

Cohesive Difference: Germans and Italians in a Postwar Europe

Karrin Hanshew

ABSTRACT. This article makes a case for rupturing the national framework used in traditional narratives of the Federal Republic, and it does so by revisiting the Italo–German relationship in particular. The state of Europe—and of Germans’ place in it—are in flux in the wake of the recent Eurozone crisis and “Brexit.” A study of German–Italian entanglements cannot offer definite answers about whether Germans or Italians feel “European,” but it does demonstrate, on the one hand, that perceptions of national difference do not preclude collaboration and closer relations, and, on the other, that the construction and deployment of difference can actually help create and maintain bonds between populations. Making a case for the importance of a history of German–Italian entanglements, the article offers evidence for how perceived national differences have brought Germans and Italians together, from the beginning of the Federal Republic to roughly the present, with a focus on Germans’ (and Italians’) recent turn to an apolitical or even anti-political lifestyle politics, and on the uncertain consequences that this has for the European project as a whole.

Dieser Aufsatz plädiert dafür die nationale Struktur traditioneller Narrative der Bundesrepublik zu sprengen, und zwar indem er insbesondere die italienisch–deutschen Beziehungen neu beleuchtet. Der Status Europas – und die Stellung, die Deutsche darin einnehmen – sind im Angesicht der jüngsten Krise der Eurozone und des bevorstehenden „Brexit“ in Bewegung geraten. Eine Studie der deutsch–italienischen Verflechtungen kann zwar keine definitiven Antworten darauf geben, ob Deutsche und Italiener sich „europäisch“ fühlen, aber sie kann durchaus zeigen, dass zum einen Wahrnehmungen nationaler Unterschiede Zusammenarbeit und engere Beziehungen nicht ausschließen, und zum anderen, dass die Konstruktion und der Einsatz von Unterschieden sogar dabei helfen kann Verbindungen zwischen Bevölkerungen zu erschaffen und zu erhalten. Indem die Bedeutung der Geschichte deutsch–italienischer Verflechtungen hervorgehoben wird, belegt der Aufsatz, wie empfundene nationale Unterschiede Deutsche und Italiener zusammengebracht haben, vom Beginn der Bundesrepublik bis hin zur Gegenwart, wobei ein Fokus auch auf den jüngsten Wendepunkt Deutscher (und Italiener) hin zu einem apolitischen oder sogar anti-politischen Lebensstil und dessen ungewisse Konsequenzen im Hinblick auf das europäische Projekt als Ganzes gesetzt wird.

ONE prominent narrative of postwar Europe and Germany’s place in it reads like a European Union (EU) primer, dominated by institutional histories and economic treatises. It is also increasingly a tale of failure. There are numerous explanations regarding the roots of the EU’s crises of legitimacy, but one long-favored answer has been the absence of a cultural or “European” identity that can compete with and, indeed,

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trump Europeans' diverse national affinities. What is implicitly argued is that an affective bond and a truly shared postwar history does not exist among Europeans as such. When contemplating "new narratives" for the history of the Federal Republic, this larger European story warrants closer inspection, especially from historians whose primary focus is not the EU or Europeanization. Institutions and elites are vital intermediaries and will remain a part of any history of postwar European relations. However, when looking to confirm or deny the sorts of solidarities that one grants to national communities at the European level, it is also necessary to investigate the unintended byproducts of economic, political, and cultural exchange. German-Italian relations after 1945 can be investigated, for example, for expressions of love, envy, and admiration, as well as of anxiety and antipathy. Such expressions are to be found at concrete sites of non-elite interaction. Balancing if not refuting present-day pessimism, this history reveals shared projects for the "good life," ones that united and divided Italians and Germans no less than they did Italians and Germans from their conationals. These on-the-ground pursuits also underscore the entangled nature of the countries' postwar social reconstructions. Germans' and Italians' myriad interactions do not suggest a narrative of postnational identities in the making. As numerous other scholars have noted, "Europe" does not necessitate the eclipse of national or local communities.¹ But a study of postwar German-Italian entanglements supports a stronger claim: perceptions of national difference do not have to preclude closer relations. Moreover, the construction and deployment of difference can actually help create and maintain bonds between populations.

Italy remains underappreciated for its importance to postwar Europe and to Germany, both East and West. Although Italians hosted the 1957 founding of the European Economic Community (EEC) and, until recently, were considered—and considered themselves—to be one of the most pro-Europe countries in the EU, they nonetheless appear as junior partners in histories of European integration.² And, though Italians do not go unacknowledged for their contribution to the West German labor force, historians have focused on other migrant populations.³ Relations between East German and Italian organized labor have received even less attention. Italians' importance to German society is reduced in popular memory to ice cream parlors and pizzerias. Moreover, this tendency to overlook or devalue Italians' contributions often takes a specific form: Italy is assigned a primarily cultural significance. Food and tourism dominate much recent literature on Italy.⁴ Even political scientists and economists seeking to

¹See, e.g., Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham, eds., *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Thomas Risse, ed., *European Public Spheres: Politics Is Back* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

²Disproportionate attention still goes to France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, even though recent histories have opened up their analyses to outside influences on these countries. See, e.g., Ian Bache and Stephen George, *Politics in the European Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Mark Gilbert, *European Integration: A Concise History* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012); Desmond Dinan, *Europe Recast: A History of European Union* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2014); Wilfried Loth, *Building Europe: A History of European Integration*, trans. Robert F. Hogg (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

³On the relative absence of Italians in German debates on and discussion of migrants, see the introduction to Oliver Janz and Roberto Sala, eds., *Dolce Vita? Das Bild der italienischen Migranten in Deutschland* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2011), 7–17.

⁴Among them are Carol Helstosky, *Garlic and Oil: Politics and Food in Italy* (Oxford: Berg, 2004); Carole Counihan, *Around the Tuscan Table: Food, Family, and Gender in Twentieth-Century Florence* (New York: Routledge, 2004); Robert C. Davis and Garry R. Marvin, *Venice, the Tourist Maze: A Cultural Critique of the World's Most Touristed City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); John F. Mariani, *How Italian Food Conquered the World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011).

explain the country's disastrous finances or its early turn to populist politics rarely avoid mobilizing cultural stereotypes when offering their more or less explicit arguments for the correctness of northern Europe's political and economic models.⁵ For Germans and scholars of Germany, the cherished place that Italy holds in German culture—thanks to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and the tradition of the *Italienreise*—also encourages viewing Italy and its population in predominately cultural terms. The Romantic narrative of southern longing is a powerful framework that neutralizes both Italy and Germans' interactions with Italians, not least because it perpetuates a long history of claims by Germans to knowledge of—and power over—Italy.

With that in mind, this article suggests a new approach to Italians and Italian-German relations, one that does not ignore culture but rather interrogates its political dimensions. The first section makes a case for an entangled history; the second offers evidence of the ways in which the perceived national differences between Germans and Italians have actually brought them together, rather than working against collaboration and closer relations. The article spans the life of the Federal Republic through the present, ending with Germans' (and Italians') recent turn to an apolitical or even anti-political politics of lifestyle—and with the uncertain consequences of this for the European project.

Entangled Histories

There are good reasons for German historians, even those not interested in Europeanization, to escape the national framework and revisit the Italian-German relationship. The two countries' shared experiment with fascism is one area where scholars have already invested considerable energy, investigating exchanges between the populations, as well as the convergences and divergences of the ruling regimes.⁶ Placing fascism in a longer history of frustrated nation-building and uneven modernization efforts, historians have also argued for Italy and Germany's "parallel" histories.⁷ The drawback here is that framing the countries as different yet parallel has generally reinforced the *Sonderweg* tendencies of both historiographies, because these studies are either implicitly or explicitly justified by each national history's overlapping peculiarities and by the efforts to overcome them. More recent parallel studies of Italian and West German terrorism continue this approach.⁸

⁵Geoff Andrews, *Not a Normal Country: Italy After Berlusconi* (London: Pluto, 2005); Bill Emmott, *Good Italy, Bad Italy: Why Italy Must Conquer Its Demons to Face the Future* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012). Also see Alexander Stille, *The Sack of Rome: How a Beautiful European Country with a Fabled History and a Storied Culture Was Taken Over by a Man Named Silvio Berlusconi* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

⁶See, e.g., MacGregor Knox, *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Sven Reichardt, *Faschistische Kampfbünde. Gewalt und Gemeinschaft im italienischen Squadristismus und in der deutschen SA* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002); Lutz Klinkhammer, Amedeo Osti Guerazzi, and Thomas Schlemmer, eds., *Die "Achse" im Krieg* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2010); Matthias Damm, *Die Rezeption des italienischen Faschismus in der Weimarer Republik* (Baden-Baden: NOMOS, 2013); Benjamin G. Martin, *The Nazi-Fascist New Order for European Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).

⁷Gian Enrico Rusconi, *Deutschland-Italien/Italien-Deutschland: Geschichte einer schwierigen Beziehung von Bismarck zu Berlusconi*, trans. Antje Peter (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006); Gian Enrico Rusconi and Hans Woller, eds., *Parallele Geschichte? Italien und Deutschland, 1945–2000* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006); Gian Enrico Rusconi, *Cavour e Bismarck: Due leader fra liberalismo e cesarismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010); Gabriele D'Ottavio, "1989 oder das Ende der 'parallelen Geschichten' Deutschlands und Italiens?" *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 67, no. 1/2 (2016): 39–57.

⁸See, e.g., Johannes Hürter and Gian Enrico Rusconi, eds., *Die bleiernen Jahre. Staat und Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Italien 1969–1982* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2010); Petra Terhoeven, *Deutscher*

A history of postwar Germany viewed through Germans' interactions with Italians unsettles comparative studies such as these, which are dominated by both countries' misfit status.⁹ In part, it does so because a history of German-Italian entanglements necessarily draws attention to the European and global contexts in which the populations and governments of four post-fascist states (the second Italian republic and the three postwar Germanies) moved. National perspectives, like nation-states, are not overcome or eliminated. On the contrary, they often grease the wheels of exchange, convergence, and interdependence. But the nation-state does not structure the analysis *a priori* any more than national borders determine historical space or subjectivities. Depending on the example, one can draw attention to a European "culture of violence," as in the case of Petra Terhoeven's examination of the radical left in the Federal Republic and Italy.¹⁰ Future studies could offer a wider framework in which to view Americanization and the Cold War, or, say, European Christian Democracy.¹¹ It is not only geographic borders that need to be crossed, but also those of subfields and methodologies in the historical profession. "Entanglement" captures the messiness of the chosen subject, i.e., the interconnections and reciprocal influences that must be teased out across the barriers that scholars have erected to differentiate themselves from others. The history of entanglements is not an exhaustive catalog of, in this instance, German-Italian interactions; it is a fragmented narrative, loosely woven together from concrete case studies, without a clear beginning and end.¹² This approach, deliberately disorienting, lends itself to methodological promiscuity and to new perspectives.

A history of German-Italian entanglements can, for example, help incorporate the German Democratic Republic (GDR) into the narrative of postwar Germany. Telling the history of Germany from the end of the Third Reich to the Berlin Republic in a way that does not either ignore East Germany or treat it like another peculiarity on the German path to liberal normality is no easy task. It is similarly difficult to envision a history that does not "break" at 1990.¹³ But here an Italian perspective can help. Italian and German Christian Democrats shared a vision for postwar Europe in the wake of fascism, one that facilitated the Federal Republic's acceptance abroad as a "civilized" nation, and a similar dynamic

Herbst in Europa. Der Linksterrorismus der siebziger Jahre als transnationales Phänomen (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2014).

⁹Successful examples of this include Manuel Borutta, *Antikatholizismus: Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter der europäischen Kulturkämpfe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); Gabriele B. Clemens, Malte König, and Marco Meriggi, eds., *Hochkultur als Herrschaftselement: Italienischer und deutscher Adel im langen 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011); Gustavo Corni and Christof Dipper, eds., *Italiener in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Kontakte, Wahrnehmungen, Einflüsse* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2012); Christof Dipper, *Ferne Nachbarn. Vergleichende Studien zu Deutschland und Italien in der Moderne* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2017).

¹⁰Terhoeven, *Deutscher Herbst*.

¹¹As a model, see Alessandro Brogi, *Confronting America: The Cold War Between the United States and the Communists in France and Italy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Wolfram Kaiser, *Christian Democracy and the Origins of the European Union* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

¹²Here intra-European studies can take a cue from postcolonial studies. See, e.g., the introduction to Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria, eds., *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 2002), 9–49.

¹³See Jennifer Allen's article in this special volume for an argument against 1989–1990 as an "endpoint."

linked German and Italian Communists to the GDR.¹⁴ Many Italian Communists, trade unionists, and independent leftists long regarded East Germany as the “other,” “better” Germany. Italian Communists (as well as Christian Democrats) toured the land of “real existing socialism” and invited East German artists and writers to Italy. The Socialist Unity Party (SED) mediated these exchanges, of course, and it helped fund a circle of writers and artists that gathered at the cultural institute *Centro Thomas Mann*, founded in Rome in 1957.¹⁵ But one result of all of this was that Italy in the 1950s and 1960s was possibly the best place to learn about the GDR outside the Eastern bloc.¹⁶ This display of international solidarity did not go unnoticed in the Federal Republic and it meant, too, that Italy served as a stage for both Germanys’ legitimization efforts. The perceived position of Communist intellectuals as trend-setters in Italian society provoked alarm on the part of at least one West German observer, who called on the Federal Republic to change its current course of action—namely, to stop courting the gray-haired social and political elites and instead pay attention to Italy’s cultural movers-and-shakers.¹⁷ Here, as elsewhere, political ends were pursued through cultural diplomacy: the courtship of artists and intellectuals, as well as sponsorship of concerts and art installations.¹⁸

Italian friendship helped both the East and West German states win international acceptance. For Italian and East German Communists, however, this friendship also worked to confirm both sides’ antifascist identities and their conviction that the Federal Republic had failed to break with its Nazi past. And because their view echoed that of West Germany’s internal critics, antifascist resistance proved fertile soil for Italian-German collaboration on several fronts—and, ultimately, across generations. Paying attention to relations between Italy and both Germanys illuminates transnational political cultures of the Cold War, as well as the legacies of those political cultures after 1989–1990, since people’s convictions and networks did not simply end with the collapse of the GDR and the Soviet Union. Moreover, the implosions of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and the SED reshaped the party-political landscape in both countries.¹⁹ One cannot explain the popularity of media mogul-cum-politician Silvio Berlusconi or understand what has become of the German left after unification without considering this history. This is because the history of Communism must be recognized alongside the histories of Christian and Social Democracy as foundational for today’s actually existing Europe—a point that is perhaps most subversive of established narratives of Germany’s “long road west.”²⁰

¹⁴Konrad Adenauer credited the Italian government under Alcide de Gasperi for “Germany’s reintroduction into the community of European nations.” See Konrad Adenauer, *Erinnerungen*, vol. 2 (Stuttgart: DVA, 1967), 259.

¹⁵For an overview of the actors and politics surrounding the institute, see *Dieci anni del Centro Thomas Mann: 1957-1967* (Rome: Centro Thomas Mann, 1967).

¹⁶Johannes Lill, *Völkerfreundschaft im Kalten Krieg? Die politische, kulturelle und ökonomische Beziehungen der DDR zu Italien, 1949-1973* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2001).

¹⁷Friedrich Lampe, “Roms Intellektuelle lieben keinen Kerzenschein. Randbemerkungen zur Kulturarbeit der Bundesrepublik in Italien,” *Rundschau am Sonntag*, March 1, 1959.

¹⁸On the long-standing importance of cultural politics, see Frank Trommler, *Kulturmacht ohne Kompass: Deutsche auswärtige Kulturbeziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2014).

¹⁹Martin Bull and Martin Rhodes, eds., *Crisis and Transition in Italian Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1997); Dan Hough, Michael Koß, and Jonathan Olsen, *The Left Party in Contemporary German Politics* (New York: Palgrave, 2007).

²⁰Heinrich August Winkler, *The Long Road West*, trans. Alexander J. Sager (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

A history of postwar Germany viewed through Germans' interactions with Italians also exposes the ways that images of Italy have propped up narratives of both West German prosperity and long-term German cultural continuity. In the decades after 1945, diplomats used the differences in Italian and German national character to argue for the strength and specificity of the countries' relations. Those same perceived differences are now common fodder for jokes and media analyses of current EU crises. And they also form a hidden backbone of scholarly accounts of Italian-German relations. Fascinated by Germans' longstanding *Sehnsucht* for Italy and in search of further insight on German self-understanding, literary scholars, in particular, have examined German texts and travelogues for their authors' perceptions of Italy.²¹ Cultural commentators have deployed similar stereotypes in other genres.²² Their conclusions may differ on the details, but, together, they argue for tremendous continuity over time when it comes to Italy's role as the quintessential German "other": Germans from Goethe to the Greens have traveled to and dreamed about Italy precisely because it is *not* Germany and because Italians do not behave like Germans. Whereas Germans are considered modern, rational, and cool, Italians are perceived as backward, emotional, and hot. Italy, with its vaunted natural beauty and slower pace, is understood to offer Germans respite; it is a near-but-far-away place that has—through its very backwardness—escaped the daily grind and superficial relations of the modern world. The historical scholarship and museum exhibitions on West German tourism echo these stereotypes, while underscoring the consumerist pleasures of the "miracle years."²³ Indeed, a postwar German's first trip to Italy sits alongside the acquisition of a refrigerator and a car in the historical narrative of the "economic miracle" and West Germans' material rehabilitation.²⁴ This, coupled with the Romantic tradition of the *Italienreise*, goes a long way toward explaining what has made Italy and the Italians particularly seductive for Germans, over and above the stereotypes that swirl around all "Latin lovers." Italians are different, but they are not so different as to preclude Germans seeing themselves—in the past or future—in them.²⁵ With the help of the tourist's gaze and Germans' newly adventurous palate, they are different enough but "not foreign."²⁶

²¹See, e.g., Martin Luchsinger, *Mythos Italien. Denkbilder des Fremden in der deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1996); Jens Petersen, *Italienbilder–Deutschlandbilder. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999); Wolfgang Lange and Norbert Schnitzler, eds., *Deutsche Italomanie in Kunst, Wissenschaft und Politik* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2000); Günter Karhof and Willi Köhne, *Mythos Italien. Reise-Erinnerungen von Italienreisenden aus 250 Jahre* (Bochum: Grünverlag, 2007).

²²The most cited commentary is Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Italienische Ausschweifungen," in *Ach, Europa! Wahrnehmungen aus sieben Ländern* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 51–118.

²³Harald Siebenmorgen, ed., *Wenn bei Capri die rote Sonne. Die Italiensehnsucht der Deutschen im 20. Jahrhundert* (Karlsruhe: Info, 1997); Hasso Spode, ed., *Goldstrand und Teutonengrill. Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte des Tourismus in Deutschland 1945 bis 1989* (Berlin: W. Moser, 1996); Hannah Schissler, ed., *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).

²⁴See, e.g., Michael Wildt, *Vom kleinen Wohlstand. Eine Konsumgeschichte der fünfziger Jahre* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 1996); Arne Andersen, *Traum vom Guten Leben. Alltags- und Konsumgeschichte vom Wirtschaftswunder bis heute* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus, 1997).

²⁵On tourism's function as a tool of nostalgia, see Hasso Spode, *Wie die Deutschen "Reiseweltmeister" wurden. Eine Einführung in die Tourismusgeschichte* (Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen, 2003).

²⁶Maren Möhring, *Fremdes Essen. Die Geschichte der ausländischen Gastronomie in der Bundesrepublik* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2012), 310. Also see Gisela Hoecherl-Alden and Laura Lindfeld, "Thawing the North: Mostly Martha as an Italian-German Eatopia," *Journal of International and Intercultural Communication* 3, no. 2 (2010): 114–35.

There is no doubt that the histories of German classicism and Romanticism—from Johann Joachim Winckelmann’s long residence in Rome to Goethe’s formative travels through Italy—inform the interactions of the postwar period. Goethe’s *Italienische Reise* (1816–1817) framed guidebooks, both mainstream and “alternative,” and Germans still wrote travelogues in conscious imitation of the master.²⁷ And postwar Germans’ claim to have a special relationship to Italy, based on that history, finds public expression even today. History looms large in the assertion itself, for the German claim on Italy has been cultivated in the fullest sense of the word. Propagated by German Romantics and Italian nationalists, and kept alive by intellectuals in both countries, it is an invented tradition that first truly gained popular traction after World War II.²⁸ How and to what ends this narrative has been mobilized after 1945, not only by Germans but also by Italians as well, is at least as interesting as the seemingly unquestioned nature of this narrative.

Postwar Italy and Germany’s difficult but also mutually constitutive memory politics are yet another strong argument in favor of studying them together.²⁹ Germans and Italians were officially allies from 1936 until Italy surrendered to the Allies in September 1943. *New York Times* correspondent Milton Bracker reported “a complete and incontrovertible end of all sympathy between the former Axis partners” by the time Italy declared war on Nazi Germany that October.³⁰ By that time, German troops had occupied Rome and “Occupation Axis” was underway. Over six hundred thousand Italian soldiers—branded “traitors” and denied prisoner-of-war status—were forced to labor for the *Reich* in Germany or in the Balkans, while Germans subjected Italians to brutal violence in north-central Italy.³¹ The occupation devastated Italy, as did the civil war that pit resistance partisans against still loyal fascists and that often treated civilians as collateral damage.³² The years 1933

²⁷Soldiers and prisoners-of-war borrowed Goethe’s title for their own unpublished travelogues, as did Joachim Fest, *In Gegenlicht. Eine italienische Reise* (Berlin: Siedler, 1988). On a related note, editors showcased writers’ “Italian” periods. See, e.g., Hermann Hesse, *Italien: Schilderungen, Tagebücher, Gedichte, Aufsätze, Buchbesprechungen und Erzählungen*, ed. Volker Michels (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1983); Volker Michels, ed., *Mit Hermann Hesse durch Italien* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1988); Ilse B. Jonas, *Thomas Mann und Italien* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1969); Tilmann Buddensieg, *Nietzsches Italien: Städte, Gärten, Paläste* (Berlin: Klaus Wagenbach, 2002).

²⁸Its prominence in newspaper accounts of Italian–German relations under Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini (as well as the publication of works such as Gabriele von Koenig-Warhausen, *Deutsche Frauen in Italien. Briefe und Bekenntnisse aus drei Jahrhunderten* [Vienna: Wilhelm Andermann, 1942] and Götz von Pölnitz, *Fugger und Medici—Deutsche Kaufleute und Handwerker in Italien* [Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1942]) suggest that its popularization might, in fact, be rooted in Axis propaganda.

²⁹Work on memory has been conducted separately for each state. See, e.g., Alessandro Portelli, *The Order Has Been Carried Out: History, Memory, and Meaning of a Nazi Massacre in Rome* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); John Foot, *Italy’s Divided Memory* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Philip Cook, *The Legacy of the Italian Resistance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Norbert Frei, *Adenauer’s Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesia and Integration*, trans. Joel Golb (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Robert Moeller, *War Stories: The Search for a Usable Past in the Federal Republic of Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); Dagmar Herzog, *Sex After Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

³⁰Milton Bracker, “Biggest Pacific Air Fleet Bombs Rabaul; Wrecks 177 Places, 123 Ships in Surprise; Badoglio, Declaring War, Rallies Italy,” *New York Times*, Oct. 14, 1943.

³¹Among other sources see Carlo Gentile, *I crimini di guerra Tedeschi in Italia, 1943–1945* (Turin: Einaudi, 2015).

³²Claudio Pavone, *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza* (Turin: Bollati Boringhieri, 1991).

to 1945 thus posed a formidable obstacle to postwar German and Italian relations. But immediately after the war and into the 1950s, the narrative crafted by German Romantics helped postwar Germans bypass the Third Reich altogether. Academics, archivists, and church historians asserted an undisrupted line of scholarly inquiry—and its apolitical nature—by reopening their respective institutions and resuming their previous duties as quickly as possible, regardless of their Nazi-era activities or even in keeping with them. The German Archeological Institute and the Hertziana Library, famous for its collection on Italian art history, reopened in December 1947 and in the spring of 1948, respectively. The German Historical Institute—founded in 1888 as the first institution of its kind—likewise resumed its work, though its fate, even more than that of the other two institutions, hung in the balance until 1953, when the Italian government officially relinquished its claims to the properties and their collections.³³ In political circles, diplomats and cultural ambassadors naturalized relations and lent weight to their work with references to *Italia* and *Germania* as the Romantic painter Friedrich Overbeck imagined them: sisters, one raven-haired, the other blond, bound together by blood and a history as old as the Etruscan villa and Gothic city seen in the distance behind them.³⁴ In fact, an assertion of Germany and Italy's shared history began nearly all official Italian–West German functions in the first two decades after the war.³⁵ Then, of course, there was the first intrepid wave of German tourists, who were eviscerated by keen-eyed novelist Wolfgang Koeppen for styling themselves as welcome travelers to Italy in search of aesthetic or spiritual orientation—their leather-bound copy of *Italienische Reise* tightly in hand.³⁶

The usefulness of the grand narrative for circumventing difficult pasts was not limited to the postwar years, however. References to the Romantic tradition served a parallel purpose in the early 1990s, this time to achieve a comic reconciliation of East and West German history, integrating the former seamlessly into the latter. The film *Go Trabi Go* (1991) offers a popular example.³⁷ The hapless Strutz family from Bitterfeld sets out in their Trabant to see the world previously denied to East German citizens. But they do not go to France or seek out the beaches of Spain. The father, a teacher, longs to do what all educated Germans long to do: retrace Goethe's journey through Italy. Mayhem ensues. On first viewing, the film appears to be nothing more or less than a screwball comedy made at the expense of the so-called *Ossis*. Yet, it also effects East Germans' symbolic inclusion in the distinctly West German narrative of the economic miracle and liberal democracy. Moreover, the

³³ Exemplary here is the career of Wolfgang Hagemann, who worked for the GHI in Rome from 1936 until joining the war effort as an aide to General Erwin Rommel. From September 1943, Hagemann directed the Art Preservation Branch (*Kunstschutzstelle*) attached to Field Marshall Albert Kesselring's *Heeresgruppe Süd* and responsible for the identification and relocation of northern Italian artworks and cultural objects. Italian friends in the Church facilitated his release from the Ghedi prisoner-of-war camp to the Capitolare Archive and Library in Verona in October 1945. From there, and later from the Vatican, Hagemann worked to assert German claims on the GHI library and to reopen the institute. He served as its director from 1953 until 1976, and his papers and wartime letters are now housed there. See Michael Matheus, ed., *Deutsche Forschungs- und Kulturinstitute in Rom in der Nachkriegszeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2007).

³⁴ Friedrich Overbeck, *Italia und Germania*, 1828, oil, 94.5×104.7cm, Neue Pinakothek, Munich.

³⁵ One example is Federal President Theodor Heuss's visit to Rome, as captured in Rene Hocke, "Wie Theodor Heuss Rom eroberte. Triumph des guten Gewissens," *Rheinische Post*, Nov. 20, 1957; also see Dr. Freiherr von Rummel, "Deutsch-italienische Kulturbeziehungen. Referat auf der Tagung in Maria-Laach im März 1963," DHI-Rom, N29 (Josef Schmitz van Vorst Nachlass) 408.

³⁶ Wolfgang Koeppen, *Der Tod im Rom* (Stuttgart: Scherz & Goverts, 1954).

³⁷ Peter Timm, dir., *Go Trabi Go—Die Sachsen kommen*, 1991.

film, going one step further, uses Italy to assert a German tradition—and polity—unbroken by time, war, or political regime. As in 1945, a unifying, national *Sehnsucht* for Italy was available to help Germans smooth over the painful and unresolved past of Germany's division.

Casting in relief the political and social uses of Goethe and German *Sehnsucht*; providing a premise for German-Italian comparisons other than the countries' ascribed misfit status; and opening another door to the incorporation of the GDR and Communism into the standard historical narrative—these are just a few of the ways a history of German-Italian entanglements can disrupt old perspectives and offer new ones on the Federal Republic writ large.

Differences that Unify

One of the consequences of this imagined relationship has been the maintenance of long-standing cultural stereotypes that confirm national difference and that, because of this—rather than despite it—have forged connections between postwar Italians and Germans.³⁸ If German-Italian relations were the unrequited love affair they are portrayed to be, this might not be the case. But Italians are important participants here, and they are no less likely to mobilize sweeping histories. As Silvana Patriarca has shown, Italian intellectuals have a long history of using stereotypes of German industriousness as a foil for Italians' attributed vices, to promote their own modernization and nationalist aspirations.³⁹ On a more negative note, Germany figures as Italy's historic enemy in a narrative that starts with the sacking of Rome and ends in the present day. The image of German barbarism reentered common parlance with a vengeance in 1943, with the Nazi occupation, and Italians of all political stripes worked quickly after the war to refashion their country's unheroic past into one of widespread antifascist resistance. Even Benedetto Croce, who had previously rejected the notion that certain characteristics adhered to particular nations or peoples, mobilized these same national stereotypes in 1944 to soften the Allies' hostility for their former enemy and to build his case for a new Italy. The liberal philosopher argued that fascism was a "parenthesis in the history of Italy," wholly out of step with its culture, traditions, and even its known vices—in contrast to Nazism, whose reception among the German people had been paved, according to Croce, by a penchant for materialistic philosophy, a history of Prussian imperialism, and a general disregard for individual freedom. He blamed all of this on their ancestors for not having been part of the Roman world; as a result, Germans lacked a strong grounding in the classical and Christian traditions that defined Italian (and, to Croce's mind, European) culture.⁴⁰ From the beginning, then, the "good Italian" depended on the "bad German." Next to the Nazis, the average Italian became clueless and gullible, Benito Mussolini laughable, and fascism, its colonial pursuits included, relatively harmless.⁴¹ As time passed and scholarly research on Nazism grew, international public

³⁸For a similar assertion, see Angelo Bolaffi, "Eine besondere Beziehung," *Zeitschrift für Kultur-Austausch* 50, no. 2 (2000): 20–22.

³⁹Silvana Patriarca, *Italian Vices: Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

⁴⁰Benedetto Croce, *Germany and Europe: A Spiritual Dissension*, trans. Vincent Sheean (New York: Random House, 1944).

⁴¹See Foot, *Italy's Divided Memory*; Filippo Focardi, *Il cattivo tedesco e il bravo italiano: La rimozione delle colpe della seconda guerra mondiale* (Bari: Laterza, 2013); Donald Sassoon, "Italy after Fascism: The Predicament of Dominant Narratives," in *Life after Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe During the 1940s and 1950s*, ed. Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 259–90.

awareness of German atrocities only solidified this earlier distinction between the Axis powers. How Germans contributed to—and even embraced—this narrative, and how it shaped relations in other arenas, remain to be explored. But the image of the “bad German” is clearly present in the positive identification with Italy noted earlier. And the “good Italian” mediated the transnational collaborations of the 1960s and 1970s, as we shall see.

Perceived national differences can blind, of course, even as they bind. Sociologist Sonja Haug, for example, agrees with others that Italian migrant workers and their families have been relatively successful in integrating culturally in Germany. But she notes that Germans’ perception of Italians as the “good” or model *Ausländer* has prevented recognition of the serious structural limitations to Italians’ integration. In the field of education, the current generation of Italian youths ranks beside Serbs and Turks in their high number of drop-outs, their small presence in *Gymnasia*, and their high incidence of learning disabilities. Contrary as well to general impressions of their success in the workplace, the majority of Italians are employed in low-income jobs, and just under half work in industry and trade.⁴² Many food and migration histories—not to mention (West) German popular memory—focus on rags-to-riches, guest-worker-into-pizzeria-owner biographies; in fact, it was more commonly middle-class entrepreneurs who moved to the Federal Republic and opened up the local Italian “joint” around the corner.⁴³

Here we see another narrative at work: Italians’ participation in the good life, made possible by the West German economic miracle. Such representations might help ease discomfort over the guest-worker program and what could be construed as German exploitation of foreign labor. But they also reinforce the stereotype of the poor, backward Italian, whose imagined achievement of entrepreneurial, middle-class status is the result of (West) German opportunity and example. If Italians have improved Germans’ lives, it could thus be said that the Germans have reciprocated. In a similar fashion, the story of a one-sided German romance with Italy (told on both sides of the Alps) prompts few to question whether anything other than economic hardship can account for Italian northward migration. But we know that at least some Italian women—in contradistinction to latter-day German Romantics and future “Tuscan Germans”—have found the air freer in Germany than in Italy. Edith Pichler mentions the young Italian women who swam against the tide to seek liberation in late 1960s West Berlin.⁴⁴ Already a decade earlier, though, enough Italian female university students had preferred to stay in Bonn after graduation to warrant investigation by Italian journalists. Their interviews suggest that Protestant Germany, and not just the counterculture of West Berlin, offered these women welcome freedom from church and family back home.⁴⁵

Evident already in these examples is how the persistence of national stereotypes rests, in part, on the concrete interactions between the two populations; at the same time, these

⁴²Sonja Haug, “Die Integration der Italiener in Deutschland zu Beginn des 21. Jahrhunderts,” in Janz and Sala, *Dolce Vita*, 136–50.

⁴³For an argument against a causal link between Italian migrant workers and the boom in Italian restaurants, see Patrick Bernhard, “‘Dolce Vita,’ ‘Made in Italy’ und Globalisierung,” in Janz and Sala, *Dolce Vita*, 62–81, esp. 71f.

⁴⁴Edith Pichler, “Pioniere, Arbeitsmigranten, Rebellen, Postmoderne und Mobile-Italiener in Berlin,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 42 (2002): 257–74.

⁴⁵See, e.g., Alfredo Todisco, “Agli italiani vivere in Germania piace, ma per ragioni assai diverse,” *La Stampa*, May 29, 1958. This article takes up the trope that the Federal Republic was undesirable. For a memoir also speaking to this point, see Maddalena M., *Imparare paura* (Rome: malatempora, 2000).

interactions present another level at which these Europeans forged connections by way of national difference. Germans and Italians came into direct contact as tourists, migrant laborers, business partners, customers, exchange students, backpackers, and fellow travelers, both literally and ideologically. German tourism to Italy resumed quickly, for instance, after the war; the trickle of travelers across the Alps that began in 1946 became a flood totaling 38.2 million visitors by 1961.⁴⁶ Facilitating this “invasion” was Germans’ and Italians’ shared romance with fascism; it initially worked to create a silent agreement, whereby the past remained in the past and Germans were allowed to be Germans, not Nazis, on their travels in Italy.⁴⁷ According to the wife of Willy Fleckhaus, it was this that originally convinced the journalist and designer to exchange his house in Provence for a rundown villa in the Tuscan hills; as art director of *Twen*, the glossy, 1960s lifestyle magazine that targeted twenty-somethings with its cutting-edge design, he eventually encouraged others to follow suit.⁴⁸ Memoir accounts of early excursions note the abundance of food found in the fields of Italy, a perception heightened by Germans’ own continued experience of scarcity into the early 1950s.⁴⁹ This often did not match Italians’ own perceptions of severe shortage, of course. Perhaps even more amazing for young Germans from *gutbürgerliche* homes was the sense of freedom, not only from those very homes—wracked by war and occupation—but also from the stigma of German-ness. In her first trip abroad in 1951, Renate W. recalled the trepidation she felt as a German: the “moral guilt bothered me greatly despite all the excitement and distraction ... It made me uncertain. I was happy to travel in a guided group with [other Germans] and not to come into direct contact” with locals, who, she feared, would scorn her.⁵⁰ But, in the end, Renate’s memories of the excursion were wholly positive, her fears of ridicule and social ostracization unrealized. Her relief comes through years later in the effusiveness of her prose but even more so in her assertion that this was a formative experience, one that allowed her “to view the foreign in a positive light” and, indeed, one that awakened in her a desire to visit other countries and learn about other cultures. In diaries, memoirs, and other sources, one finds expressions of gratitude, belonging, and happy normalcy—the products of perceived differences and the interactions that those differences enabled, the reality and value of which did not rest on the accuracy of these perceptions.

In a similar vein, one might consider whether West Germans’ early reluctance to eat anything in Italy other than schnitzel and fries—commented on and derided by their Italian hosts—had a performative aspect to it.⁵¹ It may have expressed a lack of culinary

⁴⁶In Altavilla’s telling, “Europe” means Italy. See Enrico Altavilla, “Trentotto milioni di tedeschi ‘invaderanno’ di nuovo l’Europa,” *Corriere della Sera*, May 20, 1962. For more on this particular German invasion and style of mass tourism, see Till Manning, *Die Italiengeneration. Stilbildung durch Massentourismus* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011).

⁴⁷Gabriele Kindler, “Sehnsucht nach Italien in den fünfziger Jahren,” in *Siebenmorgen, Wenn bei Capri*, 96–123.

⁴⁸Susanne Kippenberger, “Und Willy ging zum Regenbogen,” *Der Tagespiegel*, June 27, 2010.

⁴⁹See, e.g., Klaus Wagenbach, *Die Freiheit des Verlegers* (Berlin: Wagenbach Verlag, 2010), 35–37; Kindler, “Sehnsucht nach Italien,” 98.

⁵⁰Akademie der Künste, Kempowski Biografienarchiv, Renate W., “Wechselfälle des Lebens,” unpubl. ms., 158.

⁵¹Italians were not the only ones to poke fun. Comedians Gerhard Polt and Gisela Schneeberger, for example, satirized this and other aspects of the German tourist experience in the film *Man spricht deutsch*, dir. Hans Christian Müller, 1988.

adventurousness relating to cultural intolerance. It may also, or even simultaneously, have expressed a conscious public reveling in or enjoyment of German-ness.⁵² This is a dynamic that the novelist Koeppen evokes when describing the delight middle-age German men had in recounting the battle at Monte Cassino while picnicking there with their wives, and when painting the even briefer midnight scene of German women singing “the linden tree song” at full voice in front of Trevi fountain.⁵³ The novelist expresses little sympathy for the Germans who came individually or in organized tours to visit the cemeteries of the war dead, but it seems plausible that the opportunity for them to do so, and to do so publicly, offered them some personal and collective solace—the freedom, in this instance, to mourn as a German, even among non-Germans.

Devout Germans also traveled to the Eternal City, many by bus and with the help of church congregations and Italian travel agencies established to facilitate such pilgrimages. Pope Pius XII declared 1950 a Holy Year, to strengthen faith and Christian charity with a year dedicated to the forgiveness and expiation of sins and to reconciliation between adversaries. Five million faithful descended on Rome, roughly one hundred thousand of them West German. Near the end of the year, Jens Petersen, the future director of the German Historical Institute in Rome, observed firsthand the city’s “integrative power” as the capital of Catholicism. As a Protestant and as an outsider, Petersen recorded how the German pilgrims with whom he traveled found not only the promise of salvation in Rome; they also found belonging in an altogether different collective.⁵⁴

Italians are often sidelined in memoir and scholarly accounts, and they deserve a place in the hoary narrative of German *Sehnsucht* for the South. Whether Germans followed Goethe, God, or the sun, Italians helped them on their way. More specifically, the Italian government and the Ministry of Tourism and Entertainment, which viewed the associated influx of revenue as essential for Italy’s reconstruction and modernization efforts, blessed the German “invasion.”⁵⁵ State and private enterprise worked together to improve roads, to build more hotels (including the high-end facilities preferred by foreign tourists), and to lower border restrictions.⁵⁶ Glossy brochures produced by local and regional tourist boards appropriated Germans’ vision of Italy and deftly used it as a lure—to their very real financial benefit. Also lost in studies of the “Teuton grill”—as Italy’s beaches, especially on the Adriatic, were jokingly called—is the fact that, by the late 1950s, efforts to promote and expand Italian tourism were also directed at Italians, who, by 1961, accounted for the majority of nights spent in Italian hotels. The Italian government sponsored newsreels in movie theaters that extolled the unique attractions of Italy’s many regions.⁵⁷ The goal was not

⁵²On food politics in the postwar Germans, see Alice Weinreb, *Modern Hungers: Food and Power in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017).

⁵³The actual title of the song is “Am Brunnen vor dem Tore,” a poem by Wilhelm Müller set to music by Franz Schubert.

⁵⁴Jens Petersen, “Fromme Pilgerfahrt. Das Heilige Jahr nähert sich dem Ende. Ein Protestant im Pilgerzug,” *Die Zeit*, Nov. 16, 1950.

⁵⁵For an example of the ministry’s efforts to secure interest and funding using newly gathered statistics on domestic and foreign tourism, see Francesco Fazio, “Tourism in Italy,” *Banco di Roma. Review of the Economic Conditions in Italy* 16 (1962): 17–31.

⁵⁶Andrea Jelardi, *Storia del viaggio e del turismo in Italia* (Milan: Mursia, 2012), 315–502.

⁵⁷Mariangela Palmieri, “Le vacanze degli Italiani nel cinegiornale Incom,” *Officina della storia*, Oct. 17, 2017 (<https://www.officinadellastoria.eu/it/2017/10/17/le-vacanze-degli-italiani-nel-cinegiornale-incom>).

only to encourage Italians to celebrate their own “economic miracle” by hitting the road, but also to unify postwar Italians—to familiarize them with the different parts of their country and the people who lived there. The region they came to know best was Emilia-Romagna, with the Adriatic coast becoming the number one vacation spot for Italians as well as for West Germans.⁵⁸ Even if the latter stayed in more expensive hotels (which they did), the vacationers could not have avoided mingling with one another on the beaches and seaside resorts of the Adriatic coast.

None of this negates the asymmetrical, even quasi-colonial relationship between German tourists and their Italian hosts. Nor does it ignore how the Third Reich acculturated Germans to tourism and to this particular way of being “in the world.”⁵⁹ A sense of reclamation or of rightful return is, after all, woven into postwar allusions to the *Italienreise*. As tourists and then as second-home owners, Germans have (along with the British, Americans, and, most recently, Chinese) bought up land and resources; while some have “gone native,” most retain a privileged economic and social status. The phenomenon of foreigners buying property in Italy escalated dramatically in the 1990s, though it had begun earlier, when members of the ‘45er and ‘68er generations either entered middle age—and financial maturity—or “dropped out.”⁶⁰ The most famous of these are the “Tuscan Germans,” who credit *Twen* for inspiring them to travel to Italy and then to settle there on a semi-permanent or permanent basis.⁶¹ *Twen*’s three-part series, “Buy Yourself a House in Tuscany,” is indeed striking in its blunt—and lushly illustrated—inducement to buy up cheap Italian real estate.⁶² Just as striking are the unprocessed references to the Nazi past that interrupt descriptions of the land, the people, and the distinctive cuisine. The author and audience are not members of the perpetrator generation of Koeppen’s novel but rather their children, and, on the pages of *Twen*, consumer desire intermingles with a desire to confront Nazism. In the first part of the article, author Ann Thönnissen, who was born in 1941, thrills at the chance to sleep in a room once occupied by Eva Braun, who had waited, apparently in vain, for Adolf Hitler to join her. In the third part, Thönnissen tells her readers that half the houses in the village of Pitigliano stand empty or are in the services of mules, many of them once the property of Jewish residents who had perished in a German massacre. She notes the sale prices (of 200 and 1,000 deutschmarks), and also that several houses still bear the Star of David. And then, in the very next breath, she gleefully recounts how she found her heart’s desire on Via Zuccarelli: a revolving bathroom mirror with an ornate wooden frame. The interaction that Thönnissen describes with the seller of the mirror is as notable as the ease with which she shifts here from (non-)memory work to consumption: “‘Why not,’ said the man, who had lost his brother in the *Säuberungsaktion*, ‘take the thing with you. I’ll give it to you,’” he says after ten minutes of haggling. The author is clearly pleased with the seller’s generosity—and with her own bargaining skills; each performs their assigned cultural role.

⁵⁸Fazio, “Tourism in Italy,” 29.

⁵⁹Alon Confino, “Dissonance, Normality, and the Historical Method: Why Did Some Germans Think of Tourism after May 8, 1945?,” in Bessel and Schumann, *Life after Death*, 323–48.

⁶⁰For German second-home acquisition in Italy, see Daniella Seidl, “*Wir machen hier unser Italien ...*” *Multilokalität deutscher Ferienhausbesitzer* (Münster: Waxmann, 2009).

⁶¹On *Twen* and the magazine’s relation to 1960s counterculture, see Detlef Siegfried, *Time Is on My Side. Konsum und Politik in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur der 60er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006), 283–94.

⁶²Ann Thönnissen, “Kaufen Sie sich ein Haus in der Toskana I–III,” *twen*, June–Aug. 1965. Four years later, the magazine ran a similar piece on Liguria: “Diese Häuser können Sie kaufen!,” *twen*, July 1969.

But a new spin on German *Sehnsucht* also appears here, one that echoes earlier postwar exchanges while adding to it. An apolitical, cultural Italian warmth now offers forgiveness, even absolution, for the father's sins. Or perhaps it is simply the "grace" that Chancellor Helmut Kohl later associated with "late birth."⁶³ Whatever is at play here, the author and presumably her readers gain something in this interaction that they could not get in the Federal Republic or from other Germans. It is also something that contributed to their lasting affection for Italy over other "sun, sand, and sea" destinations. This, in turn, differentiated the Tuscan Germans from their French and British counterparts.

Twen was a bellwether for rebellious students, committed leftists, and cosmopolitan cultural elites of the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, those who spurned beachside playgrounds but flocked to Italy's cultural centers and to its northern industrial cities. West German actors, literati, and even several Social Democratic politicians moved to Italy in noticeable numbers beginning in the 1970s in order to live and to work—at least part of the time—where, as Michael Ende put it, "the air is freer."⁶⁴ Many of them settled in Tuscany and Liguria; others followed an earlier wave and took up residency in or near Rome.⁶⁵ A number of West German activists saw the promise of a new order in the labor strikes that shook Fiat in 1967, in the continued strength of the Italian Communist Party, and in the Italians' much trumpeted historical record of antifascist resistance, and they headed south to learn and to collaborate. While Italians were busy translating Bertolt Brecht, Theodor W. Adorno, and Herbert Marcuse in the 1960s, their northern counterparts translated Antonio Gramsci, Franco Fortini, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. German '68ers' assessments of life and politics in Italy were strongly colored by the perceived shortcomings of the Federal Republic specifically, and of postwar consumer society more generally. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, German writers read and admired Elio Vittorini and Cesare Pavese for their open and critical engagement with postwar, post-fascist Italy. But, perhaps even more, they admired a society that published and debated such work.⁶⁶ Possibly prejudiced by these earlier assessments, West German '68ers embraced the myth of a universal Italian resistance, and they envied Italians' seemingly successful confrontation with fascism after the war because of what had *not* happened in the Federal Republic. They saw what they wanted to see, of course, but it is worth emphasizing that this is also what Italian Communists and leftists wanted them—and their fellow Italians—to see. Italians helped maintain East Germans' antifascist credentials, and the West Germans did the same for the Italians.

But antifascism was a starting point, not an ending point, for this diverse set of German and Italian leftists. The Italian tradition of "workerism" (*operaismo*), for instance, offered an alternative to those West German activists who had not given up on the working classes, but who had had enough of the paternalist or vanguardist models for approaching them. Workerist groups such as Lotta Continua focused their energy on large factories as the site

⁶³"Verschwiegene Enteignung," *Der Spiegel*, Sept. 15, 1986.

⁶⁴For a satirical account by a proud member of the Tuscan left, see the 1986 play by Robert Gernhardt, *Die Toscana Therapie* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2007).

⁶⁵The German "colony" in Rome was well established, and its authors included Stefan Andres, Luise Rinser, Max Frisch, Gregor von Rezzori, and Michael Ende (as well as the Austrian Ingeborg Bachmann).

⁶⁶Hansgeorg Schmidt-Bergmann, "'Eine selbstverständliche littérature engagée'—die italienische Nachkriegsliteratur in Deutschland zwischen 'Nullpunkt' and 'Restauration,'" in Schmidt-Bergmann, *Zwischen Kontinuität und Rekonstruktion*, 103-14.

not only of mass production but also of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary action for the thousands of workers they employed.⁶⁷ The 1973 strike at the Ford factory in Cologne and the 1970s housing occupations in Frankfurt am Main were just two examples that drew heavily on the knowledge and direct experience of West German activists of Lotta Continua's campaigns in Turin and Milan, as well as in Rome.⁶⁸ The joint newspaper of the factory project groups, *Wir wollen alles* (We Want Everything), took its name from the Italian slogan *vogliamo tutto!* popularized by Nanni Balestrini's novel of that title describing the 1969 FIAT strikes.⁶⁹ Italian immigrants, among them former members of Lotta Continua, also actively contributed to the West German housing occupations.⁷⁰ Well into the 1980s, less militant West German leftists shared with others the perception that Italy was Eurocommunism's best chance. They looked to models like that of "Red Bologna," whose communist-led government pursued a course of "decentralization" (*decentramento*) over the course of the 1970s, expanding citizen participation in governance through a network of neighborhood committees and even more localized (school and workplace) councils. This more participatory or direct form of democracy attracted international interest thanks to Max Jäggi, Roger Müller, and Sil Schmid, a visiting German-Swiss trio, whose published analysis suggested that Bologna was an exportable possibility for change—within the existing system.⁷¹

Other West Germans, disillusioned activists as well as anarchists and back-to-the-landers, moved to Italy to form communes in abandoned farmhouses. They hoped to realize, if not an ideal society, then at least the interpersonal and economic relations that they believed were essential for achieving it.⁷² Whether pursued on their own or alongside like-minded Italians and Swiss, the life was often hard and most of these stays were temporary. Many young '68ers, of course, did no more—or less—than strap on backpacks and follow the routes and consumer patterns laid out by "alternative" or "red" guidebooks.⁷³ These guidebooks, like

⁶⁷On Italian workerism and autonomist theory, see Steve Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in the Italian Autonomist Marxism* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

⁶⁸Early published accounts of the occupations in Rome and Milan include Nicolas Neumann, "Verbrennt die Hütten—stürmt die Paläste," *Konkret*, April 9, 1970; Peter Schneider, "Die Häuserbesetzung in der Via Tibaldi (Mailand)," *Kursbuch* 26 (Dec. 1971): 109–34.

⁶⁹*Wir wollen alles* is available at www.mao-projekt.de/BRD/ORG/PL/Wir_wollen_alles.shtml. Balestrini's novel was translated into German just one year after its publication in Italy: Nanni Balestrini, *Wir wollen alles: Roman der Fiatkämpfe*, trans. Peter Chotjewitz (Munich: Trikont, 1972).

⁷⁰For an account of the Frankfurt scene, see Geronimo, *Feuer und Flamme. Zur Geschichte der Autonomen* (Berlin: ID-Verlag, 2002). On squatting in Rome in 1973–1974, see Mathias Heigl, *Rom in Aufruhr: Soziale Bewegungen im Italien der 1970er Jahre* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2015), 142–248.

⁷¹Max Jäggi, Roger Müller, and Sil Schmid, *Das Rote Bologna* (Zurich: Verlagsgenossenschaft, 1976). An English translation appeared immediately, with an introduction by Donald Sassoon: *Red Bologna* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1977). Both it and Bologna have returned to the attention of urban planners and architects. See, e.g., Thomas Sauer, Susanne Elsen, and Christina Garzillo, *Cities in Transition: Social Innovation for Europe's Urban Sustainability* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

⁷²Almute Nischak, *Lebenswege in die Toskana. Feldforschung über das Phänomen "alternative Migration"* (Frankfurt/Main: Brandes & Apsel, 2003).

⁷³Peter Kammerer and Ekkehart Krippendorff, *Reisebuch Italien. Über das Lesen von Landschaften und Städten* (West Berlin: Rotbuch, 1979). On "alternative" travel, see Anja Bertsch, "Alternative (in) Bewegung. Distinktion und transnationale Vergemeinschaftung im alternativen Tourismus," in *Das Alternative Milieu. Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968–1983*, ed. Sven Reichardt and Detlef Siegfried (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010), 115–30. Also see Richard Ivan Jobs, *Backpack Ambassadors: How Youth Travel Integrated Europe* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2017).

their parents' Baedeker, continued to channel Goethe, though the emphasis was not on the journey as much as the destination. Or, in the case of some pilgrims, the emphasis was on the Italians themselves and what could be learned from interactions with them. This was arguably a far more radical break with tradition.⁷⁴ In any event, this interest in the Italian "way of life" mapped on to a more general shift away from organized politics and toward a "lifestyle" or moral politics.⁷⁵

Italy as a Lifestyle Choice

For this cohort of West Germans, like their parents, connections to Italy rested on perceived national differences, as well as on similarities they understood to exist between them and their Italian interlocutors. In the 1990s, however, this expressed affection became grist for the political mill when Social Democratic leader Oskar Lafontaine stated off-the-cuff that significant political decisions should only be made after a good meal (the point was that good food and drink reminded one of the important things in life, and thus mitigated against an abuse of power). Conservatives saw their chance to attack Lafontaine and other allegedly hedonistic leaders of the Social Democratic Party (SPD). The campaign against what they called the "Toskana-Fraktion" focused on the group's "un-German" lifestyle. It was not so much their choice of vacation spots that drew fire—Tuscany was, by then, a favored destination for Germans of all political persuasions—but rather their open enjoyment of red wine, fine and foreign cuisines, and a more relaxed work style. By exposing such "southern" behavior, conservatives hoped to cast doubt on the Social Democrats' character and, by extension, on their politics. It did not matter, therefore, that Gerhard Schröder had not yet visited Italy when the popular daily *Bild* claimed that he "lived Tuscan-style" while vacationing on the North Sea.⁷⁶ In this way, Italy became a weapon in the (West) German culture wars, helping to delineate imagined generational rifts, as well as to differentiate "authentic" from "inauthentic" Germans, as well as the right from the wrong path for the newly unified country. More recently, "Tuscan left" has been mobilized by a new generation to disparage the Red-Green establishment—one-time radicals who had "sold out," and an SPD that had led the charge on neoliberal restructuring. The use of southern stereotypes is clearly not confined to German-Italian relations.

Such open political associations are exceptional, however. As mentioned at the outset, one striking continuity in German discourse on Italy is the tendency to cast the country in purely cultural terms and thereby to circumvent (or deny) its political uses and effects. And, in unified Germany, the Italian lifestyle has proven even more popular—and more ubiquitous—than ever. Familiar tropes mingle with a new attention to regional specificity, which is especially visible in Italian cookbooks, restaurants, and tourism brochures. Food historians attribute this change in taste to educated elites who were rich in cultural capital but relatively poor in economic capital.⁷⁷ But the producers—the Italians—are just as important

⁷⁴See the semiautobiographical novella by Peter Schneider, *Lenz* (Berlin: Rotbuch Verlag, 1973).

⁷⁵The growing literature on the "alternative" scene and the 1980s points to this shift; see esp. Reichardt and Siegfried, *Das Alternative Milieu*. Also see Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2010).

⁷⁶Cited by Robert Gemhardt in "Toskana-Arbeit," *Die Zeit*, Aug. 21, 1991.

⁷⁷See, e.g., Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, eds., *Food and Culture: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2008). Such analysis draws on observations of 1970s French society; see Pierre Bourdieu,

here as the well-traveled West German consumers. By the end of the 1960s, the modernization and standardization of food production had led to a notable homogenization of Italian cheese, for example, and it did not take long before individual producers sought to differentiate themselves from the indistinguishable *grana* (parmesan) pack. In keeping with Italian food's "medievalization," a new marketing campaign introduced consumers to Parmigiano-Reggiano in 1971, asserting a precise geography and an authenticity of practice that is now synonymous with quality.⁷⁸ An episode of the ever-popular *Carosello*, a ten-minute nightly television spot that mixed advertising with short stories and animated comedy, helped this process along by mobilizing history and nostalgia to establish the importance of place for the product's unique character.⁷⁹ In it, a beautiful and fashionable actor couple drove through the medieval "Reggiano" region—the provinces of Parma, Reggio Emilia, Modena, and the parts of Bologna and Mantua enclosed between the Po and Reno rivers—in a variety of sleek sports cars, not only mapping "authentic" Parmigiano-Reggiano production for viewers but also showing how quality adhered to the discerning consumer.⁸⁰ The episode was geared toward an Italian audience, but the general marketing strategy was introduced abroad; the subsequent boom in Italian food exports to West Germany was evidence of its success.⁸¹

This celebration of regional specificity took on new meaning in the heyday of European expansion. With the collapse of the Cold War order and the ascendancy of the EU, Italian scholars once again, in search of a usable past, debated their nation's troubled history. Against the earlier consensus that Italy's strong regional identities had been the bane of its nationalizing efforts, several scholars now rewrote Italy's history as a model of unity-through-diversity.⁸² Though Germany was no stranger to fractious regionalisms, in Italy, as elsewhere, this newly positive valuation of the "Italian way of doing" things rested on its difference: unlike Germans and other northerners, the argument went, Italians had managed to retain traditions and values worth preserving. They knew the secret to balancing the demands of life with its pleasures, and they did all this while also being "modern." Italians remained different but not too different in this scenario, and one hears echoes of the "good Italian" and the "bad German." If anything has replaced antifascism and resistance as a national myth in Italy, it appears to be the Italian lifestyle. Italy's cultural and tourist industries have worked hard to promote the image of a uniquely Italian way of life, and there is also evidence that, at least until 2009, Italians widely embraced the image of their own exceptionalism. Until recently, Italians defied globalizing trends (and multiculturalism) by stubbornly eating Italian cuisine to the near total exclusion of other types, and, when polled about

Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984).

⁷⁸Piercarlo Grimaldi, *Cibo e rito. Il gesto e la parola nell'alimentazione tradizionale* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2012), 28. See also Stefano Magagnoli, "The Invention of Typicality: Parmigiano-Reggiano Cheese Between Tradition and Industry," *China-USA Business Review* 14, no. 11 (2015): 545–56.

⁷⁹See the entry on *Carosella* in Gino Moliterno, ed., *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Italian Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 6–8.

⁸⁰Stefano Magagnoli, "Dal marketing della fame ai prodotti della memoria: il ruolo di Carosello," *Officina della Storia*, Oct. 17, 2017 (<https://www.officinadellastoria.eu/it/2017/10/17/dal-marketing-della-fame-ai-prodotti-della-memoria-il-ruolo-di-carosello/>).

⁸¹Top-down and bottom-up trade relations are undoubtedly an important part of this history as well. Even before the shift in marketing, the Federal Republic was Italy's number one importer of food stuffs.

⁸²See, in particular, Aldo Schiavone, *Italiani senza Italia: Storia e identità* (Turin: Einaudi, 1998).

where they would most like to live, they have differed markedly from non-Italian nationals in their preference for their own country.⁸³

With some regularity, Italian politicians have commensurately voiced fears about their country's—and Europe's—"Germanization." Such language was prominent at the time of German unification in 1990, and Italian leftists and government officials alike also used it to describe the spread of West German counterterrorism measures in the 1970s.⁸⁴ In its most recent articulation, revived during the European debt crisis of 2009, Germanization is associated with a German-dominated EU and with fiscal austerity. In the new Federal Republic, Italians, even if "not foreign" to most Germans, can still be threatening enough to provoke a parallel discourse. Early in the twenty-first century, a handful of conservative German politicians warned of a danger more sinister than globalization—one that had gone largely unnoticed and was self-inflicted: Germany's "Italianization."⁸⁵ In both the Italian and German cases, one can read such fears negatively, as evidence of anti-EU or anti-globalization sentiments. Or one can read them more positively, as evidence of a widespread acquiescence to cultural change that elites feel compelled to combat by stoking national fervor with the specter of outside colonization. There is, of course, an asymmetry between the two: Germans more easily embrace Italianization, associated as it is with cheap labor and good food. German scholarship on Italian migration and food reflects this—generally affirming Italy's positive influence and, if less explicitly, the popular thesis that contact with Italians has promoted tolerance and "warmer" Germans.⁸⁶ One cannot help but see the tropes of German longing here: the "Italian myth" and the German-Italian binary. What Italo Battaifarano has called *l'Italia ir-reale* is woven into current narratives of affluence and aspirations for a more inclusive Germany.⁸⁷

While never absent from earlier discourses on German-Italian relations, lifestyle has, in this way, asserted a new dominance. As a commodity, *la dolce vita* has never been more mobile, even as it continues to draw millions of tourists to Italy each year. Italy's global appeal has not changed one thing: Germans continue to far outnumber other nationalities that visit the peninsula.⁸⁸ The terms on which Germans and Italians meet are changing, however, as seen in the case of the German-owned village of Castelfalfi. Purchased in

⁸³Fabio Parasecoli, *Al Dente: A History of Food in Italy* (London: Reaktion, 2014), 246–50.

⁸⁴See, e.g., Federico Rampini, *Germanizzazione. Come cambierà l'Italia* (Bari: Laterza, 1996). For a debate on the usefulness of the term in its early incarnation, see Vincenzo Sparagna, "Un tedesco a Bologna. Peter Schneider ci parla della 'germanizzazione,'" *Il Manifesto*, Oct. 2, 1977.

⁸⁵Jens Petersen, "Italianisierung Deutschlands? 'Germanizzazione dell'Italia'? Das Bild des anderen in der jeweiligen Selbstrezeption," in Rusconi and Woller, *Parallele Geschichte?*, 55–69. This anxiety is often expressed as the loss of German cuisine. See Dirk Schümer, "Spaghettisiert euch," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 28, 2002; Patrick Bernhard, "Italien auf dem Teller. Zur Geschichte der italienischen Küche und Gastronomie in Deutschland 1900–2000," in Corni and Dipper, *Italiener in Deutschland*, 217–36.

⁸⁶For its popular variant, see Carola Rönneburg, *Grazie Mille. Wie die Italiener unser Leben verschönern haben* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 2005); Jan Weiler, *Maria, ihm schmeckt's nicht! Geschichten von meiner italienischen Sippe* (Munich: Ullstein, 2003); Sandra Nettelbeck, dir., *Bella Martha*, 2001.

⁸⁷Italo Michele Battaifarano, *L'Italia ir-reale: descritta dai tedeschi negli ultimi cinque secoli e raccontata agli italiani dal loro punto di vista* (Scorpione: Taranto, 1995).

⁸⁸According to the Italian National Tourist Board (ENIT), approximately 50.7 million tourists visited Italy in 2015. Over 10.8 million were German, with Americans coming in a distant second at 4.5 million. See Osservatorio Nazionale del Turismo, Turismo in cifre n. 2-2016 (http://www.ontit.it/opencms/opencms/ont/it/focus/focus/turismo_in_cifre_2_2016?category=documenti/ricerche_ONT&sezione=focus).

2007 by the Hamburg-based tourist agency TUI, the Tuscan village was nearly empty at the time; all but five of its residents, unable to make a living in the area, had moved away in the previous decades. Castelfalfi's intact church and nine-hundred-year-old castle remained official historic landmarks, making them the only buildings that were not included in the 250-million-Euro deal presided over by the social democratic mayor Paola Rossetti. According to Rossetti, the sale promised to bring numerous benefits to the area—not least new jobs and an influx of foreign money. But, he asserted, in an attempt to allay any fears, “Castelfalfi remains the paradise that it has always been.” The new German owners saw it slightly differently: when they were finished with Castelfalfi, it would be an “environmentally friendly, old-new village resort.” Sixty percent of the village's energy was to come from local biomass and the water from its own wells, purified and directed for repeat use thanks to the help of environmental engineers at the University of Pisa.⁸⁹ It was to be paradise—only better!

As of March 2017, Toscana Resort Castelfalfi housed forty-one apartments (“outside unchanged, inside modern”), a five-star hotel, a restaurant and cooking school, as well as shops where one could buy local products. Indeed, Castelfalfi produced its own olive oil and its own wine. There were eighteen farmhouses outside the village center, each with its own pool, and two golf courses, one connected to a four-star “wellness hotel,” whose “modern architecture” blends seamlessly with its surroundings, a result of the attentive use of regionally-sourced building materials. The rolling fields and forests full of wild boar, deer, and pheasant ensure that the diners' plates are always full *and* responsibly sourced. When announcing its plans, the TUI spokesperson explicitly stated that this was not to be the playground of ugly Germans—those famous for flocking to beaches and clubs and for financing large, concrete tourist developments (derisively referred to as *Bettenburg[en]*, i.e., cheap, mass “bed fortresses”). Instead, Castelfalfi “offers ... the possibility of experiencing the most authentic Tuscan lifestyle, [where] time ... passes in a slower and more relaxed way.” It is thus ideal, the real estate brochure reads, for those who lead busy lives and are looking not only for a change of scenery but also for “a simpler” way of life. The closing line is meant to seal the deal: “The real luxury today is time. Castelfalfi multiplies its value.”⁹⁰

Owned by and originally conceived for Germans, Toscana Resort Castelfalfi is, in a sense, “Italy—made by Germans.” The TUI project evokes the tradition of Italy as a refuge for Germans wanting to escape Germany. It suggests, too, that Tuscany and the ever popular North (*Settentrione*) is what many Germans really mean when they say “Italy,” and that the “land where the lemon trees bloom” is smaller than it once was: Capri and Naples more readily conjure up retro kitsch in the minds of many Germans than actual geographic locations. And the poorer, hotter South, the *Mezzogiorno*, is not Italy but rather the extraterritorial domain of the mafia, an organization that embodies the long-held negative stereotypes of Italians as criminal, lazy, and violent.⁹¹ Or perhaps Italy as a signifier has become untethered from its signified object, i.e., its actual location is secondary to the commercialized aesthetic of authenticity and timelessness.⁹² Leaving aside the irreality or hyperreality of Castelfalfi, the resort project is unquestionably a product of the pre-crisis Eurozone and

⁸⁹“Ein ganzes Toskana-Dorf für deutsche Urlauber,” *Die Welt*, Dec. 5, 2011.

⁹⁰<http://www.castelfalfi.com>.

⁹¹See note 21 for Germans' negative perceptions.

⁹²Stephanie Malia Hom, *The Beautiful Country: Tourism and the Impossible State of Destination Italy* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2015).

the unrestricted flow of capital from Europe's financial "peaks" to its economic "valleys," something that its architects and loyal (if beleaguered) cheerleaders eagerly promote. It is not a national but a European entity, one that unabashedly celebrates the pluralist lifestyles and social inequities of the neoliberal era. Project CEO Martin Schlüter has dismissed Italian predictions that Castelfalfi would become a "Germans-only" paradise serving Italian sausage and sauerkraut. His goal was "to create a multicultural community where millionaires from all over Europe could congregate."⁹³

Castelfalfi embodies the elevation of pleasure to a right—and of simplicity to a virtue—during a time of growing affluence and growing economic disparity. The same could be said of the Slow Food Movement, a proselytizing organization promoting the Italian way of life and founded by former Communists.⁹⁴ Equally dismissive of "granola-types" as of cultural elites, the group's founders hoped to tame the worst of globalization and industrialized farming by educating the masses through their stomachs, i.e., by connecting taste and pleasure to the means of production and by maintaining local tradition and foodways. Its first confrontation with McDonald's, on the Spanish Steps in Rome in 1986, captured the imagination of many, and the Slow Food Movement subsequently acquired an international membership, including a robust German chapter. But its commitment to social justice, captured in the assertion that everyone has a right to "good, clean, and fair" food, has been hampered ultimately by its own lifestyle politics.⁹⁵ The stubbornness with which Italy and the Italian way of life are framed in purely cultural terms is an essential part of this tension—and part of Slow Food's global success. The language of lifestyle routinely recasts political issues as matters of individual preference, thereby crowding out ethically and politically grounded visions of *la dolce vita*: a *Bettenburg* in Rimini or an eco-friendly apartment in Castelfalfi simply reflects one's personal taste and priorities. This has unfortunately rendered the Slow Food Movement unable to confront the very real socioeconomic barriers—not to mention the labor and gender costs—involved in its idealized (Italian) lifestyle.⁹⁶ The Tuscan Germans, whose second homes foreshadowed the German-Italian idyll of Castelfalfi, could be said to have suffered a similar, if not identical, fate.

Conclusion

In the more recent interactions discussed in the previous section, there seems to be little left of the codependent memory politics that once bound Germans and Italians in the postwar decades. Meanwhile, the Cold War—arguably just as important as World War II in the creation and maintenance of postwar solidarities—still has some traction in Eastern Europe, but

⁹³"È polemica sul borgo toscano che diventerà un'enclave per milionari," *Corriere della Sera*, June 16, 2011.

⁹⁴The Slow Food Movement's Communist origins often go unacknowledged, but there is general agreement that it is an Italian movement. See Geoff Andrews, *The Slow Food Story: Politics and Pleasure* (London: Pluto, 2008); Wendy Parkins and Geoffrey Craig, *Slow Living* (Oxford: Berg, 2006).

⁹⁵Carlo Petrini, *Slow Food Nation: Why Our Food Should Be Good, Clean, and Fair*, trans. Jonathan Hunt (New York: Rizzoli, 2005).

⁹⁶It is nonetheless difficult to deny that the preservation of traditional foodways legitimates bans on immigrants and ethnic diversity that run counter to the movement's goals and own self-perception. See Rachel Danadio, "A Walled City in Tuscany Clings to Its Ancient Menu," *New York Times*, March 12, 2009. The one tourist quoted in the article is a German who supports the town's ban—and whose opinion inadvertently says a good deal about the relationship of many Germans to Italy: "You are right to keep Lucca's charm ... We come to Lucca every year because we want to see and live Italy, not New York."

less across Europe as a whole. Taken together, this may present an argument in favor of postwar periodizations that end in 1990–1991. Does the dissolution of these unifying frameworks also suggest that the European project is doomed—shredded by a post-1990 eruption of suppressed memories and national self-interest, with nothing holding it together apart from American popular culture, economic trade, and a shared memory of the Holocaust?⁹⁷ Germans move—and have moved—confidently through Italy. It is difficult to discern whether they do so as Germans or because Italy is, for them, a Europeanized space and a favorite vacation destination.

An important strategy for answering these questions is to approach Germans' and Italians' myriad interactions as part of larger postwar efforts by Europeans to realize “the good life.” This includes not only *la dolce vita* and left-radical projects, but also the *Abendland* of Christian Democrats and the dreams of a better life that took Italians to West Germany (and West Germans to Italy as well). Before the Eurozone crisis of 2009, both critics and supporters of the EU stressed the success of economic institutions in binding Europeans together; if there were weaknesses, they derived from comparatively weak political institutions and the failure to foster European culture and loyalties. After the fiscal crisis and amid Brexit, it would appear, then, that Europeans are right where their critics judged them to be in 2005, when French and Dutch voters rejected a proposed European Constitution and the future of the EU looked grim. The narrative of the EU may not end differently, but the foregoing investigation of German-Italian entanglements hints at something else, namely, that the very success of neoliberalism—not only its institutions but, perhaps even more, its stressed values and behaviors—has helped undermine the European project. As the pursuit of the “good life” has become a predominately individual and stylistic enterprise, rather than a collective and political endeavor, the validity of the various projects that *did* bind Europeans across or above national, local, class, and religious interests is increasingly in doubt. What has emerged since the 1990s is a Europe of free-flowing individuals who come together and separate according to their perceived interests. Buffeted by markets, individual Europeans have voiced anti-immigrant and protectionist demands and sought solace in nativist nationalism and regional separatism. An inclusive sense of obligation and reciprocity, a shared political vision that goes beyond the bounds of the tribe—present in postwar liberalism, in the welfare state of Social Democracy and Christian Democracy, and in really existing socialism—appear to be increasingly beyond the reach of Europeans.

Many of the examples presented in this article demonstrate that German-Italian interactions solidified and reified national difference, while simultaneously drawing the two populations together. This suggests that the existence of a European consciousness may not be the issue and, even more, that we should not limit ourselves, when analyzing the multilingual, polycentric, and heterogeneous EU, or the cultural process of Europeanization, to looking for similarities and consensus.⁹⁸ In other words, we need to stop thinking like nationalists and afford more space to difference and conflict.⁹⁹ That is because a European history in search of Europeans will inevitably come up short. Even most transnational

⁹⁷To paraphrase Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

⁹⁸Hartmut Kaelble, “The Historical Rise of a European Public Sphere?,” *Journal of European Integration History* 8, no. 2 (2002): 9–22; Martin Conway and Kiran Klaus Patel, eds., *Europeanization in the Twentieth Century: Historical Approaches* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁹⁹See Hakan G. Sicakkan, “An Agonistic Pluralism Approach to the European Public Sphere,” in *Integration, Diversity and the Making of a European Public Sphere* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing,

movements in Europe have been more *internationalist* than European in self-conception. And whether one identifies publicly with an international movement or with a nation tells us relatively little about the underlying affinities and dependencies—in short, the histories—that hold Europeans together. This is equally true of Germans, whether at home or abroad. In addition to pursuing a more entangled history of German-Italian relations, then, it is necessary to see more evidence, based more on past interactions than on present-day crises, before calling it quits on “Europe.” This will involve research on not only how Europeans have forged a community of memory, but also the productive as well as destructive long-term effects of national difference.¹⁰⁰

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¹⁰⁰Aleida Assmann, “Europe: A Community of Memory?,” *GHI Bulletin* 40 (Spring 2007): 11–25.