Measuring the Borderland in Sabrina Janesch's *Katzenberge* (2010)

Karolina May-Chu
University of Wisconsin-Madison

> The objective space of a house—its corners, corridors, cellar, rooms—is far less important than what poetically it is endowed with, which is usually a quality with an imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel; thus a house may be haunted or homelike, or prisonlike or magical. So space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here.
> (Edward Said, *Orientalism* 55)

The poetic process that Edward Said describes can be understood as a way of "measuring the world." Poetics, as its Latin origin *poēsis* suggests, means *to create* or *to make*, and to measure the world is to *create* a narrative—to *make* a world. In this process of measuring, spaces are endowed with meaning and some degree of coherence is conferred upon the universe. Yet how is it possible to create a coherent "world" in light of the disruptive histories of the twentieth century? How can disorder and fragmentation be narrated? What kinds of "worlds" emerge from experiences of destruction, forced mobility, and trauma? Thinking in terms of borders and borderlands offers the opportunity to elucidate such questions and dilemmas in new ways.

Borders are quintessential sites of disruption and fragmentation: they divide and keep apart. As political demarcations, they are subject to geopolitical processes, and they change without regard for individual attachments or affiliations. Whether they are real or figurative, borders create exclusive spaces that are monitored and protected. However, as contemporary border

0026-9271/2016/0003/350

studies shows, borders are inherently contradictory, and as such they can also be sites of connection and encounter. They are "fixed and fluid, impermeable and porous. They separate but also connect, demarcate but also blend differences. [. . .] They insist on purity, distinction, difference but facilitate contamination, mixing, creolization" (Friedman 273). This simultaneity of contradicting elements has made the border a rich trope for framing and analyzing various expressions that emerge in the "contact zones"[1] between places and people, and between figurative and "real" boundaries.

Given their ambiguity, what happens when borders are no longer viewed only as dividing lines at the periphery of a narrative but instead become complex and evolving spaces at its center? In other words, what kinds of narratives emerge when borders themselves are the measure of the world? In this essay I argue that the increased awareness of the inherent tensions of borders and border spaces and their shifting constellations have produced a particular narrative and cultural practice that can be described as *border poetics*.[2] Narratives that apply this practice tell stories not only *about* a border; rather, they use the actual topographic and geopolitical border site as a staging ground to explore more universally oriented figurative borders and border crossings. Using the novel *Katzenberge* (2010) by contemporary German-Polish author Sabrina Janesch as an example, the analysis highlights how "world," when measured through the lens of the borderland, is made visible as a network of flexible and highly mobile constellations of belonging.

These constellations simultaneously engage universal and particular border experiences, and they convey a commitment to transborder connections. I therefore propose to view border poetics as an idiom of the "cosmopolitan imagination" (Delanty). I argue that border poetics expresses a heightened awareness of multiply intersecting borders, such as those between countries and regions, gendered or racialized bodies, myth and history, personal and collective memory, as well as epistemic and ontic boundaries. The practice addresses nationally, regionally, or even locally specific border experiences while instantaneously emphasizing the fluidity of such particulars and their interconnectedness across different times and places. In so doing, it opens up the specific and contained experience and promotes a "critical cosmopolitanism" that is based on the (self-)critical reevaluation of the familiar and a reassessment of normative and binary concepts (Delanty). Border poetics explores new possibilities of belonging and imagines conditions that foster transformation and change.

Katzenberge lends itself well to such a reading because it measures the world from the double vantage point of the German-Polish and the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands, i.e., two borders that shifted west as a result of the political reorganization of Europe after the Second World War. The new borders meant that Poland was forced to give up about half of its territory to the Soviet Union. As partial compensation, the country's western borders

were also shifted west, and formerly German territories were incorporated into the new Polish state. These border changes intensified the already ongoing population movements and resulted in mass migrations and expulsions that added to the trauma and upheaval caused by the war itself. *Katzenberge* tells the story of an individual who is caught up in these movements and disruptions, the persistence of these events in memory, and their impact on the following generations.

The novel implements border poetics in two important ways. First, it displays a high level of mobility that reflects its historical context, i.e., the mass migrations of peoples towards the end of the Second World War. The narrative is specific to particular spaces and clearly defined historical moments, but by focusing on the expulsion of Poles from the eastern territories, it also offers a perspective that is unfamiliar to most German readers.[3] Second, the novel articulates borders in their overlapping trajectories and creates complex transborder spaces. This is not only because political borders are changeable but also because figurative boundaries are folded into these spaces and movements. Most significantly, this complexity is achieved through a fantastical creature—a beast—that crosses between different worlds and represents experiences from the past. By the end of the novel, the narrator develops a notion of belonging that suggests a cosmopolitan affiliation. It is at once deterritorialized and deeply informed by particular spaces and movements.[4]

Cosmopolitan World Making and Border Poetics

Cosmopolitanism, as Pheng Cheah suggests, "is primarily about viewing oneself as part of a world, a circle of belonging that transcends the limited ties of kinship and country to embrace the whole of humanity. However, since one cannot see the universe, the world, or humanity, the cosmopolitan optic is not one of perceptual experience but of the imagination" (26). The notion of transcending one's familiar realm and the role of the imagination in this process are crucial for cosmopolitanism, yet Cheah's separation of imagination from perceptual experience also appears to limit the possibility for newly constellated networks and forms of solidarity.

According to Edward Said, the spaces we occupy are made meaningful through a poetic process—they are endowed with an "imaginative or figurative value we can name and feel." Understood in this way, the "cosmopolitan optic" is in fact the result of a confluence of imagination and perceptual experience: "the vacant or anonymous reaches of distance are converted into meaning for us here," and it is a meaning that can be *named* and *felt*. Thus, imagination impacts perceptual experience and vice versa. Arjun Appadurai has argued in a similar vein that imagination is a "social practice" and an important force in political and social processes (31). The cosmopolitan imag-

ination, then, is one that extracts meaning from the universal by linking it to the personal, local, or even national context. By the same token, the imagination opens up these previously closed contexts and devises strategies to reshape and orient them towards the universal.

The orientation towards the universal is one of the underlying principles of the cosmopolitan idea. Yet, this very connection has also been the basis for staunch criticism of cosmopolitanism. In such critiques, universalism is faulted for imposing a western-centric normativity or for promoting homogenization by dismissing the particular. Scholars from various fields have engaged with such critiques. Daniel Chernilo, for example, examines the philosophical tradition of universalism, and he makes two points that are especially relevant here. First, universalism was born at a moment of disintegration and crisis as "a way of imagining a strong sense of unity *because current situations precisely emphasise difference, conflict, and change*" (51, emphasis original). Chernilo stresses the concept's imaginative capacity and its foundation on the idea of unity through diversity (57). From this follows a second point, which is that universalism is not opposed to particularism but rather "creates the very framework that makes such recognition and acceptance possible" (57).

Chernilo's discussion is representative of current scholarship that emphasizes cosmopolitanism's inherent plurality and the dynamic relationship with various forms of the particular, including regionalism, patriotism, or nationalism.[5] Chernilo unpacks the idea of the universal itself and insists on its centrality to cosmopolitanism. Likewise, Gerard Delanty focuses on diversity and proposes the notion of a "critical cosmopolitanism" that "is critical and dialogic, seeing as the goal alternative readings of history and the recognition of plurality" (35). While Delanty dismisses the universal and argues that critical cosmopolitanism is "post-universal," his focus on openness and a drive towards self-examination (38) are significant here. Critical cosmopolitanism, he argues, is "an open process by which the social world is made intelligible; it should be seen as the expression of new ideas, opening spaces of discourse, identifying possibilities for translation and the construction of the social world" (42).

I argue here that because borders are an expression of disruption and crisis (which generated the idea of cosmopolitanism in the first place) as well as of connection and encounter (which cosmopolitanism espouses), they must be considered as sites that can produce a cosmopolitan imagination—a self-critical practice with a universal orientation.[6] This dual focus both produces and is an outcome of the experience of the historically and socially specific and the understanding that those experiences are also tied to global processes and may have parallels elsewhere. Border poetics thus emphasizes the simultaneous rootedness and belonging to a specific local, regional, or

national setting on the one hand, and the transcendence of that setting and the participation in a universally conceived community on the other.

Border poetics has been previously defined as a tool of analysis to understand narratives about borders.[7] I take this point further and argue that border poetics is not only a means of analyzing simultaneously enacted actual and figurative border-crossings but also a practice that *produces* such narratives. Border poetics articulates and makes visible variously constellated forms of attachment and the processes that shape them. It thereby constructs new constellations and contributes to a re-imagination of established borders and bordering practices. In other words, border poetics is a tool of analysis, but the narratives themselves must be considered for performing this analysis and critique of borders and for translating this critique into aesthetic forms. The remainder of this essay will illustrate how the practice of border poetics unfolds within *Katzenberge*, Sabrina Janesch's debut novel.

Sabrina Janesch's *Katzenberge* (2010)

Movement and disruption of movement are major themes and structuring devices for the plot of *Katzenberge*. The frame narrative is set in 2007 and is told from the perspective of the first person narrator Nele Leibert, a young woman of German and Polish descent. Nele has come to the formerly German region of Lower Silesia in southwest Poland to visit the cemetery where her grandparents are buried. She has just recently returned from her grandfather's birthplace in present-day Ukraine (in formerly Polish Galicia), and she has brought back some soil from his homeland to spread on their graves. As Nele bikes to the cemetery, two inner narratives unfold. One is Nele's recollection of her just completed journey to the east, which eventually merges with the frame narrative. This story is interspersed with Nele's memories of her grandparents and the stories they have told her over the years. The other plot line is a third person narrative told from the grandfather's perspective. It details the grandparents' flight from Galicia in the 1940s and the circumstances of their settlement in Silesia. At times these two plot lines flow seamlessly into one another, making for a narrative in which different times and places overlap, mix, and blend.

As in many contemporary family narratives, Nele's journey to the east is driven by the double desire to discover her family's history and to find her own place in the chain of events. To find out who her late grandfather, Stanisław Janeczko, "really was," Nele embarks on a journey that takes her first to eastern Poland, where some members of her remote family still live, and then to Janeczko's birthplace and former home in present-day Ukraine.

Nele's eastward journey is the counter movement to Janeczko's forced westward migration in 1943, when he was driven out of his village by a wave

of violence of Ukrainian nationalists against the Polish population. Janeczko flees across the Bug River (which is today in large part the border river between Poland and Ukraine) and is able to reunite with part of his family. When returning to their Galician homeland becomes impossible after 1945, Janeczko, his wife Maria, and others from the village continue west to Silesia and settle in homes that have just been vacated by expelled Germans. They must make a new home in a place they perceive as hostile and that still bears the mark of its former inhabitants. Their sense of alienation is personified in the figure of an ominous beast that threatens them throughout the novel. Using different strategies and folk remedies, Janeczko and Maria try to expel the beast, but any solution appears to be only temporary.

Narrating Disruption

In a recent essay, Polish author Olga Tokarczuk has described the condition that afflicts the German-Polish borderland populations as "Snow White syndrome." This psychological condition is "based on the strange and somewhat unpleasant awareness that one has just stepped into someone else's intimate space. This is Snow White's experience when she runs from her evil stepmother and finds herself in the dwarves' home while they are away." As she crosses the doorstep, Snow White enters a world in which "[e]verything appears to be alright, but nothing fits, things seem foreign and strange, as if from a different dimension" (163, translation mine).

Tokarczuk explains this syndrome as the outcome of the massive disruptions caused by the population exchanges after the Second World War. In particular, the syndrome sets in at the moment of encounter with the unfamiliar space that seems to resist appropriation by its new inhabitants. When expellees left, they did so hurriedly, and even under the best of circumstances, most of their personal belongings had to stay behind. In *Katzenberge*, Stanisław Janeczko encounters this strange Silesian world. Not only must he deal with the memory of the violent separation from his homeland but also with a renewed sense of alienation when he enters into the unfamiliar and threatening space of the other.

Yet this German-Polish version is also significantly different from the fairy tale: Tokarczuk stresses that in this rendition the "dwarves" did not return. Nevertheless, they did leave behind a distinct landscape of their former living spaces and belongings, which had to be adapted by the new inhabitants and endowed with new meaning (163). This process of assimilation—the attempt to create a new narrative—was overshadowed by a long-lasting and persistent fear among the Polish population that Germans would soon recover from the lost war and come back to reclaim what they had left behind. In the novel, Janeczko's granddaughter Nele registers this fear in her grandparents'

village as "frozen time": "Über den alten Höfen liegt die Zeit gefroren, als würden sich deren Bewohner noch immer weigern, in etwas zu investieren, etwas zu renovieren, das nicht zur Gänze ihnen selbst gehört" (48).[8]

Throughout the novel, the reasons for this stagnation are carefully explored from different perspectives to create a nuanced picture of the region's historical legacy.[9] Nele has a particular understanding of the fluidity of boundaries because she is a border crosser herself and finds her own identity constantly challenged. In Germany she is regarded as Polish, Poles see her as German (100). Yet, because she speaks both languages fluently, she can also claim her affiliation according to the particular situation. While traveling to Poland as a child, she tries not to be recognized as German (94f.), another time she insists on being only half-German (150), or she describes herself as merely half-Polish when traveling to Ukraine (164). Besides choosing her affiliation according to practical considerations, Nele at first claims that her only home is the city of Berlin (42). Yet, throughout the novel it becomes clear that this cosmopolitan notion of belonging can exist in tandem with more particular attachments.

The Beast of the Past

The idea of always being in transit between different kinds of attachments also applies to another border crosser that is present throughout the novel: an ominous beast from another dimension. The fantastical creature embodies not only the crossing of topographical borders but also of ontological and epistemic boundaries. As a literary figure, it disrupts a world that is otherwise based on realist principles. It asserts its material presence in different ways, for example as a wolf-like creature or owl (173). Its footsteps are audible (68), and when it attacks Janeczko and his first-born son, it leaves physical marks on their bodies (104). At other moments it lurks in the distance or appears as a shadow—a silent but permanent threat that haunts the places in which Janeczko and Maria try to rest or settle.

In magical realist fashion, the existence of the beast is never questioned, and the threat it represents is taken very seriously. Thus, the protagonists devise different strategies to rid themselves of the creature. Maria performs two expulsion rituals (142), and Nele's sprinkling of homeland earth on her grandparents' grave is intended as a third and final attempt to banish the beast.

The method chosen for this last ritual seems logical given the intimate connection between the earth and the beast—between this world and the next. Janeczko's second encounter with the beast makes this connection explicit. While Maria is giving birth to their son, the beast briefly shows itself to Janeczko and then disappears: "Geöffnet habe sie [die Erde] sich und es [das Biest] mit Haut und Haaren verschlungen. Innerhalb weniger Sekunden habe sich die Krume geteilt und wieder geschlossen" (146).[10] Maria tries to make

sense of this sighting and concludes that it can mean many things: "Wer wisse schon, was diese Erde in sich trüge, mit wem sie verbündet sei und mit wem nicht. Ohne die dritte Bannung ließe sich nichts weiter unternehmen. Wir müssen damit rechnen, [. . .] dass es jederzeit zurückkehren kann. Jetzt oder in fünfzig Jahren" (148).[11]

Yet, despite the lingering threat and the possibility of the beast's return, the scene ends with an optimistic outlook. This optimism derives from the special status ascribed to those who are the product of multiple border crossings. They have a particular access to the past and are endowed with certain, albeit limited, reconciliatory powers. After the beast's latest appearance, Maria believes that for the time being their newborn son would protect them, because he was the first Polish Silesian born in this house. Unlike his parents, their son was at home in this symbolic German-Polish borderland, but by proxy, they too would be able to find some peace and establish a new sense of belonging to the strange place. Maria concludes: "Wir sind frei, Stanisław. Für viele Jahre. [. . .] Zusammen schauten sie aus dem Fenster. Der Himmel war kornblumenblau, es würde ein guter Tag werden" (148).[12]

Many years later Nele is born into this family, and Janeczko confirms her status as border crosser: as a young child his granddaughter was unable to describe with any certainty a creature she had seen from the train. Janeczko is convinced that it was the beast, and that it had shown itself to her because she contained both parts: "von drüben, von jenseits der Oder, und von hier" (27).[13] Nele was the confluence of everything; she contained "das galizische Blut meiner Großeltern, die kommen mussten, und das deutsche Blut der väterlichen Familie, die gehen musste" (51).[14]

Yet, in what I see as the expression of a critical cosmopolitanism, Janesch does not give her protagonist Nele any opportunity to revel in border romanticism or sentimental notions of her grandfather's Galician homeland. Every time such feelings might arise, Nele is grounded and confronted with legacies that forbid such feelings. Janesch drives this point home for example by insisting on the significant difference between Nele's border crossing experience and that of her grandfather. The grandfather's forced migration is juxtaposed with Nele's leisurely travels, although Nele is at times tempted to romanticize and conflate these experiences. However, Nele's sentimentality is exposed when she crosses the Bug River—the very stream that Janeczko had to cross to save his life. Nele has a very quaint notion of the place that for her grandfather was so traumatic and life threatening:

> Der Bug, sagte ich leise. Dann stieg ich aus. Schwarzes Wasser. Sonnenspiel auf Wellen, Strudel, die ihnen entgegenliefen, Sandbänke, die wie Finger in den Fluss hineingriffen. Dichte Weidenwände umgaben das Wasser, noch wenige Meter davor war nichts vom Bug und seinen Steilufern zu sehen gewesen.[15] (234–235)

Yet Nele is confronted with reality as the borderland suddenly reasserts itself and literally grounds her in the next moment:

> Ich verließ die Brücke und versuchte, mich seitlich ins Dickicht zu schlagen. Der Boden war feucht, und als mir einfiel, dass ich mich an den Zweigen der Weiden entlanghangeln könnte, rutschte ich aus, fiel auf die Seite, schlitterte einige Meter nach unten und prallte gegen einen Baumstamm. Ein hellbrauner Streifen Lehm zog sich dort, wo ich ausgerutscht war, durch die Erde. [. . .] Meine ganze rechte Seite war bedeckt mit ukrainischem Lehm.[16] (234–235)

Claudia Winkler reads this "almost slapstick moment" (94) in the context of the novel's demystification of the lost homeland in the East (93–95) in exchange for more symbolic claims through memories and stories (88). I argue, that this kind of remaking can also open up the borderland for a cosmopolitan re-imagination.

Nele needs this kind of imagination to complete her mission. She has brought some Galician soil to Silesia, and under the prying eyes of the beast she bikes to the cemetery to reunite her grandparents with the earth they had come from. However, the road is bumpy, and by the time Nele is ready to spread the soil on the graves and ban the beast forever, she realizes that she has lost most of it along the way. Nele is forced to embrace the imperfect moment, use her imagination, and spread only the remaining fragments of dried earth on the graves.

Conclusion

I want to return to the questions raised at the beginning of this essay, which asked about the possibility of measuring the world in light of disorder and fragmentation. I have argued that border poetics is an idiom of the cosmopolitan imagination that makes productive the disruptions and tensions of overlapping and conflicting borders and borderlands. It connects the specific with the universal and allows for very particular stories of the past to be interpolated with narratives of other kinds of actual and figurative border crossings. Border poetics does not create one world but flexible networks of multiple worlds that demand constant engagement and critical reassessment. The gaps, cracks, tensions, and conflicts of the past are not eliminated, nor are they homogenized. Rather, other connections are made visible that make different solidarities and notions of belonging thinkable.

Katzenberge's cosmopolitan vision is an optimistic gesture towards the future.[17] The novel presents a timid hope that the past may be a good place to begin practicing the cosmopolitan imagination by paying attention to the smaller and marginalized, but interconnected histories. This possibility is also hinted at in the novel's concluding paragraphs. After completing her mission, Nele returns to her aunt's house, shakes out the dust from her grandmother's

headscarf in which she had transported the soil and hangs the cloth out to dry. The novel's final sentences are reminiscent of Maria and Janeczko's feelings after their last sighting of the beast—a moment of hope, peace, and a new beginning. Nele says, "Auf der größten Blüte des Tuches landet eine Biene und wärmt sich in der Sonne. Der Himmel ist kornblumenblau, es wird ein guter Tag werden" (272).[18]

[1] Coined by Mary Louise Pratt, the term "contact zone" refers to the "social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (34). The concept also questions the notion of community as a finite, sovereign and fraternal unit (37) and has inspired many other scholars to look at borders as expanded sites of interaction. With regard to literary and cultural works, the creation of new constellations across boundaries is for example discussed through the concept of "sites of exchange" (Ascari and Corrado) or the idea of a "World Republic of Letters" (Casanova).

[2] While this kind of engagement with borders has intensified in recent years, border poetics is not a phenomenon of the twenty-first century. Gloria E. Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) can be regarded as a key text of the practice. For a previously articulated understanding of border poetics that differs from my definition here, see note 7.

[3] Friederike Eigler shows that the novel's unusual shift in perspective constitutes an important new way of considering issues of flight and expulsion in a transnational European context (176).

[4] Other scholars have analyzed *Katzenberge* within the context of transformations of "Heimat" or identity into more fluid and deterritorialized concepts. Friederike Eigler shows that the novel's main protagonists represent two notions of Heimat: territorial (Janeczko) and fluid (Nele). She argues that by exploring different forms of belonging, the novel also contributes to a "discursive transformation of formerly highly contested European border regions" (9). The novel takes a transnational perspective and reveals the interrelatedness of German and Polish collective and individual histories. Historical disruption is not erased but rearticulated with the help of magical realism (151–176). Claudia Winkler's reading reveals the discursive and spatial strategies that transform Heimat into the symbolic realm that can be claimed through stories and memories. Sabine Egger focuses on Janesch's use of magical realism to articulate fluid identities and a transnational and transgenerational perspective on historical trauma. The reimagined past articulates both a "familial postmemory" but also a much broader transnational Polish-German memory (71).

[5] Many scholars have examined the relationship between cosmopolitanism and different particulars. They have expressed this interdependency, for example, as "rooted cosmopolitanism" (Appiah), "regional cosmopolitanism" (Berman), "situated" or "locally inflected" cosmopolitanism (Robbins), or as a kind of nostalgic cosmopolitanism (Boym). In the German-Polish context, historian Robert Traba has proposed a kind of cosmopolitan constellation in the concept of "open regionalism" (*otwarty regionalizm*). It is practically oriented and it opens up from the local to a wider network: "Denke universell, handele lokal!" (100).

[6] For Delanty, the notion of a "cosmopolitan imagination" is tied to the idea of critical cosmopolitanism: it is "a condition of self problematization, incompleteness and the awareness that certainty can never be established once and for all." (25) My view of borders as potential sites of a cosmopolitan imagination is also inspired by Chris Rumford's conceptualization of borders as "cosmopolitan workshops." From a socio-political perspective, Rumford proposes vernacularization, multiperspectivalism, fixity/unfixity, and connectivities as cosmopolitan dimensions of borders. The concept of border poetics can deepen this understanding by adding important aesthetic and cultural dimensions.

[7] The researchers at the *Border Poetics/Border Culture Research Group* at the University of Tromsø, Norway, apply the concept to constellations in which borders in their various iterations meet and overlap, but it appears to be primarily a tool of analysis or "a set of strategies for analyzing the successful or failed crossings of institutional, national or generic borders"

(Schimanski, *De-Limited* 10). The group also defines border poetics as a "field of cultural analysis" that "investigates the ways in which borders are negotiated within medialized forms of production [. . .]" (Schimanski, *wikidot*).

[8] "Time lies frozen over the old farms, as if its occupants still refused to invest in something, renovate something, that wasn't entirely theirs" (48). All translations are mine, unless indicated otherwise.

[9] See Eigler (159–160) and Winkler (93) on how the novel continuously ironizes and deconstructs clichés and stereotypes about the East.

[10] "It [the earth] opened up and swallowed it [the beast] completely. Within a few seconds the ground had parted and closed again" (146).

[11] "Who knows what this earth carries within itself, who its ally was and who wasn't. Without a third expulsion ritual nothing else could be done. We have to be prepared for its return [. . .]. Now or in fifty years" (148).

[12] "We are free, Stanisław. For many years. [. . .] They looked out the window together. The sky was cornflower blue, it would turn out to be a good day" (148).

[13] "[. . .] from over there, from beyond the Oder, and from here" (27).

[14] "[. . .] the Galician blood of my grandparents, who had to come, and the German blood of my father's family, which had to leave" (51). Eigler provides a more detailed exploration of Nele as border crosser, both in the literal as well as in an allegorical sense (170–171).

[15] "The Bug River, I said quietly. Then I got out [of the car]. Black water. Rays of sunshine playing on the waves, water swirling against them, sandbanks reaching into the river like fingers. Thick walls of willows surrounded the water, just a few meters earlier one had been unable to see anything of the Bug and its bluffs" (234–235).

[16] "I left the bridge and tried to enter the thicket sideways. The ground was moist, and just when I thought that I could hold on to the branches of the willows, I slipped, fell on my side, skidded several meters downward, and crashed into the trunk of a tree. A light brown streak of clay cut through the earth from where I had fallen. [. . .] My entire right side was covered in Ukrainian clay" (234–235).

[17] Amir Eshel calls this practical engagement with the past "futurity." Such literature examines the political, cultural, and ethical implications of past events for the present and the future, and it imagines alternatives. While my reading focuses on the novel's somewhat utopian, future-oriented gesture, Friederike Eigler has also noted that Katzenberge represents a "post-memorial space" that is firmly grounded in the European present. Magical realism is used to make "specters of the past" visible and reimagine space as transnational (176).

[18] "A bee lands on the headscarf's largest flower and warms itself in the sun. The sky is cornflower blue, it will be a good day" (272).

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 2007.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1996.

Appiah, Anthony. *The Ethics of Identity*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2005.

Ascari, Maurizio, and Adriana Corrado, eds. *Sites of Exchange: European Crossroads and Faultlines.* Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006.

Berman, Jessica. "Toward a Regional Cosmopolitanism: The Case of Mulk Raj Anand." *Modern Fiction Studies* 55.1 (2009): 142–162.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Cheah, Pheng. "What Is a World? On World Literature as World-Making Activity." *Daedalus* 137.3 (2008): 26–38.

Chernilo, Daniel. "Cosmopolitanism and the Question of Universalism." *Routledge Handbook of Cosmopolitanism Studies*. Ed. Gerard Delanty. New York: Routledge, 2012. 47–59.

Delanty, Gerard. "The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory." *The British Journal of Sociology* 57.1 (2006): 25–47.

Egger, Sabine. "Magical Realism and Polish-German Postmemory: Reimagining Flight and Expulsion in Sabrina Janesch's *Katzenberge* (2010)." *Interférences littéraires/Literaire interferenties*, (14/2014). "*Magical Realism as Narrative Strategy in the Recovery of Historical Traumata.*" Eds. Eugene Arva and Hubert Roland, 65–78. Web. 15 May 2016.

Eigler, Friederike. *Heimat, Space, Narrative: Toward a Transnational Approach to Flight and Expulsion*. New York: Camden House, 2014.

Eshel, Amir. *Futurity: Contemporary Literature and the Quest for the Past*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2013.

Friedman, Susan Stanford. "Migration, Diasporas, and Borders." *Introduction to Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures*. Ed. David Nicholls. New York: MLA, 2007. 260–293.

Janesch, Sabrina. *Katzenberge*. Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2010.

Pratt, Mary Louise. "Arts of the Contact Zone." *Profession* (1991): 33–40.

Robbins, Bruce. "Introduction Part I: Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism." *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*. Eds. Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1998. 1–19.

Rumford, Chris. *Cosmopolitan Borders.* London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. 25th anniversary edition. New York: Vintage Books, 2003.

Schimanski, Johan. "Key Terms: Border Poetics." Wikidot.com. *Border Poetics*. N.p., 2014. Web. 14 Feb. 2016.

Schimanski, Johan, and Stephen Wolfe, eds. *Border Poetics De-Limited*. Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2007.

Tokarczuk, Olga. "Das Schneewittchensyndrom und andere niederschlesische Träume / Syndrom Królewny Śnieżki i inne sny dolnośląskie." *Mein Schlesien-meine Schlesier: Zugänge und Sichtweisen / Mój Śląsk-moi Ślązacy: Eksploracje i obserwacje*. Vol. 2. Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2014. 157–166 and 164–175.

Traba, Robert, and Peter Oliver Loew. "Die Identität des Ortes. Polnische Erfahrungen mit der Region." *Jahrbuch Polen. Jahrbuch des Deutschen Polen-Instituts Darmstadt*. Eds. Andrzej Kaluza and Jutta Wierczimok. Band 23 Regionen. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2012. 95–106.

Winkler, Claudia. "A Third-Generation Perspective on German-Polish Flight and Expulsion: Discursive and Spatial Practices in Sabrina Janesch's Novel *Katzenberge* (2010)." *German Politics and Society* 31.4 (2013): 85–101.

Karolina May-Chu
Department of German
University of Wisconsin-Madison
804 Van Hise, 1220 Linden Drive
Madison WI 53706
USA
maychu@wisc.edu