Peter Schneider's *Eduards Heimkehr* and the Image of the "New Berlin"¹

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Many texts of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries showcased Berlin as an incomplete city, not one that is, but rather one that is always "becoming."² Recent events, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the subsequent unification of Germany, and the decision to return Berlin to its status as capital (1991) continue this trend, forcing Berlin into the limelight, and making the continual changes within the city a matter of public interest. Unification has afforded Berlin the opportunity to create a new image for itself, one that can serve as a counterbalance to the politically charged recent history of Berlin as the capital of Nazi Germany, and former East Berlin as the capital of the German Democratic Republic. As capital of united Germany, Berlin strives to recreate itself, to become a multinational metropolis, a *Weltstadt*, with an image and stature equivalent to that of other European capitals such as Paris and London. These competing desires demand that Berlin undertake one of the biggest building projects of its variegated history. The resulting construction boom allows Berlin to put on a new face, or to hide behind a new mask. Naturally, these changes have been accompanied by numerous debates in the media, in scholarly forums, and in literary texts.

This essay seeks to explore the image that the "new Berlin" has tried to project for itself and the ways in which literature has reported and responded to the city's ever-changing appearance. How does the writer Peter Schneider, famous for his portrayal of divided Berlin in *Der Mauerspringer* (1982),³ politicize the landscape and architecture of Berlin in his most recent book? How and why is Berlin the perfect stage for dealing with questions pertinent to united Germany that Schneider raises in his texts: the right of land and building ownership in the former GDR, the coming to terms with the personal past and familial ties to Nazism and to the Jews during the Third Reich, and the ever present "guilt" which Germans must feel for the Holocaust? In Schneider's most recent novel, *Eduards Heimkehr*,⁴ the city

simultaneously serves two purposes: as a narrative backdrop and as a metaphor for the problems of coming to terms with the German past and German identity.

Many critics have derided Schneider's novel. Gerrit Bartels (*die tageszeitung*) laments that Schneider's novel is too weighty, mainly because he incorporated even the minutest of controversies into the narrative.⁵ Claus-Ulrich Bielefeld of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* decries the lack of characterization of the climate of the city.⁶ Werner Fuld (*Die Welt*) compares it to a historical novel, albeit one whose "Verfallsdatum schon erreicht [ist]" as soon as it reached the stores.⁷ In contrast to these disparagements, I choose to read Schneider's novel as a *Zeitdokument*⁸ that gives voice to the changes in the New Berlin as they occur. The myriad issues that Berlin has confronted in the last decade are central issues in Schneider's novel. Before turning to an analysis of the novel, I will outline these questions in the section that follows: What image does Berlin seek to project? What does Berlin want to hide, forget, or simply not remember? Who constitutes Berlin: the citizens, the politicians, or a variety of communities together?

The New Berlin

The forty-year division of Berlin and its position as the focal point of the Cold War made the development of a dualistic character for the city unavoidable. As architecture professor Matthias Sauerbruch (TU Berlin) has noted, the Cold War also was played out in city planning: both East and West Berlin were to be showcases for their respective economic, political, and social structures.⁹ Because the traditional cultural center of Berlin was in the East, West Berlin, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, tried to establish itself as a cultured city, creating the area known as the *Kulturforum* that duplicated many of the theaters, museums, and cultural centers located in the East. Following unification, a building wave has gripped both the former East and former West Berlin, creating new shopping centers alongside renovated theaters and opera houses. The character of neighborhoods has changed, as Prenzlauer Berg in the former East becomes the hot spot, while famous cafes close their doors on Kurfürstendamm in the former West. Prior wastelands in the border area such as Pariser Platz, home to the newly rebuilt embassies, and Potsdamer Platz have gained a new lease on life. Whereas former icons including the Hotel Adlon have been rebuilt, the conglomerates Daimler-Chrysler and Sony vied to reconstruct one of Europe's busiest areas, restoring the Potsdamer Platz to its reputation from the 1920s. In the euphoria of building, however, controversies erupted over which buildings to demolish, renovate, or totally rebuild. These debates bored into the core of identity questions, as former East and West Berliners struggled to grow together and eliminate what Peter Schneider so presciently termed the "wall in the head."¹⁰ Many transformations seemed destined to erase history, particularly as streets and public spaces were renamed.¹¹ Furthermore, debates ensued over the appropriate locations for Holocaust memorials and tributes to victims of tyranny. All of these arguments were tied

closely to Berlin's history — as Nazi capital, as major Jewish center during the Third Reich, as capital of communist Germany — and to the ways that Berlin wanted to be remembered. Both the general populace and the scholarly communities have confronted these disputes in a variety of forums. Through popular media such as *Der Spiegel* and documentary films, the general public has been kept up to date about each stage of controversy.¹² A large array of historians also has tackled the topic of Berlin.¹³ And, the city has not gone unnoticed in literature either, as a number of anthologies take on the city as theme.¹⁴

It is Peter Fritzsche's *Reading Berlin 1900* (1996) that proves most insightful for analyzing the city both as construct and as spectacle. While Fritzsche analyzed the press's portrayal of Berlin in the early part of the twentieth century, the concept of the city as "urban spectacle" is still relevant to today's New Berlin.¹⁵ Fritzsche juxtaposes "the construction of the narrated city" and how this impacts the "built city," a distinction that is also present as a subtext throughout Schneider's portrayal of Berlin in *Eduards Heimkehr*.

For the purposes of this study, Berlin, the city, is also a text. It has a surface that is being inscribed and reinscribed with new function and meaning. The significance of the city as text and the ways we will investigate it are thus of considerable importance. Andreas Huyssen has distinguished between the discourse of the city as text in the 1970s and now by noting that three decades ago, the discourse derived from a desire to explore and create "new vocabularies of urban space after modernism."¹⁶ Such interchange involved the active engagement of architects, literary critics, theorists and philosophers. "City fathers," seeking to increase the profitability of the urban space, however, dictate the current discourse. The "new" Potsdamer Platz as the location for large corporations (Sony and Daimler-Chrysler), with its adjacent entertainment centers, eateries, and western-style shopping mall, epitomizes this kind of urban space.

As a historical text, Huyssen argues, Berlin is marked by "absences." As a site of "discontinuous" and "ruptured history," Berlin has suffered through the demise of four different German states, each of which has left its mark on the city.¹⁷ Each successive generation of leadership in Germany has sought, through the destruction of buildings and monuments, to erase the memory of the past. Conversely, Sauerbruch maintains that what made postwar Berlin a metropolis was precisely "its architecture and the memory of its 'great' past."¹⁸ As Berlin assumes its role as the capital of united Germany in a united Europe, it faces tough decisions about what it chooses to memorialize, remember, or forget. For many, the political rupture that forced the end of the GDR fueled a desire to break with the (West) German past, particularly the aesthetic banality and provincialism of Bonn.¹⁹

In order to foster the creation of its new image, Berlin has embraced marketing so enthusiastically that Huyssen maintains, the center of Berlin is now more concerned with "image" than usefulness, seeking to attract visitors and investors rather than inhabitants.²⁰ Nothing embodied this idea of "showplace" or spectacle

better than the Info-Box on Leipziger Platz.²¹ Between 1995 and 2001, this rectangular red outlook box, with its computer-generated images of the future and its viewing terrace, afforded visitors the opportunity to admire the spectacle of the world's biggest construction site. Since its completion, Potsdamer Platz with its emphasis on glitz and consumerism has received the most attention. Bonnie Marranca has noted that the "corporate sell" of the region offers "the amnesia of consumerism." At the same time, she remarks that Berlin is currently "overwhelmed" by development, noting that many of the current architectural trends make Berlin less distinguishable from other cities, be they European or North American.²²

Fritzsche concludes that at the turn of last century, the daily press was able to "falsify urban reality" through the representation of Berlin as spectacle. Furthermore, these same dailies sought to provide pleasure, and thereby rewrote "difference and division in aesthetic and [...] nonpolitical terms."²³ There was a need to emphasize the constant change in the city, a task that was accomplished by increasingly frequent press runs. In contrast, the recent construction boom in Berlin and its emerging importance as capital and world city, promotes the "construction" of the city as a political act. Thus, the "uniquely politicized" nature of Berlin's landscape (Ladd)²⁴ forces Berlin's architecture into the role of "political symbol."²⁵ It is precisely this politicization of landscape and architecture that plays such a prominent role in Peter Schneider's novel. In *Eduards Heimkehr*, all descriptions are political and Eduard's interpretation of events and landmarks promotes his own sense of urban reality and the ways in which he cannot come to terms with the changes taking place.

Peter Schneider's *Eduards Heimkehr*

Peter Schneider, born 1940 in Lübeck, has lived in Berlin (West) since 1961, and has gained a reputation for being able to put his finger on the pulse of the nation, identifying, as Colin Riordan puts it "the issue of the moment before many other commentators, and articulat[ing] the problem in a way that catches the imagination of readers."²⁶ In texts such as *Lenz* (1973), *Der Mauerspringer* (1982) and *Vati* (1987), Schneider contextualizes the issues of current concern, in a manner Susan Anderson described as the intertwining of "personal and political identity."²⁷ In a recent comment about *Der Mauerspringer*, Schneider remarked that he wanted the "city" to be the "text," and his residence in the city has afforded him the opportunity to observe Berlin's historical changes firsthand.²⁸ *Der Mauerspringer* explored Berlin as a divided city, asking why people build walls to begin with. Schneider's assertion proved prophetic that it would take longer to dismantle the "wall in our heads" than the actual physical barriers dividing Berlin. The unification process has proved a difficult one for Germany, and over the years there have been ample examples of such "walls." Much like *Der Mauerspringer*, Schneider's first postunification Berlin novel *Paarungen*²⁹ explores the barriers that people build in themselves. The bonds between people portrayed in this book are troubled ones,

and the main character, Eduard Hoffmann, is unable to sustain relationships. In *Eduards Heimkehr* (1999), Eduard returns to Berlin to assume ownership of a building that he and his brother Lothar have inherited. As the plot progresses, however, Eduard learns that he must investigate his family's past: the building once belonged to Jews, and Eduard must prove that his grandfather bought the building legally, and that he was not a Nazi. Here Schneider manages to dredge up the old questions of guilt and responsibility in the guise of the new questions of ownership as East and West grow together.³⁰

Eduards Heimkehr is a "Großstadtroman" in the truest sense. Not only does the majority of the action take place in the city, the city is also responsible for Eduard's feelings of guilt, remorse, loss of identity, and self-questioning. What occurs around Eduard also occurs *in* Eduard. The architectural changes on the surface of Berlin mirror the emotional changes within him. The thorniest questions in unified Germany, the issues ownership and dominance, also confront him. Eduard has returned to Berlin after an eight-year hiatus in California to claim his inheritance, a dilapidated apartment building in Friedrichshain in the former East Berlin. As he struggles with *Hausbesetzer* for his rightful ownership, he is trapped in stereotypical reactions that have grown up behind the mental walls built not only between former Easterners and Westerners, but also between different social sectors from *Hausbesetzer* to property owners, police officers to liberal academics, individual citizens to conglomerates. As he tries to tackle these interpersonal dilemmas, Eduard confronts the daily changes in the Berlin landscape, with the result that the personal and the political are intertwined. This essay continues by tracing the changing topography of Berlin that Schneider outlines and Eduard's reactions to the landscape. Eduard's general observations about the ever-changing environment tend to fall into one-dimensional East-West dichotomies. Readers perceive Eduard as a tourist in his own city, a feeling he considers "unbehaglich" (17). Complicating Eduard's simplistic perceptions are the contrasting views of his wife, Jenny, who also joins him in Berlin. In addition, there are three specific topographical spaces that are important to the novel: Potsdamer Platz and the five-story Weinhaus Huth;³¹ the Schlossplatz or Marx-Engels-Platz located in the true historical center of Berlin; and Eduard's inherited 65-unit apartment building in the Rigaer Straße. Eduard's personal story embodies the very real concerns of Berliners in the early 1990s, making this novel a successful attempt at *Gegenwartsbewältigung*.

A former resident of West Berlin, Eduard now finds himself transplanted to a guesthouse in the East, an area he knew prior to the fall of the wall only from brief visits. In addition to the property issue, Eduard's return also is prompted by a job offer. He accepts a position in a laboratory in the (East) Berlin suburb of Buch; it is not yet clear whether Eduard's wife Jenny and three children also will make the move from California to Berlin.³² The location arouses mixed feelings in Eduard. On the one hand, accepting the job excites him, for he views the position "in der vertrauten, gleichzeitig wildfremden Umgebung Ostberlins" like the German

"Busch" (18). On the other hand, California and his position at Stanford were more enticing than a mere job "in der grauen Hauptstadt eines verschwundenen grauen Staates" (16). It is from this conflicted standpoint that Eduard observes the changes in Berlin. He greets many of the changes with a critical eye, falling prey to lingering clichéd assumptions. He encounters difficulties getting from place to place because "der neue Stadtplan die Straßen nicht mehr nach Ost- und Westzugehörigkeit unterschied" (23). He sees S-Bahn stations covered in scaffolding and tarps; he disparagingly describes Berlin-Mitte as "ein ungeheures Loch" (27). At the same time, Eduard is cognizant that the entire city is not getting equal treatment, a disparity he notices most acutely in the buildings near the Lichtenberg train station. In many instances he thinks the renovations actually point backwards in time to the Wilhelminian era: "Es war, als sei die Stadt entschlossen, sich in ihre Vorkriegsgestalt zurückzuverwandeln" (47).³³ This return to the past has been harshly criticized in the media, as the program of "Berlin-like" architecture came under fire.³⁴

Eduard experiences similar discomfort in the western sections of Berlin, where he fails to appreciate the transformation of this previously familiar territory. His *Stammkneipe* "tent" still holds its original location, and the barmaid/owner has not changed, in fact, she still recognizes Eduard. But none of the regulars are there. He views the altered bar culture critically, likening it to a new type of migration ("Völkerwanderung"), this time from Charlottenburg to Prenzlauer Berg. Even earlier constants from his life have been drastically altered, for the West Berlin of Eduard's memory has disappeared as new faces encroach on his old haunts in Kantstraße, Savigny Platz, and Charlottenburg. Eduard's greatest discomfort arises from his inability to distinguish the origins of these new faces: "an ihrer Kleidung waren die Deutschen wohl wirklich nicht mehr zu unterscheiden" (37). Even Eduard and his best friend Theo have switched places geographically. Following unification, Theo, the dissident East Berlin writer/intellectual has relocated to the previously forbidden suburb of Charlottenburg, while Eduard takes up temporary residence in a guesthouse for visiting academics in the East.

Eduard and Jenny approach the united Germany and united Berlin in different ways, a tendency that mirrors their initial responses to the events of November 1989. They observed the events of the *Mauerfall* from the comfort of their home in California. They were thus mere spectators rather than participants, and though they were former Berliners, they were not directly privy to the euphoria. Jenny viewed the whole affair somewhat skeptically, "als eine Überschwemmung, als eine Inbesitznahme des Westens durch den Osten" (74), a view that does not correspond to the commonly held perception that the West colonized the East. As the story progresses, however, Jenny develops an affinity for developments in the Eastern part of the city, a fascination that Eduard is unable to share. He sees only irony in his present incarnation as an *Eigentümer* in the East. As Jenny grows to accept the East openly, even warmly, Eduard's resistance grows, leading to tension not only in their respective political views, but also in their private lives.³⁵

Overall, Eduard takes a dim view of the changes occurring in Berlin, particularly in the ways that they affect him personally (even jealousy rears its ugly head when he realizes that though many buildings in Friedrichshain are undergoing renovation, his newly inherited apartment building is a dilapidated wreck inhabited by squatters). When Jenny arrives from California, Eduard, seeing Berlin through Jenny's eyes, gains renewed perspective on the changes in the East, from the Potsdamer Platz to Käthe Kollwitz Platz. Whereas Eduard only complains about conditions in the East Berlin guesthouse at the outset of the narrative, Jenny wants to explore the East. Immediately upon arrival she insists on visiting Prenzlauer Berg to get a firsthand look at the transformations. Perhaps her intense interest in the changes in the city stem from her previous career as a "Stadtplanerin" (*Paarungen* 194), who had her own "Ideen zur Umgestaltung der Stadt" (*Paarungen* 195). Whereas Eduard feels unable to orient himself in the East, particularly without the wall, Jenny is able to marvel at the close proximity of Friedrichshain to the new "Mitte" (*Eduards Heimkehr* 91).

Jenny has come to Berlin not only to see Eduard, but also to interview for a public relations job with the Debis company, at the corporation's new headquarters on Potsdamer Platz. Eduard is invited to accompany Jenny to a reception in the Weinhaus Huth. Unlike the tourists and regular Berliners who view the construction progress on the Potsdamer Platz from the terrace of the Info Box, Eduard is treated to a close-up from the Weinhaus Huth, prompting the following mental commentary:

Aus der Höhe der Dachterrasse wirkte die Stadt, als seien die meisten ihrer Bauten von einem Hubschrauber abgeworfen worden. Vom Gropiusbau blickte er über namenlose Flachdächer zum Handelszentrum, im Dunst dahinter erschienen, wie Zitate aus einer anderen Stadt, die beiden Dome des Gendarmenmarktes, der festungsartige, von Wilhelm II. verpatzte Berliner Dom, dann kam lange wieder nichts bis auf den Fernsehturm und die klobigen Kanten der Charité, schließlich der düstere Reichstag. Was ihn verstörte, war nicht die Hässlichkeit, sondern die Abwesenheit eines Stadtbildes. Der weitaus stärkste Eindruck, der sich aus dieser Höhe mitteilte, waren die riesigen Lücken zwischen mehr oder minder geglückten Unikaten (164-65).

This description situates Schneider's novel in the early to mid-1990s (most likely 1993/94), where Potsdamer Platz, at that time Europe's largest construction site, was a project that posed considerable obstacles for architects and engineers.³⁶ As is obvious from the scene, Weinhaus Huth was to be preserved. In great detail, Schneider describes the construction site, including an explanation about how divers accomplished the initial construction work. When one of the party guests loses her hat in the wind, the construction diver rescues it, a surprise to the guests, but a testament to the construction site as spectacle.

The gaps in the skyline to which Eduard refers are the result of the often arbitrary decisions made by leaders over the years to raise a building because of what it represented at some time in the past. The Berlin Stadtschloss, home of the Hohenzollern dynasty for over 500 years, is the perfect example of this. On 6 September 1950, the East German government began dynamiting the palace, a structure that had been severely damaged in the Allied bombing raids on the city. Faced with enormous costs for reconstruction, the East German government opted to tear down the palace for vague political reasons. On the one hand, the communist rulers wanted neither a ruin nor a monument to imperialism to stand in the center of their capital city. On the other hand, the leaders also wanted an open space for a reviewing stand, from which they could view mass demonstrations and parades (one of the vestiges of Nazism that the East Germans failed to eradicate). For 20 years, the plot remained nothing more than a parking lot. In the 1970s, the GDR finally made its architectural contribution to this acreage with the construction of the Palast der Republik, a structure whose grandeur, Brian Ladd notes, "took the form of high-gloss international modernism."³⁷ Now that united Berlin again has had its historic center returned, debates rage about what to do with it. As the Palast der Republik is contaminated with asbestos, a decision was made in March 1993 to tear it down and replace it with a remake of the Hohenzollern palace.³⁸ A wave of (n)ostalgia erupted, as the citizens of the former East Berlin feared that their entire 40-year history would be erased. Huyssen speaks of the trend to "erasure of memory rather than its imaginative preservation."³⁹ 1993 also witnessed the resurgence of support for the reconstruction of the old palace; during 1993 and 1994 a canvas mockup of the palace façade surprised tourists and natives alike.

Schneider chooses to thematize this debate as well, using the changing Berlin landscape to question the individual's ability to adapt to the rapidly changing social circumstances. Through a television news broadcast, Eduard learns of a demonstration down the Karl-Liebknecht-Straße. The demonstrators, some of whom are the squatters residing in Eduard's building,⁴⁰ conflate chants about the Nazis and the "battle" for the Palast der Republik: "Nazi-Erben legen Friedrichshain in Scherben! — Arisierer! Diesmal seid ihr die Verlierer! — Friede den Hütten! Krieg den Schlössern!" (285) The last slogan in particular irritates Eduard because it misquotes the original. His attorney, Klott, however, immediately recognizes that the squatters have seized the opportunity offered by the debate on demolishing the Palast der Republik and rebuilding the Hohenzollern palace to promote what they perceive as Eduard's injustice of wanting to take possession of his own apartment building. With the references to Arianization and Nazi inheritance, they have tied Eduard to the sins of the past. Thus the battle of the Berlin landscape is a symbol for the historical, political, and ideological battles of the past, for which the generation of 68ers are still supposed to feel guilt and remorse. Through this very public demonstration, at the site where the GDR "city fathers" indeed intended demonstrations to take place, the questions of self-identity and legitimation once

again come to the forefront. At this juncture, the questions of culpability and complicity fall to the generations of the children, and in Eduard's case, grandchildren, to deny or defend. In a highly critical fashion, Schneider focuses on the inability of the Germans to let the issue die: "es war, als versuchten die Täterkinder das Ungeheuer der deutschen Schuld zu befrieden, indem sie ihm immer wieder frische Schuldige aus den eigenen Reihen zuführten" (314). Even the Jewish descendants living in the U.S. remain puzzled by the incessant preoccupation with the evil of the past. In this way, Schneider intersects Eduard's problems with the squatters with the myriad of debates surrounding Berlin's quest for a new image.

As West and East struggled to grow together, one of the most divisive issues was that of property restitution, a provision that allowed prior owners to regain control of deprivatized property. At first glance, this appears to be the situation that applies to Eduard and Lothar's inherited apartment building. However, there was a stipulation that allowed claims to be made back to 1933, circumstances that applied in particular to tenement neighbors in the former East Berlin.⁴¹ Eduard's family came into possession of the house on the Rigaer Straße when his grandfather purchased it from the previous owner, Kasimir Marwitz, a Jew. It then falls to Eduard to investigate whether his grandfather gained possession legally. If not, then the apartment building would be turned over to the Marwitz descendants. Ultimately, Eduard learns that his grandfather, though a member of the NSDAP, did, indeed, acquire the property legally, even honorably. Apparently, his party membership was merely a ruse to enable him to help the Marwitz family, since he was having an affair with one of the daughters. This twist of events is interesting for political-ideological reasons: on the one hand, we have Germans in the East, who historically had been antifascist resisters, now admitting to having been Nazis. In the words of Eduard's attorney:

Große Teile der Berliner Mitte—also im früheren Ost-Berlin—sind das ehemalige Eigentum deutscher Juden. Allein hier geht es um 12 000 Fälle mit einem Verkehrswert von ein paar Dutzend Milliarden Mark, die zu klären sind. Denn die DDR, das "bessere," das "antifaschistische Deutschland," hat ja das Nazi-Unrecht einfach fortgesetzt. Was die Nazis den deutschen Juden geraubt hatten, wurde von den Sozis noch einmal enteignet und ging dann...in "Volkseigentum" über (323).

On the other hand, there is something Oskar Schindleresque about Schneider's characterization.⁴² Once Eduard has cleared his family's name, he sells the building to one of the squatters.

With the sale of the apartment building, it seems that Eduard's relationship with the East also has come to an end. For Jenny and the children, he has rented an apartment in Berlin-Charlottenburg. For Eduard, this is a return to his old stomping grounds, and perhaps an end to his enlightenment; it appears that Eduard, to a large

extent, cannot let go of his East-West dichotomies. After he returns from a visit to the Marwitzes' daughter, he "vergewisserte sich kurz, dass die beiden Invariablen aus der Dachsicht — der Funkturm und der Mercedesstern auf dem Europacenter — ihre Positionen nicht verändert hatten" (371). It seems Eduard wants to hold on to the division between East and West; the rift has been a constant in his life up to this point. Jenny, on the other hand, will continue her association with the East, as the Debis company has hired her. It is Jenny, who after a six-month absence from the city, immediately notices the changes in the city: "Dass die Doppeldeckerbusse dreistellige Nummern anzeigten und Endstationen, an denen man noch nie gehalten hatte; dass die Telefonbücher einen Stoß von fünf Bänden ausmachten; dass man auf den Trottoirs in Charlottenburg überall Russisch hörte" (391). These minor details of everyday life symbolize the growing together of the two parts of the city, changes to which Eduard was totally oblivious. Could it be that the wall in Eduard's head prevents him from acknowledging these transformations?

Conclusion

Schneider pays homage to the long tradition of Berlin's literary representation and to the changing topography in Berlin when Eduard's supervisor Rürup remarks: "[er] solle Alfred Döblin lesen, Joseph Roth, Theodor Fontane, Heinrich Heine — all diese Zeugen hätten berichtet, dass Berlin zu ihrer Zeit gerade umgebaut werde. Die Stadt sei seit Jahrhunderten im Umbau, aber offenbar werde sie nie fertig" (280). The most recent developments in architecture and urban planning in Berlin give witness to the "unfinished" nature of the city.

Scholars have come to few conclusions about the urban planning and architectural design direction that the New Berlin projects. As Michael Wise reflects: "Bonn's architecture of reticence has yet to be replaced by a clear-cut restatement of the national self-definition" that one expects of a capital city.⁴³ It is conceivable that the city planners simply expect too much from "reconstruction," for the concept of the newly rebuilt center carried with it a "promise of reconciliation" that would bring East and West together, not only physically, but economically and socially as well.⁴⁴ The depictions in Schneider's novel are contraindicative to this conclusion, for rather than showing a growing together of the city, Eduard's return codifies the very real and persistent division that still exists between East and West. *Eduards Heimkehr* does succeed, however, in bringing public debates into the text, with the added dimension of the common people — both Eduard and the squatters represent the "common" Berliners as they confront daily economic, political, cultural, social, and architectural change.

It is the architectural changes in particular that prove most distressing to Schneider's protagonist. As he travels through the constantly changing landscape, he likens the construction sites to a human body, whose "aufgerissenen Körper" is displayed "wie auf einem riesigen Operationstisch" (273). The wounds are the sores of history: "dieser verfluchte Leib war ja tatsächlich durchwachsen von

stillgelegten oder schlafenden Geschwüren, jeden Tag stießen die Diagnosegeräte auf neue Einschlüsse und Verstopfungen, die inzwischen kaum mehr gelesene Schlagzeilen machten" (274). The underlying questioning about Eduard's ancestry reveals a second layer to the Berlin landscape, one "bestehend aus einer dicken braunen Brühe."⁴⁵ This is perhaps the most revealing critical insight because it draws to the forefront precisely the image and history that Berlin seeks to cover, and one that unification has not been able to erase.⁴⁶ In his review of the English translation, Robert Boyers noted that "Schneider intends nothing less than a re-visioning of the recent German past, a project requiring a reconstruction of [deeply rooted] attitudes," a statement that allows us to view the character "re-construction" as mirroring the "reconstruction" of Berlin.⁴⁷ Ironically, Schneider's treatment gives voice to the very "ghosts" that many of the urban planners had hoped to vanquish.

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² See Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), 31, and his reference to Scheffler's *Berlin, Ein Stadtschicksal* (1910). For an insightful study on Berlin in literature see Marilyn Sibley Fries, *The Changing Consciousness of Reality. The Image of Berlin in Selected German Novels from Raabe to Döblin* (=Studien zur Germanistik, Anglistik und Komparatistik 77 [Bonn: Bouvier, 1980]).

³ Peter Schneider, *Der Mauerspringer* (Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag, 1995).

⁴ Peter Schneider, *Eduards Heimkehr* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1999).

⁵ Gerrit Bartels, "Fette Überschrift," *die tageszeitung*, Ostern 1999: 15.

⁶ Claus-Ulrich Bielefeld, "Schaut auf diese Stadt, die ich euch jetzt erkläre!" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 24 March 1999: V2/3.

⁷ Werner Fuld, "Hirtenbrief aus der Hauptstadt." *Die Welt*, 10 April 1999: 5.

⁸ Cord Beintmann, "Verrohte Radfahrer. Peter Schneiders Roman *Eduards Heimkehr*." *Stuttgarter Zeitung*, 29 July 1999: 31.

⁹ Matthias Sauerbruch, "Berlin 2000: a missed opportunity," *The Journal of Architecture* 2 (Autumn 1997): 283.

¹⁰ Schneider, *Der Mauerspringer*, 110.

¹¹ Elizabeth Strom, *Building the New Berlin: The Politics of Urban Development in Germany's Capital City* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2001), 68-69.

¹² Hubertus Siegert's *Berlin Babylon* (2001) focuses on the major construction sites in Berlin, thus feeding the voyeuristic hunger of the onlookers to somehow participate in the "project" of Berlin.

¹³ Notable examples are Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin: Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997); Alexandra Ritchie, *Faust's Metropolis. A History of Berlin* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 1998); Michael Z.

Wise, *Capital Dilemma. Germany's Search for a New Architecture of Democracy* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), David Clay Large, *Berlin* (New York: Basic Books, 2000); *Berlin 2000*, issue of *Performing Arts Journal* 22/2 (May 2000); and Strom, *Building*.

¹⁴ Karin Kiwus, ed., *Berlin—ein Ort zum Schreiben. Porträts und Texte* (published for Akademie der Künste [Berlin: Aufbau, 1996]) and Jürgen Jakob Becker and Ulrich Janetzki, eds., *Die Stadt nach der Mauer. Junge Autoren schreiben über ihr Berlin* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1998) are representative examples. Stephen Brockmann, "The Written Capital." *Monatshefte* 91/3 (1999): 384, investigates the conflict between "visual images and written words" in fiction about Berlin.

¹⁵ Fritzsche, *Reading*, quotes 130 and 2 respectively.

¹⁶ Andreas Huyssen, "The Voids of Berlin," *Critical Inquiry* 24 (Autumn 1997): 58

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁸ Sauerbruch, "Berlin 2000," 284.

¹⁹ See Lutz Koepenick, "Redeeming History? Foster's Dome and the Political Aesthetic of the Berlin Republic." *German Studies Review* 24/2 (May 2001): 304.

²⁰ Huyssen, "VOIDS," 66. In 1993, Berlin Tourismus Marketing GmbH was founded in order to position the capital city better in the international marketplace. This was followed by Partner für Berlin—Gesellschaft für Hauptstadtmarketing MBH (Berlin Partner) in 1994, whose goal is "Imagestärkung der Stadt als zukunftsorientierter, wettbewerbsfähiger und internationaler Metropole": Klaus Siebenhaar, ed., *Kulturhandbuch Berlin*. 2. erweiterte und aktualisierte Auflage (Berlin: Bostelmann & Siebenhaar, 2001), 403-4. A 1996 campaign was entitled simply "Berlin wird." In 1996 Schaustelle Berlin opened, offering a type of construction site tourism, in which from June through September tourists and locals could learn about the various urban planning projects underway in the city. This last initiative, a postmodern creation designed to market the city as an *Erlebnis* or dream, is a true public relations coup, which seems as eager to convince the locals of the appropriateness of certain projects, as it is to show off to the international tourists. As further evidence of the importance Berlin places on tourism, numerous English-and-German publications focus on the myriad of construction changes in and around Berlin. Examples include Annegret Burg, *Downtown Berlin: Building the Metropolitan Mix/ Berlin Mitte: Die Entstehung einer urbanen Architektur* (Berlin: Bertelsmann Fachzeitschriften GmbH, 1995); Yamin von Rauch, *Der Potsdamer Platz: urbane Architektur für das neue Berlin* (Berlin: Jovis, 2000); *Neue Architektur/ New Architecture Berlin 1990-2000*. 3rd ed. (Berlin: Jovis, 2000). The guidebook, *Berlin: offene Stadt. Die Stadt als Ausstellung*. 2nd ed. (Berlin: Nicolai, 1999), presents ten walking tours focusing on construction and change.

²¹ Another telling example of "spectacle" in Berlin was Christo's project *Wrapped Reichstag* in 1995.

²² Bonnie Marranca, "Berlin Contemporary. An Editorial." *Performing Arts Journal* 22/2 (May 2000): 3, 4.

²³ Fritzsche, *Reading*, 130.

²⁴ Ladd, *Ghosts*, 3.

²⁵ Strom, *Building*, 136

²⁶ Colin Riordan, "Peter Schneider: A Biographical Sketch," in *Peter Schneider*, ed. Colin Riordan (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1995), 22.

²⁷ Susan C. Anderson, "Walls and Other Obstacles: Peter Schneider's Critique of Unity in *Der Mauerspringer*." *The German Quarterly* 66/3 (1993): 363.

²⁸ Schneider's comments were made during an NEH Summer Seminar in July 2000.

²⁹ Peter Schneider, *Paarungen* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1992).

³⁰ When Eduard must investigate his grandfather's acquisition of the building, he experiences a "vorausseilendes Schuldgefühl" (293), although he has no idea if his grandfather behaved dishonorably.

³¹ City planners used the Weinhaus Huth to stipulate the building height for adjacent buildings in the Potsdamer Platz. The traditional building height in Berlin was 22 meters. This stipulation dates back to a fire ordinance from 1897 that was based on the height that fire hoses could reach (Strom, *Building*, 140).

³² This would be the second time that Jenny would follow Eduard, first from West Berlin to California, and now from California back to Berlin.

³³ Strom, *Building*, 238, characterizes this as follows: "The 'authentic' Berlin...is really the Berlin of a very specific era, the decades around the turn of the last century, when Berlin was no longer provincial but not yet politically suspect. This Berlin remains eternal, embedded in the psyche of its planners."

³⁴ "Berlinische Architektur respects the block and the parapet height; refers to the Schinkel school; has stone or brick façades; is more square than round; has perforated façades; is heavy, and sits tightly anchored to the ground" (Sauerbruch, "Berlin 2000," 285).

³⁵ Eduard in particular is surprised at the extent to which the events in Germany affected his personal life in California, as the following passage demonstrates: "Ungläubig hatte sich Eduard gefragt, was ein welthistorisches Ereignis, dem zweifellos eine fette Überschrift in den Geschichtsbüchern gebührte, in seinem Eheleben zu suchen haben könnte" (76).

³⁶ The 50,000m² acreage that comprises Potsdamer Platz was hotly contested. Daimler Benz struck a deal with the Berlin *Senat* to purchase a large portion of Potsdamer Platz just months after the wall fell for a price of DM 1505 per m², a figure well below market value. The official public announcement was made on 14 February 1990. See Strom, *Building*, 188-91, for details of the controversies.

³⁷ Ladd, *Ghosts*, 59.

³⁸ Michael Wise distinguishes an interesting trend in the treatment of existing structures in Berlin. Several Nazi buildings have been refurbished for use by the united German government (Aviation Ministry; Reichsbank). Yet officials have been reluctant to apply this type of "recycling" to GDR structures. Many buildings are considered to be of poor quality, but it was mainly a psychological reaction that ruled the treatment of the buildings. The Third Reich was a distant memory for only a portion of the population. The defunct communist regime, however, was recent history. See Wise, 89-120.

³⁹ Huyssen, "Voids," 66.

⁴⁰ This generation of anarchists did not have a general mistrust of the media, as did Eduard's own '68 generation. It is therefore logical even prudent that they exploit the media to promote their own causes.

⁴¹ Strom, *Building*, 66, noted that this situation is very awkward: "Community activists...now find themselves in the awkward position of battling Jewish claimants in order to assert the rights of current tenants to remain in affordable apartments."

⁴² In the essay, "Der Wettlauf um die Unschuld" Schneider reflected on Stephen Spielberg's film *Schindler's List*. What Schneider found particularly disturbing was that the story was

about only *one, good* German, a fact that made the guilt of the remaining Germans all the more striking: Peter Schneider, *Vom Ende der Gewissheit* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1994), 81-96.

⁴³ Wise, 157.

⁴⁴ Brian Ladd, "Center and Periphery in the New Berlin. Architecture, Public Art and the Search for Identity," *Performing Arts Journal* 22/2 (May 2000): 8.

⁴⁵ Roland Müller, "Diese verrückte Stadt. Peter Schneider schrieb einen Gegenwartsroman über Berlin," *Neues Deutschland*, 29 October 1999: 12.

⁴⁶ Edita Schlandt, the daughter of Kasimir Marwitz who clears Eduard's grandfather's name, cannot comprehend that such intense interest in the Nazi guilt continues, remarking somewhat ironically: "Geteilt oder vereinigt—sobald man etwas bohrt, spritzt der braune Dreck wieder hervor" (358).

⁴⁷ Robert Boyers, "The Normality Blues." *The New Republic*, 26 February 2001: 36.