



LIFE BEFORE AND AFTER WIKO INGUNN LUNDE

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Several Co-Fellows will go to new jobs in new countries when they leave the Wiko. Some knew that before they came here, others didn't. Others yet will return to their home university and go on with teaching, research and administration as before. Or perhaps not. I believe that for all Fellows of our *Jahrgang*, the Wiko year has introduced a new *before* and *after* in our lives, *before Wiko* and *after Wiko*. It is difficult to state that, *after Wiko*,

nothing will be quite as before – without sounding full of pathos. Nevertheless this may be true for the great majority of the Fellows. For once, take Reinhart Meyer-Kalkus' reassuring "Einmal Fellow – immer Fellow" at the guided tour through the campus in mid-September. We will be (former) Wiko Fellows for the rest of our lives; we will belong to a worldwide community of scholars that have had the great fortune and privilege of being part of the vibrant intellectual, cultural and social life of the Wissenschaftskolleg for ten months. We will receive the *Jahrbücher*, perhaps also the *Arbeitsvorhaben* of future Fellows (I hope so), and the electronic newsletters of the Fellows' Club; we will have the opportunity to propose workshops in collaboration with former Fellows hosted at the Wiko; the tech-savviest of us will follow Wiko's Twitter feed and the Fellows' Club's Facebook page, explore links to interviews with current Fellows or enjoy pictures from book launches, concerts, evening colloquia or social gatherings. Most of us, I believe, will look back on our Wiko year with a good mix of gratitude, joy and nostalgia.

The reasons have been eloquently described on the pages of the Yearbooks many times before: the unbeatable library services, the extraordinarily friendly and helpful staff, the daily interactions with Co-Fellows, ranging from stimulating lunchtime discussions to horizon-widening Tuesday Colloquia, *Gesprächskonzerte* (a nice genre indeed), evening colloquia and socio-cultural events, some of them initiated by Fellows or partners.

I came to the Wissenschaftskolleg after 2×4 years of project leading involving (two sets of) a core research group with two postdocs and a Ph.D. at my home department and an international network of affiliated scholars. These were years with an energetic academic life of hosting conferences, guest research stays and lectures, editing volumes, publishing articles and engaging in public dissemination. The first of these two projects looked at the dynamics between the language of literature, linguistic development and language debates in post-perestroika Russian culture, whereas the second, essentially a spinoff of the first, analysed the ways new media technologies have shaped language and communication in contemporary Russia. What I had not managed to do during those years was to write my own book, and that became my Wiko project. During the two projects, my own prime focus had been to study the language debates – talk about talk, or *metalinguage*, to use the common sociolinguistic term. I had become increasingly aware of, and interested in, the many non-explicit ways one can make a statement about language. With the first project's focus on literature (mainly fiction, but also some poetry), I started to look at ways literary fiction can comment on the language situation, by thematising language, playing with language, creating a fictional situation where language is used in a particular

way and, of course, through its own linguistic design. For the book project, I wanted to get a better theoretical understanding of this kind of metalanguage and contribute to developing a methodology for its study. I launched a new term, *performative metalanguage* and started my year at Wiko with a deep dive into sociolinguistic research on metalanguage in order to describe and define the concept of *performative metalanguage*, including its necessary delineations from related terms and concepts, such as *performativity* and *performatives* in pragmatics.

My original plan for the monograph was to focus on the language question in post-Soviet Russia, with two main parts, one studying (explicit) voices in the language debates ranging from institutions through mass media to linguists and language mavens, and one exploring the multifarious realisations of *performative metalanguage* in fiction, but also digital discourses (internet slang etc.), popular culture and various instances of language play. This may seem a very broad project (it is), but my intention to develop research methodologies for analysing linguistic practices with a view to their possible metalinguistic implications requires a broad and diverse material, in order for me to be able to identify the distinctive features of *performative metalanguage*. In the course of reading and writing for the Wiko talk, for the book and for other talks given and articles submitted during the year, and not least, in conversations with Co-Fellows and Slavist colleagues in Berlin, I have decided to narrow down the scope of the book to focus on writers and fiction exclusively. I will not give up my other objectives, but for the book, it turns out that this narrower focus provides more than enough material to say something essential about the ways metalanguage operates in poetic and artistic practices. I have kept the double focus on explicit vs implicit/performative metalanguage. Thus, part three of the book explores how contemporary Russian writers express their views about language – including reactions to recent initiatives in language legislation – at roundtables, in interviews or in forum discussions in social media, whereas part four presents critical, interpretive readings of a number of writers who address in various ways the language question in their artistic practice.

One of the main conclusions to be drawn from my Wiko colloquium in early December was that my concept of *performative metalanguage* is very much shaped by the material I work on. This is not uncommon in theory-building, of course, but I realised that the “normal” procedure of starting out by explaining your theory, idea, approach and objectives and going on to present examples is perhaps not the most fortunate when communicating the results of this particular project. So for the book, the chapter on *performative metalanguage*,

which will be a distant echo of my Wiko talk, will come as a conclusion and theoretical coda to the main bulk of analyses and hopefully be easier to grasp after the perusal of the interpretive readings.

The nature of our research questions and our various approaches to our topics have continued to occupy my thoughts during and between the Tuesday Colloquia – giving us so many fascinating examples of research in all the different disciplines that make up a *Wiko-Jahrgang*. The Colloquium is a continuous search for dialogue between the disciplines, and we have tried, failed and/or been successful in many ways, mixing critical response with playful, sympathetic engagement. To me, the dynamics between the colloquia and the conversations over meals were even more rewarding than the Q&A sessions during the colloquia proper, since in a lunch table conversation, you can react much more quickly and directly, avoid misunderstandings, become immediately aware of what is taken for granted in your own field but not in others, benefit from spontaneous, often creative and inventive, reactions to your work and gain more direct insight into the nature, methodologies and challenges of the work of others. Being known in the Slavic field as someone who is working on the intersections of linguistics and literary studies, I have thoroughly enjoyed the much more radical interdisciplinarity of Wiko life.

Wiko life is more than *Wissenschaft* alone. I've enjoyed conversations about music with Jannie, William, Michel, Anne-Marie, Barbara H. and Hans, among others, and am grateful to Martin and Barbara G., who introduced me to the Piano Salon Christofori's concert series. I've enjoyed running in the Grunewald and funny and sometimes crazy post-Thursday-dinner table tennis sessions with Sianne and Mark, Jan and Hans, not to mention the professionals such as Thorsten, Andrei or Jonathan. Thursday dinners (and subsequent table tennis) would not have been possible for me and my partner Paul to enjoy together without the generous babysitter programme of Wiko and the creative and friendly babysitters themselves, making Thursday the most popular day of the week for our children. Family life has been enriched by our lovely Villa Walther neighbours and friends Yogi and Hilde. Our children, Jonas and Andrea, will remember the many outings of our two families, as well as hours and hours of playing with Jonas and Lucas upstairs. Berlin's cultural life has been a constant source of inspiration, with the RIAS Kammerchor's performance of Schnittke's *Drei geistliche Gesänge* and *Zwölf Bußverse* in the Radialsystem in February perhaps ranging at the top (challenged by the Staatsoper's brilliant staging of Monteverdi's Orfeo [with Sasha Waltz and the Freiburger Barockorchester], its equally moving Telemann's *Emma und Eginhard*, as well as the Komische Oper's hilarious

Zauberflöte). It has been good to talk about mountains from time to time with people who know and understand them, such as Yogi, Jannie or Tsering. I had been looking forward to welcoming Tsering, together with Guntram and Weirong – all members of this year's focus group on Tibetology – in my home city during the International Association for Tibetan Studies' congress in Bergen in June 2016. The sudden and unexpected death of Tsering Gyalpo in Berlin on the 28 of June was a great shock and tremendous loss, which made the last two weeks of our Wiko year very sad.

My book is not finished. Still, I am more than satisfied with this year's outcome, which, in measurable terms, amounts to six talks, five articles (submitted or forthcoming) and about 60 % of a book manuscript. The trust given to us from Wiko to pursue not only what we promised in the work plan, but also to nurture our secret *Parallelaktionen* (as Thorsten encouraged us in his welcome speech) and be open to new ideas and new initiatives from within or from the outside, has been immensely inspiring. Together with the fantastic conditions for work and dialogic interaction that the *Wissenschaftskolleg* provides, it is probably the best recipe for scholarly creativity and productivity that there is.