



German "volkstümliche Musik" of the Early Nineties and 'Modern Society'

Strategies of De-Individualisation as a Contribution to a Collective Re-Organisation

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1. Introduction

"Volkstümliche Musik" is a significant phenomenon (at least) of the early 1990s. The analysis¹ of this phenomenon can paradigmatically represent the discursive practices and sub-thought systems of large parts of the population of the Federal Republic of Germany at this time. "Volkstümliche Musik" depends on the political situation and indirectly deals with the needs and problems of individuals which result from such a situation and which lie in the deep structure of their mentalities. It thus takes on a cultural function. A quotation may make this connection somewhat clearer. Eva Herman, attempted to define the self in the show "Schlagerparade der Volksmusik" (NORD 3, 1.5.1993):

¹ The analysis is methodologically orientated to semiotics and discourse analyses according to Foucault and especially to Michael Titzmann, who defines discourse as a "System des Denkens und Argumentierens"; see Michael Titzmann, "Kulturelles Wissen – Diskurs – Denksystem: Zu einigen Grundbegriffen der Literaturgeschichtsschreibung". In: *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur* 99. 1989, p. 51 ff. See also Hans Krah, *Einführung in die Literaturwissenschaft/Textanalyse*. Kiel 2006, Martin Nies, "Kultursemiotik". In: Christoph Barmeyer/Petia Genkova/Jörg Scheffer (eds.), *Interkulturelle Kommunikation und Kulturwissenschaft: Grundbegriffe, Wissenschaftsdisziplinen, Kulturräume*. 2. Aufl. Passau 2011, pp. 207-225, Dennis Gräf, Stephanie Großmann, Peter Klimczak, Hans Krah, Marietheres Wagner, *Filmsemiotik. Eine Einführung in die Analyse audiovisueller Formate*. Marburg 2011 (with focusses on music, p. 250 ff.) and Hans Krah/Michael Titzmann (eds.), *Medien und Kommunikation. Eine interdisziplinäre Einführung*. 3., stark erweiterte Auflage. Passau 2013.

In der Regel präsentieren wir volkstümliche Schlager, und wenn wir den Begriff volkstümliche Schlager mal ein bißchen aufdröseln, dann kommen wir dahin, Schlager, d.h. also Erfolgsmusik, volkstümlich, d.h. Erfolgsmusik für das Volk, und das Volk sind wir; ich möchte es noch mal betonen, es ist Erfolgsmusik, sonst hätten wir auch diese Einschaltquoten nicht [As a rule, we present folk music hits and when we push the term a bit, then we come to the point, hits, i.e. successful music, [volkstümlich], i.e. successful music for the people, and we are the people; I would like to emphasise this, it is successful music, otherwise we would not get those viewing figures].

The chosen formulation "das Volk sind wir" – 'Wir sind das Volk' [We are the people] – obviously refers to a political background: the fall of the Berlin Wall 1989 and German 'Re-Unification' triggered by it. A matter of concern of the exertion of influence which situates its justification on a quantitative level is also articulated here. However, it is not expressed by this quantity – *das Volk* – itself, but by a speaker *for* this quantity. It does not concern itself with the exertion of influence but with making possibilities more conscious which then serves to simulate an actual analysis of the given relationships (an analysis which from the though-perspective of the individual members of society appears to be impossible or at least extremely difficult to practice) – and thus to regulate the state of mind.

What one must illustrate is that this specific musical discourse, this functionalisation of music as a strategy of collective, non-individual creation of identity finds itself in excess at those times in which the given order has totally given way to a new one and thus a collective re-organisation becomes necessary.² The new situation which presupposes this is 'total': it affects everyone, it cannot be excluded, it cannot be avoided and it cannot be prepared due to its suddenness. Nevertheless, this 'new' is now the 'standard' valid from the perspective of the entire ideology, is to be evaluated positively – determined as such by the respective governing norms – and it becomes the normal which one has to come to terms with.³ Where current

² In as much as the system "Volksmusik" is relatively constant, it can be shown that structures have changed since the 80s. See Marianne Bröcker, "Ja, wir sind lustige Musikanten: Volksmusik in den Medien – ein Bericht". In: Günther Noll/Marianne Bröcker (eds.), *Festschrift für Ernst Klasen zum 75. Geburtstag*. Bonn 1984, pp. 105-127; Martin Berthoud, "Die Prime-time der Gemütlichkeit: Volkstümliche Programmtrends bei ARD, ZDF, RTL plus und SAT 1". In: *Medium Spezial* 3/92: *Volkstümliche Unterhaltung im Fernsehen*, pp. 18-24; Georg Seeßlen, "Reichsparteitag und Bauernstube: Eine Volksmusiksendung im Jahr 1985". In: Georg Seeßlen, *Volkstümlichkeit: Über Volksmusik, Biertrinken, Bauerntheater und anderen Erscheinungen gnadenloser Gemütlichkeit im neuen Deutschland*. Greiz 1993, pp. 19-45. Seen quantitatively, 1991 was the year of "Volksmusik's" extensive breakthrough into primetime television.

³ In addition to re-unification, further historic examples would be the establishment of 'Volks-gemeinschaft' in Nazi-Germany or the reintegration of displaced people after the Second World War and the 'democratisation' of Germany. See Hans Krah/Jörg Wiesel, "'Volksmusik' und (Volks-)

strategies of coping with certain situations – taboos, exclusion, delimitation etc. – do not function and per se run dry, and where on the other hand dealing with such complex relations presupposes social discussion, processes and individual effort (and thus above all requires time as an attitude adjustment and successive development), the following are replaced as 'acceleration' and substitution of these processes: rationality and time by a magical swearing-in and determination of the new standard as a 'listening to/tuning into oneself' lacking an alternative. In this construction, music is an aid to 'awaken' this hidden substantiality. The achievement of the "volkstümliche Musik" system lies in its offer to solve complicated social and political problems by establishing certain standards of behaviour, a certain way of life and moral concepts, all depending on a conservative focus.

What needs to be understood under the term "volkstümliche Musik" is only and exactly the genre which is constructed in (a) medial presentation by (b) inter-regional (c) television shows such as "Die volkstümliche Hitparade des ZDF", "Musikantenstadl", "Die lustigen Musikanten", "Die goldene Hitparade der Volksmusik", "Schlagerparade der Volksmusik" and "Heimatmelodie". That one is concerned exclusively with television programmes is not a random limitation but is fundamentally and necessarily conditional for the construction of the genre: the genre is created by these shows. They function as selection filters which create a completely new genre, without actually showing an extra-medial reference. This genre has very little or even nothing to do with folk music in its original sense; at best elements are selected, and one abstracts from their structural-functional contexts in the system, from their status and their inherent implications (the following statements are thus based on and only refer to "volkstümliche Musik", *not* folk music in its actual sense or its continual development in the so-called 'neue Volksmusik'). The area of validity is represented by the FRG. Even though German-speaking performers and songs performed in German appear in the shows, i.e. mainly from Austria, Switzerland or South Tyrol (Italy), one cannot speak of an international genre. Although it is an analogous genre, i.e. there are *Volksmusik* shows in Austria and Switzerland too, one can see that differing national codes have been formed/established. The German system "volkstümliche Musik" (in the following also given as "Volksmusik", in quotation marks) defines itself by medial presentation in *German* shows, correspondingly this genre is constructed by everything that is shown via the paradigmatic aspect of selection. In the same way that elements of regional shows are made use of, it is possible to incorporate elements of other nations.

2. The Basics of the "volkstümlichen" Musical Discourse of the 1990s

2.1. The Basic Postulate of 'Entdifferenzierung'

The first result one notices is a superficial heterogeneity of contributions, which can refer to rhythm, melody, volume, musical style, regionality, texts, instrumentation and group formations. This heterogeneity is however not random but itself organises and is determined by the system as shown by the regulated interplay between entertaining and serious songs, which typifies every show. This heterogeneity is expressed in the fundamental basic postulate of "Volksmusik", the 'Entdifferenzierung': differences are reduced, oppositions are dissolved, it has a duty to harmonise and to compensate and, as a result, to simplify complexity. This is complied with at all levels and non-compliance is seen as breaking the boundaries of the system.

Two examples should illustrate this 'all-whole-everyone-always' way of thinking. On the song-text level, Maria Hellwig asks the question "Where is it prettiest in Germany?" to then answer the question herself (appropriately for the system) with "everywhere". The second and somewhat more extensive example is situated on the level of song presentation, i.e. the presenter-discourse. In "Die volkstümliche Hitparade des ZDF" on the 13th May 1993, Carolin Reiber, the presenter, invited five finalists from the preliminary rounds of the previous weeks to the International Song Contest of *Volksmusik*. The finalists were not invited to the show as performers but as guests for a mock 'discussion'. The dominant aspect was the interest in the regional origin of the guests, the only relevant question put to everyone. The answers – Bayerischer Wald, Magdeburg, from the Bodensee, Schleswig-Holstein, Hessen – show the reasons for this interest since from these places of origin one can derive the paradigm 'everywhere in Germany'. Additionally, one can conclude that the answers were not meant for Carolin Reiber. She asked the questions, but as the presenter of the programme one can insinuate her knowledge of the answers. The question – with didactic intention – was not asked on behalf of oneself but as a representative of and as information for, i.e. on behalf of, the audience: it must be presented to them as the 'most important' piece of information. This aspect is of such importance that its recognition as an original/independent possibility is not given over to the audience's mental ability, but as a conclusion Carolin Reiber states: "And, dear viewers, all directions of the compass are represented in our song contest, the East, the West, the South and the North". For the song contest itself, Carolin Reiber's central statement was: "Today's guests come from all over Germany".

The principle of compensation can also be recognised beyond the level of geography with the aid of the paradigms of the five selected songs and their performers. "Alle Farben dieser Erde" [All the Colours of this Earth] (Geschwister Hofmann und die Regenbogenkinder [Rainbow Children]), "Die Wundergeige" [The

Wonder Fiddle] (Spellwark), "Zauberberg" [The Magic Mountain] (Gabi Albrecht), "Frau Wirtin laß noch offen" [Landlady, please stay open] (Original Drachselsrieder Musikanten) und "Almrausch" [Alpine Rose] (Tony Temerson und die Hirtenfelder) represent the entire range of the superficial heterogeneity of "Volksmusik": on the song-text level, the themes were 'space', 'music', 'therapy', 'I-reference'; musically, the interplay between joyous and 'serious' songs and the relationship between instrumental and vocal songs; with reference to the performers, the mixture of 'newcomers' and 'old hands'; and the various possibilities of group formation.

In both examples, one is concerned with the connection to a specific space, Germany, and thus with the elimination of inner differences and the reduction of a conflict potential based on competition and rivalry.⁴ Both examples favour 'emotionality' over rationality at the level of rhetoric strategies of emotional steering and conviction.⁵ The example of Carolin Reiber makes clear due to her demonstrative personal interest that the 'argumentative' strategy consists in doing away with arguments in favour of an emotional self-involvement of the presenter/speaker whose statement becomes the evident 'argument'. Thus, e.g. when Gabi Albrecht sees stage fright as positive and necessary, it is interpreted by her as an indication of "being involved with all her heart". This principle also applies to Maria Hellwig: here, the emotionality is already given at the frame level of the speech act by the mode of singing, the involvement of the 'speaker/singer' in that which is 'being sung about' is systemically included by an additional basic postulate of "Volksmusik", that of the performer-text connection.

2.2. The Basic Postulate of the Performer-Text Connection

A second, important postulate of "Volksmusik" is the performer-text connection: one may only sing about something seen as adequate for the performer. A reference of this nature must be created between text and performer. If this is not seen as direct, implicitly conclusive, it must necessarily be installed explicitly via the pre-

⁴ A competitive situation in the "Volksmusik" system represents per se a problem. It 'contradicts' the principle of equality and harmony. Thus, there are strategies to tame/control and 'present' them from the beginning: in the song contest by a joint presentation of presenters from all three countries taking part, whereby at the start a maxime "streiten lohnt sich nicht" [it's no use arguing] is explicated and celebrated in an extensive discourse.

⁵ This is surely not consciously intended, neither located on the surface level nor recognisable in each case, but it is even more clear in the abstraction of the paradigms transmitted and the mechanisms of their transmission: the 'medial construction of Volksmusik' can be seen before this background as a (secret or non-secret) continuation of a discourse and its rhetorical strategies which in its historical form was a (central) part of Nazi 'culture' as a basic ideology of the presentation of values (and thus indoctrination). See Hans Krah/Jörg Wiesel, "'Volksmusik' und (Volks-) Gemeinschaft: Eine *unheimliche* Beziehung".

senter level. When Maria and Margot Hellwig sing the South Tyrol *Heimat*-song, the presenter Ramona Leiß has to explicate the justification for both performers: one of them comes from the area via the grandmother on the mother's side, the other likes to go walking there and is said to 'know all the footpaths'. Such explicitness however is an exception, normally the texts are 'cut to fit' the performers exactly so that an explication is unnecessary: the connection becomes immediately clear. Often a presentation, a scenic representation, is used: elements of the text are shifted to the performer level and such performer involvement in the text is 'proven' as evident. E.g. when a performer of the group 'Speelwark' in their song "Die Wundergeige" [The Wonder Fiddle] plays a white fiddle, the quality of the colour 'white' in the song text is indicated as the only material characteristic of the wonder fiddle being sung about. The performer-text connection correlates with the fact that there are rules for group formations and the age structures of the performers that interact with the theme which may be sung about each time.⁶

This construct is also valid for composers and song writers. After the preliminary round for the Eurovision Song Contest, Ralph Siegel – a song writer – replied to the question "What's your plan?" with: "Nothing. You let your soul speak, your heart and you have performers and singers for whom you like to write and I think of the audience. The 'Wundergeige' came from my soul."

3. The Theme and Implications of Music Itself

3.1. Music as the 'World Language'

The basic postulate of 'Entdifferenzierung' can also be applied to the area of music itself. For the status of music, the result is that in "Volksmusik" an ideologising⁷ of music and singing takes place. These become the values themselves from the (genre-)constructive norm. The value consists in the propagation of an abstract commu-

⁶ See regarding group formations and regularities Hans Krah/Jörg Wiesel, "Musik fürs Volk - Erfolg durch Volksmusik: Konstruktion, Präsentation und Semantik 'volkstümlicher' Musik im Fernsehen der 90er Jahre; Eine mediensemiotische Analyse". In: *KODIKAS/CODE. Ars Semeiotica* 19/3. 1996, pp. 262f.

⁷ Ideology is understood in the sense of Lowry's discursive definition as a paradigm transmission and regulation process. The ideological discourse formations "stellen Normen und Verhaltensregeln auf, bestimmen Werte, modellieren Gefühle und Affekte, definieren Sinn und schaffen Konsens. Genauso wichtig ist auch ihre negative Funktion: zu verhindern, daß potentiell kritische Bedeutungen entstehen und artikuliert werden." [create norms and behavioural rules, determine values, model feelings and effects, define sense and create consensus. Equally important is their negative function: to avoid creating and articulating potentially critical meanings]. See Stephen Lowry, *Pathos und Politik. Ideologie in Spielfilmen des Nationalsozialismus*. Tübingen 1991, p. 46.

nity, a meta-community which constitutes itself via music and is constructed as the (world-)community of sound communicators:

Alle Menschen brauchen sie
[All people need it],

Die Musik, die Sprache der Welt
[The music, the world language]

[...]

Alle Menschen und auch wir
[All people and we as well],

Singen, weil sonst allen was fehlt"
[Sing because otherwise something would be missing].⁸

The equality results from the desire to avoid a lack of something and is thus based in the ex-negativo characteristic of the possibility of permanent deficit. The central characteristic is the anthropological, biologicistic conception of singing. Singing is not done for its own sake but is determined as an unchangeable primal need which causes a person to sing in order to understand the world: "Und wenn auf dem Baum dort ein Vogel singt / Mach ich daraus ein Lied" [And when a bird sings on the tree / I sing a song about it].⁹ The biological and symbolic organ of music production and reception is the heart, which determines and regulates the qualities of the product as the sounding body ("Träum mit mir von einem Lied / Das von Herz zu Herzen zieht" [Dream with me of a song / Which moves from heart to heart]).¹⁰ It is responsible in particular for the 'emotionality' and 'spontaneity' inherent in music. "Volksmusik" is thus committed to a 'trivial emotionalisation' as a constitutive colloquial form: individual feelings are replaced by a trivialised discourse on feelings (instead of being expressed by such). In doing so, the discourse is simplified since it is carried out on the one hand on the level of terms and on the other hand operates with a binary constructed opposition to – and the explicit exclusion of – understanding, rationality and reflection:

I hab' a Herz zu verschenken
[I have a heart to give]

⁸ From: "Musikanten haben Glück" (Gebrüder Pfarr). The cited text passages refer to transcriptions created by the author. The text body consists of approximately 250 texts and the presenter-discourse recorded from approx. 30 shows.

⁹ From: "So a Stückerl heile Welt" (Stefanie Hertel).

¹⁰ From: "Die ganz kleinen Träume" (Tisner Buam).

Und wann 's wer nimmt fürs ganze Leben
[And when, who will take it for their whole life]

Nur nach Gefühl, ohne zu denken
[Just for feelings, without a thought]

Ja und dir würd' i 's gleich geben
[Yes and I would give it to you now].¹¹

An implication of this concept is that the concept makes political structures – since they are not in oneself – and thus democracy superfluous, and they can appear as a form of alienation.

3.2. Music is "Volksmusik"

In *Volksmusik* shows, "Volksmusik" is not seen as a musical direction among many others but as the epitome of music, determined and supported by biologicistic embedding. The fact that "Volksmusik" is music per se is expressed in the song texts by only talking about the music itself – e.g.: "Aus Böhmen kommt die Musik" [The music comes from Bohemia] (Gitti und Erika). One can reconstruct however that the implications and significance assigned to music here, i.e. its 'therapeutic' function ("Musikanten [...] wissen, daß Musik ja jederzeit auch Leid von uns nimmt" [Musicians [...] know that music always takes away our sorrow]),¹² can be self-reflectively referred back to the genre itself, the term 'music' is thus used as rhetorical emphasis: what is meant in the 'situation being sung about' is always a particular kind of music, i.e. exactly the kind of music which is homologous with that of the act of communication. This, i.e. "Volksmusik", is present, qua evidence of the communicative situation in a *Volksmusik* show, "A Musi halt, di alle gfallt" [Music everybody likes] (Die drei Stoakogler). In the song "I bin der Geigenmusikant" [I am the fiddler] (Die Zellberg Buam), this is made explicitly clear when the I-speaker constituted in the role of the musician distances himself from Mozart, Strauß, Paganini and thus from the paradigm 'classical and masterly' as well as from "jazz and rock 'n' roll" and thus from the paradigm 'synchronous alternatives'. As a criterion for the 'selection' and the favouring of this musical direction becomes the biological determination ("Ja das erlern' i nie", [I'll never learn it] "Das liegt mir nicht im Blut" [It's not in my blood]) and the emotionalising capacity assigned exclusively to this kind of music

¹¹ From: "I hab' a Herz zu verschenken" (Wolfgang).

¹² From: "Musikanten haben Glück" (Gebrüder Pfarr). Similar: "Es gibt nur einen Reichtum / Ich möcht' das so beschreiben / Als Musikanter den Menschen / Die Sorgen zu vertreiben." [There's only one wealth / I would like to describe it / As a musician, who gets rid of people's worries] – from: "Musik ist meine Welt" (Ennstaler Spitzbuam).

("Spiel i mit meiner Geign / Kommt glei die Stimmung auf" [When I play my fiddle, it gets all in the mood]).¹³ In doing so, this music is not conceived as competition on the same level, but forms – as a synthesis of it – the epitome of the musical quintessence relieved of time and space ("I spiel für alt und jung / Im ganzen Alpenland" [I play for old and young / in all Alpine land]).

In as much that the music in the "Volksmusik" system is seen simply as "Volksmusik", the genre constitutes itself in the song texts by a considerable self-assurance and constructs an artificial legitimisation of its existence as an autopoietic system. This is also why music itself is sung about so vehemently in the texts.

3.3. "Volksmusik" is *Heimat* [the Homeland]

This musical model is bound to a specific spatial category: on the one hand, as noted earlier, to the space within the person, to the sounding body of the heart, and on the other hand, to its external counterpart, the *Heimat* [e.g. the homeland, native country or region].¹⁴

Heimat is conceived as being (a) explicitly correlated and interrelated with the heart ("Norddeutsches Land [...] / Bist für uns Heimat mit Herz / Wo wir gern zuhause sind" [North Germany / You are for us home and heart / Where we are happy to be at home],¹⁵ "Die Sterne von Friesland / Sie strahlen so hell / Ich bin endlich zuhause / Und mein Herz schlägt so schnell" [The stars of Friesland / They shine so bright / I am finally home / And my heart beats so fast],¹⁶ "Ein Herz für die Heimat" [A Heart for the Homeland] [Joachimstaler]). *Heimat* is (b) a space, or a room, which is primarily defined through music. Some examples on the title level: "Glocken der Heimat" [Bells of the Homeland] (Gabi Seitz Ensemble), "Heimatmelodie" [Homeland Melody] (Peter und Gerda Steiner), "Heimat deine Lieder" [Songs of the Homeland] (Gitti und Erika). *Heimat* thereby is (c) normally bound to an unspecified natural or external space, which articulates itself in sound and communicates via this language – as a reflection of one's own music-making: "Wenn der Berg dich ruft / Mit dem alten Lied", [When the mountain calls you / With the old song]¹⁷ "Die Wellen tragen übers Meer / Ein Lied herüber, es berührt

¹³ This explicit thematising of alternative musical directions and their representation is an exception: more typical for "Volksmusik" is a total lack of reference.

¹⁴ See here in general Elizabeth Boa/Rachel Palfreyman, *Heimat. A German Dream. Regional Loyalties and National Identity in German Culture 1890-1990*. Oxford 2000. See also Hans Krah, "„Heimat“. Edgar Reitz' Heimat-Zyklus 1984–2004". In: Martin Nies (ed.), *Deutsche Selbstbilder in den Medien. Film – 1945 bis zur Gegenwart*. Marburg 2012, pp. 167-224.

¹⁵ From: "Perle der Heimat, Norddeutsches Land" (Heimatduo Judith and Mel).

¹⁶ From: "Die Sterne von Friesland" (Nordwind).

¹⁷ From: "Wenn der Berg dich ruft" (Angela Wiedl).

mich sehr" [The waves carry across the sea / A song which touches me].¹⁸ *Heimat* is (d) detached from a specific reference. Such a reference is often sung about on the surface level, these 'referential dreams of homeland' are however as such not central and due to their semantics are exchangeable. The semantics of "Norddeutschen Landes" [northern-German country]¹⁹ can also be assigned to the artificial space of "Meinem Tirol" [My Tyrol]:²⁰ nature, clinical cleanliness, aseptic, absence of sign systems and thus also the absence of rational communication, the promise of happiness, acoustics (sound, music) – these are the characteristics from which these positive spaces are constituted. In doing so, they remain constructed and artificial in such a way that the actual base structure of the spaces is a certain lack of characteristics which covers all spaces and shows itself to be interchangeable. *Heimat* can thus itself already be seen as an abstract concept for which the sign system is not important as a reference, but its significance consists in the sign-carrier in its function as 'empty *significant*' becoming the *significat*.²¹

Beyond this, *Heimat* is simply (e) a space which is lacking – and thus it establishes sense. It is always determined that it will be left, have to be left (or is left at the time of speaking), qua biological necessity.²² As an analogy to the model of the Fall of Man, this condition cannot be realistically maintained for any length of time. To return to it is geographically possible, however not ideologically: Once left, the "ideal world", "Wo einer fest zum andern hält" [where people keep together] and "Wo 's Herz allein nur zählt" [Where only your heart matters] is lost forever.²³ One can conclude that the result of this is the negative state of mind inherent in the nature of mankind, since this loss is irreversible and one's consciousness of it becomes the *conditio humana*: "Weit fort von der Heimat / Halt ich 's nicht lange aus / Keine Welt ersetzt mir mein Zuhause" [Far away from home / I can't stand it anymore / No world can replace my home],²⁴ "Die Arbeit und die weite Welt ersetzen kein Daheim" [Work and the whole world cannot replace my being home].²⁵

¹⁸ From: "Stella Maris" (Bianca).

¹⁹ From: "Perle der Heimat, Norddeutsches Land" (Heimatduo Judith and Mel).

²⁰ From: "Mein Tirol" (Zillertaler Schürzenjäger).

²¹ Here the missing reference on the level of the song text is repeated. The presented world of the song-text level is shown as the genre itself as a pure construction without any reference to a possible reality: no present, and no reconstructable past section of reality is derived, selected and focused upon. It is e.g. not the world of farmers and country people, not the 'provincial' determined as the epitome of the world.

²² To be reconstructed as such in "Die Sterne von Friesland" (Nordwind), "Mein Tirol" (Zillertaler Schürzenjäger), "Alles klar" (Heimatduo Judith and Mel), "Meine kleine Stadt" (Elfi Graf), "Heimatmelodie" (Peter and Gerda Steiner), "Heimat deine Lieder" (Gitti and Erika), "Ein Herz für die Heimat" (Joachimstaler).

²³ From: "So a Stückel heile Welt" (Stefanie Hertel).

²⁴ From: "Ein Herz für die Heimat" (Joachimstaler).

²⁵ From: "Meine kleine Stadt" (Elfi Graf).

Heimat thus implies as a necessary counterpart (f) the other. As an example, we can use the song "Meine kleine Stadt" [My Little Town] (Elfi Graf).²⁶ As a spatial basis, we find that the *heimat*-space is a room, explicitly the room where the individual was born and which itself appears to be organically structured: "Ja dort, wo ich geboren bin und meine Freunde hab' / Meine kleine Stadt, sie hat ein riesengroßes Herz" [Where I was born and have my friends / My little town has a great big heart]. The *Heimat* is the set against the city as a synonym for anonymity and non-transparency:

Ich wohne hier im achten Stock, in diesem großen Haus
 [I live here on the eighth floor in this large house];
 Wie die Nachbarn heißen, weiß ich nicht, ich kenn' kaum ihr Gesicht
 [What the neighbours are called, I don't know, I don't know their faces].
 Zur Arbeit eil' ich morgen hin, spät abends komm' ich heim
 [I hurry to work in the morning, I return home late at night],
 Und schließe mich mit meiner Einsamkeit in meine Wohnung ein
 [And lock myself alone in my room with my loneliness].

The individual, determined as such, is helpless in this situation. An effort to change something is excluded from this logic, a getting-to-know something is not possible as process and transformation. Getting to know – and thus knowing – constitutes well-being ("Denn wo jeder noch jeden kennt, ist das Leben lebenswert" [Where everyone knows everyone else, life is worth living]). It is however not a dynamic category. It is given per se and a priori, qua birth, qua *Heimat*-space and thus qua biologicistic make-up, it cannot however be expanded. A positive understanding of the world beyond this is thus generally impossible. The individual is substantially bound to 'heart and home'. The other always remains the other.

In order to reduce this situation of suffering one can use the modelling of the *actantial* position of the desired object via the factors *Heimat* and heart. For, via the heart, *Heimat* can be experienced in song and can, detached from its bindings to space, be taken anywhere. In the act of singing, *Heimat* reconstitutes itself, creating "So a Stückerl heile Welt" [A small piece of an ideal world] or (the memory of) "Meine kleine Stadt" [My Little Town]. Via the heart, music in such a way becomes a *virtual Heimat*-space, which can indeed replace *Heimat* – and actually becomes the *Heimat* – "Musik ist meine Welt" [Music is my world]: "Was nützt mir Glanz und Glimmer / Das hat doch keinen Sinn / Die wirklich wahren Werte / Sind tief im Herzen drin" [What use is shine and shimmer / It all makes no sense / The really true

²⁶ The exception that here town and not nature is highly valued is directed and compensated by the attribute 'small'.

values / Are deep within my heart].²⁷ "Volksmusik" thus in this conception becomes a basic need of life which requires continuous and regular consumption.

4. Therapy Models and Forms of Ideological Regulation

4.1. Coping with Life's Difficulties

Music is also introduced and expanded as a model for therapy: autoreflectively, musicians thus project an image of themselves as therapists. In the range of the texts, a group of texts can be classified as dealing explicitly with coping with life's difficulties, which significantly are not often concerned with individuals but almost exclusively with the general, diffuse condition (of the 'world'). There is always an omnipresent, omniscient narrator, who is gender-neutral like the addressed 'you'. All these texts have in common a calm, stately, almost melancholic melody which signals seriousness and contemplation from the outset, and which is emphasised by the considerably reduced movement of the performers. For 'serious' themes, there is little movement and no marching, a fixed standpoint is given, the camera 'rests' on the performer. Almost all texts have in common a doing-away with a diagnosis or aetiology of the situations being sung about which refuse to be classified according to time. In these texts, there is no present, not even that of the act of singing. Fading out the coupling of a situation felt to be deficient and negative with a temporal structure corresponds in all texts to the category of construction of a self-organising mechanism of permanent production – independent of time – of negative conditions of the state of mind of the self ('I'): we experience that the subject often worries ("we often worry...") but not why. The texts determine the following regularity: 'worrying', inaccuracies, lack of energy, i.e. negative states of mind of the subject return with particular regularity, with the regularity of a bio-rhythm, are located in the 'nature' of mankind and not in external conditions (social, societal, political-economical) and as such are to be overcome and to be cured. The person who 'worries' is thus completely normal, he or she requires a catalyst from outside, namely the singing 'I', in order to initiate self-therapy.

Therapy models thus lie at the centre of this kind of text. All texts link the therapy of the subject to his or her biology, to his or her perceptive apparatus: all therapy models refer back to the subject, lacking a given diagnosis. In doing so, the use of the optical code dominates. It is responsible for the well-being of the subject, the therapy must start here because only here, as opposed to acoustics, can a disturbance occur: seeing 'correctly' is a condition for living 'correctly': "Sieh dir die Farben an, sie zeigen dir, wie dein Leben sein kann" [Look at the colours, they show

²⁷ Title and verse from "Musik ist meine Welt" [Music is My World] (Ennstaler Spitzbuam).

you how your life can be].²⁸ Often the subject is asked to dream, which by closing his or her eyes, i.e. the removal of the visual code ("Schließ deine Augen und wünsch dir was" [Close your eyes and wish for something]),²⁹ provokes the subject's formation of fantasies (of desire).

The considerable fading-out of structures cures human 'worries' via the formation/construction of fictions, whereby the constructional capacity of the fictional lies with the responsibility (autonomy) of the subject: the subject is given the suggestion that he or she can at least treat if not 'cure' him-/herself. That such formations of fictions approach the area of transcendence marks the eschatological structure of individual texts. Successful therapy is never possible in the 'now' – the present does not exist – but only within the framework of 'sometime' (Gaby Albrecht). The success of therapy is thus promised/announced but never presented as a factual result.

Therapies and their didactic implications are designed according to a simple pattern: there are tips which everyone can understand and follow ("schließ deine Augen und wünsch dir was" [close your eyes and wish for something]), in which intellectual differences in the subjects are greatly negated. They suggest to the 'ill', 'worrying' person a self-cure and quick success via 'small' amounts of effort: minimisation and simplification of the person's own actions is coupled with the right to have a "Stückerl heile Welt" [piece of the ideal world], to the "ganz kleinen Träume" [very simple dreams]. Minimum effort for minimum happiness, it suggests a proximity to reality and the probability of the cashing-in of desires: "Man findet leichter Freunde, mit fröhlichem Gesicht, ein kleines Lächeln, mehr brauchst du dazu nicht" [You can find friends more easily with a happy face, a small smile – you don't need anything else].³⁰

4.2. Therapy and Music

The relationship between 'singing and playing music' and 'being sung to and listening' is in "Volksmusik" not a purely pragmatic one but carries considerable meaning. The dominant category here is reception, which represents the organising principle towards which the production is functionally directed. This is expressed in the song texts on the one hand in that the production is geared explicitly towards the recipients. When the themes for the music are decided upon, the recipients are included and conceived as a production-determining factor: "Spiel hin und her, auf und ab / Ja wie man 's halt gern hört" [Play here and there, up and down / like we all

²⁸ From: "Sieh' dir die Farben an" (Godewind).

²⁹ From: "Wünsch dir was" (Jürgen Seitz Trio).

³⁰ From: "Mit dem Sonnenschein im Herzen" (Stefanie Hertel).

like to hear it],³¹ "Unsere Lieder singen wir / Weil Musik viel Freude doch macht / Wir wollen euch verwöhnen / Nur mit den allerschönsten Tönen" [We sing our songs / Because music gives us joy / We want to spoil you / With all the best sounds].³² Correlated with this on the other hand is the way the performers see themselves in the song texts: "Als Musikant den Menschen / Die Sorgen zu vertreiben" [As performers, to get rid of the people's worries].³³ Music production is per se integrated into a functional concept. An egocentric artistry is not propagated, nor is it conceived as contemplative 'functionless' entertainment. It is geared towards the service for the community and as an affect-theoretically based therapy substitute has to fulfil sense-giving and system-stabilising performances in the sense of an ideological 'stimulation'. "Volksmusik" is thus less music than ideological regulation.³⁴

The symbolic organ of music production and reception is the heart; only here is musical potency fixed. The biological rhythm of the heart is at the same time a musical apparatus which as a sounding body is a sound producer and medium of perception in one: "Ein jeder hat a Melodie in seinem Herzen drin. Die begleitet uns, ganz egal wohin. Sie hat an ganz besonderen Klang, sie bleibt bei uns, ein ganzes Leben lang" [Everyone has a melody in their heart. It accompanies us, wherever we go. It has a particular sound, it remains with us throughout our lives].³⁵ By embedding music in the organic centre of human beings "Volksmusik" installs an anthropology in which each person can undergo self-treatment autonomously by 'switching on' his or her heart. Singing clears up differences, establishes presence, authenticity and identity, its sound-rhythmic components animate listeners and viewers to sing along to the 'swelling' collective sounding body, as celebrated at the end of each show of "Die goldene Hitparade der Volksmusik" in a final apotheosis by using – an asexually stylised and ageing – Gotthilf Fischer as the choir master and various uniform performers and the audience as singers, and a culturally known and highly valued German traditional song as a catalyst for therapy.

What is important are the modalities of the reception. This must take place *directly*, i.e. production and reception may not be medially separated. This directness appears necessary since it serves as an essential characteristic of "volkstümlichen" communication. The attempts to dissolve the barrier between producer and recipient – and thus between speaker and the role of the addressee – are constitutive. This is achieved mostly by a spatial-scenic singing and singing with movement in which the performers leave the stage and 'march' through the audience, or by using a final apotheosis of collective singing during which the entire arena becomes

³¹ From: "I bin der Geigenmusikant" (Die Zellberg Buam).

³² From: "Musikanten haben Glück" (Gebrüder Pfarr).

³³ From: "Musik ist meine Welt" (Ennstaler Spitzbuam).

³⁴ Concerning the term, see Stephen Lowry, *Pathos und Politik. Ideologie in Spielfilmen des Nationalsozialismus*. Tübingen 1991 and footnote 7.

³⁵ From: "Heimatemelodie" (Gerda und Peter Steiner).

the stage. This symbolic unification of performers and audience via its expansive, space-taking component causes a dynamic which functions as a lively and vitalising feeling of 'good vibrations'. In swaying and marching, the audience become a body which in ordered movement, via the removal of chaos, is geared towards and prepared for the feeling of 'having something in common'.

The level of the presenter discourse is specifically functional in this. It has to make sure that the construct of authenticity, nativeness and world-simplification is not counteracted by the consciousness of the frame conditions, i.e. that the simulation of directness is not recognised as a simulation. *Volksmusik* shows are not per se the place which is predestined for the 'realisation' of the above-mentioned 'unification'. In television, communication is not only separated, displaced in time and one-sided, but television as a technical broadcast medium is part of the reality, faded-out and excluded, which causes alienation: "Im Dorfkrug nebenan [...] / Hier gibt 's kein Fernsehen / Hier machen die Leute noch selbst das Programm" [In the village inn next door / There's no television / Here, people provide their own entertainment].³⁶

Nevertheless, in order to bridge this gap, there are various strategies of transcendence and inclusion of the recipients: the mise-en-abyme structure of the audience and thus the reception situation within the show, the direct addressing of the external viewers, TED-decisions or inviting guests to the show. These strategies are centred around the person of the presenter whose particular function is to act as the 'heart' of the show and to decentralise him- or herself as a natural medium in order to bridge the gap.

4.3. Gender Constructions and Regulations: Woman as the Medium of the 'Divine' Message

A 'constructive' establishment of limits in the sense of a fixing of differences takes place at the level of the gender roles in particular. The above-mentioned explicit characteristics of the presenters in "Volksmusik" are thus principally set as feminine. As a result, in the German system, there are no men as individual presenters. Either women (Carolin Reiber, Eva Herman, Ramona Leiß) or couples (Peter and Gerda Steiner, Marianne and Michael) present the shows whereby there is also an obvious differentiation in the share of presentation qua gender.³⁷

³⁶ From: "Im Dorfkrug nebenan" (Gaby Albrecht). Such a thematisation of television is again an exception.

³⁷ E.g. when Marianne attempts as a medial presentation in conversation with "Mutter Schulten" to tell her stories – in the sense of anecdotal individual stories – and thus as a precondition an 'emotional' relationship of the two women is determined as created in the conversation, while Michael is expertly informed by the "diploma fisherman" Herrn Lütke about fishing set as a male domain. If men

Which roles women are generally allocated in the "Volksmusik" discourse and which they are not can be illustrated by the relation between the speaker situation of the song texts and the group formation 'female soloist'. For, via the performer-text connection, the I within in text can be specified in such a way that conclusions about gender correlations are possible – and are also significant in their gender distinction – via the articulation of the I and in particular via the relation of speech situations to situations either spoken or sung about.³⁸

When a female speaker-I says something, it causes – as an exception and under specific modalities – an individual, partner-specific (partial) life-history – as is generally valid for the male-I. These life experiences of the female-I as opposed to the male-I are never an expression of a positive, successful career but are principally defined by deficiency, lack and suffering – mostly self-inflicted qua action ("Ich wollte mal die Großstadt sehn, wollt spürn was Leben heißt" [I wanted to see the city, wanted to feel what life is all about])³⁹ – i.e. it is necessary to suffer programmatically but silently: "Engel dürfen nicht weinen" [Angels are not allowed to cry] (Michaela).

The relevance and activity granted to the female-I as a person qua performance situation – a solo performer – is hereby withdrawn by coupling it with the song texts: on the one hand, the activity is reduced in that the female-I is conceived less as an active, singing-I but as a receptive, listening one ("Ich lausch dem Wind" [I listen to the wind]).⁴⁰ In "Glocken der Heimat" [The Bells of Home] (Gabi Seitz) the adequacy of this role is presented explicitly: "Ich war vergnügt und sang ein Lied, als plötzlich Glockenklang / Die Luft erfüllte, daß ich schwieg, weil er zum Hören zwang" [I was happy, singing a song as the bells suddenly rang / The air filled up so that I was silent, because I was forced to listen]. On the other hand, a decentralisation of the ego occurs by reducing individuality in favour of being geared towards a characteristic of class. The female-I is determined as an integrative component of a collective and perceives itself as such:⁴¹ "Das kommt *uns* spanisch vor" [It's all Spanish to *us*] (Maja Brunner), "*unser* Leben" [*Our* lives] (Gabi Seitz), "alle Menschen im Tal" [All the people in the valley] (Angela Wiedl), "Engel dürfen nicht weinen" [Angels are not allowed to cry].

The last three examples clearly illustrate a further female characteristic. Women are the ones who can come into contact and 'communicate' with higher beings, the

function as presenters, such as e.g. Patrick Lindner in "So ein Tag mit guten Freunden" [A day with good friends], then we are not concerned with a "Volksmusik" show in the narrow sense of the genre as would have to be shown.

³⁸ Concerning the specific male career model see Hans Krah/Jörg Wiesel, "Musik fürs Volk - Erfolg durch Volksmusik", pp. 268 ff.

³⁹ From: "Meine kleine Stadt" (Elfi Graf).

⁴⁰ From: "Wenn der Berg dich ruft" (Angela Wiedl).

⁴¹ This corresponds to the pair constellation on the performer level, to the model 'Doppeltes Lottchen'; see Hans Krah/Jörg Wiesel, "Musik fürs Volk - Erfolg durch Volksmusik," p. 262.

transcended (Die Glocken der Heimat, der Berg) [The bells of home, the mountain], respectively they can themselves appear as such beings (Engel [Angels]).⁴² The serious musical tone correlates with this. This selection is however not specific to persons but functions for the community. The female-I chosen in this manner serves as a medium to present the 'divine' message of salvation: "Glocken der Heimat, hört wie sie klingen / Sie bringen Hoffnung in Freude und Leid" [Bells of my home, hear how the ring / They bring hope in joy and sorrow]. In doing so, the esoteric also causes the de-eroticisation of both the content and the speaker. The female-I is reduced in its gender characteristics and to a 'de-womanised' neutral being. In this speaker role, one can then postulate for the content being sung about the claim to statements containing generally binding truths (e.g. "Das kommt uns spanisch vor" [It's all Spanish to us], "Im Dorfkrug nebenan" [In the village inn next door]). These songs no longer illustrate an explicitly articulated speaker-I on the level of language. Women also function as media of presentation with regard to the time dimension – by completely reducing the I-reference. They are responsible for the conservation and handing-down of the past, whereby this past – conclusively, as a prerequisite for its sense of value – has itself already been specifically 'pre-processed' as a 'saga': "Nur die Sage erzählt" [Only the saga tells],⁴³ "Es geht die Sage" [There is a saga].⁴⁴ And in this particular 'type of text', "Volksmusik" has to document the constant of the world of values ("Was die Sage erzählt, gilt noch heut für die Welt" [What the saga tells, is still true for the world today]).

5. Deconstructing 'Entdifferenzierung': Aporia and Implicit Anthropology

5.1. 'All' und 'the Others'

The following presents the essential conceptions of the inherent worldviews of "Volksmusik" as a result of the postulate of 'Entdifferenzierung' in particular. The semantic, extension and deictical reference of 'all', which qua 'Entdifferenzierung' is established as a constitutive value, is not simply fixed by and to the world community or respectively to a superficial all-encompassing 'all', as postulated and partly explicated ("Alle Farben dieser Erde" [All the colour of this earth]). Already within the conception of "Volksmusik" the 'all' is limited by a frame, thus by its correlation with music. 'All' would thus only be all the producers and recipients of "Volksmusik".

⁴² Equally in "Stella Maris" (Bianca) der "Stern des Meeres", in "Zauberberg" (Gabi Albrecht) der "Zauberberg, Zauberberg, es kam ein Engel in Sicht"; here as in "Engel von San Capitello" (Bianca) would be further evidence of the recurrence of the correlation between women and angels.

⁴³ From: "Engel von San Capitello" (Bianca).

⁴⁴ From: "Zauberberg" (Gabi Albrecht).

Above and beyond this however, further, principally non-explicit limitations and exclusions can be analytically reconstructed which are faded out within the genre and whose themes have been made taboo. Areas of reality beyond these boundaries are thus silenced and their existence is threatened since the mechanisms of limitation are themselves not obvious. As such, the song texts – and equally the entire discourse of the show – are generally characterised by the fading-out of the relevant areas of life. And what is then faded out is everything that makes up a modern society: everything that (a) implies change or transformation (ageing process), wherein (b) dissent can exist (art, fashion), that which (c) shows non-transparent, complex, not immediately comprehensible structures and thus in connection, which (d) makes clear the differences present.

On the surface, one can recognise this construction ability on the song-text level in some exceptions. Verses such as "Wir bauen uns ein Häuschen aus Sonnenschein / Da lassen wir keinen von draußen rein" [We'll build a house of sunshine / We'll let nobody in from outside]⁴⁵ illustrate that outside the all-encompassing 'we' there are still entities and spaces thought about which do not belong to 'we'. As an analogy to this exclusion, the song "Die Dummen sind immer die Kleinen" [The stupid are always the small ones] (Marianne und Michael) focuses on an exclusion of partial groups – and thus makes clear the equality within the community as an ideological construct. From this song, one can determine the two essential components that as characteristics are principally faded out in "Volksmusik": this is on the one hand the aspect of the intellect and education, "Der Lehrer sagt, ihr lernts fürs Leben / Wie ham uns die Köpf manchmal g'raucht / I weiß no recht gut wer Napoleon war / Fürs Leben hab i sowas nie braucht" [The teacher says, you learn for life / we have often rubbed our heads / I rightly know who Napoleon was / I didn't need it for my life]. Even if education is evaluated here as negative, reduced to a knowledge of facts and determined as irrelevant, this explication alone represents a digression. Correspondingly, German song texts usually contain no references to mythical models or cultural knowledge (such as Napoleon here). On the other hand, there are material-economic facts. Social differences in particular are faded out. "Der Chef sagt, die Firma ist pleite / Er muß jetzt nach Liechtenstein ziehn / Des ist da, wo seine Millionen sind / Wo ziehn nur die Kleinen jetzt hin?" [The boss says the company's gone bust / He has to move to Liechtenstein / That's where his millions are / Where are the small ones to go now?]. This song text is at the 'system boundaries', its 'existence' can however be made plausible by its pragmatic presentation. It was sung in the show "Lustige Musikanten" on 3.6.1993, broadcast live from Neubrandenburg. The text takes up specific East-German sensitivities and directs itself towards this mentality. In the song, a negative condition is thus *described*, however not criticised nor critically reflected upon. The condition as such cannot be changed since it is ontologically determined – this becomes clear in the natural analogy using a worm

⁴⁵ From: "So a Stückerl heile Welt" (Stefanie Hertel).

and a blackbird. A subjunctive wish is offered as a 'solution to the problem' in which the greatest possible 'natural' effort and expansion ("Und wenn ma uns alle auf Zehenspitzen stellen" [And when we all stand on tiptoe]) causes a symbolic influence ("die Großen auf d' Finger haun" [To hit the big ones on the hand]), however does not touch on the existing conditions.

What is not subjected to 'Entdifferenzierung' is however the relevant level of *language*, such as explicated by the song "Das kommt uns spanisch vor" [It's all Spanish to us] (Maja Brunner). As a metaphorical way of talking about something foreign or incomprehensible, the title in the text refers to and focuses on the literal meaning, on the level of language. At the centre is not the value of Spanish as such but its synecdochal function as 'non-German': "Man hört im Radio / Kaum noch ein deutsches Wort" [You hear on the radio / Hardly a German word]. By coupling it with the title-giving phrase it is not only a find which is described but also one which is evaluated.⁴⁶ The category of simplicity can easily be given as a criterion for the evaluation: "Einfach Wurst" [Simply Sausage], "einfach Kneipe" [Simply a Bar], "einfach Tanzen" [Simply Dancing] are preferred to the 'non-simple', i.e. the complicated and unnecessarily complex ("Firlefanzen" [trumpetry]) "salami", "bodega" and "disco". In "Volksmusik", simplicity as the 'quality of the small' generally organises the positiveness and the value of facts: "Die ganz kleinen Träume sind so wunderbar" [The very simple dreams are so wonderful].⁴⁷

Language, in particular the German language, contains an intrinsic value and an added value in that it is not interpreted semiotically/medially as a *significant* which carries meaning but in that the differences on the level of the *significant* are determined as existentially meaningful and relevant ("Auch Jungen gibt's nicht mehr / Denn jeder ist ein Boy" [There are no longer any 'Jungen' (boys) because everyone's a boy]) and thus verbs become the things themselves. This is supported by the acoustic-musical level in that a reference is made to the sound of the language as a distinctive characteristic: "Weil alles englisch singt / Englisch klingt" [Because everyone sings in English / It sounds English].

The equality here does not refer to society but to the language-national community (of peoples) carried via the heart. This is additionally transcended as a form of life: by continuing to suggest that 'being alone' is per se a problematic category, or a category full of problems, and that it necessarily causes negative emotional conditions ('Alleinsein' ist 'Einsamsein' [Being alone is loneliness]), the integration into community is stylised as the element of the deliverance from all earthly things: only in de-individualisation can the individual become him- or herself: "Im Dorfkrug

⁴⁶ It should be noted here that the song as a whole is an imitation of Spanish folklore, clearly illustrated in particular by the rhythm and melody and the final Olé, and thus follows a perfidious strategy of inclusion: in order to distance oneself from foreigners, this otherness is itself used as a medium with which the ideology opposed to this otherness is expressed. The otherness serves its own negation.

⁴⁷ From: "Die ganz kleinen Träume" (Tisner Buam).

nebenan / Wo jeder so sein kann / Wie er ganz tief im Herzen wirklich ist" [In the village inn next door / Where everybody can be / What in his heart he really is].⁴⁸ The individual is thus only defined by his (or her) relationships to others and is only a person in these and *for* these relationships. The fear of being alone is thus the fear of oneself.

Some implications to the complex 'Entdifferenzierung' are given here which result from the concept 'Entdifferenzierung' itself. It is thus dogmatic, affirmative and demanding in its universal statements and approach since nothing is programmatically accepted in addition to itself. Also, it implies monitoring and discipline since no individual free spaces exist ("Jeder kennt jeden" [Everybody knows everybody else]).⁴⁹ And finally, it causes the construction of problems with the 'hostile' environment, from which it is necessary to protect itself with the aid of "Volksmusik". Thus, as an addition to the song "Das kommt mir spanisch vor" [It's all Spanish to me], the postulate of 'Entdifferenzierung' and thinking in totals is itself responsible for the problem being sung about. When a togetherness of something heterogeneous is unthinkable ("Heut' nennt sich *jeder* Jack", "'s ist *alles* anders" [Today, *everyone's* called Jack, everything's different]), the fear of change is necessarily the same as the fear of existential repression ("Nur einfach Tanzen / Das gibt's nicht mehr" [Simply dancing / It doesn't exist any more]). Thus, the fear of change becomes retrospectively plausible and legitimate in turn.

5.2. The 'Self' and the 'Alien': "Volksmusik" as an Autopoietical System and a Substitute for Politics

The superficial heterogeneity of the contributions described implies and makes clear further important structures of the "Volksmusik" system. Thus, using Carolin Reiber's explicit statements concerning contributions which digress from the 'norm' (in the show "Die volkstümliche Hitparade des ZDF" from June 1993), we can draw the following conclusions: one should first note that, seen as a whole, digressions in the shows occur often. These digressions are always indicated as such by a number of characteristics and then only allowed under certain conditions. If a woman sings about herself, then only if a 'climate of digression' has been created via clothing and music which qualifies the individual digressions and signals them to the audience.

Despite the many digressions the system is not transformed. The digressions always remain digressions and never reach the status of the 'normal' in the system since they are marked as digressions – by the characteristics and by the recruitment of 'knowledge' which the audience can be said to have and to which an affirmative

⁴⁸ From: "Im Dorfkrug nebenan" (Gaby Albrecht).

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

reference is made. "Volksmusik" is an autopoietic system that regularly reproduces and reaffirms its basic structures. The statement "Sie [also das Publikum] entscheiden, was gefällt" [You (the audience) decide what you like] – and thus what is repeated in future shows – can be done all the more easily considering the result of this decision has already been fixed, due to the steering mentioned above. The system thus remains a static one on the relevant levels. What the digressions bring about instead is an increased relevance of the 'normal': for everything for which there is a choice or an alternative is meaningful. When that which is seen as 'right', as desirable, is not only presented but is selected in an act of choice from other possibilities ("Sie entscheiden, was gefällt" [You decide what you like]), its value increases. And since the audience takes an active part in this act of choice (TED), basic democratic structures and thus democracy itself is simulated with the aid of this suggestion of free decision.

The exclusion of education, i.e. of the dynamic aspect of knowledge, which finds expression in recurring formulations such as "hab i schon immer g'wußt" [I've always known that], naturally implies that there is no profit, no growth in recognition. Thus, an examination and potential modification of the condition becomes superfluous. There is nothing which one would have to deal with, one's own point of view does not have to and cannot be rethought: learning is not an inherent part of the system.

Thus, anthropologically, a model is constructed which sets the organismic make-up of human beings to dominant, derived from their biological natural laws and fixed as a maxime for life. One can also derive from this an autonomous human biorhythm which 'compulsively' determines and regulates a model similar to the circulatory system of an always-repeating of human behaviour ("Es ist so, wie's immer schon war" [It is now as it's always been]) and thus clearly excludes all temporalisation of human and biological development.

Such anthropology is the basis for the fundamental strategy of the genre "Volksmusik": the subject (the recipient) is permanently given the suggestion that all matters pertaining to itself can be managed autonomously and not heteronomously. The directness of subjective (personal) interference in the absence of complex medial structures via third persons, or of direct access to events pertaining to the I, simulate active participation in processes which – after successful completion of therapy – feign globality but are not specified more closely. To be an initiator of communication, to experience oneself not as a medium but as an operator of a medium suggests an act of basic democratic decision. Here, democracy is medially simulated.

'Time' on all levels of the "Volksmusik" discourse is a factor which one tries to exclude. Doing without the explicit thematisation of temporal structures on the song-text level corresponds to a non-presentation of transformations. The system is always presented as a static one, never a dynamic one regularly reproducing its sub-structures. Politics in the sense of a model for a paradigm to change systematic

conditions cannot exist in the logic of this text model – it is not supposed to either because "Volksmusik" serves as a substitute.

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