

"Germany, It's All Over" A true little story of German rock

Unlike Dylan or Country Joe in the States, the German "protest movement" brought forth no singer, let alone a rock band. The German SDS* was unmusical; and the godfathers of its ideology, the critical theorists Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse were enraged by "jazz" and even more by "pop." The revolt had no singers, but of course songs and chants (mostly from the 20's); and, like rock, a huge lack of tradition.

Everything else was 'autochorie': self-growth. The short life of the German rockbands began: the *Rattles* (1961-1967); *Amon Düül* (1967-1971); *City Preachers* (1965-1969); *Frumpy* (1969-1972); *Atlantis* (1972-1976); *Birth Control* (1968-?); *Can* (1968-?); *Kraan* (1971-?); *Kin Ping Meh* (1971-1976); *Randy Pie* (1972-1977); *Scorpions* (1965-...), etc. This is my small selection of "Krautrock" until 1976. Let's forget the revolt of 67-71; its actors have looked in vain for its historical roots in the subsequent years. In multiple costumes (anarchistic, syndicalistic, "rätekommunistisch," Stalinistic, Trotskyistic, etc.) it repeated and re-staged in only five years half of a century of history of the

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Crazy or Anti?

Among the most interesting characters of the early Ascona scene is the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Otto Gross.

As early as 1908 Freud referred him to his colleague C.G. Jung for an opium and cocaine withdrawal cure at Burghölzli. The analysis with Jung was very intensive, with sessions of up to twenty-four hours. After two weeks, Otto fled from Jung, who certified him as suffering from *dementia praecox*. Freud announced triumphantly to Jung: "I intend to appoint you to continue and finish my work; you are to apply to psychoses what I have begun with *neuroses*."

Otto's father, the famous Graz criminologist Dr. Hans Gross, as well as his psychoanalyst colleagues declared him crazy. The reasons are all too apparent. Dr. Hans Gross liked to use psychoanalysis to prove why criminals, vagabonds, revolutionaries, and homosexuals should be deported. Always on the move, living in open relationships, consuming all kinds of drugs, his son, on the other hand, made it clear that he wanted to "turn people into sexual immoralists." In his writings, Otto kept expounding antipatriarchal arguments, questioning the doctor-patient relationship in analysis, rejecting transference. Sure enough, this kind of psychoanalysis and antipsychiatry did not

<235>Workers' Movement. That found its end in the dead of Stammheim* and the dead of the R.A.F.*

Rock found a market in Germany due to the cultural gap left by Fascism. Everything which the masses liked until 1945 was a remnant of the decimated German "Schlager" of the 20's, as well as songs about soldiers and love songs. The delayed influence of rock after 1955 was a welcome "import" as was Big Band Jazz till 1955 which now as before dominates the musical programs of the broadcasting systems. To the present day only German rock must forego every official institutional support (which is perhaps for the best anyway) that is obtained plentifully and overplentifully by all other segments of the popular entertainment genres.

The secret of German rock (if there is one) lies on this intricate economic basis. Now as before sales figures make the "Schlager." Rock culture in Germany is a hybrid between a folk culture seeking social recognition/support and a matter of callous business. What's called "Deutsche Innerlichkeit" (German inwardness) is a by-product of this hybrid.

Curiously, the first groups to become popular in Germany were the ones which refused to enter the market at first and succeeded then as re-imports from other markets. *Kraftwerk* was discovered in 1975 in America. *Tangerine Dream* in England in 1974. Both groups are the innocent children of Mr. Moog; the lack of a tradition of rock was downright elementary for them. Their teachers are Cage, Kagel and the "classical" experimentalists of the 60's including in the case of *Kraftwerk* the Futurists of 1913: minimalists and deconstructors of serial order on both sides of tonality. The titles of the first *Kraftwerk* tracks already gave evidence of this elementary impact: "Strom"



enrapture Freud and Jung, who were attempting to establish psychoanalysis academically. Gross came to Ascona early and returned to it again and again, establishing contacts with Mühsam, Friedeberg, Max Weber, the Richthofen sisters, and through them with O.H. Lawrence.

In 1909 the police started preliminary proceedings against Otto for the death of an anarchist woman, "Lotte." It turned out that Lotte Haltemer, a co-founder of Monte Verita, had committed suicide using morphine she had gotten from Otto. In 1911 another suicide occurred in Ascona in which Gross seemed involved: a young anarchist woman, a painter, had taken a cocaine overdose. Arrest warrants were issued for him in Germany and Switzerland. Eventually, at the request of his father, proceedings against him were stopped. In the following years, Otto lived in Vienna, Florence, and in Berlin, where he collaborated with Franz Jung and the Aktion group.² Returning to Berlin in 1913, he was arrested as an "anarchist of unsound mind," deported to Austria, put in an insane asylum and declared incompetent. His father had supplied the expert opinion needed for the commitment. A press campaign in which Franz Jung, Blaise Cendrars, Erich Mühsam and others took part forced his release after a year's confinement.

Starting in 1933 one of Otto's friends, Olga Frobe-Kaplayn, ran the Eranos Circle in Ascona, a round table which tried to overcome the East-West, spirit-nature, science-

<236>(electric current), "Spule" (reel), "Megahertz," "Tanzmusik" (dance music), "Heimatklänge" (sounds from the homelands), "Ruck/Zuck" (their first big hit and an idiomatic expression for a quick move). Later they recall more object-like myths: "Autobahn," "Radio," "Roboter," "Trans-Europe Express," "Computer World." Unlike *Tangerine Dream*, who never outgrew their psychedelic sound-painting (and today enjoy a cold glory like that of official jazz), *Kraftwerk* writes texts. Short, minimalist texts, like the elements of their music. But they were and are German.

With this another sore point of "Deutsch-Rock" comes up: can one sing in German? The unanimous answer from the German rock crowd: no, except, perhaps, for Udo Lindenberg (a quarter talent, a coarse German version of Tom Waits, singing in the lingo of the Hamburg youth "scene" accompanied by the best German R&B musicians). Slang is unusual in Germany, since almost all milieus have been destroyed by fascism and war. Hardly a city is really older than 36 years. Young people may speak in dialects, but not in the lingo of a milieu.

Some say German can't be sung because there are too many unsingable consonants and unmelodious vowels. The whole dispute has been going on for twenty years. The very true rock fan in Germany speaks perfect English, reads English or American rock-magazines and fanzines, bids at auctions from Dallas to Brighton, collects transnationally and is the alpha-link in a ponderous multiplying chain of a dogma: rock'n & roll is English, Americans and whoever is 'really into it' would rather be "there" right now than here. To this day, rock'n roll is for many German musicians the music of the Allies and so the feeling towards English music on German soil is one of resistance.



myth antagonisms. Meetings dealt with Yoga and Meditation, redemption and rebirth, symbolism of light and mysteries, or "the Great Mother — the Archetype of the Great Feminine." Among those who attended were Karl Keranyi, Mircea Eliade, Gershom Scholem, Martin Buber, and Adolf Portmann.³ The esoteric parties were headed by, of all people, C.G. Jung.

"Next to Capri and Taormina in Italy, Ascona has become a place for the rediscovered cults of the Young Man, of the Woman and Great Mother, of the Wise Old Man, of Elements and Constellations; it has become a focus for the projections and desires of Nordic peoples" (Szeemann).

This finds its architectonic expression in ideas of liberated living space, theosophic building projects, nature-healing facilities, light-and-air huts, solar villas, and temple designs. Fidus⁴ wanted to build for the Monte Veritans a "Temple of the Earth" whose model can be seen in the exhibition. The Baltic nobleman Elisar von Kupfer actually built near Ascona his Temple of Clarity, called Sanctuarium Artis Eliasarion, which he dedicated to his hermaphroditic ideals. Even more beautiful is his cyclorama, "Dance of the Blessed," with a multitude of transsexual saints in Arcadian realms.

What with so much free love, alternative lifestyle, meditation, antipsychiatry, and Esoterica, the chic of wealth and the golden aristocracy were bound to get curious. In


<237>Resistance in one's own country against the dominating order with the help of foreign subculture: for the majority of German musicians, that's the keynote for their music. The danger is that this feeling of resistance remains mere legitimation instead of providing the basis for a real subculture.

Mountains Explode

Thus far to 1976; a year — better two short summers — which enforced a long hoped-for change in Rock-history similar only to the R&B explosion of Black America in the 40's, the turn to Rock 'n' Roll of White America in the 50's, and the English R&B Revival of the 60's. The Punk Revolution was vigorous enough to hop relatively quickly over to the continent. Its maxims were refusal of any alienating professionalism; restoration of direct contact between public and musician; understanding at a glance; bodily extasis instead of ritual identification; accusations instead of introverted protest; alcohol instead of drugs.

As hard as steel. I am strong. I love metal. Aluminum. Brass. Lead.
(Radierer, a Limburg group — from the so-called "Non Dom Casette")

Many German underground groups have recently released songs of LP-length, although on cassettes. Their music thus bypasses the commercial market. Cassettes tend to be closed systems and forego the logic of hits. Whoever hears it and buys it enters, as it were, an imaginary membership. Hence the freedom and relish to experiment, the impartiality and intensity of most cassette productions. Cassettes enforce their own temporality, be it con-



1923 Max Emden, owner of a Hamburg department store, bought the Brissago islands, along with their botanical garden, from Baroness Antonietta von Saint-Leger, who, says Richard Ellman, "had buried seven husbands without a tear" before she invited James Joyce to the islands and inspired the Siren and Circe episodes of *Ulysses*. (She eventually died in the poorhouse in 1948.) Meanwhile, rich Max had naked beauties hop and skip around — for "like too is an art" — in the island garden. The sanatorium closed. Artists were squatting in the Semiramis Hotel, built in 1910. The terrain was for sale. The Kaiser's banker, Eduard Freiherr von der Heydt, without much ceremony, bought the entire Monte Verita, across the water from the islands, which long since had been left by the lifestyle reformers. He built there a de luxe hotel in Bauhaus style.

A Patchwork of Minorities

There is nothing to understand about this dunghill, this mountain of truth; neither didactics nor structure of meaning; at best, there is plenty that can spur the imagination. Ascona has shown how revolutionaries, crazies, hippies, psychoanalysts, theosophists, and artists can "become parts and wheelworks of each other."

Everywhere in this exhibition we meet unpleasant company: next to the anarchist the religious freak, next to the revolutionary the petty-bourgeois gone wild, next to the

<240>centrated or empty as a bare background. One can switch it off, but not, like the needle on horizontal vinyl, simply lift it up.

We're a happy family. We don't talk about feelings. Incest. I love my mother. Incest. I love my mother. Incest. I make it with my mother. Incest. I murder my father. Incest. With my little sister.

With my big sister. Incest.
(Radierer, "Nom Dom Cassette")

"Herdentum" (herd-being) and individuality. That is the theme. What the herd ought to be it did not and does not know. The herd has no consciousness of itself. Its characteristics hide themselves in exteriorities; uniformity and fashions; in changing herd tastes and its edges; the "Angesagte" (what's "in") and the "Daneben" ("out-of-it").

Herd's feel themselves driven like nomads. They are anti-State and anti-institutional. They renounce the ciphers of educated language and high culture; they develop political experiences on a non-conceptual level, which can seldom be turned into political solidarity. Therefore "punks" and "skins" and all other "tribes" of the underground are not part of the militant sections of the current "alternative" and "squatter" movements.

Herd's are nomadic and parasitic. They take what they can get. Mooching. Borrowing money.

*I and you. We should be. I and he. Like the fire department.
We and You. How do you do. Everybody does it with everybody.
All fuck each other. Everybody's in it. AH screw each other. No one excepted. Every one will get it. No one is left out. Each gets his desserts. Everyone is next.*

Charlotte

Sitting at a table in a room of a factory, Charlotte is drinking, eating, and conversing with the people around her. A party is going on. Charlotte is the only elderly gentleman and we realize immediately who she is.

Sexuality plays the dominant role in Charlotte's life. She is receptive to all forms of sexuality, but the heterosexual side clearly predominates in her daily life.

Charlotte: This, cunt, asshole, I really screwed her with marvelous depravity. But when I wear women's clothes, I'm another person; I don't look at women any more; sex is in the background. You must see my outfits and fourteen wigs. I really have nice things, I really do. I don't understand how women can wear pants, it's awful. Nothing is nicer than being a woman, really. I'm much more familiar and comfortable with female anatomy. I've always had a feminine body.

Charlotte hides her women's clothes in the cellar, gets dressed down there or puts them in plastic bags and takes them with her. She's lived in her building for twenty

Everything vibrates without emotion.
("Alle sind mal dran" [Everyone will get it] — Tumorboys)

Observations. Berlin at the Yorkbrücken.¹ There, where the "Blocksberg" woman's bar once stood, now one finds another bar: RISIKO. The large window pane is covered by a sheetmetal full of holes; the exterior white-washed. The first impression: an artificial garbage-heap. Squeezing scrawny sounds from two boxes on the ceiling. Graffiti all over the wall. *Diving from the clouds*. A poster from a punk festival in the Ruhr. Comments scrawled nearby. *Corrosive junk*. Written over the doorway: *Men also bleed*.

Some people find themselves at home here. They hang around. Short haircuts, spiky and dyed, adventurous, decked-up jackets, faded trousers, worn shoes. Black red glitter shocking leather velvet linen brocade rubber. "Dazzling," less for shock than for difference, among each other (and, naturally, against all outsiders), and to break up the daily monotony. The gear one wears, and not the position of the sun functions as calendar here.

I'm afraid. I'm afraid. Of life. I'm afraid. I'm full of dread.
("I'm afraid," WC = Westdeutsche Christen)

The john, anxiety and blood. The pissoir in this joint is, at first sight, frightening. Here somebody has so splattered the urinal with deceitfully real theater-blood, from here on down to the bottom, that it looks just like someone had slashed an artery in his thigh. Good precaution. On the wall: *New: Deadly Doris* (a Dada/Underground group hereabouts) *now also pseudomusical*. An implicit quotation of the sex ads in the big tabloids: *New: Thai model, 18, now also dominatrix*. Dominating, jerked off, and many times a recurrent theme in graffiti — anxiety. Not anxiety towards, but anxiety as.



BIER-WEIN U. FRÜHSTÜCK

years. The neighbors know she is a transvestite. She has no inhibitions. People tell her, "You look your best in drag, sweetie." Charlotte often visits sex film clubs, brothels, and bars. Everyone likes her. She uses her homosexual side to earn money.

A Dialogue with Charlotte

C: I was fifteen when I was initiated. We already fucked each other in the school's toilet. Just the way they do today. When I was sixteen, I wore women's clothes for the first time. We did that just among ourselves in homosexual bars. After 1922, the Spruce, an athletic and nudist club, was founded. I joined then and was a member until Hitler came to power. Then everything was disbanded.

Q: During those years, did you fuck boys and girls?

C: Of course. One after the other.

Q: Did you have any difficulties in those days?

C: No, of course not. Even before then, after World War I, there were communes where five or six couples lived together. I met my first wife in Berlin in a women's bar frequented only by women. I met her there with a girlfriend.

<242>Anxiety as, to quote Nietzsche, "cement" of the "monstrous instinctive conspiracy of the herd. . . against everything that is shepherd, carnivore, hermit, and Caesar, in favor of the preservation and nurture of everything weak, oppressed, badly turned out, mediocre, half-miscarried, like a slave revolt drawn out, first secretly, then always more self-consciously, against every kind of master. . ." (Nietzsche, Fall 1885)

I want to die so no one'll hear me. A little blood in my mouth. A Black spot on my skin, I breathe deeply and then sound hollow. Carbolic acid smell doesn't bother me; my head was empty anyhow. I'm lying still warm under the white sheet. Someone cuts my toes off, my whole length won't fit in the grave.

The whole time I'm astonished by some guy sitting on the pinball machine, legs drawn up to his chest, motionless staring at the wall. His wide, thick jacket of heavy black rubber buttoned up to his neck, as if it were bitterly cold in the joint (it was sticky hot). Black rubber pants, heavy work-boots. Under his seaman's cap, visor down low, piercing, blackened eyes. Next to him stands a woman I know. Adelere, barely twenty. She is from Fulda, has been a year in Berlin, thrown out of school, off with her last bit of money, works as coat-check girl and waitress. She lost her last job at a "scene" cafe; the owner didn't want to put up with the swastika on her shirt; he forgot that she usually wore the Star of David. Now she lives off the proceeds of a single good coke deal. Says she. "Who's the guy?" I ask someone next to me. "Blixia." I remember. Blixia Bargeld ("Blixia in cash") is the founder of the *Einsturzende Neubauten* ("collapsing New-Buildings"), Berlin's underground band most full of ideas. Blixia gave the group its name *before* Berlin's most famous new



Q: What did your wife think of your women's clothing?

C: She thought it was great. She had a girlfriend who had also married and all four of us went out together as sisters.

Q: Did it bother you when your wife slept with another man?

C: Boy, are you behind the times. We did everything as a foursome. My wife was tolerant and so was I. I also fucked her. I had a daughter with her.

Q: Did your wife want a child?

C: What do you mean want. It was just there. What else can you do?

Charlotte's first wife died in Silesia in 1944. Her daughter was sent to a youth camp in Poland, from which Charlotte rescued her in 1949 with the help of the Red Cross. Charlotte still keeps in touch with her daughter, who is married and has a daughter.

Q: Were there bars for transvestites and homosexuals before World War II?

C: Not under Hitler. So we did it secretly; under Hitler it was against the law. Homos were sent to concentration camps. No doctor would give you shots. Right after World

<243>building in fact collapsed: the Congress Hall, built with American occupation force money.

Nietzsche again, in a note of 24th Nov. 1887 from Nizza: "One ought not to will of oneself what one is not able to. One asks oneself: *Do you want to go first?* Or do you want to go *on your own?* In the first case you will be, at best, shepherd: which means, the herd's indispensable need. In the other case, you must be capable of something else: from being *able* to go on your own, to being *capable* of something else, and of going elsewhere. In either case you must be capable of it, and you should not want the other."

The strength (perhaps also the reservoir) of the so-called, "New German Wave" (NDW) lies in its underground. Where the NDW encounters incipient commercial success — breaking into the German Schlager and Popmusic markets (as *Abwärts, Fehlfarben, Hans-a-plast, Ideal* are about to do) — this anticommercial, experimental humus is also present in Hamburg, around Düsseldorf, Hanover and West-Berlin. Though small and including only a couple thousand fans altogether, a social reaction is at work in it. These people who find themselves torn apart by this society, existentially and biographically, had lost the language to express themselves. That was the time of Stammheim: the mid-70's, when the traditional codes of protest, the discourse of the New Left decade, had fallen apart; when the moralists of the ecological apocalypse began to diffuse an Apollonian trance; when the women's movement went lame by rediscovering the phallus and becoming in turn an establishment; and finally, English, proletarian Punk offered new subversive levels of expression, which assault even language and speech itself.

I'm all alone. I'm all alone. I'm all alone. Today. Today. Today. Na



W: I was the best time. It was really nice. Then shitty Hitler came to power. That should never have happened. In 1939, I was drafted and sent to France.

Q: Where were you in France?

C: I was with Rommel, Africa Corps. I was everywhere, in Crete. I've seen the world.

Q: Did you get along with military men?

C: Of course, no problem.

Q: Did you earn a little something on the side?

C: I only supplemented my soldier's pay.

Q: What was the War like for you? It must have been terrible.

C: Oh, no! I liked it a lot! Man, I went AWOL after two years. I didn't like it anymore. I wasn't for the War. In 1941, I went AWOL. To France, to Lyon, in a brothel.

Q: Weren't you afraid you'd be discovered?

C: I simply disappeared. Until 1949, I was in a brothel. In those days, I had breasts. As soon as I got to France, I had shots.

<244> *nana nana nana. So alone. So alone. So alone. Today. Today. Today. No No No No.*

For the first time, a protest movement of the young generation seems to have almost completely bypassed the intellectuals. The sole frame of clarification which gives at least a few clues to explain the new phenomena was not brought up by them but by a politician (Peter Glotz, now General Secretary of the Social Democratic Party), the so-called "Two Culture-Theory." Did anyone notice that this paradigm included a quote from Lenin?

Glotz' argument rests on an analogy. As in the 90's in tsarist Russia an opposition understanding itself as "narodniki" and partly-Marxistic developed against the francophile Grande Bourgeoisie, so today an "Alternative and Underground Culture" has formed against the language and politics of the media and "high culture." It would be simple if everything resolved itself in this dualistic logic. In fact, the gaps are yawning open in multiple ways, certainly between the "alternatives" and the "underground," as well as between each of these and "high culture." And the formation of these contradictory processes are still going on silently and without any open front-lines and strategies.

The only characteristic of the underground new German Wave, its only living part, a fragile herd-tendency. Seen historically this underground has its origin in the English "year of punk" (76-77), which showed its effects half a year later in Hamburg, Berlin, Düsseldorf: the delight in the destruction of rock as an event and its elemental recomposition. Already concerts in Hamburg showed that clearly. No matter who played on stage they were neither applauded nor cheered. The traditional, ritual figure of an identifying relation-



Q: Were you in contact with your wife?

C: I wrote her everything. She was great. She replied, Papa, amuse yourself. It doesn't matter for a soldier. What matters is that you are alive. She was great. Of course my wife knew that I had a French girl. The girl was seventeen. That was great.

Q: Did your girlfriend like your breasts?

C: She didn't think anything of it. After all, it was in a brothel.

Charlotte returned to Berlin with a forged discharge.

Q: Were you a wreck when you got back to Berlin?

C: Oh, no. I felt better then than I do now.

When I returned in 1949, I found work in a hospital. I worked for sixteen years in the Hermsdorf Dominican Hospital, always with nuns. I liked that. Of course, the nuns were always domineering.

Charlotte retired in 1968. From 1967 to 1971, she worked in a transvestite bar, the Lützower Lamp in Berlin.

<245>ship between the group and the audience was extinguished. In place of this appeared what one could call a "Sid Vicious Syndrome," the symbolic and even real violation of the body. The audience down below squeeze and jostle one another, pushing, jumping around, and elbowing each other to the point of fighting (the "Pogo" as a dance preserves all these punching movements). At the same time the vehement attempt to reach the stage, and to grab the musicians. As far as Sid Vicious was concerned, no concert was finished without his leaving the stage with bleeding lips, scratched and cut skin and visible wounds.

The Destruction of the Mirror

Rock as a violation of body. Before the advent of Punk and underground the reaction of an audience to a gig consisted at the most of the production of as much noise as pounded on them from the P.A. system. Now this mirror-reflection is destroyed. What was formerly the symbolic bond of the mirroring of self in the rock-idol (the hard-rock-fans would mime the guitarist), now falls apart into components of its own imaginary energy. A good rock concert always proved itself in the real power of the audience (and the band) to cross the borders of the symbolic order over to the imaginary: The shrieks of teenage Beatle fans louder than the music, the hour-long shaking heads of Zappa and Grateful Dead fans, etc. The early punks kept as an object to be destroyed the symbolic order of the rock-event as such.

"Energy in general seems to be an important theme to you?" *"If I can radiate, release, the greatest amount of energy in three or four*



Q: Did you earn a lot as a woman in the Lützower Lamp?

A: Of course. I still do today. After all, I'm not bad looking. [Charlotte worked as a topless dancer.] When my wife was in Wittenau, I got shots. But today young male Irenevestites don't want shots. They want to be flat, boyish. Many girls are like that too. In Neufert Street there's a young woman who has no tits at all. The girls don't want to have such cannonballs.

Q: And the men?

A: Many still want tits, but it's different today. Of course a man is aroused by a woman with tits. No, I'm not going to do it anymore either. A shot costs thirty marks and lasts for about three weeks, but you've got to get shots at least three to four times for three weeks before that.

Charlotte asks us to accompany her to a film club.

C: Nothing will happen to you. Don't get offended by anything, particularly the film. Don't get offended when horny men walk around naked, when they all there masturbating. Let's be honest. It's only human. There are also rooms where you can fuck all you want with a threesome or foursome. Whatever you want. In the Hollido Club everyone can take part.

<246>years, of what I believe is put in me — then I will have surpassed my father that far."

(Interview with Mufti from Abwärts in "Spex," Sept. 1981)


But the destruction of the mirror dissolves all the limits of the body, and with that displaces its imaginary/real violation.

Hamburg 1979:

A Man has met a woman in a market, and she fell in love with him completely, plain and simple. After he went with her, he went with her plain and simple and stupidly into the forest; where else should one go I

However, the experiment was to find out whether this woman indeed loves him. Do you know that? How can one find that out? Do you know Romeo and Juliet? That is a proof of love and not the shit you are giving me here. (The kids yelled during the narration, spit and belched, in an air of indifferent tension W.H.) Thus: he went with her into the forest and took off one after another the parts of his body, till he was only just a head, just a brain. And then he asked: do you still love me forever? And that is all. (Markthalle, Hamburg, 24th Feb. 1979, the leadsinger of "Male.")

One can also read this as an allegory of the rock-event. Next, the aura is taken away; it's like being in the flea-market. By chance. Completely plain and simple and stupid. One just goes. Someone is playing. A feeling of *Mittagspause* (lunchbreak). Thus the name of one band at that time (branched out in the meantime to *D.A.F.* and *Fehlfarben*, the most successful bands of the



According to Charlotte, the film clubs are well attended even during the day. Charlotte doesn't pay to get in. She belongs to the family. In the clubs she earns something from the sale of her porno magazines, and of herself.

Q: Do you wear only women's clothes to the film clubs?

C: Yes, but not during the day. I can't do it because of the people. But I feel better as a woman. I put everything on under wide trousers when I'm alone. When I hang out in the neighborhood, I go out late in the evening.

Q: Does your wife ask you where you're going?

C: Of course not. That's none of her business.

Q: Doesn't your wife complain when you come home late at night?

C: Oh, no. She's asleep by then. I do what I want. Nobody tells me what to do. When she's away recuperating, I receive guests at home. Then they bring money into the house.

Q: Are they all men?

<247>NDW). What happens is not said or planned. A man falls in love. A woman falls in love.

But what does "falling in love" mean? The chance moment turns into the moment of decision. Yet only the forest preserves the ambiguous mood of ritual secrecy. But for the punks "forest" is also the metaphor of boredom. The grammatical tense becomes stiff. Romeo and Juliet. Love or death. It is not *like a decision*, but Decision itself. Dis-junction, either . . . or. To decide the "falling in love," to take off the parts of the body. Self-anatomy. Till he was only a head, only a brain; an idea falls apart to become real.

But it was only an "experiment." And besides, it was not sung, but narrated. A fable, which moreover contains the symptom of an experience. An experience which made its way through this text as a shifting trace, reporting about the great moment of the herd, the tragedies of incest, repeating the murder of the father which the goatherds celebrated dismembering him in their brains.

But it was only an "experiment." The great times of the herd are gone. And belching, spitting and yelling were, finally and initially, not even the worst answer to this priestly apocalyptic narration. It also belongs to the good memories from these early punk concerts, which hardly once left me the feeling of being a lamb herded by mass- or group ecstasy.

The Restoration of the rock-event through its destruction/dismemberment is like walking a tightrope. It presupposes that a linking order arises neither on stage nor in the audience's gestures. This may have the consequence that nothing happens anymore. Only laughter at a group which doesn't play or at a concert which doesn't take place. The experiences which are collected in

G: Only men, regular customers.

In A Bar With Charlotte

During our trip to Wedding¹ to pick up Charlotte, we decide to go with her to the Small World Lantern. "Well, you little assholes, you!" is Charlotte's greeting at her door. It sets the tone for the evening. Charlotte and Theodorus get horny recalling their years in Kreuzberg. They used to dance naked on the bar. Charlotte often appeared in drag. After numerous thrusts, Charlotte is ours. When we want to pay her, she roughly taps our fingers. It would threaten her masculinity. □

Translated by Wynn Gunderson

1. Workers' district in West Berlin.

<248>the body of the unfettered herd produce a nice ability for criticism. This ability is not based on individual criteria. To it belongs the presence of the herd, an uncompromising anti-professionalism, the deconstruction and dissolution of borders of relationships between group and audience, the elementarity of the music whether this side of or beyond tonality, the brevity of the songs and the collection of all these elements in the texts. This is only present in small group of musicians and fans. They call themselves the "Genial Dilettants."

Death is a scandal. Death is a scandal. Rituals of Expiation. Door handles. Ventilation grates. Radiators. Death is a scandal. Rituals of expiation. The machine works. We are all hostages. Give. Take.
(Die tödliche Doris)

But let us not forget rock has a traditional dynamic of development, based on the logic of marketing and capitalism. At some point, every musician is faced with the alternative: dropping out or making money. The destruction of the rock-event, the failure of every economy, the lack of ideas of continuity, deferment and accumulation — in a word, the *unreliability* of the herd stands in the way of this need.

I and I in the real life. I and I in reality. I and I in the true world. I and I in reality.
(Mittagspause)

Another kind of experiment began. It contained a dialectic as old as capitalistic rock-culture: how much of the transgressive element at the beginning, how much of the subversion of this "I," lost in reality; how much of the cracked mirror of the audience/group-relation; how much of all this could stand fast before the masses' taste? A question which once again answered



ANNETTE HUMPE

ROCK LOBSTER

SYLVÈRE LOTRINGEN: When did you start writing lyrics?

ANNETTE HUMPE: I started when I was 15, but I never published anything. Writing was self-therapy.

SL: Did you need therapy?

AH: Sure, every German needs therapy.

SL: To get cured of history?

AH: History is one point. Even though I wasn't born at the time.

<250>itself in the logic of hits. And even while the group *Mittagspause*, for instance, still experimented extensively on the stage, there was, for instance, at least one song, which worked, despite everything and every time it was played, as a collective hymn. A hit. This one:

*Kebab dreams in the walled city. Turk-kultur behind barbed wire. New/Izmir in the GDR. * Ataturk the new master. Kyrie for the Soviet Union. In every snackbar a spy. In the Central Committee : an agent from Turkey. Germany, Germany, it's all over. We are the Turks of tomorrow. We are the Turks of tomorrow.*

A hit which became a relatively big-seller as a single (*Mittagspause* and *D.A.F.*) and an LP (*Fehlfarben*). In the logic of rock-history, the multiplication of songs on the record market plays a co-determinative role alongside the subversive force of the rock event itself. Only from its role does the further existence or break-up of the group derive as a pure question of money, money the "Genial Dilettants" entirely rejected by releasing their productions up to now mostly through cassettes and by not claiming to make a living from their music.

No pause for breathing history is made it moves on. Spacelabs fall on islands forgetting is widespread it moves on. Mountains explode the President is guilty it moves on. Gray b-movie heroes govern the world it moves on.

("A year" — *Fehlfarben*)

The language of both these songs reflects quite well the presuppositions of their genesis. "Kebab-dreams" is a fantasmatic mixture of impressions of Berlin. The Turks in the ghetto of Kreuzberg; the wall with barbed wire;

SL: You thought it wasn't fair to inherit that?

AM: Why should I feel guilty? It's bullshit. Even the older generation doesn't feel guilty. The world won't change if sixty million people feel guilty. My parents don't feel guilty. Before I went to the university, I had many fights with them. In many families the children try to make their parents feel guilty. But without success; they just don't feel guilty.

SL: Why did you leave your parents?

AM: I left home when I was sixteen. It was the first time I was away from my parents. My mother wanted to have a daughter who was a good classical pianist.

SL: Was your mother a musician?

AM: She played organ in church. So I studied in Cologne. I was still obsessed with the idea of becoming a classical pianist, but I didn't have the energy to rehearse ten hours a day. I wanted my life to be different, and I didn't know how, so I came to Berlin. I've been in Berlin for six years now.

SL: My parents were very puritanical. When I left home, I had never been drunk before, I had

<251>military guard; the feeling of being caught and yet of remaining undiscovered in the streets of this decaying district; the end-of-time-feeling in face of this No-man's-land before and beyond the wall, *Kyrie eleison*. Thus, it is an extremely political text; it certainly does not stop at the wall of sense, or this side of the barricade of signification. It flattens the wall, jumps back and forth, lets the Turks wander to the other side, into the Central Committee of the East German "Socialist Unity Party" and back again, *in every snackbar* of the free West; the city of the wall, which should denote through its borders the borders of sense, being cut down to a pure signifier, to the indifference of "it's all over." The wall functions only as a simple slash, as the bar in a sign (S/s) that finally negates the hierarchic dualism of its structure (thought/phoneme etc.) in so far as it becomes visible as the wall encircles it.

The herd, left alone at last, and not led around by a shepherd, celebrates a festival. It scans its secret chants in demonstrations: No *pause for breath history is made it moves on*. No ideology, no politically mediated theory, no leader or shepherd has provided these chants. These pithy sounds echo from the walls of houses like laughter. It's laughter, not humor or subversive satire. *We are the Turks of tomorrow*. Not a "negative caricature," as "68ers" might misconstrue it.

But misconstruing is, in general, an epidemic poison of unregulated discourse. Next: the authors of the quoted chants hastened to "deny responsibility" for such political use of their words and music. Because: *Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft* (D.A.F.), *Fehlfarben* and nearly a dozen other bands are on the way to finding a mass audience via TV and the record market. And, lastly, the "Genial Dilettants" themselves are on the way, as last



never smoked marijuana before, I had never slept with a man before; I knew nothing about life. Everything I didn't do before, I did in Berlin.

SL: How did you switch from classical to pop?

AM: I had to earn a living, so I played in bars. I played for transvestites.

SL: How did this happen?

AM: They wanted a special male pianist: a very beautiful one. Either they were not beautiful enough, or they couldn't do it. It was my chance. At first, they didn't like the idea of a real woman in the group, then they realized that I had a neutral face, and it was okay; I was neutral.

SL: Were you in drag yourself?

AM: I had to wear a suit and look like a man in order to play. I learned a lot with them.

SL: Did you learn about men?

AM: No. They were so feminine.

<252>preservers of the genuine experience of Punk and New German Wave, to, at best, restore the old order of shepherd and shepherded. Blixa Bargeld, the already mentioned "spiritus rector" and Ernst Busch² of the Dilettants, presents himself recently as propagandist of an obscure dogma of decline, which West Germany has already bitterly experienced.

The RAF (Red Army Fraction) did their thing: not to overthrow the government. They did not do Schleyer in because he was chairman of the Employers' Association, but so that the CDU would come to power, so that fascism would triumph sooner in the BRD.- They wanted to drive the process forward; they wanted to rush the decline, which would take place anyway — / don't want anything else.*

(Blixa in "Spex," 9, 1981).

Kyrie eleison. □

Translated by Cesar Loaiza

1. A whole bunch of bridges in the Kreuzberg district.
2. Ernst Busch was the most famous singer of Brecht/Weill songs.

"I never was in the Nazi party, and I still don't belong to any party now. I mind my own business."

Hitler's bodyguard

SL: First time you saw real women?

AM: I thought they were much more woman than I am. I was watching them all the time.

SL: What did you do after you left them?

AM: I formed a band called *Expectors* together with my sister. It lasted for half a year. My sister is still in the band, but I left them to play with *Ideal*. They had better musicians. For this kind of music, they are *Ideal*, therefore the name.

SL: Groups form and disappear very fast in Germany. How do you explain that?

AM: It's a punk thing. It comes from this new music scene. Groups split up quickly, and they die, they just die.

SL: Pop music is usually sung in English. Did you ever sing in English?

AM: No, a few German singers did. I cannot express myself in English like I can in German.