses is clearly not intended.

There are several features which mark it out as a poetic text interested in manipulating our perspective on space and language. Morgan's characteristic playfulness is evident in the elision of the final syllable in 'chaffich' when two instances of the word are placed side-by-side, producing 'chaffinchaffinch'. This in turn mimics the onomatopoetic quality of the bird's common name. As the name changes throughout the country, it is implied that the sound itself might also change, giving the chaffinches in different parts of Scotland different



chaffinch  
 chaffinchaffinch  
 chaffinchaffinchaffinch  
 chaffinchaffinchaffinch  
 chaffinchaffinch  
 chaffinch  
 chaffie chye chaffiechaffie  
 chaffie chye chaffiechaffie  
 chye chaffie  
 chaffiechaffiechaffie  
 chaffiechaffiechaffie  
 chaffiechaffie  
 chaffiechaffie  
 chaffiechaffie  
 chaffiechaffie  
 shilly shelly  
 shilfyshilfyshellyshilly  
 shilfyshillyshilly  
 shilfyshellyshelly  
 shilfyshelfyshelly  
 shellyfaw  
 shielyshellyfaw  
 shilfy shilfy  
 shilfyshelfy shielyshiely  
 shilfyshelfyshelfy shielychaffie  
 chaffiechaffie chaffiechaffie  
 chaffiechaffie  
 shilfyshilfyshilfyshelfyshelfy  
 chaffieshilfyshilfyshelfyshelfyshelfyshelfy  
 chaffieshilfyshilfyshelfyshelfyshelfyshelfyshelfy  
 shilfyshilfyshilfyshelfy shelfyshelfy  
 shilfy shilfy  
 shilfy  
 shilfyshelfy  
 britchie

Figure 4.1: Edwin Morgan, 'The Chaffinch Map of Scotland' (CP 179)

'accents'. This implication is obviously absurd, but serves nevertheless to reflexively highlight the absurdity of our own obsession with accent as an artificial construct – and, indeed, with the arbitrary nature of the relationship between signifier and signified at the heart of language itself.

As Rodney Edgecombe points out, in this poem the expected dynamic of 'strangeness' as perceived by the native speaker of standard English is inverted:

if we start to read, as instinct compels us, in the northwest of the country and move down towards the Borders, the Lallans term 'brichtie' appears as a sort of punchline, phonetically very different to the other terms.<sup>39</sup> This has the effect of confounding our expectations regarding Scottish dialects and the assumptions of otherness on which they are predicated.

Overall, then, the text playfully undermines certain preconceptions, both about accent and dialect in general, and about Scottish language and its similarity to English in particular. In order to do so, it adopts a unique, non-subjective (i.e. map-like) perspective. It does not rely on the voice of a single speaker to mediate Scottish language forms for a non-Scots audience. Instead, a chorus of both human and natural 'voices' can be heard simultaneously. 'The Chaffinch Map of Scotland' also challenges our assumptions about what constitutes a map, and what constitutes a poem. It conforms to our expectations of neither, and yet it is both: it is a poem in a non-traditional form, in which a wide plurality of 'voices' can be heard, which in turn reflect the real experience of space, place and the natural world across a geographic area.

The poems discussed in this section, unlike Morgan and Jandl's concrete and sound poems, apparently express human perspectives rather than evoking pure 'nonsense' sound. Yet unlike what this analysis describes as 'polyvocal' poems, they do not coherently articulate a multiplicity of subject positions in order to undermine the traditional lyric subject. Rather, we can perhaps describe them as 'polyphonic' maps: they demonstrate the fact that spaces, as we live in them, contain a multitude of different sounds and voices which deserved to be 'mapped' like geographical features.

---

<sup>39</sup> Rodney Edgecombe, *Aspects of Form and Genre in the Poetry of Edwin Morgan* (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), p. 149.

Play, pleasure and humour are regular features of Morgan and Jandl's work, and particularly of their sound poems. This is evident in recordings of their performances.<sup>40</sup> Many of the most humorous, widely read texts in both authors' oeuvres feature animals and animal sounds. We might think here, for example, of Jandl's 'auf dem land' (WI 223) and other poems in the section entitled 'bestiarium' in *Laut and Luise* or of Morgan's talismanic sound and concrete poems from the short collection *The Horseman's Word*. Morgan's guttural Loch Ness Monster, Hungarian snake and Chinese cat all serve as examples of this shared interest.<sup>41</sup> There are many potential explanations for Morgan and Jandl's interest in the sounds animals make. Such sounds are a form of non-human utterance which can be purely expressive or playful when filtered through a human medium such as speech or writing: they are a test of the ability of sound to signify despite a lack of traditional meaning, and they draw on the wealth of symbolic functions afforded to animals. Animals also play a unique role in evoking place and landscape, and it is this aspect of Morgan and Jandl's interest in them which is relevant here. By mimicking the sounds of various animals in their natural habitats, these poems ask readers to imagine themselves in a particular environment (much like the dialect poems described above). However, far from participating in conservative pastoral traditions, the poems use novel forms and comic effects to surprise and challenge our perceptions of space, place and landscape.

Jandl's 'auf dem land' (WI 223), for instance, uses the names of various typical farmyard animals to evoke the din of a rural environment:

---

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Edwin Morgan and Roderick Watson, *23 Poems of Edwin Morgan: Read by Edwin Morgan, with Commentary by Professor Roderick Watson* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2005); Ernst Jandl, *Laut & Luise/Hosi+Anna* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2001). Many live and studio recordings exist of both poets reading their own work.

<sup>41</sup> See 'The Loch Ness Monster's Song' (CP 148), 'Chinese Cat' (CP 195), and 'Siesta of a Hungarian Snake' (CP 174).

rininininininDER  
brüllüllüllüllüllüllüllEN

schweineineineineineineinE  
grunununununununZEN

hununununununununDE  
bellemellemellemellemEN

Jandl's text brings to life the farmyard surroundings by stretching onomatopoeic language to its limits. The technique resembles those adopted by comic-strip authors to phonetically render non-human sounds. In performance, the text is comically absurd, reaching a crescendo around some unlikely onomatopoeia which Jandl articulates in a highly exaggerated manner ('vögögögögögögögEL | zwitschitschitschitschitschitschitschERN'). The poem can be read as a test of the ability of language to depict non-human sounds and evoke surroundings without recourse to imagery, metaphor or description.

Jandl's equally well-known 'schtzngrmm' (WI 127) uses a similar technique to represent a much more serious subject matter.<sup>42</sup> The poem onomatopoetically evokes the surroundings of the trenches during World War One:

schtzngrmm  
schtzngrmm  
t-t-t-t  
t-t-t-t  
grrmmmmmm  
t-t-t-t  
s————c————h  
tzngrmm  
tzngrmm

<sup>42</sup> In this respect, Jandl is drawing on the tradition of avant-garde sound poetry discussed above, including the work of Schwitters, Arp and others. In particular, links may be drawn to Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *Zang Tumb Tumb* (1914), an early (Futurist) sound poem inspired by the Battle of Adrianopole.

tzngrmm  
 grrmmmmmm  
 schtzn  
 schtzn

That this poem is still often taught in German and Austrian schools is testament to its success in evoking, through sound, an otherwise unfamiliar environment. The place the poem describes is evoked quite precisely through the manipulation of sound, using the phonemes of the single word ‘schützengraben’ in various combinations to mimic the sound of machine-gun fire, whistling shells and explosions. No identifying spatial co-ordinates or description of the surrounding terrain are supplied, and there is no narrative context or grotesque imagery which brings to life the horrors of war. Instead, the poem reproduces the surroundings of the trenches at an auditory or sensory level: it is a pure evocation of the lived experience of place. ‘auf dem land’ adopts this technique to ends which are essentially playful, but ‘schtzngrmm’ undermines the childlike, comic-book connotations of using onomatopoeia by applying the technique to such a serious subject matter.

‘The Loch Ness Monster’s Song’ (*CP* 248), arguably Morgan’s best-known text and another poem regularly taught in schools, adopts a similar approach. The poem imagines the guttural, tortured and repetitive sound of the mythical creature, exploiting onomatopoeia to comic effect:

Ssssnnnwhufffl?  
 Hnwhuffl hhnwfl hnfl hfl?  
 Gdroblboblhobngbl gbl gl g g g glbgl.  
 Drublhaflablhafubhafgabhaflhafl fl fl –  
 gm grawwww grf grawf awfgm graw gm.

The environment is undoubtedly watery, as the rhythms of repeated guttural vowels at the ends of lines – and at the end of the whole text – suggest. As in the Jandl poems cited above, onomatopoeic language is stretched to its limits in being used to shape a kind of narrative. The addition of ‘human’

punctuation assists in creating an overall narrative: the monster surfaces, seeks to communicate in watery gasps, becomes increasingly frustrated and subsequently sinks gradually back beneath the surface. Of course, the effect is absurdly comical, but it is also possible to read the poem as a gentle satire on the creation and exploitation for the tourist market of the myth of the Loch Ness Monster in the twentieth century: Morgan's monster (demonstrably a creature of human invention) uses a manipulated form of human language and punctuation, and wishes forlornly that it could communicate with people. The watery sounds of a Scottish place are invoked, and a Scottish 'tradition' playfully reinterpreted.<sup>43</sup>

In these poems, Morgan and Jandl attempt to evoke certain places or landscapes directly, though the use of characteristic sounds – the sounds of animals, of nature and of historical experiences. The phonetic components of language are divorced from their semantic content, a technique which produces a variety of effects with important consequences for the representation of space and place. Rather than representing space through description or imagery, from the perspective of an observing subject, these types of text evoke place aperspectivally; they create the 'andere Wirklichkeit' which Suchy describes as central to the project of concrete poetry.

Finally, we come to those poems which are 'aperspectival' in the most obvious sense of the term: concrete poetry in which the typographic composition of the words on the page makes an indispensable contribution to the poem's overall meaning. This section analyses poems which adopt various types of novel concrete form, many of which depend on the manipulation of

---

<sup>43</sup> The uncollected poem 'The Day the Sea Spoke' (1968; *CP* 587) adopts a similar approach, again representing the sounds of water and exploring the boundaries between communication and incomprehensibility. Here, the sea shore is extensively evoked in sound, before apparently 'speaking' the three-word phrase 'here are your' (printed in larger text and isolated on a line).

space on the page and the shaping of words to mirror architectural, geometric, topographical or geological features. At the same time, several of these concrete constructions also represent place and landscape, through sound, imagery, description or phonetic evocation. All eschew the use of a traditional lyric subjective perspective on space and place.

The flourishing of the European concrete poetry movement roughly coincided with the emergence of another artistic movement named after the same symbolic building material: architectural Brutalism, named after ‘breton brut’, the ‘raw’ concrete which was its characteristic building material. Both movements drew on earlier, high modernist traditions in their respective art forms, inspired by shifting attitudes to representation and the intersection between form and function. Both movements now appear to us as characteristic of their time, symbolic of a naïve mid-century enthusiasm for technological advancement, innovation and the desire to forge a new artistic idiom to suit a rapidly changing social context. Like its architectural cousin, concrete poetry also depends on the primacy of form as a means of articulating content or function: just as the form of the building should, according to Brutalist principles, perfectly reflect the activities for which the building is used, so the form of the concrete poem expresses its significance. Concrete poetry aims to create a spatial ‘object’ on the page, one in which the ‘content’ is inseparable from form. Sometimes, these poem-objects take the form of abstract shapes such as circles, grids, lines, wheels or spirals. In other examples, they mirror existing shapes such as those of buildings or maps. In one highly literal example, ‘Construction for I. K. Brunel’ (*CP* 190, Figure 4.2), Morgan uses various plays on the name of the Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel to construct a poem in the shape of a bridge. The poem both demonstrates and describes Brunel’s great talent, as well as gently satirising grandiose Victorian rhetoric.

I AM BARD	DOM BRUMEL
I AM ISOBAR	DOM BRU COMMIL
I AM IRON BAR	DOM BRU COWELL
I AM IRON BARD	DOM BREWMETAL
I AM BY ASGARD	DOM BRU COW MEDDLE
I AM IRON ICEBERG	great western suspension steam telegraph king
DOM BRUNELLESCHAL	
ISTAND GUARD	great eastern hungerford canal cableboat king
DOM BLO COMMIDDLE	
ISPAN BARRED	great clifton railtunnel docks submarine king
DOM BLUEMEZZO	
ISEEM BARED	great britain explosions locks tower pier king
DOM BOONMEDAL	
ISTAB HARD	DOM BRUMMELL

Figure 4.2: Edwin Morgan, 'Construction for I. K. Brunel', (CP 190)

*The Tower of Pisa*

## I BASE

this is the old base cut  
 this cold base is no cult  
 this is the cold old rock  
 this is the culled rock face  
 this place is all stone cold  
 this is the round cold form  
 this chilled stone foam is bold  
 this cut culled form holds show  
 this old arched hold lies low  
 this is the bowl of snow

this rock floor is all holed  
 this whole skilled show is held  
 this rock is told to hold  
 this is the child of form  
 this is the shield of form  
 this is the drag down stone  
 this is called build and wait  
 this weighed down round drags deep  
 this just firm sound weight creeps  
 this bold old place just keeps

## II MIDDLE

here are the heart rocks locked  
 here are the spine beams filed  
 here are the mid ribs backed  
 here are the stark stone stores  
 here high hard stones stare round  
 here round dark stairs file down  
 here files of floors hang bones  
 here shades of stone throng walls  
 here mid spine walls rock winds  
 here winds rub white ribs thin

here eyes see domes hang grave  
 here bricks frame spires hung grey  
 here doors watch bridge clamp stream  
 here high walls watch hawks climb  
 here sun streams home on stones  
 here domes and homes hang low  
 here cries climb ramps like smoke  
 here doves stamp old soft sills  
 here hills are smoke made stone  
 here grave eyes bridge two hills

here the dry bricks lean out  
 here the high heart strains bars  
 here the caged shape takes heart  
 here the barred height shakes hard  
 here the bold brick breaks shape  
 here the black breaks show bald  
 here the lean spokes take slopes  
 here the slopes build high hopes  
 here the hopes hang like ropes  
 here rows of slopes blow bold

## III TOP

now winds try high top tiers  
 now high piers creep and cry  
 now top floors float from true  
 now strong true stone slips free  
 now brick arc bows back down  
 now worn stripped brick face slides  
 now brick dust slips down rifts  
 now wan stone lifts and leans  
 now wind rips cracks in jams  
 now sprung joints creak lean songs

now storm bowls down blank flues  
 now clouds bank low on roofs  
 now sharp cracks start from clouds  
 now quick white bursts glare hard  
 now bolts of hail hit bells  
 now guard rails hiss with rains  
 now rones roll rich and spout  
 now leaks sprout bright wet wings  
 now wet springs pour down walls  
 now wet inch sinks on inch

now black rails drip  
 now bell rims dip  
 now whipped lead snaps  
 now bats shake cramps  
 now damp stars blink  
 now one side shrinks  
 now top floors flap  
 now roof rats twitch  
 now eight stacks stand  
 now eight stacks stand

Figure 4.3: Edwin Morgan, 'The Tower of Pisa' (CP 192-93, arranged to show layout across two pages)



Jandl's 'karwoche: ein turm' (*WII* 123) and Morgan's 'Tower of Pisa' (*CP* 192-93) can be read as attempts to represent space – specifically, the space of the built environment – as a means of contributing to their semantic content. Both adopt the spatial metaphor of a tower and emphasise its precarious nature, for different purposes.

Morgan's poem (*CP* 192-93, Figure 4.3) consists of three named sections: 'I BASE', 'II MIDDLE' and 'III TOP'. The ordering of these elements immediately raises certain questions about the nature of the 'construction' on the page: we read from 'base' to top, as though following the construction process of a tower, or climbing it. However, as the eye apprehends the page as a whole, the 'base' of the tower sits above the 'top'; that is to say, the tower appears inverted. Moreover, at the end of this 'top' section (i.e. at the very bottom of page, and the end of the poem), the poem's form abruptly changes from strict six-word lines to lines of four words each, disturbing the visual and formal symmetry of the poem, much as the symmetry of the famous Leaning Tower of Pisa is disturbed by its own fundamental structural instability.

Whether the instability in Morgan's poem is at the base or top of the poem-tower remains ambiguous, as a consequence of the tension between a readerly instinct to approach the text in a linear fashion – reading from the top of the page to the bottom – and the spatial layout of the poem, which suggests a tower 'built' up from the bottom of the page. At a semantic level, lines towards the beginning of the poem (or top of the page) refer to the building's base and foundations ('this is the old base cut | this cold base is no cult') and those towards the end describe the upper levels ('now top floors flap | now roof rats twitch'). The truncated lines in the final stanza reflect the slightly smaller diameter of the tower's belfry.

Various formal and phonetic qualities in the text also lend it a precarious harmony which mirrors its architectural namesake. There are eight stanzas, to

mimic the eight floors of the Tower of Pisa. The first word of each line within each numbered section is always the same and all are deictic: every line in the first section, BASE, starts with 'this'; those in the second section, MIDDLE, all begin 'here'; and the lines of the final section, TOP, all start 'now'. This creates a strong visual pattern to the left of the page. Since the three words 'this', 'here' and 'now' are all typeset to equal length, a vertical line of space emerges aligned near the left and running down the entire length of the poem – until the final stanza, where shorter lines and a central alignment disrupt the pattern. However, the text is not justified or equally spaced, unlike other Morgan poems such as 'Unscrambling the Waves at Goonhilly' (CP 191) or 'The Computer's First Christmas Card' (CP 177), and the margin to the right is therefore highly uneven.

Both in the overall structure and in the patterning of individual lines, therefore, the poem explores a tension between mathematical regularity on the one hand, and asymmetry or instability on the other. At a phonetic level, too, the poem evokes both harmony and lopsidedness: the words in each six-word line conform to regular phonetic patterning, with the repetition and recombination of a few key consonant and vowel sounds giving each stanza a distinctive character, while also offering sufficient variation to allow each stanza to build on the last and for a sense of development between the stanzas to emerge. For example, the progression between the first and second stanzas depends on the introduction of 's' and 'll' consonants alongside the 'c' which is present from the beginning, and a gradual shift from hard 'c' to soft 's' sounds at the end of stanza one, then to 'd', 'p', 'j' and 'b' at the end of stanza two. The number of stresses in each line also varies significantly, from three-stress lines ('this rock is told to hold') to lines in which every word is stressed ('this weighed down round drags deep'). Despite its framework of a mathematical

regularity, the rhythm of the poem nevertheless becomes uneven and asymmetrical.

Morgan transforms the space of the page, and of the poem, into architectural space. 'The Tower of Pisa' formally mirrors the architectural spaces it describes. It does so partly by adopting regular and appropriate patterns, such as the number of stanzas, the regular word count, and the strong visual rhythm created by the column of 'this', 'here' and 'now' at the left of the page. It also, however, mirrors the precarious state of its subject, through the use of irregular rhythms, its gradually evolving and shifting sound patterns, and the 'inversion' of structure from the top to the bottom on the page, which creates an unsettling ambiguity. Morgan's poem, like the Tower of Pisa, is the 'child of form', a text which uses the spatial model of architectural form to demonstrate the subtle interaction between regularity and imbalance in poetic form.

Jandl's 'karwoche: ein turm' (*WII*, Figure 4.4) is another poem which explicitly draws on the architectural motif of the tower and relates it to the instability of language and form. Its title implies a relationship between temporality and spatiality, but, as in Morgan's poem, the order is somewhat inverted. The 'base' of the tower relates to the later stages of Holy Week, including Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, since those are the lines we read last. The poem's central conceit is the combination of semantic elements in new compounds which are apparently contradictory or jarring, if not directly oxymoronic.

Starting with the six-letter 'ölrauh' and ending with the twenty-one-letter 'gründonnerstagfleckig', the words get progressively longer towards the bottom of the page, providing an apparently stable base for the poem-tower. Yet its visual (and implied structural) stability is compromised by its semantic contradictions and paradoxes. Some of these are direct oxymorons ('eisheiß',



Figure 4.4: Ernst Jandl, 'karwoche: ein turm', (W 179)

'stahlsanft', 'wolkenhart', 'kitschecht', 'bordellkeusch' etc.), while others are more indirectly contradictory ('scheuflüssig', 'sarggemütlich', 'darmbewußt',

‘butterkalt’) or near-nonsensical (‘sesselblaß’, ‘erdbebenblond’, ‘gebärmutterfrech’).

Given the title of the poem and the inclusion of compound words which refer mischievously, and even subversively, to issues of religion and faith, the poem can be read as a critique of the social and moral structures built on the foundations of religious hypocrisy. The final few words of the poem, ‘konfirmationsschief | gaskammernbarmherzig | gründonnerstagfleckig’, and other references to religion and memory (‘mariennackt’, ‘denkmaldumm’) imply a critique of the Catholic Church’s unacknowledged complicity in the Holocaust. In particular, the penultimate term, ‘gaskammernbarmherzig’, reflects the culmination of the ‘Karwoche’ and the gesture of re-emergence from the sealed tomb in the process of resurrection it involves. No possibility of resurrection or redemption is available to the victims of the gas chambers. Jandl uses the architectural and spatial motif of a tower – evident in the poem’s form as well as its title – to reflect upon the artifice of religious and moral structures. Like Morgan’s poem-tower, Jandl’s construction is also precarious and based on an unstable foundation.

#### 4.4. *Interplanetary space*

In Morgan’s work, issues of place, identity and communication are regularly linked to ideas of space, and particularly globalisation, through the motif of technology. One crucial aspect of the evocation of place in Morgan’s work is his interest in interplanetary space, as in the darkly humorous dialogue between earth-men and aliens in ‘The First Men on Mercury’ (CP 267), and in his occasional sequence of ‘Spacepoems’ (‘Spacepoem 1: from Laika to Gagarin’, CP 196; ‘In Sobieski’s Shield’, CP 196; ‘Spacepoem 3: Off Course’, CP 268). Writing when the ‘space race’ exerted a profound cultural influence,

Morgan's interest in extraterrestrial space reflects a dual fascination. On the one hand, interplanetary space has symbolic potential as the ultimate uncharted territory, in which novel poetic forms and topics could contribute to the forging of new traditions. On the other, it furnishes Morgan's work with a novel technical lexis, often drawing on older myths and traditions.<sup>44</sup> One example of this is the title of the spacepoem 'In Sobeiski's Shield' (*CP* 196), a constellation named in the seventeenth century for a Polish king, which contains a note of heroic classicism.

'Unscrambling the Waves at Goonhilly' (*CP* 191, Figure 5) fuses several aspects of Morgan's interest in the materiality of the signifier, place, communication and technology. The title refers to a famous satellite communication post at Goonhilly in Cornwall. The poem 'scrambles' six words of seven letters each by combining the first three letters of one word with the final four letters of a different word, in various permutations, before settling on the 'correct' forms in the final six lines of the text.

The final line of the poem gives away the fact that one of the words in the scrambled sequence does not belong with the others: the Telstar communications satellite, launched in 1962, used the Goonhilly communication post as its ground station. The gradual emergence of this 'message' from the scrambled waves, which is reminiscent of the developing messages in Morgan's earlier sequence of 'Emergent Poems' (*CP* 133-36), recalls the gradual decoding of a satellite message or the scrambled data transmitted by basic equipment.<sup>45</sup> It is notable that 'Telstar' itself is a 'scrambled' word: a

<sup>44</sup> 'The Pleasures of a Technological University' (*CP* 275), a poem which consists entirely of pairs of words juxtaposing classics, literature and the arts with science and technology, demonstrates this interest perfectly ('hubris and helium | Eliot and entropy | enjambment and switchgear [...] poem and pome').

<sup>45</sup> Interestingly, these poems in turn resemble Jandl's sequence of scrambled and unscrambled texts, 'klare gerührt' (*WI* 259-77).

t e l f i s h  
d o g s t a r  
s a r p h i n  
d o l d i n e  
t e l w h a l  
n a r s t a r  
s a r d o c k  
h a d d i n e  
d o g w h a l  
n a r f i s h  
d o l d o c k  
h a d p h i n  
d o g d o c k  
h a d f i s h  
d o l w h a l  
n a r p h i n  
h a d w h a l  
n a r d o c k  
t e l d o c k  
h a d s t a r  
s a r w h a l  
n a r d i n e  
d o g p h i n  
d o l f i s h  
s a r f i s h  
d o g d i n e  
d o l s t a r  
t e l p h i n  
s a r s t a r  
t e l d i n e  
s a r d i n e  
d o l p h i n  
h a d d o c k  
n a r w h a l  
d o g f i s h  
t e l s t a r

Figure 4.5: Edwin Morgan, 'Unscrambling the Waves at Goonhilly', (*CP* 191)

portmanteau of 'telephone' and 'star'. Thus, even the final message which emerges remains to some extent scrambled. The emphasis is on the creative potential of this process, from which new words and concepts emerge.

The poem literally, and playfully, blends the local landscape with the mysterious, distant and technical language of modern satellite communication. In addition to evoking a specific place through its choice of single, simple

words denoting the rural coastal wildlife of Goonhilly, the poem explores a radically expanded perspective on space which includes not only the terrestrial but the extraterrestrial. It is emphatically not the perspective of a subjective observer standing on the shore at Goonhilly.

Rather than evoking a local soundscape of waves and water, the sounds are strange and incomprehensible, as though interrupted by the presence of the satellite dish. However, it is clear that this incongruous feature of the local landscape is not unwelcome: Morgan's poem cannot be read as technophobic or critical of the dish's presence on the Cornish coast, since there is a strong sense of play and interplay between the man-made and natural elements of the landscape which suggest that the poem takes pleasure in juxtaposition. The perspective, which brings together the shoreline of Cornwall and the distant Telstar satellite, is radically panoramic. This reflects a key dimension of Morgan's interest in outer space: it is largely empty of a perceiving subject. Any lyric persona which purports to occupy it sacrifices plausibility as the voice of a 'real' subject.

We cannot tell 'who is speaking' in 'Unscrambling the Waves at Goonhilly'. We know, however, that the perspective represented in this text, as in 'Tower of Pisa' or 'karwoche: ein turn', is not that of a single person, standing in a certain place, and describing what s/he can see. We must accept an absolute shift in our understanding of how language relates to space: language does not describe space, but it can nevertheless aperspectively represent it in various ways, without recourse to the perspective of a lyric subject.



#### 4.5. 'kleine erdkunde'

The short sequence of place-poems which features in Jandl's *Laut und Luise* under the title 'kleine erdkunde' is a useful reflection of Jandl and Morgan's approaches to representing space in their work. The poems which are united under this heading are remarkably diverse. Despite the title, one is left with no clear overall impression of the 'geography' of Jandl's poetic universe. Instead, the impression is of a light-hearted, eclectic and frenetic tour of global space, presented without an obvious unifying theme or context.

The poems are all 'concrete' in quite different ways. All take ideas of space or travel as their starting point, yet the range of forms and approaches to representing space is remarkably varied. Some poems are simple jokes or brief plays on words, such as 'niagaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa | re felle' in which the large 'drop' and elongated vowel obviously mimic both the aural and visual properties of the famous waterfall, and the seemingly random homophonic substitution of 'felle' for 'fälle' suggests a range of surrealistic images. 'bericht über malmö' merely repeats in various configurations the phonemes of the place name *ad absurdum*, sometimes reshaping it to form German words and phrases, perhaps in order to evoke the sounds of the Swedish language and its phonetic relationship to German. 'drei städte' takes the form of a nonsense dialogue or drama between the three cities of London, Paris and Rome, but based on linguistic manipulations which render any attempted staging impossible. 'amsterdam' (WI 157), which will be discussed below, and 'prose aus der flüstergalerie' complete the sequence.

The extent to which these poems can even be said to represent 'space' in any meaningful sense is debatable: for example, 'drei städte' tells us nothing about the spatial reality or experience of being in London, Paris or Rome. On the other hand, 'prosa aus der flüstergalerie' is grounded in a concrete

description of place, and ‘amsterdam’ evokes street scenes which could be (but are not unmistakably) set in that city:

1.

die haus stiehlt zum mütze  
an wäre kalten die fagott.  
den türe schneidest vors apothekerin.  
od würde nassen das flöte.  
[...]

4.

ans abend salziges furs polizist  
blätterttest das birne auf die profilschmalz  
zu an ob treffen amsterdam die vogel  
das turm des frau sträubtest zum sonne.

The poem’s images, and the scenes it appears to describe, are almost pastoral in their focus on birds, fruit and the natural environment. The simplicity of these images is quaint, static and timeless, in the manner of the still life or street scene paintings of the Dutch Golden Age. Figures are invoked as ‘types’ rather than individuals, as in a children’s book: ‘polizist’, ‘apothekerin’. The apparently nostalgic, childlike atmosphere is suggestive of an exploration of so-called alternative lifestyles, including hippy culture, phenomena which were already associated with Amsterdam by the mid-1960s.<sup>46</sup> It is striking that the canals are entirely absent from Jandl’s representation of Amsterdam, perhaps reflecting a desire to move away from the tourist mainstream representations of the city.

However, the impressionistic imagery is not the most striking feature of the text: one notices instead the nonstandard grammar, syntax and vocabulary.

<sup>46</sup> See Geert Mak, *Amsterdam: A Brief Life of the City*, trans. by Philipp Blom (London: Vintage, 2001), p. 270-309.

Jandl wrote that 'das gedicht [amsterdam] ist jenseits des entscheidungspaares deutbarkeit-nichtdeutbarkeit angelegt'.<sup>47</sup> Rather than relying on a concrete construction or a specific evocation of the place from which the poem draws its title, the text revolves around undermining the very idea of intelligibility, drawing on contemporary hermeneutic discourses. This desire to subvert the dominant paradigm of comprehensibility through the manipulation of linguistic form can be linked to the countercultural interests of the poem. It can be read as a representation of the kind of radically altered perspective which continues to attract tourists to Amsterdam today.

Overall, the common themes linking the explicitly geographical poems in Jandl's 'kleine erdkunde' relate to the manipulation of form and meaning. In these texts, space serves as a starting point for exploring the idea of semantic 'meaning' which destabilises the dichotomy of 'deutbarkeit-nichtdeutbarkeit'. 'kleine erdkunde' offers a series of representations of space in which a traditional lyric perspective and subjectivity are undermined. They are either aperspectival, like concrete and sound poems without a lyric persona or subject; polyvocal, like texts where various perspectives are expressed according to a range of subject positions; or polyphonic, where a variety of sounds are articulated without a defined speaker or subject.

---

<sup>47</sup> Jandl appears to have been drawing on contemporary theory in his formulation of this statement in the terminology of hermeneutics – one possible source, given Jandl's long-standing interest in the relationship between speech and music, may have been *Über die deutbarkeit der Tonkunst* (1955), a critical text originally published in German by the composer and music theorist Nils-Eric Ringbom, who was responsible for establishing the Finnish wing of the Salzburg-based Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Musik (IGNM). Jandl was certainly familiar with this organisation: he once proposed establishing its poetic correlative, the Internationale Gesellschaft für Neue Poesie. See Nils-Eric Ringbom, *Über die Deutbarkeit der Tonkunst* (Helsinki: Fazer, 1955); Helmut Heißenbüttel, 'Neue Lyrik: Konkrete Poesie Als Alternative?', *Die Zeit* (Hamburg, 24 February 1978) <<http://www.zeit.de/1978/09/konkrete-poesie-als-alternative>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

#### 4.6. *Public space and power: 'The Starlings in George Square' and 'wien: heldenplatz'*

The above analysis provides an overview of various types of perspectival shift in Morgan and Jandl's representations of space and place. These shifts dramatically expand the scope of the 'maps' their poetry draws, enabling them to depict space in novel ways. Rather than centring a perceived landscape around an individual and stable lyric subject, their poetry expands into polyphony and polyvocality, or else eschews a fixed perspective altogether. This radical desire to approach landscape, space and place in innovative ways should be read in the context of rapidly changing and expanding spatial paradigms. The radicalism of Morgan and Jandl's work can be understood, too, as a response to the need to redefine national literary traditions after the first generation of modernism, which emerged in a comparable way in both cultural spaces. Such radical shifts are bound to have subversive consequences, not only as far as the possibilities of linguistic representation are concerned, but also in political terms. The following comparative close reading of Morgan's 'The Starlings in George Square' (CP 165) and Jandl's 'wien: heldenplatz' (WI 126) demonstrates how this subversive force functions in relation to political discourses of public space and power.

The role of public space as the locus of democratic discourse is long-established, beginning with classical traditions which saw the inclusive, open public spaces of the agora or forum as a special location in which dissenting opinions might be expressed, issues debated and civic priorities negotiated through the convergence of private concerns.<sup>48</sup> Recently, Henri

<sup>48</sup> For a fuller discussions of public space, see for example 'Section 6: "Public" and "Private" Space' in *The People, Place, and Space Reader*, ed. by Jen Jack Giesecking and William Mangold (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2014). Note that discussion here focuses on public space, which is not necessarily cognate with the public sphere as defined and debated by Habermas, Arendt

Lefebvre (and subsequently Don Mitchell, David Harvey and Doreen Massey) have expressed concerns about how capitalist power structures work to limit and police public spaces, particularly by restricting our ‘right to the city’.<sup>49</sup> Mitchell notes that public spaces have the potential to foster democracy, but he also points out that this democracy is continually threatened by the complex power dynamics of inclusion and exclusion which prevent many spaces from being truly ‘public’.<sup>50</sup> Today, the very existence of non-virtual public space is called into question by the plurality and ease of access to online meeting-spaces which fundamentally reshape the nature of public discourse, give new agents the power to include or exclude, and blur the boundaries between public and private.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, in the physical world, Lefebvre’s concerns about citizens’ dwindling rights to the city appear to have been entirely justified by the relentless privatisation of public spaces.

‘wien: heldenplatz’ and ‘The Starlings in George Square’ long predate present day concerns about privately owned public space; yet their examination of the relationship between language, power and democracy in public spaces is sharply critical of the various uses and abuses of public squares over the course of the twentieth century.<sup>52</sup> Both poems focus on the central

---

and others – see Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition: Second Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991).

<sup>49</sup> Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*; Don Mitchell, *Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press, 2012); Harvey, *Rebel Cities*; Doreen Massey, *World City* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

<sup>50</sup> Mitchell, *Right to the City*.

<sup>51</sup> Hénaff and Strong argue that the public space has been effectively replaced by the virtual public sphere. See Marcel Hénaff and Tracy B. Strong, ‘Conclusion: Public Space, Virtual Space, and Democracy’, in *Public Space and Democracy*, ed. by Marcel Hénaff and Tracy B. Strong (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 221–22.

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, recent debates about privately-owned public space or POPS. For a history, and critique, of POPS, see Jerold S. Kayden, *The New York City*

civic space of their respective poet's lifelong home city: for Morgan, Glasgow's George Square, and for Jandl, Vienna's Heldenplatz. Both present the interaction between, and battle for control of, the discourses which inhabit city squares, and the conflict between order and disorder which occurs there is foregrounded. Yet the two poems present the power dynamics of public space and public language in quite different ways. Morgan's poem represents the dynamism, plurality and diversity of public space as it comes into conflict with bureaucratic institutions, as an assertion of anarchic freedom and a critique of liberal humanist values, while Jandl depicts the dynamics of power in the public sphere and public discourse at a particular historical moment, while simultaneously disrupting and undercutting the authority of this discourse at a meta-poetic level.

'The Starlings in George Square', written in 1962 and first published in Morgan's collection *The Second Life* in 1968, deals with two intimately linked, once-common features of the urban landscape: public urban space and the common or European starling. The poem describes Glasgow council's attempt to eradicate starlings and pigeons from George Square in the mid-1960s using a variety of methods, including mesh rollers which prevented them from alighting, and later high-frequency audio deterrents and aggressive lighting.

---

Department of City Planning and The Municipal Art Society of New York, *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience* (New York: Wiley, 2000). The so-called 'sky garden' in London's 'Walkie-Talkie' tower (20 Fenchurch Street), and the similar proposed 'garden bridge' project, have been criticised as a manifestation of the failure of POPS to adhere to basic expectations of inclusivity which would seem to be a pre-requisite for any truly public space. See Oliver Wainwright, 'The Great Garden Swindle: How Developers Are Hiding behind Shrubbery', *The Guardian* <<http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/architecture-design-blog/2015/apr/16/the-great-garden-swindle-how-developers-are-hiding-behind-shrubbery>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

The project was largely successful, and many campaigners were pleased that the authorities had not resorted to exterminating the birds.<sup>53</sup>

Starlings are, of course, frequent and sometimes unwelcome residents of public squares and spaces, and this obvious level at which the two features of the poem are connected hints at their metaphorical relationship. 'The Starlings in George Square' celebrates community and disorder and defends these ideals against the forces which seek to limit, control or eradicate human strategies of resistance to the monoliths of state control. It depicts a battle for control of the public space between the forces of civic democracy and the disruptive, sublime presence of the starlings.

Several critics of Morgan's work have taken his depictions of space and place as a starting point for their analysis of this poem.<sup>54</sup> Aaron Kelly's argument that '[l]ike his starlings, Morgan uncovers ways by which to remap the city in abeyance of what has been determined by power' is particularly instructive: 'In doing so', Kelly suggests, '[Morgan] disputes power's capacity

<sup>53</sup> The long battle to eradicate starlings from Glasgow's public spaces can be traced in various articles in the *Glasgow Herald*, e.g. 'Starling Invasion No Joke for Glasgow', *The Glasgow Herald*, 25 November 1955, p. 9; 'Move to Rid Glasgow of Starlings', *The Glasgow Herald*, 8 December 1965, p. 1; 'Plan to Rid Glasgow of Starlings Starts on Sunday', *The Glasgow Herald*, 13 February 1970, p. 7. The phrase 'Cameron's Repellent' refers to the colourful figure of John Cameron, who proposed various methods for eliminating the birds. See 'Ingenuity versus the Starlings', *The Glasgow Herald*, 28 September 1971, p. 10. The 'Lord Provost' in question is Dame Jean Roberts, the first female Lord Provost of Glasgow.

<sup>54</sup> See, for example, Christopher Whyte and Aaron Kelly. Although Whyte's focus on the homoerotic dimensions of Morgan's representations of Glasgow is certainly warranted, my analysis positions such queer readings of space in Morgan's work as part of an overall project of subversive, radically inclusive and democratic politics. See Christopher Whyte, 'The 1960s (Robert Garioch, Tom Leonard, Edwin Morgan)', in *Modern Scottish Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp. 120–48.

to exclude, to deny the right to be heard or counted'.<sup>55</sup> Kelly's analysis of the role of public space in Morgan's work can be expanded to encompass ideas about the role of language in contemporary society: the idea of controlling the numerous Scots dialects, languages and registers is pointedly undermined by 'The Starlings in George Square'.

Morgan's representations of the relationship between language and power is the focus of much of the analysis of this work, particularly in terms of his relationship with the previous generation of Scottish writers. As discussed above, MacCaig and Alexander Scott begrudgingly afford Morgan a place in their 1969 anthology of Scottish poetry as the 'token' representative of concrete poetry, and MacCaig's introduction sets out a genealogy of twentieth-century Scottish poetry which is self-consciously organised around the various languages of Scottish literary production.<sup>56</sup> MacCaig and Scott's approach is, to some extent, reproduced in McGuire and Nicholson's chapter on Morgan in the 2009 *Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry*.<sup>57</sup> This volume is structured around the assertion that MacDiarmid's death in 1978 marked the 'end of an era' and a crucial turn in Scottish poetic production, away from a grand nationalist project of Scottish self-determination, 'high' cultural renaissance and conscious political engagement towards the *jouissance* and pastiche of postmodernism. Although there is undoubtedly some truth in

<sup>55</sup> Aaron Kelly, 'Mapping the City in Belfast and Glasgow Poetry', in *Modern Irish and Scottish Poetry*, ed. by Peter Mackay, Edna Longley, and Fran Brearton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 222–37.

<sup>56</sup> Although MacCaig and Scott take great care to map variants of these three traditions across the space of the nation, from Edinburgh and Glasgow to the Highlands, Islands and Scottish writers in 'exile' in England, the notion remains unchallenged that it is primarily, or indeed only, through the choice of national language or dialect in which a poem is written that it is able to make a political statement. The inclusion of Morgan's concrete poetry is explicitly described as 'token [...] due to our doubt as to whether this is in fact poetry – whatever else it may be.' (MacCaig and Scott, *Contemporary Scottish Verse 1959–1969*, p. 22.)

<sup>57</sup> Nicholson and McGuire, 'Edwin Morgan'.



this assessment, Whyte makes the persuasive counter-argument that readings of contemporary Scottish poetry which limit their focus to 'the question about Scottishness' do so to the detriment of other interesting approaches.<sup>58</sup>

Morgan's focus on democratisation, human community and its attendant cacophony in 'The Starlings in George Square' may be partly a response to MacDiarmid's nationalist project, but it also contributes, as comparison with Jandl's work demonstrates, to changing perspectives on poetry which occurred across national borders, such as the concrete poetry movement. A new form of engagement with space and place is part of this shift.

In many ways, it seems quite clear where the forces of order and disorder reside in this poem, both politically and linguistically. On the one hand, there are the cacophonous, noisy and lively yet harmonious starlings in the square, whose fluid harmony is praised in the opening section:

The darkening roofscape stirs –  
thick – alive with starlings  
gathered singing in the square –  
like a shower of arrows they cross  
the flash of a western window,  
they bead the wires with jet,  
they nestle preening by the lamps  
and shine, sidling by the lamps  
and sing, shining, they stir  
the homeward hurrying crowds.

(CP 165)

On the other hand, the poem ridicules the clerks and city officials in their closed offices, who try frantically and in vain to police the chaos outside. They cannot exclude the noise from the square, which intrudes on and disrupts their language in comical ways, making the transaction of day-to-day business impossible:

At the General Post Office  
the clerks write Three Pounds Starling in the savings-books.  
Each telephone-booth is like an aviary.

---

<sup>58</sup> Whyte, p. 16.

I tried to send a parcel to County Kerry but –  
The cables to Cairo got fankled, sir.  
What's that?  
I said the cables to Cairo got fankled

And as for the City Information Bureau –  
I'm sorry I can't quite chirrup did you twit –  
No I wanted to twee but perhaps you can't cheep –  
Would you try once again, that's better, I – sweet –  
When's the last boat to Milngavie? Tweet?  
What's that?  
I said when's the last boat to Milngavie?

(CP 165-66)

However, there is more to the power dynamic the poem describes than simply the force of a disorderly public pitted against the structures of state authority. It is difficult to read the poem as a straightforward plea for democracy or representation, against totalitarian government. The closed, internal spaces of the City Chambers, General Post Office and City Information Bureau are not private spaces in direct conflict with the external public square, but rather the spaces of civic institutions in which the authority of democratic power is manifested. They are closed to the starlings, but not to the public, who, in fact, are responsible for their existence and governance. The conflict is not, therefore, simply between public and private space.

Liberal humanist democratic values are actually critiqued in the final section of the poem. The voices of members of the public respond positively to the schemes to rid the square of sparrows:

Send back the jungle. [...]  
So it doesn't kill them?  
All right, so who's complaining? This isn't Peking  
where they shoot the sparrows for hygiene and cash.  
So we're all humanitarians, locked in our cliff dwellings  
encased in our repellent, guano-free and guilt-free.  
The Lord Provost sings in her marble hacienda

(CP 166)

The control of the starlings through ‘humane’ methods leads to self-congratulation which rests on the assumption that ‘we’re all humanitarians’, and a quasi-imperial ideology which insists on fundamental differences between the inhabitants of Glasgow and those of ‘Peking’. The liberal humanist values upon which European democracy and bureaucracy are founded resist what might be perceived as the inhumane extermination of pests like starlings, and allow us to differentiate ourselves from those we consider less civilised or enlightened (‘Send back the jungle’, ‘This isn’t Peking’). The poem implies that this sense of moral superiority (‘So we’re all humanitarians, locked in our cliff dwellings | encased in our repellent, guano-free and guilt-free’) is misplaced, since the preservation of structures of state control requires the suppression of cacophony, dissent and chaos. The metaphorical comparison of the Lord Provost’s office to a ‘marble hacienda’ highlights this deeply embedded colonial mentality.

On the other hand, appreciation of the starlings’ disorderly, disruptive influence can be seen as a quality of imaginative engagement with the natural world, reflecting a radical tolerance and inclusiveness which goes beyond the principles of Western humanist democracy. In other words, perhaps the tension is not between disorderly civic plurality and orderly institutional bureaucracy, but between liberal democracy as a whole on the one hand, and creativity, art, playfulness or imagination on the other. It is notable, for example, that Sir Walter Scott, well-known for his Tory politics, ‘is vexed his column is deserted’, suggesting that this deep sympathy with starlings can cut across traditional political categories of left and right.

This reading of the starlings as symbols of imagination, art and creative resistance (particularly through linguistic inventiveness) is supported by the opening stanza, where, after the vibrant images of cacophony and harmony described above, the impact of the starlings on the boy is described:

a stab of confused sweetness  
that pieces the boy like a story,  
a story more than a song.  
He will never forget that evening,  
the silhouette of the roofs,  
the starlings by the lamps.

(CP 165)

The starlings offer a glimpse of the sublime which prompts ‘a stab of confused sweetness’ in the watching child. The trope of a formative childhood experience of the sublime in nature is Romantic, but it is notable that the boy’s experience is of a ‘story’ rather than pure ‘song’. Rather than viewing this beautiful event – the murmuration of starlings – as a straightforwardly aesthetic experience signifying nothing beyond itself and the emotion it engenders, the boy interprets it as having a specific meaning, moral or communicative function. The lack of elucidation about what the ‘story’ communicates suggests that the starlings represent a creative, disruptive force which cannot be registered in the poem and is submerged from the outset, causing pain or regret. The starlings serve as a disruptive counterpoint throughout the rest of the text to structures of civic bureaucracy and small-minded neo-colonialism.

The distinctly erotic overtones of the ‘stab of confused sweetness’ described here, together with the repetition of ‘sweet’ in both the ‘nonsense’ sound of the second section and in the final section (‘sweet frenzied whistling’), support an interpretation in line with other recent queer re-readings of Morgan’s work.<sup>59</sup> Kelly’s assertion that Morgan’s starlings ‘remap the city’ can certainly be understood as part of a broader emphasis on queer approaches to space, as described by Whyte and others. For example, we might think of the examination of gay men’s experiences of the city of Glasgow in ‘Glasgow

---

<sup>59</sup> See note 33, above.

Green' and the Glasgow sonnets, among other poems.<sup>60</sup> However, references to the erotic are part of (rather than central to) the poem's project of radical inclusiveness, which can be seen as a 'queer' project in the broadest possible terms, rejecting the policing of the erotic, which accounts for the submerged, 'confused' desires the boy experiences, and at the same time rejecting other forms of social, cultural and linguistic policing.

The policing of language itself is a central component of the tension between order and disorder in the poem. Language, sound, speech and discourse are central aspects of the strategies of resistance Morgan's poem describes. Starlings are an appropriate symbol, given their historical and cultural association with the aural, not only in the disruptive cacophony of their song but also in their talent for mimicry and the acoustic image which is used to refer to their movement in flocks, a 'murmuration'.<sup>61</sup> The poem foregrounds the lively cacophony and fluid harmony of the flock, which mirrors the vibrant and multitudinous discourses of the public space they

<sup>60</sup> See Whyte, 'The 1960s (Robert Garioch, Tom Leonard, Edwin Morgan)'; Christopher Whyte, "Now You See It, Now You Don't": The Love Poetry of Edwin Morgan', *The Glasgow Review*, 1993  
<<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/STELLA/COMET/glasgrev/issue2/whyte.htm>> [accessed 24 August 2016]; Colin Nicholson, 'A Cognitive Mapping', in *Edwin Morgan: Inventions of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 82–103; Christopher Whyte, 'Queer Readings, Gay Texts: From "Redgauntlet" to "The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie"', in *Scotland in Theory: Reflections on Culture & Literature*, ed. by Eleanor Bell and Gavin Miller (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 147–66.

<sup>61</sup> In Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*, for example, Hotspur threatens to torment his enemy by teaching a starling to say his name: 'Nay, I'll have a starling shall be taught to speak | Nothing but 'Mortimer', and give it him | To keep his anger still in motion.' (*1 Henry IV*, I.iii 559–561. See William Shakespeare, '1 Henry IV', in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 453–81.) Starlings also serve as a persistent image for poetry in Dante, Coleridge and Auden – see Peter Anderson, "'Thickening, Deepening, Blackening": Starlings and the Object of Poetry in Coleridge and Dante', *The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge*, 32 (2008).

occupy. In many ways, of course, the structure, syntax and vocabulary of the text remain orderly and controlled, with subversive and playful elements intruding only occasionally, though quite dramatically, on clarity and comprehensibility. In contrast to other Morgan poems, 'The Starlings in George Square' poem adopts a largely conventional, 'standard' language and syntax. Only a few disorderly elements are present at the level of language, and these are a testament to the starlings' mischievous influence and subversion of the standard power dynamics which characterise public space. However, typically in Morgan's work, these 'disorderly' elements of the poem's language are generally playful rather than aggressive or sinister.

There is a clear temporal structure in the progression of stanzas from the child watching the starlings in the opening section to the self-aware, adult reflections in the final part of the poem. The sound patterning and poetic techniques adopted in the three sections are also markedly different. Sibilance and alliteration in the first section, combined with a variety of vowel sounds, occasional flashes of parallelism, repetition and asyndeton are mimetic of the rapid and ever-changing movement of the starlings. The shift, in the climactic penultimate line, from sibilance to h-alliteration, is reminiscent of the flock changing direction. The variety of techniques and sonic effects used in this opening section suggests both the liveliness and ever-changing diversity of the starlings' movement, and also the unity and harmony that the flock displays: the pronoun 'they' marks them out as a single unit which contains a multitude of members, acting independently but to a common purpose.

In the second section, in contrast, the rhythm becomes abrupt, halting and decidedly unmusical, with the sound of the starlings causing confusion and chaos. The strongly end-stopped lines of the first stanza, the first five of which have a different grammatical subject, signal the shift from harmony and cohesion in diversity to cacophony and disruption. Excessive alliteration ('the

cables to Cairo') disrupts meaning by mimicking the linguistic patterning of a tongue-twister.

It is in this second section where the tension between order and disorder in language is most evident, recast as a conflict between sense and nonsense. Each of the three stanzas explores one of the civic institutions under scrutiny, in the form of a dialogue, with the final three lines taking the form of query-response-modified repetition. It is not clear whether the interlocutor in each case is ultimately able to receive and comprehend the message upon the second repetition, but allowing each stanza to conclude with this clear statement may imply the victory of sense over nonsense: a clear, loud voice emerges from the din. However, close reading demonstrates that each of these three 'messages' is itself somehow problematic or garbled. In the first case, the tension between gendered nouns and pronouns ('the Lord Provost can't hear *herself* think, *man*' (emphasis mine)) is potentially subversive in the same way as other queer subtexts throughout the poem, as well as introducing colloquial Scots phrasing for the first time. In the second stanza, Scots also features in the word 'fankled', and the confusion between 'County Kerry' and 'Cairo', parcels and cables simply adds to the lack of clarity regarding the message being conveyed, even if the words themselves are audible and clear. Finally, the inquiry in the final stanza regarding the 'last boat to Milngavie', while seemingly innocent and comprehensible, is equally playful and subversive: not only is the Glasgow suburb of Milngavie nowhere near a waterway (and one cannot therefore catch a boat there), but the pronunciation of this Scots place name is also challenging for many speakers of Standard English. Despite the illusion of transparency and clarity, therefore, these dialogues subtly disrupt the boundaries between sense and nonsense.

How do the poem's representations of space reflect its exploration of the power dynamics of inclusion and exclusion? No poem which focuses so

specifically on events which take place in an urban public square can avoid exploring the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, but the specificities of the representation of George Square in this poem foreground this concern. The choice of George Square is particularly fitting because historically it has been an important site of civic protest and dissent. Most famously, the 'Bloody Friday' riot of 1919 took place there, during which the red flag was raised by protesting trade unionists. The army was called in to suppress the Bolshevik-style revolution feared by city and national authorities. George Square is also the locus of bureaucratic, hegemonic power, as is evident from the presence of the various institutional headquarters named in the poem and the carefully curated selection of figures represented in the statuary, which reflects a conservative conceptualisation of the role of civic power and a commitment to the policing of discourse and ideology in public space.<sup>62</sup>

Morgan's poem describes the spaces of the square in some detail and the setting, as well as being named in the title, is an important presence throughout. A striking feature of the imagery used to describe the square is the imaginative transformation of man-made landscapes into natural ones, starting from the very first line of the text ('Sundown on the high stonefields'). The compound 'roofscape' suggests a parallel, hidden landscape above the ground level view of the city, an interesting corollary to the suppressed diversity represented by the starlings. The natural landscape to which the urban space is compared is non-specific: it is not, for example, a space with a particular natural or geological character. Its sole distinguishing feature is that it appears to be a coastal space: in both the opening stanza and the final one, the

---

<sup>62</sup> For the history of George Square as a space of civic power and popular protest, see Crawford, *On Glasgow and Edinburgh*, pp. 101–86. The twelve statues in George Square depict Thomas Graham, James Oswald, Thomas Campbell, Field Marshall Lord Clyde, Sir John Moore, William Gladstone, Robert Burns, James Watt, Prince Albert, Queen Victoria, Sir Robert Peel and Sir Walter Scott.



buildings are explicitly compared to cliffs, and the imagery of starlings moving ‘in waves’, ‘in swooping arcs’, also suggests the movement of water. As well as potentially suggesting a motivation for the otherwise inexplicable request regarding ‘the last boat to Milngavie’, the imaginative transformation of central Glasgow to a coastal situation is testament to the playful, creative spirit which the poem explicitly defends. It makes the city-space liminal, unstable and dynamic – qualities regularly ascribed to coastal landscapes in literature and theory – and the image of the starlings penetrating the ‘warm cliffs of man’ demonstrates precisely their subversive influence, their ability to permeate the seemingly impermeable and transgress rigorously policed boundaries.

The message of the starlings is clear: we should reconsider our ‘indignant orderliness’, and specifically that which so strenuously separates the lively, democratic, inclusive discourse of public space from the silent, bureaucratic institutions which are the true locus of power. This form of oppressive policing of the public space is a failure of the imagination which renders us undeserving of the beautiful spectacle and mischievous cacophony the starlings provide. Indeed, the principle of radical inclusiveness extends to the play of various discourses, and the poem attempts to subvert the boundaries between sense and nonsense at the same time as disrupting the divisions between official, controlled bureaucratic spaces and open, anarchic ones. The final image, in which the buildings are again described as ‘warm cliffs’, gives the impression that the starlings are able to permeate the impermeable and erode the division between spaces and discourses.<sup>63</sup>

The tension between order and disorder which plays out in the public spaces of Morgan’s poem is between the forces of state control (including orderly language, bureaucratic power, and liberal humanism) and a ‘story’ told

---

<sup>63</sup> For discussion of the instability and dynamism of coastal landscapes, see Mark Monmonier, *Coast Lines: How Mapmakers Frame the World and Chart Environmental Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

by the starlings which captures the childish imagination, and which represents a form of imaginative resistance that cannot be fully grasped. This underlying story is not only beautiful, but also radical and inclusive of different approaches to understanding the world. It subverts official conceptualisations of sense and nonsense. Morgan's poem contributes to the history of protest and subversion for which George Square is renowned, but it does so by using terms which reject liberal humanist and western democratic principles of civic engagement, choosing instead a playful form of resistance to the monoliths of state power.

'wien: heldenplatz' (WI 127) is significantly shorter than 'The Starlings in George Square', and can therefore be quoted here in its entirety:

der glanze heldenplatz zirka  
versaggerte in maschenhaftem männchenmeere  
drunter auch frauen die ans maskelknie  
zu heften heftig sich versuchten, hoffensdick  
und brüllzten wesentlich.

verwogener stirnscheitelunterschwang  
nach nöten nördlich, kechelte  
mit zu-nummernder aufs bluten feilzer stimme  
hinsensend sämmertliche eigenwäscher.

pirsch!  
döppelte der gottelbock von Sa-Atz zu Sa-Atz  
mit hünig sprenkem stimmstummel.  
balzerig würmelte es im männechensee  
und den weibern ward so pfingstig ums heil  
zumahn: wenn ein knie-ender sie hirschelte.

Jandl's poem is strikingly different to Morgan's. Despite the broad similarities between the two writers' poetic interests and formal experimentation in other works, these two poems adopt quite different registers and formal approaches which seem, at first, to make comparison difficult.

However, the fact that both are named after prominent public spaces with complex political resonances is a clue to their shared interest in the power

dynamics of public urban space. Unlike Morgan's title, which announces its interest in the avian inhabitants of George Square, Jandl's somewhat starker title has the implications of stage direction, providing the setting for the scene described in the text. Even in these two words, the dynamics of authoritarian power which the poem questions are crystallised by the implicit question of which 'Helden' are being glorified, how and why?

The (ironic) answer is immediately obvious to native German and Austrian readers, since Heldenplatz is overwhelmingly associated with one event in modern history: Adolf Hitler's ceremonial speech announcing the *Anschluss* between Nazi Germany and Austria, the first step towards the creation of a German *Reich*, which took place in the square in March 1938. Jandl, then aged twelve, was himself in attendance along with many other ordinary citizens of Vienna.

The poem's unusual representation of this much-studied historical event accounts for its widespread use in pedagogical contexts in Austria and Germany, as well as its dominant status within the canon of postwar Austrian literature. Indeed, even within Jandl studies, 'wien: heldenplatz' occasionally dominates to the exclusion of other texts.<sup>64</sup> According to the majority of such readings, the text offers a parodic, subversive representation of Hitler's speech rhythms and their effects, specifically focusing on the 'Massenverhalten' which prevails in response and is described through a blend of sexual, religious and animalistic imagery.<sup>65</sup> The poem is critical of totalitarianism and totalitarian

<sup>64</sup> For discussion of the dominance of 'wien: heldenplatz' and other canonical Jandl texts, see Veronika Römer, *Dichter ohne eigene Sprache?: zur Poetik Ernst Jandls* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2012). On the use of Jandl in pedagogical contexts, see *Wir Jandln! Didaktische und wissenschaftliche Wege zu Ernst Jandl*, ed. by Hannes Schweiger and Hajnalka Nagy (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2013).

<sup>65</sup> Some examples of detailed close readings which emphasise and interpret the poem's many neologisms, building these into a more or less coherent complex of symbols, include Jörg Drews, 'Über ein Gedicht von Ernst Jandl: wien: heldenplatz', in *Ernst Jandl: Materialienbuch*, ed. by Wendelin

language, and it makes Hitler look and sound ridiculous and comic as well as sinister. This occurs partly through the characteristic manipulation of vocabulary, whereby words are combined, altered or, to use Jandl's term, 'beschädigt' in order to convey multiple connotations.<sup>66</sup> Jandl's understanding of the role of 'damaged' language in reflecting the trauma of collective suffering is, in some ways, similar to Celan's use of unusual or invented words. Both adopt this strategy as a means of addressing, without circumventing, the problems inherent in using the language of the perpetrator to reflect on traumatic events.

Interpreting the various echoes and connotations of these 'beschädigte Wörter' is a highly individual task – a kind of poetic Rorschach test – which proves irresistible to many (professional and amateur) critics. Take 'versaggerte' in the first stanza, for example, in which various critics have read 'versacken', 'versagen', 'versickern' and so on; or 'maschenhaft[...]', which Walter Rupprechter glosses as containing both 'massenhaft' and the notion of hostage-taking (as discussed above), while Jandl's comments link the motif to fishing and prompt Anne Uhrmacher to interpret it in biblical terms.<sup>67</sup>

Although significant critical energy has been expended on interpreting Jandl's unique lexis in this poem, and the majority of readings 'join the dots' to offer an overall analysis of the text's intervention in Austrian politics, rarely do critics look beyond Austrian borders for a broader contextualisation of the poem's themes. This lack of comparative readings may be due to the poem's

---

Schmidt-Dengler (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1982), p. 34-44; Peter Pabisch, *Luslulistig: Phänomene deutschsprachiger Lyrik 1945 bis 1980* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992), pp. 77-89; Walter Rupprechter, 'Politische Dichtung aus dem Sprachlabor', in *Interpretationen: Gedichte von Ernst Jandl*, ed. by Volker Kaukoreit and Kristina Pfoser (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002), pp. 34-46.

<sup>66</sup> Ernst Jandl, 'Mein Gedicht und sein Autor', in *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, ed. by Klaus Siblewski, 6 vols (Munich: Luchterhand, 2016), VI, pp. 40-49.

<sup>67</sup> See Rupprechter, 'Politische Gedichte aus dem Sprachlabor', p. 35; Uhrmacher, *Spielarten des Komischen*, p. 97.

historical specificity. Comparative reading, however, demonstrates that many of the concerns explored here – about public space, public discourse, language and power – are far from uniquely Austrian. ‘wien: heldenplatz’ explores the same dynamics of inclusion and exclusion as ‘The Starlings in George Square’, exploring a similar tension between hegemonic, oppressive political power structures and a freedom implied and enabled by linguistic inventiveness, play and poetry, conducted in the area of the public square.

At first glance, it could be argued that this dynamic, so essential to understanding the role of public space, is conspicuous by its absence. The crowd behave as one and speak with a single voice: they are participants in the same mass action and members of the same single-minded ‘männechenmeere’. Although the poem’s form and language imply a critique of this totalitarian unity, there is no force described within the poem (like the starlings in Morgan’s text) which subverts the power dynamic on display.

Instead, what is presented is a frenzy of appreciation, with religious and sexual overtones, directed towards a speaker in command of violent rhetoric. The first stanza examines the crowd first from a distance, then in close-up. The ‘maschen’ of ‘maschenhaft’ and ‘heften’ imply a weaving together of separate entities and elements into a close-knit whole, and the description of the women ‘die ans maskelknie | zu heften heftig sich versuchten, hoffensdick’ adds a sexual dimension to this enmeshing of bodies. In the second stanza, the focus is drawn to the speaker, who has also lost an individual identity in his reduction to a symbolic ‘verwogener stirnscheitelunterschwang’. His ‘bluten feilzer stimme’ is described in terms which foreshadow violence – through the image of bleeding and the echo of ‘Pfeil’ – as well as corruption and degeneracy (‘feil’). ‘Hinsensend’ suggests a Grim Reaper-esque destruction of the ‘eigenwäscher’, a term which Jandl himself glosses as ‘Individualisten’.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Jandl, ‘Mein Gedicht und sein Autor’, VI, p. 41.

‘[S]ämmertlich[...]’ contains ‘sämtlich’ alongside ‘jämmerlich’ to suggest the universal suppression of dissent. Finally, in the third stanza, the energy released by the exclamatory ‘[P]irsch!’ appears to be skilfully controlled and directed by the speaker ‘mit hüinig sprenkem stimmstummel’: this again contains sexual overtones because of the word ‘stummel’.

Interestingly, the poem’s animal imagery to some extent mirrors that of Morgan’s poem. The crowd is likened first to ‘männchenmeere’ and then to a ‘männechensee’, with the description of a ‘glanze heldenplatz’ suggesting the flash of fish scales in a swelling ocean, perhaps recalling the movement of Morgan’s starlings in the opening stanza of his poem. The speaker appears as the leader of the hunt, thanks to the terms ‘pirsch’ and ‘gottelbock’. However, where Morgan’s starlings are lively, diverse and compelling, here the crowd behaves as one entity, suppressing any dissent or difference: their energy has a single focal point, that of the speaker and his ‘verwogener stirnscheitelunterschwang’. The poem is orderly in the sense that everyone appears to have the same experience, and to fall in line with the dominant power structure expected in this particular public space.

The disruptive, disorderly qualities of the poem are evident at a meta-poetic level: at the level of language and form. Jandl himself described the vocabulary of this poem as ‘beschädigt’, and explained that he chose to maintain a regular, colloquial syntax in order to create a particular ‘Spannungsverhältnis’ between the manipulated, disrupted, disorderly vocabulary and the straightforward, easily intelligible grammatical construction. The words are ‘damaged’ and become polysemous and therefore subversive, while the grammar remains intact. As a consequence, ‘meaning’ seems to be very close to the surface of the text, although the words themselves continually frustrate and elude definitive interpretation. This is perhaps one of the reasons why critics have found the poem so compelling.

Another 'disorderly' element in the poem is its phonetic structures and sound patterns. Rather than supporting or enhancing meaning through pleasing rhythm, harmony and flow, the excess of alliteration and harsh consonant sounds which occur in unexpected places render the poem harder rather than easier to understand and read aloud. The phonetic patterning consciously mimics Hitler's distinctive speech patterns, adopting to some extent the rhetorical patterning which characterised his compelling oratory. Jörg Drews has also highlighted the use of the so-called 'häßliches Z' which is sprinkled throughout the poem along with other harsh consonant such as 'v' and 'g', and which sounds 'ugly', inharmonious and disorderly. Even the alliteration, which one would typically think of as a means of expressing harmony or order in a poetic text, as in the opening stanza of 'The Starlings in George Square', is subversive in that it gives the poem the qualities of a tongue-twister and interrupts, rather than aiding, the flow of meaning.

Finally, a tension between order and disorder – or, rather, unity and chaos – is also apparent at the level of imagery. Imagery related to sex, gender and especially fertility, such as 'maskelknie' (containing 'maskulin' and occurring in conjunction with an image of physical coupling or bonding) or 'hoffensdick' (which suggests a metaphorical pregnancy), is overlaid with references to hunting (e.g. 'pirsch') and religion (e.g. 'pfingstig', 'gottelbock'). All of these connote different areas of human 'Massenverhalten' and animalistic behaviour, and therefore contribute to the overall impression of the crowd as inspired and united by a sexual or ritualistic frenzy. However, the obvious disharmony between these fields of imagery is jarring and contributes to a repellent, grotesque effect.<sup>69</sup> It is therefore disunity, disharmony and disorder which are

<sup>69</sup> Although definitions of the grotesque vary, it is generally accepted that the grotesque mode depends on jarring juxtaposition and the familiarisation of the real and the fantastic. See Frances K. Barasch, 'Grotesque, Theories of the', in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*,

used to critique the orderly submission of the people to the rhetoric of the totalitarian dictator.

The disorderly qualities of the poem's language, imagery and sound are used both to describe and parody the unified behaviour of the crowd. Jandl notes, in 'Mein Gedicht und sein Autor', that his technique in this poem deliberately adopts the methods of the so-called 'entartete Kunst', including the extreme juxtapositions and linguistic inventiveness of Expressionist poetry, against the regime which suppressed it.<sup>70</sup> The grotesque physicality of the bodies in the poem recalls the painting of Otto Dix; the jarring juxtaposition of sexual and violent imagery invokes the poetry of Benn and others; while the exaggerated linguistic experimentation is Dada-esque. The grotesque, the chaotic and the disorderly cannot, according to this reading, be suppressed despite the seemingly united 'Massenverhalten' of the crowd itself (and Austrian society more broadly). The disorderly, disruptive and subversive force of poetry is always able to counteract attempts to police public space and public discourse. Uhrmacher's description of Jandl's language in this poem as '[eine] Waffe, die Heldenplatz-Feier in grotesker Weise lächerlich zu machen' is fitting, although comedy is only one aspect of the generalised disorder, disruption and subversion the poem presents as a means of undermining totalitarian power structures.<sup>71</sup>

Jandl's text reminds us that it is in the public space that such battles between power and dissent, politics and art, order and chaos, are negotiated. Like Morgan's use of George Square, however, Jandl's examination of

---

ed. by Irene Rima Makaryk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 85–90. See also Wolfgang Kayser, *Das Groteske in Malerei und Dichtung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1960); Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984).

<sup>70</sup> Jandl, 'Mein Gedicht und sein Autor', VI, p. 41.

<sup>71</sup> Uhrmacher, *Spielarten des Komischen*, p. 109.



Heldenplatz is fitting. In contrast to George Square, Heldenplatz is entirely dominated by a single building, the Hofburg, and rather than being the place where day-to-day city life occurs (with all the chaotic consequences of this), it is a ceremonial location which has not typically been characterised by dissent, protest or dialogue. Indeed, even a comparison of the statuary is telling: in contrast to the somewhat chaotic connotations of the twelve statues which fill George Square, Heldenplatz's two equestrian representations of Archduke Charles of Austria and Prince Eugen of Savoy are carefully positioned to evoke a particular model of Austrian identity. Heldenplatz is the nexus of all sorts of hegemonic power structures (civic, imperial, political) as evinced by both its architecture and its historical associations.

This explains why, in contrast to Morgan's poem, Jandl's text does not examine the material specificity of its site, preferring instead to refer metonymically to Heldenplatz as the model of Austrian statehood. The negotiation of the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion which Morgan's poem so skilfully lays bare is invisible in Heldenplatz, however much attention the poet might pay to the physical surroundings. Instead, the poem relies on language to introduce an element of disorder and subversion. Like Morgan's 'Starlings in George Square', 'wien: heldenplatz' explores the tension between order and disorder in a public space. However, the tension is not between identifiable forces or agents which represent different aspects of human endeavour. There is no element visible within the public sphere in 'wien: heldenplatz' which requires policing, suppression or exclusion. Rather, the tension between order and disorder occurs at the level of vocabulary and poetic technique, where complex and disharmonious images, sounds and words subvert a superficially orderly syntax and grammar.

The specific representations of space and place in the two poems reflect different ways of exploring the tension between order and disorder in public

spaces. In fact, they reflect different approaches to public space altogether: on the one hand, space as place – lived, experienced and described in rich textural detail – and on the other, space as site – of an historical event, or as a manifestation of power structures and forces. In both cases, poetry and language offer the possibility of subverting or undermining these power structures.

‘wien: heldenplatz’ and ‘The Starlings in George Square’ are poems shaped by their national contexts and it is right that they are often read in these contexts. Indeed, their choice of setting reflects, in both cases, a desire to investigate the qualities of the civic life and public discourse of their respective cities, regions and nations. In Morgan’s case, it must be acknowledged that an exploration of the role George Square has played in historical narratives of Scottish identity, and the apparent plea for joyful cacophony and diversity in public life and public speech, are key features of a text which can be read in the context of twentieth-century Scottish poetry before and after MacDiarmid. Similarly, Jandl’s poem deals explicitly with Austrian space and national history, as well as deliberately exploring the role of Austrian literary traditions, such as Expressionism, in countering conservative narratives of national identity.

At the same time, however, comparative readings demonstrate certain similarities in approach which mark both poems out as examinations of the role language can play in supporting or undermining democratic representation in the public sphere. A comparative approach to reading space and place in the two texts reveals shared concerns which are a consequence of, and a contribution to, transnational spatial discourses. The poems engage with broader questions about the nature of place, language and poetry which transcend the borders of their respective national discourses. Their re-examinations of how poetry and language relate to place, identity and

nation are part of a complex renegotiation of literary space in the 1960s and 70s which defies categorisation as either strictly modernist or postmodern, national or international, traditional or experimental.

#### 4.7. *Conclusion*

Jandl and Morgan remain very widely read poets in Austria and Scotland respectively: their work is deployed in a multitude of pedagogical contexts, and their playful humour, formal experimentation and engaging performance texts possess an enduring appeal. Yet they are also poets whose work is rooted in its historical context. Their attempts to remap tradition should be seen in the context of a postwar social and cultural discourse which sought to forge new modes of writing appropriate to a world characterised by expanding spatial boundaries, rapidly developing technologies, and shifting social norms. These changes were clearly felt in both Scotland and Austria. In Scotland, a climate of social and economic decline and a changing sense of national identity rendered MacDiarmid's confident nationalist project dated, if not entirely obsolete. In Austria, a younger generation of poets emerged who were deeply dissatisfied with the idea of simply continuing outdated pre-war traditions. In both cases, however, longer term literary traditions and movements continued to play an important role.

Reading Morgan and Jandl's poetry in light of these contexts illuminates the role of form in their work as a means of exploring space and place in the 1960s and 70s. Like the poetic movements and genres explored in previous case studies, concrete poetry has been subjected to debates about its status between modernism and postmodernism: it has variously been read as a late manifestation of the modernist impulse towards innovation in all respects, and as an example of postmodernism *avant la lettre* best understood through the

prism of late twentieth-century print and visual culture. It is the product of an era in which pre-war categorisations and movements came to appear outmoded and less than useful, but in which the techniques and strategies of 1980s postmodernism were not yet fully established.

By examining their approaches to representing landscape, space and place, we can come to understand the shared features of their work which transcend debates about their status in relation to existing categories and periodisations. Similarities – and differences – are revealed which relate both to individual, national and international contexts. Both were responding to the breakdown of established traditions, as part of emerging generations in which the questions posed by pre-war poets seemed at best outmoded and irrelevant, and at worst ethically dubious.

Morgan and Jandl adopt a blend of strategies for expressing space a- or polyperspectively. Confronted with the failure of earlier models for the representation of space in poetry, which relied on subjectivity, individual identity and coherent perspectives encompassing established ideas of self, world, tradition and nation, their response is to develop radically innovative poetic forms in which space is represented from a variety of different angles. In this way, the hierarchies of traditional cartography – and of traditional lyricism – are subverted.

## 5. Conclusion

Despite the substantial research which has been undertaken on poetry and landscape, space and place in individual language areas, there has been very little intralanguage comparative scholarship in this field. My research moves beyond existing criticism on landscape, space and place in British and German poetry of the late 1960s and early 1970s by introducing a much-needed comparative angle to the study of the literary traditions in question. It assesses relationships between the works of poets writing in different traditions, asking how their representations of space and place relate to the contemporary political, historical, social and literary contexts informing the social production of space, and how a focus on space and place might contribute to critical understandings of poetry of this period between modernism and postmodernism. What links each pair of poets – Prynne and Celan, Mahon and Kirsch, and Morgan and Jandl – is made clear in the case studies, which demonstrate the efficacy of the methodology for close reading. However, the conclusions which are drawn from each pairing prompt some consideration of what these three case studies have in common, and what conclusions can be drawn across the case studies as a whole.

In each case, the forms of landscape, space and place represented bear little relationship to dominant political, social and cultural narratives of the relationship between space, identity and belonging. This is most apparent in

Kirsch and Mahon's work, where quotidian spaces and places are explored precisely because they offer an alternative to these problematic dominant ideas. The concept of a straightforward association between self and nation is undermined by the complexity of their engagements with space, which are grounded in everyday experience. Prynne and Celan's works challenge dominant understandings of the relationship between language, memory and landscape, such as the naïve identification with a 'native soil' and the related assumption that the histories neatly embedded in landscape can be satisfactorily excavated. Morgan and Jandl explode traditions of lyric subjectivity in landscape writing, thanks to the spectrum of different approaches their poetry adopts to representing space and place. In all cases, landscapes, spaces and places are represented through the lens of daily experience, language, and individual and collective acts of subversion rather than reflecting the forms of political, social and cultural identity which may be externally imposed on poetry, such as expressions of national or regional belonging, hegemonic conceptualisations of the sites of memory, or gestures towards transnational utopias. All the poets studied in this thesis challenge 'traditional' perspectives on space and place, including conservative-nationalist traditions stressing the close association between self, landscape and identity, popular discourses of landscape and memory, and expectations concerning the role of the subject in poetic representations of landscape, space and place.

This radical spirit underlines another important conclusion which can be drawn from the case studies presented here: namely, that representations of space in experimental, non-lyric poetry are as deserving of close scrutiny as those which appear in lyric or neo-Romantic works, and that there can be little justification for artificially separating the two categories. Both German-language and Anglophone writing about poetry, space and place reflect a significant bias towards the analysis of forms of poetry which inherit

Romantic traditions of landscape writing.<sup>1</sup> In the German context, nearly all the available literatures focus on this form of poetry, overlooking the innovative representations of space and place in the work of poets like Jandl and others, which this study has shown to be worthy of serious analysis.<sup>2</sup> Although Anglophone critics like Zoë Skoulding, Ian Davidson and Peter Barry have begun to explore how experimental poetry represents space and place, this thesis extends such studies by demonstrating that useful links can be drawn between works which are generally designated experimental or

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the generic bias of the various handbooks on literature, space and place, other recent German contributions in this vein include Cettina Raspardina's work on Ingeborg Bachmann, Maria Endreva's essay on Rainer Maria Rilke and Elena Sukhina's contribution on Bachmann in Arnulf Knafl's volume on space and travel in Austrian literature. See Rapisarda, *Raumentwürfe; Reise und Raum: Ortsbestimmungen der österreichischen Literatur*, ed. by Arnulf Knafl (Vienna: Praesens Verlag, 2014). In the Anglophone context, the newly-established journal *Literary Geographies* reflects dominant trends: of ten substantial articles published in the first two editions (Vol 1, No 1 (2015) and Vol 1, No 2 (2015)), only one features poetry prominently, concentrating on MacDiarmid, Kenneth White and other (prose) writers. Tom Bristow's recent study of the 'Anthropocene Lyric', discussed in more detail below, focuses on the work of John Kinsella, John Burnside and Alice Oswald. Louise Chamberlain's contribution to a recently-published volume on ecocriticism and geocriticism discusses the work of Robert Minnick and Philip Gross (although the same volume also contains an essay by Derek Gladwin dealing with North Atlantic experimental poetry). See Jos Smith, '“Lithogenesis”: Towards a (Geo)Poetics of Place', *Literary Geographies*, 1.1 (2015), 62–78; Tom Bristow, *The Anthropocene Lyric: An Affective Geography of Poetry, Person, Place* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Louise Chamberlain, '“The Sea Was the River, the River the Sea”: The Severn Estuary and the Bristol Channel in Robert Minhinnick and Philip Gross', in *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism: Overlapping Territories in Environmental and Spatial Literary Studies*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. and Christine M. Battista (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 95–113; Derek Gladwin, 'Ecocritical and Geocritical Conjunctions in North Atlantic Environmental Multimedia and Place-Based Poetry', in *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism: Overlapping Territories in Environmental and Spatial Literary Studies*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. and Christine M. Battista (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 37–54.

<sup>2</sup> Notable exceptions are the various studies of space and place in Celan and Sachs mentioned above, neither of whom can be considered neo-Romantic writers. See, for example, Hoyer, *The Space of Words*; Werner, *Textgräber*.

innovative (like those of Prynne, Morgan and Jandl) and works which are not (like those of Mahon and Kirsch).<sup>3</sup> Incorporating a wider range of texts into research on poetry, space and place can only enrich the field of scholarship.

The tendency to challenge established narratives of space and place reflects, and is reflected by, wider social and historical discourses and contexts.<sup>4</sup> It is in keeping with the broader intellectual climate of the age, as outlined in the introduction, and reveals a desire to question established norms, including those governing the representation of space, place, identity, belonging, history and memory in poetry. Indeed, conclusions drawn by this thesis regarding these rewritings of space and place merit contextualisation within a range of critical debates, both contemporary and more recent.

The findings of the first case study intersect with ongoing debates in the field of memory studies, particularly as these relate to postwar memory and literature. My reading of Celan's exploration of the contested sites of memory emphasises the primacy of the literary text and meta-textual spaces as memory-spaces, in contrast to the growing interest in 'embodied' memory.<sup>5</sup> This approach is also in tension with psychoanalytic readings of Celan's work, such as that proposed by Baer, since the text becomes an artefact for study in its own right rather than as an expression of individual psychology or trauma.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> See Davidson and Skoulding, *Placing Poetry*; Skoulding, *Contemporary Women's Poetry and the Urban Space*; Barry, *Contemporary British Poetry and the City*; Davidson, *Radical Spaces of Poetry*.

<sup>4</sup> In all cases, it is taken for granted that poetic texts both draw on and contribute to contemporary discourses, rather than passively reflecting them. Mahon, for example, makes available new ways of talking about Irish belonging and identity which are quite distinct from the models favoured by some of his more well-known peers. Celan's approach to discussing and representing Holocaust trauma through spatial metaphors has undoubtedly exerted influence on memory discourses more generally.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Paul Connerton, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>6</sup> See Baer, *Remnants of Song*.



The emphasis on text-as-monument adds a new dimension to recent studies of the politics of monuments and memorialisation, particularly in the European context.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, by bringing together Celan's work, which is arguably motivated by trauma, or at least by catastrophic historical events and experiences, and Prynne's work, which focuses on more benign and everyday forms of memory, my research bridges a gap in contemporary memory studies.<sup>8</sup> The focus on poetry instead of narrative (fictional or nonfictional) prose implicitly challenges James McConkey's assertion that '[n]onfictional prose [...] most readily permits observation, description and direct comment about the nature and qualities of memory'.<sup>9</sup>

Consideration of the relationship between poetry and memory also opens up perspectives on another critical category which has been increasingly valued in recent scholarship: namely, the poetics of affect. In a recent polemical article, Calvin Bedient contends that 'the contradictory culture of the 1960s fell out of history, split as it was between the dehistoricized flower-body and the

<sup>7</sup> See, for example, Siobhan Kattago, 'Written in Stone: Monuments and Representation', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Memory Studies*, ed. by Siobhan Kattago (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 179–96; Siobhan Kattago, *Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe: The Persistence of the Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012); Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vél d'Hiv in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2006); *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte: eine Auswahl*, ed. by Etienne François and Hagen Schulze (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005); Peter Reichel, *Politik mit der Erinnerung* (Munich: Hanser, 1999).

<sup>8</sup> As Kansteiner and Fogu explain, 'the legacy of relatively benign events is only rarely considered in contemporary studies of collective memory'. (Claudio Fogu and Wulf Kansteiner, 'The Politics of Memory and the Poetics of History', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 284–310 (p. 286).)

<sup>9</sup> James McConkey, 'Preface', in *The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology*, ed. by James McConkey (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. i–iii (p. ii). McConkey goes on to suggest that poetry can cast a 'special kind of illumination (intense and concentrated) [...] upon any given subject' (p. ii).

futureless head', and he argues that affect has been undervalued in Western poetry as a consequence.<sup>10</sup> Analysis of the representation of space and place in the poetry of the 1960s and 1970s demonstrates, however, that the binary which Bedient presupposes between intellectual poetry on the one hand and affective poetry on the other is spurious. The relationship between Prynne's work and Romanticism, the range of styles and subject-positions on display in Jandl and Morgan's explorations of space and place, and Mahon and Kirsch's resistance to overarching intellectual categorisations in favour of representing individual experiences, all demonstrate that the poetry of this period, regardless of its relationship to traditional lyricism, is neither 'dehistoricised' nor devoid of affect. This important observation is consistently overlooked by recent scholarship on poetry, space and place, and particularly in ecocritical writings: for example, Tom Bristow's study of the 'Anthropocene lyric' emphasises 'affective geographies' and their relationship to environmental discourses in the work of several neo-Romantic poets (John Burnside, Alice Oswald and John Kinsella), with the result that his conclusions regarding the essential relationship between poetic voice, affect and the environment are based on a problematically superficial cross section of contemporary forms of poetic production. My research expands the horizons of Anglophone research in order to demonstrate that a wider range of lyric engagements with space

<sup>10</sup> Calvin Bedient, 'Against Conceptualism', *Boston Review*, 24 July 2013 <<http://bostonreview.net/poetry/against-conceptualism>> [accessed 24 August 2016]. Responding to Bedient's article, Rachel Galvin and Drew Gardner draw out various objections to the lyric/conceptual, feeling/thinking binaries his argument presupposes in order to highlight the continuing importance and nuances of lyric subjectivity and affect in a range of poetic movements from the 1960s onwards, including Oulipo, Flarf and Conceptual Poetry. See Drew Gardner, 'Flarf Is Life: The Poetry of Affect', *Boston Review*, 11 February 2014 <<http://bostonreview.net/poetry/drew-gardner-flarf-life-poetry-affect>> [accessed 24 August 2016]; Rachel Galvin, 'Lyric Backlash', *Boston Review*, 11 February 2014 <<http://www.bostonreview.net/poetry/rachel-galvin-lyric-backlash>> [accessed 24 August 2016].

and place (including 'affective' engagements) is represented in poetry of the period 1960 to 1975 than has previously been considered.

The case studies featured here represent an intervention in contemporary critical debates about the relative status of national and regional literatures, which are particularly prominent in the Anglophone context. The clear aim of my research was to demonstrate the efficacy of a polycentric model for the discussion of 1960s and 70s poetry in English, attempting to learn from the long-standing critical habit of treating German-language literature as irreducibly polycentric. This works in opposition to texts which overlook or essentialise writing from beyond the parameters of mainstream 'Englishness', and, to a lesser extent, it is also intended as a provocation to those who uncritically reproduce schemas of national or regional division as a means of challenging the hegemony of Englishness.<sup>11</sup> It takes up Christopher Whyte's plea for critics to read Scottish literature otherwise than as an expression of Scottish national identity.<sup>12</sup> Rather than suggesting that Scottish, Northern Irish, northern English, Welsh or other marginalised literatures are worthy of study only insofar as they are 'other' to an English canon, my research seeks to reposition 'Englishness' – here represented by Prynne, whose relationship to mainstream traditions of English poetry is both undeniable and oblique – as one of a plurality of equally interesting and valid potential positions. This is in line with Alexander and Moran's approach to the study of 'regional' modernisms, except that it insists even more strongly on the English

---

<sup>11</sup> For example, Adam Hanna, *Northern Irish Poetry and Domestic Space* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Jonathan Hufstader, *Tongue of Water, Teeth of Stones: Northern Irish Poetry and Social Violence* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999); Homem, *Poetry and Translation in Northern Ireland*; Davies, *Cartographies of Culture*.

<sup>12</sup> Whyte, *Modern Scottish Poetry*, pp. 6–7.

metropolis as ‘region’, rather than as ‘centre’ around and against which ‘satellite cultures’ are defined.<sup>13</sup>

The case studies presented here also engage with the question of periodisation and literary taxonomy. Poetry of this period has proven difficult to categorise as either modernist or postmodernist. My research demonstrates that many writers of this period began to move away from the guiding assumptions of canonical modernist poetry, and that a renewed emphasis on space and place often accompanied this shift.<sup>14</sup> Prynne and Celan’s explorations of history and memory through their meta-textual landscapes present a direct challenge to modernist historical teleology. Celan’s poetry does not share the enthusiasm of pre-war modernist writing for a new, technologically advanced utopian society. The importance of the Shoah in delineating this transition for Celan is self-evident, and this historical trauma also plays a major role in Prynne’s texts, particularly as it instilled a language-scepticism which is not always foregrounded in Anglo-American transatlantic modernism. Likewise, the challenge which Mahon and Kirsch pose to virtually all forms of political ideology is at odds with the explicitly political engagement of certain modernist writers. Even when modernist or late modernist writers engage with anti-nationalist sentiments, as, for example, Basil Bunting and David Jones do through their radical commitments to

<sup>13</sup> Alexander and Moran challenge the use of the term ‘regional’ to refer to ‘those who are residing in a dependent and satellite position to a notional centre’ – I propose that the Germanic model of polycentrism offers an alternative to labels which ‘legitimate territorial subjugation and control, or deny competing claims to national distinctiveness’, while also acknowledging that the different colonial histories and trajectories of British Anglophone literatures introduce complications not present in the German context. See Neal Alexander and James Moran, ‘Introduction: “Regional Modernisms”’, in *Regional Modernisms*, ed. by Neal Alexander and James Moran (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 1–21 (p. 11).

<sup>14</sup> This analysis assumes a loose notion of ‘canonical modernist poetry’ which synthesises both the transatlantic modernism of Eliot, Pound and others, and continental Francophone and German-language modernism.

‘regional’ identity, these engagements are conceived of as a contribution to a political project (i.e. of regional emancipation). Mahon and Kirsch reject all forms of generalisation, and demonstrate their political engagement only with reference to the particular and the everyday. Their rejection of the nation-state and other dominant geopolitical categories is different from some previous literary traditions, and their work does not gesture towards either a local or transnational utopia, but rather acknowledges the permeable edges of self, home and communities in a manner which broadly aligns it with postmodernism.<sup>15</sup>

However, none of the writers discussed here can comfortably be considered postmodernist. A crucial defining difference in this regard is that all retain a sense of the weight and ethical complexity of their relationship to themes and contemporary contexts. With the exception of Morgan and Jandl, none of the writers engage in postmodern *jouissance*, nor do they adopt forms of pastiche which recognisably belong to the formal vocabulary of postmodernism. The poets discussed in this thesis therefore depart from what might be considered the concerns and approaches of mainstream modernism, without becoming postmodernist.

The multiplicity of the different writers belonging to this loose second generation after World War II precludes simplistic categorisation of the poetry

---

<sup>15</sup> The complex position of Concrete poetry has been highlighted at various points throughout this thesis. As discussed above, the clearest departure in Morgan and Jandl’s works from canonical modernism is the wide range of different approaches adopted to representing the individual subject. Unlike modernist poetry, in which the Realist or Romantic lyric persona was replaced with an unstable, fluid and plural sense of self which nevertheless continued to serve as the organising principle for many forms of lyric writing, Morgan and Jandl’s poetry replaces the lyric subject with poly-perspectival, aperspectival or polyvocal subject(s) and groups of subjects. Both vary the precise nature of this exploration of subjectivity from text to text: Morgan in particular moves between expressions of lyric subjectivity and anti-subjective Concrete texts with ease.

of the entire period as affiliated with one era or another, just as the plurality of different texts which can be described as modernist and postmodern renders those categories problematic. The cross section of poets presented here does not, for example, reflect more explicitly political currents in the poetry of the 1960s and 70s, such as work by Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, and Helmut Heißenbüttel in the German context.

My research demonstrates that Frederic Jameson's hypothesis about the relationship between a renewed focus on space and place and the emergence of postmodernism requires further refinement. It is predicated on the assumption that modernist writing reinforces the primacy of temporality, while postmodern texts re-introduce the notion of spatiality. On the one hand, scrutinising space and place is no doubt helpful in illuminating the various ways in which each writer challenges certain assumptions, structures and forms – a quality which not only reflects their engagement with contemporary spatial revolutions, but also their departure from earlier forms of modernism. However, it is inaccurate to argue that this focus on space and place replaces modernism's ostensible prioritising of temporality.

Time and space are very obviously intertwined in the work of all six writers: for example, in the recurring motif of travel in Mahon and Kirsch's works, which also appears in Morgan and Jandl's works at the level of their engagement with new technologies. Temporality – like spatiality – is manipulated in Morgan and Jandl's works, and Celan and Prynne's engagement with spatiotemporality as it relates to memory needs no further explication. Although it is useful to read the literature of this period through the lens of landscape, space and place, and to do so reveals certain fault lines, the poetry of the late 1960s and early 1970s by no means marks a watershed between modernism and postmodernism which coincides with a simple shift from writing about time to writing about space. As Dirk Göttsche notes, 'there

is [...] ample evidence in our daily lives and in recent literary and cultural production that the theme of time has acquired new urgency' in late modernity.<sup>16</sup>

The critical category of 'late modernism' may prove useful as a means of describing this transitional era. At present, however, conceptions of Anglophone late modernism are problematically vague.<sup>17</sup> Anthony Mellors's useful lineage, which runs from Ezra Pound to Prynne, emphasises fragmentation and the changing role of myth as a means of unifying disparate manifestations of modernism between the 1930s and 1970s. He highlights how 'eclecticism and difficulty form a hermeneutic basis for cultural renewal' in texts of this period, along with an accompanying 'disavowal of the unifying and totalising gestures of modernist aesthetics'.<sup>18</sup> However, it is clear from my analysis of the varied representations of space and place towards the end of the era Mellors discusses that his account overlooks a great deal of diversity.

<sup>16</sup> Dirk Göttsche, 'Introduction', in *Critical Time in Modern German Literature and Culture*, ed. by Dirk Göttsche (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2016), pp. 1–24 (p. 6).

<sup>17</sup> As Alex Latter notes, 'Any critical definition which has been used with equal conviction to describe the poetries of J. H. Prynne and Philip Larkin is clearly in need of clarification' (Latter, *Late Modernism and The English Intelligencer*, p. 2.). Latter gives a lucid account of various definitions of late modernism in English in order to frame his discussion of Prynne and others associated with the English Intelligencer, but, for obvious reasons, does not attempt to account for the full breadth of the late modernist 'canon'. Steven Regan's description of Larkin as late modernist is not widely replicated: however, there is general consensus that (at the very least) Prynne, Bunting and David Jones qualify as Anglophone late modernist poets. For example, the *Oxford Companion to Modern Poetry* describes Bunting's 'modernist long poem[s]' (p. 82), Jones as 'a late British modernist' (p. 302), and Prynne as 'described as Britain's leading late modernist poet' (p. 492). Neal Alexander and James Moran described both Bunting and Jones as late modernists. See Regan, 'Philip Larkin'; *The Oxford Companion to Modern Poetry in English*, ed. by Ian Hamilton and Jeremy Noel-Tod (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 82, 302, 492; Alexander and Moran, 'Introduction: "Regional Modernisms"', pp. 6, 17.

<sup>18</sup> Mellors, 'Obscurity, Fragmentation and the Uncanny in Prynne and Celan', pp. 2–4.

Whatever their connection to high modernist traditions, a focus on space and place reveals that Celan and Prynne are quite different poets to Bunting and Jones (not to mention Mahon, Morgan, Jandl and Kirsch): they operate within different traditions and contexts, and their works cannot be subsumed under a single category.

Nevertheless, an increasing awareness of the critical vocabulary of late modernism would undoubtedly be beneficial in the context of German literary historiographies. Although 'late modernity' or 'Spätmoderne' has been theorised (for example by Hartmut Rosa) as a key moment in the history of the dramatic acceleration of social time, and certain German-language critics have tentatively applied the label to literary production, it has not gained significant critical traction.<sup>19</sup> My research demonstrates that what might be termed 'Spätmodernismus', the literary cognate of 'Spätmoderne', is undoubtedly a useful critical category for describing the poetry of this period, which reprises the engagement with history and identity, and the drive towards linguistic and formal novelty, which were characteristic of some modernist writing.

This is one way in which my research demonstrates that German-language and Anglophone approaches to space and place in poetry can be brought together productively, to the benefit of both. As noted in the introduction, the two traditions arise from quite different theoretical backgrounds, and little interchange has taken place between them. As a result, each emphasises different aspects of the relationship between poetry and space, place and landscape, which this thesis synthesises as a model for future scholarship.

---

<sup>19</sup> Hartmut Rosa, *Beschleunigung: die Veränderung der Zeitstrukturen in der Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005). Exceptions include *Krise und Kritik der Sprache: Literatur zwischen Spätmoderne und Postmoderne*, ed. by Reinhard Kacianka and P. V. Zima (Tübingen: Francke, 2004); Lampart, *Nachkriegsmoderne*.



I would like to highlight two further areas where methodological exchange has proven productive. The first key area relates to the relationship between spatiality and temporality. Whereas studies such as Uta Werner's work on Celan's poetry, and others in the German context, demonstrate a deep awareness of the relationship between spatiality and temporality, this is often an absent dimension in British critical writing on poetry and landscape. This thesis demonstrates that the categories of space and time are consistently interwoven in the work of the poets discussed here, and this aspect of the representation of space and place in poetry should be afforded more focus in Anglophone research.

This is indicative of a larger weakness of some Anglophone scholarship on literature, space and place: it can be argued that the Anglophone tradition has focussed on Lefebvrian notions of the social construction of space in literature, with inadequate attention being paid to what might be called the abstract qualities of literary space, such as mediality, temporality and linguistic self-reflexivity.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, German criticism can be said to have

<sup>20</sup> The most convincing evidence for this broad claim lies in the tone and approach adopted by survey articles, such as Eric Falci's overview of 'Place, Space and Landscape' in *The Concise Companion to Post-War British and Irish Poetry*, which insisted on 'rootedness' in the sociocultural sense as the premise on which poetry engages with space and place. Similarly, John Goodby and Chris Wigginton's discussion of Welsh modernist poetry convincingly situates the work of various poets in 'a contemporary cultural scene', but pays relatively scant attention to form, mediality and language. Peter Barry's focus on the 'urban-specific', i.e. identifiable cities, in the poetry he discusses renders it suitable for Lefebvrian sociocultural analysis (although it also has the unfortunate side-effect, which he acknowledges, of specifically excluding the work of many women poets). Notable exceptions to this tendency include Skoulding's study of contemporary women's poetry and the city, which specifically rejects Lefebvrian methodology in favour of an approach which prioritises linguistic features of the poetry, and Bristow's 'Anthropocene Lyric', which attempts to bridge the gap via notions of 'affect'. Alexander and Cooper's important study of geography in postwar poetry contains a variety of contributions from a range of perspectives. See Falci, 'Place, Space and Landscape'; John Goodby and Chris Wigginton, 'Welsh

underemphasised the social qualities of space in favour of more abstract dimensions.<sup>21</sup> The case studies presented here have attempted to mediate between the two, prioritising cultural and social contexts where these appear to support productive analysis, but not overlooking the inherent qualities of literary space which depend on a certain understanding of the nature of language, temporality and subjectivity. For example, Jandl and Morgan's experimental subjectivity and the mediality of their concrete works, which are undoubtedly important aspects of their representations of space and place, benefit from being situated within a broad sociohistorical framework in the relevant chapter. Moreover, Celan and Prynne's meta-textual space engages with historical trauma and language crisis in order to reflect a precise blend of the socially constructed and linguistically self-reflexive. These meta-linguistic spaces are both philosophically abstract and socially constructed.

There are numerous areas in which further research might develop the findings of this thesis. The most obvious continuation of the current study would be to expand the breadth of the case studies to encompass a great diversity of spatial experiences in the period in question, not least as these

---

Modernist Poetry', in *Regional Modernisms*, ed. by Neal Alexander and James Moran (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 160–83; Barry, *Contemporary British Poetry and the City*; Skoulding, *Contemporary Women's Poetry and the Urban Space*; Bristow, *The Anthropocene Lyric*; Alexander and Cooper, *Poetry & Geography*.

<sup>21</sup> Again, handbook and survey articles are instructive: the bias towards epistemological (as opposed to cultural) understandings of literature, space and place can be seen in the range and focus of the content of handbooks by Günzel, Dünne and Mahler, among others. Studies by Wenz and Bronfen focus on 'literarische Raum' (in the Blanchotian sense) and 'Textsemiotik' respectively. Rapisarda inherits this tradition, situating Bachmann's writing about space in an epistemological rather than cultural context. Again, there are notable exceptions, such as Piatti's methodology and Werner's negotiation between different (literary and sociocultural) understandings of geology in Celan's work. See Günzel, *Raum*; Dünne and Mahler, *Handbuch Literatur & Raum*; Bronfen, *Der literarische Raum*; Wenz, *Raum, Raumsprache und Sprachräume*; Rapisarda, *Raumentwürfe*; Piatti, *Die Geographie der Literatur*; Werner, *Textgräber*.

relate to poets with a background in migration. In particular, the inclusion of Anglophone poets with links to spaces beyond Europe – including the US and the former spaces of the British Empire – would no doubt prove illuminating. Further depth would be added to the analysis of periodisation presented in this thesis by the inclusion of writers working across a broader historical span, particularly into the later 1970s and 80s, in order to assess how, when and where representations of space and place in poetry shifted from ‘modernist’ to ‘postmodern’.

The poets discussed in my thesis explore a wide variety of formal and conceptual interests, which means that there are important differences in degrees of formal experimentalism, and the extent to which the poets engage with ideas of space, place, site, and landscape, both in terms of lived experience and as these relate to the space of the page. However, their most crucial distinguishing feature is a common interest in presenting imagined alternatives to hegemonic conceptualisations of space and place. Their approaches to space and place reflect and shape contemporary sociopolitical contexts, while representing a development from earlier traditions of literary modernism, but their abiding commitment to the significance of these representations – their political, social and literary ‘weight’ – precludes reading the poetry of this period as proto-postmodernist. What emerges is a complex network of concerns and interests, mapped across two major, polycentric European language areas, and a methodology which may serve as a model for moving beyond readings of space and place in poetry which fail to look beyond national borders.

The introduction to this thesis established the changing role of the moon as a metaphor for the ‘discovery’ of new forms of space in the poetry of the 1960s and 70s, arguing that it shifted from poetic symbol to tangible destination. As Joachim Kalka’s recent cultural history of the moon

demonstrates, the moon also mediates between abstract and social space in other ways: on the one hand, we calculate our relationship to the moon in highly abstract, mathematical and scientific terms, considering its distance from earth, the trajectory of its orbit, its relative gravity and other features.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, the moon is a heavily culturally constructed space, with features named after lofty philosophical concepts or important cultural and scientific figures, and which has been imbued with a vast array of different meanings by art and literature throughout history.

Kalka posits that the prevalence of conspiracy theories which deny the 1969 moon landing stems from a deep desire that the moon ‘mit seiner leeren Scheibe eben ein machtvolleres, auf verschiedenste Weise interpretierbares *Zeichen* sein muß und bleiben soll’ (emphasis orig.).<sup>23</sup> The two-part nature of the sign, and our two-fold approach to conceptualising lunar space, reflects the twin approaches to representing space in poetry: poetic language as both geometry (the space on the page, the qualities of written or oral language, the essential features of the linguistic medium) and social geography (with reference to historical events, cultural contexts, social habits, individual and collective identities). Moreover, since the so-called Outer Space Treaty (1966) prohibited its ‘national appropriation by claims of sovereignty, means of use or occupation by any other means’, lunar space has also consistently operated beyond the parameters of national sovereignty, offering an appropriate metaphor for a study of space in poetry which moves across, between and beyond borders.

---

<sup>22</sup> Joachim Kalka, *Der Mond* (Berlin: Berenberg, 2016).

<sup>23</sup> Kalka, *Der Mond*, p. 96.

# Bibliography

## *Core primary texts*

- Celan, Paul, *Der Meridian: Endfassung - Entwuerfe - Materialien*, ed. by Bernhard Böschenstein and Heino Schmult (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999)
- , *Die Gedichte. Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Barbara Wiedemann, 4th edn (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005)
- , 'Antwort auf einer Umfrage der Librairie Flinker, Paris (1958)', in *Gesammelte Werke in Sieben Bänden*, ed. by Beda Allemann and Stefan Reichert, 2nd edn, 7 vols (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2000), III, pp.167-68
- , *Mikrolithen sinds, Steinchen. Die Prosa aus dem Nachlaß* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005)
- , *Sprachgitter: Vorstufen, Textgenese, Endfassung*, ed. by Heino Schmult (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1996)
- Jandl, Ernst, 'Letter to Edwin Morgan', 9 April 1965, University of Glasgow. Edwin Morgan Papers, MS Morgan DJ/5
- , 'Mein Gedicht und sein Autor', in *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, ed. by Klaus Siblewski, 6 vols (Munich: Luchterhand, 2016), VI, 40-49
- , *Laut & Luise/Hosi+Anna: Sprechgedichte* (Berlin: Wagenbach, 2001) [on CD]

- , “‘Das Öffnen und Schließen des Mundes’: Frankfurter Poetikvorlesungen’, in *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, ed. by Klaus Siblewski, 6 vols (Munich: Luchterhand, 2016), VI, 296–401
- , *Werke in Sechs Bänden*, ed. by Klaus Siblewski, 6 vols (Munich: Luchterhand, 2016)
- Kirsch, Sarah, ‘Ein Gespräch mit Sarah Kirsch’, in *Hundert Gedichte* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1997), pp. 123–34
- , *Landaufenthalt* (Berlin; Weimar: Aufbau Verlag, 1967)
- , *Landaufenthalt* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1977)
- , *Rückenwind* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1977)
- , *Sämtliche Gedichte* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2013)
- , *Zaubersprüche* (Ebenhausen bei München: Langewiesche-Brandt, 1974)
- Mahon, Derek, ‘An Honest Ulsterman’, in *Journalism: Selected Prose 1970–1995*, ed. by Terence Brown (Loughcrew: Gallery Press, 1996), pp. 92–94
- , *Lives* (London, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972)
- , *New Collected Poems* (Loughcrew: Gallery Press, 2011)
- , *Night-Crossing* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968)
- , *The Snow Party* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975)
- Morgan, Edwin, *Beowulf* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2002)
- , *Collected Poems* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1990)
- , *Collected Translations* (Manchester: Carcanet, 1996)
- , *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on Work and Life*, ed. by Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990)
- , ‘Power from Things Not Declared’, in *Nothing Not Giving Messages: Reflections on His Life and Work*, ed. by Hamish Whyte (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990), pp. 144–87

- , 'The Beatnik in the Kailyard', in *Essays* (Cheadle: Carcanet, 1974), pp. 166–76
- , and Eugen Gomringer, University of Glasgow. Edwin Morgan Papers, MS Morgan DG/5
- , and Ernst Jandl, University of Glasgow. Edwin Morgan Papers, MS Morgan DJ/5
- , and Roderick Watson, *23 Poems of Edwin Morgan: Read by Edwin Morgan, with Commentary by Professor Roderick Watson* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2005)
- Prynne, J. H., 'Huts', *Textual Practice*, 22 (2008), 613–33
- , "Modernism" in German Poetry', *The Cambridge Review*, 1963, 331–37
- , *Poems* (Folio/Fremantle Arts Centre Press: South Fremantle, WA; Bloodaxe: Newcastle upon Tyne; Dufour Editions; Chester Springs, PA, 1999)

### *Other primary literature*

- Armitage, Simon, *Walking Away: Further Travels with a Troubadour on the South West Coast Path* (London: Faber & Faber, 2015)
- , *Walking Home* (London: Faber & Faber, 2012)
- Arnim, Bettina von, *Dies Buch gehört dem König*, ed. by Wolfgang Bunzel (Munich: dtv, 2008)
- , *Die Günderröde*, 2 vols (Leipzig: Insel, 1914)
- Auden, Wystan Hugh, *Collected Poems* (London: Faber & Faber, 2007)
- Bachmann, Ingeborg, *Werke*, ed. by Christine Koschel, Inge von Weidenbaum, and Clemens Münster, 4 vols (Munich; Zürich: Piper, 1993), I
- Brentano, Clemens and Ludwig Achim von Arnim, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn. Alte Deutsche Lieder. Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by Heinz Rölleke (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1987)

- Bunting, Basil, *Complete Poems* (Newcastle: Bloodaxe, 2000)
- Byron, George Gordon, Lord, *Lord Byron - The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford; New York: Oxford Paperbacks, 2008)
- Donne, John, *The Collected Poems of John Donne*, ed. by Roy Booth (Ware: Wordsworth Editions, 1994)
- Dorn, Edward, *Gunslinger* (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 1989)
- Droste-Hülshoff, Annette von, *Annette von Droste-Hülshoff. Ausgewählt von Sarah Kirsch.*, ed. by Sarah Kirsch (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1986)
- , *Gedichte*, ed. by Elke Erb (Leipzig: Insel, 1989)
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Werke*, ed. by Erich Trunz, 14 vols (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1994), II
- Gomringer, Eugen, 'konkrete dichtung (als einföhrung)', in *Theoretische Positionen zur konkreten Poesie: Texte und Bibliographie*, ed. by Thomas Kopfermann (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1974), pp. 38–41
- , 'Konkrete Poesie als Mittel der Kommunikation einer neuen universalen Gemeinschaft - Ein Rückblick auf die Ursprünge in den frühen 1950er Jahren', in *Poesie-Konkret: Zur internationalen Verbreitung und Diversifizierung der Konkreten Poesie*, ed. by Anne Thurmann-Jajes, Weserburg Museum für Moderne Kunst, and Poetry on the Road (Bremen: Salon, 2012), pp. 203–8
- , 'vom vers zur konstellation', in *Konkrete Dichtung: Texte und Theorien*, ed. by Siegfried J Schmidt (Munich: Bayerischer Schulbuch-Verlag, 1972), p. 76-79.
- Günderrode, Karoline von, and Christa Wolf, *Der Schatten eines Traumes* (Munich: dtv, 1997)
- Hatherley, Owen, *A Guide to the New Ruins of Great Britain* (London: Verso, 2011)
- Keiller, Patrick, *Robinson in Space* (London: Reaktion Books, 1999)



- Larkin, Philip, *Collected Poems*, ed. by Anthony Thwaite (London: Faber & Faber, 2003)
- Macfarlane, Robert, *The Old Ways: A Journey on Foot* (London: Penguin, 2012)
- MacNeice, Louis, *Louis MacNeice: The Classical Radio Plays*, ed. by Amanda Wrigley and S. J. Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Morrison, Blake, and Andrew Motion, eds., *The Penguin Book of Contemporary British Poetry* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982)
- Otmar, *Volcks-Sagen* (Bremen: Wilmans, 1800)
- Pope, Alexander, *The Major Works*, ed. by Pat Rogers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Pound, Ezra, *ABC of Reading* (New York: New Directions Publishing, 2010)
- Rimbaud, Arthur, *Collected Poems*, trans. by Martin Sorrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)
- Schiller, Friedrich, *Gedichte*, ed. by Norbert Oellers (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1999)
- Sheers, Owen, *A Poet's Guide to Britain* (London: Penguin Classics, 2010)
- Sinclair, Iain, *London Orbital* (London: Penguin, 2003)
- , *Lud Heat: A Book of the Dead Hamlets* (Cheltenham: Skylight, 2012)
- Swift, Jonathan, *Major Works*, ed. by Angus Ross and David Woolley (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)
- Wordsworth, William, *The Major Works*, ed. by Stephen Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Yeats, William Butler, *Poems*, ed. by Seamus Heaney (London: Faber & Faber, 2004)

### *Secondary literature*

- Alexander, Neal, and David Cooper, eds., *Poetry & Geography: Space and Place in Post-War Poetry* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013)

- Alexander, Neal, and James Moran, 'Introduction: "Regional Modernisms"', in *Regional Modernisms*, ed. by Neal Alexander and James Moran (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 1–21
- Al-Taie, Yvonne, 'Gebaute Worte: Zur architektonischen Transformation Celanscher Lyrik bei Daniel Libeskind', *theologie.geschichte*, 2 (2007)
- Alvarez, Al, 'The New Poetry; Or, Beyond the Gentility Principle', in *The New Poetry*, ed. by Al Alvarez (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), pp. 21–32
- Andersch, Alfred, 'Hans Magnus Enzensberger: Verteidigung der Wölfe', *Frankfurter Hefte*, 1958, pp. 143–45
- Anderson, Perry, *The Origins of Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1998)
- Anderson, Peter, "'Thickening, Deepening, Blackening": Starlings and the Object of Poetry in Coleridge and Dante', *The Journal of the Friends of Coleridge*, 32 (2008)
- Arendt, Hannah, *The Human Condition: Second Edition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013)
- Arnold, Heinz Ludwig, ed., *Die Gruppe 47: Ein kritischer Grundriss* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1980)
- , ed., *Sarah Kirsch* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1989)
- Bachelard, Gaston, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. by M. Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1994)
- Bächtold-Stäubli, Hanns, and Eduard Hoffmann-Krayer, eds., *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, 10 vols (Berlin; Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1936), VII
- Bade, Klaus J., *Deutsche im Ausland, Fremde in Deutschland: Migration in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1992)
- Baer, Ulrich, *Remnants of Song: Trauma and the Experience of Modernity in Charles Baudelaire and Paul Celan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000)

- Bakhtin, Mikhail, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981)
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington, IA: Indiana University Press, 1984)
- Barasch, Frances K., 'Grotesque, Theories of the', in *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Literary Theory: Approaches, Scholars, Terms*, ed. by Irene Rima Makaryk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 85–90
- Barck, Simone, and Siegfried Lokatis, *Zensurspiele: heimliche Literaturgeschichten aus der DDR* (Halle: Mitteldeutscher Verlag, 2008)
- Barry, Peter, *Contemporary British Poetry and the City* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- , *Poetry Wars: British Poetry of the 1970s and the Battle of Earls Court* (Cambridge: Salt, 2006)
- Bayard, Caroline, *The New Poetics in Canada and Quebec: From Concretism to Post-Modernism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989)
- Bedient, Calvin, 'Against Conceptualism', *Boston Review*, 24 July 2013  
<<http://bostonreview.net/poetry/against-conceptualism>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Bekker, Hugo, *Paul Celan: Studies in His Early Poetry* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2008)
- Berendse, Gerrit-Jan, 'The Politics of Dialogue: Poetry in the GDR', in *Rereading East Germany: The Literature and Film of the GDR*, ed. by Karen Leeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 143–59 (pp. 149–52)
- , *Die 'Sächsische Dichterschule': Lyrik in der DDR der sechziger und siebziger Jahre* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 1990)
- Berryman, Sylvia, 'Democritus', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta, 2010

- <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/democritus/>>  
[accessed 24 August 2016]
- Bew, Paul, and Gordon Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles, 1968-1999* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1999)
- Birus, Hendrik, 'Es war Erde in ihnen', in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Die Niemandrose'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann and Christine Ivanović (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp. 51–56
- Blanchot, Maurice, *The Space of Literature*, trans. by Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982)
- Blanton, C. D., 'Transatlantic Currents', in *Concise Companion to Post-War British and Irish Poetry*, ed. by Nigel Alderman and C. D. Blanton (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 134–54
- Blickle, Peter, *Heimat: A Critical Theory of the German Idea of Homeland* (New York: Camden House, 2004)
- Boa, Elizabeth, and Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat - A German Dream: Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Bode, Christoph, 'A Mercia of the Mind: Geoffrey Hill's "Mercian Hymns" and the Poetical Transcendence of Time and Place', in *Regionalität, Nationalität und Internationalität in der zeitgenössischen Lyrik*, ed. by Lothar Fietz, Paul Hoffmann, and Hans-Werner Ludwig (Tübingen: Attempto-Verlag, 1992), pp. 313–42
- Böhme, Hartmut, ed., *Topographien der Literatur: deutsche Literatur im transnationalen Kontext* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2005)
- Bonheim, Günther, *Versuch zu zeigen, dass Adorno mit seiner Behauptung, nach Auschwitz lasse sich kein Gedicht mehr schreiben, recht hatte* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2002)

- Börner, Rudolf, *Welcher Stein ist das? Tabellen zum Bestimmen der wichtigsten Mineralien, Edelsteine und Gesteine* (Stuttgart: Franckh, 1955)
- Breuer, Dieter, ed., *Deutsche Lyrik nach 1945* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1988)
- Brinkmann, Roland, and Werner Zeil, *Abriß der Geologie 1: Allgemeine Geologie*, 2 vols (Stuttgart: Enke, 1956), I
- Brinton, Ian, “‘His Brilliant Luminous Shade’”, in *A Manner of Utterance: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne*, ed. by Ian Brinton (Exeter: Shearsman, 2009), pp. 11–22
- Bristow, Tom, *The Anthropocene Lyric: An Affective Geography of Poetry, Person, Place* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)
- Bronfen, Elisabeth, *Der literarische Raum: eine Untersuchung am Beispiel von Dorothy M. Richardsons Romanzyklus ‘Pilgrimage’* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1986)
- Brown, Terence, ‘Interview with Derek Mahon’, *Poetry Ireland Review*, 14 (1985)
- Brown, Timothy Scott, and Andrew Lison, eds., *The Global Sixties in Sound and Vision: Media, Counterculture, Revolt* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014)
- Buck, Theo, *Muttersprache, Mördersprache* (Aachen: Rimbaud, 1993)
- Burton, Brian, “‘A Forest of Intertextuality’: the Poetry of Derek Mahon” (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Durham, 2004)
- Bushell, Anthony, *Poetry in a Provisional State: The Austrian Lyric, 1945-1955* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2007)
- , ‘Writing in Austria after 1945: The Political, Institutional and Publishing Context’, in *A History of Austrian Literature 1918-2000*, ed. by Katrin Kohl and Ritchie Robertson (London: Camden House, 2006), pp. 163–81

- Carrier, Peter, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989: The Origins and Political Function of the Vél d'Hiv in Paris and the Holocaust Monument in Berlin* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2006)
- Catling, Jo, ed., *A History of Women's Writing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- Central Intelligence Agency, 'Field Listing: Independence', *The World Factbook*, 2016 <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2088.html>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- de Certeau, Michel, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. by Steven Rendall (Oakland: University of California Press, 2011)
- Chalfen, Israel, *Paul Celan: A Biography of His Youth* (New York: Persea Books, 1991)
- Chamberlain, Louise, "The Sea Was the River, the River the Sea": The Severn Estuary and the Bristol Channel in Robert Minhinnick and Philip Gross', in *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism: Overlapping Territories in Environmental and Spatial Literary Studies*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. and Christine M. Battista (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 95–113
- Chomsky, Noam, *Syntactic Structures* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002)
- , *The Minimalist Program* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014)
- Clark, Heather L., *The Ulster Renaissance: Poetry in Belfast, 1962-1972* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006)
- Cockburn, Ken, and Alec Finlay, eds., *The Order of Things: Scottish Sound, Pattern, and Concrete Poetry* (Edinburgh: Pocketbooks, 2001)
- Cockin, Katharine, ed., *The Literary North* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)
- Collot, Michel, 'Landschaft', in *Handbuch Literatur & Raum*, ed. by Jörg Dünne and Andreas Mahler (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 151–59

- Connerton, Paul, *How Modernity Forgets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- , *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)
- Corcoran, Neil, *English Poetry since 1940* (London; New York: Longman, 1993)
- Cosentino, Christine, *Ein Spiegel mit mir darin: Sarah Kirsch's Lyrik* (Tübingen: Francke, 1990)
- Coverley, Merlin, *Psychogeography* (Harpenden: Pocket Essentials, 2010)
- Crafts, N. F. R., and Institute of Economic Affairs (Great Britain), *Britain's Relative Economic Performance, 1870-1999* (London: IEA, 2002)
- Craig, Cairns, *The Modern Scottish Novel: Narrative and the National Imagination* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999)
- Crawford, Robert, *On Glasgow and Edinburgh* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013)
- Crotts, Arlin, *The New Moon: Water, Exploration, and Future Habitation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- Csáky, Moritz, and Christoph Leitgeb, eds., *Kommunikation - Gedächtnis - Raum: Kulturwissenschaften nach dem 'spatial turn'* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009)
- Cunningham, David, Andrew Fisher, and Sas Mays, eds., *Photography and Literature in the Twentieth Century* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2005)
- Czapla, Ralf Georg, and Anna Fattori, eds., *Die verewigte Stadt: Rom in der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1945* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 2008)
- Daigle, Craig, 'The Era of Détente', in *The Routledge Handbook of the Cold War*, ed. by Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Craig Daigle (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 195–208

- Darwin, John, 'Decolonization and the End of Empire', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume V: Historiography*, ed. by Robin Winks (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 541–57
- Davidson, Ian, *Ideas of Space in Contemporary Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- , *Radical Spaces of Poetry* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010)
- Davidson, Ian, and Zoë Skoulding, eds., *Placing Poetry* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2013)
- Davies, Damian Walford, *Cartographies of Culture: New Geographies of Welsh Writing in English* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012)
- Derrida, Jacques, 'A Shibboleth for Paul Celan', in *Word Traces: Readings of Paul Celan*, ed. by Aris Fioretos, trans. by Joshua Wilner (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 3–74
- , 'Letter to a Japanese Friend', in *Derrida and Différance*, ed. by David Wood and Robert Bernasconi, trans. by David Wood and Andrew Benjamin (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), pp. 1–5
- , *Sovereignities in Question: The Poetics of Paul Celan*, ed. by Thomas Dutoit, trans. by Outi Pasanen (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005)
- , *Writing and Difference*, trans. by Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 2001)
- Dietrich, René, 'Postmoderne Grenzräume und Endräume in der Gegenwartsliteratur: Bewegungen ins Dazwischen und ins Nichts in Frank Bidarts "The War of Vaslav Nijinsky"', in *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur: die Literaturwissenschaften und der Spatial Turn*, ed. by Wolfgang Hallet and Birgit Neumann (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009), pp. 355–70
- Dolan, Jay P., *The Irish Americans: A History* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2010)
- Domínguez, César, 'Literary Geography and Comparative Literature', *Comparative Literature and Culture*, 13 (2011)



- Donnelly, Mark, *Sixties Britain: Culture, Society and Politics* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005)
- Döring, Jörg, and Tristan Thielmann, eds., *Spatial Turn: das Raumparadigma in den Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaften* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008)
- Drews, Jörg, 'Über ein Gedicht von Ernst Jandl: wien: heldenplatz', in *Ernst Jandl: Materialienbuch*, ed. by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler (Darmstadt: Luchterhand, 1982), p. 34-44
- Dubinsky, Karen, Catherine Krull, Susan Lord, Sean Mills, and Scott Rutherford, eds., *New World Coming: The Sixties and the Shaping of Global Consciousness* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2009)
- Dünne, Jörg, and Andreas Mahler, eds., *Handbuch Literatur & Raum* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015)
- Durcan, Paul, 'The World of Derek Mahon', *Magill*, December 1984  
<<http://politico.ie/archive/world-derek-mahon>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Dwyer-Ryan, Meaghan, 'Irish Catholics and Irish-Catholic Americans, 1940-Present', in *Immigrants in American History: Arrival, Adaptation, and Integration*, ed. by Elliott Robert Barkan (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2012), pp. 1011-1020
- Edgecombe, Rodney, *Aspects of Form and Genre in the Poetry of Edwin Morgan* (Amersham: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009)
- Emmerich, Wolfgang, *Paul Celan* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1999)
- Endler, Adolf, *Nebbich: Eine deutsche Karriere* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2013)
- Englund, Axel, *Still Songs: Music in and around the Poetry of Paul Celan* (Farnham, Surrey; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012)
- Ennis, Stephen, *After the Titanic: A Life of Derek Mahon* (Dublin: Gill and MacMillan, 2014)

- Ernst, Petra, and Alexandra Strohmaier, eds., *Raum* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2013)
- Eskin, Michael, 'Of Sailors and Poets: On Celan, Grünbein and Brodksy', *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007)
- Fähnders, Walter, *Avantgarde und Moderne 1890-1933: Lehrbuch Germanistik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1998)
- Falci, Eric, 'Place, Space and Landscape', in *Concise Companion to Post-War British and Irish Poetry*, ed. by Nigel Alderman and C. D. Blanton (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 200–220
- Felsmann, Barbara, *Beim kleinen Trompeter habe ich immer geweint: Kindheit in der DDR, Erinnerungen an die Jungen Pioniere* (Berlin: Lukas, 2003)
- Felstiner, John, *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995)
- Fietz, Lothar, Paul Hoffmann, and Hans-Werner Ludwig, eds., *Regionalität, Nationalität und Internationalität in der zeitgenössischen Lyrik* (Tübingen: Attempto-Verlag, 1992)
- Fioretos, Aris, 'Contraction (Benjamin, Reading, History)', *MLN*, 110 (1995), 540–64
- , ed., 'Preface' in *Word Traces: Readings of Paul Celan* ed. by Aris Fioretos (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), p. ix-xxii
- 'First World, N. and Adj.', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/249401>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Fogu, Claudio, and Wulf Kansteiner, 'The Politics of Memory and the Poetics of History', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (Durham, NC; London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 284–310

- Foucault, Michel, 'Of Other Spaces', trans. by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, 16 (1986), 22
- Frach, Friederike, *Schloss Wiepersdorf: das 'Künstlerheim' unter dem Einfluss der Kulturpolitik in der DDR* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2012)
- François, Etienne, and Hagen Schulze, eds., *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte: eine Auswahl* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2005)
- Frank, Gustav, Rachel Palfreyman, and Stefan Scherer, eds., *Modern Times?: German Literature and Arts Beyond Political Chronologies; Kontinuitäten Der Kultur: 1925-1955* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2005)
- Frederiksen, Elke and Katherine Goodman, "'Locating" Bettina Brentano-von Arnim, A Nineteenth Century German Woman Writer', in *Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: Gender and Politics* ed. by Elke Frederiksen and Katherine Goodman (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), pp. 13–34
- Freidin, Robert, *Generative Grammar: Theory and Its History* (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2007)
- French, Lorely, *German Women as Letter Writers, 1750-1850* (Madison; Teaneck: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996)
- Galvin, Rachel, 'Lyric Backlash', *Boston Review*, 11 February 2014  
<<http://www.bostonreview.net/poetry/rachel-galvin-lyric-backlash>>  
[accessed 24 August 2016]
- Gardner, Drew, 'Flarf Is Life: The Poetry of Affect', *Boston Review*, 11 February 2014  
<<http://bostonreview.net/poetry/drew-gardner-flarf-life-poetry-affect>>  
[accessed 24 August 2016]
- Garnier, Xavier, 'Der literarische Raum', in *Handbuch Literatur & Raum*, ed. by Jörg Dünne and Andreas Mahler (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), pp. 88–95

- Gawoll, Hans-Jürgen, 'Spur', in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. by Joachim Ritter and Karlfried Gründer, 9 vols (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft Darmstadt, 1995), IX, 1550–58
- Getz, Thomas H., 'Geoffrey Hill: History as Poetry; Poetry as Salutation', *Contemporary Poetry: A Journal of Criticism*, 4 (1982), 4–23
- Giesecking, Jen Jack, and William Mangold, eds., *The People, Place, and Space Reader* (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2014)
- Gladwin, Derek, 'Ecocritical and Geocritical Conjunctions in North Atlantic Environmental Multimedia and Place-Based Poetry', in *Ecocriticism and Geocriticism: Overlapping Territories in Environmental and Spatial Literary Studies*, ed. by Robert T. Tally Jr. and Christine M. Battista (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 37–54
- Glen, Duncan, *Hugh MacDiarmid (Christopher Murray Grieve) and the Scottish Renaissance* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1964)
- Gold, John R., *The Practice of Modernism: Modern Architects and Urban Transformation, 1954–1972* (New York; Abingdon: Routledge, 2007)
- Goldberg, Nathaniel Jason, *Kantian Conceptual Geography* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)
- Goodby, John, and Chris Wigginton, 'Welsh Modernist Poetry', in *Regional Modernisms*, ed. by Neal Alexander and James Moran (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), pp. 160–83
- Göttsche, Dirk, 'Introduction', in *Critical Time in Modern German Literature and Culture*, ed. by Dirk Göttsche (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 2016), pp. 1–24
- , *Die Produktivität der Sprachkrise in der modernen Prosa* (Frankfurt a.M.: Athenäum, 1987)
- Gregory, Lady Augusta, *Gods and Fighting Men: The Story of the Tuatha de Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland* (Gerrards Cross: Smythe, 1970)

- Gumpel, Liselotte, *'Concrete' poetry from East and West Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976)
- Günther, Siegmund, *Physische Geographie* (Stuttgart: Göschen, 1895)
- Günzel, Stephan, ed., *Raum: ein interdisziplinäres Handbuch* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2010)
- , *Raum/Bild: zur Logik des Medialen* (Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos, 2012)
- Habermas, Jürgen, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991)
- Hainz, Martin, *Masken Der Mehrdeutigkeit: Celan-Lektüren Mit Adorno, Szondi Und Derrida* (Vienna: Braumüller, 2001)
- Hall, Matthew, 'Prints in the New Snow: Notes on "Es Lebe Der König", J. H. Prynne's Elegy to Paul Celan', *Cordite Poetry Review*, 1 September 2013 <<http://cordite.org.au/scholarly/prints-in-the-new-snow/>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- von Hallberg, Robert, 'Celan's Universality', *Michigan Quarterly Review*, 155 (2006)
- Hallet, Wolfgang, and Birgit Neumann, eds., *Raum und Bewegung in der Literatur: die Literaturwissenschaften und der Spatial Turn* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009)
- Hamacher, Werner, 'The Second of Inversion: Movements of a Figure through Celan's Poetry', in *Premises: Essays on Philosophy and Literature from Kant to Celan*, trans. by Peter Fenves (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 337–88
- Hamburger, Michael, *Roots in the Air* (London: Anvil Press Poetry, 1991)
- , 'Town and Country: Phenotypes and Archetypes', in *The Truth of Poetry: Tensions in Modernist Poetry Since Baudelaire* (London: Anvil Press, 1996), pp. 267–68

- Hamilton, Ian, and Jeremy Noel-Tod, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Modern Poetry in English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)
- Hanna, Adam, *Northern Irish Poetry and Domestic Space* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)
- Hansen, Randall, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Hart, Henry, *The Poetry of Geoffrey Hill* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985)
- Harvey, David, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (London: Verso, 2012)
- , *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Malden, MA; Oxford: Blackwell, 1990)
- Haughton, Hugh, *The Poetry of Derek Mahon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)
- Heaney, Seamus, 'Englands of the Mind', in *Preoccupations: Selected Prose, 1968-1978* (London: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), pp. 150–69
- Heidegger, Martin, 'Wozu Dichter?', in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann, 2003), pp. 269–320
- Heißenbüttel, Helmut, 'Neue Lyrik: Konkrete Poesie Als Alternative?', *Die Zeit* (Hamburg, 24 February 1978)
- <<http://www.zeit.de/1978/09/konkrete-poesie-als-alternative>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Hénaff, Marcel and Tracy B. Strong, 'Conclusion: Public Space, Virtual Space, and Democracy', in *Public Space and Democracy*, ed. by Marcel Hénaff and Tracy B. Strong (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 221–22

- Hodenberg, Christina von, and Detlef Siegfried, eds., *Wo '1968' liegt: Reform und Revolte in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006)
- Hoffmann, Gerhard, *Raum, Situation, erzählte Wirklichkeit: Poetologische und historische Studien zum englischen und amerikanischen Roman* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1978)
- Hofmann, Michael, 'Paul Celan', in *Behind the Lines: Pieces on Writing and Pictures* (London: Faber & Faber, 2001), pp. 105–15
- Homem, Rui Manuel G. de Carvalho, *Poetry and Translation in Northern Ireland: Dislocations in Contemporary Writing* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)
- Hoyer, Jennifer M., *'The Space of Words': Exile and Diaspora in the Works of Nelly Sachs* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014)
- Hufstader, Jonathan, *Tongue of Water, Teeth of Stones: Northern Irish Poetry and Social Violence* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999)
- Huppert, Hugo, "'Spirituell". Ein Gespräch mit Paul Celan', in *Paul Celan*, ed. by Werner Hamacher and Winfried Menninghaus (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 319–24
- Hutchinson, Ben, *Modernism and Style* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)
- 'Ingenuity versus the Starlings', *The Glasgow Herald*, 28 September 1971, p. 10
- Ivanovic, Christine, *Das Gedicht im Geheimnis der Begegnung: Dichtung und Poetik Celans im Kontext seiner russischen Lektüren* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996)
- Jackson, K. David, Eric Vos, and Johanna Drucker, eds., *Experimental - Visual - Concrete: Avant-Garde Poetry since the 1960s* (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 1996)

- Jameson, Fredric, *Postmodernism, Or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1992)
- Janz, Marlies, *Vom Engagement absoluter Poesie: zur Lyrik und Ästhetik Paul Celans* (Frankfurt a.M.: Syndikat, 1976)
- Jeffries, Stuart, 'On the Road', *The Guardian*, 24 April 2004, section Books  
<<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2004/apr/24/featuresreviews.guardianreview14>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Johansson, Birgitta, *The Engineering of Being: An Ontological Approach to J. H. Prynne*, Acta Universitatis Umensis, 135 (Umeå: Umeå University Press, 1997)
- Jones, Kathryn N., *Journeys of Remembrance: Memories of the Second World War in French and German Literature, 1960-1980* (Oxford: Legenda, 2007)
- Kacianka, Reinhard, and P. V. Zima, eds., *Krise und Kritik der Sprache: Literatur zwischen Spätmoderne und Postmoderne* (Tübingen: Francke, 2004)
- Kalter, Christoph, 'A Shared Space of Imagination, Communication and Action: Perspectives on the History of the "Third World"', in *The Third World in the Global 1960s*, ed. by Samantha Christiansen and Zachary A. Scarlett, *Protest, Culture and Society*, 8 (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), pp. 23–38
- Joachim Kalka, *Der Mond* (Berlin: Berenberg, 2016)
- Kattago, Siobhan, *Memory and Representation in Contemporary Europe: The Persistence of the Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012)
- , 'Written in Stone: Monuments and Representation', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Memory Studies*, ed. by Siobhan Kattago (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp. 179–96
- Kaufmann, Vincent, *Guy Debord: Revolution in the Service of Poetry*, trans. by Robert Bononno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006)



- Kayden, Jerold S., The New York City Department of City Planning, and The Municipal Art Society of New York, *Privately Owned Public Space: The New York City Experience*, 1st edition (New York: Wiley, 2000)
- Kayser, Wolfgang, *Das Groteske in Malerei und Dichtung* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1960)
- Keenaghan, Eric, 'Queer Poetry', in *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, by Roland Greene and others, 4th edn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 1139–41
- , *The View From The Train: Cities And Other Landscapes* (London: Verso, 2013)
- Kelly, Aaron, 'Mapping the City in Belfast and Glasgow Poetry', in *Modern Irish and Scottish Poetry*, ed. by Peter Mackay, Edna Longley, and Fran Brearton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 222–37
- Kennedy-Andrews, Elmer, *Writing Home: Poetry and Place in Northern Ireland, 1968-2008* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2008)
- Kiesel, Helmuth, *Geschichte der literarischen Moderne: Sprache, Ästhetik, Dichtung im zwanzigsten Jahrhundert* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2004)
- King, Martina, 'Sprachkrise', in *Handbuch Literatur und Philosophie*, ed. by Hans Feger (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2012), pp. 159–77
- Kleinschmidt, Erich, *Gleitende Sprache: Sprachbewusstsein und Poetik in der literarischen Moderne* (Munich: Iudicium, 1992)
- Kligerman, Eric, *Sites of the Uncanny: Paul Celan, Specularity and the Visual Arts*, Interdisciplinary German Cultural Studies, 3 (Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2007)
- Knafl, Arnulf, ed., *Reise und Raum: Ortsbestimmungen der österreichischen Literatur* (Vienna: Praesens Verlag, 2014)
- Kohl, Katrin, "'Flaschenpost": Sprache als Metapher in der Lyrik des 20. Jahrhunderts', *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007), 329–47.

- Konzett, Matthias, 'Austria: Post-1945', in *Encyclopedia of German Literature*, ed. by Matthias Konzett (Chicago; London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2015)
- Korte, Hermann, *Geschichte der deutschen Lyrik seit 1945* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1989)
- Kröll, Friedhelm, *Die 'Gruppe 47': soziale Lage und gesellschaftliches Bewusstsein literarischer Intelligenz in der Bundesrepublik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1977)
- Krolow, Karl, 'Das Problem des langen und kurzen Gedichts - heute', *Akzente*, 13 (1966), 271–87
- Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe, *Poetry as Experience*, trans. by Andrea Tarnowski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999)
- Ladkin, Sam, and Robin Purves, 'Introduction', *Chicago Review*, 53 (2007), 6–13
- Lampart, Fabian, *Nachkriegsmoderne: Transformationen der deutschsprachigen Lyrik 1945–1960* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013)
- Lamping, Dieter, *Das lyrische Gedicht: Definitionen zu Theorie und Geschichte der Gattung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989)
- Latter, Alex, *Late Modernism and The English Intelligencer: On the Poetics of Community* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)
- Lazarus, Neil, 'The Global Dispensation since 1945', in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, ed. by Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 19–40
- Leeder, Karen, 'Introduction: The Address of German Poetry', *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007), 277–93
- Lefebvre, Henri, *Critique of Everyday Life*, trans. by John Moore, 3 vols (London: Verso, 1991)
- , *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*, ed. by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden, trans. by Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009)

- , *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1991)
- , *The Survival of Capitalism*, trans. by Frank Bryant (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981)
- Lehmann, Jürgen, "Engführung", in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Sprachgitter'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann, Markus May, and Susanna Broch (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), pp. 431–80
- , "Gegenwort" und "Daseinsentwurf": Paul Celans "Die Niemandrose". Eine Einführung', in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Die Niemandrose'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann and Christine Ivanović (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp. 11–35
- Lessing, Gotthold Ephraim, *Laokoon oder über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie: mit beiläufigen Erläuterungen verschiedener Punkte der alten Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2010)
- Lewis, Pericles, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007)
- Longley, Edna, 'The Singing Line: Form in Derek Mahon's Poetry', in *Poetry in the Wars* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1987), pp. 170–84
- Lotze, Franz, *Geologie* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1955)
- Louis, Wm. Roger, 'The Dissolution of the British Empire', in *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Judith Brown and Wm. Roger Louis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 329–57
- Lyall, Scott, 'Hugh MacDiarmid and The Scottish Renaissance', in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 173–87

- Lyon, James K, *Paul Celan and Martin Heidegger: An Unresolved Conversation, 1951-1970* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006)
- Lyotard, Jean François, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984)
- Mabee, Barbara, *Die Poetik von Sarah Kirsch: Erinnerungsarbeit und Geschichtsbewusstsein* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1989)
- Mabey, Richard, and Iain Sinclair, *The Unofficial Countryside* (Dorchester: Little Toller Books, 2010)
- MacCaig, Norman, and Alexander Scott, eds., *Contemporary Scottish Verse 1959-1969*, Scottish Library (London: Calder & Boyars, 1970)
- MacDiarmid, Hugh, *The Letters of Hugh MacDiarmid*, ed. by Alan Bold (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984)
- , *The Ugly Birds without Wings* (Edinburgh: Allen Donaldson, 1962)
- Mackay, Peter, 'The Gaelic Tradition', in *The Cambridge Companion to Scottish Literature*, ed. by Gerard Carruthers and Liam McIlvanney (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 177–131
- Magennis, Hugh, 'Edwin Morgan: Speaking to His Own Age', in *Translating Beowulf: Modern Versions in English Verse* (Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2015), pp. 81–108
- Mak, Geert, *Amsterdam: A Brief Life of the City*, trans. by Philipp Blom (London: Vintage, 2001)
- Malone, Christopher T., 'Writing Home: Spatial Allegories in the Poetry of Seamus Heaney and Paul Muldoon', *ELH*, 67 (2000), 1083–1109
- Manger, Klaus, 'Entwurf einer Landschaft', in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Sprachgitter'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann, Markus May and Susanna Broch (Heidelberg: Winter, 2005), pp. 350–57
- Massey, Doreen, *Space, Place and Gender* (Cambridge: Polity, 1994)

- , *World City* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007)
- May, Markus, Peter Gossens, and Jürgen Lehmann, eds., *Celan-Handbuch: Leben, Werk, Wirkung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2008)
- Mayer, Hans, 'Erinnerung an Paul Celan', *Merkur*, 24 (1970), 1150–62
- McConkey, James, 'Preface', in *The Anatomy of Memory: An Anthology*, ed. by James McConkey (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. i–iii
- McDiarmid, Lucy, *Auden's Apologies for Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014)
- McDonough, Thomas F., 'Situationist Space', *October*, 67 (1994), 59–77
- McGonigal, James, *Beyond the Last Dragon: A Life of Edwin Morgan* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2012)
- McHale, Brian, *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodernism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015)
- McLuhan, Marshall, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962)
- , *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*, Routledge Classics (London: Routledge Classics, 2001)
- McManus, Tony, *The Radical Field: Kenneth White and Geopoetics* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2007)
- McMurtry, Áine, *Crisis and Form in the Later Writing of Ingeborg Bachmann: An Aesthetic Examination of the Poetic Drafts of the 1960s* (London: MHRA, 2012)
- Meinecke, Dietlind, *Wort und Name bei Paul Celan: zur Widerruflichkeit des Gedichts* (Bad Homburg: Gehlen, 1970)
- Melin, Charlotte, *Poetic Maneuvers: Hans Magnus Enzensberger and the Lyric Genre* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2003)

- Mellors, Anthony, *Late Modernist Poetics: From Pound to Prynne* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005)
- , 'Obscurity, Fragmentation and the Uncanny in Prynne and Celan', in *Late Modernist Poetics: From Pound to Prynne* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), pp. 167–208
- Mengham, Rod, '"A Free Hand to Refuse Everything": Politics and Intricacy in the Work of J. H. Prynne', in *A Manner of Utterance: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne*, ed. by Ian Brinton (Exeter: Shearsman, 2009), pp. 69–82
- Menninghaus, Winfried, *Paul Celan: Magie der Form* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1980)
- 'Meridian, N.', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001)  
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116769>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Michel, J. B., Y. K. Shen, A. P. Aiden, A. Veres, M. K. Gray, J. P. Pickett, and others, 'Quantitative Analysis of Culture Using Millions of Digitized Books', *Science* (New York, N.Y.), 331 (2011), 176–82
- Miller, Tyrus, *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts between the World Wars* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1999)
- Mitchell, Don, *Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space* (New York: Guilford Press, 2012)
- Monk, Geraldine, 'Preface', in *Cusp: Recollections of Poetry in Transition*, ed. by Geraldine Monk (Bristol: Shearsman, 2012), pp. 7–14
- Monmonier, Mark, *Coast Lines: How Mapmakers Frame the World and Chart Environmental Change* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008)
- Moretti, Franco, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1998)
- Mottram, Eric, 'The British Poetry Revival 1960-1975', in *New British Poetries: The Scope of the Possible*, ed. by Robert Hampson and Peter Barry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 15–50
- 'Move to Rid Glasgow of Starlings', *The Glasgow Herald*, 8 December 1965, p. 1

- Muranga, Manuel J. K., *Grossstadtelend in der deutschen Lyrik zwischen Arno Holz und Johannes R. Becher* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 1987)
- National Records of Scotland, 'Mid-2014 Population Estimates', 2013  
<<http://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/statistics-and-data/statistics/statistics-by-theme/population/population-estimates/mid-year-population-estimates/mid-2014>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Nicholson, Colin, 'A Cognitive Mapping', in *Edwin Morgan: Inventions of Modernity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 82–103
- Nicholson, Colin, and Matt McGuire, 'Edwin Morgan', in *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry*, ed. by Colin Nicholson and Matt McGuire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 97–110
- , eds., *The Edinburgh Companion to Contemporary Scottish Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009)
- Nora, Pierre, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, ed. by Lawrence D Kritzman, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer, 3 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), I
- Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency, 'Northern Ireland Census 2011: Historic Population Trends (1841 to 2011) - Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland', 2011  
<[http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/Historic\\_Population\\_Trends\\_%201841-2011%20\\_NI\\_and\\_RoI.pdf](http://www.nisra.gov.uk/Census/Historic_Population_Trends_%201841-2011%20_NI_and_RoI.pdf)> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Oesterle, Günter, "Vorbgriffe zu einer Theorie der Ornamente": Kontroverse Formproblem zwischen Aufklärung, Klassizismus und Romantik am Beispiel der Arabeske', in *Ideal und Wirklichkeit in der bildenden Kunst im späten 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Herbert Beck, Peter C. Bol, and Eva Maek-Gérard (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann Verlag, 1984), pp. 119–39
- Oliver, Douglas, 'J. H. Prynne's "Of Movement Towards A Natural Place"', *Grossteste Review*, 12 (1979), 93–102

- Olschner, Leonard, *Im Abgrund Zeit: Paul Celans Poetiksplitter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007)
- Olsen, Redell, 'Postmodern Poetry in Britain', in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry*, ed. by Neil Corcoran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 42–56
- Otto, Rudolf, 'The Numinous', in *Readings in Philosophy of Religion: Ancient to Contemporary*, ed. by Linda Zagzebski and Timothy D. Miller (Malden, MA; Oxford; Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 119–22
- Owen, Ruth J., *The Poet's Role: Lyric Responses to German Unification by Poets from the GDR* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001)
- Pabisch, Peter, *Luslüstigtig: Phänomene deutschsprachiger Lyrik 1945 bis 1980* (Vienna: Böhlau, 1992)
- Paha, Bernhard, *Die 'Spur' im Werk Paul Celans: eine 'wiederholte' Lesung Jacques Derridas* (Marburg: Tectum, 2001)
- Pattison, Neil, Reitha Pattison, and Luke Roberts, eds., *Certain Prose of the 'English Intelligencer'* (Cambridge: Mountain Press, 2012)
- Paul, Georgina, 'Gender in GDR Literature', in *Rereading East Germany: The Literature and Film of the GDR*, ed. by Karen Leeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), pp. 106–25
- , 'Ismene at the Crossroads: Gender and Poetic Influence', *German Life and Letters*, 60.3 (2007), 430–46.
- Perloff, Marjorie, *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994)
- , 'Sound Scraps, Vision Scraps: Paul Celan's Poetic Practice', in *Reading for Form*, ed. by Susan J Wolfson and Marshall Brown (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006), pp. 177–202
- , 'Writing as Re-Writing: Concrete Poetry as Arrière-Garde', *CiberLetras*, 17 (2007)



- <<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v17/perloff.htm>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Piatti, Barbara, *Die Geographie der Literatur: Schauplätze, Handlungsräume, Raumphantasien* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008)
- ‘Plan to Rid Glasgow of Starlings Starts on Sunday’, *The Glasgow Herald*, 13 February 1970, p. 7
- Pleister, Michael, *Das Bild der Grossstadt in den Dichtungen Robert Walsers, Rainer Maria Rilkes, Stefan Georges und Hugo von Hofmannsthals* (Hamburg: Buske, 1982)
- Pöggeler, Otto, *Spur des Worts: zur Lyrik Paul Celans* (Freiburg: Alber, 1986)
- , ‘Ach, die Kunst! Die Frage nach dem Ort der Dichtung’, in *Der Mensch und die Künste: Festschrift für Heinrich Lützel zum 60. Geburtstage*, ed. by Günter Bandmann, Peter Bloch, and Wilhelm Perpeet (Düsseldorf: Schwann, 1962), pp. 98–111
- Poiger, Uta G., ‘Generations: The “Revolutions” of the 1960s’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern German History*, ed. by Helmut Walser Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 640–62
- Rainey, Lawrence S., *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998)
- Ramazani, Jahan, ‘Poetry and Decolonisation’, in *Concise Companion to Post-War British and Irish Poetry*, ed. by Nigel Alderman and C. D. Blanton (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp. 111–33
- Rapisarda, Cettina, *Raumentwürfe: Studien zu Gedichten Ingeborg Bachmanns* (Frankfurt a.M.; New York: Peter Lang, 2013)
- Rau, Susanne, *Räume: Konzepte, Wahrnehmungen, Nutzungen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2013)
- Reeve, N. H., and Richard Kerridge, *Nearly Too Much: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1995)

- Regan, Stephen, 'Philip Larkin: A Late Modern Poet', in *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century English Poetry*, ed. by Neil Corcoran (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 147–58
- Reichel, Peter, *Politik mit der Erinnerung* (Munich: Hanser, 1999)
- Ringbom, Nils-Eric, *Über die Deutbarkeit der Tonkunst* (Helsinki: Fazer, 1955)
- Ritter, Joachim, *Subjektivität* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989)
- Roebuck, Thomas, and Matthew Sperling, "The Glacial Question, Unsolved": A Specimen Commentary on Lines 1-31', *Glossator*, 2 (2010), 39–78
- Römer, Veronika, *Dichter ohne eigene Sprache?: zur Poetik Ernst Jandls* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2012)
- Rosa, Hartmut, *Beschleunigung: die Veränderung der Zeitstrukturen in der Moderne* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2005)
- Ross, Kristin, *The Emergence of Social Space: Rimbaud and the Paris Commune* (London: Verso, 2008)
- Rupprechter, Walter, 'Politische Dichtung aus dem Sprachlabor', in *Interpretationen: Gedichte von Ernst Jandl*, ed. by Volker Kaukoreit and Kristina Pfoser (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002), pp. 34–46
- Salminen, Antti Eemeli, 'No Name: Paul Celan's Poetics of Naming', *Kritike*, 4 (2010), 123–37
- Sanderson, Stewart, 'Peripheral Centre or Central Periphery: Two Approaches to Modern Scots Translation', *Comparative Critical Studies*, 11 (2014), 93–108 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/ccs.2014.0146>>
- Sareika, Rüdiger, *Die Dritte Welt in der westdeutschen Literatur der sechziger Jahre* (Frankfurt a.M.: Fischer, 1980)
- Sarotte, M. E., *Dealing with the Devil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001)
- Sauer, Carl Ortwin, *The Morphology of Landscape* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1925)

Sauvy, Alfred, 'Trois Mondes, Une Planète', *L'Observateur*, 14 August 1952, p.

14

Schäfer, Martin Jörg, *Schmerz zum Mitsein: zur Relektüre Celans und Heideggers durch Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe und Jean-Luc Nancy* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003)

———, "Weg des Unmöglichen" - Celans Gespräch mit Heidegger im Meridian', in *Die Zeitlichkeit des Ethos: poetologische Aspekte im Schreiben Paul Celans*, ed. by Ulrich Wergin and Martin Jörg Schäfer (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003), pp. 113–64 (p. 163)

Schlögel, Karl, *Im Raume lesen wir die Zeit: über Zivilisationsgeschichte und Geopolitik* (Munich: Hanser, 2003)

Schmeling, Manfred, and Monika Schmitz-Emans, eds., *Das Paradigma der Landschaft in Moderne und Postmoderne* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2007)

Schnurre, Wolfdietrich, *Der Schattenfotograf: Aufzeichnungen* (Munich: List, 1978)

Schulze, Joachim, *Celan und die Mystiker: Motivtypologische und quellenkundliche Kommentare* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1983)

Schweiger, Hannes, and Hajnalka Nagy, eds., *Wir Jandln! Didaktische und wissenschaftliche Wege zu Ernst Jandl* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2013)

Scott, J. D., 'In the Movement', *The Spectator*, 1 October 1954, pp. 399–400

Self, Will, *Psychogeography* (London: A&C Black, 2013)

Shakespeare, William, '1 Henry IV', in *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp. 453–81

Shen, Qinna, 'Shedding, Witchcraft, and the Romantic Subject: Feminist Appropriation of the Witch in Sarah Kirsch's "Zaubersprüche" (1973)', *Neophilologus*, 93 (2008), 675–89

- Sherman, Daniel J., Rudd van Dijk, Jasmine Alinder, and A. Aneesh, eds., *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*, 21st Century Studies, 7 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013)
- Sherry, Vincent, *The Uncommon Tongue: The Poetry and Criticism of Geoffrey Hill* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1987)
- Shields, Kathleen, 'Derek Mahon's Poetry of Belonging', *Irish University Review*, 24 (1994), 67–79
- 'Shore, n.3', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1914) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/178551>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Skoie, Mathilda, 'The Woman', in *The Cambridge Companion to Latin Love Elegy*, ed. by Thea S. Thorsen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 83–96
- Skoulding, Zoë, *Contemporary Women's Poetry and the Urban Space: Experimental Cities* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013)
- Smith, Jos, "'Lithogenesis": Towards a (Geo)Poetics of Place', *Literary Geographies*, 1 (2015), 62–78
- Soja, Edward W., *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London; New York: Verso, 1989)
- 'Space, n.1', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/185414>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, 'Translator's Preface', in *Of Grammatology*, by Jacques Derrida, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. ix–lxxxiix
- Stanley, Thomas, 'Back On Into The Way Home: "Charm Against Too Many Apples"', *Glossator*, 2 (2010), 11–37
- 'Starling Invasion No Joke for Glasgow', *The Glasgow Herald*, 25 November 1955, p. 9

- Steiner, George, 'On Difficulty', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 36 (1978), 263
- Stone-Richards, Thomas, 'The Time of the Subject in the Neurological Field (I): A Commentary on J. H. Prynne's "Again in the Black Cloud"', *Glossator*, 2 (2010), 149–244
- Strathausen, Carsten, 'Eichendorff's Das Marmorbild and the Demise of Romanticism', in *Rereading Romanticism*, ed. by Martha B. Helfer (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000), pp. 368–88
- Strutz, Johann, *Profile der neueren slowenischen Literatur in Kärnten* (Klagenfurt: Hermagoras, 1998)
- Suchy, Victor, 'Poesie und Poesis: Dargestellt am Werke Friederike Mayröckers', in *Formen der Lyrik in der österreichischen Gegenwartsliteratur*, ed. by Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler and Hermann Möcker (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1981), pp. 95–109
- Suri, Jeremi, 'The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960–1975', in *The Long 1968: Revisions and New Perspectives*, ed. by Daniel J. Sherman and others, 21st Century Studies, 7 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 93–119
- Sutherland, Keston, 'X L Prynne', in *A Manner of Utterance: The Poetry of J. H. Prynne*, ed. by Ian Brinton (Exeter: Shearsman, 2009), pp. 104–32
- Symmons Roberts, Michael, and Paul Farley, *Edgelands* (London: Vintage, 2012)
- Szondi, Peter, *Celan-Studien* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1973)
- , 'Durch die Enge geführt. Versuch über die Verständlichkeit des modernen Gedichts', in *Schriften II* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1978), pp. 345–89
- Tally Jr., R. T., ed., *Geocritical Explorations: Space, Place, and Mapping in Literary and Cultural Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

- Tervooren, Helmut, and Jens Haustein, eds., *Regionale Literaturgeschichtsschreibung: Aufgaben, Analysen und Perspektiven*, Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie. Sonderheft, 122 (Berlin: Schmidt, 2003)
- The World Bank, 'Total Population (2014)', World Development Indicators <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Theobaldy, Jürgen, and Gustav Zürcher, *Veränderung der Lyrik* (Munich: Text + Kritik, 1976)
- 'Third World, N. and Adj.', *OED Online* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986) <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200854>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Thomas, Nicola, 'Meridians: The Poem as a Place of Encounter in Paul Celan and J. H. Prynne', *Tropos*, 2 (2015)
- , 'Stark, Necessary and Not Permanent: Huts in the Work of Paul Celan and J. H. Prynne', *German Life and Letters*, 69 (2016), 350–64
- Thurmann-Jajes, Anne, Weserburg Museum für Moderne Kunst, and Poetry on the Road, eds., *Poesie-Konkret: Zur internationalen Verbreitung und Diversifizierung der Konkreten Poesie*, (Bremen: Salon, 2012)
- Tobias, Rochelle, *The Discourse of Nature in the Poetry of Paul Celan: The Unnatural World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006)
- Tomaney, John, 'Keeping a Beat in the Dark: Narratives of Regional Identity in Basil Bunting's Briggflatts', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25 (2007), 355–75
- Tryphonopoulos, Demetres P., and Stephen Adams, eds., *The Ezra Pound Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 2005)
- Uhrmacher, Anne, *Spielarten des Komischen: Ernst Jandl und die Sprache* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007)

US Census Bureau Public Information Office, 'Facts for Features:

Irish-American Heritage Month (March) and St. Patrick's Day (March 17):  
2012 - Facts for Features & Special Editions - Newsroom - U.S. Census  
Bureau' <[https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/  
facts\\_for\\_features\\_special\\_editions/cb12-ff03.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/cb12-ff03.html)> [accessed 24 August  
2016]

Vinci, Thomas C., *Space, Geometry, and Kant's Transcendental Deduction of the  
Categories* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2015)

Von Dannenberg, Julia, *The Foundations of Ostpolitik: The Making of the Moscow  
Treaty between West Germany and the USSR*, Oxford Historical  
Monographs (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Wainwright, Oliver, 'The Great Garden Swindle: How Developers Are Hiding  
behind Shrubbery', *The Guardian* <[http://www.theguardian.com/  
artanddesign/architecture-design-blog/2015/apr/16/the-great-garden  
-swindle-how-developers-are-hiding-behind-shrubbery](http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/architecture-design-blog/2015/apr/16/the-great-garden-swindle-how-developers-are-hiding-behind-shrubbery)> [accessed 24  
August 2016]

Walker, Paul M., 'Stretto', *Grove Music Online*  
<[http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article\\_citations/grove/  
music/26948](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article_citations/grove/music/26948)> [accessed 24 August 2016]

Ward, Geoffrey, 'Nothing but Mortality: Prynne and Celan', in *Contemporary  
Poetry Meets Modern Theory*, ed. by Antony Easthope and John Thompson  
(New York; London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), pp.  
139–52

Watson, Roderick, 'The Modern Scottish Literary Renaissance', in *Edinburgh  
Companion to Twentieth-Century Scottish Literature*, ed. by Ian Brown and  
Alan Riach (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009)

- Weigel, Sigrid, 'Zum "topographical turn". Kartographie, Topographie und Raumkonzepte in den Kulturwissenschaften', *kulturpoetik*, 2 (2002), 151–65
- Wenz, Karin, *Raum, Raumsprache und Sprachräume: zur Textsemiotik der Raumbeschreibung* (Tübingen: Narr, 1997)
- Werner, Uta, *Textgräber: Paul Celans geologische Lyrik* (Munich: Fink, 1998)
- Westphal, Bertrand, *Geocriticism: Real and Fictional Spaces*, trans. by Robert T. Tally Jr. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)
- White, Kenneth, *On the Atlantic Edge: A Geopoetics Project* (Dingwall: Sandstone, 2006)
- Whyte, Christopher, *Modern Scottish Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004)
- , '“Now You See It, Now You Don”t’: The Love Poetry of Edwin Morgan', *The Glasgow Review*, 1993  
<<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/STELLA/COMET/glasgrev/issue2/whyte.htm>>  
[accessed 24 August 2016]
- , 'Queer Readings, Gay Texts: From “Redgauntlet” to “The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie”', in *Scotland in Theory: Reflections on Culture & Literature*, ed. by Eleanor Bell and Gavin Miller (Amsterdam; New York: Rodopi, 2004), pp. 147–66
- , 'The 1960s (Robert Garioch, Tom Leonard, Edwin Morgan)', in *Modern Scottish Poetry* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), pp. 120–48
- Williams, Rhys W., '“Ich bin kein Emigrant, ich bin kein Dissident”: Sarah Kirsch und die DDR', in *Deutsch-deutsches Literaturexil. Schriftstellerinnen und Schriftsteller aus der DDR in der Bundesrepublik*, ed. by Jörg Bernig and Walter Schmitz (Dresden: Thelem, 2009), pp. 385–400
- Wilson, David A., ed., *Irish Nationalism in Canada* (Montreal; Kingston: McGill-Queen's Press, 2009)



- Winkler, Jean Marie, 'In der Luft', in *Kommentar zu Paul Celans 'Die Niemandrose'*, ed. by Jürgen Lehmann and Christine Ivanović (Heidelberg: Winter, 1997), pp. 368–76
- Winkler, Ron, *Dichtung zwischen Grossstadt und Grosshirn: Annäherungen an das lyrische Werk Durs Grünbeins* (Hamburg: Kovac, 2000)
- Wolf, Christa, 'Your Next Life Begins Today: A Letter About Bettine', in *Bettina Brentano-von Arnim: Gender and Politics*, ed. by Elke Frederiksen and Katherine Goodman, trans. by Jan van Heurck (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), pp. 35–70
- Wroe, Nicholas, 'Interview: Derek Mahon: "A Sense of Place"', *The Guardian* <<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/jul/22/featuresreviews.guardianreview11>> [accessed 24 August 2016]
- Yeung, Heather H., *Spatial Engagement with Poetry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)
- Zurbrugg, Nicholas, 'Iain Hamilton Finlay and Concrete Poetry', in *Contemporary British Poetry: Essays in Theory and Criticism*, ed. by James Acheson and Romana Huk (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 113–42
- Zwengel, Almut, *Die 'Gastarbeiter' der DDR: politischer Kontext und Lebenswelt* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2011)