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INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY

JAHRBUCH 2021/2022

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON BARBARA STOLLBERG-RILINGER
MIT BERICHTEN UND BEITRÄGEN VON

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VORWORT DER HERAUSGEBERIN

In diesem Jahr wurde das Wissenschaftskolleg 40 Jahre alt. Das ist noch kein Grund für eine große Jubiläumsfeier, aber doch ein Grund zu fragen, was sich strukturell verändert hat im Kolleg, während ringsum die großen Transformationen stattfanden, die Welt politisch neu geordnet und das Internet erfunden wurde. Ganz offensichtlich eines: das Geschlechterverhältnis. Im Gründungsjahrgang 1981/1982 waren sechzehn Fellows männlich und zwei weiblich; in diesem Jahr war das Verhältnis nahezu ausgeglichen. Diese Veränderung hatte eine andere zur Folge: In diesem Jahr waren achtzehn Fellowkinder im Kolleg, während im ersten Jahrgang überhaupt keine Kinder dokumentiert sind (Haustiere übrigens auch nicht). Die Diversität der regionalen Herkunft dagegen war schon damals groß – auch vor der Wende hat man Fellows aus dem Osten Europas gewonnen –, aber sie hat noch deutlich zugenommen. Der Preis dafür ist, dass im Kolleg inzwischen kaum noch deutsch gesprochen wird. Zugenommen hat auch die Vielfalt der akademischen Disziplinen. Mittlerweile ist es ein Kennzeichen des Kollegs, dass in jedem Jahrgang alle drei großen Wissenschaftskulturen – Natur-, Sozial- und Geisteswissenschaften – vertreten sind. Die Veränderung in der Zusammensetzung der Fellowgruppen hat auch die Atmosphäre verändert. Heute ist das Kolleg nicht nur vielfältiger, familienfreundlicher, weniger deutsch und weniger männlich, der „Stil des Hauses“ ist auch deutlich weniger gravitatisch und hierarchisch. Doch der Kern der Kollegphilosophie hat sich – trotz aller Veränderungen in der gesellschaftlichen Umwelt – als erstaunlich stabil erwiesen. Das bestätigen die vierzig Bände der Jahresberichte. Immer noch gilt uneingeschränkt die Maxime des Gründungsrektors: „Die Fellows verfolgen keine anderen Ziele als die, die sie sich selbst gesetzt haben.“ Freiheit und die Gelegenheit zu unerwarteten persönlichen Begegnungen, das ist nach wie vor der Kern dessen, was dieses Institut zu bieten hat.

Doch von den Katastrophen in seiner Umwelt bleibt auch das Kolleg nicht verschont. Die Fellows dieses Jahrgangs kämpften noch mit den letzten Ausläufern der globalen Covid-Pandemie, da wurde die Seuche von einem ganz anderen, noch größeren Unglück in den Schatten gestellt. Am 24. Februar überfielen bekanntlich russische Truppen die Ukraine und öffneten die Augen für Putins neokoloniale Expansionspolitik, die man in Deutschland lange nicht zur Kenntnis hatte nehmen wollen. Ein Ende des Krieges ist derzeit nicht in Sicht. Seither ist von einer Zeitenwende die Rede. Diese Wende war (und ist bis heute) auch im Wissenschaftskolleg erfahrbar. Valentyn Sylvestrov, Kateryna Mishchenko, Tetiana Portnova, Oleksandr Irvanets und Olha Kolomyjets aus der Ukraine fanden im Kolleg vorübergehend eine Zuflucht; Maxim Osipov aus Tarusa bei Moskau machte auf seinem Weg ins Exil im Grunewald Station. Ilya Kalinin aus Sankt Petersburg war es nach dem Ende des Fellowjahres nicht mehr möglich, in seine Heimat zurückzukehren, denn sein Forschungsgegenstand – Putins „Kulturkrieg“ – hatte sich in eine Bedrohung des Forschers selbst verwandelt. Olga Shparaga aus Minsk und Mohammad Al Attar aus Damaskus lebten schon im Exil, als sie ins Kolleg eingeladen wurden – die eine hatte ihr Land nach der Niederschlagung der belarussischen Revolte verlassen, der andere war schon vor Jahren vor dem Gewaltregime in Syrien geflüchtet. Sie alle bereicherten diesen Fellowjahrgang mit ihren Erfahrungen und ihrem Mut, aber auch ihrer künstlerischen und intellektuellen Kreativität. Zugleich verstärkten sie das Gefühl, im Grunewald in einem Paralleluniversum zu leben.

Denn zur selben Zeit spielten sich im Kolleg die üblichen Rituale und Aktivitäten eines gelungenen Fellowjahres ab. Man tauschte Theaterkarten, Manuskripte und selbstgebackenen Kuchen, fuhr gemeinsam nach Prag, las Victor Klemperers *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, besuchte Konzerte, sang im Chor, lief durch den Grunewald und schwamm durch den Halensee. Und es gab die üblichen Alltagssorgen – Schwierigkeiten beim Zugang zum deutschen Visum, zum Bargeld, zum Berghain. Manchen Fellows aus dem Iso-Lomso-Programm waren die tropischen Temperaturen in Berlin zu heiß; sie wünschten sich zurück ins kühle Namibia oder Südafrika.

Den einen erschien das Kolleg als eine Insel für Schiffbrüchige, den anderen als Rückkehr in die eigene Jugend, als Disney World for scholars, als letzte Zuflucht vor dem Regime der Buribunken oder auch als Verwirklichung der klassischen Einheit von Ort, Zeit und Handlung. Das regelmäßige physische Zusammentreffen in demselben Raum und die Entlastung von jeder „taylorisierten Projektagenda“ (Peter Strohschneider) führte zu unerwarteten Impulsen und produktiven Irritationen. Solche Anregungen flossen

oft subkutan, aber manchmal auch manifest in die Arbeit der Fellows ein. Eduardo Halfon zum Beispiel ließ sich von den Gesprächen mit Kullu Suryawanshi zu einem Essay inspirieren, den Guy Tillim illustrierte. Dessen Fotografien wiederum dienten Heiko Hecht als Grundlage für eine psychologische Studie zur Bildwahrnehmung. Ulinka Rublack lernte für ihre globale Geschichte der Mode von Mohammad Al Attar einiges über die Bedeutung des Basars, und Sofía Torallas Tovar's Wissen über altägyptische Rituale floss in Liza Lims Kompositionskunst ein. Ich stelle mir vor, dass solche Momente von *serendipity* schon den Gründern des Kollegs vor mehr als vierzig Jahren vor Augen gestanden haben.

Berlin, im März 2023

P.S. Dem aufmerksamen Leser und der klugen Leserin wird nicht entgehen, dass allerlei magische Formeln und codierte Hinweise in diesem Jahrbuch versteckt sind. Es scheint, dass einer der Fellows – ein hermeneutisch geschulter Literaturwissenschaftler, wie könnte es anders sein – dem dunklen Geheimnis des Kollegs auf die Schliche gekommen ist.

THE EDITOR'S FOREWORD

This year the Wissenschaftskolleg turned forty. That's not reason enough for a big jubilee celebration, but enough to ask how the structure of the Kolleg has changed while all around it huge transformations have occurred, the world has reorganized politically, and the Internet was invented. One thing is quite obvious: gender proportions have changed. The founding class of 1981/1982 comprised sixteen male and two female Fellows; this year, the proportion is almost balanced. This change led to another one: this year, there were eighteen children of Fellows at the Kolleg, while no children at all are documented for the first class (and no pets, either). Regional origin, in contrast, was already diverse – Fellows

were invited from Eastern Europe even before the fall of Communism – but that diversity has markedly broadened and deepened. The price for this is that German is hardly spoken at the Kolleg anymore. Also broadened is the diversity of academic disciplines. Today, a characteristic of the Kolleg is that all three major academic cultures – natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities – are represented in each annual cohort. The changes in the composition of Fellow groups has altered the atmosphere, as well. Today, the Kolleg is not only more diverse, more family-friendly, less German, and less male; “house style” is also markedly less characterized by gravitas and hierarchy. But the core of the Kolleg’s philosophy has proven to be surprisingly stable, despite all the changes in the societal environment. The forty volumes of the Kolleg’s Yearbook confirm it. The founding Rector’s maxim still applies unconditionally: “The Fellows pursue no other goals than those they have set for themselves.” Freedom and the opportunity for unexpected personal encounters – that remains the core of what this institute has to offer.

But the Kolleg is not spared by the disasters in its environment. This year’s Fellows still struggled with the tail end of the global Covid pandemic, but this plague was overshadowed by a very different, even greater calamity. On February 24, as everyone knows, Russian troops attacked Ukraine and opened our eyes to Putin’s policy of neocolonial expansion, which people in Germany had long not wanted to register. An end to this war is not currently in sight. Since then, the catchword has been “a turning point in history.” This turning point could be (and still can be) felt also at the Wissenschaftskolleg. Valentyn Sylvestrov, Kateryna Mishchenko, Tetiana Portnova, Oleksandr Irvanets, and Olha Kolomyiets from Ukraine found temporary refuge at the Kolleg; Maxim Osipov from Tarusa near Moscow sojourned in Grunewald on his way into exile. After the end of the Fellow year, Ilya Kalinin of Saint Petersburg was unable to return to his home city, because his research subject, Putin’s “culture war,” had transformed into a threat to the researcher himself. Olga Shparaga from Minsk and Mohammad Al Attar from Damascus already lived in exile when they were invited to the Kolleg; she had left her country after the Belarusian revolt was quashed, and he had fled years earlier from the reign of violence in Syria. They all enriched this Fellow class with their experiences and their courage, but also with their artistic and intellectual creativity. At the same time, they reinforced the feeling of living in a parallel universe in Grunewald.

Nonetheless, the customary rituals and activities of a successful Fellow year played out at the Kolleg. The Fellows exchanged theater tickets, manuscripts, and homemade cake, travelled to Prague, read Victor Klemperer’s *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, attended concerts,

sang in a choir, jogged through Grunewald, and swam across Halensee. And there were the customary worries of everyday life – difficulties acquiring a German visa, cash, entry to the Berghain club. Some Fellows from the Iso Lomso Programme found the tropical temperatures in Berlin too hot and wished they were back in cool Namibia or South Africa.

To some, the Kolleg seemed like an island for the shipwrecked; to others, like a return to their youth, a Disney World for scholars, a last refuge from the regime of the *Buribunken*, or like the realization of the classic unity of time, place, and action. Regular physical gathering in the same space and relief from any “Taylorized project agenda” (Peter Strohschneider) led to unexpected impetus and productive disruptions. Such stimuli often flowed subcutaneously, but sometimes also manifestly into the Fellows’ work. Eduardo Halfon, for example, took inspiration from talks with Kullu Suryawanshi to write an essay that Guy Tillim illustrated. The latter’s photographs, in turn, served Heiko Hecht as the basis for a psychological study of the perception of pictures. For her global history of fashion, Ulinka Rublack learned much from Mohammad Al Attar about the significance of the bazaar, and Sofia Torallas Tovar’s knowledge of ancient Egyptian rituals flowed into Liza Lim’s compositional art. I imagine that the founders of the Kolleg already envisioned such moments of serendipity forty years ago.

Berlin, March 2023

P.S. The attentive and clever reader will not fail to notice that all kinds of magical formulas and encoded clues are hidden in this Yearbook. It seems that one of the Fellows – a hermeneutically trained philologist, who else? – has brought to light the dark secret of the Kolleg.

Arbeitsberichte

Work Reports



HEARD AT WALLOTSTRASSE 19 GABRIEL ABEND

Gabriel Abend. Uruguayan sociologist. Professor at University of Lucerne. Prior to that, Associate Professor at New York University, grad student at Northwestern University, and undergrad at Universidad de la República. Author of “Making Things Possible” and “The Meaning of ‘Theory’.” Not a fan of illeism. All rights reserved. – Address: University of Lucerne, Frohburgstrasse 3, Lucerne 6002, Switzerland. E-mail: g.abend@u.northwestern.edu.

An Advertisement to the Reader.

As serendipity would have it, I happened upon these handwritten notes in the tunnel network that connects Wallotstraße 19, Villa Jaffé, Villa Walther, and the Edeka grocery store. (The magic phrase to get in is “¡abrite sésamo!”) While they’re unsigned, the author appears to be a certain Imulio Urgonif.¹ There’s an alternative theory, though, that attributes the text to a secret permanent fellow. She’s believed to hail from Tacuarembó and to dwell in Villa Walther’s attic. Either way, whoever penned this, their handwriting is barely legible, so I only managed to transcribe a few fragments.

1 Arturo Scarone. 1942. *Diccionario de seudónimos del Uruguay*. Second edition. Montevideo: Claudio García & Cía.

September 1

“Let’s begin with the general philosophy of the Wissenschaftskolleg. Freedom! Wiko is based on the conviction that intellectual and artistic creativity is inversely proportional to external constraints.”

Barbara and Daniel point out that there are significant similarities between the Wissenschaftskolleg and the Lunapark. This was an amusement park, on the other side of the lake, which the Nazis shut down in 1933 – alleging it was an immoral and decadent place. NB: this isn’t one of the aforementioned similarities.

Freedom.² Fellows are free to devote their time to whatever they wish. Your colloquium needn’t be about the topic described in your application. Staff and fellows introduce themselves. The latter receive a bilingual copy of *Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin: A User’s Guide*. The epigraph reads: [illegible] ... fantastic ... [illegible]

* * *

What’s the collective mood around here? Excitement. Anticipation. Meeting strange strangers-*cum*-future friends. Predictably, a few awkward interactions. Goffman 101.³

October 12

“Next Tuesday, October 12, 2021, Gabriel Abend will give his talk; Sanyu A. Mojola will chair the colloquium. Please see attached the abstract for Gabriel’s Tuesday Colloquium.”

Title: “A burrito is a burrito is a burrito.” Abstract (excerpt): “Next spring there’ll be yet another Conference on X, where experts on X won’t be able to agree on the nature of X. Nor on how to empirically tell X from not-X. Conference papers will be published in a

2 Mercedes Sosa, “Inconsciente colectivo”: https://archive.org/details/mercedes_sosa/05%2C+Inconciente+colectivo.mp3.

3 Erving Goffman. 1963. *Behavior in Public Places*. New York: Free Press.

special issue of *Journal of X*. A renowned scholar’s paper will be titled, ‘Toward a better X concept’ or ‘A novel conception of X.’ Comments and replies won’t find their novel conception up to par. Is this all a massive waste of time, paper, and coffee and cookies?”

Special thanks are due to Sanyu for chairing the colloquium and for her introduction.

* * *

Tuesday morning. At the colloquium. Is a burrito a sandwich? Contemporary social science has neglected this fundamental question. Here’s a sandwichness scale, from 1 to 7, where 1 is “not at all a sandwich” and 7 is “totally a sandwich.” Where would you say that a burrito falls? Attendees’ mean is about 2.1. Standard deviation is available from the author upon request.

Sandwichness Scale

(1)

(2)

(3)

(4)

(5)

(6)

(7)

1 = not at all a sandwich

7 = totally a sandwich

Your answer here:

Figure 1: Colloquium prop.

November 11

“11. Wiko fellows have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it.”



Figure 2: Stralau, Berlin.

December 9

“Forty-two. The answer that the supercomputer Deep Thought gives to the ‘ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything.’”

The event was titled, somewhat cryptically, “forty-two.” It was a TCF, that is, Three Cultures Forum. A forum for natural scientists, social scientists, and humanities scholars to exchange ideas. Artists and journalists, too. The invitation announced its main themes: “What do different disciplines conceive as a valid answer and why? And how is an answer determined by the way that the question is formulated?” Hold on, though. How is an answer to *this* question determined by the way it was formulated? The regress was duly noted (smart-asses as we are and can’t help but be). The conversation was fun.

We've come to see the Wissenschaftskolleg as a generative medley. People, places, ideas, arguments, fields. A cocktail of natural science, social science, humanities, and art. Visual artists, writers, playwrights. Photographers, musicians, composers. Most important: a cocktail of fellows who're eager to learn. Eager to see things they've never seen before. Cuckoo eggs. Snow leopards. Magic spells. Arsenic. The integration nation. The Cinderella syndrome. Truly open science. Why are you into this sort of stuff? What makes you so passionate about it? Fellows are intellectually curious creatures, a bit like children. Fellows' children are curious creatures as well.

Sometime in January

niñoquepiensa (kid thinking)⁴

these old people all these old people they're very weird what on earth are they doing the whole time? every day they have lunch together and they talk and talk and talk i wouldn't get any of it but i bet it's bullshit or for the most part bullshit anyway on tuesdays they go to this big room and listen to someone speak or read a paper and then people ask questions and the speaker frowns and looks funny and appears to be smart or appears to think they're smart whatever look at that thing over there isn't it beautiful? so many children in villa walther also two dogs and a few cats one of them seems to understand austrian and spanish pretty well hola hola hola for sure the best thing about this place are kids of all ages funny there should be three leos⁵ english-speaking leo spanish-speaking leo italian-speaking leo sometimes i miss my cousins and my room back home but other than that i really like it here there's a bunch of cool kids to play with oh yeah too bad the soccer goals are gone though

4 Damocles [Mario Benedetti]. 1967 [1956/1961]. "Niñoquepiensa." Pp. 21–23 in *Mejor es meneallo*. Montevideo: Arca Editorial.

5 Not counting Leo Africanus, author of *Description of Africa*, which Anthony is working on.

Sometime in February

*“Sur o no sur.”*⁶

March 29

“Next Tuesday, March 29, 2022, Nuno Ramos will give his talk; Anthony Ossa-Richardson will chair the colloquium.”

social imaginaries in russian realism a metabolic history shall we dance?
o futuro certo one hand washes the other the people of god?
irony illusion and paradox immigration integration and citizenship a ghost story
the lens of networks nine years two months and eleven days families in plural
ultracold gases sustainable community livelihoods untangling the wires
steamship connections being one ecology and evolution of hosts and pathogens
saving the snow leopard death by design ulysses in auschwitz
brood parasitic birds and their hosts story and history physical and pictorial space
the body and the air the host and its microbiome wanjiku and the wig
the great leap forward famine genesis of democracy a burrito is a burrito is a burrito
integrating two cultures of forest research a good short story whither open science?
constitution of the digital medium danish job centers what is a “grimoire”?
an unknown cartesian party in and outside the petri dish
triumph of fashion if you are a camel

* * *

variations on a nuno theme
(without actual voices, without actual sounds)

6 Kevin Johansen, “Sur o no sur”: <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x2ahrd>.

Sometime in April



Figure 3: A typical lunch at Wallotstraße 19. Fellows sitting at the table, from left to right: social scientist, natural scientist, artist, and humanities scholar.

Heard at one such lunch⁷:

Most fortunately it happens, that since reason is incapable of dispelling these clouds, nature herself suffices to that purpose, and cures me of this philosophical melancholy and delirium, either by relaxing this bent of mind, or by some avocation, and lively impression of my senses, which obliterate all these chimeras. I dine, I play a game of back-gammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends; and when after three or four hours' amusement, I would return to these speculations, they appear so cold, and strain'd, and ridiculous, that I cannot find in my heart to enter into them any farther.

⁷ Said by a fellow who seemingly memorized Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* (while playing backgammon). Quotation is in book 1, part 4, section 7.

May 28

„Herr Kliger: wir haben Sie erwartet.“

„Die Eule der Minerva beginnt erst mit der einbrechenden Dämmerung ihren Flug.“⁸

Sentences uttered, respectively, by a non-native speaker and a native speaker of German.⁹ Everyone's wearing a Hegel mask. Surprise birthday party. Wiko is all about the group of fellows. We struck it lucky: it's a wonderful group.

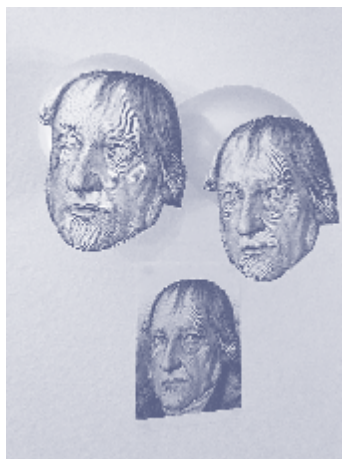


Figure 4: At the Geburtstagskind's apartment. The vodka of Minerva spread its wings only with the coming of the dusk. Or something.

8 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. 1911 [1821]. *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*. Leipzig: Verlag von Felix Meiner. Quotation is on page 17. A common translation is: "The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the coming of the dusk."

9 Barbara, "Göttingen": <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1fjdv>.

Sometime in June

Sophie's email to fellow fellows:

“Each of us will have to write a report about their year at the Wiko

How can we do this, so that

(1) it will not be as boring as the reports of the previous years

(2) it will show something of the group we have formed

There have been several more-or-less crazy proposals, such as:

- writing the report of someone else drawn at random
- submitting all the same report
- writing a series of paragraphs each devoted to a theme... and combining them at random
- sending the transcript of a conversation”

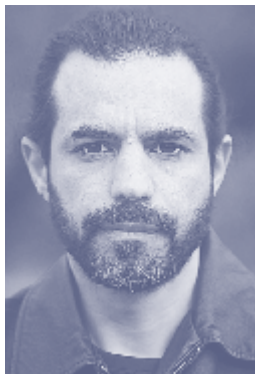
And yet, these more-or-less crazy proposals didn't pan out.

* * *

There's nothing you could say about Wiko that hasn't been said in earlier yearbooks, including that there's nothing you could say about Wiko that hasn't been said in earlier yearbooks. Even “there's nothing you could say about Wiko that hasn't been said in earlier yearbooks, including that there's nothing you could say about Wiko that hasn't been said in earlier yearbooks” – at least from now on. Was there something after all?

What's the collective mood around here? Melancholy.¹⁰ A party. A “leaving book” (aka “*album amicorum*,” we’re told). Gratitude. Contentment. Understanding takes time. If this year we didn’t move at a snail’s pace, we didn’t move at all.¹¹

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- 10 Fortunately, “*it may be mitigated and much eased. Nil desperandum*. It may be hard, but not impossible, for him that is most grievously affected, if he bee willing to be helped.” Since several “lawfull” cures are available, soon-to-be former fellows should refrain from employing “diabolicall meanes, which are commonly practiced by the Divell & his Ministers, Sorcerers, Witches, Magicians, &c.” Robert Burton. 1621. *The anatomy of melancholy, vvhat it is. VVith all the kindes, causes, symptomes, prognostickes, and seuerall cures of it*. [...] By Democritus Iunior. With a satyricall preface, conducing to the following discourse. Oxford: Printed by Iohn Lichfield and Iames Short, for Henry Cripps. Quotation is on pages 287–288.
- 11 “Let’s go slowly. In philosophy if you aren’t moving at a snail’s pace you aren’t moving at all.” Iris Murdoch. 1998. *Existentialists and Mystics: Writings on Philosophy and Literature*. New York: Allen Lane. Quotation is at page 500.



JUSTICE, REPRESENTATION, AND THE
CONSTANT SEARCH FOR HOPE
MOHAMMAD AL ATTAR

Mohammad Al Attar (born in 1980 in Damascus) is a Syrian playwright, theatre maker, and essayist. At university, he completed a degree in English Literature, followed by a degree in Theatrical Studies from the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts, Damascus. He then completed a master's degree in Applied Theatre at Goldsmiths, University of London. His work takes place on the boundary between fiction and documentation. He has been focusing on the Syrian Revolution and the resulting conflicts since 2011. His plays – like *Withdrawal*, *A Chance Encounter*, *Could You Please Look into the Camera?*, *Antigone of Shatila*, *While I was waiting*, *Aleppo: A portrait of Absence*, *Iphigenia*, *The Factory*, and *Damascus 2045* – have been staged at various international theatres and festivals around the world. – Address: Friedrichsbrunner Straße 13, 12347 Berlin, Germany. E-mail: moattar80@gmail.com.

I was one of the last speakers of the day, and it was my turn. We were assembled in the large colloquium room for informal and brief introductions. I had listened in awe to the Co-Fellows I was meeting for the first time as they presented their research topics, finding myself overcome by the realization that this was my first time in the company of so many distinguished academics. Coming into the fellowship, my relationship with academia could be described as lukewarm, verging on sceptical. Now, here I was, immersed in a world of distinguished academics!

As I prepared to speak, I watched my planned remarks vaporize. Instead, I heard myself saying: *“If I ever seem grim in the morning, rest assured it has nothing to do with you or the space we find ourselves in. I just tend to work at night and abhor early rising. Also, I will unfortunately not be sharing this charming compound with you because I already reside in*

Berlin and would rather keep living in my humble home near Hermannstraße in Neukölln. By the way, Hermannstraße is the complete opposite of Grunewald, where we now find ourselves. It is poor, grimy, and hosts a mix of immigrants, workers, and students.”

As I sat back down, it dawned on me that I had substituted my polished notes about my upcoming plans for the year with trifling personal detail about my strange lifestyle and home address. What exactly possessed me in that moment, I can't be sure. But I did feel a need to be frank right from the start. An inner voice had guided me towards spontaneity – to ask these walls to embrace me as I am, to free us all from the binds of formalism, to speak freely, unencumbered by the weight of this prestigious institution and its famed history in science and academia. I took a gamble on the place without knowing what its halls had in store. It turns out my hunch was right; the gamble paid off.

Did I make the right choice staying in Neukölln rather than moving to Grunewald? In retrospect, I certainly missed out on the full experience. For my colleagues, Grunewald was much more than academic discussions and Tuesday Colloquia. There were lunches, ping-pong tournaments, a running club, reading sessions, frequent meetings, and impromptu meet-ups in the institute's halls or the Fellows' apartments – all crucial ingredients for creating this small community. I feel fortunate to have belonged to this community, to have exchanged ideas, attended cultural events, and walked Grunewald's streets and woods. But I know that, because I did not live there, my presence was less tangible.

My work schedule also placed me in the White Villa in the evenings, where I worked through the night and departed in the early hours of the morning, without witnesses to my comings and goings. Grunewald was my personal parallel universe, a unique opportunity to experience parallel time. I must confess that I feared growing accustomed to this parallel universe – with its unique space-time, the boundless kindness and support of its inhabitants, its abundance of books, its infinite horizons for contemplation – because I knew it was temporary. I needed to steady myself with a foot planted firmly in Neukölln, home of the real world, the one I am used to, in all its beauty and crassness. My (almost) daily journey between both worlds unearthed a new way of seeing and thinking about Berlin, the city I was exiled to years ago.

I have not visited Grunewald since the fellowship ended, though I am but a single train ride away. I am certain I will do so soon, reuniting with Barbara, Daniel, Katharina, and other Fellows. I imagine we will laugh as we reminisce. But for now, something keeps me away. Maybe I am afraid of acknowledging how much I miss this parallel universe, how much I didn't know I would miss it until it was gone.

As I reflect on the year that flew by, I am shocked at how little time I actually spent with the institute's team. Aside from the Thursday dinners and Tuesday Colloquia, I had limited interactions with Barbara, Daniel, Katharina, Sophia, Iris, Petria, Vera, the staff at reception, the amazing librarians, the incredible IT department, and Dunia and the dedicated kitchen staff. Yet even if infrequent, these encounters made an impression on me. I felt camaraderie, support, and the certainty that I would always find someone ready to help if needed. Such a sensation is far from trivial; one rarely comes across it, and I will forever be grateful for the generosity I received.

One day, as I stopped by her office on the way up to mine on the top floor of the White Villa, Sophia Pick noted that I seemed restless, deflated. She said I would do well to remember that in this place, should I need it, someone would jump out of the bushes and hold my hand. Sophia's metaphor was charming, and I came to realize it was no exaggeration.

When I first learned I would be a Fellow, I was both excited and anxious. My mind went to two former Fellows, giants in Syrian writing and thought to whom I owe a great deal of my education and political awareness: Sadiq Jalal al-Azm and Yassin al-Haj Saleh.

I met Sadiq Jalal al-Azm only once. Yet I read his work at a young age, so it made a deep impression on me, especially by how critically and boldly it challenged orthodoxies and taboos. Two books in particular come to mind: *Self-Criticism after the Defeat* and *Critique of Religious Thought*. As I was writing this text, Salman Rushdie suffered the assassination attempt he had feared ever since Khomeini issued his infamous fatwa against him in 1989. Al-Azm was among the first in the Arab world to write unequivocally in defence of Rushdie and his right to write, and in opposition to the fatwa and similar attempts to silence intellectual battles by the executioner's sword. These positions are best articulated in al-Azm's *The Mental Taboo: Salman Rushdie and the Truth Within Literature*. Al-Azm also drafted a statement signed by 50 Syrian intellectuals denouncing the fatwa, in defence of Rushdie and freedom of opinion. Coming at a time when Hafez al Assad ruled Syria with an iron fist and in strong alliance with Khomeinist Iran, this initiative spoke volumes about the courage of al-Azm and the other signatories.

As for Yassin al-Haj Saleh, our friendship can be traced to our very first meeting, in 2003 in Damascus, a few years after his release from 16 years of detention in the Assad regime's prisons. From my first engagement with Yassin's early political writings, I have not stopped learning from him, not only through his work, but also through his life. I owe him the example of his personal courage and lucidity in the face of tyranny, despair, and

bitterness. What Yassin was forced to go through is unfathomable, but he has always remained coherent, thoughtful, and able to craft meaning even in the darkest of times.

Knowing these two men had walked the Wiko's halls overwhelmed me sometimes as I walked the same halls, thinking that we now had this experience in common, just as we did our Berlin exile. Sadiq al-Azm passed away in December 2016 in exile in Berlin. Yassin continues to live in Berlin, like me unable to return to Syria. His presence in Berlin, the gift of our human, intellectual, and political partnership, is invaluable.

During my year at Wiko, I worked on three themes in parallel. The first was Justice. Not in its abstract sense, but in what the word represents in the current Syrian context. It was Germany's Koblenz trial that inspired this theme. I was captivated by the story of a fleeting chance encounter between a victim and an executioner. Here were two people who had found themselves in roles not of their own choosing, tried to escape them by fleeing Syria, believing they had left the past behind, only to find themselves coincidentally staring at each other in exile. How is justice achieved through this confrontation, and what does it mean for a country that has been destroyed and fragmented like Syria? A country teeming with victims and torturers who must one day find a way to live side by side.

The second theme I worked on, in the form of the draft of a theatrical text, was Representation. I was interested in the power that artists possess – consciously or not – in times of turbulent wars when they find themselves authoring novels and making films and plays about people who have no voice or platform of their own. Artists reap fame and even awards for their work, while their original characters remain in the shadows, voiceless, alone in facing the tragic reality that the artwork tried to shed light on. In my script, one of the sons of a main character in an award-winning documentary film seeks revenge against the director who used his family's story to make the film. The director harboured no ill intention; in fact, he was driven by sincere political concern. Yet the lines between the artistic, the political, and the moral become blurred for him as more opportunities for funding and fame flow in. I am deeply concerned with the boundaries of artwork that builds on real stories or makes real people its main characters. Where do they intersect and where do they part ways? What is the nature of the power held by the writer or director in these contexts? And how should we think of the freedom of artistic experimentation: is it absolute, or should it be subject to ethical standards in works of this kind?

The third theme that absorbed me, and continues to do so, is Hope. It is the most pressing of the three and I have failed to bring any ideas into focus. All the stories I ideated,

I failed to finish. Perhaps this continued failure to write about hope says something about how difficult it is for me to summon it today. I find myself constantly contemplating hope, my need (our need) for it, and my concern that I should not create it as an illusion.

Every time I told Eva there was no hope that I would ever master German, she would reply without fail, “*Doch*, you will master it.” Eva is the German language teacher at Wiko, and despite my feeble efforts to learn the language during our weekly lessons, she has not given up on me. With her gentle smile and insistence that I can learn, Eva taught me a lesson in hope.

Less than a week after the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, we received an invitation to gather in the large colloquium room to reflect collectively. I had been seething since day one. And it wasn’t simply a case of *déjà vu*. I was most angry that no one had listened to us Syrians when we warned repeatedly of the consequences of overlooking the atrocities of Russia’s brutal military intervention in Syria in support of the Assad regime. We had pointed not only to Russia’s grave violations, but also to the dangers of Putin’s growing ego and sense of impunity. My frustration grew at the contrast between the discourse that accompanied the arrival of refugees from Ukraine and the one that had prevailed in Europe on the eve of the arrival of refugees from Syria and other sites of conflict and war in the Middle East.

All those present that day spoke with open minds and hearts. Participating allowed me to release the anger. We could do nothing meaningful to stop the war that day. But I remember leaving the room grateful that the institute was at least not ignoring what was happening or dismissing it with the pretext of not disturbing the calm we needed for our scientific and academic endeavours. This event signalled a clear recognition that no concern is greater or more important than neighbouring war and human tragedy. Quick on its feet, the institute went on to host several writers and academics who had been forced to flee with their families from Ukraine, as well as from Russia because they opposed Putin’s war. This initiative was very generative for me personally. I recall writing to Barbara to thank her and to express how proud I felt to be a Fellow of the institute that day.

I will miss many things about Grunewald. My neat little office on the top floor of the White Villa. Our Thursday dinners, especially those on warm summer and spring nights, are hosted in the garden that is only a stone’s throw from the banks of Lake Halensee.

Above all, I will miss the entire Wiko team and its hospitality as well as my Co-Fellows, whom I now count as friends. It is no easy feat to gain new friendships and to be able to grow them in an atmosphere of trust and affection. Ours blossomed in the institute's halls, offices, and apartments, as we debated, laughed, and ate, but also as we expressed vulnerability, doubt, and anxiety – about our work's worth and feasibility, about our lives post-Grunewald in an ever wilder and more turbulent world. Scattered across the globe, we are bound by precious memories of the year and a renewed hope of reuniting in Grunewald, in that garden around Lake Halensee on a moonlit summer eve.



WIKO AS A CATALYST

GREGORY ALBERY

Greg Albery was born in 1994 in Taunton, Somerset, UK. He studied Biological Sciences at Keble College, Oxford, where he specialised in ecology, immunology, and disease biology and then received a PhD in Evolutionary Biology from the University of Edinburgh. After the pandemic shook up his academic career, he has been based between a number of institutions including Georgetown University, the Universities of Edinburgh and Oxford, and the Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB) in Berlin. In his time as a disease ecologist, he has worked on ants, badgers, red deer, great tits, wild-fires, and climate change, among other topics. Currently, he specialises in unifying spatial and social network approaches to studying disease dynamics, with a view to understanding and predicting how behaviour and the environment drive infection in wildlife and humans. During his time at the Wissenschaftskolleg, he worked on understanding how population density affects disease transmission, writing reviews, and consolidating meta-datasets of wild animal data. – Address: Department of Biology, Georgetown University, Washington, DC 20057, USA. E-mail: gfalbery@gmail.com.

My six months at Wissenschaftskolleg were transformative. In a series of interwoven work-related and personal developments, I emerged in a very different position in July 2022 than the one I arrived in in January.

Early on in my fellowship, I fell in love with Berlin. The size and energy of the city, its ethos and its culture all enraptured me and I ended up very rapidly (within a couple of weeks) deciding I wanted to stay past my time at Wiko. I spent my time wandering through Grunewald, cycling in the sun through the streets, and escorting groups of

visiting friends around the sights. Over the course of the six months, I had a dozen visitors and managed to draw them into the same love of the city, through a combination of museum visits, street art tours, cycles around Tempelhofer Feld, and *Späti* beers. I've learned a good bit of German via osmosis from the Fellows, my Berlin friends, and the surroundings, and I've really enjoyed the process of picking up phrases and deciphering the grammar rules as time goes on.

Wiko itself was another huge part of my enjoyment of this year. Although my six-month stint was hamstrung by a couple of extended Covid-related quarantines (including two weeks of my own first experience with the virus), I settled quickly into life there. As well as being involved in some scintillating conversations with the other Fellows, I engaged in some once-in-a-lifetime activities. I ended a decade-long abstinence from acting, reading a part in Mohammad Al Attar's play as part of his colloquium. I DJ'ed the farewell party in an ostentatious pink suit, I got gleefully rejected from Berghain with two other Fellows, and I had many drinks on the terrace at the back of Villa Walther (which we erroneously christened "The Pontoon," to split scorn and enthusiasm). I watched dozens of fascinating colloquia on all sorts of topics I'd never have had a chance to learn about. The fellowship delivered on its promise of "Time to Think" and was perfectly timed for me personally as an opportunity to emotionally and academically reset and get over the last couple of years of pandemic, split across three countries. The whole staff was delightful and extraordinarily helpful and directly led me to extend my visa and stay in Berlin. I have never eaten, drank, and lived so well.

Having arrived in the dead of winter to some minor lockdowns gave me a good opportunity to get some work done before the sun arrived. On the research front, I fulfilled my aim of consolidating and integrating a series of collaborations with researchers distributed across a few dozen institutions worldwide. I've collated datasets on behaviour and infection on a wide distribution of wild animals, spanning insects, sharks, bony fish, mammals, birds, and reptiles. The procedure was really successful and thought-provoking, and I am looking forward to continuing to analyse the data for a number of different purposes and hopefully produce a paper or two with an egregiously long co-author list. I also wrote a few long reviews during my time here, allowing me to organise my thoughts on social and spatial behaviour and their interactions with disease dynamics.

When I arrived, I had no precise plans for my life after the end of the six months, so I also had to go about getting a job lined up during my time here. I applied for several fellowships and grants and spent a substantial amount of time interviewing for them.

Ultimately, I was awarded a few of the grants, including two through Georgetown University and one through the University of Edinburgh. The consortium of researchers I co-founded, the viral emergence research initiative (VERENA), was awarded a grant by the NSF to establish an Institute at Georgetown. As well as being a useful time to take to think and write grant proposals, the advice of more experienced Wiko Fellows was incredibly useful in guiding me through the process and giving me tips for the future. A few of the Fellows also participated in a mock interview for me, grilling me on the intricacies of my work and sorting out my presenting style. I also got the opportunity to present my work to several European institutions, including the Humboldt-Universität, the Freie Universität, and the University of Zurich. These combined serendipitously with my desire to stay in Berlin beyond the end of my Wiko fellowship, leading to me securing a guest researcher position at the Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology and Inland Fisheries (IGB).

All in all, it was a wonderful six months whose memories I will cherish. The time left an indelible mark on my career and personal development, and without Wiko I am certain my life would turn out very differently. These days, I occasionally cycle around Grunewald and wander around the same paths and remember the time I spent there.



THE JOURNEY STARTED THEN
SUDDENLY ENDED
ELINA M. AMADHILA

Elina Amadhila graduated in Business Administration at the University of Namibia in 2009 and obtained her PhD at the Stellenbosch University Business School in 2016. She is now a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Commerce, Management & Law at the University of Namibia, where she has been a faculty member since 2018. Her research interests lie in the area of development finance with a particular emphasis on the finance aspect of agricultural businesses and social protection. Her research at Wiko has focused on coupling social protection with youth interest in agriculture in Namibia, but she has collaborated actively with researchers in several other disciplines of education, disability studies, and tourism. Her latest publication focuses on “Are social protection grants alleviating poverty among vulnerable groups in Namibia? – The case of older persons and persons with disabilities,” and she just published her edited book on teaching and learning with digital technologies during COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of her research papers can be found in journals such as the *African Review of Economics and Finance*, *Cogent Education*, *Harvard Africa Policy Journal*, and *Journal of Disaster Risk Studies*, among others. – Address: University of Namibia, Mandume Ndemufayo Avenue, Private Bag 13301, Windhoek, Namibia. E-mail: eamadhila@unam.na.

On the 2nd of April 2022, I arrived in Berlin around noon (to stay for three months) and was welcomed by the ever so friendly and patient Vera Pfeffer at Villa Walther. I was excited yet nervous about the weather as to whether I had packed enough clothes to keep me warm? I made a deliberate decision to visit Berlin during the last three months of the academic year when it was not too cold (or so I thought), hence my nervousness about the

weather. Nonetheless, the weather was cold during the early days when I arrived (I ended up buying one more jacket and boots), but of course, it became much warmer later. It is 36 degrees Celsius today (27 June 2022) as I write this report. Too sad that it is getting much warmer when I am about to return to a very cold Namibia.

On the 3rd of April 2022, I walked to the Wissenschaftskolleg (Wiko) for the first time, had a small tour of the Kolleg, and met very wonderful, kind people. Two days later, I went to the bank to open a bank account, and it took much longer than I had anticipated (a month) to receive the bank card. I was quite disappointed, as this created an inconvenience for me, because I found it difficult to move around as I couldn't buy bus/train tickets on the BVG app and/or buy other cash items, due to not having a local bank card to withdraw cash. I mean, some shops strictly wanted cash, so buying from these shops was impossible and withdrawing cash with my Namibian VISA card from the ATMs in Berlin was very expensive. This all happened before the staff at Wiko decided to give me cash while I waited for the bank card, as neither I nor the staff had known this would happen, so this alternative arrangement was suggested to me only later, after I went through some hurdles. I am glad someone at Wiko thought of a Plan B when Plan A did not work. I will never forget the kind gesture from Fellows like Lars Behrisch who gave me free bus tickets as I waited for my bank card. Thank you, Lars. You were truly kind and I will never forget!

My research at Wiko focused on coupling social protection with youth interest in agriculture in Namibia. When I arrived at Wiko, I had only about three pages of the paper and was not sure exactly what direction to take. However, my plan was that I would develop a full research article while at Wiko in time for my Tuesday Colloquium (7 June 2022). The library was very efficient in providing all the books I needed when I needed them. I managed to submit the paper to *Development in Practice Journal* during my stay. Although the journal editor has shown interest in my work, I was requested to address a few issues before sending the paper for peer review (as is the nature of most good journals), and this is what I am busy with at the time of writing this report. The comments I received from other Fellows during my colloquium presentation and from the editor of the journal really helped strengthen my paper. Apart from this paper, I was also able to finish and submit my edited book on *Teaching and Learning with Digital Technologies during COVID-19 in Sub-Saharan Africa*. This will be published by Routledge in December 2022. I am happy to have been afforded an intellectual space at Wiko to develop and

present my paper. I will never forget my beautiful apartment in Villa Walther, which had a working space with all the equipment one would need.

I am grateful to have met the wonderful staff at Wiko, who (especially Jana) made every effort to put me in touch with researchers in my field or those who do research closely related to my field. Because of this, I was able to visit the WZB Berlin Social Science Center, specifically the Director of the research unit Institutions and Political Inequality (Prof. Macartan Humphreys) and his colleagues (Alex Sacco and Jonah Foong), who later invited me to a two-day workshop (16–17 June 2022) to provide input to doctoral students' work. It was a great experience, as the workshop was a read-in-advance workshop of papers with no presentations and this was my first time attending a workshop of this nature. I learned a lot! I am also fortunate to have met the Director of the Research Center for Sustainability (FFN) at the Freie Universität (Prof. Philipp Lепенies), who has been very supportive of my work and has agreed to be my host for the Georg Forster Research Fellowship with the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation that I am about to submit an application for. I was lucky to meet with the Head of the InsuResilience Solutions Fund (ISF) (in Frankfurt School) that promotes the development of innovative and sustainable climate risk insurance products in developing and emerging countries. We are in talks to expand the project to other countries. This is just the beginning, but the future looks promising. Thank you, Jana, for creating the connections to make sure my short research stay at Wiko was worth it. It really was!

Lastly, I would like to thank the Kitchen staff (Dunia and her team) for their good service and great meals. I enjoyed the sweet stuff (dessert) the most. My family and friends in Namibia informed me it is now colder than it has ever been. I feel like my research journey in Berlin was just starting and suddenly came to an end. I wish I could change my ticket to stay longer than three months in Berlin and enjoy the warm weather until winter is over, but I guess (as they say) all good things come to an end at some point and I must return home to fulfill my job of educating the nation. *"The end of a journey means the beginning of another"* – Silvermist. I will therefore return home with the belief that another exciting one will soon begin.



ON HISTORY, FREEDOM(S),
AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE
CONSTANTIN ARDELEANU

Constantin Ardeleanu is Professor of Modern History at the Department of History, Philosophy, and Sociology of “Dunărea de Jos” University of Galați, Senior Researcher at the Institute for South-East European History, and a Long-Term Fellow at the New Europe College – Institute for Advanced Study, Bucharest. Ardeleanu is interested in the social and economic history of Danubian Europe and the Black Sea region since the eighteenth century. He has published extensively on various topics connected with the opening of the Black Sea to international trade and shipping and the market integration of South-Eastern European port cities. He has been a member of various national and European research teams and is currently PI in a Romanian-funded research project (2022–2024) titled “Entangled Histories of the Danubian Quarantine System (1774–1914).” His latest monograph in English is *The European Commission of the Danube, 1856–1948: An Experiment in International Administration*, Brill, 2020; he is co-editor (with Olena Palko) of *Making Ukraine: Negotiating, Contesting, and Drawing the Borders in the Twentieth Century*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2022. – Address: New Europe College, Strada Plantelor 21, 023971 Bucharest, Romania. E-mail: cardeleanu@nec.ro.

My Wiko fellowship was greatly impacted by Russia’s full-fledged war against Ukraine, launched on the fateful morning of 24 February 2022. This report is an account of how the current war has altered several of my academic priorities, forcing me to think more about the “how” and “why” of historical writing. When writing this text, but especially when revising it, I had the acute impression that it speaks too little about how great a place Wiko is as an academic venue, but also as a safe haven for those scientists, writers,

artists, or activists who dare speak freely and thus openly contest – with their voices, texts, or art pieces – some of the ruthless political regimes around the world. This report, a bit too personal at times, is a modest tribute to honour Wiko's commitment to support one of the greatest values of them all: "freedom."

*

February 2022 was an intense month. I had just arrived in Berlin, and the grey weather made it rather uninviting to explore the neighbourhood and the city. By mid-February, with rising numbers of corona infections within the Wiko community, seminars and academic events were switched to online only; soon, restrictions were extended to how meals were served in the restaurant. With little social life and confined to a nice, but rather isolated apartment in Villa Jaffé, research occupied almost all of my time.

I took advantage of Wiko's splendid library services and got access to historical literature that had been unavailable to me before. My aim was to write a chapter for my long-planned volume on the coming of steamships in the Black Sea since the 1830s. The *Chernomorskoye morskoye parokhodstvo* (Black Sea Shipping Company), established in Odesa in 1833 after renewed discussions between local merchants and the imperial authorities, was an organisation that to my mind showcased imperial Russia's use of modern technology as a tool of empire building in its southern Black Sea provinces at a time when the Romanov Empire advanced at a rapid pace towards the Turkish Straits, the crux of the so-called "Eastern Question." The topic equally allowed me to employ many of the approaches (about technology, infrastructure, and connectivity) that I thought might shed new light on the coming of capitalism in the Black Sea region and its transformation into one of the world's largest reservoirs of agricultural foodstuffs.

While looking at the history of steamships in Odesa and the routes that linked the Ukrainian outlet to ports around the Black Sea and beyond it, I was anxiously following news about Russia's military build-up along Ukraine's borders. Ukraine and Russia were a regular topic during all social events that I attended. I vividly remember such a conversation, during one of the few Thursday dinners served in February in the cosy Wiko restaurant, and the growing concerns that many of us had that the crisis might easily escalate into a full-blown war.

Vladimir Putin's speech on 21 February was a surreal event. I followed it online, but I soon got lost in the twists and turns of his argument. The speech, an hour-long lament

about Ukraine's ingratitude, was full of historical allusions. Modern Ukraine was "entirely created by Russia or, to be more precise, by Bolshevik, Communist Russia"; Lenin and Stalin gifted Ukraine with various territories; Ukraine was "an inalienable part of our own history, culture, and spiritual space"; Ukraine was an ungrateful inheritor, led by corrupt, far-right nationalists and oligarchs on the payroll of the West. References to the history of some of the places I was myself busily studying – such as the shipyard in Mykolaiv or the symbolic significance of Ochakiv (further downstream from Mykolaiv, on the banks of the Dnipro-Buh estuary) – clearly showed that for Putin there was no difference between imperial Russia and *his* Russia. It was, to my mind, a deeply flawed narrative (which he has further developed since his February rant), which purposefully concocted historical events, sacred spaces, national heroes, and global villains to form a toxic, explosive potion. In many ways, I felt that Putin's revisionist ideology was a direct attack on the work of all those historians – myself included – who were writing about various episodes in the long history of the Romanov Empire's expansion towards Europe.

Still, despite growing concerns of escalation, 24 February came as a shock. I spent long hours on the first day of the war glued to news outlets, expecting, like Putin himself probably, to see Ukraine's rapid capitulation. Interminable conversations followed – by phone or various messaging apps – with friends from Ukraine and with family in Romania. Some Russian strikes hit targets in south-western Ukraine, not far from my hometown of Galați, on the boundary between Romania, Moldova, and Ukraine. As the first refugees started to cross the border and the war scare made its way to my home country, I felt rather uneasy being away from loved ones.

25 February was the day I had long planned to fly back to Bucharest and return some days later, accompanied by my family, for the four remaining months of my Berlin fellowship. Romania looked somehow different, trying to accommodate the realities of a war raging on its borders. I watched some cable news programs, with contradictory comments about Romania's military readiness, broadcasts about panic buying of gasoline and foodstuffs, and displays of the huge popular support that Romanians showed for the Ukrainian refugees fleeing their homes. The next few days, I was busily engaged with preparations for our return to Berlin, while trying to provide support to some Ukrainian friends who had been connected with the Bucharest institute where I have been coordinating a fellowship program for scholars from the countries around the Black Sea. Their stories were simply overwhelming: in Kyiv, S. is sheltering in place, while watching bombs fall over various districts of the Ukrainian capital; she intends to take her

five-year-old son to Western Ukraine and God knows where further; in Dnipro, A. has been mobilised and is digging trenches close to Zaporizhzhia: in Bucharest, Y. is closely watching military developments in southern Ukraine, hoping that his wife and kid, caught in their flat in Kherson, a city assaulted by the Russian invaders, will be safe.

As for the military conflict itself, I grew particularly interested in one of the most spectacular battles of the war, that for control of Snake Island, the tiny islet near the north-western coast of the Black Sea about which I had written a couple of academic papers. When the warships of the Russian Black Sea Fleet attacked Snake Island on 24 February, the aggressors were received with utter defiance, turning the defenders' brave response into a symbol of Ukrainian resistance. With the sinking of the *Moskva* flagship in the region, the island gained further prominence.

We returned to Berlin on 2 March, and the plane, with dozens of Ukrainian women and children, carrying small backpacks and plush toys, was an early testimony of the huge displacement of people brought about by Putin's Russia's attacks against Ukraine. In the airport, sitting in the long queue to pass through border control, mothers would check their phones to see who had died and what had been destroyed in the past two hours.

I arrived at Wiko just in time for an (informal) "exchange of information and impressions" moderated by our fellow Fellows from Belarus and Russia. It was an excellent academic discussion, with many great questions about the war and its larger significance for the international order: "Is NATO's position wise enough?" "Are Germany's plans of remilitarization appropriate?" "What does the war change about China's global ambitions?" Loaded with my very personal and rather emotional view of the conflict, I felt everything was a bit too cold and analytical.

My colloquium was scheduled for a Thursday afternoon on the last day of March. I had little energy and inspiration to work on my presentation, distracted, beyond the war, by family obligations and the spring weather. In a more spacious and cosier apartment in Villa Walther, with a daily routine that involved going out a lot – from the kindergarten and grocery stores to playgrounds and tourist attractions – I employed my limited time to read about Ukraine and its history. I was seriously considering changing the topic of my seminar presentation from a boringly historical recount of "Steamship connections in the Black Sea (1830s–1860s)" to something more relevant for the political and military events in Ukraine.

By March, with Ukraine's incredible resistance, the conflict gradually turned into a war of attrition. Russia's control of Snake Island and of shipping routes to the outlets in

southern Ukraine started to raise new concerns: a lasting war would gravely affect the grain market and contribute to a global food crisis. I have long been interested in the grain trade of the Black Sea, and I authored several papers and books on the economic premises of the Crimean War; I analysed those episodes as part of the dispute between the Romanov Empire and the Western industrialised countries for free access to the food-stuffs of the Black Sea provinces, which imperial Russia had tried to weaponize, just as Putin's Russia has been doing with its gas and oil. It made sense, after all, to talk about steamship connectivity in the Black Sea by the mid-nineteenth century, with the transportation revolution as one of the main factors in the market integration of the region and its transformation into one of the world's largest reservoirs of agricultural goods.

By April, I was anxiously expecting to see the published version of a volume I had co-edited together with Olena Palko (at Birkbeck University at the time): *Making Ukraine. Negotiating, Contesting, and Drawing the Borders in the Twentieth Century*, as the book is titled, had been scheduled for publication by McGill-Queen's University Press in Canada for quite some time. Russia's full-fledged war in Ukraine made our volume, "the first comprehensive account of the making of Ukraine's borders during the twentieth century," as the marketing ad reads, equally timely and obsolete. Essays by fourteen contributors from around the world (myself included, with an essay covering some episodes of Snake Island's twisted history) are included in this volume, which we launched, via Zoom, in late May. Discussions with contributors and guests were excellent, but the event also raised the interest of a Russian troll, who briefly interrupted our presentation to play to us the Soviet anthem!

With the coming of several Ukrainian and Russian Fellows at Wiko since mid-March and with a return to more normal social life (despite a very persistent Covid that infected almost everyone in the community, myself included), Ukraine remained a hot topic on Wiko's academic agenda. In several public talks featuring prominent scholars in Ukrainian Studies and experts in Eastern European history and politics, the different facets of Russia's aggression were minutely analysed. I attended all such meetings, even when they were in German, using them as a further way of practicing my listening and understanding skills. No need to add that the war – with its military, political, and humanitarian dimensions – was one of the most common topics discussed during social meetings.

Our Wiko semester was invariably impacted by Russia's full-fledged war against Ukraine. It made me (and presumably many of us) look closer at contemporary political developments in the Black Sea region and the instrumentalization of history by Russia's

political elites. It has also encouraged me to pay more attention to long(er)-term historical analysis of the weaponization of foodstuffs and energy and to symbols of national resistance, such as Snake Island (about which I have completed an article that was included in the Winter 2022 issue of the *Zeitschrift für Ideengeschichte*). As it clearly resulted from Putin's February rant, Russia's war is also an assault on history, and being at Wiko during such difficult times, we were even more privileged to meet and work together with Ukrainian, Russian, and Belarusian colleagues defending, with their scholarly articles, literary pieces, or music, some of humankind's greatest values, such as freedom, truth, and justice. Because Wiko is more than a hub of academic excellence, it is also a safe haven for those brave enough to fight for our freedom(s) and most importantly it is an oasis managed and inhabited by kind-hearted people who treasure these dear values.



EIN JAHR IM ELFENBEINTURM LARS BEHRISCH

Geboren in München und aufgewachsen in der nahegelegenen Kleinstadt Landshut, verbrachte ich den größten Teil der Neunzigerjahre in Berlin, um an der dortigen Humboldt-Universität Geschichte, Russistik und Islamwissenschaft zu studieren und anschließend im Bereich frühneuzeitliche Geschichte zu promovieren. Zwischenzeitlich verbrachte ich auch längere Zeit in Hamburg und London sowie in Sankt Petersburg und in Damaskus. Nach der Promotion erhielt ich eine Anstellung an der Universität Bielefeld, wo ich den Großteil des folgenden Jahrzehnts verbrachte und meine Habilitation zum Eintritt statistischen Denkens und statistischer Praktiken in Politik und Verwaltung während des späten 18. Jahrhunderts – in vergleichend deutsch-französischer Perspektive – erarbeitete. Diese Arbeit, die ich im Jahr 2012 abschloss, erhielt 2014 den Habilitationspreis des Vereins der Historiker und Historikerinnen Deutschlands (Carl Erdmann Preis) und wurde anschließend unter dem Titel „Die Berechnung der Glückseligkeit“ veröffentlicht. Unterdessen hatte ich 2009 eine feste Anstellung an der Universität Utrecht in den Niederlanden erhalten, die ich bis heute bekleide. Zwischenzeitlich durfte ich eine einjährige Fellowship am Collegium de Lyon sowie eine ebenfalls einjährige Gastprofessur an der Humboldt-Universität wahrnehmen. Während meiner Fellowship 2021/2022 am Wissenschaftskolleg konnte ich wesentliche Teile eines Buchprojekts zu den Wurzeln der Demokratie in der Frühen Neuzeit abfassen. – Adresse: Dep. Geschiedenis en Kunstgeschiedenis, Universiteit Utrecht, Drift 6, 3512 BS Utrecht, The Netherlands. E-Mail: l.behrisch@uu.nl.

Wenn es einen Elfenbeinturm gibt, dann ist es das Wissenschaftskolleg. Hier kann man forschen, nachdenken, lesen und diskutieren, ohne umgehend Ergebnisse liefern zu

müssen. „Elfenbeinturm“ hat natürlich den negativen Beigeschmack einer dem Leben entfremdeten Lebensweise und Denkungsart. Es ist schon wahr: Leben am Wissenschaftskolleg entspricht nicht dem üblichen Alltagsleben, einschließlich dem an der Universität. Doch in Zeiten, in denen dort ununterbrochen Projekte ausgearbeitet und Drittmittel beschafft werden müssen, entsprechen Leben und Arbeiten am Wissenschaftskolleg viel mehr dem, was man früher lange als akademische Normalität angesehen und praktiziert hat: nämlich der Möglichkeit, sich kontinuierlich auf einen konkreten Gegenstand und konkrete Forschungsfragen konzentrieren zu können und sich darüber ebenso kontinuierlich mit Kolleginnen und Kollegen auszutauschen – beides ohne den Druck, schnell konkrete Ergebnisse präsentieren oder Eindruck schinden zu müssen.

Wenn das Wissenschaftskolleg alle positiven Seiten des „Elfenbeinturms“ bietet, treffen die negativen Assoziationen, die man damit meist verbindet, keineswegs zu. Denn es ist ein Turm, von dem man nach Ablauf eines Jahres heruntersteigen wird – und was man hier tut, soll nach Ablauf dieses Jahres durchaus langfristige Früchte tragen. Es ist zudem ein Turm, in dem sich mehrere Dutzend Fellows zugleich aufhalten, sich täglich begegnen und austauschen. Und schließlich ist dieser Turm nicht im Nirgendwo angesiedelt, sondern in Berlin, dessen diverse Zentren rasch zu erreichen sind. Die Fellows nutzen dies mit hoher Regelmäßigkeit und Intensität – Theater, Konzert und Oper, Lesungen und Tagungen, Kneipen, Restaurants und Clubs gehören kaum weniger zum Alltag des Lebens am Wissenschaftskolleg als das Forschen, Schreiben und Diskutieren.

Für mich war das Jahr am Wissenschaftskolleg – abgesehen von allen anderen wunderbaren Dingen – auch deshalb so willkommen, weil es mir die Gelegenheit bot, aus dem Ausland, wo ich seit gut zehn Jahren lebe und arbeite, für einige Zeit in die Stadt zurückzukehren, in der ich meine akademische Ausbildung erhalten habe und die ich sehr liebe. Ich konnte an viele alte Kontakte und Freundschaften anknüpfen, vielen das Wissenschaftskolleg zeigen und sie mit anderen Fellows bekannt machen. Dies gilt auch für meine Frau – und unsere Kinder hatten die Gelegenheit, für ein Jahr eine deutsche (Grund-)Schule zu besuchen und neue Freundschaften zu knüpfen (abgesehen von der Tatsache, dass ihre Großmutter nicht allzu weit entfernt wohnt und sie sie auf diese Weise regelmäßig besuchen konnten). Für mich und uns war das Jahr am Wissenschaftskolleg somit sowohl eine neuartige Erfahrung als auch ein Wiedereintauchen in eine Welt, die wir gut kennen und lieben und oft vermissen. Diese Kombination machte das Jahr erst recht zu etwas Besonderem.

An dieser Stelle noch ein Wort zum Grunewald! Anfangs – gefragt, wie es denn in Berlin sei – reagierte ich oft gereizt: „Wir wohnen hier nicht in Berlin, sondern im

Grunewald, einem Villenvorort von Berlin, wo es keinen Laden und keine Kneipe gibt, wo niemand zu Fuß geht außer dem Dienstpersonal und alle Kinder mit dem Porsche Cayenne zur Schule gebracht werden.“ Nun ja, das trifft schon zu – der Grunewald ist in dem Sinne wirklich nicht Berlin –, doch hat er auch sehr schöne Seiten, allen voran natürlich das viele Grün, das Wasser und die kurzen Wege in den Wald und an die herrlichsten Badeseen. Während der ersten Monate fuhr ich mit einigen anderen Fellows jeden Sonntagmorgen mit dem Rad die Koenigsallee entlang zur Krummen Lanke – das dauert auch bei mäßigem Fahrttempo nur eine gute Viertelstunde –, wir durchschwammen den See einmal vom einen bis zum anderen Ende und liefen dann zurück (nur eine von uns, Sophie Roux, war so sportlich, hin- und zurückzuschwimmen). Für die Jogger unter uns bot die Gegend natürlich auch mehr als genügend Auslauf; für den Winter gab es die herrliche Tischtennisplatte, auch gerne frequentiert von den vielen Fellowkindern.

Es versteht sich von selbst, dass die Möglichkeit, ein Jahr lang ebenso frei wie konzentriert an meinem Buchprojekt arbeiten zu dürfen – es handelt von den frühneuzeitlichen Wurzeln der repräsentativen Demokratie –, für mich den größten Mehrwert des Aufenthaltes darstellte. In das wirklich wunderschöne Büro, das mir zur Verfügung gestellt wurde, ging ich jeden Tag mit Freude; und anders als im universitären Alltag verließ ich es meist in dem Gefühl, den Tag hinreichend für die Lektüre, zum Nachdenken und Schreiben genutzt zu haben. Zwar habe ich es nicht geschafft, das Buch abzuschließen, wie ich gehofft, aber doch nicht ernsthaft erwartet hatte. Dennoch hätte ich im normalen Unileben niemals den Grad an Konzentration und Kontinuität aufbringen können, der es mir erlaubt hat, einen substanziellen und für mich besonders schwierigen Teil des Buches zu erarbeiten. Es ist natürlich nicht immer einfach, sich tagein, tagaus denselben Gedanken, demselben Text zu widmen; doch die Befürchtungen, dass es mir irgendwann zum Verdruss werden würde, ja ich womöglich Geduld und Motivation verlieren könnte, bewahrheiteten sich nicht – auch dank des herrlichen Ambientes und des wunderbaren akademischen und menschlichen Rahmens, den das Wissenschaftskolleg bietet.

Jeder Mensch und jeder Wissenschaftler hat unterschiedliche Bedürfnisse und Erwartungen. Es war unendlich wertvoll und erfreulich, täglich andere Fellows zu sehen und mit ihnen zu sprechen. Für mich persönlich waren dabei die spontanen Begegnungen besonders anregend – sei es im Garten der Villa Walther, auf dem Weg zum Kolleg oder in dessen Räumen –, und regelmäßig habe ich mich mit Einzelnen verabredet, für ein Bier am Abend, einen Ausflug, einen Spaziergang. Für mich ganz persönlich – und dies ist sicherlich nicht repräsentativ – waren die täglichen, gewissermaßen ritualisierten

Begegnungen in der Gruppe während des Mittagessens hingegen weniger gewinnbringend. Aus drei Gründen: Erstens bin ich es aus den Niederlanden gewöhnt (das gilt im Übrigen, wie man mir sagte, ähnlich auch für Länder des angelsächsischen Raums), nicht zu Mittag zu essen, sondern nur ein kleines Sandwich zu mir zu nehmen. Ich habe daher zur Mittagszeit eigentlich meist keinen Appetit (auch wenn das Essen natürlich immer ausgezeichnet war). Zweitens bin ich gerade in den Mittagsstunden immer so in meine Arbeit vertieft, dass ich jede Unterbrechung als ungewünschte Ablenkung und Störung empfinde. Drittens widerstrebt mir jede Art der Ritualisierung, insbesondere in Gruppen. Das einmalige Abendessen war immer sehr schön, auch da man sich abends – wenn man die Arbeit abgeschlossen hat und bei einem Glas Wein – ganz anders entspannen und in Gespräche vertiefen kann. Was mich betrifft, hätte ich es dagegen sehr bevorzugt, wenn die Teilnahme am Mittagsbuffet einem jeden freigestellt wäre – um an manchen Tagen, wenn man keinen Appetit hat, nicht dazu aufgelegt ist und/oder zu sehr in die Arbeit vertieft, ohne schlechtes Gewissen fernzubleiben (damit wären wohl gewisse Komplikationen bei der Abrechnung verbunden, die aber sicher zu lösen wären).

Von diesem Kritikpunkt abgesehen, der überdies, wie betont, auf persönlichen Neigungen beruht, war alles, was mir und uns am Wissenschaftskolleg geboten wurde – darunter nicht zuletzt auch die unerschöpfliche Freundlichkeit und Geduld sämtlicher MitarbeiterInnen –, jenseits aller Erwartungen und wird uns als solches in lebhaftester Erinnerung bleiben. Es ist ein Elfenbeinturm, der ohne Zweifel wenige seinesgleichen hat. Man steigt nur mit Mühe und Bedauern von ihm herab – wenngleich getröstet davon, die Früchte der Zeit, in der man ihn bewohnte, für immer in sich zu tragen.



A STRANGER IN PARADISE DAVID CANNADINE

Sir David Cannadine is Dodge Professor of History at Princeton University. He has also held positions at the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, Columbia University, and the University of London. He is the author of more than a dozen books and the editor or co-editor of numerous volumes. His scholarly interests range across the economic, social, political, and cultural history of modern Britain and its empire, capitalism, collecting, and philanthropy in nineteenth- and twentieth-century America. His books include *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*; *Class in Britain*; *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire*; *Mellon: An American Life*; *The Undivided Past: Humanity Beyond our Differences*; and, recently, biographies of King George V and Margaret Thatcher, but also a volume on Churchill as an artist. He is the Editor of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, the Editor of the *Penguin History of Britain* – for which he wrote the volume *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800–1906*. He was also Vice-Chair (2001–2018) of the Editorial Board of *Past & Present*. He is a member of a large number of learned societies and academies and served as President of the British Academy in the years 2017–2021. – Address: Department of History, Princeton University, 129 Dickinson Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544-1017, USA. E-mail: dcannadi@princeton.edu.

For various personal reasons, I arrived late at Wiko, towards the end of October 2021, which meant I missed the initiation briefings and induction rituals of the previous month, and it took a while to settle in. But my fellow Fellows were very welcoming, the staff were superb, and the facilities were excellent. Negative liberty meant no teaching, no departmental meetings, and no committees at my home university (although graduate students continued to

require attention); positive liberty meant encountering many clever people working on hugely interesting subjects, learning a great deal from them at the Tuesday Colloquia and in conversations over lunch and dinner, and meeting a colleague from another department from my own university on the other side of the Atlantic, whom I doubt if I would otherwise have encountered. As a result, I soon came to realize that Wiko is a special place for enjoying conviviality and for making connections, and that these two activities are mutually reinforcing in stimulating and supporting the life of the mind. Truly, it is an earthly academic paradise, I am still trying to adjust to no longer being there, and I wonder how long that will take.

I came to Wiko with one major objective, which was to get as far along as I could with writing the history of the Ford Foundation, a project on which I had been working intermittently for the previous five years. During that time, “working” had meant overseeing a project manager and supervising a research team of three; making clear the topics that I wanted the researchers to work on in the archives of the Foundation and elsewhere; discussing with them the former Foundation employees in the United States and overseas who should be interviewed; doing as much secondary reading as my other responsibilities allowed (in addition to teaching at Princeton I was President of the British Academy from 2017 to 2021, and that took a lot of time); trying to get clear on how I wanted to organize what was bound to be a big and complex book; and drafting ten out of a probable seventeen or eighteen chapters, along with a very tentative introduction. By the time I arrived at Wiko late last October, that was as far as I had got.

By the time I left Wiko, I had made a great deal of progress. I revised the ten chapters I had already written and got most of the footnotes sorted. I drafted the remaining seven chapters (I did not need an eighth, which came as a relief), which bring the history as near to the present day as is possible. I worked out what seems an appropriate expositional structure for the book, I re-drafted the introduction, and I wrote the first two parts of a four-part conclusion. With ample desk space and with unencumbered time, I was able to check each chapter to ensure that essential themes were followed through in all of them. Thanks to the support and efficiency of the Wiko library staff, I was able to borrow a large number of books for further essential secondary reading and to download an even greater number of equally indispensable articles easily and conveniently. This meant that by the time I left Wiko, I had what was virtually a full draft of the book, and to that extent, I am able to report “mission accomplished.”

I also went public with the project for the first time. I presented some findings at my Tuesday Colloquium in May, providing a chapter outline, setting out the themes of the

history, describing briefly some of the most important episodes, beginning with the creation of the Foundation in 1936, and seeking guidance and advice on how to evaluate the successes (and failures) and significance of the Foundation – the part of the conclusion I have yet to write. I also explained how an essential part of the Foundation's history has been its changing relationship with academic subjects and with ideas more generally, among them development economics, sociology, area studies, “the West” versus communism, totalitarianism versus democracy, the “problem” of race relations, human rights, public interest law, community development, feminism and women's studies, black and ethnic studies, reproductive rights, and so on. And I set out the challenges of writing the history of what became, from 1950 on, a global organization, concerned to award grants and prizes not only in the United States, but also via its overseas offices in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.

In addition to my presentation at Wiko, I discussed the project with Yale faculty and students at the Jackson School of Global Affairs, where they cautioned that the book would be very dense (seventeen chapters of twenty thousand words each) and that I should try hard to “lighten” the narrative as much as I could (I still remain rather unsure how to do this). At the invitation of the Berlin Capital Club, I gave a talk on the Ford Foundation and the Cold War, with special reference to the support that the Foundation gave to the Freie Universität Berlin during the 1950s. And via Zoom, I addressed both the executive leadership team of the Foundation and the trustees, who seemed enthused and excited by what I said – though they have yet to read the book!

There is, of course, more to do, which means that the “mission” is still not entirely “accomplished.” I continue to fret about the two final sections of the conclusion. I have yet to complete all the secondary reading, as the bibliography grows ever longer as each new book or article I read contains yet more references I need to follow up on. There is a great deal of fact checking and reference checking to do. There are permissions to obtain from interviewees whom I quote in the text. And there are illustrations to select, which is both a challenge and an opportunity: a challenge because there is a danger that too many of them will be photographs of the white men who for so long dominated the Foundation's board and staff; an opportunity because appropriate visual images will be one way of “lightening” the text. With luck, all this should be finished by early summer 2023, and I hope that Harvard University Press will publish the book in the autumn of 2023. I cannot wait to donate a presentation copy to Wiko.

Such was my main task and my near-full-time preoccupation while I was at Wiko. But I did do some other things that I ought briefly to summarize. I was the keynote

speaker at a conference to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates at Maynooth University. I gave the concluding remarks at a virtual colloquium organized at Humboldt-Universität to mark the thirtieth anniversary of the publication of my book, *The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy*. I delivered the address at the memorial service held at St Margaret's Church, Westminster, for Sir John Chilcot, the British civil servant who helped broker the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland and who later chaired the (highly critical) inquiry into Tony Blair's decision to join the United States in invading Iraq. And I presided at a memorial meeting at the British Academy to celebrate the life and work of one of my presidential predecessors, the sociologist Viscount Runciman of Doxford.

There were other obligations, many of which I could discharge via Zoom. I attended meetings of the Wolfson Foundation, as a trustee, as chair of its arts and heritage panel, as a member of its nominations committee, and as chair of the judges of the Wolfson History Prize, and I wrote a commemorative essay to mark the golden jubilee of that award. I continued to be active as a board member of the Royal Oak Foundation in New York, the American partner of the National Trust. I chaired meetings of the advisory council of the Centre for Urban History at the University of Leicester. I began my term as President of the Birmingham and Midland Institute. As a trustee of the Gladstone Library, I was heavily involved in the appointment of a new warden. I chaired the newly established Heritage Committee of the British Academy, which oversees its archive, library, and art collection. And I was appointed a Governor of the Museum of London, which will be transitioning from its present cramped and unwelcoming quarters to new and much-expanded premises during the next few years.

As I write these words, I see in my mind's eye the spacious study in Wallotstraße 10 where I was able to get so much work done; I recall the outlines of the main building, with its beautiful spaces and the spectacular view across the lake; and I think of the music, the museums, the palaces, and the restaurants that (among many other things) make Berlin such a vivid, vibrant, and vital city to have lived in. I extend my heartfelt thanks and unstinted gratitude to everyone at Wiko – the Rector, the Academic Advisory Board, the Fellows, and the staff – who made my time there so productive, so memorable, and so special. And I cannot find the words to express how much I envy the new Fellows who will be entering this academic paradise in less than two months' time. I hope they will soon realize just how lucky they are!



LAT (LIVING APART TOGETHER)
TERESA CASTRO-MARTÍN

Teresa Castro Martín is a Research Professor in Demography at the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) in Madrid. She holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and has previously worked at the United Nations Population Division in New York. Her research focuses on the causes and consequences of very low fertility, on global changes in partnership formation and family dynamics, and on the implications for children of new family forms, on which she has (co-)authored nearly 100 scientific articles. Her project at Wiko tried to understand whether polarized family change is driven by or itself contributes to amplifying existing social inequalities in Latin America. – Address: Center for Human and Social Sciences-CSIC, Albasanz 26–28, 28037 Madrid, Spain. E-mail: teresa.castro@csic.es.

LAT: Living Apart Together

LAT is a term typically used in demography to refer to couples who maintain separate households, but could well be used to portray the very special Wiko community. Academically, we were both apart – coming from a broad range of fields and working on our own projects – and together – talking to and learning from each other on a daily basis. This sense of togetherness grew stronger meal after meal, colloquium after colloquium, walk after walk. Before long, we realized that, despite real and imagined distances in thematic interests, disciplinary traditions, and work styles, we all shared similar enthusiasm for sharing, debating, living fully, and playing.

Residentially, we also lived apart – more than a room of our own – but at the same time together, or in very close proximity. I enjoyed greatly the day-to-day companionship

of my Villa Walther neighbors. This type of co-living arrangement transported me back to my graduate school years in Madison, when I lived with fifteen other international students at Rochdale Co-op. Like then, coming back home at night, I found myself looking at the window lights to see who was still up. Potlucks, after-colloquium night gatherings over wine, and beer evenings at Floh, Landhaus Grunewald, or Villa Walther's courtyard were rejuvenating. I never felt lonely. I am going to miss terribly this kind of co-living with cool neighbors, amusing kids, and a large variety of pets – including a praying mantis – when I go back to my dull apartment building of quasi-anonymous neighbors in Madrid.

Socially, I would say that we were more together than apart. The week's agenda rapidly filled up, with plenty of cultural and social activities organized by Wiko and by Co-Fellows: wine tasting parties, Fassbinder movie nights at Villa Jaffé, restaurant outings, museum visits, concerts, beer gardens, street markets... No time to be idle. Mohammad Al Attar's premiere of *Damaskus 2045* at Freiburg, Liza Lim's concerts, Guy Tillim's photo exhibitions, the train trip to the Bauhaus in Dessau, and watching *Metropolis* with live orchestral accompaniment at Kino Babylon were among the highlights of this inspiring year.

The intermingling of work and play made it relatively effortless – even for a shy person like me – to engage in both deep and light conversations. Laughter was always present. I truly admire the talent and erudition of my fellow Fellows, but what I treasure most is their sharp sense of humor and subtle irony. The line between serious and fun talks was quite thin. In fact, Hegel was a regular guest not in our serious talks, but in our follow-the-vodka parties and surprise birthday celebrations.

Cohort: Group of persons who experienced a common event in a specific time period that leaves an imprint on them

Cohort is another key concept in demographic analysis. There are birth cohorts, graduation cohorts, marriage cohorts... and there are Wiko Fellow cohorts: an eclectic group of people with different backgrounds, expertise, national origins, ages, family stages, and life trajectories from all over the world, who spend an academic year (or part of it) together in a stress-free environment, cared for by the incredibly helpful and kind Wiko staff, and granted the most precious gifts: time and freedom. What else can you dream of? No doubt this unique experience will leave a long-lasting imprint on us and a sense of belonging.

Possibly all Wiko cohorts have the same feeling, but I cannot help thinking that our cohort of Fellows and partners was truly special regarding the level of camaraderie and

friendship we developed. Why so special? Perhaps because for most of us, Wiko and Berlin meant the first trip abroad, the first in-person seminars, the first social meals or the first outing to a theater, after nearly two long years of remote work, virtual meetings, and limited social life imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of us arrived at Grunewald a bit like *Zombies* – having been forced to move our professional and social lives largely to the virtual world – and eager for face-to-face interaction. Wiko provided the ideal setting to heal from isolation fatigue and to return to collective life.

Grunewald felt at first like an elitist and depopulated suburb; however, its forests, lakes, and wildlife – the first time I've seen foxes on a city street! – had a therapeutic effect on me after a long period of home office in a dense and greenless neighborhood in Madrid. I really welcomed the singing birds, the noisy swans, and even the weird insects I found on the balcony.

Thanks to the Tuesday Colloquia, we regularly learned about each other's fields, interests, ongoing projects... Exposure to such a varied range of knowledge from the life sciences, humanities, social sciences, and arts made me feel increasingly humble, but also curious, so I rapidly switched to a learning mode.

Thanks to the daily meals, we gradually got to know each other and enjoy time together. I remember how the initial Thursday dinners ended after only two hours, while later on, they lingered on well past midnight. Animated conversations and contagious laughs became commonplace. No wonder nobody wanted to leave the dinner table (and the accompanying wine) on Thursdays.

Serendipity: Making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident

Serendipity is one of the mottos at Wiko, but I would not say that discoveries happen by accident at Wiko. Instead, the Kolleg's leadership and the wonderful staff have carefully designed a perfect environment for formal and informal cross-disciplinary encounters that inspire new ideas and enhance creativity. Broadening your mind – and your research questions – in such an environment requires no effort, it just comes naturally. I cannot think of a better setting where you can engage in lively and fruitful conversations bridging disciplinary, linguistic, national, and cultural divides. The wide diversity – in all dimensions – of my Fellow cohort was a real treasure.

Both planned and chance encounters and both serious and playful discussions were equally valuable to me. Conversations did not develop only in structured contexts, such as the Tuesday Colloquium, the Three Cultures Forum, or lunchtime, but also in many

casual encounters typical of close neighbors, like grocery shopping, doing laundry, hanging out in Villa Walther's courtyard, or taking the M19. The myriad possibilities to approach colleagues, in both their professional and domestic spheres, made it easier to venture into other scholarly fields, ask naïve questions without fear of embarrassment, and understand each other's views without getting lost in specialized jargon. Sometimes, the conscious awareness of how little I knew about so many things would be overwhelming, but at the same time, surrounded by so many gifted but incredibly modest scholars and artists, the learning opportunities were endless.

Work-in-progress syndrome: Difficulty to consider a work "finished"

The first months in Berlin were an in-between period – half here, half there – because I still had to revise some unfinished papers – on child maintenance after separation in Spain and on social norms related to fatherhood in Europe. I was impatient to move on and start working on my Wiko project on the interplay between family change and social inequality in the Latin American region. As Nuno Ramos stated in his introduction to my colloquium, "In Latin America, inequality is at the center of any and all social life, making itself noticed in absolutely everything, from the baker's 'good morning,' to the children's games, the shadows on the floor, the sunlight, the night watchman's whistle, some couple's discussion at the next table, some baby crying, neighbors' music, dogs barking. Everything, everything is absolutely unequal." It could not be expressed better. I truly admire my fellow writers and artists for their talent in communicating not only ideas, but also feelings and emotions.

Before I initiated my project's data analysis and writing, I engaged in a kind of "slow science." It had been a very long time since I could devote time to just reading and thinking, without the pressure to be constantly productive or the stress of imminent deadlines. Thanks to the rare luxury of time, Fellows' recommendations, and the great Wiko library, I had the opportunity to read widely: studies that had long been on my to-do list and many others that were outside my radar. I am not sure this broad reading gave me more answers, but it surely left me with many more questions and broader narratives of social and family change, as well as a joyful sense of moving beyond my field's comfort zone.

Despite – or perhaps because of – the blurred boundaries between work and play, I am happy with what I accomplished in my Wiko year, particularly with a co-authored article, "Families in Latin America: Trends, Singularities, and Contextual Factors," published in the *Annual Review of Sociology* 48 (2022), which explores the causes of the growing social

class divide in family patterns. But I am even more happy to have met and befriended amazing people, to have discovered never-boring Berlin on random long walks, and to have engaged in so many enriching conversations about politics, life challenges, family stories, and endless topics.

When you are happy, you are more productive. Even so, my work rhythm was largely seasonal. It peaked during the long dark winter days – though I confess I was disappointed that it only snowed a few days – and relaxed during a spring that was too beautiful to be indoors. Quite a few half-written papers remain “in progress,” perhaps waiting for the next dark winter.

Gratefulness: Deep appreciation of the kindness received

I am truly thankful to Wiko for giving me the opportunity to be part of this unique intellectual community and to spend such an enriching, magical, and happy year in Berlin; to the exceptionally caring Wiko staff, for nurturing me and making me feel at home; and to my dear Fellows and partners, for their wit, humor, and warmth. It really felt like an extended family. Gracias mil!



DISRUPTION WEITSENG CHEN

Weitseng Chen, born in Taiwan, teaches at the National University of Singapore (NUS) Faculty of Law. He specializes in comparative Asian law – particularly within the greater China area, with an emphasis on law and development. After he received his JSD from Yale Law School, he worked for Stanford University as a Hewlett Fellow of the Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law (CDDRL). Immediately before he joined the NUS Faculty of Law, Weitseng worked as a corporate lawyer at Davis Polk & Wardwell. Weitseng's recent research interests include authoritarian legality in South Korea, Taiwan, and China, Asian state capitalism, China's outbound investment, shadow banking in Asia, property rights transition in greater China, and the legacy of German law in East Asia. He has published many articles and five books, including *Regime Type and Beyond: The Transformation of Police in Asia* (with Hualing Fu; CUP, 2023), *Authoritarian Legality in Asia: Formation, Development and Transition* (with Hualing Fu; CUP, 2019), *The Beijing Consensus? How China has Changed Western Ideas of Law and Economic Development* (CUP, 2017), *Property and Trust Law: Taiwan* (with Yun-Chien Chang and Ying-Chieh Wu; Wolters Kluwer, 2017), and *Law and Economic Miracle: Interaction between Taiwan's Development and Economic Laws after World War II* (in Chinese, 2000). Besides research, he loves cooking Asian cuisine, practicing Tai Chi, flying his DLG glider, and playing cello. – Address: Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore, 469G Bukit Timah Road, Eu Tong Sen Building, 259776 Singapore. E-mail: weitseng.chen@nus.edu.sg.

“Have you found the rhythm of life?” During my first two months at Wiko, I noticed that this is one of the most frequent questions in conversation among Fellows over lunch and

dinner. We of course talked about scholarship, discussed current affairs, and shared the experience of our adventures in Berlin. But this question always slipped into our conversation as the topic of small talk, as a convenient way to fill in awkward silence between new friends, and as a sign of deepening friendship among Fellows who began to feel comfortable revealing anxiety to each other. Be that as it may, it manifests a disruption of life.

Many Fellows, me included, came to Wiko with an ambitious project, something we otherwise would not be able to accomplish at our home institutions. Quickly, this ambitious and romantic plan went bust. Every day by 1 p.m., after various rituals in the morning, either a cup of coffee or a walk along the lake, our brains finally got warmed up, but it was now time for lunch. There were times when a few paragraphs had been produced by then; most of the time, however, it was not that ideal. This daily lunch, seemingly too early, always led to a paradoxical feeling that the day is nearly over after lunch. Lunch did not end when I left the canteen, because it was not just a meal. Interesting, or disturbing, ideas always lingered around for a while. Curiosity, or just the lack of knowledge, often compelled me to do quick Google research to close this lunch stimulation. When finally returning to my project, I could become extremely efficient, for I realized not much time was left in the day. Unsurprisingly, that type of efficiency would not be translated into productivity. After all, Wiko's lunch is a disruption that broke my old routines to accommodate the unexpected amounts of stimulation and compelled me to accept this new normal.

Disruption goes beyond daily routines. "I am not an expert in this field...", another sentence that always appeared during the Tuesday Colloquium. It popped out when a lawyer put a question to a biologist, a historian to a photographer, a playwright to a political scientist, or a sociologist to a psychologist. It is a disclaimer that could shield us from the sense of insecurity when being pulled out of our comfort zone. Speakers, however, were not in a better position, either. When we finally could speak about what we feel most comfortable talking about, we soon realized that it was equally daunting to explain it to the audience of an entire room who do not share some basic vocabulary, concepts, backgrounds, or personal experience. This disruption, though intellectual, is equally uneasy.

Construction comes only after disruption, as some theories suggest. It is true, at least at Wiko. I sensed my fellow Fellows had tried hard to cope with such unexpected disruptions: to wake up earlier, to go to bed later, to give in and further engage in this community, or, conversely, to concentrate just on one's own project. As for me, I finally came to terms with this disruption, though far from before long, and realized how precious and

fruitful such a disruption could be. It is a disruption that might happen to us anyway, but rarely occurs in such a warm, supportive, and stipulating environment. It is a blessing that I fully used this opportunity. It is an intellectual journey that my fellow Fellows and I went through together, and it is this disruption that created the amazing community at Wiko and glued together us Fellows with very different backgrounds. During one of many “disruptive” meals, Luca Giuliani and I chatted about the norms we had observed at Wiko, such as be nice, be supportive, and be engaging. Both of us agree, however, that “disruption” is on the top of our list.



STARTING A NEW PROJECT LINDA COLLEY

Linda Colley, since 2003 the Shelby M.C. Davis 1958 Professor of History at Princeton University, is an expert on British, imperial, and global history since 1700. Born in Chester in 1949, she completed her Ph.D. in History at Cambridge University, and moved to Yale University in 1982, where she became a University Professor. Her first book, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714–1760* (1982), challenged the then-dominant view by arguing that the Tory party remained active and influential during its years out of power. *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (1992) investigated how, and how far, inhabitants of England, Scotland, and Wales came to see themselves as British over the course of the 18th and early 19th centuries. *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World, 1600–1850* (2002) used captivity narratives to investigate the underbelly and sporadic vulnerability of this empire and its makers. *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh* (2007) pioneered the technique of using the life experiences of an individual to explore transnational and transcontinental histories. Her most recent book, *The Gun, the Ship, and the Pen* (2021) explores how novel kinds of codified constitutions spread across continents after 1750 and how and why this development was closely connected with changes in the geography, cost, and nature of warfare. Linda Colley is a Fellow of the British Academy, the Royal Society of Literature, and the Academia Europaea, among other bodies. Address: Department of History, Princeton University, 129 Dickinson Hall, Princeton, NJ 08544, USA. E-mail: lcolley@princeton.edu.

It was a great honour and privilege to be offered a fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin for the 2021/2022 academic year and enormously stimulating and exciting finally to take up and inhabit this opportunity.

In some few ways, to be sure, my time at Wiko did not proceed as I had anticipated. Because of a major operation on my foot, I was not able to come to Berlin till October 25, 2021. This meant that I had sadly to let go of some of my plans, especially devoting intensive time to improving my German. In common with everyone else at Wiko last year, my progress was also occasionally disrupted by COVID and its restrictions. This cut back on some of the intellectual encounters and visits that I had planned. More pleasurably, some of my time at Wiko was of necessity eaten up by the good aftershocks of my most recent book, *The Gun, the Ship, and the Pen: Warfare, Constitutions, and the Making of the Modern World* (2021). I had to make minor alterations and additions for the UK paperback edition of this, which was issued in spring 2022. I took part in dozens of online debates/podcasts/interviews on the book for sites in the UK, India, Australia, Mexico, the USA, Canada, etc.; and I prepared long responses for a colloquium devoted to the book at the National History Center in Washington, D.C. and for the online legal history symposium, *Balkanization*. I also did a lengthy online interview in relation to a new Mandarin translation of an earlier book, *The Ordeal of Elizabeth Marsh: A Woman in World History*, which was issued in Taiwan this spring.

Given these commitments, I tried to keep live academic performances outside of Wiko to a minimum. But, along with the two talks I delivered there, I did also give the annual Foundation Lecture for Fitzwilliam College Cambridge in the autumn of 2021. In spring 2022, I delivered the Fourth Annual Wittrock Lecture at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Studies in Uppsala and the Annual Keynote Lecture for the Centre for British Studies, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. In addition, I gave the keynote lecture at a Conference on Constitutions and Crises organized around my book at Cambridge University, and I delivered a paper at the Global Constitutionalism seminar at the WZB Berlin Social Science Center.

During this academic year, I was made an Honorary Fellow of Harris Manchester College, Oxford University, and I was appointed a D.B.E. (Dame of the British Empire [sic]) for services to history in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Award List in the UK.

Most of my time at Wiko, however, was devoted to reading both intensively and experimentally in order to give shape and substance to a new research project I had begun loosely to think about in advance of arriving here. The current working title of this project is *Decline and Fall and Rise: Edward Gibbon in the World*, and it is organized – though not exclusively – around the life, career, ideas, and writings of the historian of that name (1737–1794). At Wiko, I concentrated, to begin with, on the published primary

material on Gibbon, and on some of the major secondary analyses of his life and work by scholars such as J.G.A. Pocock and Glen Bowersock. Part of the reason I wanted to acquire a firm sense and control of this material – which is extensive – was to prepare myself for the detailed archival research I planned on (and am now) doing on my return to London this summer.

Looking at these different layers of evidence and commentary on Gibbon confirmed my early instinct that this was someone who to a marked degree hid in plain sight. His late-life memoirs, for instance, are avowedly frank and famous, one of the most notable exercises in life writing of the 18th century. But Gibbon wrote several different versions of these memoirs, and they all omit critical aspects of his life, from the range of his political interventions and alliances and his shifting and conflicted positions on slavery, to his own progressive and humiliating physical disabilities. Gibbon's early journals are more open and capacious; but they are still selective; and – as I have now confirmed – they have not yet been comprehensively published, any more than has his correspondence. A striking feature of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, for instance, is the degree to which its volumes appealed to women who were not formally educated in the classics. Yet many of the letters sent to Gibbon by female readers are omitted from scholarly editions of his works.

As far as Gibbon himself is concerned, concealment was sometimes a product of the fact that, like other famous historians – Tacitus in the ancient world (a major influence) or Reinhart Koselleck in the 20th century – he belonged to a defeated grouping. His family were Tories, a political grouping excluded from power after the Hanoverian Succession to the British throne in 1714. Moreover, many of these people supported the Catholic Stuart dynasty, which was ousted from Britain in 1688, while remaining a persistent threat (Edward Gibbon briefly became a Catholic convert in 1753). For the Gibbons as a family, these allegiances had two paradoxical consequences. On the one hand, choosing the wrong political side shut them out of many conventional perquisites and possibilities. On the other, it obliged them to explore different options, often outside of Britain. Some set up as traders with India, China, and (in part for slaves) the Caribbean. Others took positions and profits and spouses in Continental Europe, in France, Spain, and the German lands. Gibbon himself spent four years after his brief conversion in Lausanne, acquiring fluent French and meeting Voltaire and Rousseau etc.

I want to insert these transnational and transcontinental influences into my discussion both of Gibbon and his history writing. For instance, because he acquired fluent French

– and because of family contacts – he became quickly familiar with publications by French Jesuits on what we would now call China. This influenced his treatment of how nomadic peoples from the “Chinese” border and Central Asia impacted on the frontiers of the Roman Empire. My intention throughout indeed is to devise an essentially wide reassessment of Gibbon. More even than many other leading Enlightenment intellectuals, he pursued different, sometimes conflicting careers, working successively as a soldier, as a member of the British Parliament, and as a government bureaucrat and minor cog in the British imperial machine, as well as an avid historian with connections in different countries. Many commentators have sought to hive off these more official activities from Gibbon’s scholarship and history writing. It is more productive, I believe, to examine these various facets of Gibbon in tandem, investigating the tensions that sometimes ensued.

At present, I envisage a book of three parts. The first will present a revised account of Gibbon himself and is now substantially researched. The second will examine Gibbon’s vision and version of Ancient Rome in the context of his own intense experiences of empire. The third and final section will scrutinize and interrogate the growing reputation and different readings of the *Decline and Fall* across the world. When I came to think about this last portion of the work, I was enormously helped by feedback from various colleagues and officers at Wiko and by the careful research of the librarians. They devoted much time and patience to tracking the very many different editions and translations of *Decline and Fall* across time and geographical space. To them and to you all, my most grateful thanks.



FALSE START, SADNESS,
AND FINALLY HAPPINESS
TATENDA DALU

Tatenda Dalu is Senior Lecturer of Water Management at the University of Mpumalanga, South Africa. His research explores aquatic biodiversity in relation to invasions and anthropogenic impacts in freshwater and estuarine environments. He is particularly interested in trophic ecology, environmental monitoring and assessment, and biodiversity and conservation. He studied Aquatic Ecology at the University of Zimbabwe and took his PhD at the Department of Zoology and Entomology, Rhodes University. His post-PhD research focuses on the ecosystem functioning of freshwater systems, both rivers and wetlands, in southern Africa. The main findings of his research contribute significantly to our understanding of these ecosystems and their likely response to human disturbances (freshwater extraction and reduced water quality) and global climate change. He previously held Rhodes University and Claude Leon Postdoctoral Research Fellowships and was a Senior Lecturer at the University of Venda, South Africa. He is currently a Young Affiliate Fellow of The World Academy of Science and an Honorary Research Associate at the South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity, among other positions. Additionally, Tatenda is Associate Editor for *Ecology and Evolution*, *BioInvasions Records*, *Aquatic Invasions*, *Frontiers in Water – Environmental Water Quality*, and *African Journal of Ecology*. He lives in Nelspruit, Mpumalanga with his wife Mwazvita and their daughter Kimberley. – Address: Aquatic Ecosystems Research Group (ASRG), School of Biology and Environmental Sciences, University of Mpumalanga, Nelspruit 1200, South Africa. E-mail: tatenda.dalu@ump.ac.za; dalutatenda@yahoo.co.uk.

I am an Iso Lomso Fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS), South Africa. Iso Lomso means “the eye of tomorrow” in the isiXhosa language in South Africa. The programme aims at African scholars who have obtained a doctoral degree within the preceding seven years, have completed at least one year of postdoctoral fellowship, and hold an academic position at a university or research institution anywhere in Africa. As part of the fellowship, I was supposed to go for an international placement for at most three months. When I was told that I would be going to Wiko Berlin, I was both excited and nervous. I was excited because I was looking forward to visiting Germany for the first time and meeting Fellows from different parts of the world, and I was nervous due to the language differences, but that did not really affect the enthusiasm that I had about the anticipated visit.

I arrived in Berlin on the 22nd of September 2021 from Nelspruit, South Africa, after at least two false starts due to the COVID pandemic, as the German Consulate was not processing visas. All these obstacles resulted in my family not travelling with me when the consulate finally opened, as they had to create a space for me during the next academic year. However, against all these odds and thanks to continuous support and encouragement from the Wiko staff, I managed to get to Berlin only three weeks after the start of the new academic year. During my short 2.5-month fellowship, I was physically alone in Berlin and my Co-Fellows, staff, and German research collaborators became my family. Thank you to Jana and her family for taking me in as part of their family; I really appreciate all the love they showed me and thoroughly enjoyed visiting all the places they took me to in Berlin and the surrounding areas, and I am very looking forward to seeing them soon in South Africa or Germany. I will always remember the love shown by the various Fellows. Mark, Rachel, and I toured Leipzig together, and Szabolcs and I shared countless walks and dinners. I went for several trips and events with the young Fellows Szabolcs, Rachel, Kulbhushansingh, and Elisa and relished incredible lunch dates with Sanyu. Thank you, Hannah, for giving us €20, after we went to dinner only to realise that the restaurant accepted only cash and we had go around knocking on all Fellows’ doors so that we could go back and pay the restaurant at the train station! Thanks to Dunia and the team for amazing lunches and dinners. All the love, smiles, and care shown in sometimes grand and often subtle ways by the several Fellows and staff – I really appreciate it.

My time at Wiko was stimulating and interesting, especially during the weekly colloquia when we sat down and listened to the main talk, followed by spirited debate as the topping on a delicious cake. People from disparate fields nonetheless presented their talks in such a way that even a layman could follow and understand. This interactive platform

provided me with opportunity to mingle with other scholars and Fellows from different epistemological backgrounds and cultures, giving me a good glimpse into their work and what inspired it.

During my two and a half months at Wiko, I worked on data capturing and manuscript writing for my main project on freshwater crabs in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe and other projects from southern Africa. During the presentation of my project, I received valuable feedback on how to significantly improve the project. I also captured all the data from my previous fieldwork, have now started to analyse it, and will be writing a manuscript on the preliminary findings. I believe that my time was well spent, as I managed to write and submit 13 journal articles (see below: refs. 1–13). I lead all the papers as first or senior author, and some of the work involved the students and collaborators from my research group back home and abroad; all the papers note the Wiko affiliation.

The first paper from my Eastern Highlands project that has been published looked at macroinvertebrate and diatom communities in relation to land use patterns (ref. 1). As you know, anthropogenic activities have increasingly subjected freshwater ecosystems globally to various pressures. Increasing land use activities have been strongly linked to deteriorating freshwater ecosystems and dwindling biodiversity. Hence, to implement sound management and conservation policies, relations between land use and environmental and biotic components need to be widely documented. Thus, we evaluated the impacts of land use on biotic components by assessing the diatom and macroinvertebrate community composition in Eastern Highlands (Zimbabwe) streams to investigate the main spatial diatom and macroinvertebrate community variances and how environmental variables and spatial factors influence community composition. We found that land use had a significant effect on water quality, with variables that differed significantly depending on the environment type, i.e. plantations, national parks, and communal areas, across 49 study localities. The second paper that I wrote assessed organic matter dynamics in the Rasmar-declared wetland system in South Africa; what we observed was that organic matter tended to differ with wetland zones and seasons and was strongly related to the autochthonous and allochthonous inputs (ref. 2). This paper was strongly linked to another investigation of macroinvertebrate diversity we conducted in the same study area, where functional feeding group (FFG) ratios indicated that all sites were strongly autotrophic, had high predator-prey ratios, few shredders, and a stable substrate across seasons (ref. 3). The wetlands are a protected area, so we found that information on macroinvertebrate and organic matter dynamics could provide a useful baseline for further

studies of wetlands in the region subject to greater anthropogenic stresses, as well as future studies in this Ramsar site. Most of the papers were on environmental monitoring and assessment across different river, reservoir, and wetland localities in South Africa (refs. 4–13); one paper assessed community structure in wetland systems (ref. 4) and another two assessed human perceptions of the presence of large wood in river systems (ref. 6) and green space utilisation (ref. 7).

My Iso Lomso Fellowship at Wiko reaffirmed my conviction that it is worth continuing to develop a scientific career in Africa, working with many collaborators from around the world. Despite the constant challenges posed by limited resources and lack of funds, our work continues to make a difference, as highlighted by several breakthroughs we made during the COVID pandemic, in which the earlier detection and sequencing were done in Africa, and we need to continue training a next generation of scientists to fill the vacuum that is currently being left in the region. I firmly believe that developing a well-connected local scientific community is important and I applaud Wiko for partnering with STIAS, as this will help increase the continent's general welfare and tackle issues of inequality. Through this collaborative process that brought me to Wiko, I believe the institution is playing an important role in increasing the representation of African Fellows who are based on the mother continent and increasing the proportion of Global South Fellows.

I strongly believe I achieved as much academically as I wanted; my stay at Wiko was a much-needed break in life, particularly a temporary escape from strict COVID lockdowns in South Africa. Going back home came early, bringing my exciting fellowship break to a complete stop, but I dearly missed my family. However, I am sure that my collaborations and links to this unique place and to my new friends from Germany and all over the world will last forever. Finally, to top it all, the support and service I received from the Wiko team led by the Rector Prof. Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger was amazing. They made this a home away from home and fully gave me space to do my own work.

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FLYING CAT

ELISA DOMÍNGUEZ-HÜTTINGER

Elisa Domínguez-Hüttinger is an Austrian-Mexican systems biologist specialized in constructing and analysing mathematical models of complex diseases. She was born in Mexico City and educated at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (Bachelor in Biology, 2004–2008) and the Imperial College London (MRes in Systems and Synthetic Biology, 2009–2010; PhD in Bioengineering 2011–2015). She then embarked on a short but diverse postdoctoral journey that took her to Japan (RIKEN-Yokohama in 2015 and the University of Osaka in 2019) and back to her home university in Mexico, where she is now an associate professor. Elisa has a strong interest in understanding slow pathophysiological processes that affect epithelial tissues including the epidermis (e.g., atopic dermatitis), the airway epithelium (e.g., infection by *Streptococcus pneumoniae*), and the mammary tissue (e.g., cancer). Using mathematical modelling, her research group contributes to understanding, diagnosing, preventing, and reverting these complex diseases. Elisa has published one textbook and 12 peer-reviewed research papers, two of which were finished at Wiko. – Address: Departamento de Biología Molecular y Biotecnología, Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Ciudad Universitaria, 04510, México, México. E-mail: elisa.dominguez@iibiomedicas.unam.mx.

My strong connection to Wiko started when, still in Mexico, I received an e-mail from Vera Pfeffer titled: “Flying cat.” As the name suggests, it was about the travel arrangements for my research stay companion, my cat Malte, who travelled with me to the wonderful Grunewald from Mexico City. As soon as that e-mail hit my mailbox, I felt that this is getting serious and that Wiko truly meets our needs and necessities. I was right; from

the very day of our arrival until the last day, Malte, Iñaki (who joined us later), and I felt totally welcomed and at home and could enjoy every minute of our stay.

I arrived at Wiko at a very special point in both my professional career and my personal life. In September 2021, when I started my College for Life Sciences fellowship at Wiko, I had been less than a year at my current (dream) job in Mexico City as a very newly appointed associate professor in the Departamento de Biología Molecular y Biotecnología, Instituto de Investigaciones Biomédicas, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). Given that I started my appointment at UNAM during the pandemic, I hadn't had the chance to have any in-person conversations with my peers and colleagues. Hence, I had to navigate this new world of leading a research group by myself. It was a very big jump in my career to become lab head, and, although excited, I felt anxious and at times lonely. Being at Wiko really helped me to put things into perspective, to plan my career, to get over the impostor syndrome, and to finally submit the first papers of my own lab (see references). For all this, talking with my colleagues at Wiko was incredibly helpful. First, my more-experienced (aka tenured) Co-Fellows were kind enough to give me career advice and patiently listened to my complaints about the hurdles (and of course joys) of having to graduate students. Second, my College for Life Sciences peers, who were at the same career stage as me, really made me feel part of a group and that we are not alone on this path. Finally, but equally importantly, the advice, networking, and companionship of Dr Jana Petri, our College for Life Sciences Coordinator, were of great help.

On a personal note, I was at the same time going through my first big loss: my father had just passed away a couple of months before I arrived at Wiko. In fact, he still learned the news of the offer of the College for Life Sciences fellowship and was happy and proud for me and advised me to accept the offer (which was not easy in terms of the bureaucratic arrangements I had to make at my home university). Indeed, it was the last good news he heard from me about my academic career. My father was also an academic, and therefore he really understood how important it was for me to go to Wiko. Furthermore, he, like my mother, was a historian, and therefore I felt immediately at home in the (from my life-sciences perspective) slightly more social-sciences-oriented Wiko. Thus, while my stay in Berlin was shadowed by my personal grief, it also helped me to get closure. Coincidentally, by the end of my stay, Jana Petri got us tickets for the Mozart Requiem at the Berlin Philharmonie – one of the strongest and most emotive experiences I had in my life.

I deeply enjoyed the interdisciplinary conversations with my Co-Fellows at Wiko. Regular scientific exchanges with my College for Life Sciences peers allowed me to deepen the scope and my understanding of my own research. Also, the conversations with colleagues from other disciplines were enjoyable and insightful beyond belief. To my surprise, one of the academic conversations I enjoyed most was with my Theology Co-Fellow during a Thursday dinner, made possible thanks to how disciplinary boundaries regularly vanish at Wiko and, maybe, the non-negligible amount of wine we consumed that night.

But it was not only during dinners that I enjoyed fantastic interdisciplinary conversations. Another one of the big highlights of my stay in Berlin happened regularly just after the Thursday dinners: the Wicked Wiko Runners Club. Friday mornings, no matter how much wine / how little sleep we had had the night before: we ran, to Grunewald, Drachenberg, Kiesgrube... Admittedly, under these circumstances it was not easy for me to keep up with the running distance, speed, and, of course, the ever smart and interesting conversations, all under Daniel Schönpflug's guidance. It was a challenging but extremely enjoyable experience I dearly miss.

Along the same line, I also deeply enjoyed our mini-biathlon series with my Co-Fellows Lars and Sophie – we started cycling to Krumme Lanke and swimming there in early September and did not stop until, already in October, we were running back in our swimsuits while the pedestrians were already walking in thick coats. I loved it!

Tuesday and Thursday Colloquia were also memorable experiences that re-ignited my love for seminars after these pandemic Zoom years. Hearing my colleagues talk with such passion about biology, the history of arts, politics, and philosophy was great, of course, but perhaps what I enjoyed most was preparing and giving my own seminar. Preparing my presentation for such an interdisciplinary group of people forced me to think very deeply about my research. By putting into words and images why I chose my research question in the first place, I could see clearly again, decades after having chosen this career path, the reasons that motivated me to become a systems biologist in the first place. I felt again the fascination for biology and maths I had very early during my bachelor studies. It also allowed me to speculate more freely about possible future directions for my current research, which helped me to see more clearly the scope and limitations of my lab. Even today, I am still thinking about all the questions and feedback I got from my Co-Fellows.

The usefulness of this “Gain Time to Think” time became apparent very shortly after coming back to Mexico. The day I flew back to Mexico (with my cat, of course), I learned

that I had to submit a grant application within five days. Given that I had just given my Thursday Colloquium, and that all the discussions with my Wiko Co-Fellows were still very fresh in my head, I was able to write a successful grant application even in this short amount of time. My short time at Wiko really helped me take a big step in my career. Thanks!

During my 3-month stay at Wiko, I finished and submitted the papers (with acknowledgement to the College for Life Sciences fellowship):

1. Flores-Garza, E., et al. (2022). “Mathematical model of the immunopathological progression of tuberculosis.” *Frontiers in Systems Biology* 2: 912974. doi:10.3389/fsysb.2022.912974.
2. Meave, J. A., et al. “Ecological modelling predicting dynamic trajectories of a protected plant community under contrasting conservation regimes: insights from data-based modelling” (under review).



LONELINESS OF THE LONG DISTANCE
WIKO RUNNER
ADRIAN FAVELL

Adrian Favell is Professor of Social and Political Theory and founding director of the Radical Humanities Laboratory at UC Cork. Until October 2022, he was Chair in Sociology and Social Theory at the University of Leeds and directed the Bauman Institute there. He is the author of various works on migration, multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, diversity, and cities, including *Philosophies of Integration: Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain* (1998), *Eurostars and Eurocities: Free Movement and Mobility in an Integrating Europe* (2008), and a work in migration theory, *The Integration Nation: Immigration and Colonial Power in Liberal Democracies*, completed while at the Wissenschaftskolleg (2022). He also writes on contemporary culture in Japan, notably *Before and After Superflat: A Short History of Japanese Contemporary Art 1990–2011* (2012). Most recently, he has led the UK ESRC project *Northern Exposure: Race, Nation and Disaffection in “Ordinary” Towns and Cities after Brexit*. Website: www.adrianfavell.com. – Address: College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, O’Rahilly Building, University College Cork, Cork T12 K8AF, Ireland. E-mail: acfavell@gmail.com.

I didn’t know that I could run. In the long, languid, first days of endless Wiko summer, why not join a club? Become a full-throated choir singer or crazy lake-swimming triathlete? A German wine connoisseur, or close reader on the linguistic anthropology of the Nazi state? Or a runner, with the fabulous Wiko Runners...?

D. offered us pain and a T-shirt if we joined; a promise to take us up to half-marathon level, into the woods, along pine-needled trails, around lakes, up and down sand hills, and

onto the great mountains of wartime rubble that overlook Grunewald from Teufelsberg. And so I ran, Fridays at 8.

You limber up as the team gathers, kicking gravel. Friday morning hangovers. Anxious thoughts. Let's go... Leave the blocky classicism of the Kosovan embassy, start slow, plod even, warm up a bit, run... Oh, there's no way I can do this, I can't go on, really... No, well, I can go on... And soon, yes, you are running with the hounds, man, I'm *running*, like *I* could *ever* do this?...

Svevo, our mascot, a flash of black wolf, leading the way with his bouncing toes and fluffy tail, disappearing occasionally to run headlong down a slope after some wild boars or for a dip in a smelly pond. D. and D. always some way ahead in conference, D. doing little additional circuits, just to keep it challenging; H. and E., or S. and E., chatting, at ease with the rhythm; me just about keeping up.

Soon I am addicted and running alone, on Tuesdays too, before the colloquium, with the promise of a luxury breakfast on the terrace, and a few minutes with the *LRB* before this week's talk. Remember to stretch, check your pockets. I contemplate for a moment getting squished like Roland Barthes on the tarmac racetrack outside the villa, in a moment of academic distraction; all those black *deutsche* saloons hurtling angrily down the *Allée* early morning towards Ku'damm. No, not today, and soon you are off, towards the forest. Past the early morning café, coffee and croissant waiting; the first corner, the Putin stencil, gun to the head; over the road, up the alley, the Grieg statue and Red Pill; along cobbles, then down dusty stairs to the lakeside.

The dogs and their ladies are out in force, the dog lake, J. calls it. Lots of wealth and face work on show. Morning conversations. Russians everywhere, it seems. Four lakes good. We are going to follow the deep woods and canals to the tip of Krumme Lanke and back today.

I'm distracted and trip. Hop, skip, and crash. H. and D. catch me; I'm ok, just bruised, and we run on. My apologies. The team demurs. No man left behind: we will start and finish together. Only one time in the year do my calves just go *ping*, when I have run too far or too fast, and I have to limp home.

Past an old ruined bunker and down the slope to the water. Maybe even a swim there someday? In the summer, perhaps, swimming across to the patch of sunlight over the trees; no dark Scottish lake this, no monstrous Jungian coincidence, just the septuagenarians who belong here, naked in the water. I swam this whole lake once. Long behind S. and L., and H. and E., who powered across without me. Dragging myself out cold, numb, and

chastened at the other end, before a painful kilometre run back to the bikes over stony gravel. My greatest achievement this year?

Heading home now. I tell myself it's training. For when I am back running *à deux* on the Merseyside trails and Sunday morning football pitches of Chorlton. Trying to keep up. I think of the space station, orbiting, alone. M. taught me how to see it at nights, abandoned without gravity, free of us all, as the world spins furiously below.

But I am not alone. Along the ridge, we are together again. I swear robustly as the going gets tough – and the tough are going too fast. S. teases me again. Will I only be remembered for expletives and Wittgenstein? The leaders go easy to let us catch up. Or yet, now alone again, with just a strange Gormley-like statue up ahead; a standing stone with mobile phone, while his dog examines with some satisfaction his foresty doings. Over another big road and round the sandy turn, taking us back up and down to the lake again.

What will I remember of the year? The Blue Skies over Berlin, surely. Every day it seemed. Perpetual blue and perpetual peace. Watching the chem trails over the country club. Wondering. Listening to the fireworks at night, the distant rumble of explosions, with the moon big like Melancholia, over a dark blue Walt Disney skyline, my view of the church at night, high in the Villa.

It was snowy once. It was cold and grey maybe. Maybe it rained, I don't recall. Ah yes, there was a storm one day. We had missed the incoming weather alert and went running early morning in the calm before it descended; the trees suddenly alive, agitated, and blowing their leaves against the wind, creaking and bending wood over us, as E. grabbed my arm, and we ran for our lives.

The talks. The talk talk talk. Speaking as a philosopher, we are all philosophers here. Speculating about Hegel or Aristotle, Adorno or Latour; or whether Gibbon had the balls to envisage the end of it all.

Through the clearing, left towards the road, then out across and down. Another lake. Peaceful and rich, villas and rowboats – is that the American Academy? – as the sun slants in orange across the water. A dog paddling, a couple throwing a stone. The Steffi Graf stadium – they seem to be dismantling something, desultory workers with a digger truck, as I struggle up the stones and onto tarmac again. There's a line of formidable tennis poster girls, then over the road again, to the Rewe carpark, and down past Grunewald station and Floh, and Gleis 17, impassive and metallic in its anguish, *Polizei* eyes watching warily as more joggers go by; then the wasteland with sand, S.'s extra loop with Svevo, before it's new houses again; and then the last glorious slope of absurd villas down

Baraschstraße (*née* Wissmann) – *die fetten Jahre sind eindeutig noch nicht vorbei* – right onto the stone path, past the final home lake, and across the road. Yes, like the furtive red Grunewald fox, scrawny and exhausted, but still ready for a final sprint.

It's evening. The final days. All my running is done. The bags are packed, the tickets checked. I go into the garden, onto the pontoon, and look out over the lake at the back of the Villa. High in the friendly sky, a plane. Flying west, a shining dart against the dusk, catching the last sunshine rays high in the stratosphere.



THE LAST TIGER
EDUARDO HALFON

Eduardo Halfon was born in Guatemala in 1971. He is the author of fifteen books of fiction published in Spanish. Named one of the best young Latin American writers by the Hay Festival of Bogotá, he is also the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship and the prestigious Roger Caillois Prize. His latest novel, *Mourning*, won the Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger (France), the Premio de las Librerías de Navarra (Spain), the Edward Lewis Wallant Award (US), and the International Latino Book Award (US). In 2018, he was awarded the Guatemalan National Prize in Literature, his country's highest literary honor. – Address: Düsseldorfer Straße 68, 10719 Berlin, Germany. E-mail: edhalfon@gmail.com.

For me, the magic of the Wissenschaftskolleg takes place in the margins. All of us Fellows are there to do our own work, of course, to advance our research and our writing. But something else happens while we're busy working, almost without us noticing, at times in the middle of a conversation with other Fellows at dinner, at times during one of the many colloquiums or conferences, and at other times during an improvised afternoon walk. The staff knows very well that this occurs. They even have a name for it: serendipity – finding interesting or valuable things by chance, says the Cambridge English Dictionary. An unplanned fortunate discovery, says Wikipedia. The following piece, written during my year as a Fellow and originally published in The New York Review of Books, is the story of such a serendipitous encounter with another Fellow – my very own unplanned, fortunate, and beautiful discovery.

*

My grandfather killed the last tiger.

At least that's what I thought I heard Kullu say. We were walking in a Berlin neighborhood called Grunewald that is filled with mansions old and new and borders a forest home to foxes and raccoons and wild boar and a series of lakes where Berliners, continuing a late nineteenth-century German tradition known as *Freikörperkultur*, swim and sunbathe naked.

Jalambaba, Kullu went on. That was my grandfather's name. He died before I was born.

Badly parked on the street, in front of a beer tavern, gleamed a yolk-yellow Ferrari.

When I was a child, said Kullu, my grandmother used to tell me that one night in late 1964, Jalambaba hid inside his stable on the outskirts of Mukpat, our village, which is only a few kilometers from the Buddhist caves of Ajanta. Through a hole in the wall, Jalambaba could see the silhouette of his dead cow on the grass. A single-barrel shotgun in his hands, he waited for the predator that had killed his cow earlier in the afternoon to return, as he knew it would.

We stopped in front of the Grunewald train station. At the entrance was a small café with four tables on the sidewalk. I suggested we sit down for a few minutes to have a cup of coffee before we went up to the platform.

I'd love to, Eduardo, he said in his always soft-spoken, carefully measured way, as if he was never in a hurry to get to the end of his words.

I went inside and approached a tall, portly lady behind the counter. Lacking German, I held up two fingers and asked in English for two coffees. As she prepared them, I noticed behind her a long shelf with a series of antique dolls, perhaps thirty or forty of them, sitting in a row, all old and dirty and in bad shape. More than a few were missing a leg or an arm. Others had been mended with thread or tape. One was even decapitated, the frayed head lying beside it.

*

His name is Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi, but everyone calls him Kullu. We had both received writing fellowships from the Wissenschaftskolleg to spend a year among the forests and lakes of Grunewald. We were living in the same building, Villa Walther (whose original owner, the architect Wilhelm Walther, in financial ruin after building such an elaborate palace in 1917, hanged himself inside the tower). Kullu and his family would invite mine to their apartment for typical Indian breakfasts of poha, sabudana, and

chapati; we would invite them to ours for typical Guatemalan breakfasts of black beans, huevos rancheros, and tortillas. His daughter and my son attended the same German lessons, and played together in the swanky garden out back.

A renowned scientist in his field, Kullu had devoted the last fifteen years – his entire academic life – to work for the protection and conservation of the Himalayan snow leopard. Listening to him tell me about his field work in the most inhospitable regions of India and Mongolia and Nepal and Kyrgyzstan, and about the prolonged solitude and many dangers (several of his colleagues had died of hypothermia up in the mountains), I thought of Jorge Luis Borges's tale of an Aztec priest, who, locked in a stone prison by his Spanish captors, spends days observing and studying the rosette pattern on the fur of a jaguar locked in the neighboring cell. One night, after waking from a feverish dream, the Aztec priest believes he sees in the jaguar's fur a divine script. A magical sentence of fourteen words, writes Borges, that upon utterance would make the stone walls disappear and unleash the jaguar on his captors. Yet, in the end, the Aztec priest decides not to say them.

*

After midnight, the clouds opened up and in the moonlight my grandfather caught a glimpse of a huge tiger eating the carcass of the cow.

Kullu paused and I took advantage of that pause to drink a last, already cold sip of coffee.

Very slowly, Kullu continued, so as not to alert the tiger, my grandfather raised the shotgun. When he pulled the trigger, the whole village heard the shot. People immediately began to gather at the Hanuman temple in the center of the village. They wanted to know if the tiger was dead. But no one dared to go near the stable where Jalambaba had spent the night, alone, waiting for it to return.

At the table next to us sat a couple of teenage girls: tattooed and shaved and fondling each other as they shared an illicit cigarette, hiding it under the table.

As a kid, Kullu said, I always asked my grandmother to tell me that story at bedtime. Jalambaba was my hero. Jalambaba, to me, was the strongest and bravest man.

He went to take a drink of coffee, but his cup was empty.

After that night, Kullu said, nobody ever saw another tiger in the forests around the village. My grandfather, I came to understand over the years, had killed the last tiger of Ajanta. I stopped asking my grandmother to tell me the story of Jalambaba. I stopped telling it to my friends at school.

Kullu stood up and, without asking me, said we should go to the railway platform.

*

Gleis 17. That's what was written on the rectangular sign hung high in the Grunewald train station, in large black letters against a white background.

It's this way, Kullu said, pointing to the steps to the right.

I had been to that station many times, either taking trains to the city center or going through its long underpass to get to Grunewald's forests. I'd hardly noticed the sign and never stopped to ponder what Gleis 17 meant. But Kullu knew what it meant, and also how to get there. He'd been insisting for weeks on showing me, without telling me more or explaining why.

We walked up the steps and out onto a long, open-air platform. It was empty. On the other side of the rails was another platform, just as long and narrow. A father stood there in the darkness, addressing his young son in sign language.

Kullu was silent. I supposed he wanted me to discover the place slowly, by myself. At first, I saw nothing. But then I noticed that the ground beneath my feet was made up of a succession of huge cast-iron plates, each measuring maybe ten feet by five feet, and all perforated by rows of holes. On the uppermost part of the plate on which I was standing, I could see something written in rusty relief. I knelt down to read it: 14.10.1943/78 Juden/Auschwitz. I walked to another plate, knelt, and read: 10.01.1944/352 Juden/Theresienstadt. Then a third: 03.10.1942/1021 Juden/Theresienstadt.

There are 186 plates in total, on both sides, said Kullu, pointing to the platform opposite. They commemorate each one of the 186 trains that, beginning in October of 1941, transported Jews from here to the camps.

I kept walking and reading out loud, as if reading out loud would bring life to such a dead thing, until I came to a plate in the middle of the platform: 08.12.1944/15 Juden/Sachsenhausen.

Sachsenhausen, I whispered again in the night.

Could your Polish grandfather, Eduardo, have passed through here on his way to Sachsenhausen, Kullu asked me in his soft, reverent tone.

I couldn't answer him. I couldn't say anything. I could only stare at the little boy standing in the dark on the other side of the tracks. He made no noise. He didn't sign back. He only exhaled breaths of white mist in the already black night as he watched his

father's hands. The only thing that seemed to matter to him at that moment were his father's hands.



FOUR CAPITAL CITIES IN ONE DAY
– A WIKO-ENABLED EXPERIENCE
MARK E. HAUBER

Mark E. Hauber is the Harley Jones Van Cleave Professor of Host-Parasite Interactions at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is a native of Hungary and a graduate of Yale (BS) and Cornell (PhD) Universities, and he trained at UC Berkeley as a Miller Post-doctoral Fellow. He was a faculty member at the University of Auckland and Hunter College of the City University of New York, where he also served as Associate Vice Chancellor for Research. He has been an editor of *Behavioral Ecology* and of *Ethology* and editor-in-chief of *The Auk: Ornithological Advances*, and currently he is co-editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Field Ornithology*. Together with his students and other collaborators, he has published more than 350 peer-reviewed articles, including in *Nature*, *Science*, *PNAS*, and *Current Biology*. Mark's true passion (and paid job) is to study avian behavior in the context of brood parasitism by cuckoos and cowbirds. You can find more at www.cowbirdlab.org and Twitter @cowbirdlab. – Address: Department of Evolution, Ecology, and Behavior, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 515 Morrill Hall, 505 S. Goodwin Ave., Urbana, IL 61801, USA. E-mail: mhauber@illinois.edu.

I love travelling. It comes from having spent my childhood behind the Iron Curtain and the Hungarian state having given me a regular passport that said: “*Not valid to all the countries in the world.*” Even though my family also loved travelling, and so we explored the allowances that the state made for us – Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR, and we even lived in Soviet Russia for a while when my military-employed father attended “graduate school” (a.k.a. tank-driving lessons); until I turned 16, all I had seen of the West was the barbed wire fence separating us from it.

Then came my first trip to Vienna – oh, the excitement!!! What a bundle of nerves I was, while I held onto a valid train ticket and a Western-validated passport and crossed the Hungarian-Austrian border with my mother. They let us through!! It was a great sigh of relief, only to find out, of course, that Vienna looked just like Budapest, but was cleaner and had far better neon advertisements on top of the 19th-century rental palaces lining the grand boulevards of that city.

My next trip to the West was at age 17, to West Berlin, in spring 1989!! So much to come later that year. But first, we were on a trip heading to Sweden to visit my cousins, whose father was doing a postdoc in Stockholm, again with my mother and some half-Swedish and half-Hungarian friends. We flew cheaply to East Berlin, “The capital city of the GDR,” on Malev-Hungarian Airlines (now defunct, replaced by Whizzair), and then took a train on a ferry to Sweden. But because we were heading to the West, our passports once again included access to Western countries and locales, including West Berlin!! We decided to spend the day walking around Berlin – both sides! First, we headed for the Brandenburg Gate and looked at it from the (far) distance allowed by the East German border guards, with the Berlin Wall also blocking the view past the Gate into the Tiergarten’s nightingale-home woodlots. Then we headed to Checkpoint Charlie and crossed into West Berlin. And there we were! On the other side of the Wall!!! Instead of another wall (and lots of rabbits living in between), the wall on the Western side was heavily graffitied and ridiculed. There were observation platforms to look into East Berlin (and, again, at the rabbit-filled fields between the actual Wall and the additional barbed wire fences). We were free to move around, buy expensive chocolate, and visit the Europa-Center in downtown West Berlin, at the end of Kurfürstendamm.

Who knew that 32 years later, I would call the central boulevard, Ku’damm, “almost home,” the M19 bus would be my going-home ride, and I would become a resident of Grunewald at the end of the avenue??! I certainly did not imagine such a thing as a high school kid studying for a national Hungarian competition in Biology (which I won twice)...!

Once we had spent all our West German currency (we were allowed to carry the equivalent of US \$50 each), we headed back to East Berlin to catch our Sweden-bound train. But it was not easy. The border guards told us to head back to Checkpoint Charlie instead of the other border crossing that we tried, and I was duly strip-searched for who knows what. As my fellow Fellows know, I have never drunk or done drugs in my life, and certainly was not going to hide chocolate in my body cavities to transport to East Berlin...

Fast forward 32 years to my much-anticipated Wiko arrival. I suddenly connected back to my childhood! I knew myself where in town I lived in Villa Walther, just off Ku'damm. I could take the M19 to Prada to buy shoes, to Breitscheidplatz to see the bombed-out cathedral tower, and to Nollendorfplatz to eat Ethiopian food and socialize with my fellow homosexuals. The last ten months in 2021/2022 have truly been heavenly, living and working at Wiko. I even wrote a new bird book manuscript, as I had promised to myself and to Wiko's Rector, which is now working its way through peer review at the University of Chicago Press.

One of my most special travel experiences was also made possible by Wiko – it was a conference trip to the 2022 LIBER Journées, organized by the Association of European Research Libraries in Budapest. Wiko Fellows and staff facilitated my invitation, and I ended up giving a talk on my experience with the Open Science framework as an editor-in-chief of two ornithological journals in front of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' founder (his painting) in a hall overlooking the Danube and the Buda castle. Though my uncle (the same one who worked in Sweden) was a two-term president of the Academy in Hungary, I had never been to the building, and it was an honor to make it there on my own achievements, without any nepotism! So, once the conference was over, I invited my Berlin boyfriend to come and join me for a couple of extra days to enjoy the city, visit my mother, and make our way back to Berlin. I rented a car, and when the day came, we made our way out of Budapest, after a night of dancing and drag shows in the still viable Hungarian gay scene. We first drove to Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, and walked along the Danube in search of ice cream (for me) and cigarettes (for him). We were both successful. We then got back on the highway and drove to Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, the capital of Austria, for a tour of the buildings and the grounds. What a stunningly sunny day it was! We also headed back to downtown Vienna to visit St. Stephan's Church. We narrowly escaped total disaster, as our underground parking garage near the Opera House slowly filled with dense smoke from a burning car (we backed out just in time and drove safely to the airport). Finally, we landed back in Berlin, the capital of all of Germany, still before midnight (otherwise the Berlin airport would have rejected us), completing our whirlwind 4-capital city tour in one day. *Thank you Wiko for adding this magical day to my life!*



SCHIFF ODER INSEL? HEIKO HECHT

Heiko Hecht begann ein Studium der Psychologie an der Universität Trier und wechselte dann an die Universität von Virginia, wo er 1992 promoviert wurde. Danach war er u. a. an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität in München, am NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, CA, am Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung der Universität Bielefeld sowie am Center for Space Research am Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, MA tätig. Seit 2002 ist Heiko Hecht Professor für Allgemeine Psychologie an der Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz. Er forscht zu theoretischen und anwendungsorientierten Fragen der visuellen Wahrnehmung und Intersensorik. Themen sind u. a. Bildwahrnehmung, Handeln in extremen Umgebungen, visuelle Kontaktzeitschätzung, Cybersickness und künstliche Schwerkraft. Bei der Kontaktzeitschätzung beispielsweise geht es darum, herauszufinden, welche Information aus dem reichhaltigen optischen Fluss auf der Netzhaut des Auges das visuelle System benutzt, um erfolgreich einen Ball zu fangen oder eine Straße zu überqueren; Cybersickness entsteht, wenn uns in einem kopfgetragenen Display eine visuelle Realität vorgegaukelt wird, die nicht mit derjenigen im Einklang ist, die unser Gleichgewichtsorgan im Innenohr meldet. – Adresse: Psychologisches Institut, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Wallstr. 3, 55122 Mainz, Deutschland. E-Mail: hecht@uni-mainz.de.

Ein echtes Buch

Die Idee, ein Buch zu schreiben, ist in meinem Fach, der experimentellen Psychologie, so merkwürdig wie angsteinflößend. Vom ersten Tag des Studiums bis zur ersten Anstellung mit Perspektive im vollreifen oder gar betagten Alter bestehen Lebenszweck und

Karriere darin, möglichst effizient in kleinen Einheiten zu publizieren. Die Währungseinheit meiner Disziplin ist die Anzahl der publizierten Fachartikel – mit Peer-Review, versteht sich – jeweils gewichtet mit dem Impact-Faktor der Zeitschrift, in der sie erscheinen. Nicht nur das, solche Artikel sind in aller Regel Gemeinschaftsprojekte, an denen teils Kollegen aus mehreren Kontinenten, teils Mitarbeiterinnen aus dem eigenen Labor, zumindest aber ein Doktorand beteiligt sind. Ab und an habe ich auch allein ein Experiment durchgeführt oder eine Idee in einem theoretischen Artikel untergebracht. Bücher kannte ich bisher nur als Herausgeber von Sammelbänden oder als Autor eines Lehrbuches. Echte Bücher, monolithisch und thematisch, waren für mich Erscheinungen des letzten Jahrhunderts. Das heißt, auch die Lektüre von echten Büchern ist in meinem Fach eine Seltenheit, es sei denn, man spezialisiert sich auf die Geschichte der Psychologie. Die Idee, ein echtes Buch zu schreiben, schien mir so verwegen wie verlockend. Mein Vorhaben, ein solches zum Thema Bildraum zu verfassen, hat mich also weit weg von vertrautem Terrain geführt. Am Wissenschaftskolleg lernte ich Fellows kennen, die, grundsätzlich anders sozialisiert, Bücher nicht als Zierrat, sondern als Kerngeschäft ansehen. Mir wurde klar, dass ich hier Neuland betreten musste.

Ich beschloss, zunächst erst einmal ein echtes Buch zu lesen. Aber welches? Hier sorgten die Dienstagskolloquien für reichhaltige, ja ein Übermaß an Anregungen. Nicht nur gibt es viel zu viele spannende Bücher, als man im Laufe eines Lebens lesen könnte, auch sind die meisten von ihnen nicht oder zumindest noch nicht elektronisch durchsuchbar. Über Fachartikel zu einem Thema kann man sich heute einen sehr guten Überblick verschaffen, indem man geeignete Suchmaschinen anwirft, bei Büchern bin ich hier gründlich gescheitert. Vielleicht ist das das Geheimnis des echten Buches. Wie lange noch?

In meiner Ratlosigkeit stieß ich schließlich auf das Büchlein *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer* von Hans Blumenberg, das mich faszinierte, weil sowohl Schiffbruch als auch Zuschauer recht passend für meine Situation schienen. Schiffbruch, weil mein Buchprojekt mir mit voranschreitender Lektüre zunehmend riskant vorkam und einen solchen als reale Gefahr antizipieren ließ, Zuschauer in zweierlei Hinsicht. Zum einen kamen aus der Gruppe viele wohlmeinende und kritische Blicke, die mein Vorhaben beäugten und mich zwangen, Position zu beziehen. Dafür bin ich meinen Co-Fellows unendlich dankbar. Zum anderen geht es mir ganz wesentlich um den Zuschauer, genauer gesagt um den Bildraum, der sich ihm beim Betrachten visueller Medien eröffnet. Und als wäre die Beschreibung des Bildraumes für sich nicht schon kompliziert genug, geht es mir darum, wie sich realer Beobachterraum und Bildraum zueinander verhalten. Auch da leuchtet

die Schiffbruchmetapher ein. Durch den Aufenthalt am Wissenschaftskolleg habe ich mich in eine wundervolle künstliche Seenot begeben, die mich unglaublich bereichert hat. Um Blumenberg zu zitieren: „Seine künstliche Seenot entsteht nicht durch die Hinfälligkeit des Schiffes [ob hier das Wiko gemeint ist?], das schon ein Endstadium langwieriger Bauten und Umbauten ist. Aber offenbar enthält das Meer noch anderes Material als das schon verbaute. Woher kann es kommen, um den neu Anfangenden Mut zu machen? Vielleicht aus früheren Schiffbrüchen?“

Das Wiko ist für mich zu einem zuverlässigen Schiff geworden, nicht zuletzt dank der Unterstützung des Wiko-Staffs. Aus der Idee, den Bildraum zu ergründen, ist ein *book proposal* entstanden. Ein Gerüst steht, einige Kapitel sind fertiggestellt, es war zu viel los auf dem Schiff, um das Projekt noch weiter voranzubringen. Ein Kopfsprung von Bord, gezwungenermaßen. Aber da ist ja noch der Sommer, um weiterzuschwimmen. Der Semesterbetrieb geht erst Mitte Oktober wieder los.

Mittagessen mit Folgen

Der Wahrnehmungspsychologe trifft den Fotografen. Sehr schnell sind wir bei der Frage, was – visuell gesehen – ein gutes Foto ausmacht. Der Künstler hat klare Vorstellungen, wenn es um Fotos geht, die ein Stück Landschaft oder eine Stadtszene abbilden. Wir taufen dieses Genre „Scapes“, anspielend auf „landscape“ und „cityscape“. Hier die tiefe Überzeugung des Fotografen: Das Auge muss im Bild spazieren gehen können. Der Blick darf nicht stolpern oder von einem bestimmten Punkt im Bild gefesselt werden. Der Empiriker sieht die Möglichkeit eines experimentellen Tests der Hypothese: Wir können Augenbewegungen messen und wir können ästhetische Urteile über die Qualität des Fotos, die erlebte Präsenz im Bild und natürlich die Einladung zum Spaziergehen des Blickes quantitativ per Rating-Skala erfassen. Wir entschieden uns für eine Onlinestudie, in der wir – in den Augen des Künstlers – gelungene und missratene Fotos präsentierten. Es nahmen 67 Personen am Experiment teil, im Alter von 19 bis 69 Jahren. Wir suchten 16 Fotos von Guy Tillim aus, die eine Hälfte gelungen, die andere missraten. Von diesen Hälften wiesen jeweils vier eine tiefe und die anderen vier eine geringe räumliche Schichtung auf. Nicht nur stimmten die Urteile der Probanden mit denen des Künstlers überein, misslungene Fotos bewerteten sie als unattraktiver verglichen mit den gelungenen Fotos. Die Probanden gaben auch an, dass die attraktiven Bilder sehr viel eher dazu einluden, den Blick schweifen zu lassen, und es leichter machten, sich in ihnen präsent zu fühlen. Das Präsenzerleben war am ausgeprägtesten bei den gelungenen Fotos mit großer räumlicher Schichtung und am geringsten bei den misslungenen Fotos mit

geringer Schichtung. Wir zeichneten exemplarisch bei einigen Probanden Augenbewegungen auf, und es zeigte sich, ganz entsprechend der subjektiven Eindrücke, dass die Anzahl der Blickfixierungen bei den gelungenen Fotos weitaus größer war und die jeweilige Verweildauer des Blicks pro Ort im Bild kürzer als bei den missratenen Bildern.

Das Wiko als Rettungsinsel

Im universitären Alltagsbetrieb machen es die etablierten Strukturen und die Zeitbudgetierung schwierig, sich freizuschwimmen. Doktorandenseminare sind vergleichsweise strukturiert, Drittmittel sind zu akquirieren, zu verwalten, und das Forschungsprojekt ist entsprechend des zuvor gestellten Antrags abzuarbeiten. Aus diesen Strukturen auszubrechen und den Tag mit einem Vortrag zu einem Thema zu beginnen, über das ich mir noch nie Gedanken gemacht habe, ist ein wundervolles Geschenk. Diese Insel bewohnen zu dürfen war ein besonderes Vergnügen. Und erst angekommen auf der Insel, ist man versucht, sich vom Strand zu entfernen und das Innere der Insel zu erkunden. Gerade die empirische Psychologie bietet Anknüpfungspunkte zu sehr vielen, ja fast zu vielen Erkundungstouren. Meine Disziplin sitzt seit ihren akademischen Anfängen Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts unbequem zwischen den Stühlen. Mal verstehen wir uns als Naturwissenschaftler und verfertigen schön kolorierte Bilder von Hirnregionen anhand von Stoffwechselprodukten, die nach einem Wahrnehmungsereignis unterschiedlich ausgeprägt sind. Und mal verstehen wir uns als Jongleure subjektiver Erscheinungen, Täuschungen und Kognitionen. Gespräche mit Physikern und Biologinnen auf der einen Seite und mit Historikerinnen, Theologen und Philosophen auf der anderen lassen die Stühle auf aufregende Weise weiter auseinanderrücken, was nicht ganz ungefährlich sein kann. Ein schönes Thema zwischen den Stühlen ist das der Realität. In einem Three Cultures Forum sind wir der Frage nachgegangen, wie sich Wahrnehmen und Erkennen in verschiedenen Wissenschaften organisieren, ob wir voneinander lernen können, indem wir die Stühle etwas anders hinstellen.

Auch in ganz anderer Hinsicht ist das Wiko zu einer Rettungsinsel geworden. Unser Aufenthalt ist von dem Krieg in der Ukraine überschattet. Plötzlich tauchten Fellows aus der Ukraine und ins Exil gedrängte russische Wissenschaftler auf, die hier eine temporäre Unterkunft fanden. Die Einblicke in den so unzeitgemäßen Krieg und die geteilte Faszinoslosigkeit warfen sehr differenzierte Schlaglichter auf die ehemalige Sowjetunion. Ich begann russische Novellen zu lesen. Hier war ich Zuschauer. Mein Glaube an die russische, ukrainische Kultur ist lebendig angesichts der vielen geretteten Schiffbrüchigen.



BERLINER LUFT
EVA HORN

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Berliners have always been very proud of the city's air, the "Berliner Luft." "Berliner Luft" is special, fresh, and crisp, both invigorating and inebriating. Yet it is far from pure, filled with the smells of cheap perfume, *Currywurst*, trash, sweat, exhaust fumes, dog poop, cut grass, and burnt plastic, along with the aromas of freshly baked bread, *Sonntagsbraten* (Sunday roast), and flowering trees. A city air filled with the smells of life. Berliner Luft famously made it into a popular song by the Berlin composer Paul Lincke:

Das ist die Berliner Luft, Luft, Luft
So mit ihrem holden Duft, Duft, Duft
Wo nur selten was verpufft, -pufft, -pufft
In dem Duft, Duft, Duft

That's what makes the Berlin air, air, air
With its very lovely scent, scent, scent
Where things rarely vanish, vanish, vanish
In the scents, scents, scents...

“Wo nur selten was verpufft...” – “verpufft” is German slang, it means “melt into air,” “fizzle out,” but also “remain without consequences.” Maybe it’s just there to rhyme with “Duft,” but it also means that in Berlin nothing just disappears without consequences.

Cities have their own air, their specific signature of typical weather, air quality, and regional climate. And cities always had their weather folklore. London air with its mix of smoke, wet and foggy weather, and the exhalations of a huge urban population was already famous for its bad air in the 17th century. London air, the folklore went, makes people suicidal. In the 18th century, doctors explained many ailments in terms of the local air. In 1818, the British meteorologist Luke Howard described the effect of the urban heat island for the first time. Cities, he argued, have their own microclimate that significantly differs from the general climate of the region. It’s usually hotter, dryer, and dustier than the surrounding rural area. A few decades later, the Austrian author Adalbert Stifter elaborated on the specifics of Vienna air. The air of the Austrian capital, he argued in an essay on *Viennese weather* (1844), is both social and meteorological. Thunderstorms and sudden rains cause frantic and hilarious scenes of people running for cover; the ball season in winter sees elegant couples in ball gowns and tailcoats angrily stumbling through snow and mud. Yet what is worst, he found, is the density of the city. When he opens his windows in the morning to let in fresh air, Stifter complained, all he gets is the foul smells from his neighbor’s bedroom. In cities, everyone inhales the exhalations of everybody else. The air is a social fact, a medium that inescapably connects all city dwellers to one another.

Today’s Berlin air, according to the Air Quality Index, is supposed to have a rather good quality, yet with occasionally elevated levels of fine particulate matter or NO₂, sometimes also high ozone levels. Climate change also changes the air of Berlin. Temperatures have risen by about 1.0 C since the 1970s, precipitation is diminishing, and the many

parks in the city have started to rethink their choice of local plants, given the changing climatic conditions.

But air is so much more than air quality or climate change. “Stadtluft macht frei” – “city air liberates” is an adage in German, originally coming from medieval law that ruled that a serf who had fled from the region where he was a bondsman would be free after one year in a city. The old legal meaning is forgotten, but the adage is still cited. City air is liberating in many respects: socially, intellectually, professionally, aesthetically, economically, existentially. Coming back to Berlin – a city I always considered “home,” even if I lived there only for a few years in my thirties – I was looking forward to exactly this. City air would liberate me, I hoped, not just from my professorial tasks at home at the University of Vienna, but also toward new ideas, new material, new encounters, and new ways of thinking and experiencing.

When I arrived in Grunewald on the last day of August, I was struck by the balmy warm weather. I remember that twenty years ago when I lived here, the luxury of dining outside was quite rare. “Always bring a sweater,” we used to say. As a German, I grew up to see hot weather as a rare boon; my childhood memories are bathed in winter gray and summer rain. Now in 2021, we would have our dinners outside until October, entranced by the almost Mediterranean warmth, the smells of freshly cut grass, the last flowers, and the rotting algae bloom of the nearby ponds – while we were enjoying the elation and excitement of getting to know one another. A social honeymoon in “honeymoony” weather, aided by the incredibly friendly, helpful, and socially graceful Wiko staff. I have never been treated so nicely. Being thus pampered and brilliantly entertained, our good spirits were reflected in the glorious and sunny skies that lasted until late November. The good weather subsided only in December to the typical concrete-gray Berlin sky. In the following summer, beginning in early May, it was sometimes almost too hot to have lunch outside. One could not sit in the searing sun, even with sunscreen and sunglasses; not even the Brazilians would do it. Throughout the summer, days in the 30s Celsius and nights in the 20s were normal, and an entirely different Berlin emerged: scorched, dusty, slowed down, more relaxed, and with balmy nights. Observing our ponds’ sinking water levels and the dried-out plants in Grunewald, suffocating in the overheated S-Bahn, swimming in Halensee and Schlachtensee, I started wondering what climate change would do to Berlin and the Berliners.

I came to Wiko to write a book on “air” or “climate” (synonyms for centuries). Not as a climate scientist, but as a literary scholar. Not so much about climate change as about

climate per se. “Air” may seem a bland, even trifling topic, a nothingness. In German, “eine Person ist Luft für mich” means “someone means nothing to me,” “I ignore her/him.” Yet with climate change, this nothingness, the boring background of local environmental conditions steps to the foreground. After decades of denial or lip service, air pollution, changing weather patterns, and shifting local climates all over the world came to be among the most pressing political topics of our times. However, even as we are frantically discussing the policies of greenhouse gas reduction, climate change mitigation, and adaptation to changing environments, we have a hard time understanding what air or climate itself *is* to us. How can we perceive or conceptualize it beyond the tables of rising temperatures and CO₂ levels, the dystopic scenarios of so-called “climate fiction,” and the apocalyptic rhetoric of *Fridays for Future*? Why do we consider it as either perceptual nothingness or simply an issue of scientific research and political intervention? All of these questions remain unanswered despite the many discourses on climate change. Steven Conner calls air “the matter of the immaterial.” Yet air was, for a very long time, very much a matter: an element in Ancient Greek and Chinese thought, a cultural influence throughout the centuries, and a bearer of health (e.g. in the European climatic spas) and disease (in the long tradition of miasma theory).

As a literary scholar, I wanted to reconstruct what “air” or “climate” meant before science came to reduce air to a mix of gases and climate to “the average weather.” How could it be perceived and represented – both in texts and in images? What was the sensorium of former epochs for the states and influences of air – be it as unhealthy winds (such as the scirocco), as dangerous smells, or as “miasma” carrying epidemics? How would they turn this sensorium into stories or metaphors? What were the models used to understand the atmosphere as a body of gases enveloping the planet? How can the relation between the earth and the air can be put into images, poems, narratives? Can one write a history of literary works on the air as a history of the changing relation of humans to the air, the climate, the “weather worlds” they dwell in?

Wiko air liberated me to dive into an endless ocean of documents, stories, ideas, and historical forms of knowledge. Through some of the Fellows, I learned a lot about new frontiers in biology that entirely redefine the relation between organisms and their environment. With the many symbioses each body depends on, a clear separation between an organism and its outside environment is almost impossible. Much as with air, the environment is not just outside but also inside each body. We inhale our environment, and shape it by exhaling. Bodies are “holobionts,” an assemblage of a host and many other species

living on and inside of it. – With each and every Fellow’s research field or personal interests, I discovered new continents of knowledge: the evolutionary advantages (and disadvantages) of sexual reproduction, the pitfalls of statistical methods and personality trait tests in psychology, the history of fashionable fabrics and the width of farthingales, the nilometer, the hunting techniques of the snow leopard, the climate of paradise, the cosmology of the Yanomami tribe in Brazil. Interested in virtually everything, I was in heaven. I binge read. I listened to people’s research projects, anecdotes, and reading advice. Some suggested bulky Chinese novels from the 14th century, others early modern philosophers, yet others more non-European material. All of this made total sense, all of it was fascinating. And so I binge read even more, facilitated by Wiko’s fantastic book service. I drowned in other people’s erudition and ideas. I wrote, and re-wrote, wrote more, disliked it, edited it – and never seemed to know what exactly should be in the book and what shouldn’t. In short: my book project was literally melting into air, it “verpuffte” more and more while the text grew longer and longer.

As the year went on, there were not just changes in the weather, the temperature, and the smells of the Berliner Luft, there were also changes in the group’s social atmosphere. In the middle of winter, Wiko had to implement another round of Covid curfews. No more lunches, dinners, and on-site colloquia for several weeks. We met either privately – or not at all. There are “seasons” in the social atmosphere of the Fellow group, the Wiko staff told me. The late summer and fall is honeymoon, everybody getting to know one another, trying to make friends and find companions, intellectually and otherwise. Winter comes and things get more difficult. The Fellows discover each other’s limitations, character flaws, and idiosyncrasies. Competition, animosity, irritations usually flare up in the darkest part of the year, January or February. Maybe it’s also that, after the mating period, people fall back into their default mode. A few seemed unable to talk, think, or write about anything but themselves, their lives, their families, their books, their accomplishments. No questions, no interest in others, just “now back to me!” Sometimes this felt like someone filling the air with smoke while you eat or breathe or think. This was the winter of our discontent, albeit mild, but elements of it persisted throughout the year, just like occasional foul weather.

In February, the war in Ukraine started. We all felt like in a state of exception. Russian-speaking Fellows spent nights at the central bus station helping with translation and advice for the refugees arriving from Ukraine. We held panel discussions about what was going on in Ukraine; how this conflict could affect other geopolitical conflict zones, and

about the dangers that dissenters from Putin were facing in Russia. Ukrainian and Russian scholars and writers arrived at Wiko as refugees. Some of them were getting their families out of Russia, willing to maybe never return. With Covid right behind us, the war felt like a symptom of completely unpredictable times, a dark and unclear future.

But then, in the spring, the atmosphere grew calmer. Being only witness to a crisis and not immediately affected, one quickly adapts to the constant flow of bad, even terrible news from the war zone. The energy crisis, climate change, and the pandemic diluted the horrors from Ukraine. And we got used to each other's oddities, like an old family, some forming tightly knit groups, others staying aloof. Bonds deepened, aversions yielded to friendly irony. In late spring, everybody realized that the end was near. And so the honeymoon atmosphere resumed, mixed with melancholy over our looming good-bye and the regret about things we hadn't done, or seen, or written.

These seasons of Fellow life and the return of the honeymoon made me think about the air again in a different way. The air is not just the spirit or quality of a given place, it is not only the air we share, the social atmosphere. Through the seasons, the varying states of the air make it a medium of time, a pacemaker. As atmospheres change, they seem to move through us, penetrate us like the air we breathe, and shape our moods and the ways we look at things. They might not really change us in our essence, but they color our feelings, thoughts, experiences, and relations in ever new and different ways. What seemed like an awkward behavior in the winter gets to be an endearing whimsicality in the spring. What looked like an impossible task in February, broke up into manageable bits and pieces in August. And what in the fall felt like an urge to withdraw, in May melted into the pleasure of spending time with people who all of a sudden had become real friends.

Berlin air was a boon. And a challenge. And a liberation – for many of us. Maybe, for some, also a bit disorienting, outlandish, uncomfortably rude, grey, cold, and rattled by political or personal disasters. For me, it was rediscovering a home that I had believed to have left behind forever, two decades ago. The particular Northern German language I grew up with, the singing “Tschühüß” (never try that in Vienna or Zurich!), the typically German know-it-all attitude, the endearing “Berliner Schnauze” (Berlin slang and blunt sense of humor) – all this came back to me. And I found new Berlin friends living in Zehlendorf, Cape Town, Cambridge, São Paulo, Münster, Grenoble, Singapore, Chicago, New York, and many other places.



MY WIKO FAMILY AND OTHER ANIMALS SZABOLCS HORVÁT

I am a complex systems scientist. In short, that means that I borrow methods and ideas from physics to study subjects in a wide variety of other fields. After an initial period of working on high-energy heavy-ion collisions, I became interested in interdisciplinary applications of quantitative methods and went on to study diverse topics such as the spatial distribution of tree species in rainforests, the emergence of spontaneous synchronization, the statistical mechanics of networks, and interpreting the wiring of the brain. Presently, my main research is concerned with understanding the structure and behaviour of complex networks, and in particular the study of networks in biology. I was born into a Hungarian-speaking Szekler family in Transylvania, Romania. I completed my doctoral degree in Theoretical Physics at the University of Bergen in Norway and the Babeş–Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, Romania. A series of different projects and postdoctoral positions took me through several countries including Italy, Malta, the USA, France, and finally Germany, where I currently work at the Center for Systems Biology Dresden and the Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics. – Address: Max Planck Institute of Molecular Cell Biology and Genetics, Pfotenhauerstr. 108, 01307 Dresden, Germany. E-mail: szhorvat@gmail.com.

As I write this, almost a year has passed since we first arrived in Grunewald on a sunny, late August afternoon. Now that I'm settled back into my daily routine, my Wiko experience feels almost like a distant dream. We had the essentials of our life packed into a van: me, my partner Monica, her piano, two bicycles, a couple of suitcases with clothes, and of course a large birdcage for our cockatiel Bei. I knew that the Wiko was going to be a very

special place when the answer from the always-helpful Vera to my inquiry about bringing a pet parrot was: “Of course, it won’t be the only bird this year.” But I was also slightly nervous. I was about to spend six months in the company of respected senior scholars from prestigious universities, many of them from the humanities and arts, fields that were very different from my own and that I had little prior exposure to. Would I fit in, would I be accepted? As it turned out, my worries couldn’t have been more misplaced. The unique arrangement whereby most Fellows live in the same building and attend daily lunches together creates a wonderful sense of community and friendship, with full-time and Short-term Fellows as well as partners eager to get involved and support each other. This environment was particularly helpful to those of us who were also on the academic job market during the time of our fellowships.

Part of the appeal of the Wissenschaftskolleg is its unique location that provides equally convenient access to the hustle and bustle of the city with its restaurants, museums, and universities and to the pleasant seclusion of Grunewald, Berlin’s “green forest,” where foxes and wild boar were our daily visitors. Monica, my wife, who loves to teach children about music and nature, particularly appreciated the latter. With a recommendation from the Wiko and a bit of luck, she soon found a teaching job in a nearby kindergarten and did not hesitate to begin assembling our own home zoo from which she could pick exciting creatures to show to the children there. Her collection started with stick insects and leaf insects, looking so much like parts of a real plant that most guests in our apartment wouldn’t even notice them at first. They ate blackberry leaves, which we picked in the nearby woods. Then there was the pickle jar with tiny transparent newtlets, gathered from a pond back home just before leaving. They would accept only food that was alive and moving, so we soon needed to extend the collection with a bucket of lake water to house the swarm of *Daphnia*, tiny clumsy water crustaceans that newts love to slurp up, supplied by Jana Petri, the Scientific Coordinator of the College for Life Sciences. The Wiko takes very good care not only of its Fellows, but also of their animals! The pickle jar and bucket eventually gave way to a small aquarium – again thanks to Jana’s help – lined with gravel from the Grunewald sandpit, and its contents mirrored the lake ecosystem from the backyard of the Villa Walther: there were freshwater isopods, aquatic caterpillars, and myriads of copepods, much to the amusement of Tatenda, another Fellow who does research on these creatures. As time passed, the newts grew bigger, their round fish-eyes migrating to the top of their heads and turning frog-like, until they finally metamorphosed from aquatic larvae to terrestrial forms and climbed out of the water.

They were transferred to a moss-lined box, and small glass-bodied shrimp moved into their old home. The shrimp are still here on my desk, in the same small aquarium, a tiny piece of living Grunewald that we brought back with us. The zoo grew bigger and bigger, and by the time winter set in, there were praying mantises, crickets and grasshoppers, and a metallic green rose beetle that ate jam. All this of course was a delight to several of the children of Villa Walther, a great amusement to adults as well, and allowed me to pretend to be a biologist a little bit. After all, I was now in the College for Life Sciences.

When people ask me what I do, I like to say that I am “a physicist who studies anything that is not physics.” Galileo famously wrote that the book of nature is written in the language of mathematics. Since then, physicists have mapped out the fundamental laws of matter and energy and distilled them down into concise mathematical theories. But what about the laws that govern the behaviour of people, the motion of biological cells, or the dynamics of an ecosystem? Could we not apply the same methodology to these as well? Do such complex systems even have simple governing laws? We find that empirical data about them often contains strikingly simple patterns, suggesting that the answer is yes. While their individual components are sometimes hopelessly unpredictable – think of a mass of people – collectively they frequently produce entirely new and tractably simple behaviours, a phenomenon known as emergence. Typically, however, not all components relate to each other in the same way. Instead, there is a non-trivial network of connections that defines their interactions and that plays a great role in defining the nature of their emergent collective behaviour. This is the premise of network science: connectivity structure influences function and behaviour. Much of the work I do focuses on finding effective ways to uncover interesting structural features of various networks and determining which ones are relevant for their function.

I planned to use the time of my Wiko fellowship to think specifically about networks that exist in space, such as the neurons of the brain, the streets of a city, or vascular transport networks of the body. In all these, only those nodes tend to be connected that are physically near each other. This leads to a characteristic and strongly constrained structure, which requires new and specialized methods to extract meaningful information from it. I made progress on this work and incorporated it into the research programme that I propose in my still on-going job applications. I do, however, regret that the workload and stress created by being on the academic job market did not leave as much time and energy as I would have liked to fully exploit the possibilities of the fellowship. Additionally, I was greatly looking forward to inviting a long-term collaborator to the Wiko

and making progress on common projects, but to my great regret this plan was cut short by the mid-winter COVID wave. However, despite the raging pandemic, I was able to make contacts in Berlin and give some in-person talks.

The Wiko did deliver on its promise that originally drew me to apply: “unexpected encounters inspire new ideas.” In fact, I should warn future Fellows who might be reading this: be wary of the great many temptations you will face at the Wiko. It is all too easy to get distracted and start playing with the myriad of new ideas the Wiko environment will inevitably inspire, instead of finishing old work that you should be doing. I have especially fond memories of spending time with the other College for Life Sciences Fellows, Elisa, Rachel, Tatenda, Kullu, and of course Jana, who made sure that there would always be something new and exciting for us, from learning about the Bauhaus in Weimar to early-morning crane-watching tours and making scientific contacts in Berlin. I hope to find the time to flesh out all the ideas we discussed together: reconstructing food webs with Tatenda, thinking about how the tree-like shape of the lung impacts the dynamics of its microbiome with Rachel, modelling parasite evolution in the context of animal social networks with Greg and Mike, and wondering about the personal space of birds with Mark and Heiko. I think back fondly to sharing birding photos with Mark, Alyx, and Kullu, learning to play *go* with Anthony, listening to Xun’s stories about Chinese history while playing ping-pong, and exploring Berlin with Teresa: I miss you all!

I left the Wiko with a treasure box of new ideas waiting to be implemented. These couldn’t have been born without the stimulating environment, and without the gift of *time to think* that this fellowship brought. To all my fellow Fellows and the exceptionally supportive Wiko staff, *thank you!*



FRAGMENTS OF (IM)PERFECTION LAURENCE D. HURST

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I never *really* expected to be at Wiko. A chance encounter led to a very welcome impromptu invitation to come as a Short-term Fellow. I had no academic plan but knew I needed a break, so gladly accepted. My university agreed. Then they didn't. Then they did. My original intent was to spend October to late January in Berlin, with a rush home to the UK for Christmas. COVID had other plans. Shortly after I had resolved to escape to Wiko, Delta struck and the German government closed the borders to the UK and wasn't accepting applications for visas. Emails flurried between me, Wiko, and another UK Short-term Fellow, Rachel Wheatley, in the same predicament. Wiko was again cancelled.

As Delta spread into Germany, however, the borders opened, and between me, Rachel, and the amazing Wiko team, we navigated the system. Visa, health insurance, vaccination certificates, and much other bemusing paperwork in hand, I eventually arrived late on a

wet evening in early September. A break that just a short while before seemed impossible was real.

After the introductory week, fragment 1 concluded with my return to the UK a few days later, COVID test negative. Fragment 2 started in late September with my return to Berlin, but this time to visit collaborators in Buch, in the far north-east of Berlin – a world away from Grunewald. I discovered an abandoned Stasi hospital in the woods and a fascination for hidden Berlin. Fragment 2, part 2, saw me arrive, now once again a stranger, at Wiko on October 1st. I settled down to discover Tuesday Colloquia, Thursday dinners, and the silence of weekends. I walked, discovered the woods, and found the mental exhaustion of university life under COVID slowly easing.

Then darkness slowly descended. COVID's resurgence seemed a mirror of the northern European decline into winter's unrelenting grey. Expecting the worst from Omicron, before my return to England, I packed away what little I had left at Wiko, not confident that I would be returning. In mid-December I struggled home, COVID tests negative. The day after, the border was again closed to UK residents.

I have no regrets not returning in January. Fragment 3, my final return mid-April, saw blue skies, a tour of the botanic gardens and cherry blossoms (do go to the Hanami festival on Lichterfelder Allee). I was again the stranger, the fragmentary visitor. That suited me, as I could remain a hermit (twice weekly COVID tests were, perhaps not unsurprisingly, all negative). And this time, helped by the lengthening days and brightening skies, I knew how to use my time. I luxuriated in the Tuesday Colloquia – the scholarship and the creativity was like soaking in a warm bath. Who knew that the history of Catholic dogma or the architecture of job centres could be so interesting? I worked from early morning until late at night, walking when need be. In my new single room, a bird nesting above my window was welcome (nut-eating) company. The move outside for lunch and dinner, with sun on our backs, was emblematic of a rare fragment of time, separated from all others.

Shortly before my return home (no COVID test), I found myself, while waiting for a bus, seeking shade from May's sun. I was warm in Berlin and waking up. I took the train back to the UK – a relaxing experience watching the world go by. Torrential rain in Amsterdam made a fitting punctuation to terminate the final fragment.

And what did I achieve? On paper perhaps not so much. I fell on my feet in receiving the invitation but had no plans, just a need to stop my brain from exploding. A rest. That I achieved that much is good enough.

But I managed something. Before I arrived, Wiko asked if I could write a paragraph on what I might do. As I didn't know what else to say, I wrote about some of what I am interested in – why, if natural selection is a perfecting force, do so many things seem extraordinarily imperfect. Our DNA is mostly junk, we are quite singularly bad at processing our genes, and making babies is bizarrely wasteful. For every human born another two die, most of which a mother knows nothing about. Why?

While I thought nothing of this paragraph, a few weeks before I arrived, to my surprise, a publisher approached me to ask if I had the intention to convert that plan (such as it was) into a popular book. I had no such plan I said. But then I did. I had once again landed on my feet and had a much-needed focus for my short stays. “The Evolution of Imperfection” had my attention.

I had no idea how to structure a book or how to write one. As a scientist, I write three-minute pop songs, not operas. Walking the woods and pavements through October and November, I found a structure and composed the book proposal. I enjoyed the novelty of the challenge. One revision later, a few enthusiastic comments from the referees and I had a book to write. The one month in April found me completing 5 of 7 chapters.

Along the way, I think I might also have solved the problem of why so many human embryos die so young. That was my first single-author paper since I was little. I'd forgotten how much fun that can be. With my graduate student Alex Ho, I suspect that we have also solved the problem of why our genes use and conserve the least good “stop” codon, one that regularly leads to cellular traffic accidents. That was fun, too.

Written like this, I could have been almost anywhere, but the experience needed Berlin. I visited the city first while a graduate student in Oxford. In 1988/89, my American girlfriend at the time was having a year at the Freie Universität. On my regular visits, I discovered *Currywurst* and *Glühwein*. I recall taking the S-Bahn over the Wall to Friedrichstraße and freezing days in East Berlin (what an irony that, as a UK resident, I was permitted easier travel then to East Berlin than I was, post Brexit, to Germany). I have regularly returned after the Wall came down, often to Wiko (for workshops etc.) but also to Buch. But being Jewish, Berlin has always been “difficult.” This is not the right word, but I don't know what word is. Wrestling with this has been an undercurrent of my months at Wiko. I can't explain more, not because I don't want to, but because I don't know how to. Perhaps it is enough to say that my year was very much like my view of Berlin: a set of discordant fragments, some in colour, some in black and grey. There is glory in the music, the art, the science, and especially the ethos of Wiko. But there is also the dark. The perfect and the imperfect.

THE WHITE VILLA – A PLACE OF
TRANQUILLITY AND STRENGTH
OLEKSANDR IRVANETS

I am a Ukrainian writer, 61 years old. The author of more than 30 books, I write poems, prose, and drama. The film *The Guide* (2014) was shot in Ukraine based on my script. In Germany and German-speaking countries, I had a little success with the productions of my plays *Lügner* [The Liar] and *Ein kleines Stück vom Verrat* [A little play about betrayal], but that was in the last century. Performances based on my plays were staged in theaters in Stuttgart (Theater im Depot), Leipzig (theater.FAKT), and Munich (Pasinger Fabrik) in 1995–1996 and 2001–2002. And in 2017, the Gaymon publishing house published my novel *Rivne/Rovno* (2001) as *Pralinen vom roten Stern* [Chocolates from the red star], translated by Alexander Kratochvil. The book had several favorable reviews in the German and Austrian press. – E-mail: alekirvan@hotmail.com.

On February 24, I found myself in Irpin. This city near Kyiv is now more than half destroyed. My wife and I evacuated to Kyiv within two weeks and in another month to Western Ukraine, to Rivne. During those difficult days, my wife's mother died. From the beginning of the war, I wrote poems and columns for Internet sites. Some of them have also been translated into German. I am deeply grateful to the Wissenschaftskolleg for the invitation and the opportunity to rest from the horrors of war. And also for the opportunity to understand the meaning of this war for Ukraine, Germany, and the whole world.

I called my project “The Unfinished Diary of an Unfinished War.”

I wrote my first essays on the subject of war in Irpin and Kyiv and continued my work in Berlin. I was interested in learning the position of German society, its attitude toward

Russia's war with Ukraine. I also had meetings with Ukrainian refugees who ended up in Berlin after these tragic events.

During those incomplete three months at the White Villa, I produced 12 essays, again on the subject of war. Comprehension of what is happening to my homeland is not very easy.

These essays, together with previously published ones, are gradually forming a collection of journalistic essays. Although the name "Unfinished War" was a bad joke here – many texts still need to be refined. And the war in Ukraine is not over. Several Ukrainian publishing houses have already expressed interest in this future collection. But the book has yet to take shape into a complete structure.

In conclusion, I would like to once again express my deep gratitude to the entire team of Wiko for the excellent conditions created for the fellowship recipients.



THINK. BELIEVE. DREAM. AND DARE.
NKATHA KABIRA

Nkatha Kabira is a poet, author, and Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, University of Nairobi. She is also an Iso Lomso (“eye of tomorrow”) Fellow at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS), South Africa, a Fellow of the Africa Science Leadership Programme, University of Pretoria, and a Fellow of the Summer Program in Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. She is also a Fellow at the Ife Institute of Advanced Studies, Nigeria, was a participant in the Global Scholars Academy at the Institute for Global Law and Policy (IGLP) at Harvard Law School, and is a Fellow at the Intercontinental Academia (ICA). Nkatha has also served as a Distinguished Africanist Scholar at the Institute for African Development at Cornell University and as a Dorothea Clarke Visiting Scholar in Law at Cornell Law School. She completed her doctoral degree at Harvard Law School (HLS) in 2015 and has professional and research experience in law, democracy, gender, constitution making, and governance. She lectures widely and has taught both in Nairobi and at Harvard and has received awards in recognition of excellence in teaching. She completed the Master of Laws Program at HLS in 2008 and holds a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Nairobi and a postgraduate diploma in legal practice from the Kenya School of Law. She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya. – Address: Faculty of Law, University of Nairobi, PO Box 30197, 00100 Nairobi, Kenya. E-mail: nkabira@uonbi.ac.ke.

“First, think. Second, believe. Third, dream. And finally, dare.”

“Gain time to think!” I will never forget the words that Jana Petri, the Scientific Coordinator at the College for Life Sciences, whispered to me early on during my fellowship at Wiko.

She insisted that it was very important to immerse myself in the Wiko experience completely to fully recharge and reset my mind. As soon as I began to dive into my Wiko journey, I decided to live by a Disney World mantra, “*First, think. Second, believe. Third, dream. And finally, dare.*” This quote that welcomes you to Disney World could very well hang on the door as you walk into Wiko. Wiko is like a Disney World for scholars. As soon as you leave where you are from and enter Wiko, you enter *the world of yesterday tomorrow and fantasy* as you encounter scholars from all over the world and from different disciplinary backgrounds and professional affiliations. Like Disney World’s Magic Kingdom with amazing lands to explore and attractions to enjoy, Wiko brings together scholars who together make up the breadth and meaning of life. Wiko is like an intellectual playground with so many swings and places to play and really nourish your intellectual curiosities. From the Wiko lunch and dinner conversations to the Fellows’ colloquia and conversations along the corridors and in the kitchen, minds are constantly sharpening minds.

One of the most significant experiences for me was participating in the Wiko choir. I never imagined that I would find myself joining a choir and singing different genres of songs every Wednesday before embarking on my writing. Being part of the Wiko choir really gave me time to think, believe, dream, and dare again. In fact, after spending time singing songs like “Time after Time” by Cyndi Lauper, “For the Longest Time” by Billy Joel, and others, I was inspired to write a song based on the constitution-making process in Kenya. 2022 marked the twelfth anniversary of Kenya’s Constitution, and I looked back on the journey toward making the constitution and the joyous day when Kenyans finally enacted the new constitution and ushered in a new dawn. The proverbial new dawn symbolized a shift from Kenya’s constitutional history in which Kenya’s story had been told through British colonial lenses to a period in which Kenyans told Kenya’s story in their own words and in their own tongues. A Constitution had just been passed and promulgated into law. I reflected on those moments when our vision, purpose, and feeling as Kenyans were one.

As I reflected on this journey and continued to attend the choir practices on Wednesday, a new idea was born, and I called it “Song of Wanjiku and Song of the Wig.” This song builds on earlier work I had done in which I described Kenya’s legal transformation process in the form of a dance. In this song, I reflected on the challenges of making a constitution that seeks to bring together the views and perspectives of men and women from all walks of life. The song captured the spirit and the heart of my own inner struggles with the law – a struggle to reconcile the tensions between the *law in the books* and the *law in action*, a struggle to reconcile the tension between *tradition and modernity, formalism and informality*,

the international and the local. The song uses the example of the constitution-making process in Kenya to tell a story about an encounter between two modes of legal consciousness. The song used two characters, *Wanjiku* and the *Wig*, to chronicle two opposed but mutually constitutive approaches to thinking about the future of law in Africa. The first character is the *Wig*; the *Wig* represents the lawyers, the judges, the magistrates, the elites, the rulers, the legal profession, and the legal discipline at large, all of whom are trained to value certainty, predictability, and objectivity – the hallmarks of legal formalism.

The second character is *Wanjiku*; *Wanjiku* is an allegorical historical artifact that depicts ordinary men and women. The song is inspired by the dualities that dominate individuals: minds, souls, and bodies in their encounter with foreign norms and institutions, double consciousness, as W.E.B. Dubois would say. What happens when the *Wig* encounters *Wanjiku*? How does the *Wig* experience *Wanjiku*, and what is *Wanjiku*'s reaction to the *Wig*? What kind of conversations will the two have? What types of negotiations will the two have? How do they perceive each other's realities? Is this a joyful union? Is there ever a meeting of minds? When *Wanjiku* encounters the *Wig*, the two are forced to discern a new way of thinking, a new way of describing their world, a new way that attempts to correspond to their realities.

At Wiko, I was constantly surrounded by Fellows, scholars, and wonderful staff who engaged each other in conversations ranging from poverty in China to quantum physics to youth unemployment in Namibia, to architecture. From music to literature to linguistics to religion, to racial politics. Despite our different backgrounds and interests, the Wiko family is committed to the joint pursuit of knowledge and to understanding and overcoming global challenges. Together, the Wiko family makes up the breadth and meanings of life.

Wiko is truly a creative space for the mind and soul. The silence in the office and the beauty of the scenery right outside my office window made for a very conducive environment to strive and thrive in. During my stay this year, I was challenged to think beyond binaries, to explore frontier conversations, to acknowledge the incompleteness of science, to acknowledge multiple identities in the quest for knowledge, to embrace "strangeness," and to adopt advanced hermeneutical and epistemological skills.

Finally, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the entire Wiko community for being so welcoming and supportive. I thank the entire community – it is because of you that I gained time to think, that I believed again in the power of community and scholarship, that I dreamed again about constitution making, and that I finally dared to write a song about the Law. Thanks a million.



ON THE UNITIES OF PLACE, TIME,
AND ACTION
ILYA KALININ

Ilya Kalinin is a visiting scholar at the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (Princeton University). He got his PhD in 2022 at Saint Petersburg State University (the title of his thesis was “Russian Literary Utopia, XVIIIth–XXth Centuries: The Philosophy and Poetics of the Genre”). His recent researches focus on Russian literature, early Soviet intellectual and cultural history, and on the historical and cultural politics of contemporary Russia (post-Soviet social and cultural transformations; identity politics and politics of history in contemporary Russia). He is editor-in-chief of the independent intellectual journal “Versus. Journal of Liberal Arts and Sciences” (<https://versus.elpub.ru/jour>). His essays have been translated into 15 languages and published in a wide range of journals including *Ab Imperio*, *Arche*, *Baltic Worlds*, *Osteuropa*, *Die Welt der Slaven*, *Sign Systems Studies*, *Social Sciences*, *Russian Literature*, *Russian Studies*, *Russian Studies in Literature*, *Russian Studies in Philosophy*, *Slavonica*, *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach*, *New Literary Observer*, *Logos*, etc. – E-mail: ilya.kalinin1975@gmail.com.

In his treatise-poem *L'Art poétique*, Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux formulated the generic rules of Classical drama – the unities of place, time, and action – in concise form: “Qu'en un lieu, en un jour, un seul fait accompli / Tienne jusqu'à la fin le théâtre rempli.” These rules have long since become a standard object of critique, demonstrating the mechanical schematism, lifeless rationalism, and, simultaneously, ingenuous naivety of artistic cognition that seeks to grasp life's diversity by reducing it to strictly observed compositional principles. Yet take note of a historical irony: these same principles, which have long since been exhausted in theater, where they provoke only boredom in the spectator, in this same

spectator's daily life may become a coveted ideal – something available only during a brief vacation and for good money. Riven and decentered, mystified by capital and neurotized by its lack, the subject (as described by Freud and Lacan, Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault and Althusser, Žižek and Butler...) seeks inner peace and stable identity in the disciplinary daily routine offered by seaside hotels; in the structural orderliness of medical and wellness treatments, as advertised by spas; in the soothing monotony of gardening in the yard of one's own country house.

These same unities – of place, time, and action – which have abandoned not only the theatrical stage, but the real world as well, have become an unattainable dream, a collective fantasy of equilibrium, an imaginary horizon that may be inscribed into reality only with great difficulty, in which the ecological topos of “sustainable development” has become an empty commonplace in the bureaucratic language of international organizations and the annual reports of global corporations, as well as a ritual attribute of applications for research funding. The unities are a dream, a fantasy, an imaginary horizon, in a word: a utopia, a place absent on the map of modernity.

Nevertheless, as it turns out, there does exist a *place* that unites *time* and *action* into a single whole. *Un lieu*: a small plot of land radiating along Wallotstraße and Koenigsallee, along which one finds several villas – their quantity precisely matches the number of fingers on one hand (communicating the readiness to perform an *action*, as encrypted in the geographical structure of *place*). *Un jour*: the 2021/2022 academic year has flown by as though it were a single day. *Un fait*: this, of course, is a bit more complex, but all the same let us define it as the opportunity to focus attention on one's own academic or artistic interests (a stroke of good fortune that lasts a year) that was presented to the several dozen lucky individuals who were given the *place* and the *time* to escape from their usual life routines. The unities of place, time, and action described above, which set the dramatic coordinates for the play in question, can be named with precision: *Das Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin*.

We are indebted to the Russian philosopher and cultural theorist Mikhail Bakhtin (1895–1975) for his invention of the concept of “chronotope,” which he employed to describe the various amalgamations of space and time that allow each artistic genre to master, cognize, and depict the world. A chronotope, according to Bakhtin, is a “merging of spatial and temporal characteristics into a concrete and meaningful whole. Here, time is thickened, made dense, becomes artistically visible; space is intensified, pulled into the movement of time, of emplotment, of history... The characteristics of time are made evident in space, and space gains meaning and is measured in time.” The chronotope of *Das Wissenschaftskolleg*

combines the features of several genres: those of *Bildungsroman* and carnival, of adventure novel and the *Georgics*, of scientific treatise and circus act. Historically and typologically, these genres oppose, rather than complement or supplement one another. As a result, a portrait that combines these features would be more reminiscent of the grotesque portraits of Giuseppe Arcimboldo than the ceremonial ones of the Classical era. If one seeks the closest literary analogues of the chronotope under consideration, combining elements of mundane idyll and intellectual drama, the first thing that comes to mind is the cultural heteronomy of Castalia from Hermann Hesse's *Das Glasperlenspiel*; the measured everyday life of the Davos sanatorium, which establishes a rhythm for its inhabitants' ideological clashes, in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*; and the Abbaye de Thélème from François Rabelais' *Gargantua et Pantagruel*, the luxurious infrastructure of which (and allow me to remind the reader that in addition to bookstores and galleries with frescoes, that abode included a stadium, hippodrome, theater, swimming pool, baths, as well as a park full of animals, an orchard, and arenas for playing ball; as anyone who spent a year in *Das Wissenschaftskolleg* can confirm, all of these amenities are also present in our own Abbaye) made it possible to indulge not only in scholarly activity, but also in everything that allows a scholar to pronounce: *Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*.

1. Place

Some say that the activities of social scientists and humanists are largely independent of the location in which they work and any opportunities it might present to them, since they have no special need for extensive and costly laboratories or large teams of colleagues focused on the resolution of common problems. Attachment to a specific place arises only at the stage of collection of empirical materials (for anthropologists, sociologists, and archaeologists – during field work; for historians and philologists – in an archive; for art historians – in a museum). The touring kit and needs of a humanist in the final stages of work are quite modest: a personal computer and a relatively decent library.

As a rule, a humanities scholar or social scientist works alone or in a small research group, so that the intensity of direct communication with colleagues tells us more about personal temperament than about levels of scientific productivity. Nevertheless, practices organizing academic life at university research centers and Institutes for Advanced Study demonstrate the productive potential of temporary communities that unite scholars from various disciplines and regions. The premise of interdisciplinarity and the internationalization of science, hardwired into their existence, lifts such institutions' structures far

above the contest of faculties or the boundaries dividing national university traditions. The *raison d'être* of such settings relates primarily to the academic exchange of research results and their discussion. Yet another important legitimating argument for such institutions is their provision of the opportunity to spend a semester or full year of sabbatical in comfort and with financial support. That's no small thing. But the *Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin* is a different matter entirely.

Colleagues in this Kolleg are connected not only by shared scholarly exchange – a weekly colloquium – as is usually the case in institutions of this kind. The republic born within the walls of the institute combines the features of what Ferdinand Tönnies described as the distinct phenomena of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*. The presence of the latter is of course to be expected in a scientific society: the professional and practical linkage of rational individuals in the exchange of knowledge and of social and symbolic capital, allowing them to derive mutual benefit from these exchanges and conversions. But the emergence of relationships typically characteristic of the former, it seems, renders the Berlin Kolleg unique: not *ein* Wissenschaftskolleg, but *das* Wissenschaftskolleg. Life together (in separate apartments, but under the same roof) and daily shared meals, which reach a peak of vitality on Thursday evenings, establish organic, familial relationships (partners' and spouses' equal participation in the life of Wiko, as well as the exuberant presence of children, bringing parents into closer relations, make it possible to speak of family not just as a metaphor, but as the actual model for life at Wiko). This is a *corporation* and a *company*, returning us to the etymological origins of these terms, the life of the whole body (*corpus*) and shared meals (literally, breaking bread together: *com pānis*). Emotional involvement, love, and friendship, as well as the mutual support of Fellows and the endlessly generous willingness of Wiko employees to help in resolving any and all challenges, bring about more than just a different approach to knowledge production. They establish a new standard for the organization of human community. If this combination – of organic community and highly functional institutional structure, of affect and rationality, of leisure and work, of a disinterested willingness to help and a generously supported annual budget, of poetry and accounting, of gastronomic art and the art of management – is possible for a community of scientists (individuals whose levels of vanity and selfishness, jealousy of the successes of others, and self-absorption are on average higher than in the human population in general), perhaps it might be possible on a larger and more socially significant scale.

2. Time

The specificity of temporality characteristic of the *topos* in question (*das Wissenschaftskolleg*) is mediated by the place where it takes shape. Linearity – inherent to the development of thought, text, human life, and history – here meets cyclical nature. The only possible place for such a meeting is the suburbs – the intermediate space at the frontier between first and second natures, between historical time and the seasons of the year. Yet also, the five villas (lat. *villa*: country house), whose placement organizes the daily pedestrian movements of Wiko's inhabitants, are close to the city center. So, the M19 bus line and line 7 of the S-Bahn take you from the lake district to the urban metropolis, from the hunting grounds of the Electors of Brandenburg to the capital of the 20th century, in some 15–20 minutes. It must be said that the architectural landscape of Grunewald itself is densely inscribed with traces of the last century's tragic history, as evidenced by the names of its past inhabitants – from Walter Benjamin to Walter Rathenau, who was killed ten steps from the M19 stop closest to Wiko; not to mention Gleis 17, leading from idyll to hell, from which the trains carrying Berlin Jews to the extermination camps departed (this memorial platform is now adjacent, to some degree imperceptibly, with the Bahnhof Berlin-Grunewald platforms from which you can depart – often even on schedule – to infamous Wannsee and Potsdam or, conversely, to the center of Berlin). Still, in the 21st century, Grunewald time is calculated not so much by historical periods as by the change of seasons, with a greater focus on flora and fauna than on politics and economics (except, of course, with regard to local real estate prices).

The paradoxical unity of time at Wiko lies at the crossroads of these two modes of temporality: city and suburb, history and nature, the uniqueness of events (lectures by Wiko Fellows, discussions, seminars, and round tables) and the almost natural regularity of their rhythm, overlaid by the therapeutic routine of the working day, broken into the time before lunch and the time after it (the successive progression of days of meat, fish, and fast, of days of smorgasbord and full service, deserves a separate discussion inspired from readings of Nikolai Gogol and contemplation of seventeenth-century Dutch still life).

As a result, the political economy of intellectual labor fits within a unique framework that does not coincide with any of the paradigms that have guided academic life over the last century. This is not the work of an industrial laborer, immersed in assembly line production. Neither is it the work of a neoliberal effective manager obsessed with demonstrating the growth of a KPI. Nor is it the work of a modern creative industries worker, engaged in hyper-exploitation of the self and of one's own time. One might say that the

mode of work one settles into over a year spent at Wiko should be compared to that of a farmer: measured, but not mechanical, distinguished by both consistency and variety, inscribed in natural cycles more than in any other. Wiko time is linear time of reading and writing, looped between the end of one summer and the middle of the next: a continuum between a moment when it is *still possible* to swim in the surrounding lakes and one when it is *already time* to do so.

3. Action

The unities of place and time are also determined by the specific nature of the unity of action that is characteristic of the flow of life at Wiko. One of the main features determining this third unity is the intermingled diffusion of various types of activity (from reading groups to choral singing), thanks to which work and leisure imperceptibly begin to interpenetrate, creating ever denser and more extensive zones of intersection. Whereas outside of Wiko, work in the office and time spent with family and friends are quite distinct from each other, the question remains open as to how one should describe the joint lunches and dinners that Fellows are expected to attend, just as surely as they are expected to participate in colloquia. The answer depends on position and perspective. On the one hand, the regular Tuesday Colloquium can be viewed as a form of intellectual leisure, diversifying one's own research routine. On the other hand, Thursday's inevitable arrival brings with it an equally inevitable Thursday evening dinner, which, in turn, may be seen as a form of intellectual labor, leading to a characteristic feeling of enervation the following morning. And how, in this light, is one to evaluate the parties that the Fellows themselves organize at the Villa Walther in connection with birthdays (their own and those of partners and children), on various holidays of their countries of origin, or (surprise!) in honor of a colleague following a Tuesday Colloquium presentation?

Thanks precisely to the communal nature of everyday life within the walls of Wiko, each researcher or artist gains a better sense of the boundaries and limitations of their own scholarly optics, of the work that each habitually associates with their own discipline, subject, theme, or project. No matter what stance one adopts toward this communal life – whose level is largely regulated by each particular communard (and which is, furthermore, a more organic experience for some, while others may resist it or even find it somewhat traumatizing) – this experience of togetherness turns out to be unforgettable and useful, both in an academic and in a simple human sense.

In conclusion, I will turn once more to the unities of place, time and action. My own research project focused on the intertwining of culture and politics in Putin's Russia: on how culture is reduced to practices of symbolic legitimization of current policies, while politics appeals predominantly to arguments of a cultural nature. This is to say, I focused on how Russian culture (whose borders extend far beyond the political borders of the Russian Federation) began to function in the framework of state cultural policy as a muted palliative for Russian empire, justifying the geopolitical ambitions of the Putin regime. One of my research goals was to demonstrate how, since 2014 (the year of the Russian annexation of Crimea), culture and the appeal to cultural identity had been transformed into a *casus belli*. The beginning of Russia's new phase of military aggression against Ukraine found me in Berlin. What had been a matter of metaphor ("wars of memory," "culture wars") acquired the monstrous reality of real war, becoming our own historical and biographical context. The research topic, transformed into the researcher's own conditions of existence, took on a determinative character for decisions about life. If it were not for the help and support from Wiko as a whole and all its employees individually, it would have been much infinitely more difficult to make these decisions.



WIKO DAYS: VIGNETTES
ILYA KLIGER

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1.

A month or so into our stay at Villa Walther, pressure started to build. “But why,” people kept asking, “why don’t you have a bicycle?” “Why indeed?” I asked myself. “I do need one, or at least I would like to have one; it would make many things easier. What’s worse, I am one of the few people here who doesn’t have a bicycle, I keep stating my intention to get one, but not following through. It’s becoming embarrassing.” But day after day, I continued to live without a bicycle. At one point I even began imagining puzzled, perhaps slightly judgmental exchanges behind my back, like “there goes I., on foot once again,” and so on. Then, one day, M. came to my door and told me he had made me a bicycle out of the spare parts that were lying around unused, perhaps accumulating through the years

from abandoned or broken Wiko bicycles. This unassuming act of generosity moved me with gratitude and wonder. M. managed to put together a means of transportation from a pile of inert objects; and there I went, riding a kind of archeological artefact, stratified with fragments of past Wiko lives, to the nearest Edeka supermarket and beyond.

2.

While taking individual German lessons from our beloved teacher E., I often had to struggle to say even approximately what I wanted to express. But one particularly foggy morning, there was a word I could not remember in any of the languages I knew. Not even in my native language, or my near-native one. After a long pause filled with inarticulate sounds, I confessed this fact to E. To which she smiled brightly and said, in German, something to the effect of: “Ah, but this is a wonderful sign!” At the time, I attributed this reaction in part to E.’s characteristic mixture of kindness and optimism and in part to her esoteric insight into language pedagogy. But later, I started to feel that there really was something wonderful about one’s intended meaning falling through the cracks between languages, to the place, I imagined, where all the different languages meet – at the point of meaning’s inarticulacy.

3.

Inarticulate meaning is pure sociality, pure relation before all content. The linguist Roman Jakobson called this the “phatic” function of language, a marker of sheer contact, like the person picking up the phone and saying, “Hello,” to indicate: someone is there, someone is listening. One thing that struck me at Wiko was the volume of the phatic, an overall atmosphere of trusting cultivation of each other’s company. This brought out a lot of silliness and a lot of earnestness, a combination in fact, in which the two components reinforced each other. So that one day, even A., whose reputation as “the most ironic person at Wiko 21” was established by a vote (which, I must say, fell far short of a quorum and consisted mainly of his friends), even A., whose penchant for conspiracy theories emerged thereafter and seemed to square awkwardly with his ostensible skills as an ironist – even A., in short, confessed that in no other intellectual setting had he felt so known, accepted, and appreciated simply for who he was. Speaking of conspiracy theories, it makes me wonder: was our food spiked with endorphins?

4.

And speaking of food, how do I describe the solicitude with which D. and the kitchen staff treated our various dietary restrictions? Mine in particular were a real pain. What's worse, I couldn't properly explain them. I asked for non-dairy options, pointing to my intolerance of lactose. But beyond that, on top of properly physiological reasons, I had deep-seated aversions going back, surely, to some early childhood trauma. The best I could do was to tell my table-mates, when they asked, that I had an aversion for things "white and mushy." Though I have learned that German cuisine has plenty of room for non-dairy but nevertheless white-and-mushy foods, I have no doubt that D. would understand and accommodate all my "illegitimate" requests with the same generosity and grace with which she met my medically justifiable ones. One day, I kept telling myself, I will make sure to tell D. what it is really that I try to avoid, and why it is that some of the food presented to me as "lactose-free" nevertheless remained almost untouched. But I never did. So, D., if you are reading this, please forgive me.

5.

For many of us at Wiko, life tended to condense into art, interactions often became improvised performances. What Schiller had called the "instinct of play" manifested itself in full force. A trip to Prague produced a collectively designed Golem. A group of Fellows, cultivating an interest in ghosts, read the entirety of Macbeth aloud together. Allusions and foreshadowings multiplied, situations began to rhyme, accented speech generated puns, and persons coalesced into characters. And one day, one such character walked into his apartment in Villa Walther only to be faced by fifteen or so of his Fellows, wearing the masks of a German philosopher, with whom the character was supposed to have been obsessed. The fifteen-headed philosopher proclaimed: Happy Birthday!

6.

Dishes and cutlery, shot glasses and cups, institutional history, memory, and myth, theater tickets, manuscripts, food, animals, and children – all circulated freely among households, were found and lost, received and returned, assimilated and misplaced. One day, A. (not the ironist) volunteered to be a "guest bedtime storyteller" for O., a twelve-year-old whose father, outdoing Scheherazade, had managed to spin the same tale for over five years. A. received a rough summary of the epic's previous events and went to work weaving her episode into the fabric of the whole. Once O. was asleep, A. left a white feather on

his desk, an element of the story, magically appearing to different people in different colors. Many fellow Villa Walther dwellers were let in on the secret, and pretended to see the feather differently – to the delight of the thoroughly undeceived O. In this way, the economy of the gift took precedence; threads of reciprocity proliferated, embracing ever-wider circles of Fellows and staff, extending indefinitely into the future, and requiring a special arithmetic of thoughtfulness for which no axioms are given in advance and no definitive solutions are possible. I, for one, feel that I have remained on the debtor side of the equation.

7.

All this was a matter of privilege, and I mean privilege here in the negative sense of the word. In the sense that much of the world around us – the social as well as the natural world – was badly off. And this for systemic, in large part, humanly created and humanly correctable reasons. (Russia's war in Ukraine, unleashed midway through our stay at Wiko, exacerbated this condition many-fold.) Many of us had been protected from the immediate consequences of it all even before coming to Wiko. Moving to Grunewald did not increase our exposure, enabling instead the forms of nurturing sociality that should be – but decidedly aren't – available to all. One day at lunch, N. said to me that Cassandra is the emblematic figure of our time. Her voice was perhaps more muted than it should have been, for me in my Wiko retreat.



A YEAR OF FALSE STARTS BRITT KOSKELLA

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I sat down to write my Wiko yearbook entry at least ten different times both during and after my fellowship, and thus have amassed a collection of introductory paragraphs (or, in a few cases, sentences) that remain abandoned in a folder on my desktop. Each was deserted either because it was too grandiose (setting me up only for failure) or else too banal (not coming close to capturing the complexity of my year at the Wiko). With hindsight I can now see that this collection of false starts for my entry is in fact the most accurate reflection of my time in Berlin.

Before I get to my final (complete) entry, a small taste of the sentences that were abandoned either as is or after a continuing paragraph or so:

- i) Either everyone or no one will write about how COVID-19 affected life at the Wiko. By the time we arrived, it almost felt normal. And indeed, when we began – fully vaccinated, protected, impenetrable to the pandemic around us – it felt momentarily like we had escaped;
- ii) In the fantastical playgrounds (*Spielplätze*) of Berlin, I learned to let go;
- iii) My mother is an intellectual, and much of my identity growing up was formed as rebellion against that very status. How then would I do surrounded by intellectuals at an institution that was built around the very idea of intellectuality?;
- iv) After the most chaotic and turbulent few years of my life, the simplicity of life at the Wiko was a desperately needed healing balm;
- v) I will not miss nightly Zoom calls to California, but will very much miss my morning walk from Villa Walther to my gorgeous office retreat, where I luxuriated in thought until being served a delicious lunch in the company of the most wonderful fellow Fellows I could have imagined.

The thing about false starts, it turns out, is that they aren't failures. They till the soil of the mind – create a fertile and ripe imagination that is primed to fully nurture the right seed of an idea when – at last – it falls to the ground. In my day job as a scientist, teacher, manager, grant writer, reviewer, dog walker, wife, and mother, I rarely – if ever – have time for false starts. And the most meaningful gift the Wiko gave me was the time to waste on them.

The first few months of life in Berlin involved finding our footing; getting the kids settled in school, finding the best dog walks around the Grunewald, and settling on a schedule that worked for a two-scientist family. There was COVID to contend with, as well. Deciding how much risk to take every day, taking our tests and watching the reassuring absence of a band appear, and of course walking around the Thursday evening champagne gathering and opening all the windows despite the chill and occasional funny look were all part of the less normal aspects of our year. But mostly, I used the first few months of my fellowship as a time to rebuild myself from the exhausted shell of a researcher – and human being – I was (or felt I was) when I arrived.

The pandemic had stolen most of the joy from my job. I had been teaching online, giving departmental seminars and conference presentations as monologues alone in my makeshift home office, and meeting students and postdocs at regularly scheduled interviews through my computer screen rather than spontaneously as a result of new and exciting data in the lab. And all of that was when the kids weren't home from school due to a sniffle that required a trip to the COVID test center and a three-day wait for PCR results. Let's just say that when August finally arrived, I could not have been more ready to leave Berkeley and head to Berlin.

We came to the Wiko with a preschooler who joined the local Kita across the lake and learned how to fight better (in German) with a stick, a first-grader who had the magical experience of celebrating her entry into education with a *Schultüte* as big as she is, and a dog who cost as much to ship to Germany as a horse (despite only resembling a small pony). From the moment we arrived, we all felt at home. The staff and environment could not have been more conducive to feeling that way, and we never even spoke of Berkeley until many months later. For the first time in many years, I had spare time to think. And I did.

The colloquia each week had their desired effect – they made me think of my own work differently, inspired me to try new approaches to scholarship, gave me ideas for better ways to present ideas and challenge the audience, and made me laugh, cry, and – think. My fellow Fellows taught me to question even the most basic things I thought I knew and took the time to explain things on a level that I have never experienced elsewhere. Were it not for my having visited the Wiko as a “partner” ten years earlier, I wouldn't have believed that a full hour of questions was possible after each talk – and when it came to my own talk, I worried that the content would be too narrow or dry for active debate. But week after week, the discussions played out in unexpected and exciting ways through the lenses of disciplines and with the shared goal of discovery. Of everything I will miss at the Wiko, the questions sessions after talks will be at the top.

In between the amazing meals and parties, nightly Zoom calls with my group back in California, and school runs, I spent my fellowship exploring two related sets of ideas. The first, as originally planned, was based around the question of the holobiont, in this case defined as a eukaryotic organism and its microbiome. Through reading, chatting with other Fellows, and thinking (the clear theme here), I began to lay out a series of questions, predictions, and experiments that we could use to ask whether hosts and their associated microbial communities can be considered in the same way that we – as a field – have

studied genes in a genome. The time afforded by the Wiko fellowship gave me the courage to revisit my old Population Genetics and Quantitative Genetics textbooks and notes from graduate school to see whether we can apply the same statistical frameworks for understanding and predicting microbiome diversity. This project had many false starts, and I won't know for some time whether and in how many ways it will succeed. But I am returning home with a bank of new ideas to explore with my group and am confident that I have a far better understanding of what is possible than I did a year ago.

The unexpected project was the result of an *Annual Reviews in Virology* paper that I had committed to writing before knowing I would join the Wiko. I had promised to write a review about how bacteriophage viruses can and do impact microbial populations, communities, and microbiome function. But this was a topic that I was already tired of before even beginning (I had been thinking and writing about it for too long). As I dragged my feet ever closer to the impending deadline, I remembered an old paper I loved in graduate school by Peter J. Hudson, Andrew Dobson, and Kevin Lafferty in which the authors put forward the idea that parasites in an ecosystem can be considered a sign of good health! The premise is quite simple: parasite diversity is an indicator of host diversity, and if there are lots of different parasites around at relatively low densities, that suggests the presence of many different hosts at even higher densities. Despite its intuitiveness, this idea has been remarkably hard to test in natural systems and so remains more of a hypothesis than knowledge. However, with the increasing number of datasets from microbiomes across plants and animals that have resulted from so-called “Next Generation” sequencing approaches, I thought this would be an ideal testbed of the prediction. I pitched the idea to fellow Fellow Rachel Wheatley, who had come to the Wiko from Oxford as part of the spectacularly cool and relatively new College for Life Sciences. She thought it was interesting, but more importantly, was excited about the idea of collaborating with me on the project. In this case, her enthusiasm, as well as the work of a creative postdoctoral researcher in my group, Dominique Holtappels, is set to ensure this idea does not join the pile of false starts.

Among the other false starts that I will leave fallow for a while and revisit before deciding on their final fates are: two new grant ideas, a collection of short stories (or should I say a collection of short stories that have beginnings, occasional middles, but never ends), numerous watercolor paintings, a hat that remains half knit, and three novels that I am “in the middle of” reading. But all of these wonderful false starts gave me the creative energy and joy to: write (and receive) a large National Science Foundation training grant;

publish a paper on critical windows of microbiome development with my colleague, very dear friend, and fellow Fellow Jess Metcalf; coauthor five papers with members of my group back in California; complete my *Annual Reviews in Virology* manuscript; make life-long friends from across the globe; and right a generational wrong by giving my children the gift of the German language that I never received.

My time at the Wiko was everything I had hoped it would be and more, but – unfortunately – despite all of the false starts, there was no false ending.



THE FIVE THINGS I THOUGHT ABOUT
THIS YEAR
HANNAH LANDECKER

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Every morning, I set out to work in my office in the New Building from my apartment in the Villa Walther. As it is approximately a four-minute walk, I usually first went in the opposite direction, crossing the Hasensprung and looping through the meadow near the S-Bahn tracks or doing a circuit around the Herthasee, particularly in the spring when there were nesting swans to check in on every day. Every morning I thought about what I was working on, walking for twenty or thirty minutes before sitting down to write or read. For me, the hallmark of this year was what felt like a reinhabiting of my own mind.

How can you feel evicted from your own mind? Perhaps it seems anti-intuitive, but I expect many people will understand what I mean. After years of administrative work, accentuated by the demands of making decisions and running things during the pandemic, and a year of social turmoil about racist violence and what should be the University's appropriate response to it, my stream of consciousness had begun to fracture into a thousand disconnected yet intrusive pieces, and I couldn't feel at home or restful in my own thoughts. It took a while to repair. I have structured this report around what I thought about this year, because this is what it has all been about, for me. If I have feedback for the Institute, it is only that facilitating this kind of mental peace and concentration should continue to be a priority and a core value, as it is an increasingly rare opportunity in our times.

One. Antioxidants.

In September and October of 2021, I confronted the profound paucity of my chemical education and finally began to really understand reduction and oxidation after only ever having memorized it before, in a charade of understanding. This is partly due to the fact that chemistry (and many other sciences) are often taught to students *as if they are not interesting* and therefore one only needs to know enough to pass the test. The other reason that real understanding had eluded me is that the language of reduction and oxidation in chemistry is one of history's great travesties in terms of explaining with words that actively make it more confusing – something is reduced because it gains electrons! That is not intuitive. Finally, no one ever thinks that a historian or a sociologist needs to understand things like electrons, which of course is totally misguided. I learned to think about it simply, about plants soaking up the sun and turning it into chemical energy. All those plant-made things such as wood, or rubber (from rubber trees), or grain – they've all been charged up, wound tight. A chemist would say that photosynthesis produces all these *reduced* forms of carbon because of their gain in electrons or the way they pull other molecules close to them, energy that is released again when they are *oxidized*, in eating, or combustion, or weathering.

In terms of human social history, the control of the processes of oxidation can be understood as the effort to stop butter and lard from going rancid; to prevent explosions in stored oil and gas; to halt the cracking of rubber and the weathering of infrastructure; to stop photos from developing all the way to complete blackness; and to keep the fluids of gas warfare liquid until they can be vaporized at the moment of use. This profound manipulation of how long things last led to the discovery that vitamin E and many plant-derived substances are antioxidants; but so are many synthetic chemicals. During World War II,

the exigencies of making synthetic rubber, and keeping fuel and food chains flowing, redoubled research into antioxidants, leading to the now ubiquitously used BHT and BHA. These petroleum derivatives showed the highly desirable characteristics of “carry-through” – not only would they keep the lard fresh on the way to the factory, but they would keep the crackers made with the lard fresh as they travelled the railways and shelves of the new lifespans of modern commodities. Another key use of the antioxidant just postwar was the preservation of animal fats used in animal feed – cheap tallow and grease from rendering could now be added to mass-produced chicken feed, for example, which before had been impractical because it all went rancid too quickly. This completely reordered the way fats flow through society.

In short, antioxidants are key technologies of duration in modernity.

Two. Shift work.

In November, I turned to shift work. This may seem totally unconnected, but antioxidants and shift work are linked by a photograph I found in the 1953 issue of *Fortune* magazine, in a photo essay titled “Chicago Industry at Night.” It shows workers at the National Biscuit Co., laboring through the night to produce packaged crackers and cookies, which were quickly becoming the staple of the snack culture that America has since spread throughout the world. Over the course of the twentieth century, profoundly accelerated by World War II, the rise of continuous-process manufacturing in chemicals and food commodities such as high-fructose corn syrup significantly changed workplaces in the United States and Europe, and to a certain extent globally. The time a chemical process takes from beginning to end, such as the polymerization processes for making synthetic textiles, was rarely the length of a day shift. The machinery was expensive and the processes were difficult to start up and shut down, so the solution was to run them continuously.

As shift work began to occupy a larger proportion of the workforce, the epidemiological links between shift work and illnesses such as atherosclerosis and diabetes began to be made in the context of rising concern about chronic illnesses in industrialized nations. From this has come an entire realm of biomedical research on the relationship between circadian rhythms and metabolic health – indeed, the shift worker has served as a kind of model organism for the long-term physiological effects of night work. One does not have to suppose that the shift workers were eating the high-fructose corn syrup and crackers to understand that the entire biochemical milieu of human life – including its rhythmicity – is shifted by these developments in manufacturing and the temporality of chemistry.

Three. Compartmentalization.

January becomes February as 2022 unfolds. Everyone says it is dark and depressing but I don't notice. In retrospect I probably should have given my kids vitamin D supplements, as their delicate Californian constitutions were apparently in shock from prolonged darkness. But I was too busy thinking. There is a tendency these days in critical and cultural theory to celebrate things that break down boundaries or binaries and to reify flow as superior to stasis or structure. There is a rather uninterrogated admiration of entanglement, as if to be entangled or to realize that things are entangled is morally superior to being separate or to hew to categories. But many of the examples I thought about this year showed the importance of organization in time and space, what researchers working on issues such as the human microbiome and health often refer to as *compartmentalization*. The human gut is a great example of the importance of compartmentalization. The symbiotic microbes that live in the gut and are essential to human health live in a thick mucus layer at the surface of the epithelium lining the intestine and colon. The mucus is nutritious for these microbes; they in turn digest complex carbohydrates and synthesize vitamins, metabolic processes that human cells are not equipped for. In short, human cells feed the microbes that feed human cells. But the way that they are organized in the space and time of the gut is essential to this relationship – the microbes are kept very close, but not *in*, the host's tissues. The relationship between host and symbiont actually maintains the boundary between them.

Many things can degrade the integrity of this dynamic boundedness. Many of the emulsifiers, detergents, colors, preservatives, and agricultural pesticides and herbicides that structure human food ways today are damaging to the integrity of the mucosal boundary, leading to inflammation and a decrease in the tightness of the junctions between the epithelial cells lining the gut, a condition colloquially known as leaky gut. Disruptions in the sleep-wake cycle, such as in shift work, can also lead to a breakdown in the organization of the mucosal boundary at the gut wall. Compartmentalization can also be temporal, in that some reactions happen at night and others during the day – the microbiome also sleeps and wakes. It is a little hard to tease out the cause-and-effect relationships, but leaky gut is linked to obesity, liver disease, diabetes, and their accompanying chronic inflammatory states. In short, it is important to stay organized. The chronicity of industrial life is being explored in biomedical science today as a dis-ordering force. Resilient boundedness is a hallmark of health.

Four. Covid and the Underlying Condition.

March, onward. How could one *not* think about Covid this year? From the very outset of the pandemic in China, and echoed and confirmed in populations in Europe, the United Kingdom, India, Brazil, and North America, the disproportionate impact of the virus in individuals with so-called *underlying* metabolic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension has been clear. Epidemiology and modeling have shown that diabetes, obesity, hypertension, and heart failure were the conditions that made the difference between hospitalization and death and a milder disease course with SARS-Cov-2. If these conditions were not so prevalent – and fundamental parameters such as blood sugar were not so clearly stratified by race and class – the individual and community suffering of so many people in the hospital all at once would not at all resemble what has in fact unfolded. Many scientists were referring to this as the collision of two epidemics – one chronic and one infectious. In the meeting of the acute and the chronic, the underlying condition is foregrounded and made differently urgent because of its role as the enabling ecology for acute illness.

What *is* an underlying condition? Why at this particular historical juncture has a novel virus intersected with a landscape of high blood sugar and blunted immune responses? It is an open question whether the human condition *has* or *is* an underlying condition; but it is this human condition that SARS-CoV-2 explores. The anthropogenically contoured living surface – if we imagine the population's lungs as a fairly continuous surface from an airborne viral point of view – is as much a part of the event that is the Covid-19 pandemic as any origin point of this or that virus among millions of viruses. Metabolism today does not reflect the workings of a nature underlying human life, but is nature after industrialization, which is its own historically specific formation. See antioxidants, shift work, emulsifiers, etc. above. This is the historical-metabolic body of Covid.

Five. Intellectual friendship.

June. I have a robust schematic in my head of the Fellows at Wiko in 2021/2022 that sorts fairly clearly into those people who asked questions and those who did not ask questions. I don't mean ask questions in colloquium, but in conversation. Then there is a second-tier sorting: those people who ask questions about work and thought, in a manner that suggests that *they actually want to know*, and to tell you, similarly, what they have been thinking about. A few people were willing to really get into ideas or research problems or things they'd read recently. These few have become friends for life. Even one such new

bond would be more than a person could hope for in a year, really, and I feel a universe of gratitude for such gain.

July and the loop of a year. When you walk the streets and forest paths around Wiko, you frequently end up on the same street you turned off of earlier. Just at a different point.



NO END IN SIGHT
SABINA LEONELLI

Sabina Leonelli is Professor of Philosophy and History of Science at the University of Exeter, where she directs the Centre for the Study of the Life Sciences (Egenis) and leads the governance strand of the Institute for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence. She is a Fellow of the Alan Turing Institute, Academia Europaea, and Académie Internationale de Philosophie de la Science and is Editor-in-Chief of *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences*. Her research concerns the epistemology, history, and governance of data-intensive science; modelling and data integration across the biological, environmental, and health sciences, with a focus on the use of organisms as models and on the relations between plant and agricultural research; and the significance of open science policies and related evaluation systems within the global – and highly unequal – research landscape. She also has an interest in science policy and served as advisor for national and international bodies including the European Commission. Her books include *Data-Centric Biology: A Philosophical Study* (2016, winner of the Lakatos Award and the Patrick Suppes Prize in the Philosophy of Science), *La Ricerca Scientifica nell'Era dei Big Data* (2018), *Data Journeys in the Sciences* (2020, with Niccolò Tempini), *Model Organisms* (2020, with Rachel Ankeny), and *Data in Society: A Critical Introduction* (2021, with Anne Beaulieu). – Address: Egenis Office, Byrne House, University of Exeter, St. German's Road, Exeter, EX4 4PJ, United Kingdom. E-mail: s.leonelli@exeter.ac.uk.

A bright morning in October 2021. Distracted by a sudden change of light, heralding an approaching storm, I turn towards the ample windows of my office in the Neubau – and I am startled by a shower of shimmering leaves, falling gracefully at irregular intervals,

from the trees that envelop the building. The leaves are travelling sideways, pushed by the autumn breeze, painting the street a thick, solid yellow. The sight arrests me. And I find myself interrupting whatever it is I am typing on my computer, standing up, listening to the golden rain. It may seem peculiar to remember this moment, out of all the wonderful experiences of our year at Wiko – the intense seminar discussions, the apartments and gardens of the gorgeous Villa Walther, the parks and lakes and forests, the convivial German classes and Daniel’s budding Wiko choir, Berlin’s theatre halls and playgrounds and restaurants and musea. But this was a rare moment, especially since the start of the coronavirus pandemic (not to speak of the unfolding Brexit chaos), where I could allow myself to stop and let thoughts wander, unprompted but fostered by the many surprising conversations that marked my first few weeks on Wallotstraße. At that moment, having gained some distance from the stress of attempting a move in the midst of a pandemic, it became clearer to me what a year at Wiko could and would mean.

Of course, coronavirus utterly derailed the expectations I had formed back in 2019 when planning my prospective visit. My first term was all about picking up old threads and weaving anew, hospitality truly fuelling and replenishing me, my partner, and our children. Mornings of friendly greetings and helpful chats with Maike and Vera while picking up the mail, while books long yearned for magically appeared on library shelves. Evenings with the extended Wiko family, which grew increasingly relaxed as we got to know and love each other’s quirks, passions, and struggles. My kids blossomed through the daily ritual of ringing their friends’ doorbells and running off to new adventures – in the backyard at first, then the neighbourhood as their confidence grew. Dunia, Dennis, and the brilliant kitchen staff provided food invariably infused with care, that rarest of ingredients. Frequent visits to the Komische Oper, Deutsche Oper, Philharmonie, and most of all the phenomenal Staatsoper nourished our soul after a long period without live music.

Still, this was not a time of slow contemplation. Reflection was highly compressed – the stimulation of the daily conversations over food, colloquia, Three Culture Forums, evening lectures, and workshops at Wiko alone provided a kaleidoscope of topical, cutting-edge research across all fields to dip my toes into, not to speak of the wider Berlin/German intellectual environment to explore in its latest configurations, despite the many empty buildings due to the pandemic. And after the Christmas break, the world made its way to Grunewald in other, less gentle ways. COVID picked up again in early January, leaving a toll on my family, as my daughter in particular got rather sick, and shifting

Wiko life online for a few weeks; leg troubles, which had pursued me since breaking my knee at the start of the pandemic, intensified in ways that ended up requiring surgery; and on February 24, the horrific Russian war on Ukraine started, bringing a new shift in worldview and a torrent of refugees into Berlin – including some artists and scholars whom Wiko was able to bring into our midst, together with their families. The unfolding tragedy made being part of this community ever more significant for me, an unexpected source of hope through daily evidence of kindness, fairness, courage, and the opportunity to learn from other Fellows, especially those with experiences of exile.

As I write, the war continues, its seismic impact on the planet reverberating ever more aggressively, making much of my research feel at once insignificant and urgent. What a time to be working on what the concepts of openness and diversity may mean for scientific research – and to interrogate Bergson’s and Popper’s questions around what an Open Society could and should be, for science to function humanely and reliably. I had originally planned to work on the notion of epistemic diversity this year, that is, the extent to which cultivating a variety of perspectives and methods to acquire knowledge (as well as a pluralist understanding of what knowledge amounts to in the first place) may be constitutive of reliable and robust practices of inquiry. My starting point was the varied manifestations of notions of diversity and their implications for existing assumptions about “best practice” for scientific evaluation – especially assumptions made in well-resourced research contexts, where the availability and necessity of cutting-edge technologies and related skills are taken and given for granted and often used as proxy for quality assessment. Partly thanks to a European Research Council project that unexpectedly got funded starting this year, this question became intertwined with a study of current policies and practices of Open Science, leading to an even broader interrogation of the framing and evaluation of research methods across locations and knowledge systems – and of the extent to which a common commitment to openness (and related principles such as transparency and reproducibility) can help safeguard the epistemic and social value of science to an increasingly endangered planet. Discussing these issues with other Fellows (and their equally wonderful partners!) was enlightening and inspiring, with many collaborations forming to accompany this work as it proceeds beyond this year.

Some of that thinking took the form of a short book on *The Philosophy of Open Science*, where I argue against the conceptualisation of openness as a form of “sharing” and instead for a renewed emphasis on the conditions under which those contributing to scientific research can meaningfully connect and improve their interactions with the world.

This understanding of openness, I contend, is intrinsically discriminating, since it is explicitly aimed to support not only epistemic diversity but also epistemic justice – a plea for a reflexive, politically charged standpoint rather than easily instrumentalised appeals to egalitarianism. Another strand of thinking was a complete reframing of a book I had planned (a short version of which already exists in Italian) on the epistemology of data-intensive research and its deep roots in the transnational mobilisation of data as objects. This manuscript remains far from completed: what I ended up with is a rewritten outline for a book intended to articulate an understanding of empiricism as grounded on the absence of evidence, rather than on its presence. My focus is shifting decisively towards the gaps, the indeterminacies, the incompleteness of whatever humans (and especially scientists) use as a document to study the world – a change in worldview that takes account of the by-now obvious problems with the rhetoric and promises of big data and data-driven research, while also pointing to the key interpretative role played by highly diverse forms of knowledge in producing and contextualising meaning. Here too, I can't thank my fellow Fellows enough for the inspiration that they provided for this shift, with a special mention for those who do not rely on writing as their main form of expression: from Liza's music, steeped in a multi-layered, embodied understanding of the connections between human and non-human experiences in and of nature across many traditions, including the loss and puzzlement that is the origin of any inquiry; to Nuno's cross-media renditions of humanity, infused with dissatisfaction in the most generative, generous ways – the play of life as constant seeking, falling, reacting, yearning.

My own material engagement with the world, which informs and grounds my philosophical writings, also came in two interrelated strands this year. The first investigated the implications of COVID-19 data-sharing for epidemiology and public health, resulting in a forthcoming *Report on Reproducibility* and a paper on how data-intensive exchange is changing epidemiologists' understanding of the environment. The second strand focused on the collection, management, and re-use of crop science data, and particularly attempts by various international bodies over the last forty years to establish links between existing plant data infrastructures around the world, in the hope of supporting agricultural development – work that culminated in an edited volume on *Responsible Plant Data Linkage* and its significance for planetary health. The history of crop science – and especially its data-semantic systems – is a rich platform to examine the intersections between biological, methodological, and cultural forms of diversity. What names do we use to label plant traits, and who is the “we” assumed by the increasingly automated systems for trait

recognition (and related data collection) used by farmers, breeders, and agrotechnology companies around the world? How are naming choices shaped by the scientific knowledge base and political economy of current regimes of agricultural development, in their novel intersections with digital infrastructures and related institutions? How are such naming choices positioned vis-à-vis the history of plant trait descriptors, on the one hand, and biological taxonomies, on the other – and what kind of multi-species histories do these classifications nourish? And how can biological research processes facilitate the development of sustainable, responsible food systems, given the dominance of technology-fuelled, high-yield monocultures as a model for agricultural development? These questions become particularly haunting when considering crops such as cassava, which are increasingly recognised for their nutritional potential under conditions of climate change, but are not (yet?) global mass products or protagonists of crop research efforts. Studying the evolution of research on cassava provides a window on the transition from small-hold local agriculture to transnational techno-scientific market regimes and may help to fashion data systems that are explicitly value-laden and supportive of agroecology and community-supported agriculture. In that sense, I was particularly glad this year to finally round up an argument for what I am calling “process-sensitive” crop-naming systems, an approach that recognises the crucial role of dynamic classifiers and data architectures in confronting epistemic diversity and injustice within data sharing technologies (published in *Philosophy, Theory, and Practice in Biology*). This is but one attempt to put philosophical thinking about openness and empiricism into practice, while also learning more – and from a widely varied array of voices and experiences – about how such concepts could and should be framed. The gift of Wiko is that I now carry the voices of my *amazing* Wiko Fellows with me, conversations and collaborations that will be continued well beyond our year in Berlin – a delightful beginning for a choral composition with no end in sight.



LEARNING THROUGH DANCING LIZA LIM

Liza Lim's music focusses on collaborative and transcultural practices. Ideas of beauty, ecological connection, and ritual transformation are ongoing concerns in her compositional work. Her four operas: *The Oresteia* (1993), *Moon Spirit Feasting* (2000), *The Navigator* (2007), and *Tree of Codes* (2016) and the major ensemble work *Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus* (2018) explore themes of desire, memory, and the uncanny. Widely commissioned by some of the world's preeminent orchestras and ensembles, Lim is Sculthorpe Chair of Australian Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. Her music has been published by Casa Ricordi (Milan, London, Berlin) since 1992. Website: lizalimcomposer.com. – Address: Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 1 Conservatorium Rd, NSW 2000, Australia. E-mail: lizalimcomposer@gmail.com.

What is a Wiko education?

LL: An expansion of mind and heart: learning through dancing with things; finding inner freedom; cultivating fellowship by conversing and dining together.

Dancing with things?

LL: I was immersed in the dance of the changing seasons and took hundreds of photos of the view from my study window in the *Remise* of the Weiße Villa: of flaming autumn colours; of a gang of great tits, sparrows, shy red robins, and *Eichhörnchen* (there is no more perfect name for squirrels) who came to munch on the birdseed I put out on the sill

during the surprisingly brief winter season; and of the procession of spring flowers rising and falling on the lawn topped by showy fanfares of magnolias and rhododendrons. All of these were object lessons in composition that taught me so much about temporal polyphony, about timing and the vitality of organic form.

Nuno Ramos: “If embodiment is everywhere, then notation should be everywhere. Can this curtain be notation or that dried tree outside?”

LL: Musical notation came alive for me as never before. I’ve always had a lively, dialogic relation to notation, but this year, that interface of marks and traces of body on paper attained a stronger living presence. One of the first things I completed was a revision of the end of an orchestral work: *Mary/Transcendence after Trauma*, the middle part of a large cycle of works, *Annunciation Triptych* (2019–22). I saw that the ending I had was too passive and too sure of itself, and so I opened up the last bars and found myself able to write a music of defiant doubt in the form of a surging orchestra that lets loose three wayward trumpets in its receding sea foam. I also completed the last part of the trilogy: *Fatimah/Jubilation of Flowers*, setting music to words from Etel Adnan’s *The Spring Flowers Own*, and again, the garden showed me ways of orchestrating a tidal push and pull. It was an incredible experience to be able to hear the full cycle played by the WDR Symphony Orchestra conducted by Cristian Măcelaru with soprano Emily Hindrichs in Cologne at the end of April 2022. The work was recorded under the guidance of the exceptional *Tonmeister* Günther Wollersheim and producer Harry Vogt, for release on the Kairos CD label.

I remember the dancing...

LL: I think that was my proudest achievement: getting a room full of academics and scientists up to dance the Swedish Polska in my colloquium session with the help of violinist Karin Hellqvist and choreographer Hannah Loewenthal. Our shared experience of dancing the triple-time Polska with its hesitating second step became the experiential basis for thinking together about embodiment and ritual and musical practice. The questions and discussions that ensued are still reverberating in my mind – here’s a sample (edited) selection:

Francisco Bethencourt: “I connected to the dance through my memory of Salsa. How can dance be reintroduced into your music and how could this dance be a departure from previous memories?”

Anthony Ossa-Richardson: “In that dance I felt there was dialectic of embodiment/dis-embodiment. Is there a doubleness there for you?”

Ulinka Rublack: “As a historian I think of dance as registering historical experience; your rendering seems to me to be an exploration of the ghostly. My question is around what these dances registered when they first appeared [as wedding music] at a time when marriage was not necessarily a joyous occasion.”

Daniel Schönflug: “The dance is shared cultural knowledge with layers of inscription/references. But what I see in our bodies is a cacophony of knowledge.”

Mark Hauber: “I didn’t dance; I would have fallen over because there’s an inscription of Hungarian rhythms in my body that feels ‘3’ differently from the Swedish dance.”

Ilya Kliger: “The dance had inclusiveness and was life-affirming, but also contained disruption, distortion, parody, satire, harshness, irony.”

Sabina Leonelli: “...so notation is controlling time?”

LL: “Yes, but I think more in terms of ‘time textures’ rather than counted or measured time. The dance contains ghosts – Karin is recalling past dances, past iterations of her experience as a player. Through its repetitions, interpolations (pockets of time), and deliberate technical and temporal slippages (distortions), the musical form tries to open up a space in which the player can come into a ‘channelled’ relation with both the past and the future.”

Karin Hellqvist: “Freedom sounds different. In this music there is deviation on purpose; things grow when one dares to leave being super-true to the score.”

LL: In partial answer to Francisco’s comment: “Maybe through the music, one is remaking the body – what art can do is ‘re-imagine us into different spaces.’ In the end, the musician *is* the dancer.”

Did freedom become a theme for you?

LL: We are confronted by questions of freedom all the time. Leaving Australia after two years of pandemic lockdowns and encountering a reopened Berlin of concerts, theatre, opera, and in-person gatherings was an ecstatic experience. But of course, Covid continued/continues to shadow everything and the world became even darker when the war in Ukraine

broke out. I was impressed by the way Berliners, Wiko as an institution, and Fellows mobilised in support of the refugees pouring into the city. I felt the melancholy of my colleagues, particularly Mohammad Al Attar, whose Syrian story foreshadows so much of the brutality that is unfolding; the emotional complexity faced by Fellows from Russia and Belarus, and soon after, the shattering grief of guests from Ukraine, particularly the composer Valentyn Sylvestrov, who was in residence for a time with members of his family.

And do you reflect the times in your music?

I think that's inevitable... but art is not just some transcription of "reality." It often takes a more indirect route with mysterious forces at play, and its "truths" can resonate in quite unforeseen ways and at unexpected times.

The topic of grief has been a thread in my recent work, particularly the perspective that the Buddhist scholar and ecologist, Joanna Macey, articulates so well in her teachings, in which "owning" or being present to and a witness to grief allows one to reframe it as a compassionate "suffering-with" in order to reconnect to life. The other side of the coin of grief is therefore a kind of hard-won joy... I was so fortunate to work with the great pianist based in Berlin, Tamara Stefanovich, on the piano concerto *World as Lover, World as Self* (titled after Macey's book) that premiered at the Donaueschinger Musiktage in autumn 2021.

I picked up on some of these themes in the work I wrote for the American JACK Quartet towards the end of my residency. The work begins with a section called "Cat's Cradle: 3 diagrams of grief": sonic gestures of percussive shredding, weeping lamentation, and laboured breathing becoming song. The music tracks paths guided by the materiality of the instruments and bodies involved, and it builds form by exploring the relational possibilities of string as a substance – entangling, knotting, weaving... and finally nest-making. The last part of the piece is inspired by this article in the *New York Times*: "Why Birds Are the World's Best Engineers" (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/science/why-birds-are-the-worlds-best-engineers.html>), which describes the weird "magic" of mechanical synthesis. Birds use their bodies to compress, rub against, and create friction with sticky, stringy things until individual filaments start to behave collectively, "jamming" together and giving rise to emergent form. The chaotic "stick bomb" of a nest retains just enough energy from the bird's activity for the whole ensemble to maintain its shape.

Speaking of "serendipitous conversations," I have to thank bird specialist Prof. Mark Hauber for this interest in bird behaviour, and papyrologist Prof. Sofia Torallas Tovar

who piqued my interest in the cascading formats (notations!) of Ancient Egyptian spells of increase and decrease that fed into the structure of the expanding and contracting repetitions that occur in the string quartet.

The work, *String Creatures*, will be premiered at the Lucerne Summer Festival before coming to the Berliner Festspiele's orchestra festival Musikfest Berlin in September 2022, which makes a full circle to the Wiko year.

In amongst the turmoil of the world, Wiko was a House of Grace. I am so grateful to all of the staff, steered by the personification of graceful leadership, Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger. I was dazzled from the first moment by the way we were introduced to everyone on the Wiko staff across all areas by the academic and administrative staff: special thanks to Daniel!, Jana!, Katharina!, Iris!, Petria!, Nina!, to the staff from the library (Dominik!, Anja!, Stefan!, Kirsten!, Timo!, and others), the reception (Vera!, Maike!, Deniz!, Marie!), to the restaurant and kitchen (Dunia!!), to cleaning (Anna!), to IT support (Gesine!, Frank!), to estates (Dennis!), and many areas of "backstage" activity (sorry not to mention everyone). An institution's culture is created in practice, and at Wiko, there is an extraordinary practice of attentive care and support for everyone working there as well as for the intellectual, creative, and daily lives of the Fellows – something to aspire to in our usual academic and artistic spaces...

My fellow Fellows became like family and I was so moved when they and even some of their kids rocked up to attend my Berlin concerts: *Extinction Events and Dawn Chorus* at the Philharmonie and *Sex Magic* at the Akademie der Künste. This performance was part of the "Speicher des Hörens" Festival, where I had the pleasure of having a public conversation about memory, time, listening, and ritual with the composer Isabel Mundry – in Wiko's 40-year history, Isabel was the first woman composer-in-residence (2002/2003); I'm the second in this "lineage" and, pleasingly, the third is Lucia Ronchetti (2022/2023). Then there was the customary Wiko *Gesprächskonzert* that I gave together with the French cellist Séverine Ballon.

I had an incredibly productive year and had the privilege of being able to attend many performances of my music in Berlin and throughout Europe. But the more valuable part from an artistic point of view was having enough time and mental space to gain an inkling of new directions for my work in the longer term. One of the best (and unexpected) compositional experiences of the year, though, was the instant group composition that Fellows contributed to in the colloquium, which was performed then and there by Karin Hellqvist. When I listen back to the music, it's like a giant Proustian madeleine in which

the sounds vividly bring back each person who got up to add a bar to the music, along with the discussion, laughter, and shared insights of the moment.

Publications:

The following compositions are published by Ricordi Berlin:

World as Lover, World as Self (2021), for solo piano and orchestra

Mary/Transcendence after Trauma (2022), for orchestra

Fatimah/Jubilation of Flowers (2022), for soprano, orchestra, and singing audience

One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin) (2022), solo violin with low octave string

String Creatures (2022), for string quartet

Nautilus (2022), for solo contraforte

Articles:

Hellqvist, K., L. Lim, and S. Brodsky (2022). "Elementens Musik." *Portable Gray* 5, no. 1: 83–84.

Lim, L. (2022). "One and the Other (Speculative Polskas for Karin)." *Portable Gray* 5, no. 1: 88–105.



BECAUSE IT WAS YOU, BECAUSE IT WAS ME ANNA MARMODORO

Anna Marmodoro is Full Professor of Philosophy and holds the Chair of Metaphysics in the Department of Philosophy at Durham University (UK). She is concomitantly an Associate Member of the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Oxford, where she worked for a decade before taking up her current position at Durham in 2016. Anna specializes in two main research areas: metaphysics on the one hand, and ancient, late antiquity, and medieval philosophy on the other. She has also strong research interests in the philosophy of science and of religion. In metaphysics, she is particularly interested in the nature of properties, dispositions, relations; causation; the metaphysics of substance; composition and structure. In the history of philosophy, she has worked on an eclectic collection of topics: Anaxagoras, Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, the Stoics, Gregory of Nyssa, Thomas Aquinas, and others. Anna has published monographs, edited books and journal articles in all these areas. Her latest monograph is *Forms and Structure in Plato's Metaphysics* (Oxford University Press, 2021). She is currently working on a new one, *Properties in Ancient Metaphysics*, under contract with Cambridge University Press. Anna is also the co-founder and co-editor with Erasmus Mayr of the peer-reviewed journal *Dialogoi. Ancient Philosophy Today* (Edinburgh University Press). – Address: Department of Philosophy, Durham University, Stockton Road, Durham, DH1 3LE, United Kingdom. E-mail: anna.marmodoro@philosophy.durham.ac.uk.

I write my Yearbook entry just after having left Wiko, after ten amazing months. The last few days there were dominated by a collective sense of melancholy, turned into palpable sorrow when the very last dinner was announced. I was struck by how distressed we all

seemed to be at departure time, and I can only explain it as the B-side of our experience: flip over that sense of sorrow, and you'll discover the happiness of our stay there!

That everything would have gone so well wasn't obvious at the start of the year, when I met for the first time my Co-Fellows and the Wiko dream team: in a sense, every year and cohort of new Fellows at Wiko is an experiment in intellectual chemistry. But importantly, for each Fellow, too, a year at Wiko is an experiment of dislocation from the familiar in the pursuit of ambitious intellectual goals.

My own goals were for sure, I readily admit, *very* ambitious, because in a bout of extreme optimism at the start of the year, I not only set out to pursue the research plans I had submitted with my application to Wiko, but also aspired to write a new short monograph on a different research topic. I remember insisting with the relevant staff at Wiko, asking them to please change my web entry by adding a "Further" paragraph, which was in effect a second research plan for the year. And then came the wise words of Helga Nowotny, who visited Wiko at the beginning of the academic year and shared with us Woody Allen's line, "If you want to make God laugh, tell Him about your plans."

Yes, perhaps my initial plans for the year at Wiko might have made God laugh at how ambitious they were. But even if I did not achieve what I had specifically set out to achieve, I feel an exhilarating sense of success at the end of the year. Academically, it was a year of intellectual exploration and discoveries. Firstly, I consolidated my ground by finishing up a series of outstanding projects: a paper in defence of the philosophical soundness of the view according to which properties (such as being red, square, or human) are Aristotelian universals instantiated in concrete objects (this tomato, this table, Socrates); and a paper arguing for the "utility" of appealing to causal powers in our scientific and metaphysical explanations of the world. The final versions of both papers were tried out at events at which I was invited to speak: for instance, the annual meeting of the Società Italiana di Filosofia Analitica and the conference on "Connaissance philosophique & connaissance des essences" at the Collège de France. They are now published.

In the meantime, I laid the foundations of three new editorial projects: three edited collections on (as widely different topics as) Omnipresence; Artificial Dispositions; and the philosophy of Joachim of Fiore (an Italian thinker who flourished in the 12th century). (For the Fellows to come: this last idea was *not* inspired by the existence of a small Italian restaurant in Grunewald called "Trattoria Gioachino"; but the coincidence of there being such a restaurant in the neighbourhood was intriguing! Did they hold reading groups of Joachim's texts there after dinner? I never got to find out...)

As the good, happy routine of life at Wiko and Villa Walther started having a deeper, beneficial impact on me and the winter was setting in, I started the most adventurous of my philosophical undertakings this year and one of the most adventurous in my entire career thus far, and on a research topic that I had not anticipated I would investigate while at Wiko. The topic is as old as philosophy itself. It concerns the metaphysics of change and what the ancient thinkers of the first millennium BC thought about it. Change is an everyday phenomenon. Everything changes in nature. Yet, change is a challenge to metaphysicians, of all times. For change presupposes that what changes is one, but makes it different from itself, by changing it, still requiring it to be the same one. *Oneness is both presupposed and denied by change*; so, what is the number of change? I submit there is much to learn from the way the ancients thought about individuation and about counting things that change. I will say no more here, but... watch this space for more to come! As part of this research strand, I delved into the fantastically interesting metaphysics of Philolaus, an ancient Pythagorean philosopher whose work survived to us only in 11 fragments and, indirectly, in Plato's dialogue *Philebus*. The challenge of reconstructing a theory out of this slim textual evidence was irresistible and occupied me for a good part of the spring.

Spring in Berlin was lovely! Grunewald buzzed with life: birds, frogs, bunnies, and flowers, all around the lakes... As a *meta*-physician, I usually pay little attention to my physical surroundings; but the beauty of nature was impossible to ignore in Grunewald, and with it came a sense of extra vitality and energy – which I found myself investing in working on two different new research papers on late antique philosophy: one on Themistius (who flourished in the 4th century) and one on Gregory of Nyssa (also in the 4th century).

What about the rest of my research plans for the year at Wiko?? The first and initial project was to write on the origins of the mind-body problem, which I submit entered the history of philosophy due to an assumption made by Aristotle. Aristotle's assumption, which has been deeply influential, even on us today, is that only items within the same ontological category can interact causally (e.g. the physical with the physical, but not the physical with the mental). The second additional project I mentioned above was to write a short monograph on *Properties in Ancient Metaphysics*, as described in my Wiko video (<https://www.wiko-berlin.de/en/wikotheque/multimedia/anna-marmodoro>). Neither of the two initially envisaged projects was completed during my stay at Wiko. But they are in the making, and without Wiko they would not even have been initiated. Thanks to Wiko though, much more came to be in the making and has now been accomplished.

The serendipity of what has actually come to be accomplished during the year is a testimony to one of the qualities that I have appreciated the most in the academic approach that our current Rektorin, Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, and Daniel Schönplflug, Head of Academic Programs, embody at Wiko. They value, encourage, and support academic freedom. This freedom is above all what makes Wiko an ideal home for curious minds, brave explorations, and exciting discoveries.

And yet, Wiko is not the home of lonely researchers buried in their books and their studies. Wiko encourages interactions – in its “legendary” Tuesday Colloquia, but also around the dining table over a plate of lovely gnocchi, around the coffee machine, or while sipping a glass of wine on the balcony of Villa Jaffé. Hospitality at Wiko is generous and warm, and it materialises just by evoking the genie of the place, Dunia Najjar, and her formidable staff. And Wiko’s hospitality extends to every aspect of the Fellows’ well-being: from keeping us healthy and safe during the nth pandemic wave, to discovering for us and booking shows and museum tickets, to finding the ideal hairdresser, etc. Thank you to ALL of you at Wiko!! And especially to Vera Pfeffer and Maike Schaper.

Wiko is not a place on the map – Wiko is a place in the mind. A place that one *discovers* by being physically based at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin; but a “place” that one never leaves, even when leaving the Institute. Because it was all of you, because it was me, with all our individual ways of being colleagues and friends – that this is a place that I loved. A place of freedom, which I valued and will always feel to be home.

And the new ideas...? Here are some highlights from the research topics I mentioned above.

Instantiation – What is it, metaphysically, for a universal to be instantiated in a concrete particular? Philosophical controversy has been on-going since the beginning of philosophy itself. I contribute a novel account of instantiation developed on the basis of Aristotelian premises (but departing from the mainstream interpretation according to which Aristotelian universals are instantiated by “combining” hylomorphically with matter). The key stance is that, for Aristotle, each substance is one, i.e. single (in addition to also being a non-recurrent particular). I show that for Aristotle, the oneness of substances is primitively assumed, and, importantly, cannot be derived from the composition of parts, not even holistic composition. However, parts undermine oneness; it follows that instantiated properties are *not parts* of substances. However, if they are not parts of the substances they are in, what are they? Aristotle shows they are *qualifications* of the substances they are in.

However, don't qualifications undermine the singleness of a substance? I show that Aristotle makes sure they do not. The way he does it is new, then and now. Qualifications are hybrid entities, sacrificing their own discreteness *qua* properties, while adopting the discreteness of the (metaphysical) subject they qualify. But then, how can a universal quality *recur* in many substances, if, when instantiated, it assimilates the discreteness of each of these substances? This is a key Aristotelian stance: the *quality* recurs, not its *qualifications*. Qualities are *abstracted* from the instantiated qualifications of similar objects, e.g. "wisdom" is abstracted from many "wise" people; "wisdom" (the universal) is individuated bottom-up from its instances, by abstraction.

Dynamic Powers: The Black Box of Metaphysics – Change does happen in the world. Powers/forces/potentialities are posited in physics and in metaphysics as the "engines" of change. Without their *dynamic* contribution, that change happens would be a mystery in nature. And yet, no explanation of what makes powers dynamic has been offered in physics or in metaphysics, including power ontology. Their *dynamism* is always assumed as primitively given, when positing powers. I identify the dynamism of powers as the Black Box of metaphysics and investigate what is possible to find out about it.

Philolaus – I believe Philolaus' theory of harmony has been greatly influential in the history of philosophy and the sciences. Here is the difference between Democritus and Philolaus. Democritus' atoms are an example of how to articulate reality into parts, thereby grounding number on reality – a world of atoms is a readily countable world. However, Philolaus upped the ante by providing a general model of how number can be grounded on reality by showing that *number is grounded on reality by setting limits on the unlimited*. This is a *schema* of how to ground number on reality – the limits set boundaries onto the unlimited, thereby articulating it into segments/parts that can be counted. What is significant in my redescription of what Philolaus proposes is that the limits bring to the unlimited their own *individuation criterion*, which is *independent of/extrinsic to the nature of the unlimited*. Let me explain: If we look at today's Set Theory, which in my understanding is an application of Philolaus' model of "numbering" reality, we may consider a set, say the Set of Green things. *What* every member of this set is, is determined by its own individuation criterion, and not by the colour green. That is exactly how it is with Philolaus' limits, too. They each bring in an individuation criterion that is independent of the continuum they articulate, thereby bringing number to this continuum.

Themistius – The most surprising assumption of Themistius is that *what is truly good* is one and the same for all philosophical theories of his time; he offers an analogy between philosophy and medicine: all doctors concur on what health is, for all men; and yet, there are multiple ways in which one may lack health and multiple ways to restore it; similarly with the true good which is one and the same for all philosophers. Themistius assumes that there is a single über-theory of the good for all philosophical schools; and all ancient ethical theories are merely ways to get people to come to be as close as possible (given their conditions) to understanding it. I have a novel explanation to offer of what Themistius meant by this (to us very surprising!) claim.

Gregory of Nyssa – The challenge I focus on is Gregory's account of the *creation of matter* by God and his philosophical response to difficulties for his account that stem from Aristotle's *Stripping-Away Argument* (SAA). I examine, in parallel, the account of the creation of matter offered by Basil of Cesarea. I argue that both philosophers *use* Aristotle's argument to build and establish their respective ontologies specifically on the nature of matter; but additionally, that they also *argue against* certain conclusions they derive from SAA. Both Gregory and Basil read Aristotle's SAA as requiring an underlying *characterless material substratum*, which God would not have been able to create. I argue against Gregory and Basil, showing that Aristotle's SAA is not committed to the conclusions they draw. I also examine Calcidius' response to Aristotle's SAA, and I argue that the way I understand Aristotle's argument was available, at least implicitly, at the time of Gregory and Basil, in Calcidius' own way of engaging with SAA.



VERY LIKE A SANDWICH
C. JESSICA E. METCALF

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Toward the middle of our lives, as Alyx reminded me to read, we came to ourselves in a dark wood, for the straight way was lost. Or rather, for me, the way was too straight, I had filed my mind to a point that could think only of the pandemic, I had been working too hard and too single-mindedly, and did not know how not to. In the first colloquium (Ulinka's), a flourish of ostrich feathers and the rampantly oblique questions that followed (none more splendidly angled than from our post-Cartesian philosopher, Sophie) delightfully revealed a thousand meandering far-from-straight paths. At our first dinner, a courteous Ilya Kl. (very perfectly, one of two Ilyas) layered more magic around the mystery of one of my vast loves (Henry James), which, as we all know and Anthony reminded us, Can Have Only One Meaning.

And what followed delivered: Adrian, writing from the Death Star, heroic crabs from Tatenda, the wonderful challenge of introducing the brilliance of Elisa's mathematical models of our paradoxical integuments, steamships with Constantin, unexpected music and the obliquely revealed magic of how music is written with Liza (a sad bridal song), magic (but quite literally magic) with spellcasting Sofia, and Kullu, fleet-footed across mountain ranges of all kinds. And when the pandemic came back into my working life

(as it had to), Sanyu reframed it for me entirely by saying so simply but so clearly that all of it comes down to intimacy, or rather, the breaking of intimacy.

Winter came down. The dog, Svevo, and I started taking our morning walks with Hannah, a loop that turned left out of Villa Walther, past lakes and villas and up to the train station, with its memorial, and then through the *terrain vague* behind it to loop back down to her office. These conversations brought a new set of curiosities to marvel over from what we had been reading, or a new, fascinating angle on the history of a term I'd been using unthinkingly for years (I might perhaps have guessed that the term "sensitive windows" had more history than hinted at by its dry immunological sense, and so it proved). Then winter entrenched itself. My brother visited under steely skies – and my brother caught COVID (or COVID caught him). One day he had symptoms, and so we tested him, and he tested positive.

Vera and Maike rallied magnificently to help us sort out the logistics of what had to happen (the rules and the specificities of the rules were enormously bewildering at that point in time). My brother was housed in the basement of Villa Jaffé. Dunia supplied us with food for him – indeed supplied us all with food, thoughtfully, calling us up when we forgot to ask, since we were also isolating. We walked over from Villa Walther to pick up food from the kitchen and then passed food to him through the window. He stood in the bathroom, looking up at us. We would rub our hands against the cold and talk for a while. Wiko was vastly supportive, but it was a strange and anxious time. In the evenings, walking back from seeing my brother, I would sometimes see the fox. It would trot by, light and busy, at the start of its nighttime, at the other end of which it might meet Mohammad, heading home. Ten long days later, my brother tested negative, and thus released himself and flew home. On his last day, as we cycled through Grunewald, we saw eight wild boar running across a hill.

Omicron swelled and abated. Life continued. German lessons continued. Eva was endlessly patient with me. Ilya and Sophie and Anthony and I met and read Klemperer. I felt a little more possessed by German, as Nuno would put it, but my stammering tricks not to lose the flow of my German thoughts were always and stubbornly French (euuh). My reading rambled from Anthony's colloquium to Valéry, which wandered me back to Rilke ("Diese Tage, die leer dir scheinen / und wertlos für das All, / haben Wurzeln zwischen den Steinen / und trinken dort überall"). I felt that I spent a lot of time wandering through quiet days. History showed up on the outside of things, and I fell in love with Berlin, outside and in; inside the museums, where Menzel's curiously edge-side angles on forgotten windows were an odd foreshadowing of Guy and his colloquium.

Amid the ludicrous springiness of spring in Grunewald, I took to a routine of mornings spent always in a different café, in a different corner of Berlin, riding out on my bike, or the M19 bus, or the S7 train, and then returning to lunch with my fellow Fellows. Mostly, I applied those mornings – in Kreuzberg, or Charlottenburg, or Schöneberg, or Mitte, or Prenzlauer Berg – to quietly resetting the foundations of my knowledge, reading in and around and through the topics that I’m supposed to know but had run through so headlong over the last decades that I’d never stopped to look.

I was very much at peace with this gentle pace (and have since turned much of that rumination into a text for teaching) but unexpectedly, aspects of Wiko fed back to the more immediate questions I had half set aside. The Three Cultures Forum on biodiversity, a workshop led by Dieter Ebert on co-evolution, and conversations with Sabina, Ulinka, and Eva provided me with new thoughts and new angles in thinking about the microbiome. With Britt, I consummated a somersault in perspective that I had long ago started and never completed to consider how hosts are shaped by rather than shape their microbes. I finished a few more papers about the pandemic virus; I even saw my way to thinking about it a bit more.

Over the spring, the days became blue days (as Sandra would say) and we started to swim (except for Sophie, who had been swimming since the beginning). Mark guided us through a cycle of swans. And then, Mark stayed, but we had to leave.

I have returned to what Anthony taught me is the *Abendland*. And every Tuesday, I miss how we all tilted forwards in our chairs and turned our heads when Nuno’s question was called.

So.

Begriff.

Genau.

Works completed:

Rice, B. L., J. Lessler, C. McKee, and C. J. E. Metcalf (2022). “Why do some coronaviruses become pandemic threats when others do not?” *PLoS Biology* 20, no. 5: e3001652.

Metcalf, C. J. E., B. Tepekule, M. Bruijning, and B. Koskella (2022). “Hosts, microbiomes and the evolution of critical windows.” *Evolution Letters* 5: 412–425.



GEGEN DEN KRIEG DENKEN UND HANDELN KATERYNA MISHCHENKO

Kateryna Mishchenko ist Autorin, Verlegerin und Kuratorin aus Kiew. Sie studierte Deutsche Philologie an der Kyiv National Linguistic University, wo sie später kurz als Dozentin tätig war. Danach arbeitete sie als Übersetzerin, unter anderem von literarischen und kulturtheoretischen Texten, und war Mitbegründerin der Zeitschrift für Literatur, Kunst und Gesellschaftskritik *Prostory*. Parallel dazu war sie als Dolmetscherin für die deutsche NGO Connect plus e. V. tätig, die Fortbildungs- und Aufklärungskampagnen zu HIV/Aids in der Ukraine durchgeführt hat. Seit 2014 ist sie Verlegerin im unabhängigen Verlag Medusa. Sie kuratiert Veranstaltungen an der Schnittstelle von Kunst und Politik. Ihre Essays sind in internationalen Zeitschriften, Anthologien und im Buch *Ukrainische Nacht* (Spector Books, 2015) erschienen. – E-Mail: kat.mishchenko@gmail.com.

Nach Berlin kam ich genau einen Monat nach Beginn des großen Kriegs in der Ukraine, ohne zu wissen, wann und wie ich zurückkommen würde. Die Ratlosigkeit, das verlorene Zeitgefühl, die einsame Mutterschaft und die aus dem alten Leben stammenden Arbeitspläne brachte ich mit ins Wissenschaftskolleg und sollte hier ein neues Konzept nicht nur meiner Arbeit, sondern auch meiner ganzen Lebensorganisation entwickeln.

Eine der zentralen Fragen, mit denen ich konfrontiert war, war, was nach allen Geschehnissen des Krieges relevant bleibt oder werden kann, für wen ich arbeite und wie ich meine Ressourcen nutzen kann, um meine Landsleute zu unterstützen. In meinem Land wurde Körperliches wieder radikal präsent, sowohl auf politischer als auch auf existenzieller Ebene. Die Konstellation von Millionen ukrainischer Körper wurde zum

wichtigsten Faktor in diesem Krieg. Die Relevanz des Diskursiven war für mich fragwürdig und bleibt immer noch sekundär.

Es gibt heute im ukrainischen Diskurs Wörter wie Kultur- oder Informationsfront. Einerseits verdecken sie die Privilegien von Intellektuellen, die nicht in der Armee sind (wobei viele auch dort kämpfen), andererseits fördern sie eine bestimmte Form der Militarisierung geistiger Arbeit, die von ähnlichen Algorithmen wie in sozialen Netzwerken gesteuert wird. Die Militarisierung kann man nicht wirklich vermeiden, wenn man sich der Tatsache bewusst wird, dass man der heutigen russischen Gewaltpolitik nur mit einer eigenen Armee entgegentreten kann. Ist es dann möglich, die Militarisierung als eine organisierende oder disziplinierende Stärke anzusehen und nicht als Logik des Denkens?

Als Frage formuliere ich meine eigene Strategie, mit der Militarisierung umzugehen. Damit verbinde ich heute meine Verantwortung den Ukrainer*innen gegenüber, die ihr Leben riskieren oder es verloren haben. Ich weiß, dass meine Sicherheit keine Normalität mehr ist, dass sie den Menschen in meinem Land zu verdanken ist, die kämpfen, und denjenigen, die mich nach Deutschland eingeladen haben. Ich lasse auch den unlösbaren Konflikt oder die ungerechte Trennlinie zwischen den Lebenden und Sterbenden in diesem Krieg zu. Das ist die Position, von der aus ich versuche, meine Arbeit zu organisieren.

Die einsame innere Landschaft der Menschen in einem Land zwischen Revolution und Krieg, das Hauptthema meiner essayistischen Recherche, kam mir plötzlich zu nah, um damit intellektuell und emotional arbeiten zu können. Deswegen waren meine ersten Arbeitsschritte mit kuratorischer und diskursiver Arbeit für die deutsche Öffentlichkeit verbunden. Ich habe für deutschsprachige Medien geschrieben und an vielen Veranstaltungen zum Krieg, seinen Folgen, seinen Hintergründen, zur deutschen Politik in diesem Zusammenhang, über die christliche Dimension der Kriegserfahrung usw. teilgenommen. Über einzelne Projekte, die in diesen Monaten initiiert wurden, von denen aber die meisten noch nicht abgeschlossen sind, möchte ich mehr schreiben.

Das erste Projekt, mit dem ich ab April 2022 beschäftigt war, heißt „Schlaflos. Ukrainische Krieggisillustrationen“. Es sollte eine Ausstellung von ukrainischen Zeichner*innen und Illustrator*innen sein, die aus dem Krieg über eigene Erfahrungen und die von anderen berichten. In Kooperation mit der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in der Ukraine entwickelte ich eine Art Bausatz für Ausstellungen, der 25 Bilddateien und einen begleitenden Text umfasst. Dieser Satz kann unkompliziert produziert werden und damit für diverse Austragungsorte relevant sein. Nicht nur Galerien, sondern auch NGOs mit kleineren Räumlichkeiten könnten somit die Ausstellung organisieren.

Poster und Illustrationen kann man als schnelle Medien bezeichnen, die ganz unmittelbar auf Ereignisse reagieren und zu aktivistischen Zwecken genutzt werden können. In den ersten Wochen des Krieges sind sehr viele Bilder entstanden und die Zeichner*innen stellten oft ihre Dateien online zur freien Nutzung – für Ausstellungen, Publikationen und Plakatierungen. Bei der Auswahl fokussierte ich mich auf die Geschichten von Zivilist*innen, auf ihren Alltag und ihre Weltwahrnehmung, die sich abrupt verändert hatten.

Der Titel der Ausstellung bezieht sich auf diese Veränderung. Die These, dass seit dem Tag, wo der große Krieg ausbrach, die Menschen keinen Schlaf mehr finden, geht über physische Erschöpfung und psychische Ängste hinaus und betont die Realität eines solchen Krieges im 21. Jahrhundert. Konnte er gestern noch als Alptraum beschrieben werden, so mussten heute die Ukrainer*innen aufwachen. „Schlaflos“ soll die Collage einer neuen Kriegsrealität vorstellen, auch wenn sie unbeständig und verwüstet ist. Trotz der schnellen Produktion verfolgten diese Arbeiten das Ziel, die Zeit zu verlangsamen, Erinnerungen und Erfahrungen festzuhalten, die drohen, verloren zu gehen.

Die Ausstellung wurde am 10. Oktober im Berliner Büro der Böll-Stiftung eröffnet. Ebenso wird sie in den regionalen Büros der Stiftung sowie bei deren Partnerorganisationen zu sehen sein.

Ein weiteres kuratorisches Projekt, an dem ich im Mai gearbeitet habe, hieß „Evakuierungszüge in Bildern“. Auf Einladung der Berliner Agentur Ostkreuz konzipierte ich das Begleitprogramm zur Fotografieausstellung *Nach der Flucht* von Johanna-Maria Fritz und Mila Teshaieva in der Zionskirche. Die beiden Fotografinnen dokumentierten über einige Wochen den Krieg in Kiew und außerhalb.

Das Veranstaltungsprogramm beschäftigte sich mit den Möglichkeiten einer Reflexion inmitten und außerhalb des Kriegsgeschehens. Es sollte ein empirischer und gleichzeitig analytischer Kommentar der Situation sein, in der die Dynamik des Krieges die Menschen dazu zwang, kurzfristig neue Identitäten und Rollenbilder anzunehmen. Es sind ja große und bunte Gruppen von Kämpfenden und Helfenden entstanden.

Die zentralen Fragen des Programms waren: Wie lassen sich diese durch den Kriegsausbruch aufgezwungenen Veränderungen beschreiben und darstellen, wenn Medien- und Kunschtschaffende selbst diesem Bedeutungswandel unterliegen, da auch sie unmittelbar in den Krieg involviert sind? Wie können wir über Kriege berichten? Welche (künstlerischen) Medien stehen uns dafür zur Verfügung?

Als Referent*innen wurden ukrainische und deutsche Medien- und Kunschtschaffende sowie Wissenschaftler*innen aus den Bereichen Kunstgeschichte und Slawistik eingeladen.

Die Reihe begann am 14. Mai 2022 mit der Veranstaltung „Was machen wir mit Mehl, wir brauchen eher einen Bäcker“, der Lesung des Tagebuchs der Evakuierung von Kateryna Iakovlenko, Autorin und Kunstwissenschaftlerin, und einem Gespräch mit Angelina Kariakina, Chefredakteurin der Nachrichtenredaktion des ukrainischen öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunksenders „Suspilne“, und dem Fotografen Florian Bachmeier, moderiert von Susanne Strätling, Professorin für Allgemeine und Vergleichende Literaturwissenschaft mit Schwerpunkt Slawische Literatur an der Freien Universität Berlin.

Darauf folgte die Podiumsdiskussion „Rettung der Kunst“ (25. Mai), eingeleitet von Sasha Kurmaz’ Soundinstallation *Alarming Symphony*, mit Kateryna Iakovlenko und der Kulturmanagerin Alona Karavai, moderiert von der Kunsthistorikerin Wendy M. K. Shaw. Abgeschlossen wurde das Programm am 28. Mai mit einem Konzert von Mavka & Jazz Aid Ukraine. Mavka, Iryna Laser, ist eine ukrainische Musikerin aus Hostomel, die mit ihrer Tochter nach Berlin gekommen ist, Jazz Aid Ukraine ist eine sehr aktive Initiative, die Solidaritätskonzerte organisiert und dabei viel mit geflüchteten Musiker*innen arbeitet.

Im April begann ich auch die Arbeit an einem weiteren Projekt, das Februar 2023 abgeschlossen werden soll. Es geht um einen Sammelband für den Suhrkamp Verlag mit dem Titel „Aus dem Nebel des Krieges“, den ich gemeinsam mit der Lektorin des Verlags Katharina Raabe herausgeben werde.

Das Buch ist eine Zwischenreflexion im weiterhin andauernden Krieg. Es hat den Anspruch, die Gleichzeitigkeit festzuhalten: die Zerstörung des Lebens und seiner Orte; die Selbstbehauptung und der Wille, eine neue, friedliche Heimat zu schaffen. Es versucht, die Situation der Menschen im Krieg zu beschreiben – den radikalen Umbruch, ihre Fähigkeit, sich in sehr unklaren Zeiten dennoch wiederzufinden. Ein weiteres wichtiges Thema ist die Erweiterung der Grausamkeit des heutigen Krieges gegen die Ukraine um die technologische und mediale Dimension. Die massenhaften Kriegsverbrechen sind online verfügbar und einfacher ermittelbar. Parallel finden gesellschaftliche Mobilisierung und Traumatisierung, solidarischer Widerstand gegen den heutigen Aggressor und die Geister der Vergangenheit statt. Der Sammelband enthält sozial- und kulturwissenschaftliche, essayistische, medienkritische und journalistische Texte von Autor*innen überwiegend, aber nicht nur aus der Ukraine.

Und das letzte Projekt, das ich in meinem Bericht erwähnen möchte, ist mein Blog für die Klassik Stiftung Weimar. Bei der Suche nach Möglichkeiten, über die eigene Kriegserfahrung zu sprechen, habe ich mich für kurze Texte entschieden, in denen ich kulturelle und mediale Aspekte des Krieges betrachte. Die Freiheit des Blogformats

möchte ich mit der frei assoziativen Reflexion verbinden, die die Diskurse und Darstellungen der heutigen Geschehnisse zugänglich machen kann. Bisher sind zwei Beiträge erschienen, weiter zu verfolgen sind sie unter diesem Link: <https://blog.klassik-stiftung.de/innere-bilder/>.

Diese kurzen, frei konzipierten Texte sehe ich auch als eine Brücke zu längeren Essays und grundsätzlich zu meinem Vorkriegsvorhaben. Aber die Verantwortung, mit der ich heute konfrontiert bin, bleibt für diese Essays konstitutiv, auch wenn ich noch nicht ganz verstehe, was das bedeuten kann.



A REAL YEAR OF WORK/LIFE BALANCE SANYU A. MOJOLA

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I arrived in Berlin in late August exhausted, after a year spent working double time to create space and time to think and write at Wiko. It did not help that my entry coincided with a poor weather spell. I experienced a thirty-degree drop in temperature (from 90° F (32° C) in New York City, where I live, to 60° F (16° C) in Berlin), the rain was constant, and the skies were cloudy, casting a gloom over the neighborhood and city. Even the trees near the Bundestag had been fooled into thinking it was already fall – the leaves were already turning gold. My first to-do list item was to purchase a rain jacket, a sweater, and two thick pairs of socks. I was also puzzled by the heaviness I felt in the neighborhood and in the city. Learning Grunewald's history and seeing the Gleis 17 monument at the

local train station, the stumbling stones in front of Villa Jaffé where I stayed, and monuments throughout the city helped me make sense of the weight I felt. Things eventually perked up. The sun fought its way out, and on a lovely Thursday in September, the first truly sunny and warm day, I took advantage of an open-air Hop-On, Hop-Off bus plus Spree boat ride tour to finally get an overview of the city that would be home for ten months. As I settled in, I established a rhythm of very early weekday morning starts to enable me to have a good writing stint and get ahead of the siesta-inducing inertia that inevitably followed the filling three-course Wiko lunches. I spent my afternoons in Zoom meetings and answering emails, and came to treasure my late afternoon/early evening walks through the beautiful Grunewald streets when I could think or unwind or just be. (I must admit that part of the initial motivation for daily walks – as opposed to afternoon naps – was a desire to slow down my growing dependence on what I came to call “kind trousers” that could easily accommodate my expanding waistline – see lunches above).

I also decided that during my sabbatical year, I would try to consistently take full weekends off, for perhaps the first time in my academic career. So over the weekend, I started to venture out and take in the Berlin cultural scene, both high- and low-brow, including attending performances of symphony orchestra, opera (for which I developed a real appreciation), and jazz (Wynton Marsalis came to town for his birthday); visiting art and photography museums; and going to see comedy and movies (the CineMaxx at Potsdamer Platz showed English-language movies). But the main event of most of my weekends was traveling, which made it easy to leave the laptop behind. One of the many gifts of my time at Wiko was the gradual and obvious realization that I was not only in Berlin, but also in Germany – and not only in Germany, but also in Europe. I had been dreaming of exploring Europe for over twenty years. Despite flying through European airports on my way to and from home in Kenya and Tanzania since I first left to take up a high school scholarship abroad, I was not able, for many years, to leave the airport. Now, here was my chance. Traveling through Europe from a base in Europe is so much easier and cheaper than doing so from afar. Fall, winter, and early spring travel also meant fewer tourists, shorter lines for famous sites, and my feeling safer, given that the COVID-19 pandemic was (and is) still ongoing. There are many travel memories I will treasure – riding on the Glacier Express train in Switzerland with its stunning vistas of snow-capped mountains, a midnight walk through Venice and viewing Anselm Kiefer’s stunning mixed media art displayed in the Palazzo Ducale, listening to live fado music in a small Alfama neighborhood café in Lisbon, watching flamenco dancing in Madrid, savoring French food in

Paris and seeing the Eiffel Tower up close, indulging my childhood self as I toured fairy tale-like castles in Prague and Füssen, understanding why, as the saying goes, one loses one's heart in beautiful Heidelberg, wandering through the lovely streets and over the canals in rainy Amsterdam, and more, much more... It was a dream worth waiting for, and a real education in history, in sociology, in culture, and in pure enjoyment of life.

I was amazed at how well my attempt to reset my work and non-work life balance went. My wonderfully full and fun work-free weekends were matched by a surprisingly productive work year. I focused primarily on two projects. For the first project, I had been running a large research study since 2013 called "HIV after 40 in Rural South Africa: Aging in the Context of an HIV Epidemic" (<https://hivafter40.princeton.edu>). It was funded in part by the U.S. National Institute on Aging and was slated to come to an end in March 2022, with a final progress report due in July 2022. South Africa has the world's worst HIV epidemic – almost 8 million people are living with HIV, comprising about 20 % of the reproductive-age population. The project's aim was to study the causes and consequences of the HIV epidemic among middle-aged and older South Africans. Prior literature focused mainly on young adults, yet HIV rates remained high up until the '70s. We were also interested in examining, more broadly, the complexities of aging in post-apartheid South Africa through the lens of the HIV epidemic, along with other chronic disease epidemics such as hypertension and diabetes. (Overall, 72 % of our study population aged 40 and over have at least one major chronic disease). The COVID-19 pandemic had stalled or entirely stopped many parts of the project, and this past year was when many of my team members were finally starting to get fully back up to speed. I spent much of the year pushing my group to move our remaining papers through the pipeline – finishing drafts, submitting articles to journals, revising papers in response to reviewer feedback, and getting papers published. As a result, I had to devote significant time and attention – far more than I had hoped – to writing and editing team papers, many of which I was not leading, but was nonetheless responsible for as Principal Investigator. We made substantial progress, with many papers getting accepted and/or published as of the time of writing this report (the publication list is at the end). I had hoped to bring my group to Wiko, but the shifting travel restrictions various team members faced (we were scattered across four continents) along with shifting restrictions and safety levels in Berlin made it impossible in the end.

For my second project, I had planned to finally finish what began in the summer of 2011 as a "small summer study," which gradually became a historical project stretching

from 1790 to 2020. The book, which was the subject of my Tuesday Colloquium, aims to examine how racial health inequality in the U.S. is produced and maintained, using the case of Washington, D.C., the country's capital city. It has had worst-in-the-nation HIV/AIDS rates, infant mortality rates, heroin overdose rates, and homicide rates, among other epidemics. I was glad that I decided to give my presentation "Death by Design: Producing Racial Health Inequality in the Shadow of the Capitol" in early November. I had two months to fully immerse myself in the project, yet had plenty of time left to work on the colloquium feedback and continue conversations with my Wiko interlocutors for the rest of the year. The Fellows' feedback at the colloquium was phenomenal and generous. It was exactly the right audience at the right time for the project – the lawyers, especially, pushed me to think about intentionality, culpability, and causality, given my controversial proposed book title "Death by Design"; the humanists pushed me to think about the craft of storytelling, the power of biography, and the soundtrack running through my book project; the social scientists pushed me to think harder and deeper about my theoretical and empirical contributions to the various fields I was engaging. I also learned a lot from the natural scientists, in thinking more holistically about human beings in the context of the larger ecosystem they inhabit, both above and beyond (the environment, the globe) as well as within the body (on the level of cells and genes) as I thought about the intergenerational transmission of disease vulnerability. The book will bear a Wiko Fellow imprint, for sure. I arrived at Wiko with a very messy book draft at the beginning of the fellowship year. I left with most of the book revised and solid enough to circulate (I had a virtual book manuscript workshop with a few colleagues to get feedback just before I left Wiko), and just one substantive chapter and conclusion left to draft. The book manuscript is currently under review. I still have significant work left to do, but an end to this seemingly never-ending project is now clearly in sight. I could not have accomplished this without the time afforded by being at Wiko.

As I reflect on my year, I am grateful for many things – the invitation to come, the welcoming and friendly Wiko staff, the remarkably efficient and persistent librarians, the privilege of our wonderful housekeeper at Villa Jaffé, the German lessons, the lunches (and especially the Wednesday buffet), the enriching and informative colloquia, the many rich conversations with Fellows in different disciplines, and most of all, the friendship, communality, generosity, and kindness extended to me by many Fellows and the permanent Wiko administration, Fellows, and staff, which made all the difference. Thank you Wiko!

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THREE MONTHS AT WIKO MAXIM OSIPOV

Maxim Osipov (b. 1963) is a Russian writer and cardiologist. In the early 1990s, he was a research fellow at the University of California, San Francisco before returning to Moscow, where he continued to practice medicine and founded a publishing house that specialized in medical, musical, and theological texts. In 2005, while working at a local hospital in Tarusa, a small town ninety miles from Moscow, Osipov established a charitable foundation to ensure the hospital's survival. Since 2007, he has published short stories, novellas, essays, and plays and has won a number of literary prizes for his fiction. He has published six collections of prose, and his plays have been staged all across Russia. Osipov's writings have been translated into more than a dozen languages. He lived in Tarusa up until February 2022, when he moved to Germany. – Address: Geleitsstr. 16, 60599 Frankfurt am Main, Germany. E-mail: drmaximosipov@gmail.com.

The main thing is that I do not want to be
suspected of ingratitude. That is worse than liberalism.

— A. S. Pushkin to his wife, July 14, 1834

Harmony, social grace – these are things you yearn for when you've fled the country where you were born, grew up, raised your children, lived to see your grandchildren born, and began to grow old, when you've left behind your home and your friends, your profession in medicine, and the graves of your parents, when you don't exactly feel you've done well for yourself. "Are you okay?" ask solicitous strangers. You want to respond like the gangster hero from one of Tarantino's films: "No, I'm pretty fucking far from okay."

But instead you give the customary answer: Everything is fine, perfectly in accordance with your age and social status. In truth, for a Russian émigré author pushing sixty, the situation is rather bleak. And then a letter arrives – from Wiko (Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin), an organization you know virtually nothing about: Come, you'll like it here.

The first touching detail: "We found a room with a balcony for you and your pipe," writes a Wiko employee. In the modern Western world, life is difficult for a smoker (though it is easier, of course, for a smoking writer than for a smoking doctor). Not too shabby: instead of a lecture on the dangers of tobacco, a balcony.

On the train to Berlin, there are many refugees from Ukraine, almost exclusively women and children. They speak neither English nor German and are grateful for any help or accommodation: a compartment with children's toys, restrooms, Internet connection. "Are you from Ukraine or..." – a pause – "...or have you lived here for a while?" They don't wish to pronounce the name of your country – the aggressor, a terrorist state, which is the cause of their endless suffering. I've been in Germany for less than two weeks, but I already know that I will probably have to listen to pronouncements about good and bad Russians for the rest of my days and that the coming months and years will require, first and foremost, humility, a quality I do not possess in abundance. It is in this condition that I arrive in Berlin – a newly minted émigré with an overburdened conscience.

But as soon as I approach the main building of Wiko – where, it turns out, my next-door neighbor will be the composer Valentin Silvestrov – I find myself in a place saturated with numerous cultural and historical associations and connections. For instance, Walter Rathenau, a politician I'd read about in Sebastian Haffner's memoirs of life in the Third Reich, was killed just a few dozen meters from where I stand. And I immediately think of a title for the Tarusa-Yerevan-Berlin travelogue I will write: "Cold, Ashamed, Relieved." Three words: *frostig, beschämt, befreit*. So ends *Defying Hitler*, a book we Russians read with enthusiasm last year, foreseeing (no great prophetic gift necessary) the rise of fascism in our country.

On my first day in Berlin, I get to know Silvestrov (something I could only have dreamt of before) and present him with discs by the Eliot Quartet (in which my daughter and son-in-law play), then listen all evening from behind the wall as he plays them at maximum volume – more than once! Also that day, I speak to Barbara, the Rector of Wiko: "You're like those anti-fascist Germans who ended up outside Germany with a German passport in their hands. They too were seen as citizens of a hostile country." So says Barbara, and my anxiety about having to explain the same thing to everyone, over

and over again, completely vanishes. The company of intelligent people actually presupposes social grace, as does genuine rather than affected aristocracy. Of course, I am unable to assess the professional credentials and accomplishments of most of my fellow residents – biologists, physicists, sociologists, and others – but judging by their broad-mindedness and by their positions in the scientific hierarchies of their nations, this is an important segment of the real elite (knowledge is not democratic, but elitist).

No conflict, no competition, the presumption that one's interlocutor is smart enough to speak to – and no persistent reminders that "we're all one family." As a doctor, albeit a former one, I especially appreciate mental health in those around me. A Guatemalan author, a Brazilian painter, a South African photographer, a Taiwanese law professor, an English historian, an American biologist, a Spanish biophysicist – a far from complete list of those whom I was lucky enough to befriend over the course of three months. And even the acute need to speak in one's native tongue, which every émigré likely feels from time to time, was fully satisfied by two brilliant literary scholars, one from St. Petersburg, the other from New York, and both named Ilya. "Forty eccentrics" is how the former Rector of Wiko described the Wiko Fellows. He surely exaggerated the share of eccentrics, but in the end, temperament isn't the main thing. "The point isn't optimism or pessimism, but in the fact that ninety-nine out of a hundred people are completely witless" – Chekhov's statement certainly doesn't apply to the residents of Wiko. While we are told that everything in the broader world is relative, here the primary values, in particular knowledge and beauty, are never called into question.

The house I lived in was built in 1904. It has seen many inhabitants, including the Luftwaffe Radar Office and the British Officers' Club, with a casino. It features wide oak staircases, a spacious library, and a conference room with a grand piano. I lived on the very top floor, in a room of perhaps fifty square meters, with extremely high ceilings. Because of the heat, I left the balcony door open at night, and so was awakened early each morning, almost at dawn, by birdsong. I would make myself coffee and sit on the balcony with my pipe. From there I could see quite far, in both directions: old two- and three-storey houses, well-groomed gardens, trimmed lawns. Seventy-seven years have passed since the end of World War Two, and with them at least two generations of Germans. If Russia's rulers would at least once allow several generations of its citizens to live in peace, without artificial disasters like the one now unfolding, then, one imagines, something similar might arise in our country... On the other hand, I loved my garden in Tarusa, but could never determine whether I loved it because it was mine or because I had at last become

sensitive to nature. Here, in Wiko, I found out that I could like not only my own, but also someone else's lilac.

On Saturdays and Sundays, the house is almost empty. The two or three people who stay for the weekend feel like mice who've crawled out of the cracks to wander through deserted rooms. The best day at Wiko, of course, is Thursday – the day of the communal dinner, of wine and conversations that often continue long past midnight. The image of paradise – not only biblical, but also ancient – is a friendly feast, and this, I feel, needs no explanation.

My new comrades began to mourn their impending departure from Wiko in April, when I had just arrived. After all, they had already been here a whole year. I feel the sadness of parting in earnest only now – a sadness mixed with gratitude, and with the desire to see those I love come to Wiko.

Unlike a story or even an essay, life – the one commonly called *real* – has no plot. We introduce a plot into our own biography (and into those of other people as well), come up with explanations for one or another twist (most frequently, a punishment for this or that sin). Some events, including important ones, seem to come as rewards. What did I do to deserve the reward of these three months? Nothing, of course. They were a pure, unadulterated, undeserved joy. “We are extended fellow-feeling,” wrote Fyodor Tyutchev, “like the Lord lavishes His grace” – that is, as if by chance, or rather, unpredictably. I was freezing (“cold, ashamed, relieved”), and Wiko warmed me up. It's as simple as that. The best thing you can do for someone who's freezing is to warm him up. Three months seems such a short time, but how wonderful it is that I had these months in my life. And I will have them forever.

Translated from Russian by Boris Dralyuk



TAUSEND STÄBE, KEINE WELT
ANTHONY OSSA-RICHARDSON

Anthony Ossa-Richardson is a literary and intellectual historian born and raised in London. He was educated at Bristol University, the University of York, and the Warburg Institute and now teaches English Literature at University College London. He has published two dozen articles on a diverse range of historical topics from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries and is the author of two monographs: *The Devil's Tabernacle* (2013), on early modern ideas about the oracles of ancient Greece, and *A History of Ambiguity* (2019), an account of how readers from Antiquity to the present have posited, denied, conceptualised, and wrestled over the existence of double meanings in texts. In 2023 he will publish (with Richard Oosterhoff) the first new English translation in four hundred years of Johannes Leo Africanus's 1526 *Cosmography and Geography of Africa*, the first modern book about Africa in a European language. He is currently engaged in two book projects, one on the intellectual context of post-war British architecture, the other on the problem of communication in Elizabethan literature, although these are on hold while he tries to unravel the conspiracy at the heart of the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. – Address: English Department, University College London, Gower Street, London, WC1E 6BT, United Kingdom. E-mail: a.ossa-richardson@ucl.ac.uk.

I have no desire here to record all my memories of the Wissenschaftskolleg over the past year, and, in any event, you would not believe them if I did. (I'll just let that sink in for a moment.) Only in hindsight am I beginning to make sense of it all; the owl of midnight flies only at – no, the owl of, what was it? Something like that. It is remarkable just how differently I interpret in recollection the stray gesture, comment, or joke, with all that

I now know. Nothing could have seemed more innocent as we sat by the lake on the “pontoon,” as some illiterate wag dubbed the measly strip of concrete with the table and benches on the waterside below Villa Walther. I ought to have known something was up, but I couldn’t have guessed just how many were in on it. I was amazed by the colloquia each week, and especially by the standard of questions for an hour afterwards, from people who had no right to any cognizance of the topic in question. I knew, of course, that everyone there had been handpicked from across the globe and assumed their insights reflected only a superior class of scholar, you know, not the typical riffraff that passes for the academy these days. That reflected well on me, too. I was delighted that somebody had finally recognised *my* talents after my long labours in thankless obscurity. Perhaps that is always the case: nobody suspects a thing, because to do so would compromise one’s own self-esteem. So we have all just been sitting around thinking ourselves very clever indeed.

I do not remember exactly when I first guessed that the colloquia were not what they seemed: that they were a coded means for the conspirators to exchange plans and ideas. Some were subtler than others. One woman was so acute at discerning a paper’s problems or contradictions that I now wonder if the papers were designed precisely for her to interrogate in that manner. By contrast, another of our colleagues almost gave the game away with his clumsy questions. Then again, it may be the variety itself, carefully staged, that was designed to throw me off the scent. Poring over the talks again now – I have the recordings, although some of them, I’m convinced, have been tampered with, and others are missing altogether – I’ve begun to make out the patterns, the slips, the disguised allusions, and to catch at the lineaments of the whole design. I know now what they meant by “global,” by “reality,” “penetrating,” “entanglement,” “Hegel”... even “camel”; some of their watchwords were, it must be said, pretty goofy.

But now that I am putting the pieces together I realise it can all have only one meaning. This work has consumed me in a way that my academic pursuits never did, and I must confess that the project with which I arrived in Berlin, as brilliant as it is, has fallen by the wayside in my pursuit of the secret. Let the others, to the extent they were who they said they were, plod on with their niche projects on urban design or animal feed, democracy, migration, or the history of fashion; I have bigger game in my sights, and have no intention of succumbing to distraction now that the sinister dream of Grunewald is dissolving behind me. This time, I will not be denied.

The truth is simple: several Fellows present in the first few months suddenly disappeared, like the woman on the train in that Hitchcock movie. Not all at once, but

sporadically. And just as spookily, each person who vanished was quickly replaced by another. Nobody else seemed alarmed by this, and not a soul complained or even spoke to me of it. Was I the only one to notice? These ambitious young stars were never seen again. I tried to make enquiries at their putative home institutions, but met with polite dismissals. I tried to warn the new arrivals. It was no use. None of the Fellows cared, and why should they? Our life was so comfortable there, with the verdant surroundings and the hubbub of chat around our interminable daily gnocchi, our veins coursing with plonk from the college's cornucopian cellar. That wine must have been extremely potent, and possibly spiked with something stronger; there are certain nights I ill remember, and nights I recall with shame at my own drugged behaviour. But I thank my creator that I was hale enough to withstand its heavier effects; no doubt this poison was a crucial component in the cabal's machinations. I can only surmise that it was those poor dolts unable to hold their liquor whose participation was so abruptly and mysteriously curtailed. "If your wish be to close me, / I and my life will shut very beautifully, suddenly," and so on.

Nobody – *nobody* – was quite sure how the whole lavish operation was funded. Would it be rash to suggest that these *desaparecidos* hold the key to that mystery? Was their property simply expropriated and sold off, or were they themselves ransomed? Or trafficked to – no, I dare not speculate on that front. If murdered, where did the bodies go? Buried in the forest? Concrete shoes at the bottom of the Halensee? Served as roulade? What exactly was inside that hideous fountain installed in the garden by the survivors of last year's cohort? But the true question is – *who knew*? Our warm, elegantly turned-out hosts, of course. I know talent and competence when I see it, and they frankly projected authority. Excellent historians, too. I don't trust a historian. One of them was even kind enough to introduce me to the phenomenon of printing, which for some reason had escaped me; I had always wondered how so many people had managed to read my work. You see, these were astute operators; no such conspiracy could possibly have escaped them. The question is rather of the Fellows themselves, as I mentioned. Did all know, or only some? Who were the ringleaders, who the cowards and cronies maintaining *omertà*, and who utterly clueless? I have my hunches. The dissident Russian literary critic K. – he was high up. The fiery Italian philosopher based in England – high up. The woman who studies epidemics at Princeton – high up. Two-faced, the lot of them. The Californian hyena – crony. The self-confessed witch – crony. The demographer who didn't even know how many demographers there were – crony. Damn them all, and damn their damnable ideas. It would be so important for them to hear that. But the political theorist

with a taste for the *avant-garde* – innocent. (I have doubts about his elusive wife, though.) The photographer and the playwright – clueless, both too honest, too handsome. You wouldn't want to point the finger at someone with actual creative *talents*. About others, such as all those inaudible mumblers, I must for the moment remain agnostic.

As for the mastermind of the enterprise, my suspicions lie with one of the shiftiest coves in the whole rum gang, an “artist” from a large country it would be circumspect of me not to name. He showed me his work, nothing but obscenities, politicking, and waffle. No wonder I'd never heard of him. His so-called colloquium, ostensibly the offering of an idler, comprised nothing more than a tissue of recordings from previous talks. It is obvious in retrospect, however, that it was not really a colloquium at all, but, as I said, a message to his henchmen, a summary of the main points of the plan to date as expressed in their own presentations. The most important instructions were even repeated several times to ensure compliance. It was an infernal, hypnotising performance worthy of Dr Mabuse.

Halfway through the year, I decided to get close to the artist so as to keep a better eye on him. I would venture to say that we actually became friends. His wife, an inveterate doodler, was entirely charming, as she ought to have been. I hardly trust her more than her husband. Their flat, high up at the front of the Villa, had a balcony adorned with grotesque, engorged stone *putti*, from which a dictator might have harangued adoring crowds in the street below. We saw them many nights, most nights. There was a group of us, in fact, and we drank together almost every evening, dabbling, so to speak, in the minestrone. We even travelled to Prague for a long weekend, probably a pretext for the little band to scout for victims beyond the confines of Grunewald, or else to meet contacts with whom to conduct their nefarious business. As it happened, I only ran into one of the other Fellows, a Bavarian innocent mostly interested in collecting Czech beer steins.

Innocent alike was another member of our troupe, a shy and retiring young novelist, not a Fellow herself but a partner. I was initially suspicious of her friendliness: for instance, she claimed to want to read the *Inferno* with me – ironic choice of text! And who ever heard of tagging along with somebody to an archive for the sake of a story? My guess then was that she ran counter-surveillance on the artist's behalf, allowing him to preserve an aura of mystery with his cryptic text messages and inexplicable fascinations. I had to rule this theory out. You see, I hadn't considered the possibility that her writing might be any good, but one night she passed around one of her pieces, a vignette of autobiography from her childhood. She denied it was autobiographical of course, but that is just what writers do. It was full of feeling and purpose, and, as I think I said already (do I repeat

myself? Very well then, I repeat myself), I trust an artistic talent. As if to reinforce my change of attitude, she demonstrated herself, unlike the philosopher and the cloth-eared Russian critic, alive to the richness of English rhyme. One makes the occasional mistake, but you can rely on someone with an instinct for language.

I had hoped to spend this year in paradise exchanging ideas and reading lists, getting on with my important project, and meeting senior professors who might prove useful to me in my future career. If this did not come about, it is no fault of mine. I gather from looking at past yearbooks that it is customary for Fellows to lament their lack of progress on their projects, and I have no choice but to continue that ignominious tradition. But unlike the dozers and shirkers and partiers of yesteryear, I can be proud of what I am at last beginning to accomplish. The task is not yet complete, and time is dwindling. I have already sacrificed so much, not least that flighty, desultory woman I have long called wife. For sure, the other entries in this book will paint a gay and trivial picture of academic bonhomie, with nary a suggestion of malpractice. I hope you will see through that charade, read between the lines. But to any future Fellow who may peruse these pages, I say – *beware!* If my luck runs out, perhaps you will be able to stand on my giant shoulders and bring the whole corrupt edifice crashing down, engorged *putti* and all.



THE FREE ENERGY

ALBERTO PASCUAL-GARCÍA

Alberto Pascual-García is a Ramón y Cajal Fellow at the National Centre for Biotechnology (CNB) in Madrid. His research area in Integrative Biology combines different fields of knowledge, from molecular biology to theoretical ecology, methods (experiments and theory), and epistemological approaches (bottom-up and top-down). He studied Physics at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and completed an MSc in Biophysics at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, followed by a PhD in Molecular Biology at the Spanish Research Council, honoured with the Outstanding Thesis University Award. Alberto then pursued his postdoctoral research at Imperial College London and at the ETH Zurich. Some of his research has been published in journals such as *Nature*, *PloS Genetics*, and *eLife* and, in the last few years, he has a focus on microbes and their biotechnological applications. He actively participates in a number of initiatives aimed at making science more efficient, ethical, and transparent. In particular, he is a Board Member of Crowdfight (crowdfight.org) and Open Scholar (openscholar.org.uk). – Address: National Centre for Biotechnology, C/ Darwin no. 3, Campus de Cantoblanco, 28049 Madrid, Spain. E-mail: alberto.pascual.garcia@gmail.com.

If the universe could be explained with an equation, it should be written as $F = 0$. Because, no matter how complicated the explanation, we can always clear everything on one side of the equation and call it F . The fascinating thing about this idea is that it tells us that the universe (everything we know, F) would equal nothingness. In fact, cosmologists tell us that all matter is positive energy and the gravitational force is negative energy, which offsets it and equals zero: yin yang.

Beyond the physics and metaphysics of the whole, most of us are interested in what lies within F . And, although dualism is defenestrated by postmodernity, it seems clear to me that within F we find more dual tensions. These tensions have been described by philosophers of all the ages, from Heraclitus' "everything flows, nothing remains" to the Hegelian thesis, antithesis, and synthesis (note that the tension in the triad is dual).

To my taste, the one who has been able to describe most clearly the tension that reigns in *our* world was Nietzsche. The emphasis on "our" indicates that it is a tension characteristic of living beings, which is what we are. Nietzsche described the following dichotomy for F in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*¹ which we can write as an equation:

$$F = \text{Apollonian} + \text{Dionysian}.$$

The first term refers to everything that emanates from the god Apollo with his light and truth, protector and guide, producer of harmonious creations in music and poetry: a symbol of Cartesianism. A reference for anyone who envisions an orderly, clean, structured, and efficient world that works like a watch in the purest Swiss style. The second term invokes Dionysus, who takes us with dance and wine through a theatre that sometimes approaches madness and stirs the viscera that makes us so human. This is probably a clearer reference for countries like mine, where flamenco and bull's blood are welcome.²

Nietzsche's merit was to appreciate the need for both terms to be present in our lives in order to make the human being more human. And how the contempt of the most developed societies towards the Dionysian is a danger that we should not ignore. In these months at Wiko, I have been able to see how this dichotomy appeared again and again in my work (and even in my life), as well as in the lives of the other Fellows.

To understand why, let's assume that F is a function that we want to maximize, so that the higher its value, the better adapted we are to the environment. F could represent what several Fellows working in biology would call a fitness function³ (for example of a

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, trans. Thomas Common (1917; Penn State Electronic Classics Series, 2013), <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/24307828/thus-spake-zarathustra-penn-state-university>.

2 For more details, listen to "Mediterráneo" by Joan Manuel Serrat.

3 Guy Sella and Aaron E. Hirsh, "The application of statistical physics to evolutionary biology," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 102, no. 27 (2005): 9541–9546.

species), where we would measure what percentage of the progeny of the species is able to reproduce. And a typical problem would be to understand if, in order to maximize F , we can decide whether it is a better strategy to maximize the Apollonian, the Dionysian, or a combination of both.

Assuming that the environment is relatively constant and controlled, it is likely that the species specializes in that environment by developing very efficient mechanisms that allow it to be very good at exploiting resources under those conditions (e.g., building gas pipelines). With all the predictions and means on the table, everything works out Apollonian. However, if conditions change (e.g., a war breaks out) the species is not at all adapted because it has avoided the Dionysian, and the problems begin. Robustness versus evolvability.⁴ Despite the terrible war, sharing the vision and experiences of Fellows who came from Ukraine and Russia has been one of my best experiences at Wiko and a reminder of how artificial our Apollonian bubble of comfort is.

And, personally, it has led me to see once again how one of the Darwinian simplifications of evolution, summarized in the survival of the fittest (the most Apollonian), leads us to overlook the acuity with which the deaf can understand the world in its other senses. What Spanish street art in the 1990s denounced with the graffiti “the stump is beautiful” or, as a Wiko Fellow showed us, that a hydrocele testicle may have influenced the work of Edward Gibbon in unsuspected ways.

So it seems that our equation above is missing a term that would multiply the Dionysian, which we could metaphorically call temperature, T , and would represent the amplitude of the perturbations around us:

$$F = \text{Apollonian} + T \times \text{Dionysian},$$

so that the higher the T , the more we will have to pay attention to the Dionysian to be well adapted. In physics, an analogous equation (saving the sign criterion) is that of free energy, where the Apollonian would be analogous to internal energy and the Dionysian to entropy, the latter familiarly related to disorder.

Listening to another Fellow, I also saw an example of this duality in the brain, since having a good model of the world allows us to perceive information, predict possible

4 Andreas Wagner, “Robustness and evolvability: a paradox resolved,” *Proceedings of the Royal Society B* 275 (2008): 91–100.

events, and take action. And these predictions will be better, the fewer unexpected events happen (surprise, and therefore entropy, is low). But, again, if uncertainty increases and our model of the world is not prepared for big surprises, we may have problems unless we find another way. This is the free energy of the brain,⁵ which means that, if you need a change in your life, just... increase the temperature (during my stay at Wiko: expecting a kid).

So maybe that's why I think I've seen in many Fellows at Wiko that, like Nietzsche, they claim the need to expose ourselves to the Dionysian. For example, a Fellow gave us a great example with live music, which I adapt to the argument. Suppose we listen to a classical violin piece, perfectly executed, is there anything more Apollonian? Now let us ask the artist to repeat the work, after winding a few strands of polyester along her bow. In this scenario, the uncertainty that the strands introduce to her movement forces her model of the world to completely adapt. But, far from wanting her to try to interpret the original piece as accurately as possible, why not create new music that moves on the edge of the strands? And contemporary music appeared.

The examples came one after the other. As when a Fellow reminded us that there is no objectivity in the definition of family, because it defines itself, and another Fellow noted that this is indeed why the search for an Apollonian definition of family becomes one of the most important problems for the Roman Catholic Church ("Volk Gottes" can never be Apollonian). Similarly, another recovered the intimacy of the subjective individual to show how the desire for an Apollonian pharaonic rural revolution – orchestrated from top to bottom in China – led to collective death. This view connected with another Fellow's asking whether death could speak, and with another one capturing the guts in the eyes of people in South Africa's apartheid. Or when some Fellows challenged the ontology of an apple, while another highlighted the value of believing in instantiation (or in incarnation), yet another one said that that applies even in quantum entanglement. Also, in a workshop, some suggested that it would be possible to put the freedom of the Internet not under the law but in spontaneous self-regulation, and indeed another Fellow pointed out that capitalism in Apollonian democracies has continued to advance differentiating "good" citizens from "migrants." This is perhaps why someone pointed out in another workshop that the future of work and economy should lie in degrowth. But the funny thing is that, when we were about to finish all discussions and leave, a Fellow reminded

5 Karl Friston, "The free-energy principle: a unified brain theory?", *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 11 (2010): 127–138.

us that all our words, even if we want to talk about very different aspects of reality with epistemological rigor, may be nothing more than a camel (Conversation About My Existence and Life). In the end, The Camel is what we understand the least.

To conclude, I would like to reclaim once more the need for the Dionysian in the scientific world. Because we often hear scientists themselves speak of objectivity in their work without recognizing their own subjectivity. We see the obsession with the search for immediate utility that makes our lives alien to (or alienated from) entropy. We suffer the stagnation of a system of scientific production intoxicated by publish-or-perish quantification. These are tendencies that reflect a misconception in which science is intended to be 100 % Apollonian.

Wiko (and Berlin) is a place where the temperature rises in discussions from the Fellows' club to the nightclubs. It invites you to mix with other models of the world, increasing surprise, pushing creativity elsewhere and making the new models more resilient. A context that allows me, far from my area, to talk about Nietzsche.

A place where the free energy of free spirits flows. And knowledge remains.



HOMELESS NUNO RAMOS

Nuno Ramos, born in 1960 in São Paulo, is a Brazilian artist, writer, playwright, and composer. His paintings and sculptural works carry a system of quotations that take up themes of Brazilian nationality, art history, social malaise, and intellectual tradition, always presented in tension with specific materialities, highlighting the physical implications of historical and semantic processes. The choice of materials is a central issue of his poetics, emphasizing the materiality of the world in the face of the making of meaning and vice versa, a situation that leads to the artist's statement that "art is in between the ground and utopia." In addition to numerous solo exhibitions in Brazil, Nuno Ramos also shows his works worldwide in group exhibitions and prestigious collections such as the Tate Modern (London), the Walker Art Center (Minneapolis), Inhotim (Brumadinho), the MAC USP (São Paulo), and the MAM Museum of Modern Art (São Paulo). In 1995, he represented his country at the Venice Biennale. His literary work has also received several awards, including the Portugal Telecom Prize for Ó (Editora Iluminuras, 2008). – E-mail: nunoramosemail@gmail.com.

acho que fui a Berlin me perder e me perdi mesmo
agora não há Kolleg ou Wissenschaft que me diga onde estou
em que parte do mundo, em que fuso

a cor do concreto do muro
não é a que eu me lembrava
e o lago gelado, em frente à Koenigsallee
visível sob cada um dos meus passos
guarda seus peixes, mensagens
num sóbrio segredo

piso de leve pra não despertá-los
não quero quebrar a superfície do gelo
não tenho mais olhos pra ler, ouvidos pra escutar
meu nome, não lembro os livros que li
nem as perguntas que fiz por aqui

ou estará tudo guardado
ainda sem tradução, dentro da unha
do sebo das minhas juntas
da cera no ouvido, do dente do siso
como acontece com o amor verdadeiro
ou, melhor, o amor de Coltrane
supremo?

pergunto à cachorra de pelo dourado
que lambe minhas mãos em São Paulo
Maria, uma pessoa da paz
com um medo de tempestades que a deixa feroz
pergunto meu nome, meu nome, Maria
diga meu nome e o que espera de mim
comida, Nuno, massagem
na pança, e os postes da vizinhança
num final de tarde

cimentaram a praça, Maria
roubaram os cabos de eletricidade
a chuva encheu a garagem
será isso voltar, secar
o chão, comer à luz de velas, tomar banho frio?
você vê meu sorriso, Maria, agradecido ao desastre?

agradeço à escala gulliveriana, rabelaisiana
pública, erótica, política, do desastre
peço ao antropoceno que seja, ao menos, completo
e leve tudo com ele, deixando o solo arrasado
o arroz estragado, museus cobertos de lama
e aquilo que reste, Maria, não seja jamais
como o quadro do Kiefer que vi em Veneza
pedante, retórico
como se o mundo fosse acabar numa colcha
bordada com cinzas e nomes
mas um anel de carne entre os homens
e os bichos, trocando suas vozes

fui a Berlin pra me perder, esse o meu Stipendium
meu fellowship, o cume do meu currículo
vitae, pra isso gastaram uma fortuna comigo
pra me ensinar a esquecer
a espessura da lombada de um livro

feita de uns restos de frase
dos fios pensos dos postes
do reboco dos muros que vi
caídos em Nápoli
das calçadas em que falava sozinho
abrindo os braços, durante a pandemia
a própria perspectiva, com suas linhas
nítidas, renascentistas
agora foge de mim

é isso estar sozinho, Maria, a rua foge de você

isso não é um poema
não é um desejo de morte
ao contrário, fui a Berlin pra me sentir amado
pra isso me deram um apartamento em frente a um lago
com anjos pendurados
essa é minha vingança e todo meu Wissenschaft
esse raio de luz que entra nos pássaros
ocos, nos troncos
mortos, caídos em diagonais perfeitas
cobertos pela ferrugem das folhas
em suma – amado, amado

mas a expansão madura, serena, do mal
neste mundo, como um gás embaçando
os vidros do ônibus, na volta pra casa
de madrugada, ou o ruído dos trilhos
na Hauptbahnhof, onde alguém se jogou
ontem à tarde, e refugiados chegaram, em março
os olhos enormes, onde milícias mataram
civis, oitenta anos atrás
essa história sem cicatriz
que bate nos prédios da Potsdamer Platz
atravessam agora, como uma pedra, meus pensamentos

a paz de não falar alemão
de não entender o que dizem
esse deus protetor e benigno
que sempre esteve comigo
(podia escrever nos cafés, em Neukölln)
me abandona

meu português é perfeito
palavras entregam a senha
às sentinelas, e entram

boiando, essa a palavra
num homeless romeno
com quem divido moedas
em Halensee, São Paulo.

*

i came to Berlin to lose myself and lost myself indeed
now there is no Kolleg or Wissenschaft to tell me
in which time zone i am

the color of the wall is not the one i remember
and the frozen lake, in front of Koenigsallee
still visible under my steps,
keeps its fishes, messages
in a sober secret

i tread lightly not to awaken them
i don't want to break the surface of the ice
i can't remember the books I read, the questions i posed

or is everything kept
untranslated inside the fingernail
in the tallow of my joints
in the earwax, in the wisdom tooth
as happens in real love
or better yet, Coltrane's love, supreme?

i ask the golden-haired dog
that licks my hands in São Paulo
Maria, a peaceful person
with a fear of storms that makes her fierce
i ask my name, my name, Maria
say my name and what you expect from me
food, Nuno, a belly
rub, and the neighborhood lamp poles
when the night comes

they have cemented the square, Maria
and stolen the electric cables from my studio
the rain flooded the garage
is this what coming back means
to dry the floor, eat by candlelight, have a cold shower?
and do you see my smile, Maria, grateful to the disaster?

i thank the gulliverian, rabelaisian
public, politic, erotic scale of the disaster
i ask the anthropocene that it be complete
at least, and take everything with it
leaving the rice spoiled, museums covered in mud
and that whatever remains, Maria
never be like the Kiefer painting i just saw in Venice
pedantic, rhetoric, prophetic, well painted
as if the world were meant to end up in a quilt
embroidered with ashes and names
I hope it ends like a ring
of flesh among men and animals
exchanging their voices

i went to Berlin to lose myself
that was my Stipendium
my fellowship, the summit of my Curriculum Vitae
for that they spent a fortune on me
to teach me how to forget
the thickness of a book spine

made of remnants of sentences
of cables hanging from the grey poles
of the plaster on the walls I saw fallen down in Naples
of the sidewalks on which i talked to myself
during the pandemics, opening my arms like an opera singer
Perspective itself, with its clear renaissance lines
with its blueish atmosphere
now escapes me

this is being alone, Maria, the street escapes you

this is not a poem, not a death wish
just the opposite, i went to Berlin
to feel loved, for that they gave me an apartment
in front of a lake, with angels hanging from it
this is my revenge and all of my Wissenschaft
this ray of light that enters the hollow
birds, the dead
tree trunks, fallen in perfect diagonals
covered by the rust of the leaves
– loved, loved

but the mature, serene expansion of evil
like a gas fogging up the bus windows, returning home
early in the morning, or the noise on the train tracks
at Hauptbahnhof, where someone jumped this morning
and refugees arrived in March, the enormous eyes
where militias killed civilians eighty years ago
this history without a scar
that hits the glass buildings on Potsdamer Platz
break through my thoughts like a club

the peace of not speaking German
of not understanding what they say
this benign god who has always protected me
(i could write in the cafés, in Neukölln)
vanishes suddenly

my portuguese is perfect
words deliver the password
to the sentinels, and enter

i'm floating, that's the word
inside a homeless Romanian
with whom I share coins
in Halensee, São Paulo.

Translated by Angelica de Freitas



MURMURATION IN BERLIN

SOPHIE ROUX

Sophie Roux is Professor of the History and Philosophy of Science at the École normale supérieure, Paris, where she is currently Director of the research team “La République des savoirs,” which is affiliated with the CNRS, Collège de France, and École normale supérieure. After her doctorate, she held positions at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG), Berlin, at the Centre Alexandre-Koyré (Paris), and at the University of Grenoble. Sophie’s main research interest is in the history of early modern science and early modern philosophy, and more specifically in the history of Cartesianisms and anti-Cartesianisms in France. She also wrote papers concerned with philosophy of science (e.g. on thought experiments and on mathematization) and with history of philosophy of science (e.g. on Pierre Duhem, on Louis Couturat, and more generally on the so-called French historical epistemology). – Address: Département de Philosophie, École normale supérieure, 45 rue d’Ulm, 75005 Paris, France. E-mail: sophie.roux@ens.psl.eu.

The words “paradise” and “refuge” come up repeatedly in past years’ reports. But I would describe Wiko neither as a paradise nor as a refuge. I don’t have a clear idea of what an existence in paradise looks like, but I would expect that every form of work would be proscribed from such a place; despite the blue skies of March, which ushered in the first blissful dives into the lakes and then the intense greens of the spring leaves, the sky should be less gray in paradise than it was in Berlin during a good part of the winter. (I didn’t suffer during the winter though, probably because warm human interactions compensated for the lack of light.) I would not speak of refuge either: I was not really sheltered from the demands of my institution or from the duties I imposed on myself; this year again, the

world continued its crazy race; above all, wherever you go, you take your joys and your fears with you. However, there was a distinctive quality of my experience at Wiko, which I will describe to express the gratitude I feel towards the staff and my Co-Fellows. This experience could be presented as a rejuvenation: as if I had reconnected with the whole of my childhood self; as if I had glimpsed again possible worlds long lost from sight; or as if I was about to embark on an unexpected and wonderful adventure.

Let's talk about work first, because there was work. As always, there were many small tasks to accomplish, papers to complete, reports and letters of support to write. But the main thing for me was to continue, against all odds, a historical investigation that I had embarked on during the pandemic, without having planned it at all. This investigation concerns Jacques Du Roure, who in 1654, i.e., only four years after Descartes' death, was the first author to publish a Cartesian textbook in French. It had the same four-part structure (logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics) as the textbooks then used in teaching, but it added to their Aristotelian content some new ideas that were mostly taken from Descartes. Starting from the indications provided by a document I had stumbled upon by chance, I followed as systematically as possible the clues that emerged progressively, and I began reading one document after another to find answers to some basic questions about the social origin, the intellectual training, and the material conditions of subsistence of Jacques Du Roure, whose life was until then totally unknown.

Playing the detective was fun, but my goal was not only to reconstruct a life. It was to understand why this man educated by the Jesuits had converted to the new ideas of his time and to determine the particular form that his Cartesianism had taken. This led me to gather material for what might be three chapters of a forthcoming book whose starting point would be his biography. Materials on the networks of patronage in the South of France first of all, since Du Roure was protected by Pierre Dalibert, a rich financier from Languedoc, the same one who in 1667 brought Descartes' bones back to Paris to have them buried there with great pomp. Materials on the articulation of a religious context and a political attitude, since Du Roure chose to paraphrase Hobbes to stand in for Descartes' nonexistent political theory, while he came from a region marked by the French Wars of Religion. Last but not least, materials on education outside of academic institutions, since Du Roure taught philosophy, and more generally the liberal arts, without however belonging to a university or to a college. I speak somewhat vaguely of materials: I read indiscriminately, in the hope of catching the threads of a life that seemed more and more mysterious and elusive as I identified some of its elements. It was a disconcerting

freedom at times, but for sure it was significant in an academic world obsessed with productivity.

There is a risk in writing the biography of an individual about whom information is scarce, and this risk is all the greater when the individual in question is neither remarkable nor even typical. I have regularly asked myself what demon was driving me to persevere in a project that was not really a project, at least if this word implies a clear vision of the goal to be reached and of the appropriate means to deploy to reach it. To answer this question, I would say that, notwithstanding all sorts of theories, it is still an open question to determine the relationship between, on the one hand, the material conditions and intellectual contexts that structure our lives and, on the other hand, the ideas or more generally the forms that we happen to produce and that are sometimes transmitted from one generation to another. If, like me, one is in principle skeptical about ambitious programs or great methodological stances, it remains to examine what this relationship is in specific cases. And there is probably something to be gained by examining the case of individuals who, representing nothing but themselves, are only that: cases.

By an unavoidable return to myself, I cannot but ask how this applies to my experience at Wiko. At the beginning, there was the Villa Walther, monstrous by its bombastic architecture, but able to make secret paths emerge between our private lives and a community life that was reminiscent of a summer camp. There was a regular rhythm that reminded me of school time: lunch at 1:00 p.m.; the intimate German class on Monday, where we were led from the burning news of the day to works of literature and poetry; the always exciting and sometimes surprising colloquia on Tuesday, followed by our informal gatherings in the evening; Wednesday and its close reading of Victor Klemperer's *Lingua Tertii Imperii: Notizbuch eines Philologen*; the specific physiognomy of Thursday when a more sophisticated dinner replaced lunch; and here is already Friday, the last breath before the weekend excursions. And then everything started all over again, just like at school. A bit farther away, Berlin was a multifaceted and inexhaustible playground: in spite of blatant social inequalities and growing gentrification, many forms of inclusivity can be felt in most of its neighborhoods; its exhilarating cultural life is easily accessible; countless forests and lakes offer welcome rests after the vibes of the city. Last, but not least, there were those Co-Fellows whom I met again and again, some of them being closer and others more distant, but all finding a place in a moving swarm that indefinitely formed, lost form, and reformed. From the first day to the last, I did not know whom I would be with, what we would talk about, what we would do, where we would go: we

were ourselves, we were together, we were there. There was a certain innocence in all of this, as at the age when, more than thirty years ago, I was eternal. At times, I wondered if this murmuration was its own end or if some of these scattered energies would crystallize into something persistent and concrete. As far as I know, it was not the case: but the story is not over yet.

It remains to be said whether this mode of existence, or rather this mode of coexistence, favored my work on Du Roure. Some generous discussions gave me confidence that I could write a book and helped me to imagine what this book could be. But one must go further than the enchanted circle of Wiko to grasp the intellectual context from which I was emerging. The globalization of intellectual exchanges, the commodification of universities, the emergence of new technological devices for the dissemination of information, the bureaucratization of academic institutions, the excessive growth of publications, and, quite recently, the expansion of online teaching during the pandemic – all these contributed to a profound transformation of knowledge. In these circumstances, one necessarily asks oneself why to write, whom to address, what form to give to one's publications, what can be expected from them, etc. These issues were also pressing during the early modern period: although historians of science have refrained from using the category of the Scientific Revolution for at least thirty years now, the production of knowledge, the material forms in which it was inscribed and the disciplines that structured it, its transmission in teaching institutions, and its circulation in other social spaces were profoundly transformed in the 17th century. To pay attention to an early modern follower of the new philosophy who wanted to elaborate a popular doctrine and to teach it to all human beings is also, indirectly, to speak about our present.



A YEAR AT THE WISSENSCHAFTSKOLLEG ULINKA RUBLACK

Ulinka Rublack, born in 1967 in Tübingen, is Professor of Early Modern European History at the University of Cambridge. She studied History, Art History, and Sociology at the University of Hamburg and the University of Cambridge, where she completed her PhD in 1996 and became a lecturer. She is a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Society of History. She was awarded the Roland H. Bainton Prize in 2011, the Reimar Lüst Award in 2018, and the Prize of the Historisches Kolleg, Munich, in 2019, especially for her monograph *The Astronomer & the Witch: Johannes Kepler's Fight For His Mother* (Oxford UP, 2015; *Der Astronom und die Hexe*, Klett-Cotta, 2019). Rublack has published widely on the history of the Reformation, for example *Die Reformation in Europa* (S. Fischer, 2003; *Reformation Europe*, Cambridge UP, 2005). She is the editor of the *Oxford Handbook of the Protestant Reformation* (2016) and of *A Concise Companion to History* (Oxford UP, 2011; *Die Neue Geschichte*, S. Fischer, 2013), among other works, and is a co-editor of *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Legislation in a Global Perspective, 1300–1900* (Cambridge UP, 2019) and *The First Book of Fashion* (Bloomsbury, 2015). *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe* (Oxford UP, 2010) was published with Klett-Cotta in 2022 as *Die Geburt der Mode: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Renaissance*. In 2023, *Dürer's Lost Masterpiece: Art and Society at the Dawn of a Global Age* will appear with Oxford University Press and in 2024 with Klett-Cotta. – Address: St John's College, Cambridge, CB2 1TP, United Kingdom. E-mail: ucr10@cam.ac.uk.

Definition of synergy

1: synergism broadly: combined action or operation. 2: a mutually advantageous conjunction or compatibility of distinct business participants or elements (such as resources or efforts). (Webster's Dictionary)

For many years, synergy has shifted as a buzzword from academia. It is a simple idea: you bring together trailblazing scholars who work on related problems. That way, you achieve diversified approaches and improved outcomes. Usually this happens through a very focused process: scholars self-select co-investigators to pool skill sets. Linguistically, all this joining leads to the use of lots of hyphens – two in the sentence you have just read.

Participants usually self-select scholars who share a similar background in terms of education, ethnicity, and habitus, not least because intense cooperation means spending lots of work and even leisure time together. Synergizing academics will know each other's partners and pastimes. The question is whether selecting for compatibility ensures the most diversified outcomes.

Wiko operates differently. It selects groups of scholars and artistic practitioners to engineer that mutually advantageous conjunction, yet projected outcomes remain mostly in the stars. You will never be told that it was expected that you might have much to say to X or Y. Part of the pleasure of being at Wiko is solving the puzzle that has been set up for you.

Settling into my time in Berlin, it thus never felt as if masterminded synergies went according to plan, but as if *Wiko happened* several times, when the conjunction was right. It felt like magic every time.

I was the first to give a talk that year. *Wiko happened* for me right after Syrian playwright Mohammad Al Attar came up to me. He said: "I am glad you mentioned Damascus." My project was to write the first world history of fashion for the period 1300–1800. It was obvious that I should mention Damascus, but for Mohammad it could not be taken for granted. As a result of Mohammad's presence at Wiko, I started to read with that question in mind: Where and how *are* Damascus or Aleppo represented in the scholarly literature, and where are they missing and why? I read Mohammad's play *Aleppo*, rich in refugees' memories of the bazaars of the city. When I made it to chapters five and six of my book, on the history of consumption as a political project and practices of shopping for fabrics and clothes around 1600, I realized that bazaars were completely missing from authoritative accounts of the history of consumption. Yet around 1600, they were at the heart of key initiatives of urban improvement. They were tightly policed, beautifully clean,

rich in goods, and offered free water to customers. They pointed to a pathway to modernities that needs to be written into historical accounts that focus on Western advances.

Wiko happened – in the sense of *es ereignete sich* – moreover when I was completely electrified upon noticing that Hannah Landecker had a stack of books on starch waiting for her in the library. Researching the long history of ecological changes to result from an increased consumer demand for fashion is central to my book. Starch was needed for linen ruffs and cuffs and shirts to make them seem beautifully white. But in fact, pristine whiteness derived from something black – from potash shipped around the globe in ever greater quantities. Potash was made from burning forests down. In months to come, Hannah and I would go for walks every now and then, to talk about starch, or lichen moss from which dyestuffs were harvested in colonial conditions, and many other matters of biochemistry. We spoke about whether the past of natural dyes could or should ever become the future again, to defy the damage of synthetic dyes, and what happens when bio-engineered extractions of natural colourants in factories do away with the rich culture that used to and, in some countries, still does amalgamate in the making and use of natural dyes.

Wiko happened when Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi talked about the ecology of pashmina goats, the livelihoods of herders, and efforts of conservationists in Kashmir trying to save snow leopards. Pashmina goats yield some of the highest-grade cashmere fibers in the world. Swept up in the voluminous literature on cotton, silk, and sheep wool in world history, I had not intended to write about cashmere. But this unique fiber links to a culture that is about to be made extinct in Kashmir because of consumer ignorance, climate change, and capitalist business practices elsewhere. Soon I was immersed in books and in specialized journals from India that were difficult to source, to prepare for conversations with Kullu. Hannah and Kullu both participated in a workshop I had the privilege to organize at Wiko, on *The Past and Future of Fashion*. It was an inspiring event that likewise brought together people who otherwise would not have met and it enabled free and open conversation about difficult and political topics that are global in scope.

Wiko happened in so many other ways – as I saw on those library shelves that Hannah, Kullu, and I were all reading Amitav Gosh's new book, *The Nutmeg's Curse*, and soon a small group of Fellows memorably discussed it from the vantage point of their professional expertise; as Eva Horn, Jessica Metcalf, and Britt Koskella and I repeatedly discussed perspectives on evolution and diversity; or that night when a group of us had listened to a performance of Liza Lim's astonishing, fearless compositions and were on the way back to the Koenigsallee in the S-Bahn. It was springtime at last. That night for me

registered how we had become friends in a gentle way that allowed each of us to know and get to know others and their partners and families differently, which could mean that you were just deeply aware of their personalities and sympathetic to the way they just are. As we stood on the platform, a Fellow who tended to suddenly disappear (only to later emerge on the Koenigsallee walking her dog, we noticed) naturally had vanished; another Fellow, who tended to get lost, had gotten lost, but by then we knew not to worry. In the S-Bahn, one of the multilingual boys taught another one Italian. A girl, who sometimes would knock on our door to distribute home-baked biscuits or sweets, was practicing maths with her dad for fun, showing no sign of tiredness. The other Fellows talked animatedly in small groups all the way as we happily rolled towards Grunewald and its refreshing air.

I wrote a nearly complete draft of my book in these months, at astonishing speed. *The Triumph of Fashion* will need much further work, and years to mature and live with, but the opportunity to turn a detailed proposal I had already conceptualised in 2018 into that draft was unique. I am so grateful for that immense privilege, for Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger's utmost support of my research needs, and likewise for the immense support I received from the library. I worked with hundreds of books, often from obscure libraries, and benefitted from Stefan Gellner's brilliant support in researching bibliographies for topics ranging from natural dyes today to early modern shipwrecks. I also finished a nearly completed book I had taken with me to Wiko and an article relating to its subject. Here Lena Heidemann joined the outstanding library team to provide help with the utmost professionalism. *Dürer's Lost Masterpiece: Art and Society at the Dawn of a Global Age* will be published by Oxford University Press in the UK in autumn 2023 and by Klett-Cotta in Germany in 2024, and Wiko made all these combined activities possible. *A Revolution in Colour: Natural Dyes in Europe, 1300–1800* will be published as a jointly edited volume by Bloomsbury, and the introduction was written in happy synergy at Wiko. Generous support from all staff members undergirded all these efforts, as smiles abounded and connections were genuine.

Other highlights of those magic months in Berlin included a close examination and discussion of Iranian silk woven c. 1600 with a curator and expert; many visits to museums; countless meetings with colleagues, old and new; so many evenings with old friends; our adult children coming to stay (both of them now want to live in Berlin); sharing all this, plus concerts, opera, and theatre, with my husband, Francisco Bethencourt, when he

wasn't in the office next door; exploring plenty of *Kieze*, markets, and new shops; and the Andreas Murkudis charity sale.

The charity sale, of course, was for Ukraine. I remember Peter Burke, the cultural historian and one of my closest colleagues before his retirement, talking about his stay at Wiko in 1989, as the Berlin Wall fell. We were the year witnessing another *Zeitenwende*, the Ukrainian resistance to Putin's invasion.



WER AM LANGSAMSTEN LIEST, GEWINNT
MICHAEL SEEWALD

Michael Seewald wurde 1987 in Saarbrücken geboren. Nach seinem Studium der Katholischen Theologie, der Philosophie und der Politikwissenschaft in Tübingen, Pune und Frankfurt am Main wurde er an der Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München promoviert und habilitierte sich dort. Seine Forschung wurde mit mehreren Preisen ausgezeichnet, unter anderem dem Karl-Rahner-Preis für theologische Forschung und dem Heinz Maier-Leibnitz-Preis der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft. Michael Seewald lehrt als Professor für Dogmatik und Dogmengeschichte an der Westfälischen Wilhelms-Universität Münster und ist Sprecher des Exzellenzclusters „Religion und Politik“. Am Wissenschaftskolleg ging er den Spuren des Volksbegriffs in der katholischen Ekklesiologie nach. Leitend war dabei die Frage, welche Bedeutungen dem Wort „Volk“ – etwa in Begriffen wie „Volk Gottes“, „Volkskirche“ oder „Volksfrömmigkeit“ – im Laufe der vergangenen zwei Jahrhunderte zugeschrieben wurden. Entlang der wechsellvollen Beanspruchung des Volksbegriffs erarbeitet Michael Seewald eine Geschichte der katholischen Ekklesiologie in der Moderne. – Adresse: Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät, Johannisstr. 8–10, 48143 Münster, Deutschland. E-Mail: mseewald@uni-muenster.de.

Im Keller der Weißen Villa steht ein Regal. Darin finden sich Dubletten der Bibliothek, Bücher, die Fellows bei ihrem Auszug zurücklassen mussten, oder dicke Schinken, die der Notwendigkeit, Platz im Regal zu schaffen, gewichen sind. Über die vorzüglichen Werke, die ich dort entdeckt habe, und die Bildungserlebnisse, die ein nicht zielgerichtetes Lesen entlang des Kellerregals an der Kreuzung von Wallotstraße und Königsallee

vermittelt, ließe sich viel sagen. Ich greife nur ein Buch heraus: Jason Baehr, *The Inquiring Mind. On Intellectual Virtues and Virtue Epistemology*, Oxford 2011.

Ich will nicht den Anschein erwecken, dass ich viel über Tugendepistemologie wüsste. Theologen kennen sich – als Theologe sei mir gestattet, so etwas zu sagen – mit den meisten Dingen gerade nur so gut aus, dass es für ein paar kluge Bemerkungen hier und da reicht. Früher nannte man die gravitatische Aneinanderreihung solch kluger Bemerkungen „Predigt“. Ich selbst kann keine Predigten mehr hören und möchte daher auch keine Predigt halten. Trotzdem komme ich aus meiner Haut als Theologe nicht heraus. Was von ihr geblieben ist, ist eben dies: die Fähigkeit, Beobachtungen auf assoziative Weise in ein halbwegs gebildet erscheinendes Gewand zu kleiden. Ob das eine Tugend ist, weiß ich nicht. Für die Abfassung eines Arbeitsberichts ist es jedenfalls nützlich.

Tugendepistemologische Ansätze gehen davon aus, dass es Tugenden gibt, die sich auf das Erkennen auswirken. Wenn an dieser Annahme etwas Wahres ist, muss das Wissenschaftskolleg als erkenntnistarker Ort auch ein tugendstarker Ort sein. Was zunächst prüde klingt, dürfte allen, die schon einmal ein Dienstagskolloquium besucht haben, einleuchten. Diese Kolloquien zeugen von einem großen Reichtum kognitiver Tugenden. Sie gelingen mit argumentativer Strenge und diskursiver Mildtätigkeit, dem Willen zur Präzision und der Fähigkeit zur Verallgemeinerung, dem Bestreben, die einem Problem gebührende Komplexität aufzubieten, und zugleich dem Mut, Dinge einfach auf den Punkt zu bringen.

Einen beträchtlichen Teil meiner Zeit am Wissenschaftskolleg – zumindest außerhalb des Lesessessels – habe ich mit Gesprächen, Spaziergängen, Opern- und Theaterbesuchen, Mittag- und Abendessen verbracht, bei denen über Dinge gesprochen wurde, die ich für mein Projekt nicht verwerten kann. Darin liegt der Reiz des Kollegs. Paradoxerweise bringt es in ihrem Fach ausgewiesene Persönlichkeiten zusammen, um ihnen zu ermöglichen, Abstand von diesem Fach zu gewinnen – ein Abstand, der einen frischen, innovativen Blick auf das Fach gewährt. Bespricht man die speziellen Fragen, die im disziplinär gegliederten universitären Alltag forschungs- und lehrmäßig wie selbstverständlich verwaltet werden, am Kolleg mit Soziologinnen und Juristen, Biologinnen und Historikerinnen, lernt man epistemische Bescheidenheit – ebenfalls eine kognitive Tugend.

Mein Bericht soll jedoch auch einer schlecht beleumundeten, in ihrem Tugendcharakter fragwürdigen Virtus gelten: der Langsamkeit. Wenn man sagen würde, das Wissenschaftskolleg sei langsam, wäre dies ein großes Missverständnis. Die Fellowdienste, die Bibliothek, die Küchen- und Hauswirtschaftsdienste sind alles andere als langsam. Sie

arbeiten schnell, damit die Fellows sich den Luxus erlauben können, langsam zu arbeiten. Das habe ich jedenfalls getan. Ich habe am Wissenschaftskolleg so langsam wie noch nie gearbeitet, ja geradezu hemmungslos langsam alles gelesen, was mir, vor allem aus dem 19. Jahrhundert, begegnet ist, selbst wenn ich manches schon einmal gelesen hatte und es zu kennen glaubte: Romane von Stendhal, Balzac, Flaubert, Werke von Lamennais, Maret, Döllinger, Abhandlungen von Drey, Franzelin, Pilgram. Als Nachwuchswissenschaftler und auch während der ersten Jahre auf einem Lehrstuhl kommt es darauf an, schnell zu sein. Dinge schnell aufzunehmen und zu verarbeiten, schnell zu schreiben und zu veröffentlichen, Gelegenheiten schnell zu erkennen und zu ergreifen, ist entscheidend für den Weg im Wissenschaftssystem. Der eigentliche Lohn der Schnelligkeit aber, habe ich am Kolleg lernen dürfen, ist die Langsamkeit.

Die Langsamkeit von der Art, wie sie mir als Fellow zu praktizieren gestattet war, ist kurzfristig unproduktiv. Ich bin am Ende des akademischen Jahres nicht mit einem fertigen Manuskript, sondern mit einer Ansammlung von Notizen, Skizzen und Ideen nach Hause gefahren. Ich habe aber nicht den Eindruck, dass das wenig ist. Ganz im Gegenteil: Von diesen Ideen werde ich lange und über den Rahmen meines Projektes hinausgehend zehren. So kann ich ohne Übertreibung sagen, dass ich in Berlin nicht nur die langsamste, sondern auf sehr spezielle Weise auch eine der produktivsten Phasen meines Forschens verbracht habe. Und eine der tugendhaftesten natürlich: Wer am langsamsten liest, gewinnt.



WISSENSCHAFT IN DER SITUATION DER REVOLUTION UND DES KRIEGES OLGA SHPARAGA

Olga Shparaga, Dr. phil., geboren 1974, lehrte bis 2021 Philosophie am European College of Liberal Arts in Belarus (ECLAB), Minsk, welches sie im Jahr 2014 mitgegründet hat. Sie studierte in Minsk und Bochum. Von 2001 bis 2014 unterrichtete sie Philosophie an der European Humanities University (EHU), bis 2004 in Minsk und ab 2005 in Vilnius. Sie lehrte und forschte an Universitäten und wissenschaftlichen Zentren in Tschechien, Polen, Litauen, Deutschland und den USA. Olga Shparaga ist Autorin dreier Bücher. *Die Post-Holocaust-Gemeinschaft: Auf dem Weg zur Gesellschaft der Inklusion* (2018, auf Russisch) wurde 2019 als bestes philosophisches Buch auf dem International Congress of Belarusian Studies in Vilnius ausgezeichnet. 2021 erschien *Die Revolution hat ein weibliches Gesicht: Der Fall Belarus* bei Suhrkamp. Die Übersetzung ins Russische (2021) wurde 2022 mit dem Ales-Adamowitsch-Literaturpreis des Belarussischen PEN-Zentrums ausgezeichnet, die litauische Übersetzung erschien im Dezember 2022. Seit Oktober 2020 lebt Olga Shparaga im Exil. Seit Juli 2022 ist sie Visiting Fellow am Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen in Wien. – E-Mail: olga.ariel@gmail.com.

Mein Aufenthalt am Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin begann im Januar 2022. Das Jahr 2021 hatte ich ebenfalls physisch in Berlin verbracht, aber psychisch, mit meinen Gedanken und Gefühlen, war ich eher in Minsk.

Unterwegs zum Wiko

Der Grund dafür war die Revolution, die im Sommer 2020 in Belarus begonnen und am Jahresende eine Konterrevolution hervorgerufen hatte. Im Jahr 2021 hat sich die Zahl der

politischen Gefangenen in Belarus vervierfacht (inzwischen beträgt sie mehr als 1400), die Menschen wurden weiter jeden Tag durchsucht, festgenommen und zu jahrelangen Gefängnisstrafen verurteilt, Hunderttausende sind ins Ausland geflohen. Im zweiten Halbjahr 2021 blieb in Belarus kaum etwas von einer freien Presse übrig, die größten und bekanntesten Print- und Onlinemedien wurden geschlossen und viele Redakteur*innen und Journalist*innen kamen ins Gefängnis, mehr als 1000 NGOs wurden verboten. Sowohl die Menschen in Belarus als auch die aus dem Lande fliehenden Belaruss*innen brauchten Hilfe und Unterstützung. Dieser widmete ich im Jahr 2021 den größten Teil meiner Zeit. Dabei war ich aber auch wissenschaftlich und als Intellektuelle aktiv, da im Juni 2021 mein Buch *Die Revolution hat ein weibliches Gesicht: Der Fall Belarus* im Suhrkamp Verlag erschien.

Den Hintergrund meiner Vorträge und öffentlichen Auftritte im Jahr 2021 bildete die grundsätzliche Transformation oder die Emanzipation der belarussischen Gesellschaft, die im Laufe der Revolution 2020 begonnen hatte. Von gesperrten Websites wechselte man auf Telegram-Kanäle (auch wenn dies mit einem teilweisen Verlust des Publikums verbunden war), die Menschen in Belarus versuchten, vernetzt und solidarisch zu bleiben, und die ins Ausland geflohenen Belaruss*innen versuchten, weiter in Verbindung und aktiv zu bleiben, weil niemand mehr an den Fortbestand von Lukaschenkos Regime glaubte.

Eine der wichtigsten Bindungskräfte der belarussischen Gesellschaft seit dem Beginn der Proteste war eine bestimmte Art der Solidarität, die ich mit dem Adjektiv *fürsorglich* spezifiziert habe. Gemeint war damit die empathische und rücksichtsvolle Dimension der solidarischen Praktiken, die vor allem eine Antwort auf die enorme Gewalttätigkeit von Lukaschenkos Machtapparat waren. Die fürsorgliche Solidarität zeigte sich in der spontanen gegenseitigen Unterstützung von Menschen, die einander kaum kannten, in Berufsgruppen und Nachbarschaften, aber auch durch sympathisierende Kreise, die Geld sammelten und sich in zahlreichen Protestgruppen und Hilfsprojekten zusammenschlossen. Zu den wichtigsten Orten fürsorglicher Solidarisierung zählten die Gefängnisse, wo unterschiedliche Menschen und vor allem Frauen ihre Vulnerabilität in *agency* im Sinne von Saba Mahmood¹ verwandelten. Dadurch haben sie/wir nicht die Kontrolle über ihr/ unser Leben zurückerlangt, sondern eine Neugestaltung eigener und geteilter Erfahrungen vollzogen, einschließlich der Erfahrung der leiblichen Sorge um sich selbst oder um das

1 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

eigene ethische Selbst. Danach, nach der Befreiung, haben die Frauen diese Praktiken, die ich in meinem Buch als *Schwesterlichkeit* bezeichnet habe, in verschiedenen Interviews als Modell für das Handeln der gesamten Gesellschaft vorgeschlagen. Eine neue Kultur hat begonnen, sich herauszubilden und Einfluss auf die gesamte Gesellschaft auszuüben, in der dann nicht nur Frauen, sondern auch Männer die Notwendigkeit der Fürsorge für das politische Leben und nicht nur für die Privatsphäre anerkennen. Sie hat die Möglichkeit einer anderen Gesellschaftsorganisation sichtbar gemacht, die sich nicht auf Hierarchien gründet, einschließlich der Hierarchie zwischen öffentlicher und privater Sphäre, sondern auf eine horizontale und für die Bildung verschiedener Allianzen offene sozialpolitische Infrastruktur.²

Der Forschung, Analyse und Beschreibung einer solchen Infrastruktur, ausgehend vor allem von den Begriffen der Schwesterlichkeit und der Sorge/Care als politischer Kategorie³, wollte ich meine Zeit und Ruhe am Wiko widmen. Doch am 24. Februar begann der russische Angriffskrieg gegen die Ukraine.

Krieg und das Konzept der Menschenrechte

Nach einer gewissen Zeit des Erschreckens und der Sprachlosigkeit erkannte ich die Notwendigkeit, mit all meiner Kraft die Ukraine zu unterstützen. Es war für mich sehr schwer, an den Veranstaltungen am Wiko teilzunehmen, die sich nicht mit dem Thema des anhaltenden Krieges befassten. Und das waren fast alle Veranstaltungen. Dabei hatte ich leider keine Kraft, selbst etwas zu organisieren, auch deswegen, weil ich vor allem deutsch- und nicht englischsprachig bin.

Sowohl diese Situation am Wiko als auch die Kommunikation mit meinen Kolleginnen aus der breiteren akademischen Sphäre – wie z. B. Sabine Hark, Alexandra Scheele, Anika Walke, Susanne Lettow, Evelyn Annuß, Julia Schulze Wessel, mit denen ich an

2 Dazu Olga Shparaga, „A Feminist Framework for Understanding of the Role of Women in the Belarusian Revolution: Domestic Violence, Care, and Sisterhood“, *Chronicle from Belarus* (Blog), IWM, 22.10.2021, <https://www.iwm.at/blog/a-feminist-framework-for-understanding-of-the-role-of-women-in-the-belarusian-revolution>.

3 Siehe dazu z. B.: Fabienne Brugère, *Care Ethics: The Introduction of Care as Political Category*, Leuven: Peeters, 2019; Joan C. Tronto, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*, New York: New York University Press, 2013 und Sabine Hark, *Gemeinschaft der Ungewählten: Umrisse eines politischen Ethos der Kohabitation*, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2021.

verschiedenen Veranstaltungen teilgenommen habe⁴ – haben mich zu der Frage geführt, was Wissenschaft in der Situation der Kriege bedeutet und bedeuten kann. Sollten Wissenschaftler*innen – wenn nicht alle, so doch nicht wenige – in einer solchen Situation ihre speziellen Interessen nicht hintanstellen und versuchen, ihre Forschung und Gedanken – wenn nicht alle, so doch einen bestimmten Teil – dem Krieg zu widmen?

Die Berechtigung einer solchen Fragestellung ergab sich für mich daraus, dass der laufende Krieg, wie die COVID-Pandemie zwei Jahre zuvor, eine ganze Reihe von Widersprüchen sichtbar gemacht hat, die in keinem Fall als lokale, sondern zwingend als globale – und dadurch interdisziplinär denkbare – betrachtet werden müssen. Sie erforderten meiner Meinung nach eine Diskussion vonseiten sehr vieler Teilnehmer*innen, einschließlich solcher aus dem wissenschaftlichen Bereich.

Der größte Widerspruch scheint mir derjenige zwischen dem Konzept der Menschenrechte (das nach 1948, d. h. nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg, dem Holocaust und nach der Allgemeinen Erklärung der Menschenrechte den Rahmen für die weltweite Koexistenz bestimmen sollte) einerseits und der Realität eines brutalen und unmenschlichen Krieges andererseits zu sein. Die Menschenrechtskonzeption fordert, von der Perspektive jedes einzelnen Menschen auszugehen und gewaltfreie Lösungen für verschiedene Probleme zu finden. Mein ganzes Leben in Belarus hörte ich von den Folgen der Gültigkeit dieses Konzepts, nämlich dem Ausbleiben eines Krieges in Europa nach 1948.

Die neue Phase des russischen Krieges in der Ukraine hat die Selbsttäuschung gezeigt, die in diesem Glauben liegt, nicht nur wegen des Krieges im ehemaligen Jugoslawien 1991–2001 oder in der Ukraine 2014, die beide zu Europa gehören. Dieser Glauben war falsch, weil aus der Perspektive der Menschenrechtskonzeption die unzähligen Kriege in der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts außerhalb Europas auch mit Europa zu tun haben. Den Grund dafür bilden sowohl die Idee der allgemeinen, d. h. für die ganze Welt geltenden Menschenrechtskonzeption (die UN vereint 193 Mitgliedstaaten) als auch die

4 „Revolution und Umbruch – Belarus im Fokus“, Podiumsdiskussion mit Olga Shparaga, moderiert von Anika Walke, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden, 18.5.2022, <https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/der-bereich/termine/gesellschaft-im-dialog-2022/revolution-und-umbruch-belarus-im-fokus>, Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zGZiVBNEQic>; „Transnational Feminist Solidarity with Ukrainian Feminists“, Online-Zusammenkunft initiiert von Judith Butler (University of Berkeley, CA), Sabine Hark (TU Berlin) und Irina Zhrebkina (V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University), 9.5.2022; „Die Revolution hat ein weibliches Gesicht – Der Fall Belarus“, Lesung und Diskussion am Zentrum für interdisziplinäre Forschung, Universität Bielefeld, 27.4.2022.

Prozesse der Globalisierung, die die Länder weltweit auf verschiedene Weise und nicht immer im Interesse der Demokratie verbinden. In der Situation des brutalen und unmenschlichen Krieges in der heutigen globalisierten Welt auf pazifistischen Methoden zu beharren, bedeutet, sich außerhalb der Kriegssituation und somit auf der Seite des Aggressors zu positionieren. Anders gesagt: Man fordert die friedliche Verteidigung der Menschenrechte in einer Situation, in der diese nicht mehr anerkannt werden, eben dadurch, dass Töten und Misshandeln zur Handlungsgrundlage des Aggressors wird.

Dies führt erneut zum Paradox der Menschenrechte, wie es Hannah Arendt in ihrem Buch über den Totalitarismus formuliert hat. Die Menschenrechte versagen gerade in dem Moment, in dem sie eine Rolle spielen sollen, d. h. wenn Menschen als Menschen und nicht als Bürger*innen dieses oder jenes Staates gelten, der in einer kritischen Situation nicht mehr imstande ist, diese Menschen zu verteidigen. Oder, wie wir im aktuellen Krieg in der Ukraine sehen, wenn der Staat nicht genug Kräfte dafür hat und um internationale Hilfe bittet. Eben diese internationale Hilfe soll den für die Ukraine kämpfenden Menschen ermöglichen, sich als Träger*innen von Menschenrechten zu fühlen, d. h. nicht allein gelassen, sondern mit anderen Menschen weltweit und über die Grenzen nationaler Staaten hinweg verbunden.

Eigentlich bittet die Ukraine schon seit 2014 um diese Hilfe. Wäre schon damals die russische Aggression ernst genommen worden, hätten wir höchstwahrscheinlich 2022 keine Eskalation dieses Krieges erlebt. Auch hätte man damals versuchen können, diese Aggression mit friedlichen Methoden zu verhindern, z. B. durch wirtschaftliche Sanktionen, was nicht passiert ist.

Wissenschaft gehört dazu, über nationale Grenzen hinaus

Diese Absage an die Menschenrechtskonzeption im dritten Jahrzehnt des 21. Jahrhunderts übertrage ich auch auf die Situation in Belarus, wo es seit dem Jahr 2020 um ein Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit geht, das keine adäquate Reaktion in der demokratischen Welt gefunden hat und findet.⁵ In meinem Online-Vortrag am Institut für Kulturmanagement und Gender Studies an der mdw – Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, organisiert von Evelyn Annuß (Institut für Kulturmanagement und Gender

5 Mein letzter Text, „Der Fall Belarus: Die Sorge umeinander und die Zukunft der Demokratie“ über die Situation in Belarus nach dem 24. Februar 2022: *Forum* Nr. 425 (Mai 2022), 11–14. <https://www.forum.lu/article/der-fall-belarus/>.

Studies, mdw) und Susanne Lettow (Margherita-von-Brentano-Zentrum für Geschlechterforschung der Freien Universität Berlin) am 16. Mai 2022 habe ich das Paradox der Menschenrechte mit einer Reihe von Machtasymmetrien in Verbindung gebracht, nämlich zwischen *Autoritarismen und Demokratien, Imperien und nationalen Staaten im politischen Sinn, Patriarchat und Emanzipation, der ganzen Reihe von kultur-symbolischen und diskursiven Asymmetrien, wie z. B. zwischen der „großen russischen Kultur“ und der mit der russischen historisch verflochtenen Kulturen*. Die Wirkung dieser Machtasymmetrien findet ihren Ausdruck sowohl in menschlichen (und weiteren) Opfern als auch in sozialer und politischer Regression. Ein Beispiel dafür ist ein sich verstärkender nationalistischer Diskurs, der einer schwachen Solidarisierung und Allianzbildung über die Grenzen der Nationalstaaten hinweg gegenübersteht (oder zur Allianzbildung gegen die Menschenrechte führen kann, wie im Fall des Abkommens mit der Türkei).

Auch die feministische Solidarisierung wurde infrage gestellt, und das in vielerlei Hinsicht. In Deutschland verteidigt Alice Schwarzer die Opferung der Ukraine angesichts des Risikos eines Dritten Weltkrieges, als ob in Zeiten der Globalisierung nicht jeder Krieg mehr oder weniger zugleich ein Weltkrieg wäre. In der Ukraine lehnt eine ganze Reihe von Feministinnen die Solidarisierung vonseiten belarussischer Feministinnen ab, sogar wenn diese Lukaschenko nicht unterstützen und ihn bekämpfen. Diese Konstellation zeigt die dunklen Seiten sowohl der Welt im Ganzen, die immer noch nationalistisch geprägt ist, als auch der Empathie und der Fürsorge, wenn das eigene Leiden und Mitleid zum geltenden Modell des Handelns auch für die anderen erhoben wird und keine anderen Reaktionsformen gelten lässt.

Diese Widersprüche und Asymmetrien bringen mich zurück zur Frage, welche Rolle der Wissenschaft in einer solch verschärften Situation zukommt. Im Rahmen der Diskussion am Wiko „Fighting against Authoritarianism: Belarus and Syria“ am 30. Mai 2022 mit Mohammad Al Attar haben wir versucht, der Beantwortung dieser Frage einen Schritt näher zu kommen. Diese wichtige Diskussion motivierte mich zum weiteren Vergleich unserer Revolutionen und Gesellschaften. Der horizontale Charakter der Revolutionen des Arabischen Frühlings war die Voraussetzung dafür, dass sie eher als soziale Bewegungen interpretiert wurden. Sie haben so gut wie keine Veränderung der politischen Regime herbeigeführt, verkörperten dabei aber die Emanzipation mehrerer gesellschaftlicher Gruppen, und das heißt die prodemokratische soziale Transformation (und

in diesem Sinn die Revolution).⁶ Das führt zu der Schlussfolgerung, dass der anhaltende Krieg auch neuer Begriffe zur Beschreibung und Analyse bedarf, wenn wir danach streben, die von mir skizzierten Widersprüche und Machtasymmetrien zu überwinden, anstatt an ihnen festzuhalten. Die Rolle verschiedener Wissenschaften, auch die des Wiko, kann dabei kaum überschätzt werden – ohne sie besteht keine Hoffnung, dass das Paradox der Menschenrechte überwunden und das Leben nach der Menschenrechtskonzeption für alle, nicht nur für privilegierte Staaten und Gruppen von Menschen möglich wird.

6 Vgl. dazu Asef Bayat, *Revolutionary Life: The Everyday of the Arab Spring*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021.



FREIRÄUME UND FREIZEITEN – *IN PRAISE
OF THE IVORY TOWER*

PETER STROHSCHNEIDER

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Der vierzigste Jahrgang. Das Wiko ist aus dem Gröbsten offenkundig raus. In den wilhelminischen Neobarockvillen im Grunewald leben und arbeiten zu dürfen, empfinden

die Fellows aus aller Welt unverändert als glückhafte Ausnahmesituation, *it is a privilege*. Mir selbst geht es nicht anders. Zumal ich das Kolleg bisher allein aus der Perspektive eines Gremienmitglieds kannte – und also anders. Von innen betrachtet erscheint der Elfenbeinturm noch schöner als von außen.

Das Jubiläum der Institution gibt zugleich Anlass, jene einschneidenden Veränderungen von Gesellschaft und Wissenschaft sich vor Augen zu führen, die unseren Jahrgang von der Gründungszeit trennen. Der Ausnahmeort liegt nicht mehr in einer ummauerten Exklave, sondern in der Mitte der Metropole, jedenfalls in deren westlicher Mitte; und das heißt, er liegt auch in direkter Nachbarschaft zum politischen Zentrum der Republik. Die Zeiten bildungsbürgerlich ziemlich homogener, zumal männlich und geisteswissenschaftlich dominierter Fellowjahrgänge werden allmählich historisch. Und auch die innerwissenschaftlichen Umwelten des Kollegs veränderten sich in einer Weise, von welcher unsere Vorgänger vor vier Jahrzehnten schwerlich einen Begriff sich hätten bilden können.

Expansion, Differenzierung und Akzeleration der Wissenschaften scheinen ohne jede Stoppregel einfach immer weiterzugehen. Ihre, mit Max Weber gesagt: Veralltäglichen, ihre numerokratische Formatierung und ununterbrochene institutionelle Reformierung nehmen, so könnte man meinen, jenen eingeführten Antworten einiges von ihrer Selbstverständlichkeit, die man vordem auf die Frage zu geben wusste, wie begründungsfähig eine so außeralltägliche, eine ebenso liberale wie exklusive und eine dem quantitativen *output accounting* so systematisch sich entziehende Forschungseinrichtung denn sei. Muße in Zeiten der Beschleunigung? Die Offenheit des Gesprächs statt einer taylorisierten Projektagenda? Mehr Neugier aufs Unvertraute denn interdisziplinäre Arbeitsteiligkeit? Kultivierung intellektueller Irritabilität statt planerischer Vermeidung von Überraschendem? Wie lässt sich derlei plausibel machen für eine wissenschaftsgesellschaftliche Öffentlichkeit, die Forschung in erster Linie als Lösung externer Problemvorgaben versteht? Wird der außeralltägliche Freiraum des Kollegs gerade im Maße der Veralltäglichen von Wissenschaft suspekt? Hatte nicht auch der Wissenschaftsrat jüngst erst, im Frühjahr 2021, von Legitimationsdruck gesprochen?

Mir will scheinen, mit solchem Legitimationsdruck vernünftig umzugehen, sei weniger eine wissenschaftssystematische denn eine politische Aufgabe. Dass Antworten neu formuliert werden sollten, mag sein, neu finden muss man sie nicht. Denn im Zuge fortschreitender Verwissenschaftlichen von Gesellschaft treten die utilitaristischen Fremdbezüge von Wissenschaft zwar hervor, doch die intrinsische Selbstbezüglichkeit

methodischer Erkenntnissuche einfach ersetzen können sie nicht. Für die wichtige Frage nach dem Neuen, danach also, wie nicht neue Lösungen, sondern wie neue wissenschaftliche Probleme in die Welt kommen, dafür kann man sich nämlich auf jene Fremdbezüge allein kaum verlassen. Dafür braucht es nach wie vor auch die Freiräume und Freizeiten entlasteter intellektueller Produktivität eines Institute for Advanced Study. Dafür braucht es solche Instanzen „funktionaler Zweckfreiheit“ (H.-G. Soeffner).

Jede und jeder Fellow bringt sein Projekt mit in den Elfenbeinturm. Ich selbst hatte deren drei. Zu viele also, um mir jene Freiheiten auch gänzlich zu eigen machen zu können, auf die hin das Wiko angelegt ist. Zu seinem Ruhme soll indes gesagt werden, dass es mit der Verbindlichkeit der Fellowprojekte höchst generös verfährt.

Dies freilich ist auf gewisse Weise geradezu die *raison d'être* des Kollegs. Es ist ein Ausnahmefall von der allgemeinen Projektifizierung moderner Forschung und bleibt als solcher auf jenen Regelfall bezogen. Sein Prinzip ist *people, not projects!* Für begrenzte Zeit setzt es den Forschungsprozess der Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler frei von jenen Steuerungs-, Evaluierungs- und Finanzierungssystemen (und -routinen) der Wissenschaftsorganisierung, mit welchen die Institution des Projektes, zumal des Drittmittelprojektes, sie enger verbunden hatte. Und das Kolleg tut dies, indem es diese Forschungstätigkeit selbst mit einer gewissen Unverfügbarkeit ausstattet. In sachlicher Hinsicht gibt es die Problemwahl frei. Es unterbricht auf Zeit die sonstigen Zeitzwänge des Wissenschaftsbetriebs und verlangt auch nicht nach einer Binnenstrukturierung jener Forschungszeit, die die zeitlich terminierte Fellowship gewährt. Und in der Sozialdimension entfremdet es die Fellows auf Zeit den Ordnungen ihrer akademischen Alltagswelt, indem es sie zu einer Spezialgemeinschaft, dem Fellowjahrgang, integriert – durch räumliche Versammlung und Residenzpflicht, durch Restaurant und Kommensalität, durch die Dichte weiterer Konsoziationsrituale vom Dienstagskolloquium bis zum Jogging, von der Tanzgruppe bis zum Chor.

Für dieses Entlastetsein von den Nachweispflichten der Projektforschung ist auch und besonders dankbar, wer mit zu vielen Forschungsversprechungen, *vulgo* Projekten, an den Halensee kommt, als dass er mit eingelösten wieder abreisen könnte.

Die Ausnahmehaftigkeit des Elfenbeinturms mitsamt ihren exklusiven Freiräumen und Freizeiten ist, ich wiederhole mich, genuin funktional und deswegen rechtfertigungsfähig. Gleichwohl habe ich den Eindruck, dass es die Spezialgemeinschaft aus anderen

Gründen derzeit nicht leicht hat, die Produktivität ihrer entlastenden Exzeptionalität zu entfalten. Es machen sich im Innern der Exklave bedrückende Zeitumstände in ungefilterter Direktheit geltend. Seit mehr als zweieinhalb Jahren prägen die Wellen der SARS-CoV-2-Pandemie die Rhythmen des gesellschaftlichen, des wirtschaftlichen, auch des akademischen Lebens. Seit dem 24. Februar 2022 verbreitet der neoimperialistische Angriffskrieg einer Atommacht auf ihr europäisches Nachbarland Angst und Schrecken – ohne dass doch die Krisen des globalen Klimasystems, des Artensterbens oder der pluralistischen Gesellschaft mit ihrer liberalen Demokratie irgend an Dringlichkeit verloren hätten.

Von Ersterem, von der Pandemie, waren die drei Anfangsmonate meines Aufenthalts im Grunewald im Herbst 2021 geprägt. Nicht so zwar, dass die besondere Kollegnormalität, anders als dann wieder im Winter der Omikron-Welle, spürbar eingeschränkt gewesen wäre; unter den eingewöhnten Vorkehrungen von der Gesichtsmaske über den Antigen-Schnelltest bis zum häufigen Lüften des Großen Kolloquienraums konnte sich auch im 40. Jahrgang mehr oder weniger die Normalität von Kolloquien, Mahlzeiten und anderen Vergemeinschaftungsformen wieder einstellen. Wohl aber waren die auslaufenden Frustrationswellen des vorangegangenen Kollegjahres 2020/2021 im Gegenlicht jener erleichterten Freude wahrzunehmen, mit welcher all die unbegrenzt aufmerksamen und hilfsbereiten Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter des Wissenschaftskollegs nun die Rückkehr in die Normalität genossen: nach Monaten, da die Dienstagskolloquien per Zoom stattfanden, da man mit seinem Essenstablett an separierte Orte sich zurückzog und die Abstandsregeln dazu zwangen, so zu tun, als ob es eine Normalität von Gemeinschaftlichkeit gäbe. Der Lockdown hatte jenes Prinzip gebrochen, das für das Kolleg konstitutiv ist: dass es nämlich die tatsächliche räumliche Versammlung der Fellows an diesem Ausnahmeort ist. Es braucht größere sozialräumliche Nähe, als die Ansteckungsprävention seinerzeit zuließ, damit der Elfenbeinturm wirklich funktionieren kann.

Zugleich verlangt er auf seiner epistemischen Seite analytischen Abstand zu den Dingen, um die es geht: Forschung ist eine Kategorie der Distanz. Zur Logik des wissenschaftlichen Elfenbeinturms, eben weil er als Freiraum exklusiv abgegrenzt ist, gehört auch dieses dialektische Moment, dass er tatsächlich eine Art von sozialem *safe space* ist, gerade um epistemische Verunsicherung, Herausforderung, Irritation und Provokation zu ermöglichen. Hier emergieren Formen des Vertrauens, die den wissenschaftlichen Streit erleichtern sollen, weil er insofern geführt werden kann, ohne dass man unentwegt auf die sozialen Folgen des Streitens Rücksicht nehmen müsste.

Die Grenzen dessen wurden erkennbar, da man am Kolleg – das mit eindrucksvoller Selbstverständlichkeit ukrainischen Flüchtlingen Herberge bot, Anlaufstelle wurde für Familienangehörige von Alumni wie Fluchtpunkt von Exulanten aus Russland oder belarussischer Verfolgter –, da man also versuchte, den russischen Angriffs- und Vernichtungskrieg, seine historischen und politischen Dimensionen in wissenschaftlichen Veranstaltungen zu thematisieren. Das holte zugleich den in Europa vergessenen syrischen Krieg mit seinen Schrecknissen zurück ins Bewusstsein. Doch so eindrucksvoll ästhetische Vergegenwärtigungen und Verarbeitungen von Kriegserfahrung waren, so sehr kollabierte in solchen Situationen analytische Distanz. Scharfe Deutungsdifferenzen oder die Betonung von Widersprüchen verboten sich schon aus Gründen von Empathie und Takt gegenüber denjenigen, die dem Schrecken direkt ausgesetzt, die ihm mit knapper Not entronnen waren.

Es kann Wichtigeres geben als die momentane Weiterführung wissenschaftlicher Auseinandersetzungen. Dann kommt es mehr auf den Schutzraum des Kollegs an, auf die Sicherheit, die es zu bieten vermag, als auf die Freiräume und Freizeiten für epistemische Verunsicherungen.



AN INSPIRING PLACE KULBHUSHANSINGH SURYAWANSHI

Kulbhushansingh Suryawanshi, or Kullu, is a scientist at the Nature Conservation Foundation in Bangalore, India. He is also the Country Director of India for the Snow Leopard Trust. Kullu is an ecologist and conservationist with interest in the high mountains of Asia. Kullu grew up in small towns and villages in central India and studied Zoology, Botany, and Computer Science at the Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University in Aurangabad. A master's degree in Wildlife Science and Conservation from the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Bangalore, changed the course of his career. Since then, his PhD and the rest of his academic career has focused on the ecology and conservation of biological diversity in the Himalaya and other mountain ranges of Central Asia. – Address: High-Altitude Program, Nature Conservation Foundation, 1311 “Amritha”, 12th Main Vijayanagar, 1st Stage, 570017 Mysore, India.

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I had just survived Covid, but people around me were dying. Hospitals in India were running out of supplementary oxygen, and that made headlines around the world. The pandemic had already raged for a year and this was the second wave of infections, the deadliest to hit India. Estimates of the number of dead in India vary by an order of magnitude, ranging from five hundred thousand to five million. Some of my relatives were among the dead. Fortunately, all my close family was healthy. I was to be at Wiko in two months, but when life itself seemed so uncertain, it was hard to think about a sabbatical. The gloom all around made me question everything and not take anything for granted. I tried to remain cheerful around my wife and our seven-year-old daughter and be excited about our upcoming visit to Berlin.

Come August when all the other Fellows started arriving in Wiko, we had not yet applied for our visa. The German consulate in India, like all other consulates, was still shut. And yet, the wind began to change. An email from a Fellow asking about our well-being and introducing their daughter to our daughter and saying that they are waiting for us, a Zoom call for our daughter from her to-be classmates from her to-be school in Berlin, and a WhatsApp message from my German-language teacher started to create a new reality from the abstract idea of a sabbatical. Wiko staff were trying everything in their capacity to help with the visa.

We arrived in Berlin on a quiet Sunday afternoon in late September. It was the day of the Berlin marathon. I could see a few straggling runners in their bright clothes and colourful shoes as our taxi drove along a circuitous route to Villa Walther. We were two months late, but tree leaves had not yet turned to their fall colours. We would get a few more weeks of summer sunshine. When the taxi pulled in front of Koenigsallee 20, I didn't know what to make of the mansion-like house with a Kosovo flag (much later I found out that Wiko shared the villa with the Kosovo embassy). It was quiet out in front of the villa, but within minutes we were in the warm embrace of the social life of Wiko. Even before entering our apartment, we were part of a group of Fellows and their families at the backyard of the villa having coffee amidst laughter and conversations as the kids played on the lake bank. The big yard behind Villa Walther, next to the lake, became the hangout place for all the kids and their parents until winter came and it became too cold to stay outside in the evening. Never before had I eased into a new group so seamlessly.

I was a Fellow of the College for Life Sciences, which means that I was to spend only six months at Wiko. I was younger than most of the other Fellows and still early in my career. I had spent months thinking about how I was going to approach some of the other Fellows. I was low on confidence when I arrived. I was the only Indian in the cohort and one of only two Fellows from Asia. I was keen to feel accepted. All my concerns were dispelled within minutes of reaching Villa Walther. We were warmly welcomed by everyone and we did not feel like outsiders even for a minute. Everyone was interested in my work and many were keenly awaiting our arrival.

I was at my desk in the office the morning after arriving in Berlin. The books that I needed for my work were already on my shelf in the library. All the Wiko staff welcomed us with affection and were eager to show us around. I met the Rector over lunch and we spoke about healthcare and the political situation around the world. By that evening I had met almost all the other Fellows. Next morning, in less than 48 hours after arriving in

Berlin, our daughter was attending her new school. She already had friends, thanks to the Zoom sessions organized by the teachers of the Freie Schule Anne-Sophie. By our second evening, we felt fully settled, as if we had been residents of this place forever.

The six months that followed were some of the best six months of my professional career. I made a good decision to do my colloquium early in my stay. It helped everyone know about my work and my interests and hence the remaining time was spent on focussed discussions. It helped that Wiko put me in touch with the right people in Berlin. I was fortunate to be invited for an Evening Colloquium by Wiko, which led to more invitations from research groups around Berlin and more networking.

My wife Bhagya and our daughter Tara enjoyed their time in Berlin. We spent our Thursdays and weekends going around the many museums of Berlin. I will never forget the moment when I saw my seven-year-old look deep into the eyes of Nefertiti's statue. I could sense that this could be the spark that leads to a curiosity that will change the rest of her life. We took every opportunity to go for walks in the forests of Grunewald, skate on Berlin's many ice rinks, eat at the amazing Christmas markets. Tara loved everything about her bilingual school, the Freie Schule Anne-Sophie. She had great friends and wonderful teachers. What she loved (and misses) the most are her friends from Villa Walther. All of us Fellows with young kids made a WhatsApp group called Wiko Village to keep tabs on our kids who were all over the Villa Walther. Kids spent most of their after-school hours playing outside when it was warm enough or in each other's houses once it got too cold to play outside. Tara looked forward to Thursdays, when she would spend the evening with her friends and the babysitters when all the grownups were busy with Thursday dinners. The amazing library kept us all supplied with all the books we wanted. We prioritised the titles that we knew we would not find back in India. After a long time, we felt we had control over our time. We could do things that we wanted to do rather than needed to do. My calendar took a backseat and I would pay attention to whoever was sitting with me. There were conversations all around, over picnic lunches, at children's parks, around play dates for kids at the zoo, over coffee, at lunches, on the road from Villa Walter to the M19 bus stop at Erdener Straße, on the M19. We often spoke about our work, but it did not feel like work, and I realised that that was what I came looking for at Wiko. To rediscover a passion and love for my work.

I am grateful to every person I met at Wiko. I cannot name everyone but I cannot fail to thank the library team and the kitchen staff. I have never before had (and perhaps will never have again) such incredible access to research material. Almost anything that I ever

wanted to read was made accessible. The library team was interested in the research of every Fellow, and often we merely discussed our broad areas of research and the library team found gems of material on that topic. I could widen my research horizons thanks to the interest the library team took in my work. Dunia and the kitchen staff made sure that every meal was a fine dining experience.

I have come back to India rejuvenated. I am brimming with new ideas, and I have also recovered my passion for my earlier ideas. I have developed new proposals with friends and colleagues from Wiko and other institutions in Europe. My primary goal for this fellowship was to attempt a book. It is hard for me to say if I have achieved it. What I can say is that I achieved a lot more than my primary goal. I worked with writers, philologists, photographers, ecologists, historians, anthropologists, and philosophers. Some of these collaborations will be long-term. More importantly, I made friends on whom I can count for the rest of my life and this can mean only one thing. I value and aspire for more such collaborations. I did not write the whole book, but I have a better proposal (than the one I went to Wiko with) and a better idea of what I want to achieve with my book. The book is no longer the end in itself.

Our final month at Wiko was dominated by conversations around the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The administration of Wiko was very swift in creating fellowships for academics and artists from Ukraine and Russia who were escaping the war. We spent a few evenings with the new Fellows listening to their stories of lives shattered by a new war. For me, the greatness of Wiko was not in its idea or its infrastructure but in its people. Everyone we met at Wiko was inspiring in their own way and that made my family and me feel special.



NEUTRALITY GUY TILLIM

Guy Tillim was born in Johannesburg in 1962 and lives in Vermaaklikheid in South Africa. He started photographing professionally in 1986, working with the Afrapix collective until 1990. His work as a freelance photographer in South Africa for the local and foreign media included positions with Reuters between 1986 and 1988 and Agence France Presse in 1993 and 1994. Tillim has received many awards for his work, including the Prix Roger Pic from Scam Société Civile des Auteurs Multimedia in 2002; the Higashikawa Overseas Photographer Award (Japan) in 2003; the 2004 Daimler-Chrysler Award for South African photography; the Leica Oskar Barnack Award in 2005; the first Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography from the Peabody Museum at Harvard University in 2006; the Quai Branly Photography Residencies in 2015; and the Henri Cartier-Bresson Award in 2017. He has had solo exhibitions at the Huis Marseille, Museum for Photography, Amsterdam; the Fondation Henri Cartier-Bresson, Paris; the Museu de Serralves in Porto; the Peabody Museum at Harvard, Cambridge; the Foam Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam; and the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, among other venues. His work was included in documenta 12 in 2007, the São Paulo Biennial in 2006, and the touring exhibition *Africa Remix* (2004–07), presented at the Centre Pompidou in 2004. – Address: c/o Michael Stevenson Gallery, 160 Sir Lowry Road, Cape Town, 7925, South Africa. E-mail: guytillim@yahoo.co.uk.

When I think about what makes a picture good, I sometimes remember what Bob Dylan once said when he was asked what one of his songs meant:

“Have you heard the song?”

“Yes.”

“Well, that’s what it means.”

So, what makes a picture good? It’s hard to say. Ways of reading photographs change with time, and visual vocabulary evolves. Compare making photographs in the 1980s, say, when competence in the field required specialist knowledge, to now, when we’re all photographers. Now, old unwritten rules of composition and grand themes are swamped by the onslaught of visual diaries of our lives.

What was thought to be good is changing. In the future, one may be able to see a line of successful photographs somehow linked, informed by each other, yet distinct, full of intention and insight. But now, is there a thread and can we glimpse it? Perhaps we can, a little.

At Wiko it’s hoped that encounters with other Fellows at our daily lunches together will lead to inspiring exchanges. At one such meal I’m sitting next to Heiko Hecht, who is Professor of Experimental Psychology at the University of Mainz. Our conversation drifts to whether there exists a stock definition of a “good” photograph. I think of Bob Dylan for a second (it’s good if it holds you?) but I take the plunge and share a thought about landscapes.

A photograph of landscape might be called good if you look into it rather than at it. It’s a window/mirror analogy. In one, you see yourself, in another – and this makes it good, I think – you have a possibility to forget yourself. The picture as window is evoked by creating an equality of elements, or equally weighted elements in the frame, where one is not quite sure what is photographed and consequently the gaze wanders. If it wanders, you’re in it.

Let’s test that, said Heiko.

He came up with the word “Scapes.” A definition of sorts. Landscape, Cityscape, Seascape.

So it goes at Wiko. Wednesdays were my favourite lunch. Buffet. Followed by Friday’s fish.

Sometime near the end of the year in our apartment at Villa Walther, I had a visit from the future. A next year’s Fellow came to look at her accommodation. She barely registered me, I was the as-yet unformed relic of the soon-to-be past; she was making the most of a fleeting visit to size up her soon-to-be accommodation. I wondered if she lived anywhere near the tropics as I did and if she had any idea of the fierceness of the Berlin winter that awaited. Perhaps not, and neither had I, and in the end it was this winter, the

winter that made all elements of any given street seem equally grey, that offered me my window of forgetting.

This evenness of the grey streets held allure for me because I'd always loved the deep tonal qualities that European photographers evoked in their black-and-white pictures. These tones seemed impossible to reproduce under a bright African sky where I learned my trade. And now here I was in Berlin, for an entire year, and I embraced the opportunity to use the winter as palette and source of inspiration.

I'm exquisitely alone on a quiet street on a frigid morning. In the busier avenues, I'm undisturbed as people pass by wrapped up against the cold and masked against the pandemic. I'm perversely grateful for this latter aspect because my wanderings that are erratic, often uninformed, are nevertheless situated in a time. If the pictures are revisited at all, they would have this, a certain nostalgia.

I lose myself in constructing the images, mixing elements of different frames in a single one. Making panoramas from multiple images. I'm curious to investigate these new possibilities of image-making and the implications for a documentary form from which I sprung. It would seem that now one can effortlessly create images with a compositional dynamic heretofore only dreamed of. But it is not so. It is an exercise in restraint, not indulgence. All at once, I'm hugely grateful to Wiko for this sustained immersion in Berlin.



Alexanderplatz





Perleberger Straße





GOODBYE WIKO
SOFÍA TORALLAS TOVAR

Sofía Torallas Tovar, Ph.D. (1995), is Professor of Classics and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago. Since 2002, she is the curator of the papyrus collection at the Abbey of Montserrat, where she has not only catalogued and restored, but also published the texts of many of the papyri in Greek, Latin, and Coptic stored there. Editing papyrus texts requires additional skills, including the languages and knowledge of the historical context of the texts analyzed. In this line, triggered by the study of the texts, she has published on the sociolinguistic environment in Greco-Roman Egypt, the administration of the Roman province of Egypt, early monastic developments, and the circulation of books and documents in Antiquity. The world of ancient magic was always one of her interests. As co-PI of the project “Transmission of Magical Knowledge: Magical handbooks on papyrus,” funded since 2015 by the Neubauer Collegium at the University of Chicago, she has spearheaded with her colleague Christopher Faraone the re-edition and analysis of 88 magical handbooks from Greco-Roman Egypt. Her favorite place on earth is the Nile at sunset and having tea while basking in the sun and the blinking of its waters as they pass by Aswan. – Address: Classics and Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago, 1115 E. 58th Street, Chicago, IL 60637, USA. E-mail: sofiat@uchicago.edu.

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“Whaaat? Is it already June 30th!!? Help! can time be reversed? Can we go back to the blessed day in September when we arrived in Grunewald?”

I flipped frantically through my Greek and Egyptian magical handbooks on papyrus, the most powerful of all:

– “procedure to reverse time..., procedure to reverse time..., procedure to reverse time..., here!”

“Êdê êdê tachy tachy!” “now, now, quickly, quickly!”

Oh no! this is not a procedure to reverse time. Did I activate the spell to speed up time instead? That is the only explanation! Now I must apologize to all the Fellows, who are in tears, packing their property, and booking flights to get back home, who have been mourning since May the end of their term here. I hear all this booing and weeping on the courtyard of Villa Walther. And I feel responsible.

I came to the Wissenschaftskolleg with a project on ancient magical papyri. It is a project in which my main purpose is to understand the authors, scribes, users, and customers of

GEMF 15. 148–155:

For a workshop to do well: Inscribe the egg of a male bird and then bury (the egg) near the threshold of the Wissenschaftskolleg with the following text: “You are the egg CHPHURIS, (the) egg, that is CHORBAISANACHARSŌ AMOUN (say thrice) SPHĒ (twice) GAKNEPHĒ SIETHŌ (thrice) NOUSI (twice). You are the egg that is sacred from birth, that is SELBIOUS BATHINI PHNIĒI APO AŌE AŌE AŌ[I] AŌI APHIAEA THŌU[TH?] IAŌ SELETĒA THEŌĒPH OXUMBRĒĒ ĒĒ III.” And then pronounce the prayer of the egg: “O great god, give favor, business, and success to me and to this place, where the egg lies, in the house where I (myself) conduct my business, the Wissenschaftskolleg. (You are) SELEPĒL THEŌĒPH and Agathos Daimon. Send to the Wissenschaftskolleg all business and daily prosperity. You are my labor, you are the great Amûn, who (dwells) in heaven. [Aye, Lord,] help me.”

The weekly colloquia gave testimony of the high efficacy of this procedure. Gathered around a speaker, in the bright and elegant conference room of the central building, our brains were activated in a large number of different topics. The proof of the effective power of the spell was the interaction between scholars of extremely different and distant professional fields in discussions to which not even hunger could put an end, with hands still rising for questions at lunchtime.

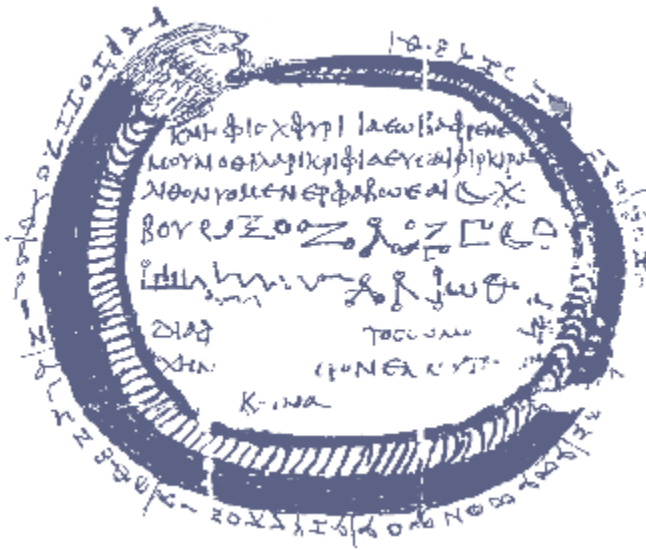
The third procedure did not have the expected results. It is a fourth-century protection against disease and suffering. I have two explanations for its failure: on the one hand, I might have not performed it correctly, though I have extensive experience in the activities of ancient *magoi*. On the other, perhaps I did perform it correctly, but too early on, and the effect of the spell wore out by February, when we all of us fell ill with COVID. At a similarly late date in our time together, other Fellows suffered from other serious ailments, and even had to visit the operating theater. I had chosen it from a Greek papyrus roll containing multiple recipes. It seemed indicated for our condition and protection, but now I know its effectiveness is not what it should be. I will write a note in the margin of my handbook. This was the procedure:

PGM VII 579–590:

A phylactery, a bodyguard against daimons, against phantasms, against every sickness and suffering, to be written on a leaf of gold or silver or tin or on

hieratic papyrus. When worn, it works mightily for it is the name of the pourer of the great god and [his] seal, and it is as follows: "KNOUPHIS CHPHYKIS IAEIO IAO AEE IAO IAEOBAPHRENE MOUNOTHILARIKRIPHLE Y EAIPHIRKIRALITHANY OMENERPHABOEAI." These [are] the names; the figure is like this: let the Snake be biting its tail, the names being written inside [the circle made by] the snake. The whole figure is [drawn] thus, as given below, with [the spell], "Protect my body, [and] the I entire soul of me, and all the other Fellows." And when you have consecrated [it], wear [it].

It also requires the drawing of a powerful sketch.



Only the gods know what happened. Perhaps I am not a good draftsman.

I did not activate the final procedures I had planned. This task was instead taken up by the Wiko staff, who in the meantime had developed incredible ability and skill in magical crafts, a skill as great as the one they brought to helping us in all manner of matters during our stay. There were in fact two separate procedures. The first, used in the final days, is a formidable one, which apparently effectively worked in less than a week. From the Hay

“cookbook,” a powerful Coptic eighth-century leather magical handbook preserved at the British Museum:

When you wish a person to leave his/her house: Recite the following prayer over wild mustard. Cast it before the door of his/her house. He/She will flee. “I beg, I invoke you today, MARMARIOTH, the one who is seated over all the authorities; I invoke you today, and your form, which is a flame of fire; I invoke you.”

The second procedure, used at the end, is well known, its use amply attested throughout history. It is the one for “safe travels” that was generally used by traders, travelers, soldiers, even pirates since antiquity. I provided the staff with an iteration of this one found in the Nautical Lapidary. An adaptation needed to be applied, of course, since transportation means have changed through the centuries, but as far as I know, everyone is back home and safe.

Astrampychos, Nautical Lapidary 3:

The translucent and shiny beryl, the aquamarine green: if Poseidon is engraved on it mounted on a double-drawn chariot, those who sail the sea – or fly across the skies – wearing it will come out of the difficulties unscathed.

To complete the good wishes for our travel, this short (culinary?) procedure provided comfort and ease.

PGM VII 182:

To be able to travel [a long way] home and not get thirsty: Gulp down an egg beaten in wine.

I cannot close this report without wishing as much friendship, health, and good work to the incoming cohort of Fellows. I hope they will enjoy this wonderful place as much as we have done, even in difficult times. To them I dedicate my last spell, wishing them also lots of joyful discovery at the Wissenschaftskolleg. They might need this spell specially on Thursday nights, when conversation goes on beyond midnight:

PGM VII 181:

To be able to drink a lot and not get drunk: Eat a baked pig’s lung.



A MODEST FLOURISHING QUANTUM GAS
IN THE MIDST OF HUMANITIES
ETIENNE WAMBA

Etienne Wamba was born in the Toko family, a hundred-wife and three-hundred-child polygamy leaving in Baleveng, a modest chiefdom of the West region of Cameroon. He studied Physics at the University of Dschang and got his B.Sc. in 2002. Then he moved to Cameroon's capital city, Yaoundé, where he received a Diploma in Education in 2005 and his M.Sc. in Physics from the University of Yaoundé 1 in 2006, studying out-of-equilibrium stochastic systems and critical behaviors with application to the hearing organ. He then did his Ph.D. (2013) at the same university, studying the matter-waves of Bose-Einstein condensates, followed by a two-year tutor position at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences in Limbe, Cameroon. He did a post-doc at the Technische Universität Kaiserslautern, Germany on a fellowship from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He studied spacetime mappings of quantum gas experiments. He was a joint associate of the Simons Foundation and the Abdus Salam International Center for Theoretical Physics (2015–2021). Starting in 2020, he joined the University of Buea, where he is now a Lecturer. His research focuses on the theoretical investigation of the dynamics of quantum many-body systems. – Address: Faculty of Engineering and Technology, University of Buea, P.O. Box 63, Buea, Cameroon. E-mail: etienne.wamba@ubuea.cm.

On April 1, when the taxi took me to Grunewald and dropped me off at the location that would shortly after become my new home, the address Vera Pfeffer communicated to me pointed to a grand bourgeois-style building, the main building of the Institute, located in a very peaceful and wealthy area of Berlin. The coming days would let me discover that I was accommodated near the bus stop of line M19 at a working distance to main grocery

stores, shops, and restaurants. Being in the main building made everything just so easy for me since the restaurant, seminar rooms, offices, table-tennis area, and washing machine were all close at hand.

With time, I have discovered the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin as a unique place for doing research while living a balanced life in many ways. The Kolleg, far from the urban noise and in the middle of the greenness of trees, nurtures inspiration. My office was equipped with all the basic stuffs needed for doing my research. And I met very lovely people at Wiko, both the staff and Fellows. The staff has been so kind to me, always willing to provide help wherever and whenever need be, and I am really grateful for that. Wiko is suitable for thinking with a free mind and for taking interdisciplinary research to the next level. As one of the few research centers where natural scientists, humanities scholars, artists, and social scientists can gather together and discuss ideas at seminars, it is appropriate for the cross-fertilization of ideas between the sciences and the humanities. Furthermore, this may provide a way of seeing how our research is perceived by people outside of the research field and by the entire society. I found both the staff and Fellows to be nice, wonderful people, humble, and easy to talk to. Lunch and dinner times were real socialization moments, and I had open discussions with Fellows on all kinds of topics, ranging from science to daily life matters. I happened to have my birthday during my three-month stay at Wiko, just three weeks after my arrival. I was still shy, as I was still trying to get to know my new family members. But without having Facebook connections with Fellows, Teresa sent me a surprising birthday wish, with an invitation to celebrate it in a restaurant. I had informed no one, and who could have informed her, I wondered! I finally knew that she conspired with Jana Petri to offer me such a great surprise. We celebrated my birthday in an Indian restaurant at Halensee, with Sabina whose leg was to undergo surgery in the coming days. The joy I felt that day is simply indescribable. Remembrances of Anna's Spaghetti Theory around the gnocchi table, full of fun, during one of those joyful dinners still resonates in my mind! Wiko is a very inspiring place for the mind. How can one forget the end-of-year party?! I was part of the decoration team along with Mark, Eva, Elisa, and Sanyu. The party was a moment of great excitement and a joyful conclusion to my stay. I found it very interesting, and that makes Wiko a unique place in the world of research institutions. All that put together allowed me to quietly do my research work. I really enjoyed my stay at Wiko.

While at Wiko I was able to visit many places in the city of Berlin, including the Brandenburger Tor, the botanical garden, the Berlin-Hohenschönhausen Memorial, the

former Stasi (East Germany's Ministry of State Security) prison, Berlin's waters on a sightseeing tour by boat, and the Bundestag. I also had the opportunity to visit Potsdam, thanks to Jana Petri, the Academic Coordinator of the College for Life Sciences, who offered me the visit. I then visited, among other places, Sanssouci Palace and its surroundings. Jana was extremely helpful in suggesting places to visit.

During my stay at Wiko, I had the opportunity to attend German courses. I was attending B1 slots offered by Eva von Kügelgen. I received a lot of resources that allowed me to improve my German. I also took a few weeks of an A2 slot offered by Reinhard von Bernus.

One of the most important things I got at Wiko is an account to have access to online resources of the Freie Universität Berlin. The library's head, Michael Dominik Hagel, helped me in that respect. It gave me the opportunity to get the papers I needed for my work. This was really vital for my research as a scientist.

On April 29, 2022, I attended a workshop held at Wiko on the theme "Genomics of coevolution" convened by Dieter Ebert. Participants were visitors coming from many institutions throughout the world. During the workshop, apart from interesting discussions on coevolution, I had the opportunity to start discussions with Aurélien Tellier of the Technical University of Munich about possible supervisions of students at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences in Cameroon.

On June 1, 2022, I gave a colloquium talk on the topic "From Classical Lines of Thought to the Quantum World: What Place for Ultracold Gases?" The talk aimed at raising awareness of the quantum world and how it can affect our future, as well as the kinds of ongoing research therein. I had to prepare the talk with great care, as it was meant for a very diverse audience of great minds. And I felt honored to give such a talk at Wiko. I was overwhelmed by the questions, which really impressed me a lot. A peculiarity of Wiko's colloquia is the traditional introduction by another Fellow or staff member. I was introduced in a very special way by Alberto Pascual-García, and that really made the colloquium ambiance exciting.

During my stay at Wiko, I worked on two aspects of the dynamics of quantum gases.

First I worked on the heating suppression in quantum gases under periodic driving that can be prepared with Floquet engineering. The driving is a certain periodic but anharmonic modulation of the gas's two-body interaction, at a particular frequency, which makes it possible to map the Floquet-engineered experiment onto an evolution with slowly varying parameters. Such a mapping between a Floquet evolution and a slow process

allows us to investigate non-equilibrium many-body dynamics and examine how rapidly driven systems may avoid heating up, at least when mean-field theory is still valid. We learn that rapid periodic driving may not yield to secular heating, because the time evolution of the system has a kind of hidden adiabaticity, inasmuch as it can be mapped exactly onto that of an almost static system.

Second, I built a numerical code meant for simulating on Matlab the nonlinear dynamics induced by the modulation instability of a binary mixture in an atomic Bose-Einstein condensate under the joint effects of higher-order residual nonlinearities and helicoidal SO coupling. The analysis relies on a system of modified coupled Gross-Pitaevskii equations on which the linear stability analysis of plane wave solutions was performed, from which an expression of the MI gain was obtained. A parametric analysis of regions of instability was carried out, where effects originating from the higher-order interactions and the helicoidal spin-orbit coupling are confronted under different combinations of the signs of the intra- and intercomponent interaction strengths. Direct numerical calculations, on the generic model, have confirmed our analytical predictions and have showed that the higher-order interspecies interaction and the spin-orbit coupling can balance each other suitably for the instability to take place. Mainly, it was found that the residual nonlinearity preserves and reinforces the stability of miscible pairs of condensates with SO coupling. Additionally, when a miscible binary mixture of condensates with SO coupling is modulationally unstable, the presence of the residual nonlinearity may help soften such instability. Our results finally suggest that MI-induced formation of stable solutions in mixtures of BECs with two-body attraction may be preserved by the residual nonlinearity even though the latter enhances the instability.

My short-term fellowship at Wiko was fruitful in terms of networking, as I was able to establish new scientific contacts and strong bonds with leading German scientists in my field of research, notably at the Technische Universität Berlin (TU Berlin) and Heidelberg University.

It all started with the in-person FINES 2022 conference I attended in St. Martin from May 2–6, 2022. The conference is usually organized every two years and regroups forefront experts of the field of finite temperature and out-of-equilibrium dynamics across the world. The conference was an occasion to meet closely and discuss with leading scientists in my field. I contributed and presented a poster on the theme “Using a space-time mapping for probing heating suppression in periodically driven many-body quantum systems: a mean-field example with Bose gases.”

Next, I contacted, met, and discussed with André Eckardt, Head of the Quantum Non-Equilibrium Dynamics research group at the Institute for Theoretical Physics of the TU Berlin. He invited me to visit his group and give a talk on “Exploring heating suppression in periodically driven quantum gases using an exact space-time mapping.” The contact with Prof. Eckardt was suggested by Jana Petri and the talk was given on May 16, 2022.

While at Wiko, Tao Wang invited me to deliver an online talk on “Mapping as a probe for heating suppression in periodically driven quantum many-body systems” in the Department of Physics and Chongqing Key Laboratory for Strongly Coupled Physics of Chongqing University, China. The contact with Prof. Tao was facilitated by my German collaborator, Axel Pelster of the TU Kaiserslautern, and the talk was held on May 30, 2022.

Finally, Tilman Enss invited me to deliver an on-campus talk on “Using a space-time mapping for probing heating suppression in periodically driven many-body quantum systems” at the Institute for Theoretical Physics of Heidelberg University on June 16, 2022. My contact with Prof. Enss was established around my poster presentation during the FINES 2022 conference.

Although my stay at Wiko was shorter than that of other Fellows, it was very pleasant and fruitful. I am very grateful to all the Wiko staff for this wonderful opportunity I was given and for the treatment I received. I achieved my personal goal, and I rate life and work at Wiko with a Distinction grade. I will not hesitate to come back to Wiko whenever there is any occasion. It would be helpful if the following points can be considered:

- The use of microphones by participants during the questions-and-answers phase of the Tuesday Colloquia should be made systematic, since the hall is big.
- While at Wiko, Fellows should be able to participate in conferences and workshops outside Wiko, using Wiko as their affiliation, and such participation should be supported.
- The lecturer replacement support was vital in my case, since without it I could never have gotten permission to travel. I really appreciate the idea.

I am very grateful to all the Wiko staff for this wonderful opportunity I have been given and for the care I have received during my stay in Grunewald. I especially thank Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger for the invitation; Vera Pfeffer, who prepared my trip and organized my stay; Jana Petri for her constant care; and Eva von Kügelgen for her commitment in teaching me German. Finally, I wish to thank Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced

Study (STIAS), Wiko's partner, which made it possible to get the present fellowship through the Iso Lomso program. Words cannot describe the feeling of satisfaction I had through these ninety days spent at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. All I can say is "Zaandi" (Many thanks, in my mother's Yemba dialect!).



(THINKING ABOUT) BACTERIA IN BERLIN RACHEL WHEATLEY

Rachel is an evolutionary microbiologist and currently a Prize Fellow at Magdalen College, University of Oxford. She is interested in understanding: (1) the processes underpinning host-microbe interactions (from human infections to plant symbioses), (2) how bacteria respond to environmental perturbations (including antibiotics, host immunity, and phage), and (3) how these fundamental biological processes happen not just in single-species settings, but in the context of a microbiome. She graduated with a BSc. in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry from Durham University in 2014, before going on to study a DPhil in Biological Sciences at the University of Oxford. – Address: Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, 11a Mansfield Road, Oxford, UK OX1 3SZ. E-mail: rachel.wheatley93@gmail.com.

Arrival

When I applied for the College for Life Sciences fellowship in November 2020, I had no idea what I would be doing from June onwards when my postdoc finished. Thankfully, by March I had a bit of a clearer picture. After my postdoc finished, I was incredibly excited to be spending four months at Wiko, and then starting a research fellowship in Oxford in January.

I left for Wiko in August, to join in with the German classes. Entry from the UK to Germany was still very restricted up until June, due to Covid. Many, many email exchanges with Vera later (thank you Vera!), I had wrapped my head around travel navigation and visas. It being my first time flying since the start of the pandemic, I over-eagerly headed to the airport at 4 a.m. to get my flight. After spending the last 1.5 years pretty much in the same 2-mile radius, by the time I “navigated” myself to Wiko, I was exhausted,

but in awe of the gorgeous flat I found myself in Villa Walther, with the incredible views of leafy Grunewald!

Work at Wiko

With the new research fellowship starting in January, it was firstly a great opportunity to prepare for the project – and think deeply about what I wanted to do, with the input of a fascinatingly broad range of interdisciplinary colleagues around me. Broadly speaking, I'm interested in the lungs and what determines success from a microbial perspective in this ecosystem. In reality, it ended up being a lot more holistic than just project input. As someone just starting on an independent career path, it was brilliant to have discussions and get perspectives on varied academic paths, managing groups, applying for funding, and all the life in between from so many talented and thoughtful individuals.

A major focus during my fellowship also ended up being a theoretical project considering CRISPR-Cas systems in bacteria. Just like us, bacteria have their own immune systems. These are mechanisms that can protect them against cellular invaders, including the viruses that infect them (bacteriophages or phage). CRISPR-Cas systems are effectively considered the adaptive immune systems of bacteria. They provide bacteria with a “molecular memory” of past infections, which enables both the targeting and the degradation of repeat invaders. From a theoretical perspective, possession of these systems confers many benefits. However, they are observed at an unexpectedly low prevalence across the bacterial domain. So the question I was interested in was: what are the costs associated with CRISPR-Cas carriage that might help explain their absence in populations of bacteria?

I had first started thinking about this in March, while supervising a brilliant master's student writing a “Covid-alternative” project to experimental lab work. My time at Wiko allowed me to dive deep into the literature and gave me headspace to fully explore ideas. Excitingly, this project has now been written up as a paper and published in *Microbiology* (<https://doi.org/10.1099/mic.0.001209>), and importantly, I think this work has generated a clear set of additional questions and intriguing issues that I hope to explore in the future.

An extremely enjoyable part of my stay was discussing bacteria-phage interactions with Britt. These are the interactions that occur between bacteria and the viruses that infect them. Similarly to the viruses that infect our cells, these viruses can be bad news for the bacteria – infecting them, rapidly reproducing inside, and sometimes ultimately resulting in cell death. As a result, we see a diversity of bacterial resistance mechanisms to phage (CRISPR-Cas systems being an example of one), and on-going research tries to better

understand how these viruses shape the populations and communities of their bacterial hosts. I was very excited by Britt's invitation to collaborate as a co-author on an *Annual Review of Virology* paper she'd been invited to write. Here, we discussed how to draw the link between fundamental experimental work that probes the ecology and evolution of bacteria-phage interactions and trying to understand how these processes occur in natural ecosystems where complex microbial communities exist along with many other variables. It is great to see the Review in Advance version of this now online (<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-virology-091919-075914>), and we are continuing to work together on a second project.

Wiko, Berlin, and Beyond

I won't fit in all the other things for which I will also remember my time at Wiko here, so I'll just touch on a couple. I will remember the very early on College for Life Sciences trip to Jena and Weimar, brilliantly organised by Jana and with on-the-ground directional help from Clara! The excitement of Wiko in the snow, the glorious S7 and M19, so much good food, and the visit to Leipzig Zoo. Donut trips with Tatenda, the Wiko Runners Club, the Thursday dinners, and lunches together every day. Opening my mind to new and different research themes at the Tuesday Colloquia and, of course, all the wonderful people who made the stay such a delight. I have found now when hearing anyone discuss definitions and meanings of words – a slightly rephrased *Is a burrito a burrito a burrito* always comes into my head. I have been back in Oxford since January and have started the work I was planning for at Wiko. The College for Life Sciences fellowship was really good for my confidence as an academic, my development as a person, and the openness of my mind to new perspectives and places – and I will forever be grateful for my time at Wiko.



WISSENSCHAFTLICHE ROMANTIK ODER (NICHT) BURIBUNKE SEIN DAN WIELSCH

Dan Wielsch lehrt und forscht an der juristischen Fakultät der Universität zu Köln als Inhaber des Lehrstuhls für Bürgerliches Recht und Rechtslehre. Forschungsschwerpunkte im Bereich des Privatrechts und seiner Grundlagen, dem Medien- und Immaterialgüterrecht sowie dem transnationalen Privatrecht. Nach Studien in Philosophie und Rechtswissenschaft in Frankfurt am Main erstes und zweites juristisches Staatsexamen, wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am dortigen Max-Planck-Institut für europäische Rechtsgeschichte. Promotion über die Entwicklung der funktionalen Interpretation im Wirtschaftsrecht. Master of Laws an der University of California in Berkeley. Habilitation mit einer Arbeit im Schnittfeld von Immaterialgüter-, Wettbewerbs- und Medienrecht. Initiator und Herausgeber der Reihe „Future Concepts of Law“, Mitherausgeber der Internationalen Studien zur Privatrechtslehre/International Studies in the Theory of Private Law. Otto-Hahn-Medaille der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft und Preis für Recht und Gesellschaft der Vereinigung für Recht und Gesellschaft. Am Wissenschaftskolleg mit einem Arbeitsvorhaben zur digitalen Medienverfassung und Organisation des Workshops „Politicizing the Digital Medium“. – Adresse: Universität zu Köln, Lehrstuhl für Bürgerliches Recht und Rechtslehre, Albertus-Magnus-Platz, 50923 Köln. E-Mail: dan.wielsch@uni-koeln.de.

Die Bürger des Staates der Buribunken sollen für jede Sekunde ihres Daseins Tagebuch führen. Alles wird aufgeschrieben. Jede Empfindung, jeder noch so triviale Gedanke, jede ausgeführte oder auch nur erwogene Handlung. Bis hin zu den Träumen und ihren Transformationen des Bewussten. Alles. Jeder geistig-seelische Kampf oder Krampf, auch der zur Hemmung des Schreibvorgangs führende. Selbst der Nichtvollzug des

Schreibens bietet so noch den Anlass für die Fortschreibung eines universalen unendlichen Protokolls. Alles wird dadurch veredelt, dass das Geistige und überhaupt jede Lebenszuckung so zur Tatsache wird. Die Buribunken wie ihre wissenschaftlichen Beobachter, die Buribunkologen, sind gleichermaßen durchglüht von dem Gedanken, der Sinn des Lebens sei das Leben selbst, wie es da ist und war, das aber erst durch das Protokoll seiner Vollzüge anwesend gemacht wird und das hierüber erst seine konkrete, faktische Tatsächlichkeit und Positivität gewinnt. Das Leben gerät zum Gottesdienst am Datum. Seine Myriaden an Messdienern sind dabei mit dem größten Eifer am Werke. Nicht nur eröffnet die Positivierung jeder Selbstbeobachtung die Möglichkeit, dass andere die Selbstbeobachtung beobachten und diese Beobachtungen wiederum Gegenstand weiterer Beobachtungen werden können, sich also die Aufzeichnungsanlässe ins Maßlose potenzieren. Vielmehr wird der individuelle Eintrag durch die großartige Institution des „Kollektivtagebuchs“ aus der verengenden Verknüpfung mit der Einzelperson gelöst und zur globalen Liturgie verbunden, die als höchste Stufe der Transsubstantiation des kleinen und noch des allerkleinsten Ich in schwarz auf weiß lesbare Buchstaben auf der Schreibmaschine der Geschichte gelten kann und die das brausende Chaos unverbundenen Einzelburibunkentums zu der tönenden Vollendetheit eines buribunkischen Kosmos emporführt. Selbstverständlich werden die täglich in Kopie abgelieferten Tagebücher zur Erhöhung der Datenproduktivität nach Art eines Sachregisters sowie nach dem Personalprinzip gesichtet.

Gegen diesen allgemeinen Rausch der Positivität nimmt es sich eher wie eine Fußnote des hoffnungslos staatsfixierten Metachronisten der Buribunken aus, wenn ihm zufolge die so erschlossenen Tagebücher in regelmäßigen Monatsberichten dem Chef eines Buribunkendepartements vorgelegt werden, der auf diese Weise eine ständige Kontrolle über den Gang der psychischen Entwicklung seiner Provinz habe und seinerseits einer Zentralinstanz berichte, die, unter gleichzeitiger Publikation in der Esperantosprache, Gesamtkataloge führe und dadurch in der Lage sei, das gesamte Buribunkentum buribunkologisch zu erfassen. Der panoptische Weltgeist wird schnell über jeden Versuch hinweggehen, die in ihm gigantisch aggregierte Kontrollmacht selbst zentral beherrschbar machen zu wollen. Viel entscheidender ist der sich in alle Buribunken legende „unermüdliche Verwertungstrieb, der expansive Trieb zum Betriebe“, der alles Erleben und jede soziale Beziehung unter den Imperativ der totalen Erfassung und Datenproduktion stellt. Seine Vollendung aber erreicht das Buribunkentum durch die Schließung seines Bewusstseins, indem die im Fieber des Allprotokolls betriebene Selbstaufhebung vom buribunkischen Subjekt nicht einmal wahrgenommen wird. Getragen vom Hochgefühl,

dem eigenen Dasein durch seine umfassende Positivierung Sinn zu verleihen, verzehrt es sich ungerührt wie ein anästhesierter Ouroboros.

Einmal ganz beiseite die Verballhornung eines „relativistisch-antimetaphysisch-atheistischen Historismus“ (Meuter) sowie die „selbstinquisitorische Romantikkritik“ (Mehring), die Carl Schmitt vor etwas mehr als hundert Jahren in seine Satire über die Buribunken hat einfließen lassen: Der medien-onto-technologische Dreisatz „Ich denke, also bin ich; ich rede, also bin ich; ich publiziere, also bin ich“ ist durch die Innovation der Aufschreibungssysteme seit den Tagebuchzeiten heute tatsächlich in die letzten Kapillaren der Gesellschaft vorgedrungen. Jedes Ich twittert, postet und bloggt. Das wissenschaftliche bewaffnet sich überdies mit Datenbanken und allerhand Applikationen, die natürlich nicht selbst entwickelt sind, sondern von den Feudalherren der Netzwerktechnologie in scheinbar selbstloser Hingabe an die Zukunft der Menschheit zur Verfügung gestellt werden. Beheizt vom gleichen Geist der Vermessung und Datafizierung der Welt kann auch der Durchschnittsvertreter der Zunft gewiss sein, der Nachwelt einen unendlich wichtigen Dienst zu tun, indem er die Datenspur durch irgendetwas Aufgeschriebenes vermehrt und so, wenn nicht dem geheimen Weben des Weltgeistes, dann doch wenigstens einem Suchalgorithmus neue Nahrung gibt – vorausgesetzt natürlich, dass er den Peer-Review als Brandbeschleuniger des Mittelmäßigen passiert, der alles aussortiert, was nicht dem herrschenden Paradigma sich fügt oder unter den scharfen Augen des Positivismus gar als metaphysisch-spekulativ erscheint. Welche Domäne würde nicht ergriffen vom Buribunkentum? Denn es geht ja nicht, wie man auf den ersten Blick annehmen möchte, um ein eigenes neues Völkchen, das da beschrieben wird, sondern um eine Bewusstseinsstufe oder einen Habitus, den die Bürger bestehender Welten ausbilden. Die eigene Selektivität datengetriebener Kommunikation trifft stets auf bestehende Wissenskulturen, Selbstbeschreibungen, Normordnungen, Diskursregeln, Verfahren der Entscheidungsfindung usw. Wenn es zur erfolgreichen Orientierung in der Welt und zur Bewältigung von Kontingenz ausreicht, große Datenmengen mit Hilfe von Algorithmen zu korrelieren, anstatt mit Hilfe von Theorien auf die Suche nach Kausalitäten zu gehen, ist nicht nur, aber vor allem anderen die Wissenschaft betroffen. Weil es unter dem Buribunkentum für Wissensproduktion keine Theorie mehr braucht, ist nach dem Ort zu fragen, der die unbedingte Freiheit der Frage und Äußerung im Interesse eines auf Wahrheit gerichteten Forschens und Wissens gewährt.

Die Universität als Institutionalisierung von Wissenschaft erfüllt den Anspruch einer solchen unbedingten Freiheit immer weniger. Nicht dass es die unbedingte Universität,

wie Derrida sie in seinem gleichnamigen Vortrag anruft, je gegeben hätte. Sie ist die vielfach bedingte, wobei die Ausrichtung auf ökonomische Rationalität heute herausragt und mit der Bologna-Reform gezielt zum Bestandteil einer übergeordneten wirtschaftspolitischen Strategie geworden ist. Aber sie konnte als der öffentliche Raum gelten, in dem nichts außer Frage steht, in dem in privilegierter Weise das Recht in Anspruch genommen wurde, bedingungslos nach der Wahrheit zu fragen und allen Versuchen zu widersprechen, sich ihrer im Namen von Wirtschaft, Politik oder Religion zu bemächtigen. Ein Ort, in dem Wissenschaft zum Beruf gemacht wird und diejenigen, die diesen Weg wählen, sich für die Wissenschaft öffentlich erklären und sich ihr versprechen („professor“). Autonomie durch Grenzziehung, das war die Formel, die Kant im Streit der Fakultäten gewonnen hatte, um die Universität externen Kräften zu entziehen. Um die Autonomie des Wahrheitsdiskurses geht es auch Derrida. Aufgewühlt durch die Verwandlung des öffentlichen Raums im Cyberspace, sieht er aber, dass eine andere Topologie erforderlich ist, sobald der Ort von Demokratie und Universität selbst virtuell wird und sich die Grenze zwischen drinnen und draußen verschiebt. Wahrheitssuche und die Idee der unbedingten Universität hätten ihren Ort dann nicht mehr ausschließlich innerhalb der Mauern universitärer Körperschaften. Sie wären erst auf der Suche nach ihrer Stätte, würden sich gar mit außerakademischen Kräften verbünden, aber doch immer mit dem Ziel, politischen, rechtlichen oder ökonomischen Aneignungsversuchen wirkungsvoll Widerstand zu leisten. Derrida schreibt noch in einer Phase, in der demokratische Hoffnungen in die Netzentwicklung gesetzt wurden. In einem Moment, in dem gleichzeitig die alte Institutionalisierung der Wahrheitsfrage ihren Eigensinn und ihre Widerstandskraft verliert und sich die Chance auftut, ihre Grenzen neu zu verhandeln und neue Verbündete für eine bestimmte unbedingte Unabhängigkeit des Denkens zu gewinnen. Anstatt dass sich aber die Wahrheitsfrage neue Öffentlichkeiten erschlossen und sich in die Gesellschaft eingelassen hätte, haben umgekehrt die neuen – fragmentierten, polarisierten, strategisch koordinierten, meinungszentrierten und kognitiv geschlossenen – Öffentlichkeiten sich der Wahrheitsfrage bemächtigt. Wenn sie denn überhaupt noch eine Rolle spielt und nicht gleich ganz der algorithmischen Rationalität zum Opfer gefallen ist, der das betäubte Buribunkentum mit seinem Positivismus in vorausseilendem Gehorsam den Weg ebnet.

Wenn also nicht allein die unbedingte Freiheit der Frage und Äußerung durch innergesellschaftliche Systemrationalitäten gefährdet wird, sondern der Horizont der Wahrheit selbst in der Dämmerung des Anthropozäns – das nie mehr war als eine vom Technozän

offengelassene Illusion des Menschen – sich langsam verliert, wenn also Wahrheit sich in Wahrheit auch in einer (techno-)ökologischen Gefährdungslage befindet, dann ist das Bedürfnis nach dem Stellen und den Stellen der Wahrheitsfrage augenscheinlich. Dieses Bedürfnis alternativer Institutionalisierung geht weiter als Hegels Bedürfnis der Philosophie, das den Entzweigungen der Moderne entsprang und einer bereits von Differenzierungskonflikten geschüttelten Gesellschaft wieder einen vernünftigen Begriff von sich selbst geben wollte, sich aber noch des Sinns von Sinn sicher sein konnte. Es geht um mehr als Rejustierungen des Geistes; die totale Errechenbarkeit von Welt wird zur Frage seiner Existenz. Oder ist der Zeitpunkt für eine Reinstitutionalisierung der Wahrheitsfrage sogar schon verstrichen und nichts anderes als wissenschaftliche Romantik? Vielleicht ist es ein Zeichen romantischen Denkens, immer dann zu entstehen, wenn eine Idee ihre institutionelle Rückendeckung verliert. So wie einst der aufklärerisch-rationalistische Geist romantisch wurde, als seine Träger sich dem Bürgertum entfremdeten (K. Mannheim). Das würde einerseits den romantischen Blick zurück erklären, der sich in dessen gegenüber dem buribunkischen Jetzt als aufgeklärter erweist. Wenn sich in der algorithmischen Gesellschaft die Idee der Wahrheit abschafft, liegt nämlich die Reflexion ausnahmsweise ihrem Gegenstand voraus. Solidarität mit der Metaphysik im Augenblick ihres Sturzes nannte Adorno so etwas. Zum anderen entfesseln der romantische Trieb und sein Nichteinverstandensein mit dem Leben, wie es da ist, die Kraft zum Aufstoßen gegenstrebigere Freiheitsräume. Gegen die Kontraktion der Welt durch die Maschine und eine Wissenschaft, die sich zum Annex der Datensätze macht, tritt wissenschaftliche Romantik jeder Schließung entgegen und versetzt scheinbare Notwendigkeit in den Modus der Potenzialität. „Freunde, der Boden ist arm, wir müssen reichlich Samen Ausstreuen, daß uns doch nur mäßige Erndten gedeihn.“ Wenn bei Novalis die Suche nach dem Unbedingten als Regulativ gegen alle Reduktionismen fungieren konnte, steht heute das Regulativ selbst auf dem Spiel, sodass es darauf ankäme, das Unbedingte überhaupt zu suchen, auch wenn wir immer nur Dinge finden. Vor allem bedarf es institutioneller Suchprozesse, die dem buribunkischen Imperativ widersprechen und dem gegenwärtigen Herausforderungsdruck für die Wahrheitsfrage gewachsen sind. Dass das Wissenschaftskolleg seit mehr als vierzig Jahren Teil dieser Suchprozesse ist, dafür kann man allen Beteiligten nur dankbar sein.



BRUIT DU FRIGO
BERNARDO ZACKA

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As I write this, the moon is high over Boston and my family is long asleep. The calm is deceptive. Over the past forty-eight hours, since our plane landed from Europe, Valentina and I lugged somewhere around two tons of boxes out of storage and up three flights of stairs; rented a car and had someone ram into it; tried to see our physician and were dismissed for lack of insurance; spent breakfast, lunch, and dinner on hold trying and failing to restart gas, electricity, and oil service; were locked out of our offices for a reason that still eludes us; and were graced with a ticket while trying to get in.

I am so drained that I scroll aimlessly through the news, hoping for a headline that will set my mind on a different track. I have been at this for quite some time and I am now reaching the lower depths – the product recommendation section. *The New York Times* informs me that for 22\$ the Green Bell G-1008 clippers would elevate my nail-trimming routine from a chore to a ritual.

There is a French architectural collective called *Bruit du Frigo*. The name refers to a fridge's intestinal gurgling and low humming, the kind of sound you notice only when it

stops. Only now I'm living things in reverse: the fridge has just restarted, and it is deafening. Is this the kind of tedium Wiko had blissfully shielded us from?

Every other institution today prides itself on offering a good work-life balance, especially those that don't. Wiko puts them all to shame. Lunches, dinners, colloquia, wonderful company: working there is – to use a rather tired word aptly for once – delightful. Yet to me what is most special about Wiko is that it is a space of imbalance, one that makes room for obsessiveness and that affords the rare luxury of remaining silent until one has something to say. Last year, I tried something I cannot usually afford to do at work: I closed my lips. And to my amazement, I discovered that I could sometimes hear myself think.

When I joined a management consulting firm after college, I was made to swear by the 80/20 rule: the first 20 % of the time you invest in any project produces 80 % of the result. After that, it is time to move on. I shudder to think about what cultural patrimony we would have inherited had our ancestors abided by such a rule. Apparently, I am not alone. Wiko is an institution so out of tune with the spirit of the times that it stands, in my eyes at least, as a tribute to diminishing returns. It is a place where someone might – just might – have a chance to get to the bottom of something.

I spent much of last year muddling through a book project on the interior architecture of public employment offices. How have these offices changed over time, and why? How should the state greet those who turn to it for assistance? This is a topic that involves spaces that are by all accounts anonymous and generic – spaces about which there seems to be little to say.

Perhaps because they are so dull and unremarkable, public employment offices have left few visual traces, so coming across photographs of them is a minor triumph. One week last spring was particularly auspicious. Browsing through local Danish archives, I found a trove of photographs from the early 1970s. In other circumstances, I would have happily called it a day. Being at Wiko, however, meant that I could seek the advice of a colleague specializing in material culture. On her recommendation, I reached out to design historians and furniture specialists in Denmark. One thing led to another and soon I found myself in Copenhagen speaking to experts at a major auction house who helped me bring the photographs to life by identifying furniture items and tracing their cultural significance at various moments in the long twentieth century.

A few months earlier, I happened to be talking to a Wiko librarian about the Berlin labor exchange, which served as an inspiration for early public employment offices in the

UK and US. I had found short descriptions of it in the English-language literature, including a few grainy images and a first-person account by an American visitor. Enough, I thought, for my purposes. A few days later, a short pamphlet from 1903 appeared on my library shelf. Replete with architectural plans and photographs, it described the space in minute detail. There, I discovered that the exchange contained a cobbler, a tailor, a library, and bath stalls – features that traced its lineage not just to markets for commodities but to journeyman inns and the tradition of hospitality.

One type of desk or another, a cobbler or not: these may be the sorts of details that no one really cares about, the material that remains on the cutting board – the very reason for the 80/20 rule. Yet to me details such as these make all the difference in the world because they offer precious clues as to the social dynamics that took place in these institutions and the aspirations that were invested in them. They explain why spaces that seem to resemble those we have in the present were in fact quite different. And in this gap between past and present, normative questions arise: what should we ask of architecture and what can we reasonably hope from it?

In the memories I keep of last year, Wiko and Berlin have meshed together and become almost indissociable. A place to obsess and a city where, as Valentina once put it to me, you can take on roles without being entirely swallowed by them – a city where you can be an academic and not just an academic; a parent and not just a parent.

I remember one night in particular at Silent Green, seeing Stephen O'Malley play live for the first time. I sensed from the burning sensation in my eyes that I hadn't blinked for an eternity. In front of me, a wall of amplifiers and a guitarist holding one note, then another. Until then, I had thought of music, somewhat naively perhaps, as something I heard with my ears. But here were waves of sound washing over me and passing through me to the person behind. I wasn't hearing sound but bathing in it.

I cannot think of Wiko without thinking of Berlin. But I cannot think of either without the small gestures that made them glow. The smiles with which our Wiko hosts met our most obtuse requests. My neighbor at the Villa Walther, with whom I practiced rolling cigarettes under a Japanese maple tree. That time we had to take our son to the hospital in the middle of the night, only to hear a friendly knock on the door and someone offering us a ride. Or that long, peaceful walk through Marzahn with a photographer friend who never once lifted his camera. As I think of them, and of the place that brought us together, I remember a sentence of Maya Angelou's that I must have read once on a mug or T-shirt: people will forget what you said and what you did but never how you made them feel.

When we were preparing to leave Berlin, our son Emi, who is three and a half, asked me what would happen to “our lake” – the one that our apartment at the Villa Walther overlooked. I answered that we would leave it behind for others to enjoy, but that we would come back every so often to make sure it was well cared for. “Just like a *Spielplatz*?” Yes, I suppose, a *Spielplatz* for adults with a certain temperament.



MY YEAR AT WIKO
XUN ZHOU

Dr Xun Zhou, Reader in History at the University of Essex, is one of a growing number of historians pioneering the history of the PRC using new oral and archival evidence. In 2007–11, she worked on a project of key importance to the history of the 20th century – the Great Leap Forward famine (1958–62) in China. Based on thousands of archival documents and hundreds of interviews, *The Great Famine in China: A Documentary History* (2012) and *Forgotten Voices of Mao's Great Famine: An Oral History* (2014) powerfully reshape our understanding of modern Chinese history. *The People's Health: Health Intervention and Delivery in Mao's China* (2020) is the first systematic study of healthcare and medicine in the PRC. Xun turns from official statistics to the records of local institutions and personal memories. Her book illustrates the dynamics between politics and health and between individual lives and the political system. She co-authored the book *"I Know Who Caused COVID-19": Pandemics and Xenophobia* (2021). At Wiko, Xun worked on a monograph "Coping mechanism and everyday survival tactics: The Great Leap Forward famine, a case study," exploring how rural villagers in China understood the famine and state propaganda, and their mechanisms to cope with hunger, illness, and loss on such a massive scale and in the context of older traditions and belief systems. – Address: History Department, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Essex, CO4 3SQ, United Kingdom. E-mail: xzhoug@essex.ac.uk.

My ten months at Wiko went by much too quickly. During those ten months, a great many things kept on happening in the world. Some bad, some good. I arrived at Wiko in the midst of the Covid pandemic; when I left, Russia's war in Ukraine had entered its

fifth month, and there was little sign of it ending soon. In the meantime, the pandemic has been largely forgotten, at least in the West and despite a large number of daily infections. While travelling in Europe became a breeze: “nary a face mask” and “smiles everywhere,” restaurants and shops too enjoyed brisk business; sports and cultural events and public transport were jam-packed, China and its SAR Hong Kong stood out again, being the last region on this planet to insist on *zero*-Covid policy. Commentators in the West quickly condemned this as “cruel” and another crime of autocracy against humanity. My lawyer in Hong Kong, who immigrated to Hong Kong during British colonial rule, however, compared the SAR and the Motherland to “The Land That Time Forgot,” while calling the territory’s pandemic policies “prehistoric.” Indeed, for Hong Kong, the quarantine rule that has been implemented is another legacy of British imperialism, and the Handover in 1997 did nothing to change that – even though anti-imperialism has been an ideological pillar of the PRC ever since the communist revolution. Ironically, during the SARS pandemic in 2003, mask wearing was popularised in Hong Kong by a group of pro-democracy lawyers to protest the “prehistoric,” “colonial,” and “inhuman” quarantine rules imposed by the Hong Kong authority.

As I watched the world going topsy-turvy, life at Wiko provided a much-needed respite. At times, the Grunewald felt almost like the “Peach Blossom Spring” imagined by the 4th- and 5th-century Chinese poet and politician Tao Qian (365–427). Living in a time of great turmoil, Tao fantasised an idyllic community of Chinese who centuries ago had settled in the “Peach Blossom Spring” – a wilderness of natural beauty – after having fled their war-torn homeland. Oblivious to the chaos in the world beyond, they lived in perfect harmony, peace, and simplicity. They were also hospitable to strangers. A kind of Confucian secular utopia, but also inspired by the Daoist notion of a grotto heaven. The Wiko community was, however, much more engaging than Tao Qian’s imagined ideal community, and life at Wiko was never short of fun and exhilaration. At Wiko, we enjoyed material pleasures, and Thursday night’s excessive drinking led to some enlightening and engaging conversations, unlike boring haiku contests. I also remember fondly many passionate, and sometimes even heated, lunchtime discussions on a wide range of topics, from the pressing issue of climate change to whether cherry blossoms have six or five petals and the latter’s social and cultural meanings.

One of the many memorable moments of my Wiko year was, in anticipation of the coming of the Year of Tiger, working with a world-class literary scholar (Eva), scientists (Mark, Sean, and Szabolcs), an anthropologist (Chris), a demographer (Teresa), a lawyer

(Weitseng), and the talented Sandra to transform the Wiko kitchen into a pop-up dumpling lab. I bet the beastly Tigress was impressed!

Wiko was not just boozing, dining, and having fun. At Wiko, unburdened by my usual, or I would say, overwhelmingly heavy teaching and administrative duties, I was finally able to breathe, read, think, and write – in other words, have time for serious scholarship. For the first few months, in addition to giving a number of online talks across the world on the topics of the two new books I had just published before coming to Wiko, I revised my chapter examining the unintended consequences of political planning and social engineering in Maoist China for *The Yearbook for the History of Global Development* (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, January 2023, <https://www.degruyter.com/document/isbn/9783111015583/html>). During this time, I was also commissioned by the Bloomsbury Food Library to write a lesson plan titled “A History of Food and Health in China.” It was subsequently published by Bloomsbury Publishing’s Digital Resources (doi:10.5040/9781350930322.018).

In addition to having the time to complete the above writing, the intellectual freedom we enjoyed at Wiko, which has become increasingly rare hence more precious these days, and the simple fact that we were encouraged to “think outside the box” and to go beyond our usual “comfort zone,” allowed me to focus on two very different topics, using two different types of non-textual sources. Being surrounded by first-class textual scholars and award-winning authors, as well as Fellows who are unfamiliar with China, made me listen to views that were very different and much broader than those in my own discipline. I was able to sharpen the perspective and trajectory I needed to take for my projects, including their new directions. I began to challenge myself to ask the *hard* questions: What is the value of oral and visual sources for the historian? What more can we learn from oral sources about the Mao era on top of what we already knew from the abundance of memoirs by dissident intellectuals from the PRC and survivors of such political repression as the Great Proletarian Revolution, memoirs published in the West since the death of Mao – many of these have been greeted in the West as the “authentic voice” of the “silenced” “victim” and have won prestigious prizes. (I must say I was surprised and disappointed to learn that the relatively new oral history archive “Archive of Refuge” in Berlin – an admirable initiative – has so far followed the same vein to include only voices of dissident Chinese intellectuals, rather than making the effort to give voice to ordinary Chinese refugees/emigrants who don’t normally have a voice.) How can I, as a historian of modern China who deploys the techniques of oral history, help to fill the missing gap by exploring the private lives of ordinary PRC citizens living under Mao’s leadership (frequently

compared to Stalin's terror), e.g. how did individuals and families react to the pressures of the socialist regime? How did they preserve their traditions and beliefs when their private values were in conflict with the public goals and the morals of the Maoist socialist system? What were their survival strategies, from moral compromises to the arbitrary and brutal choices individuals and families made in their unceasing struggle to survive threats to their physical existence and private life? How did the experiences of rural villagers differ from those living in cities? How does the legacy of Maoist rule impact the life of ordinary Chinese and Chinese society compared with that of the Stalinist regime? To this last question, I am indebted to Ilya and Elena Kalinin for the conversations we had and for their valuable recommendations and suggestions.

As I try to return to and explore new directions of working with visual sources (beyond using them as mere illustrations), it was a real blessing to have Guy the photographer and Nuno the multidisciplinary artist around as Fellows. Their works and the many conversations we had have been inspiring and thought-provoking. Daniel, too, took time to read my grant proposal for a new project "Imaging Asia: John Thomson and a Visual History of Southeast Asia and Greater China." He has given me some insightful and valuable suggestions. Daniel also helped with meeting Joachim K. Bautze, a German art historian who specialises in encounters between European visual arts and indigenous visual art traditions in India and Southeast Asia and is the author of *Unseen Siam: Early Photography 1860–1910*. My meeting with Dr Bautze began what I call a snowball effect. His publisher Mom Rajawongse turned out to be the great-granddaughter of the Siamese King Rama V the Great. King Rama V was photographed by Thomson as a young boy, and during his long reign was a farsighted monarch open to new ideas and a keen photographer himself. Her Excellence Mom Rajawongse introduced me to the work of Nakrob Moonmanas, a Thai visual artist and a laureate of Cité internationale des arts Paris for 2020–21. For his 2021 exhibition *PhotoAlchemy*, Nakrob took old photographs from archives, most of these by Western photographers, and collaged them in a computer graphic program: "I see [this] as a progressive and advanced by-product of photography, and there is this current, contemporaneous dimension to it. I printed them out and sent them over to a photographer who specializes in the collodion wet-plate process and created the final results. It's a reversed process that allows me to revisit the past. But with this process, the past becomes this mixture of times, intertwined and almost inseparable," he says. He also talks about how Siamese people viewed photography as a form of alchemy, "which was neither entirely scientific while not fully natural nor supernatural" and how "photography allowed

Siamese people to explore and present their visual appearances to the outside world for the first time, even though it was through the eyes of western photographers using a camera.” This was eye-opening, as I have been exploring the ways that this new project would move away from the plain East-meets-West trope or a simple contrast between the cultural representations and symbols of Western visual arts and “traditional” Asian arts, and Nakrob’s work reminded me how images in the past can be reworked and deployed by “dusting things up, collaging things together and re-presenting them to the world.” With the help of Her Excellence Mom Rajawongse, our proposed project has secured a partnership with the Bangkok Art & Culture Centre, which will involve Nakrob creating contemporary artwork using Thomson’s 19th-century photos of Siam that tell the visual history of modern Thailand and reflect the challenges of the present world.

There was also the Wiko library with its amazing staff. They not only helped locate all the English-language books I requested, they even managed to find some Chinese-language primary sources for me. The other bonus of being in Berlin was that, through the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science library, I could use the CrossAsia portal set up by the Berlin State Library, which allowed me to access digitised Chinese primary sources held in libraries across China, Japan, Taiwan, the USA, and Europe.

Wiko was more. “Wiko is like a family,” as the wonderful Teresa so precisely put it. At the beginning, when I was confronted with the daunting obstacle of finding a school for my son Alexander, Vera Pfeffer stepped in and took care of it. Vera was incredible! She not only managed to secure a school place for my son, she also drove us to the school and made sure my son settled down. On her return from leave, Andrea and Eva von Kügelgen worked together to come up with a “secure plan,” generously funded by Wiko, to help my son improve his German proficiency. Alexander is now fluent in the German language, and he loved the ten months he spent in Berlin and at the Charles Dickens Grundschule and the Villa Walther. We are forever grateful to Wiko for this amazing experience.

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