

HEIMAT, SPACE, NARRATIVE

Toward a Transnational Approach to Flight and Expulsion



FRIEDERIKE EIGLER

Heimat, Space, Narrative

Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture

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Friederike Eigler



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For my parents

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Acknowledgments

DURING THE COLD WAR, West Germans as well as most German Studies scholars in the West were culturally and linguistically oriented towards Western Europe. Surprisingly, this imbalance has not significantly changed in the twenty-five years since the fall of the Wall and the end of the Cold War. I became acutely aware of this bias—and the extent to which it had shaped my own personal and professional life—when I attended the 2010 conference of the IVG (*Internationale Vereinigung für Germanistik*) in Warsaw, Poland. This visit to Warsaw and subsequent trips to Wrocław, Zielona Góra, and Łódź fostered my interest in Poland, the country whose borders are not far from my favorite German city (Berlin) and whose history is so closely and violently intertwined with that of Germany.

My research on *Heimat*, space, and narrative and my interest in flight and expulsion predate my trip to Warsaw, but the completed book is shaped in significant ways by my encounters with Poland and Poles over the past few years. My interactions with scholars in Poland and at the Zentrum für Historische Forschung Berlin were eye-opening and inspiring in multiple ways. I was intrigued to learn more about the (often collaborative) scholarship on German-Polish issues, most importantly the monumental project *Deutsch-Polnische Erinnerungsorte* (German-Polish Sites of Memory) spearheaded by Robert Traba, director of the Zentrum für Historische Forschung Berlin.

Publications by Polish Germanists as well as the creative work of some Polish writers have shaped my own approach to (German) literary responses to flight and expulsion—and related notions of *Heimat* and space. For instance, regional initiatives in Poland like the grass-root organization “Borussia” and novels like Stefan Chwin’s *Hanemann* (1995) or Olga Tokarczuk’s *Dom dzienny, dom nocny* (House of Day, House of Night, 1998; German: *Taghaus, Nachthaus*) first made me aware of innovative engagements with German-Polish border regions in contemporary Poland. These trends compelled me to look for related efforts in German literature and contributed to my interest in Horst Bienek’s novels on Upper Silesia from the 1970s and early 1980s (the focus of chapters 4 and 5) as well as in contemporary novels that tackle the legacies of flight, expulsion, and the loss of home (chapters 6 and 7).

Over the past few years, I greatly benefited from opportunities to present aspects of my research in the United States, Canada, and in Europe. In particular I have valued the discussion with colleagues at invited lectures at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, University of Virginia, University of Bonn, and Ohio State University, as well as at conferences and symposia in North America (University of Edmonton, Alberta, 2011; Georgetown University, 2013), Germany (Trier, 2010), Poland (Zielona Góra, 2011; Łódź, 2011), Spain (Vittoria-Gastein, 2013), and France (Lille, 2014).

For helpful conversations and feedback to presentations and book chapters I am especially grateful to the following colleagues and friends: Peter Blickle, Carme Bescansa, Mirosława Czarnecka, Andrew Demshuk, Rainer Dobbelstein, Michael Dormmann, Martin Eigler, Anne Fuchs, Randall Halle, James Harding, Mareike Herrmann, Andreas Huyssen, Kornelia Kończal, Kristin Kopp, Jens Kugele, Werner Nell, Bill Niven, Karen Remmler, Jay Rosellini, Karol Sauerland, Birgit Schneider, Helmut Schneider, and Irene Sywenky.

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Last but not least, Georgetown University granted me a sabbatical leave in 2010–11. This year, which I spent in Berlin, provided me not only with uninterrupted time for reading and writing, but also with the opportunity to witness changing German-Polish relations (in the form of cultural and academic initiatives) “on the ground.” Regarding my research in Germany, I would like to thank Reinhard Laube and Anja Fleck at the Niedersächsische Landesbibliothek Hannover. Both were extremely helpful in introducing me to the Horst Bienek archive and in assisting me in locating relevant sources.

Finally, I would like to thank Annelies Schwarz for generously granting permission to use her artwork—a creative response to early memories of expulsion—for the book cover.

Washington, DC, December 2013

* * *

Most of this monograph contains previously unpublished material, but earlier versions of some of the book chapters have appeared elsewhere. My contribution to the 2010 volume *Generational Shifts in Contemporary German Culture* (ed. Suzanne Veas-Gulani and Laurel Pfister), titled “Beyond the Victims Debate: Flight and Expulsion in Recent Novels by Authors from the Second and Third Generation,” has been reframed for the monograph and makes up chapter 6. My *New German Critique* article, “Critical Approaches to Heimat and the ‘Spatial Turn,’” (2012) was revised for chapter 2. And, finally, a contribution in German to the 2012 volume *Störungen im Raum—Raum der Störungen* (ed. Carsten Gansel and Pawel Zimiak), entitled “Grenz-Räume in der deutsch-polnischen Gegenwartsliteratur,” became the point of departure for chapter 7. I am grateful for the permission to republish revised versions of these essays.

Introduction: Geocritical Approaches to Place-Bound Belonging

FLIGHT, EXPULSION, AND FORCED RELOCATION of different ethnic groups make up an intricate part of European history in the first half of the twentieth century. While the circumstances and consequences varied in each case, these phenomena taken together throw into relief the precarious state of the notion of a stable and secure home, homeland—or Heimat. Some of the most extreme examples of forced relocation in the twentieth century occurred as part of the “westward shift” of Poland at the end of the Second World War, which involved redrawing the borders of the Soviet Union, Poland, and Germany (as decided by the Allies at the conferences of Yalta and Potsdam); as a result approximately eight million ethnic Germans—as well as at least one million Poles and 500 thousand Ukrainians—had to flee or were expelled from the border regions and other Eastern territories.¹

The atrocities committed by Nazi Germany against Poles on the one hand and the massive and often violent expulsion of Germans on the other contributed to the fraught relationship between Poland and Germany after the Second World War. The notion of Heimat, and in particular of a lost Heimat, is thus a central concern when exploring the German-Polish relationship, particularly in its literary manifestations. Indeed, literature is a prominent arena in which these historical events and their human consequences have been examined.

This monograph revisits Heimat, the much-debated German notion of homeland, by examining flight and expulsion, as well as the construction of new places of belonging, in selected German-language novels from the 1970s to the present. They include Horst Bienek’s four novels on Upper Silesia of the 1970s and early 1980s as well as contemporary novels by Kathrin Schmidt, Reinhard Jirgl, Christoph Hein, Tanja Dückers, Sabrina Janesch, and Olga Tokarczuk. Specifically, this study asks how, within the constellation of Cold War and post-Cold War Europe, German authors respond to memories and postmemories of the “lost Heimat in the East.” To what extent do contemporary German and Polish authors examine previous notions of belonging, based on ethnicity and territory,

¹ Because of the new Eastern border of Poland, Poles were forced to move westward and Ukrainians eastward.

and how do they imagine new notions of place-bound belonging? How does the recent interest in border regions among some German authors correspond to related developments in Polish literature (here exemplified by a novel by the prominent author Tokarczuk)? Conceptually, these guiding questions are informed by theoretical engagements with space and place² in the context of (literary) narratives.

* * *

The “traditional” concept of Heimat is arguably a “modern” phenomenon: it emerged in response to what Anthony Giddens has called “modernity and its discontents”—that is, the perceived or real loss of social stability and transparency, and of a sense of community, all tied to a specific locale. The idea of a lost or unattainable Heimat has shaped German literary and cultural history in significant ways since long before the second half of the twentieth century. Since the early 1800s Heimat has served as an arena for contemplating the uprootedness of the modern individual. The yearning for Heimat as a manifestation of the loss of metaphysical rootedness constitutes a significant part of the concept’s rich connotations. While this modern condition makes up a general backdrop for this study, it remains distinct from yearnings for the lost Heimat in the East, since the latter is the response to a specific historical constellation and the real loss of home.

Historians have examined how a sense of German national identity emerged in the late nineteenth century in interaction with local (Heimat) identities, and how in the twentieth century National Socialism appropriated Heimat sentiments for the ideology of racial purity and territorial expansion.³ In response to national or nationalistic appropriations of Heimat, exiled writers such as Thomas Mann clung to a non-territorial Heimat of German language and culture. This embrace of German language and culture as a virtual Heimat has been explored in existing scholarship, not only in reference to the literature of exile but also in reference to postwar German and Austrian literature more generally.⁴

² Throughout this study, I use “space” and “place” often in tandem. Unless noted otherwise, “space” generally denotes the abstract concept, while “place” refers to a particular geographical or social manifestation of space. Scholars working with transdisciplinary discourses on space are faced with competing (and sometimes incompatible) definitions and usages of both terms. In chapter 3, definitions of both terms will be discussed in more detail.

³ For instance, historians have explored how *Heimatvereine* (Heimat associations) were crucial in connecting local communities to the (abstract) idea of the nation-state. See Confino, *Nation as a Local Metaphor*; Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials*; and Blackbourn and Retallack, *Localism, Landscape, and the Ambiguities of Place*.

⁴ W. G. Sebald discusses both notions of Heimat—the poetic/linguistic and the territorial/politicized one—in his essay “Damals vor Graz.”

Expanding the historical and conceptual parameters of these inquiries, in this study I discuss how postwar and contemporary literature responds to the loss of physical home as a consequence of the forced relocation of ethnic Germans (and of Poles) at the end of the war. More specifically, I take our contemporary moment as a point of departure for examining how specific novels respond either implicitly or explicitly to two intertwined trends that dominated public discourse in the long postwar period of 1945 to 1989: on the one hand, politicized discourses on the “lost Heimat in the East,” promoted, especially in the early postwar decades, by the influential “Bund der Vertriebenen” or BdV (Federation of Expellees);⁵ on the other hand, a lack of public and scholarly attention to the human and social dimensions of the momentous movement of people at the end of the War.⁶

The loosening of the ideological grip that had dominated the engagement with flight and expulsion through the Cold War has resulted in scholarship that looks more closely at expellee discourses on the “lost Heimat in the East.” According to widespread assumptions held by the general public and in academia, the notion of the “lost Heimat” among expellees was associated not only with legal claims to the lost homeland but also with the desire to return to the territories in the East. Leaders of expellee organizations did indeed publicly voice these demands. But as Andrew Demshuk has recently argued in *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945–1970*, these views were not shared by the majority of expellees. Demshuk’s broad archival research, including diaries, Heimat books,⁷ letters and other expellees’ documents, shows that expellees worked through the loss of their homes by conceptualizing two diverging notions of Heimat. What he terms the “Heimat

⁵ In the decades following the Second World War, public discourses on the “lost Heimat in the East” were dominated by the “Bund der Vertriebenen” or BdV (Federation of Expellees) and contributed to an ideologically problematic linkage of Heimat and space. Representing a large number of local expellee groups, the BdV refused to accept the postwar borders between Germany and Poland throughout the long postwar period (1945–90) and generally approached the events that resulted in the loss of Heimat from a narrow national viewpoint.

⁶ This second trend was in part an attempt to counteract the ideological outlook of the “Bund der Vertriebenen,” but the lack of interest in the fate of expellees outlasted the BdV’s political influence and continued through the 1980s.

⁷ The genre of Heimat books (*Heimatbücher*) is a popular but until recently little researched local tradition that can be found in rural areas to the present day. It is defined by collective authorship by inhabitants of a particular place, and the attempt to capture, often in great detail, aspects of its topography, local history, local traditions, and daily life. This genre assumed special significance for expellees who continued to write Heimat books as a way to remember the homes they had lost at the end of the war (cf. Faehndrich, 6–10).

of memory” consists of an often nostalgic rendering of the lost homeland that allowed the expellees to preserve a sense of continuity via an idealized home that “resided in memory” (5, 7). By contrast, Demshuk describes the expellees’ negative image of their actual former homeland, which is now part of Poland, with the term “Heimat transformed.” Exaggerating the foreignness and general decline of the previous home, these images drew on a combination of hearsay, actual travel experiences, and long-standing stereotypes regarding the “polnische Wirtschaft” (a term that carries connotations of Polish chaos and decay). According to Demshuk, these negative representations helped expellees to accept their loss instead of clinging to the unrealistic idea of a physical return to the old Heimat (13, 21).

The Lost German East exemplifies a recent trend in scholarship that does not primarily focus on the historical events themselves but on the ways in which historical subjects (here the expellees themselves) and subsequent generations, including scholars, writers, and public figures, remembered, conceptualized, and represented these events. In the fraught history and legacy of flight and expulsion this approach is an important corrective to a focus on the (dominant) role of the Federation of Expellees. In literature, however, similar considerations of multiple voices and shifting perspectives on these events predate this recent turn in scholarship by several decades.

The following example illustrates the prominent role of literature in addressing the flight and expulsion of Germans at the end of the Second World War. Siegfried Lenz’s novel *Heimatmuseum*, published in 1978—more than thirty-five years ago—looks at phenomena that are closely related to Demshuk’s scholarly investigation. In Lenz’s novel, memorabilia from Masuria are collected in a museum (the museum of the “lost Heimat”) that is located in the expellees’ new hometown in the northern part of postwar West Germany. The range of memorabilia exhibited in the museum fulfills a function for expellees that is comparable to that fulfilled by the documents Demshuk investigates. Written and visual documents as well as objects from the lost Heimat create a sense of continuity, despite the major personal and social upheaval that is epitomized in the loss of home. Beyond these similarities, the novel also shows how the museum of the “lost Heimat” is ideologically appropriated by expellee leaders who are striving to bolster their territorial and legal claims regarding the lost territories. And it is this constellation—as we find out in the framing narrative at the end of the novel—that prompts the narrator and museum director, Zygmunt Rogalla, to set fire to the museum. Having destroyed the museum that he was instrumental in building, he narrates the story of his (lost) homeland instead. Rogalla’s narrative includes detailed personal memories of the lost Heimat but also critical accounts of increasing nationalism and anti-Polish violence—that is, exclusionary practices in the

old Heimat. In brief, the novel assumes the role of a multifaceted written Heimat museum.

These meta-critical and self-referential dimensions of Lenz's novel exemplify a potential of literature that goes beyond the role of the personal and communal Heimat documents analyzed by Demshuk. Lenz's novel takes seriously the expellees' affective attachment to their lost homeland, while at the same time drawing attention to other dimensions: the extent to which expellees' nostalgic memories gloss over problematic aspects of the past, and the ways in which this nostalgia can be easily appropriated for problematic ideological ends. Because of their multi-voiced structure, novels such as *Heimatmuseum* have played a major role in challenging reductive or politicized responses to the lost Heimat in the East—not by avoiding these topics but by tackling the politically sensitive issues of flight and expulsion in innovative and nuanced ways.

This example also illustrates that the novel is a particularly appropriate focus of this study, as this genre provides an imaginary space for experimenting with notions of place and belonging, while at the same time referencing geographical regions, their histories, and the ways in which they are transformed in memories and postmemories. Indeed, since the 1950s, a number of significant novels, including Grass's *Blechtrommel* (*Tin Drum*), have tackled the controversial history and legacy of flight and expulsion in a contextualized fashion—predating related efforts in historiography and in literary studies by several decades.⁸

* * *

My exploration of how literary texts contribute to discourses on flight, expulsion, and relocation draws on the concepts of geopoetics and of geocriticism. Both concepts are particularly useful for my focus on changing representations of Heimat and on underlying notions of space and place. For the purpose of this study I use the term “geopoetics” when the narrative construction of places of belonging is concerned, while I employ the term “geocriticism” when I examine these narratives' larger cultural and sociopolitical implications. Briefly put, by examining the role of spatial constellations in narrative, I ask what happens when geopoetics responds to geopolitics. Focusing on the role of memory in novels that work through the loss of Heimat, I address the following overarching questions in this study:

- What are the alternatives to traditional concepts of Heimat, which have tied identity to ethnicity and territory?

⁸ There is of course ample scholarship on Grass's novel, but until recently most of it focused on other dimensions of the work.

- What is the role of spatial constellations in narrative in general, and in narratives of Heimat in particular?
- What has been literature's contribution to establishing contextualized and, in some cases, transnational approaches to flight and expulsion?⁹
- How does literature explore the transgenerational effects of the loss of home?
- How does literature engage with specific (historical and contemporary) border regions?

Each chapter addresses one or more of these overarching questions. The book as a whole consists of three parts that speak to one another in multiple ways, yet can also be read fruitfully on their own. In the three chapters that comprise the first part, I discuss distinct scholarly discourses on Heimat, on space and narrative, and on flight and expulsion, respectively. These chapters provide important angles for the critical reading of the literary texts in parts II and III. In chapter 1, I look at the scholarship on Heimat in the context of literature, culture, and film and argue that we should pay closer attention to underlying notions of place and space in order to enhance our ability to identify and analyze changing manifestations of Heimat. In chapter 2, I take theories associated with the spatial turn as a point of departure for exploring the role of space in narrative and cultural theories.¹⁰ Some of the most widely established approaches in narratology are influenced by structuralism, and they thus often work with a static concept of space. Under this paradigm, space in narrative is understood as a container that delimits social processes or as a fixed location that provides a stage or backdrop for the evolving plot. In chapter 2, I tease out the ways in which some approaches in literary and cultural studies account for dynamic concepts of space, that is, space conceived as co-constructed by social and historical factors. Ultimately, my goal in this chapter is not to provide a comprehensive account of the wide array

⁹ As an attribute for literary or theoretical approaches, I employ the term “transnational” as defined by the historian Young-sun Hong: a transnational perspective examines how the national “is imbricated in sub- and supra-national phenomena whose repression or forgetting first makes possible the political and cultural construction of the nation.” On the subject of German studies Nina Berman maintains: “The concept is also relevant with regard to literature and culture about German issues that is produced in languages other than German ranging from Swahili to Polish” (“Transnationalism”). On the “transnational turn in literary studies,” see Jay, *Global Matters*.

¹⁰ Since the role of space in narrative has received far less attention than memory, I devote a separate chapter to space but not to memory. Concepts related to memory studies are more widely known and will be employed and, if necessary, briefly discussed throughout this study.

of narrative theories but to explore how dynamic concepts of space shape prose fiction and, in particular, narrative renderings of Heimat.¹¹

Addressing readers primarily interested in the scholarship on Heimat and on space and narrative, chapters 1 and 2 can be read either independently or in conjunction with the textual analyses in parts II and III.¹² Alternatively, readers interested primarily in literary engagements with the lost Heimat might want to skip chapters 1 and 2 and start with chapter 3. Chapter 3 provides a critical assessment of scholarly approaches to flight and expulsion, giving special attention to scholarship that has emerged in the decades since the end of the Cold War. Among the most promising developments are transdisciplinary approaches and collaborative projects that involve scholars from multiple national backgrounds.

In the remainder of the book, parts II and III, I examine selected novels from the 1970s to the present. Serving as a test case for a geocritical approach to literature on the “lost Heimat,” part II (chapters 4 and 5) examines Horst Bienek’s Gleiwitz tetralogy, published between 1975 and 1982. In chapter 4, I examine how Bienek’s four novels recreate the historical border region of Upper Silesia just prior to and during the Second World War, that is, the period that precedes the fundamental restructuring of Silesia and the redrawing of the German-Polish border. Considering this volatile historical situation, it is not surprising that competing notions of space, place, and belonging take center stage in Bienek’s novels. Yet, as I will show in chapter 5, in contradistinction to the historical divisions and changing political status of this Silesian border region, the novels also foreground connections, affiliations, and multiethnic identities across and beyond political borders. Overall, I argue that Bienek’s literary re-creation of one of the last vestiges of a regional, pre-national identity carries utopian elements anticipating another, perhaps postnational and postideological Europe at a time when the continent was firmly in the grip of the Cold War.

Chapters 6 and 7, which comprise part III, examine contemporary German novels that look anew at forced relocation, flight, and expulsion and at the legacies of this history in contemporary border regions. In chapter 6, I explore four novels from the late 1990s and early 2000s, Kathrin Schmidt’s *Gunnar-Lennefsen Expedition*, Reinhard Jirgl’s *Die Unvollendeten* (The Incomplete), Christoph Hein’s *Landnahme* (*Settlement*, 2008), and Tanja Dückers’s *Himmelskörper* (Heavenly Bodies). Unlike earlier literary works, including the last novel of Bienek’s tetralogy, these texts no longer focus on the expulsion of Germans from Eastern territories but address the transgenerational effects of losing one’s home and attempting to establish

¹¹ For an insightful and comprehensive discussion of recent theories of narrative (and of performance), see Breger, *An Aesthetics of Narrative Performance*.

¹² Spatial concepts that are important for the analyses of literary texts are introduced again at various points in parts II and III.

a new home in the context of postwar East and West Germany. The novels discussed in chapter 6 reference not only the “lost Heimat” in German-Polish border regions but also the city of Königsberg (today Kaliningrad, Russia) and the Sudeten German town of Komotau (today Chomotov, Czech Republic). However, the specific histories and geographies of these places are not the main focus of these novels. Because memory and trauma across multiple generations feature prominently in these texts, the analytical focus of chapter 6 shifts from spatial constellations to generation-specific responses to flight and forced relocation.

The final chapter discusses two novels, *Katzenberge* (Cat Mountains) by Sabrina Janesch, and *Dom dzienny, dom nocny* (House of Day, House of Night; German: *Taghaus, Nachthaus*) by the Polish author Olga Tokarczuk. Both novels explore places of belonging in contemporary German-Polish border regions by experimenting with real and imagined geographies. They reference aspects of German-Polish history that were silenced during Socialism and that have remained little known in Germany to the present day: as a result of the new postwar borders, which increased the territory of the Soviet Union, a significant number of Poles were forced to relocate from the eastern border region of Poland (today part of Ukraine, Belarus, and Lithuania), often to the newly gained (formerly German) territories in the West. In terms of numbers, these expulsions were significantly smaller in scale than those of Germans, yet for Poles these events were the last in a long sequence of forced population movements (the previous ones were part of Nazi Germany’s infamous Master Plan East aimed at a complete spatial and racial restructuring of occupied Poland).

In a decisive departure from previous literary engagements with flight and expulsion, which were limited to one particular national framework, both Tokarczuk and Janesch begin to look at these events by considering multiple perspectives and the interlinked collective and individual histories of Germans and Poles. These novels yield new notions of Heimat or places of belonging¹³ that explicitly consider the legacies of multiple relocations—including the expulsion of Poles from Poland’s former Eastern territories. These new notions of Heimat share aspects of the Polish *prywatna ojczyzna*, a term that Dagmar Wienroeder-Skinner translates as “private fatherland” or “kleine Heimat.” The notion of *prywatna ojczyzna*—evoking a sense of regional memory and identity—assumed new significance in the 1990s when Polish writers began to explore German-Polish border regions (Wienroeder-Skinner 262–65). In

¹³ I use the descriptive term “place of belonging” here as a synonym for “Heimat.” Since the term Heimat is so closely associated with German culture and history I use this synonym especially in the context of Polish literature. At the same time, I will argue that contemporary German and Polish novels contribute to redefine the very notion of Heimat by introducing transnational perspectives.

different ways, these texts foster an awareness that particular regions used to be the home of other ethnic and national groups. As I will show in this final chapter, these novels thus introduce a transnational European perspective regarding historical events that, until recently, have been viewed almost exclusively through a national lens.¹⁴ By rethinking notions of belonging, these novels are not only of interest from a literary standpoint but are of cultural and historical significance as well.

Finally, a brief comment on the criteria for selecting the literary works briefly introduced above. The novels discussed in part II address the legacies of flight and relocation from the vantage point of postwar Europe, while the more recent novels examined in part III address these issues from the perspective of a reconfigured contemporary Europe. The selection of primary texts was motivated by pragmatic and by conceptual reasons. Despite a recent upsurge in scholarship on Bienek, his tetralogy on Upper Silesia has not received as much attention as thematically related works of his contemporaries, including Siegfried Lenz, Günther Grass, and Christa Wolf. As I will argue below, Bienek's four novels of the 1970s and 1980s have gained new relevance in the context of contemporary Europe and thus merit additional critical attention. By comparison, recent novels by authors of subsequent generations (for example, Sabrina Janesch and Olga Tokarczuk) that are the focus of the final chapter emerged from and respond to the reconfigured geopolitical situation in contemporary Europe.

Conceptually, the selection was motivated by the central role that geographical regions and imaginary spaces play in most of the novels. An exception is chapter 6, which discusses a body of texts that work through the transgenerational effects of flight and forced relocation. These novels from the 1990s and early 2000s—which received significant attention in the German media (*feuilletons*) and in German studies scholarship—provide a general backdrop against which the shift toward literary explorations of border regions is thrown into relief. In different ways, all of the literary works lend themselves particularly well to a textual analysis that concentrates on narrative representations of places of belonging or *Heimat*—broadly conceptualized as the nexus of place, memory, and affect. Taken together, these novels contribute to the discursive transformation of formerly highly contested European border regions.

¹⁴ The final chapter thus contributes to a growing body of research on German-Polish issues in film, literature, and culture that adopts a comparative or transnational approach. See, for instance, the monograph by Kopp, *Germany's Wild East*; the volumes *Germany, Poland, and Postmemorial Relations*, edited by Kopp and Niżyńska; *Re-mapping Polish-German Historical Memory*, edited by Beinek and Kosicki; and the special issue of *German Politics and Society* on "German-Polish Border Regions," edited by Eigler and Weigert.

