

more integration between the different parts of her study. But *Botanophilie* provides a wonderful sampling of the relationships between plants and human beings in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century.

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doi:10.1017/S0008938921001230

Heimat. Geschichte eines Missverständnisses. By Susanne Scharnowski. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2019. Pp. 272. Cloth \$57.99. ISBN 978-3534270736.

The fraught concept of *Heimat* (homeland) undergoes a partial rehabilitation in this provocative cultural history of its myriad applications since 1800. The divisive and politically charged resonance of *Heimat*, Susanne Scharnowski argues, rests on misunderstandings, specifically on a distortion and excessive narrowing of its presumed meaning. Her book seeks to broaden the cultural associations of the term in order to defuse its reactionary potential and reclaim for *Heimat* a progressive, European agenda. Historical excavation is key to this project. Scharnowski liberates *Heimat* from its encasement within Sonderweg-style historical narratives, a dismantling long in progress. Discrediting *Heimat* as an irrational, völkisch concept paired with aggressive nationalism and faulting its evocation in romanticism for the blood-and-soil ideology of National Socialism is, in her view, misinformed. Nor should the term be deemed untranslatable, a peculiarly German preoccupation with an ideal of place. Scharnowski proposes that the German fascination with *Heimat* reflects less a nationalist fear of the foreign than an overwhelming sense of alienation produced by rapid technical-industrial change. *Heimat* was a symptom of loss and endangerment, an antidote to a pernicious history of imperial expansion, environmental degradation, and the destruction of local traditions and customs.

Heimat's value as an analytical concept useful for probing fissures in German society and correcting historical narrative is most evident in the first section of the book, a chronological rendering of the discourse on *Heimat* through the 1950s. Drawing primarily on literary texts, film, and other media, the chapters in this section excavate the social, cultural, and political applications of ideas of *Heimat* against the historical backdrop of modernization and its impact on rural regions. Scharnowski starts by severing the romantic concept of *Heimat* from nation and Volk, arguing for its inner spiritual significance as a symbol of aesthetic-religious longing. Only in the Vormärz did *Heimat* designate a concrete place or material reality. The author highlights the emancipatory, liberal-democratic intent behind the *Dorfgeschichten* (village stories) of Jewish-German author Berthold Auerbach, which offered an alternative to Wilhelm Heinrich Riehl's conservative adulation of inherited social structures during the Restoration.

The rift that emerged around 1900 between visionaries of progress, such as engineers and industrialists, and their critics among the *Bildungsbürgertum* decidedly politicized the idea of *Heimat*. In an important chapter, Scharnowski presents the multifaceted *Heimat*-hype of the period as a legitimate form of *Zivilisationskritik* that responded to threatened landscapes and traditions (concerns also present in Britain). The real perversion of *Heimat* occurred,

for Scharnowski, as the colonial state attempted to reconcile through nationalism the two warring cultures that embraced, respectively, industrial modernity and expansionism or Volk, history, and locality. Imperialists and National Socialists made love for the Heimat and a German connection to place crucial components of an ethnic and racial identity that disparaged the presumed mobility of money, capital, and Jews. Heimat emerged as a fighting concept that undermined the cosmopolitan Weimar Republic and masked the actual destruction of the provinces and traditions under National Socialism.

Less concerned with separating Heimat from the German *Sonderweg*, the post-1945 chapters are diffuse and stretch the bounds of the book's stated topic. Scharnowski's insights are nevertheless intriguing. She notes that futuristic urban planning, designed to forget the Nazi past, perpetuated the destruction of Heimat in the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany and unravels how East German film evoked the idea of Heimat to model socialist society. Through the symbolism of the garden gnome and the garden allotment, she explains the complex entanglement of Heimat in the aesthetics and social and political effects of kitsch. By the end of the 1960s, critical anti-Heimat films attempted to expose the confinement and narrowness of rural environs once beloved as a form of escapism. The author detaches the feelings associated with Heimat—nostalgia and homesickness—from their associations with psychological deficiency and from the recent rise in reactionary populism. Ironic gnomes with hipster spectacles and kitschy landscapes in Kreuzberg pubs illustrate Heimat's ideological malleability, Scharnowski argues. She does well to emphasize the tendency since the 1970s of the political left to cultivate its own *Heimatbewegung*. Starting with protests against nuclear powerplants and building on the ideas of Marc Bloch, the left rediscovered the emancipatory, utopian potential of regional cuisine, local landscapes, folklore, and dialects. These alternative orientations to Heimat are rooted, Scharnowski proposes, in the radical critiques of technology, consumerism, and civilization that upheld Heimat at the turn of the century.

More speculative are the final two chapters that pay tribute to Heimat's vastly expanded current associations, at the expense of rendering the term overly diffuse. A cosmopolitan class of hyper-mobile digital nomads has, Scharnowski argues, redirected the concept of Heimat so that it captures the feelings of belonging to urban centers with hybrid cultures that feature in multi-local, global lifestyles. Since the first earthrise captured by NASA astronauts in 1968, the entire world has been imagined as the Heimat of a privileged population that transcends borders. Given such references to migration, it is striking that neither the Heimat sensibilities of refugees—other than ethnic Germans expelled from eastern Europe—nor the conflicted loyalties to place experienced by, for example, Turkish-Germans, feature in this analysis. Scharnowski notes, in an odd refutation of Nazi ideology, that exiled German Jews retained a strong sense of Heimat. But what has Heimat meant to those excluded from its embrace? On the whole, Scharnowski successfully argues for the progressive and democratic potential of Heimat as a site of local self-determination where urgent ecological and social problems can be addressed. Her publicizing the multiple political possibilities of feeling rooted in place and community largely, but not entirely, blunts Heimat's history of stifling inclusivity.

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doi:10.1017/S000893892100011X