

1 Introducing a German Chapter of the Queer Intersectional

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“In a world, which one would most willingly define as the blindest of worlds, the presence of people who nevertheless insist on the possibility of its change acquires supreme importance.”

Elias Canetti, The Conscience of Words, 1976

Near the end of one of the late Zygmunt Bauman’s final book-length essays, titled *Does the Richness of the Few Benefit Us All?* (2013), he contemplated the role of the writer in this present world of brutal disparities and looming catastrophes. Happy to concede that “most human hearts” value truthfulness and abhor hypocrisy (ibid., 91), Bauman painstakingly documents the widely-held, in fact, stubborn belief that trickle-down economics and elite capture of finite resources can and should somehow be tolerated – can be seen as rising tides lifting all society’s ships, as a bearable feature of “reality” (ibid., 92) under capitalism. A look at the balance sheet reveals a discordance between society’s words, deeds and the facts on the ground. Echoing a chorus of leftist exasperation with the unsustainable status quo, Bauman dolefully notes that “the world seems not well protected against catastrophes, but against their prophets” (ibid., 95). In this sense, Bauman sees the vocation of writers as radical truth-tellers who “build a bridge” (ibid., 91) between words, deeds and the graspable, empirical world.

To elaborate this idea, Bauman turns to an important but little-known speech by Elias Canetti on the topic of whether “there is something in which writers or people hitherto thought to be writers could be of use” (Canetti in Bauman 2013, 91–2). “For his starting point, (Canetti) picks a statement made by an unknown author on 23rd August 1939: ‘It’s over. Were I a real writer, I should’ve been able to prevent the war’” (ibid., 93). In this chilling statement, Canetti observes two important virtues of this unknown writer¹ which he holds as exemplary for the entire vocation. These virtues imply a strong relationship between words, deeds

1 “(I)t may have been the Berlin poet Oskar Loerke”, wrote J.P. Stern in a 1986 issue of *London Review of Books*.

and the world. First, the “hopelessness of the situation” (ibid.) doesn’t defeat the author into silence; rather, it compels acknowledgement, spoken, written. Second, the author asserts their fidelity to writers’ “vocational *responsibility* for the state of the world” (ibid., 94, italics in original). Words and deeds must be jointly mobilized toward the world, toward making a difference “between well-being and catastrophe” (ibid.). The writer thus possesses the “desire to assume responsibility for everything that can be expressed in words, and to do penance for their, the words,’ failure” (Canetti in Bauman, ibid.). Tasked with this tall order, Canetti’s virtuous writer remains absent (“There are no writers today”, Canetti in Bauman, ibid.) yet utterly relevant, as in the epigraph above: “In a world, which one would most willingly define as the blindest of worlds, the presence of people who nevertheless insist on the possibility of its change acquires supreme importance” (Canetti in Bauman, ibid.).

Writing as prophesy of the catastrophe – then, ongoing, to come. Writing as implement to know and transmit knowledge of the world *as it is*. Writing as urgency to insist that things could be – *must be* – otherwise. Writing as an ethical stance toward words, deeds and world. Tall order, indeed.

The essays collected in this volume, translated in 2017 and early 2018 into English, represent a modest supplement to existing English-language works which, taken together, provide a partial but forthright portrait of the burgeoning anti-racist queer left in urban Germany during the Merkel era, what I’m calling here *a German chapter of the Queer Intersectional*. “A German chapter”: the indefinite article, because this is one scene, one selection of authors, and, crucially, one national context, among many; “German”, because the writers’ texts, the politics practiced, and the lives conducted under my admittedly lofty heading do such in German, among other languages; “chapter” has here two intended resonances – both “local branch” and “portion of a book”; and with “the Queer Intersectional” – we’ll come back to that part in a moment.

Readers may have already encountered this recent development of anti-racist queer politics in western Europe, broadly, and in urban Germany, specifically, through the sophisticated works of Fatima El-Tayeb and Jin Haritaworn, both of whom have excellent monographs in English (2011 and 2015, respectively), as well as a wide selection of other published academic works since 2003².

² See also the three excellent contributions to the “Special section on women’s rights, gay rights and anti-Muslim racism in Europe” in the February 2012 issue of *European Journal of Women’s Studies*: Haritaworn’s essay “Women’s rights, gay rights and anti-Muslim racism in

Or perhaps readers have encountered the story of Judith Butler's speech at the Berlin Christopher Street Day awards ceremony in 2010, in which she castigated the organizers and award-givers for their collusion with anti-Muslim racism and announced her strident solidarity with local queer of color groups and organizations³. But outside of these entry points, access to the sharp political analyses of this scene remains limited for non-German readers⁴. This lack of access translates into a lack of familiarity, which, upon reflection, is doubly strange considering both Germany's proximity to the beating heart of global economic and political governance and its rich, creative traditions of political activism.

Obviously, this lack of access and familiarity is one-sided. In Germany – as throughout the world – critical leftist politics are intensely aware of the goings-on in the Anglophone portions of the USA. This is, of course, both a feature of globalization as well as an artifact of the USA's massive presence in Germany. But this is also a feature of many currents in global anti-racist and sexual freedom movements, both of which have been converging in recent years. In Berlin, Hamburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt, and other urban centers, critical leftisms routinely draw on theories and discourses about race and queerness – perhaps much more so than commensurate discourses of feminism and anti-capitalism – which originate in English-language contexts. Historiographies of the US American Civil Rights movement and subsequent movement for gay and lesbian liberation, learned in university educations and circulated in political networks, both provide contemporary activists and writers in Germany with images and strategies with which to identify and strive.

Europe: an introduction", El-Tayeb's "'Gays who cannot properly be gay': Queer Muslims in the neoliberal European city" and Jennifer Petzen's "Contesting Europe: a call for an anti-modern sexual politics". Petzen's rich record of scholarly and activist contributions to this scene also deserves special mention.

- 3 Still unparalleled in its wide scope and high-quality, the edited volume *Karriere eines konstruierten Gegensatzes: zehn Jahre 'Muslime versus Schwule'* (English: *The Career of a Constructed Opposition: 10 Years of 'Muslims versus Gays'*), edited by Koray Yılmaz-Günay and first published in 2011 (the 2nd edition arrived in 2014), remains the finest introduction to this political-cultural scene. The majority of those texts are in German, but interested readers might consult the book for its three English entries, including a short text by Petzen which depicts this important episode with Butler in Berlin in 2010 ("Silent Echoes: The Aftermath of Judith Butler's Refusal of the Civil Courage Award", p. 163–168).
- 4 English-reading publics, on the other hand, have a surfeit of readily accessible works from non-German affiliates and chapters of the Queer Intersectional and writers working to elaborate anti-capitalist, anti-racist, feminist and queer theoretical insights in their respective disciplines. This could easily be the subject of a still-unwritten bibliographic survey which would helpfully sort through this thicket of writers and works.

This is not to claim that activists in Germany operate in a mode of emulation or mimesis with their projected American counterparts. I do, however, wish to suggest that this epistemic imbalance between German-speaking and non-German-speaking publics of critical leftists does produce deleterious effects, particularly for queer anti-racist activists in Germany. On the one hand, the absence of familiarity becomes, all too easily, a failure of solidarity, or worse, an opening for hackneyed political fantasies to seep in unchallenged. And on the other hand, conservatives and the far-right in Germany (and throughout Europe) jump at the chance to paint queer anti-racist interventions in the tawdry shades of unwelcome foreignness, imported decadence and/or moral menace. This conservative trend to dismiss the contributions and perspectives of queer anti-racists is also, worryingly, manifest on the left. In what amounts to a massive project of ethnoracial gaslighting, throughout Germany a weird coalition of anti-imperialist, anti-fascist and anti-nationalist traditions of street activism and urban politics have conjointly cast queer anti-racist prerogatives variously as inauthentic, crypto-antidemocratic, or as manifest bigotry. This volume of translated essays militates against these dangers, providing readers with both first-hand accounts of queer anti-racist theorizing and, in the opportunity to grow international reading publics, a potential bridge to further solidarities in this moment of unprecedented interconnectivity and unstable conditions.

Queer and anti-racist political movements throughout Europe are not going away. In fact, they seem to be in a phase of metastasis and convergence. Political opposition to homophobia and transphobia is not only becoming co-extensive with political opposition to racism and xenophobia – a banal observation considering how entities like the EU, states or even corporations conspicuously broadcast their commitments to the rights of sexual and ethnoracial minorities. More pointedly, radical sexual politics and radical racial politics are increasingly finding common cause during this historic moment, at all scales, occupying precisely that cavity in leftist politics produced by obdurate and widening economic inequalities, persistent and ongoing racisms, and the ambivalent and volatile sociolegal inclusions of sexual and gender minorities.

In September 2017 the German federal election was held. I casually polled my friends and acquaintances here in Berlin about their voting moods. The first thing to come up was the scary voting projections for the Alternative for Germany⁵, the

5 Sebastian Friedrich has written an insightful book about this far-right insurgent party, *Die AfD: Analysen – Hintergründe – Kontroversen* (2017) which remains unfortunately untranslat-

new party who were rightly predicted to take seats in the Bundestag and become the first sitting extreme right-wing party in post-WWII German history. How many people will vote for them? When pressed who they personally would vote for, always the same refrain: "There's nobody to vote for!" For a US American observer like myself, accustomed to a two-party system, this initially strikes as an overstatement. From the outside, the choices appear seemingly wide for the left-leaning voter. From the inside, however, there's not one party who a voter committed to queer and anti-racist politics would unconditionally support. In Berlin, the Social Democrats continue to be associated with the kind of out-of-touch development politics and mismanagement of gay former municipal mayor Wowereit and the anti-migrant and racially-incendiary statements of former district mayor Buschkowsky. The Green party is still held responsible for their part in evicting the Oranienplatz and Gerhard-Hauptmann-Schule occupation demonstrations conducted by refugee activists a few years before. The Left Party's biggest national politician, Sarah Wagenknecht, has been appropriating populist discourse about refugees and immigration in a campaign so despised that leftist activists threw a pie in her face. Of course, people voted strategically, holding their noses. But when I stated above that there is a real cavity which queer anti-racist activists occupy, this is a clear index.

In a cunning electoral move to defang the already-mostly-toothless Social Democrats, Chancellor Merkel slightly but significantly changed her stance regarding same-sex marriage legislation months before the election, allowing her party members to vote their conscience rather than as a party block. Annual polls had demonstrated that a majority of the public supported same-sex marriage legislation, Merkel's previous steadfastness prevented it. A vote was quickly held in June, making same-sex marriage federal policy on October 1, 2017. Mainstream LGBT organizations organized festivities throughout the country. The election campaign went forth, without same-sex marriage as a distinguishing feature of party platforms. The Alternative for Germany party preyed on their far-right voters' ambivalent opposition to same-sex marriage in the weeks leading up to the election; this, despite the fact that that same party is co-chaired by an out lesbian married to a woman of color.

While the election and the legalization of same-sex marriage were notable background events for the queer and anti-racist activists and writers I have gotten

ed into English. Friedrich and co-author Gabriel Kuhn published a condensed account of the AfD in English in the leftist magazine *Jacobin*, available here: <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/06/germany-afd-cdu-immigrants-merkel-xenophobia-neoliberalism>

to know here in Berlin, neither event were major concerns nor prominent targets of their politics or life projects. In fact, for many people I know, 2017 was a somewhat dreadful year of backlash, backsliding, and bad faith, epitomized by a loud, disagreeable book controversy.

Three of the four authors translated here – Wolter, Çetin, Yılmaz-Günay – live in Berlin; Voß lived here for many years and now commutes here regularly from his professorship in Merseburg. This “chapter” of queer anti-racist writers is, more or less, a Berlin affiliate of a larger international network. Last summer, after the same-sex marriage celebrations and at the height of the election campaign, I conducted two semi-formal interviews with Wolter, Çetin and Voß to listen to them discuss their writings and political activism. I had befriended these authors over the course of my own ethnographic field research in Berlin years before, had interviewed three of them formally during that time, and was thus well-acquainted with their writings and politics.

Months before our summer meetings – in fact, on the same day as Donald Trump’s inauguration in January – I got to witness firsthand how the writings and characters of Çetin and Voß – and by association, the critical interventions of queer anti-racist activists and writers writ large – would be maligned throughout the year. That day, Berlin’s largest queer club called SchwuZ⁶ hosted another of its many monthly entertainment series, this one called Polymorphia, organized by local drag performer and activist Patsy l’Amour laLove. This particular party series includes a public lecture and discussion, followed by a drag show and then dancing. The lecture, titled “Pinkwashing⁷ Israel?!” (yes, both a question mark *and* an exclamation point), was to be delivered by Frederik Schindler, a youthful freelance journalist and Green Party activist from Frankfurt am Main. The circulated description of the lecture promised to discuss why “leftist groups”, especially in Berlin, relentlessly critique the “only Jewish state” and what their organizing against “pinkwashing” has to do with centuries-old antisemitic stereotypes.

For local queer anti-racist activists, the announcement of this edition of Polymorphia sent off red flags of concern and outrage. From the perspective of the event’s organizer, that was the point – Patsy’s public persona is crafted to be a

6 More information about this iconic club is to be found in Çetin’s contribution to this present volume.

7 Readers unfamiliar with the term *pinkwashing* would benefit from reading Sarah Schulman’s beautifully written New York Times op-ed from 2011, “Israel and ‘Pinkwashing’”: <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/opinion/pinkwashing-and-israels-use-of-gays-as-a-messaging-tool.html>

provocateur who flouts political correctness. But it was quickly pointed out that such a “public lecture,” at least in its description, upends a broad political more in Berlin which stipulates that public political discussions about international contexts and communities should strive to include those communities to speak for themselves. Berlin is home to the largest Israeli immigrant community in Germany, a demographically young and majority-leftist population, as well as a long-standing Palestinian community. Furthermore, the lecture was announced to be held exclusively in German – another more flippantly disregarded by the event organizers. How does an event about the Israeli and Palestinian political contexts not include Israelis or Palestinians, nor even presenters who speak Hebrew or Arabic? The event description’s characterization of local activists who organize against “pinkwashing,” many of them Israeli Jews and Palestinian exiles, as antisemitic also alarmed and offended many people, far more people, in fact, than just those activists who were simply intended. Even after my own many years of residence in Berlin, I must admit that it continues to astonish (not only) me when white Germans breathlessly accuse Jews of antisemitism. It’s creepy.

The lecture saw a packed room with a divided, boisterous, even sometimes rude crowd. Patsy moderated, striking a hard note at the beginning about the value and importance of civil but passionate listening, the irony (or hypocrisy, take your pick) apparently lost on her. For the better part of an hour, Schindler then clambered through his talk – the simultaneous English-translation of his speech near the front (a last-minute concession from the organizers), as well as audience interruptions, and the general tense mood, were all minor distractions. While one could almost admire his gumption, his polemic, such as it was, pivoted between straw-men, guilt-by-association, selective reading and outright misreading, with more than a dash of en vogue “whataboutery”, all poorly hidden behind the imprimatur of his haughty, academic style of delivery. 30 minutes into his talk⁸, Schindler mentioned the recent work of Çetin and Voß as evidence of how the very concept “homonationalism” is wrapped up in antisemitic and Islamist-defensive discourses, in this case, imputing that the authors denied a statement about particular cases of homosexual refugees being threat-

8 Video of Schindler’s entire talk is be found here, at least for the time being: <https://vimeo.com/200790848>. While it might not be worthwhile to listen to his lecture for the non-German-speaking, the video somewhat captures the rowdy atmosphere. After the talk concludes, the video also documents the question-and-answer segment, which is intermittently in English.

ened by ISIS members as mere anti-Muslim hysteria. Needless to say, there's more to it⁹.

Only months later, Schindler's lecture was published in an edited volume by Patsy l'Amour laLove called *Biting Reflexes – Criticism of Queer Activism, Authoritarian Longings and Speech Bans* (2017), which collected 27 articles of more or less the same type of shabby polemic thinly disguised as academic research. Several of these authors then went on a media blitz, most notably in Germany's oldest feminist magazine *Emma*. Seeing a threat in the recent gains of anti-racist interventions into German queer politics and discourse, these authors attempt to draw a straight line from theoretical concepts like the aforementioned "pinkwashing" and "homonationalism" to more diffuse activist discourses of "intersectionality," "privilege" and "cultural appropriation," threading these ostensibly authoritarian and sectarian concepts and politics to recursive accusations of antisemitism and racism, again and again. From its dust-jacket description to the sweep of its articles and the fierce publicity campaign, the book presented an impassioned attempt to take back the concept and identity "Queer" from all its current, villainous keepers.

The book became a minor hit. It sold well and received loads of media attention, dominating national and local discussions about the state of queer activism in the year of same-sex marriage equality and the Alternative for Germany. Wolter, Çetin, Yılmaz-Günay and Voß, as well as many other anti-racist queer activists I know in this Berlin chapter, found themselves having to variously respond to the myriad half-truths and accusations which smeared their bodies of work. The debate got loud enough to catch Judith Butler's attention, who co-authored a rebuttal in *Die Zeit* with eminent German queer theorist Sabine Hark, which eloquently responded to many of the inaccuracies and defamatory accusations pedaled in the book. (A translated and updated version of this Hark and Butler text is presented at the end of this volume – more about that below.)

9 I think what Schindler is referring to here – at this point in his talk, he's hopscotching around the mediasphere to explain to his audience how queer anti-racist activists and writers supposedly minimize the threat of Islamist extremists – can be found at the end of his section titled "Gay Kisses Are German *Leitkultur*" in Çetin's contribution to the present volume. There, Çetin quotes at length the director of MILES – LSVD Berlin. While I'm told she's a very nice person, that interview (not unlike LSVD's politics), as one can read, is a mess. The casual tone, the weird deference to hearsay in a public interview, and the very serious reality behind those flippant words – none of it adds up. Consider Çetin's measured take on this example, and then revisit Schindler's shooting-from-the-hip characterization in his speech to get a little taste of what's afoot here. I'm reminded of the recent Jordan Peterson phenomena. Correcting all this and that reanimated bullshit is such a disappointing waste of human resources.

Having spent many years investigating queer anti-racist politics in Berlin ethnographically¹⁰, I understood the mood I witnessed among Wolter, Çetin, and Voß during our interviews last summer. That public discourse would treat the shrill charlatans gathered in *Biting Reflexes* seriously was indeed deflating. Institutions which supported the book – like the Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation – were materially supporting hollow arguments and denunciations of these and other very accomplished writers and activists. The Queerbuchmesse – an annual queer book fair – did not give the book any space, sparking outcries of censorship. Publications devoted inordinate space to deliberating caricatures of serious scholarship and devoted work.

Wolter, Çetin, and Voß, however, didn't seem defeated. They were concerned, sure, even exasperated and angry. But also jovial, sharp as ever – and undeterred. This was an attitude I recognized from having collected many accounts of queer anti-racist work and activism over the years. And this is why I began as I did with Bauman and Canetti's reflections on writing and writers, those who, despite miserable conditions, pursue the vocation of truth-telling and taking responsibility for both the troubled world and one's failure to write it.

Queer and anti-racist political movements are swelling and converging like never before. Their relationships and commitment to radical feminist and anti-capitalist politics, traditions and analysis also continues to burgeon. These developments are to be found in Amsterdam, London, Paris and Vienna, as well as Berlin. In the US, the Black Lives Matter movement, instigated by the police murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri in 2014, was prominently launched by black straight and queer-feminist activists. The Movement for Black Lives, an umbrella organization which grew out of this powerful swelling of politicized resistance to anti-black violence, strongly features queer, feminist and anti-capitalist dimensions in their anti-racist works and policy recommendations. In fact, Black Lives Matter have chapters here in Berlin and elsewhere in Europe. As a tentative label for this multicentric, theoretical and political movement, I proposed "the Queer Intersectional". Let me now explain.

With this label, I'm trying to put my finger on what I perceive as a global constituency of politicized actors – scholars, writers, activists, thinkers, dreamers – who task themselves with the synthesis of a number of critical political traditions

10 I cannot thank enough the UMass Department of Anthropology's European Field Studies program, the National Science Foundation, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for their generous support of my research in Berlin.

and multiple lines of solidarity and concern. Frequently maligned and misunderstood, the term “intersectionality”¹¹ has come to function as the signifier for this stance I’m describing, this posture of solidarity bent in multiple directions. Traditionally, the term refers to a methodology of Critical Legal Studies analysis which allows the social scientist to be sensitive to and account for multiple axes of juridical power and overdetermined designations, the effects of which tend toward the occlusion of compounding forms of discrimination. In the decades following the popularity of Angela Davis’ *Women, Race and Class* (1981), the term “intersectionality” took on a more relaxed usage, to generally refer to a sociological imagination attuned to multiple vectors – lines, hence the intersection metaphor – of oppression, at first sexism, racism, class inequality, then homo- and transphobia, ableism. Fast-forward 30 years to the era of the Anthropocene, the early 21st century, and suddenly the idea of distinct forms of oppression operating arm in arm in sociolegal structures sounds ... like exactly how leftists, whether at the chalkboard or in the streets, tend to understand the political world. “Intersectionality” has long since descended from its perch as a word solely for an academic methodology. It is now less a methodology than it is the condition we find ourselves in. *Intersectionality: the auspicious condition we experience when our multiple capacities for political solidarity are activated and coordinated*. This is what distinguishes “intersectionality” from “multiculturalism”. While both capacious labels are easily denounced, the former is a political discourse while the latter is a depoliticizing one¹².

I hope readers forgive me for being so bold as to admit that the Queer Intersectional is also my remix of Joseph Massad’s catty designation for “Western” gay and lesbian imperialism, what he infamously calls “the Gay International”. I actually believe the contrast of the two categories is apposite. Criticism of Massad’s thesis is plenty – at this point, one can even read Massad’s extensive response to

11 Readers who wish for a clear historiography and explanation of the term in English-language scholarship have innumerable resources at their fingertips with the internet. I suggest Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge’s book *Intersectionality* (2016) for those who desire a deep and thorough inquiry.

12 Readers seeking a more robust explanation of “depoliticization” as I am using it here might well consult the first chapter, “Tolerance as a Discourse of Depoliticization” of Wendy Brown’s still vital *Regulating Aversion* (2006). On the topic of “multiculturalism,” English-language sources really are endless. I suggest Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley’s excellently researched *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age* (2011) as well as Rita Chin’s longer durée study *The Crisis of Multiculturalism in Europe: A History* (2017) for those wishing to be brought up to speed.

over a decade of criticism¹³. But if one takes queer and anti-racist ideas seriously, it's hard to deny that Massad was on to something. Put simply, I asked myself, who or what acts as a counterweight to the Gay International? While Massad is hypercritical of how feminism and gay and lesbian rights discourses have both been mobilized, he wouldn't have given us the term the Gay International if he simply thought *all* forms of struggle for sexual and gender freedom are evil conscripts to Euro-American imperialism. The Gay International is meant to designate something in particular. But Massad does not busy himself with explaining or even theorizing what this "otherwise" to the Gay International might be; it remains implicit in his theorizing. By the time Secretary of State Hilary Clinton delivered her "gay and lesbian rights" speech in Geneva in 2011, most readers and users of queer intersectional theories turned to Jasbir Puar's contagious term "homonationalism" rather than Massad's for assistance, the latter seemingly a bit out of focus when it came to properly naming the accelerating synergy between (inter)nationalism(s) and gay/lesbian legal inclusion.

Massad calls them "the Gay International" aptly – wealthy cis-men, as people and as norms, dominate global structures of governance. They're awful, and we must challenge them. But he could well have called them "Gay Inc." The unaccountable corporation is just as menacing and accurate an image as a conspiratorial "International" cabal. (Lisa Duggan's popular term *homonormativity*, while richly theorized and a likely synonym, leaves us with "normativity" to get worked up about, which is difficult.¹⁴) Besides, from a Queer perspective, Gay Inc. *is* the problem, domestically as externally, across national contexts. Wherever you find well-funded gay and lesbian organizations, disputes about racist, classist, sexist and transphobic exclusions are nearby. As gayborhoods underwent gentrification and waves of neoliberal, creative-class-modernizing, lesbian and trans* locales diminished significantly¹⁵. This as true in Berlin or London as it is in San Francisco.

13 Massad first introduced his argument in 2002 in the journal *Public Culture* with his text "Re-orienting desire: The Gay International and the Arab World" and expanded it in his book *Desiring Arabs* (2007). Readers can find Massad's response to his critics of that article and book in his most recent book *Islam in Liberalism* (2015), a book fit for superlative descriptions like "magisterial" and "path-breaking".

14 Don't let my jocular tone fool anyone: Duggan's 2004 book *Twilight of Inequality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy* – in fact, anything she writes – is to be read carefully and taken seriously. Her works are consummate examples of NYC Queer Intersectional writing.

15 Christina Hanhardt's 2013 study *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* is a noteworthy and highly readable account of these processes in North America.

Call the observable split in contemporary sexual freedom movements that between Gay Inc. and Queer. Keep “Queer” singular, to remind us that it is neither a person nor team, but rather a tendency and a tradition.

Call the emergent convergence between anti-racist, anti-capitalist and radical queer-feminist politics “Intersectional”. Keep it awkwardly singular, too, to signal its oppositional kinship with “International”.

Find and read your local chapter. Read other chapters, too.

This Berlin chapter of the Queer Intersectional introduced in the following volume is hardly meant to be the symbolic representatives or all-encompassing ambassadors for the movement. This volume came together organically, first with the commissioning of Wolter and Voß’s texts into English. Then we imagined a volume with two other texts – Wolter and Yılmaz-Günay’s chapter from Çetin’s 2013 edited volume, and Çetin’s chapter from Voß and Çetin’s 2016 co-authored book *Gay Visibility – Gay Identity*. I contacted my friend and colleague Smaran Dayal to translate Çetin, and Daniel Hendrickson agreed to translate Yılmaz-Günay and Wolter’s text. Suddenly, a feasible plan for this volume emerged.

My translation – with the excessive help of my husband Yossi Bartal – of Voß and Wolter’s two-essay, co-authored *Queer and (Anti)Capitalism* begins this volume. Already in its third printing, this slim book functions as a wonderfully lucid introduction to the synthesis of critical Marxist, queer and anti-racist scholarship which informs the politics of the Queer Intersectional¹⁶. Wolter’s essay charts the history of radical trans* and gay and lesbian liberation alongside his brief account of the historiography of capitalist development, from its inception through the present neoliberal era. He follows his argument – that anti-racism, queer rebellion and anti-capitalism are all mutually constitutive and empirically linked, and thus equally worthy of our solidarity and attention – through both German history, which will be especially helpful for the non-German audience, as well as through more recent US history, lingering over Marsha P. Johnson and Sylvia Rivera, for instance. Wolter’s essay concludes with a discussion of how Queer Intersectional theories – some of the authors he discusses, like Crenshaw, Foucault, Derrida, Spivak, may be quite familiar to English-language readers, while

16 Peter Drucker’s lucid – and long – book from 2015, *Warped: Gay Normality and Queer Anti-Capitalism*, remains a strong complementary text to the present volume, dovetailing with Wolter and Voß’s Marxist arguments and interest in history and, especially in its Chapter 5 (“Toward a Queer Sexual Politics”), providing correspondent exposition of key terms like *homonationalism* and *pinkwashing*, extensively used in Çetin’s and Yılmaz-Günay and Wolter’s texts.

German-language writers like Wagenknecht and Engel less so – find encouraging expression in contemporary anti-racist and queer activisms.

Voß's essay offers a more detailed historical account of the development of global capitalism and its nasty effect on people, what he calls *Deklassierung*, which I translated as *immiseration*. This essay, a superb exemplar of historical sociology, puts post-colonial and Marxist scholarship into illuminating dialogue, spanning many centuries, demonstrating the sexual, gendered and ethnoracial dynamics of capitalist development with specific attention throughout paid to Germany, all in a manner which never loses sight of just how much coercion, suffering and misery European modernity drummed up and doled out in its quest for progress. After an interesting discussion of how homosexuality's history is marked by these very same capitalist dynamics, Voß turns back to German history in the final portion of his essay, tracing both queer as well as anti-racist dilemmas and events in the 20th century. This history recounted here will be especially useful for readers less familiar with the West and East German contexts. Concluding his fresh intersectional account of capitalist development, Voß passionately pleads, like Wolter, for a renewed configuration of anti-capitalist, anti-racist and queer-feminist agendas up to the task of acknowledging and taking responsibility for the twisted societies we find ourselves in, complicit, as they are, in ongoing atrocities hiding in plain sight and riven by possibilities for alliance, co-ordination, and a major change of course.

Çetin's essay comes from a book he co-authored with Voß in 2016 called *Gay Visibility – Gay Identity: Critical Perspectives*. Developing arguments made in some of his previous works, including his published doctoral dissertation *Islamophobia and Homophobia: intersectional discriminations with the example of binational couples in Berlin* (2012) as well as his sharp contribution to Yılmaz-Günay's book (see Note 2 above), this article makes important conceptual bridges to scholarship indebted to Puar's vivid concept *homonationalism* and empirical analysis of mainstream gay and lesbian politics in Germany's political and cultural capital, Berlin. Çetin surveys a number of manifestations of the synergy between gentrification and the politics of institutionalization and securitization, thereby offering readers a concrete analysis of how prevalent discourses circulate, repeat and harden into misdiagnosed problems, shoddy policies and elite constituencies. As his translator Smaran Dayal recently put it to me, Çetin's text courageously names names and does some heavy-lifting to connect ongoing activisms to academic and wider political debates hitherto disconnected from these activisms. Finally, his media analysis of different Berlin districts provides a much-needed connection between the sociology of contemporary Berlin and the burning questions of contemporary queer scholarship about racism and nationalism in Europe.

Yılmaz-Günay and Wolter's polemical essay tackles one of the thorniest issues in German leftist politics, the ugly misappropriation of the Holocaust by mainstream gay institutions and talking heads. A wonderful rhetorical counterpoint to Çetin's text, Yılmaz-Günay and Wolter take issue with the ways that "the figure of the Jew" is mobilized in the project of German gay and lesbian institution-building. The authors consider political speech about the Monument for Homosexuals Persecuted under the Nazis to show the bad faith arguments which spill forth from the mouths of gay actors wishing to validate their exclusionary vision of a historic, German gay community via crude – and oftentimes wildly inaccurate – Holocaust victimology. Tracing the rhetorical pattern whereby white gay identity seems compelled to cast Jews and antisemitism as analogous to gays and homophobia, their text interrogates the elisions this rhetorical move makes possible and the realities it denies, offering a stark anti-racist critique which rejects instrumentalizing Jews and a renewed call for solidarity with those victims of Nazi persecution these elite gay actors seem unable to imagine as comrades.

Our volume ends with two short texts from 2017. The first is co-authored by Çetin and Daniel Hendrickson in German for the *documenta 14* exhibition in Kassel, Germany, in 2017¹⁷. We chose to include this text to gesture toward the radically-changing domain of sexual politics in Germany at the time of publication – and undoubtedly into the future. The reverberations of two recent dramas continue to shake German society in numerous ways. The first, of course, took place in the summer of 2015, with what the English-language press settled on calling the "European Migrant Crisis". Months later, the annual New Year's Eve celebrations in Cologne (and a few other German cities) to mark the 2015/2016 transition were marred by mass sexual violence and assaults of women and petty crimes in the crowded central district. While analysis of each event is beyond the scope of the present work, this final text hints at some of the ways that they have impacted local sexual discourses, here in particular, about male hustlers and sex workers in Berlin's cruising parks.

And finally, as a special to addendum to the political context I have described here in my introduction, and also in the spirit of acknowledging the rapidly changing terrain of sexual politics in Germany, we are fortunate to present Sabine Hark and Judith Butler's timely rejoinder to the *Beissreflexe* volume and its noxious publicity campaign. After we translated their original text back into English, the authors combed through and ameliorated some of our more clunky formula-

17 Video of Çetin and Hendrickson's presentation is available in the very middle of the page at this URL: <http://www.documenta14.de/de/calendar/19396/how-does-it-feel-to-be-a-problem>

tions, as well as embellishing some of their points and including some insights that were previously edited out because of space restrictions in *Die Zeit*. While neither Hark nor Butler belong to this Berlin chapter per se, their bodies of works have been hugely influential for Germany's multiple Queer Intersectional chapters in general and this Berlin chapter in particular – they are cited in the following texts; Wolter even borrows Butler's pithy phrase "refusing complicity" as a subtitle.

My invocation at the beginning of this introduction of Zygmunt Bauman's musings on the duty of writing and writers for the present might be a bit melodramatic – but only a bit. Much like the Greek discursive tradition of *parrhesia* which fascinated Michel Foucault, or the spiritually prophetic tradition extolled by Cornel West, Canetti's discourse about writerly solidarity becomes implicitly conscripted to Bauman's self-portraiture, which I suppose one could call hubris, but which I prefer to see as a forgivable, even charming, act of ego. After so many pages and books describing the intractable problems of "liquid modernity," might Bauman had held out hope that perhaps he, according to Canetti's formula, qualified as a writer? This anxiety is familiar. This determination, too.

Queer Intersectional writing and activism, wherever it bubbles up, doesn't shy away from reckoning with the ugly immiseration which haunts this most luxurious of human civilizations. It doesn't give colonial patterns a pass. It doesn't permit the fiction of equal opportunity and nominal democracy used to cheerily narrate the scary present. When it comes to ongoing oppression, in all its tricky forms, the Queer Intersectional doesn't succumb to the inertia of accommodation or integration; it doesn't "get over it"¹⁸. It takes responsibility for what it witnesses, and proceeds thusly.

To put it in personal terms: this is what makes the writers collected in this volume – along with the staggering number of still-untranslated others – worth my attention and time (and effort – I have to admit, German to English translation isn't a stress-free cruise in the park). These are the types of texts I would want easy access to were I unfamiliar with but curious about the German context and/or were I working out of another chapter of the Queer Intersectional, scouring the record for comparable cases, stimulating analyses or political strategies.

CMS January 2018

¹⁸ Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous comments about maintaining a proud "creative maladjustment" to the horrors of contemporary society, delivered at my undergraduate alma mater Western Michigan University on December 18th, 1963, are emblematic of this stance.

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