Klinger, Nadja. *"ich ziehe einen kreis." Geschichten.* Berlin: Alexander Fest, 1997.

Sie hat den Blick. Die Geschichten von Nadja Klinger haben mich vom ersten Augenblick an fasziniert. Bereits die *Freitag*-Kolumnen der 1965 geborenen Ostberliner Journalistin waren mir aufgefallen, weil sie stets zu kleinen Prosastücken gerieten, in heutigen Zeitungen eher eine Seltenheit.

"Ich ziehe einen Kreis" heißt das Credo, das sich poetologisch durchaus in seinem genauen Gegenteil niederschlagen kann: Einkreisend und zugleich öffnend, in Geschichten kreisend und dabei entdeckend, daß der Spiegel voller Sprünge und das eigene Gedächtnis voller Lücken ist. Das aber ist auch schon das Höchste an Pathos, im weiteren wird Großes im Kleinen erzählt, gänzlich unpathetisch, manchmal voller Wehmut, manchmal voller Selbstironie, nie mit Bitterkeit. Nadja Klinger kann "ich" sagen, ohne Nabelschau zu halten (auch das ist in der Gegenwartsliteratur eher selten). Sie erzählt vom eigenen Vater, den Großeltern, der Katze, vom Familienleben im Dorf und in der Stadt, ohne daß es wichtig ist, ob hier "authentische" oder fiktive Literatur vorliegt. Die Autorin bürgt auf jeden Fall für eine Wahrhaftigkeit der Geschichten, die unabhängig von Fakten ist. Es ist die Erzählhaltung, die überzeugt. Hinter den Texten ist eine enorme moralische Kraft zu spüren, die sich jedoch nie im moralisierenden Gestus manifestiert, sondern in einer klaren, mitunter auch schonungslosen Sicht auf gelebte Haltungen und erlebte Situationen. Ohne Entschuldigung, aber auch ohne Verurteilung wird der kommunistische Großvater gezeichnet: in seinen Freundschaften zu den alten Genossen, in seiner Ehe, in seiner Beziehung zur Enkeltochter. Kunstvoll geht die Perspektive des nähesuchenden Kindes in die heutige über, wird große und kleine Geschichte in einen Zusammenhang gebracht. Gesellschaftliche Strukturen werden in genauen Alltagsbeobachtungen zur Diskussion gestellt, ohne daß der Autorin irgendein missionarischer Zungenschlag unterlaufen würde. Stets steht auch die Erzählende selbst in Frage, deren Unsicherheiten, Eitelkeiten, blinde Flecken nicht verborgen bleiben. Am stärksten sind die Texte, die sich der familiären Vergangenheit widmen, wogegen die Gegenwartsreflexionen vor allem am Schluß des Buches dem dadurch gesetzten ästhetischen Anspruch weniger standhalten.

Die Geburt der Tochter wie der Tod des Vaters werden auf eine bestechend genaue und originelle Weise literarisiert, die die Lesenden an keiner Stelle zu Voyeuren werden läßt. *Was* Nadja Klinger sieht, unterscheidet sich von einer ganzen Flut von Mutter-Tochter- oder Vater-Tochter-Romanen. Dabei kann ich die Originalität ihrer Sicht auf die Welt und deren literarischen Niederschlag kaum auseinanderhalten: "Ich haben den Gedanken regelmäßig fotografiert"—ist das konkret oder poetisch originell?

Sprachklischees sind selten, schöne poetische Bilder nicht: "Wir stillten das Verlangen nach uns" heißt es in bezug auf die stillende Mutter und ihr Baby. "Meine Mutter ist fast ihr ganzes Leben lang auf halber Sohle gelaufen." "Sein Gesicht war so fehlerfrei, als würde meine Mutter regelmäßig darin aufräumen." Hier muß nichts poetisiert, hochgehängt, stilisiert werden, weder das "altersschwache Haus im Prenzlauer Berg, das die Zeit nur so verschlungen hat, in die ich mich jetzt eingemietet habe," noch der Garten, "... der uns glauben ließ, wir träten ins Freie, wenn wir hinausgingen ... Gegangen aber sind wir immer nur bis zum Zaun."

Noch mehrere andere gehören zu meinen Lieblingssätzen in diesem Buch. In meinen Kreis sind Nadja Klingers Geschichten gedrungen.

Birgit Dahlke
Humboldt-Universität

Kluge, Alexander, and Heiner Müller. *Ich bin ein Landvermesser.* Berlin: Rotbuch, 1996.

Ich bin ein Landvermesser is the sixth volume of interviews with Heiner Müller published by the Rotbuch Verlag of Berlin. It is also the second in which Müller's interlocutor is his friend, the filmmaker Alexander Kluge. The the first volume, *Ich schulde der Welt einen Toten,* appeared in 1995. This book, like its predecessor, is the transcription of interviews broadcast late at night on private satellite and cable channels, predominantly on RTL and SAT 1. This unusual arrangement resulted from these channels' need to fulfil quota obligations for 'cultural hours' in their weekly schedules. *Landvermesser* presents us with ten full conversations as opposed to the six found in *Ich schulde der Welt einen Toten.* The increase in 'value' should, however, be seen in the context of Müller's long history as a professional talker.

Müller has granted many interviews over the years; the *Bibliographie Heiner Müller* (now two volumes) numbers them in three digits. We should therefore be wary of *another* collection of utterances from the late playwright. Müller's earlier discussions (roughly between 1974 and 1987) are documented in the ironically named *Gesammelte Irrtümer I und II.* In these we are witness to his ever-changing ideas about the form and nature of the theater, among other things. Informed by anecdotes and stimulated by different conversation partners, the interviews are lively and provocative. Müller himself called them performances. Over the course of the two volumes positions are taken up, contradicted, rejected and thrown into relief by others, whose views fall under similar scrutiny. The third volume, published in 1994, is a pale imitation of its two predecessors. There are certain biographical reasons for this. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Müller's dramatic output all but dried up—he lost his main stimulus,

the GDR. Instead of writing plays, he was elected President of the East Berlin *Akademie der Künste* for a short while until its dissolution, directed plays and Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde*, and filled various senior positions in the *Berliner Ensemble*. He also continued to give interviews. In *Gesammelte Irrtümer III* the focus moves away from the theater into the contemporary situation of Germany, and more pompously, of the world. The mood changes from a playful and often comic appraisal of his works and the theater in which they are staged to an elder statesman's pontifications on things he does not really understand. *Ich bin ein Landvermesser* more often than not falls into this latter mode.

Müller and Kluge discuss the position of Stalin in Russia's collective unconscious, the all-encompassing and all-devouring mechanisms of democracy, the experience of the First World War, and the mind-altering qualities of LSD. There is also, on a more positive note, lengthy exploration of the role and function of myth (especially of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), and Müller's hopes for a new form of epic theater. The problem is that even when Müller *is* talking about his craft and the types of theater that appeal to him, the opinions are easily found in material published prior to this volume. Anecdotes are wheeled out for another airing, formulations sound hackneyed. There are, of course, moments of originality and sparks of new ideas. Sadly for the reader, they are few, far between and underdeveloped by Kluge.

Kluge is not the ideal interlocutor for Müller. Although he is no sycophant, he is certainly not a combatant who struggles with and challenges Müller's pronouncements. His gentle tone fails to keep his partner in check and allows the occasional excursus to ramble on into tiresome conjecture. He does, however, give an interesting account of the interviews in the foreword to the book, and his organization of the material is refreshing. Rather than following a simple chronology by starting with the first interview and finishing with the last, Kluge applies a montage technique. We start with an interview given while Müller is convalescing after an operation to remove his cancerous gullet. We then move backwards and forwards in time until we reach an interview that took place shortly before Müller's death at the end of 1995. The achronological juxtaposition of the conversations creates an uncertainty in the reader that is most welcome in the book. Müller's views on certain areas, including, quite pointedly, his own mortality, are temporally disturbed. They confront and question each other, and provide contrasts that a strict chronology would ignore.

All the same, passing biographical interest is a high price to pay for a book that all too often restates old views. The alluring title, which draws on K., the central character in Kafka's *Das Schloß*, seems little more than a marketing ploy—it is neither explored nor remarked upon by either speaker after its brief appearance at the end of the second dialogue. That the volume appeared shortly after Müller's death also seems to point to a triumph of commercialism over content.

David Barnett
Keble College, Oxford University

Königsdorf, Helga. *Die Entsorgung der Großmutter. Roman.* Berlin: Aufbau, 1997. 120 pp.

Since the upheaval of 1989, Helga Königsdorf has been one of the most consistently productive voices from the former GDR. In nearly annual volumes—of essays and speeches, prose fiction, poetry, and *Protokolle*—she has alternately provided a seismographic record of her fellow Eastern Germans' attitudes during a period of enormous social upheaval and offered a series of highly self-reflective takes on her own responses to the shifts in social and discursive conditions around her.

With her latest contribution, Königsdorf seems to have pried herself loose from that trauma, shifting her focus to a new terrain. Whereas her latest volume of essays has been criticized for dwelling too easily in a dualistic, "ostalgic" view of German affairs (see, for example, Brigitte Rossbacher's review of *Über die unverzügliche Rettung der Welt* in *GDR Bulletin*, vol. 23), this short novel, *Die Entsorgung der Großmutter*, contains neither explicit reference to, nor thematization of, East-West relations. The boundaries of this new area of attention are marked in the text's sole, oblique reference to the division and unification of Germany. As Herr Schrader, father and sole wage earner in his family, makes his way into his house and up the stairs in the opening section of the novel, he is preoccupied: "Auch jetzt, während er dem Klavierspiel seiner Tochter lauscht, denkt er, daß es unsichtbare Grenzen gibt, die weniger durchlässig sind, als es alle Wälle und Mauern je sein könnten" (17).

The invisible borders referred to here are those of social status; the anxiety is created by a clash of property relations and family relations, for the Schraders—a "perfect" nuclear family—owe their luxurious domicile to Frau Schrader's mother, in whose house they live. When the grandmother becomes a burden, through the onset of old age (and presumably Alzheimer's), the family is faced with a dilemma: the cost of placing her in an appropriate care facility would necessitate selling the house and moving down the social ladder to a more modest apartment. The Schraders invent their own solution, one that is unveiled incrementally to the increasingly unsettled reader as the domestic *Vorstadt-Garten-Idylle* unravels to reveal the core unhappiness of each family member. At the base of their desperation and their unhappiness lurks the parents' shame of having disposed of the grandmother like an unwanted pet,