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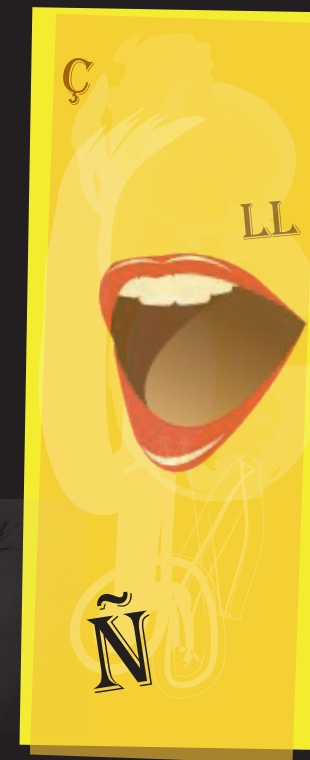
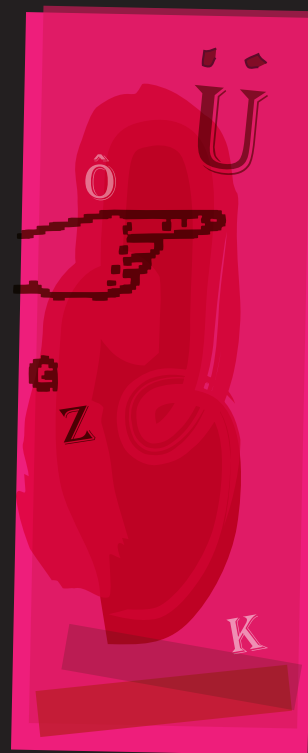
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政治大學歐洲文化研究中心

當代歐洲文學、文化暨語言發展新趨勢

New Trends in Contemporary European Literature, Culture and Language



張台麟 主編 Edited by Tai-Lin Chang

國立政治大學外語學院歐洲文化研究中心

二〇一一年六月

當代歐洲文學、
文化暨語言發展新趨勢

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Culture and Language*

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主編序

二十一世紀的歐洲在全球化的漸進影響下，呈現其多樣性與豐富性，當代歐洲文學、文化暨語言發展將邁入一個嶄新的里程碑。就內部整合而言，如何運用語言政策加強人民的國家意識以及如何善用文學創作與創新以符合現代之趨勢；就外部的全球角色而言，如何在全球化的浪潮之下有效提升文化在國際上的影響力以及如何推動交流以融入不同文化間的特色。展望未來，我們對當代歐洲文學、文化暨語言發展抱持樂觀的期待。

本專書之研究重點在於，探索當代歐洲文學、文化與語言的研究趨勢，圖以宏觀的角度展開相關領域的研究。書中除了針對法語文學創作和法國政黨政策進行探討，同時也透過德國樂團研究德國的流行文化以及就西班牙的語言政策與西班牙語學生的閱讀學習做深入的分析。這幾篇論文不但具有學術與實用價值，同時對國內相較缺乏的歐洲資訊而言可說提供了較新且重要的參考依據，對提升國內的歐洲研究有很大的貢獻。

書中主要是集結 2010 年 5 月 15 日於政大外語學院歐洲語文學程舉

辦之「當代歐洲文學、文化暨語言發展新趨勢」國際學術研討會的 10 篇發表文章，會後經由撰寫人依據評論人和與談人之意見修改，再送交匿名審稿人審查，通過了嚴謹的學術審查過程後始進而收錄於本專書中。同時感謝美國學者 Samuel Amell 出席演講，論文亦將收錄於專書中。

此次出版除了要感謝國科會和政治大學近年來提供經費支援之外，感謝本校歐洲文化研究中心以及歐洲語文學程對研討會及專書出版的大力持，也要感謝阮若缺老師、楊瓊瑩老師、古孟玄老師、姚紹基老師、藍文君老師、舒卡夏老師以及蔡莫妮老師在研討會過程中的協助。此外，感謝昭儀助教、崧筌和亭毓在籌備研討會中的辛勞以及在行政與出版上的付出與用心。最後，還要特別感謝參與此次專書出版過程中的各方學者及審查委員，因有各位的協助與費心使得本書得以順利付梓。

專書主編 張台麟謹序

2011 年 5 月於政大研究室

推 薦 序

這部專書所集結的議題十分豐富和廣泛，包括語言、文學、文化及後殖民時代現象的探析，視野不侷限於德、法、西，甚至擴展到歐洲、非洲其他國家。總共是 14 篇論文送審，10 篇通過審查，藉此機會要特別感謝幕後辛苦工作的同仁，以及替我們匿名審查、學有專精的委員們，唯有大家彼此的合作，本書才得以問世。當然，還要感謝國科會和政治大學研發處秉持鼓勵學術的熱忱，予以支持，本專書始得以順利印行，以饗學術界。

由於編輯委員均於課暇幫忙校稿，若其中不慎尚有誤繆不週之處，敬請前輩先進不吝指教，必予以改善。

國立政治大學歐洲語文學程法文教授兼外語學院副院長

阮若缺

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「東京飯店」，德國流行文化中底層的發聲？

蔡莫妮*

摘要

德國男孩樂團「東京飯店」，可視為一個值得研究的題目，我曾在「『東京飯店』，翻譯德國流行文化」文中闡述歌手 Bill Kaulitz 造型呈現日本現代漫畫圖象加上一種新的混合性別的現象。本文中，我們要繼續分析「東京飯店」，進一步解讀他們一首最有名的歌曲“Schrei”（吶喊）的歌詞，作為典型文本，來顯示一般社會大眾的心理問題。同時，本文將研究樂團中另一個歌手，Tom Kaulitz 的圖像，從而突顯出德國當代文化研究轉向（後）殖民問題的一個新趨勢。事實上，在 2008 年 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak 的經典作品「賤民能否發言？」首度翻譯成德語並在奧地利出版，表示在德語國度裡，已經調整當代文化研究的方向來研究殖民論述和後殖民理論。從英國文化理論出發，我們要討論（後）殖民效果所產生的一種新的混合圖像對流行音樂愛好者的影響，如何顯現在不同民族上。應用 Homi K. Bhabha 所言「渴望認同一個創新、可辨識的他人」的模仿概念，本人認為，我們可以解讀 Tom Kaulitz 圖像是一種試圖改變刻板權力印記的反抗象徵。

關鍵詞：吶喊、抗議、圖象、反抗象徵、種族

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Tokio Hotel. Articulation of the Subaltern in German Pop Culture?

Monika Leipelt-Tsai*

Abstract

I have already shown in my essay “Tokio Hotel. Translating German Pop Culture”¹ that the phenomenon of the German pop music group “Tokio Hotel” can be considered an interesting topic, regarding the singer Bill Kaulitz in relation to manga imagery and a new hybrid form of gender. In November of 2009, the young band again won an award, but this time not for “best new artist”, but the MTV Europe Music Award for “best group”.² Following up, I would like to continue the analysis of Tokio Hotel, extending it to a close reading of the lyrics of one of their most famous songs, “Schrei” (scream), as an exemplary text that shows a general psychosocial issue.

At the same time, this essay intends to examine the imagery from another member of the music band, Tom Kaulitz, in order to highlight one of the new trends in contemporary German cultural studies, the turn to postcolonial issues. The fact that in 2008 the first German translation of

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¹ Cf Leipelt-Tsai, Monika. Tokio Hotel. Translating German Pop Culture (「東京大飯店」. 翻譯德國流行文化). 廣譯. 語言, 文學, 與文化翻譯 (Guang Yi. Lingual, Literary, and Cultural Translation). 國立政治大學外語學院翻譯中心之廣譯期刊 (Translation Center, College of Foreign Languages and Literatures, National Chengchi University), No. 3, January 2010. 101-128.

² See <<http://www.mtv.co.uk/events/emas/news/163380-emas-tokio-hotel-win-best-group-win>>, 1 March 2010.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's classic "Can the subaltern speak?" was finally printed in Austria, shows that colonial discourse and postcolonial theory belong to the reorientation of contemporary cultural studies in the German-speaking world. Starting from British cultural theory, I would like to discuss the postcolonial effects on pop music fans of a new hybrid image concerning race. Employing Homi K. Bhabha's concept of mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other", I argue that one can read the imagery of Tom Kaulitz as resistance of a symbolic nature that tries to rewrite the inscriptions of power.

Keywords: scream, claim, imagery, symbolic resistance, race

Tokio Hotel. Articulation of the Subaltern in German Pop Culture?

Monika Leipelt-Tsai

Orientation

Let us first take a short look at the German speaking part of the field of humanities research, especially literary and cultural studies. Compared to the British cultural studies, which it usually observes, the German field of research in general seems to be more passive and reluctant to change. Still, today its structure seems more open and mobile than before. Its focal point has mainly moved from the object of investigation to the category of analysis. After the dominance of the linguistic turn, with its concentration on the philosophy of language and the symbolic which started in the 1980s, literary studies in Germany were mostly classified based on theoretical backgrounds, such as the so-called structuralism, poststructuralism, hermeneutics, and others. They also picked up influences of other fields, such as gender studies and media research. In consequence of the cultural turn, German literary studies widened and internationalized, and found new ground in cultural studies, opening interdisciplinary and intercultural horizons. It even started to slightly open the methodological border of the old binary opposition of the humanities and the experimental sciences, i.e. the so-called “natural sciences” (in German “Geisteswissenschaften” and “Naturwissenschaften”). Formerly, the sciences used to be seen as a challenge that is future-oriented and the

humanities as a response that draws on relations to the past. This traditional separation has now started to loosen, and the humanities not only are no longer adversarial to modernization, but are needed to enable modernization and refamiliarization with estranged worlds of origin.³

In approximately the last ten years, German literary and cultural studies have turned and shifted in many directions, splitting theories in the process. Their dynamic originates from different impulses which, unlike former turns, do not force methodical definition but more often contextualization, and focus on topics and refiguration of genres. In 2009, Bachmann-Medick⁴ described the following turns (which are here just accompanied by a fragmentary key point; for a compendium see her book): the interpretive turn (e.g. widening the concept of text and culture into historical and anthropological dimensions), the performative turn (e.g. considering the dimension of practices, influenced by gender studies), the reflexive turn (e.g. through questioning the possibility of representation), the postcolonial turn (e.g. reading the colonial discourse and its impact on power relations), the translational turn (e.g. considering transformation and the impossibility of translation), the spatial turn (e.g. considering territorial space, borders and geopolitical perspectives), and the iconic turn (i.e. the reading of visual texts and media). These new orientations in the field of German cultural studies bring a return of the former repressed. Highlighting one of the new trends in contemporary German cultural studies, I would like to use postcolonial

³ I refer here to Böhme, Hartmut/Peter Matussek/Lothar Müller. Orientierung Kulturwissenschaft. Was sie kann, was sie will. 3rd ed. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 2007. 21.

⁴ Bachmann-Medick, Doris. Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften. 3rd, new revised ed. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch, 2009.

discourse as an example which tries to put the whole of Western culture fundamentally into question, and raises sensitive political and social issues. Acting as a social and epistemological category of analysis, it questions the traditional boundaries and uncovers the output not only of colonial but culture-specific systems of power relations and hierarchies, as we will see in the following.

Blurred lines

This essay analyzes the phenomenon of the band “Tokio Hotel” and their adolescent fans, and the topic of youth’s style construction, while at the same time linking it to the discourse of postcolonialism. In this essay I refer methodologically to culture as text⁵ (Bachmann-Medick 2009, 10) and interpret it as a constellation of texts, which is surpassing the written or spoken word and is readable in images, rituals, theater, and gestures. We will focus especially on the reading of the visual style concerning race and its impact as well as offering a preliminary close reading of exemplary parts of the lyrics of one of their songs.

The mystery of the impact of music on humans seems to be linked to a certain connectivity with community and social bonding. To elicit how and why a particular audience is drawn to the music and videos of a certain German pop music group, we first take a brief look into the theoretical concept of “subculture”. In the context of British cultural theory, notably

⁵ Bachmann-Medick, Doris. Einleitung. Ed. by Doris Bachmann-Medick. Kultur als Text. Die anthropologische Wende in der Literaturwissenschaft. 2nd ed. Tübingen: UTB, 2004. 7-66.

research conducted by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, the term ‘subculture’ was used to refer to broader formations that arose at the intersection between what was thought to be a subordinate class culture and a more dominant culture, while maintaining a strong sense of autonomy (cf. Cagle 24 et seq.).⁶ The autonomy of subcultures seemed to be manifested through a subcultural style that expresses the opposition between youth and parent culture as well as the subculture’s symbolic contention with the dominant culture (cf. *ibid.*). In comparison to the parent culture, subordinate youth “win cultural space” (*ibid.*, 26) through the appropriation of fashion, objects, music and linguistic terms or expressions. Accordingly, even if youth subcultures do not usually match or circumvent hegemony, they can use symbolic strategies which are related to their identity to claim their particular rights. Today, however, the focus has shifted, and fluid class lines do not allow for a distinction between social classes, which were previously thought to be separable (cf. McRobbie 152; 159).⁷ Our analysis will focus on the process of style construction, because it shows a momentum of resistance, or a challenge to a more dominant cultural order through cultural practice, hereby rearranging or reorganizing the former inscribed meaning. From our point of view, musical taste and fashion can become a form of opposition against something, but it does not necessarily have anything to do with the determination of social class or class consciousness.

⁶ Cagle, Van M. Reconstructing Pop/subculture. Art, Rock, and Andy Warhol. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications, 1995.

⁷ McRobbie, Angela. Postmodernism and Popular Culture. London: Routledge, 1994.

Nowadays, most of the young people who do not belong to the so-called Third World seem less constrained by their socio-economic background. They are able to spend money on lifestyle items such as fashion, CDs, and DVDs. When we look at modern youth cultural forms in different parts of the world today, we often find a reference to consumer culture. The line between an alleged ‘authentic’ youth culture and the consumer culture is blurred as well. Formerly, British cultural theorists focused mainly on male youth subcultures; we shift the focus and look at a part of youth subculture that for the most part consists of female youth in Western countries. To put more emphasis on openness, we describe formations of youth who are not thought of as being as secluded or as being as isolated as thought of subcultures in earlier days. We have to bear in mind that the majority of young people today are using the Internet and/or other new media. The interconnection and interaction between youth subcultures, and the consumption of particular media by young people result in the cultural translation and interweaving of cultural resources in different countries and different areas of cultural life.

Scream

In light of this characterization of the cultural formation called youth subculture, we will first consider the phenomenon of the band Tokio Hotel by taking a close look at the lyrics of one of their most famous songs. The song “Schrei”⁸ from their debut album of the same name – which sold more than

⁸ A version of the song can be heard on “Tokio Hotel. Schrei.” Universal Music GmbH, EU: 2005.

half a million copies worldwide – can be read as an example *par excellence*. Interestingly, the band uses a new formula to explore one of the most current questions. “Schrei” suggests the word ‘scream’ in English. The song seems deliberately designed for easy listening and enjoyment, though only from a very young audience’s perspective. Whereas to the under-twenties Tokio Hotel seems to some extent ‘authentic’ and exciting, the band’s music often does not suit the taste of an older audience. In a simplistic dichotomy, they sometimes accuse the band as only being ‘a marketing strategy’.⁹ This thinking uses an old model of an alleged ‘authentic’ artist in his singularity who is related to his art through his identity, as opposed to someone who is non-authentic and only exploiting the fans to make a profit without any personal connections. Instead, we would remind of the famous (post)structuralist Roland Barthes’ thought that all texts have a disjointed nature like textile fabric, and are drawn from innumerable quotations, rather than from one individual experience (cf. 25f.).¹⁰ Like all products of culture, it can be situated in a discursive formation.

The style of “Schrei” displays little diversity, but the song has a straightforward musical arrangement and a strong beat. The sound of this particular song recalls the punk rock roots of Tokio Hotel, who called themselves “Devilish” in their early days. In addition to the singing, the lead singer sometimes uses a megaphone in performance to enhance his voice and

⁹ As one of many examples, see the article “tokio hotel: auseinandersetzung mit einem phänomen“ of the weblog “popkulturjunkie”. The “popkulturjunkie” writes “Tokio Hotel ist letztlich nichts anderes als ein perfekt designtes Plastik-Produkt für eine spitze, aber klare Zielgruppe.” < <http://www.popkulturjunkie.de/wp/?p=1509>>, 31 Jan. 2010.

¹⁰ Cf. chapter XII in Barthes, Roland. *S/Z*. 2nd ed. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1994.

to hoot, emphasizing volume. At first it seems difficult for unaccustomed ears to tolerate the singer's voice and the hooting of the megaphone, which may be another reason why the band strongly polarizes the audiences. For the fans of Tokio Hotel, however, the effect is a kind of ecstasy, and sometimes they even faint.

The lyrics of the song “Schrei” unfold:¹¹ “Du stehst auf und kriegst gesagt wohin du gehen sollst./Wenn du da bist, hörst du auch noch was du denken sollst./Danke, das war mal wieder echt ‘n geiler Tag./Du sagst nichts, und keiner fragt dich: Sag mal, willst du das?/Nein, nein, nein ...!”. The lyrics confirm what the sound suggested: that the song is not about romantic fantasies. The first sentence “Du stehst auf und kriegst gesagt wohin du gehen sollst” can be read as ‘You get up and you are told where to go’. In considering this translation, we should remember that every translation as such is just a kind of effigy, and will never catch the ‘true’ meaning – if there is any, since every single word is metaphorical. The language in this first line is more colloquial than lyrical, as the words “du kriegst gesagt” (which connotes ‘you are told’) show. The “du” form of address is the second person singular, used in German by family members and students among themselves, and does not tell about its gender. The lyrics seem to describe a youth who gets up in the morning and whose parents tell him or her to go to school. The second line, “Wenn du da bist, hörst du auch noch was du denken sollst” can be translated as ‘When you get there, everybody is also telling you what to think’. This does not say where the person went, but in this context it could

¹¹ See e.g. <<http://www.tokiohotellyrics.info/>>, 31 July 2009.

be interpreted as arrival of the student at school, where the teachers determine all actions, and the students have to follow. The third line says “Danke, das war mal wieder echt ‘n geiler Tag.”, and could be translated as ‘Thank you, it has been another real awesome day.’ With subtle irony in the politeness of the acknowledgment, this sentence may describe the assumed student’s thoughts after coming home from an ordinary day at school. In the context of the first two lines, this rhetoric suggests the opposite of what it states. The last line of this verse “Du sagst nichts, und keiner fragt dich: Sag mal, willst du das?“ could be translated as ‘You don’t say anything, and no one is asking you: Tell me, do you want this?’. We could read this as a negative assessment of the student, that nobody in his/her surroundings – neither family nor friends – is interested in his/her opinion, and that (s)he has no power over his/her own life. After the first verse, the singer repeats the word “Nein!” (‘no’) several times, which may signal the negation of the situation described in the previous verse. Then the refrain of the song is repeated twice: “Schrei! - Bis du du selbst bist./Schrei! - Und wenn es das Letzte ist./Schrei! - Auch wenn es weh tut./Schrei so laut du kannst./Schrei ...!“ In English, this means ‘Scream! - Until you are yourself./Scream! - And even if it is the last./Scream! - Even when it hurts./Scream as loud as you can!/Scream ...!’ Repeatedly, the words of the refrain call on the audience to scream. The words “Schrei! - Bis du du selbst bist” suggest, that the addressed “du” could form a self identity by means of screaming, supposing that a oneness of the subject could be possible. The lines “Schrei! - Und wenn es das Letzte ist./Schrei! - Auch wenn es weh tut” can be interpreted as a call for public protest in the form of screaming, even if it is the last thing on earth the addressed could do, and

even if it is painful. The German words “es tut weh” mean ‘it hurts’, and do not say exactly to whom the screaming will be painful; the audience has to decide if it means ‘painful to the one who screams’, or ‘painful to the ones who have to hear the screaming’, or both. Considering that the context is about only one addressee, i.e. the “du”, and considering the abundance of imperatives, the first interpretation is preferred. The last sentence of the refrain, “Schrei so laut du kannst” [‘Scream as loud as you can!’], reconfirms the refrain as a whole, and emphasizes the audibility of the addressee.

The lyrics of the song seem easily intelligible, and their language may seem a little prosaic, but we need to consider that the target group is teenagers. The adults, represented in the lyrics by teachers and family members, are shown as domineering, egoistical and uninterested in the feelings or wishes of the young. It demonstrates a reason for the unhappy life of the pupils and the selfishness and inability of the adults to handle the powers given by society. By contrast, the youth described in the lyrics seem reasonable, self-sacrificing, and able to endure pain. The song “Schrei” calls for a protest against apparently despotic adults, and a protest against something that seems to be a firm cultural formation. The song text constructs the typical life experience of youth all over the world. It seems especially concerned with the topic of anger that is due to the many restrictions and imposed boundaries. The pain involved, “Auch wenn es weh tut” [‘Even when it hurts.’], evokes self-affirmation, and also reflects the process of the self trying to become a oneness, which is ultimately inaccessible, in the pain of the individuation.

A close analysis of this extract from the lyrics of the song “Schrei”, makes it clear that the song’s text unfolds the issue of expression. Even if it gives textual references to other texts in discourse, an expression seem to be a more or less actively produced interiority of meaning, and in contrast to a suddenly appearing idea it seems to stay under a certain kind of influence of the subject who produces it. The question of expression is important since in the process of puberty the identity of the youth its especially unsteady, and adolescent youth have to find ways to differentiate themselves from grown-ups, especially from their (psychological) parents.

Adolescent youth are often less able than adults to argue their own cause or talk explicitly about their intentions and wishes. The song “Schrei” addresses this problem and appeals to the youth. Unlike most adults, the band understands – or pretends to understand – their inner thoughts and feelings. The fans imagine themselves as the addressed “du”, and the band as their accomplices. In this way, the fans of Tokio Hotel find an expression they are searching for, an expression that seems to be one of their own identity. The response of the fans appears to be an illusionary false recognition, but as the lyrics and the singer’s screaming vocals point out, the only remedy against this situation of powerlessness seems to be a screaming protest.

For the fans, it is also fun to scream in companionship with other girls, especially at a live concert, when asked by the singer Bill Kaulitz to scream in competition with others while singing the song “Schrei”.¹² Young people of different cultures can respond, or may we say ‘resonate’ to that.

¹² This can be seen on “Tokio Hotel Schrei – Live.” Universal Music GmbH, DVD Video. EU: 2006.

Metaphorically speaking, by yelling and screaming, the young fans perform as a sounding board for this pop music band. We can attach significance to this form of interaction as a central way in which the fans get in touch with the band. This shows less a critical reflection of the lyrics, but rather a path out of parents's and teachers's kind of intellectual reception. Since Elvis Presley first appeared on television, young female fans all over the world have screamed in frenzy at pop stars. Screaming offers a strategy of participation which encourages self-expression. Screaming, together with the cultural practice of singing along has participatory dynamics and seems to offer a "mode of empowerment" (McRobbie 174). The youth of different nations can connect to the feeling of frustration over the powerlessness they have to endure, and share it collectively in a temporary differentiated unity in the mystery of music. While joining the band and singing together, they reinforce and try to escape their position in society temporarily at the same time. Through the exaggerated, taboo-breaking screaming the fans express their desire for more, i.e. more pleasure and more power. It becomes clear to us that the meaning of the language is not the most important consideration¹³ in this special field of popular music. The fans are not obliged to understand the lyrics intellectually, as we already know from looking at British, Irish and US pop music which is sold all over the world, even in non-English speaking countries. Screaming in this context is of the foremost importance, because as social interaction it produces a temporary identity for the youth.

¹³ The question of the content of the lyrics is often made by-and-by, when the youth has already become a pop fan.

As a dominated group that has less potential opportunities to exercise influence and power at school and at home, teenagers in general can be seen as a kind of subordinated group. Social hierarchy is imposed upon children as well as youth in modern societies, especially in the school context, where they have little power. They are dominated by patronizing parents and teachers and also dominate one another. In many cases, the social norms concerning female youth in Western societies are more oppressive than for male youth (for instance modesty, self-effacement, and reservation in behavior in- and outside of their homes). Even when they are considered emancipated, female youth are often more forced to adjust socially, e.g. restricted in their ability to be loud or to show off, or to get together in crowds to do inhibited things. Female youth's confrontations may not be explicitly open in questioning the hierarchy, but they can resist the dominant culture symbolically, and seek to negotiate new terms with it. Seemingly uncommitted to the parent culture, subcultural experience gives them space outside of the conventional. Attending a Tokio Hotel concert and participating in it seems to be a chance to temporarily forget their own powerlessness by achieving a feeling of community.

In the time of adolescence, tensions and contradictions are growing, especially in the process of separation and detachment from parents. To find a new method of relations to society and to themselves, the youth need to try to construct a new formation of identity, which may be better described as a process, as there is no sound identity even in adulthood. Confused and frustrated about adolescent and puberty issues, the cultural production outside the regulated space of home and school seems to provide female youth a way

of “achieving social subjectivity and therefore identity through the subcultural experience” (McRobbie 161). However, since there is no authenticity as such but fragmentary parts of pluralistic identities, we would not emphasize authenticity as a precondition for acquiring subjectivity and identity, as McRobbie claims (ibid. 174).

Speaking (without speaking)

Why a scream? In general, one can say that only the unprivileged and disadvantaged scream. At this point, we can link our discussion of young pop music fans with the postcolonial discourse, where the important concept of the “subaltern” is widely debated. The word “subaltern” is derived from Marxist Antonio Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks* (Said VI),¹⁴ where it is used in place of the term “proletariat” due to the prison censorship in fascist Italy. The meaning of this transcription soon strode beyond that of Marxist proletariat (cf. Steyerl 9),¹⁵ meaning a group that was not organized, and scattered and not able to be politically represented. While rewriting the colonial history of India, Indian national historiographers use the term to depict not only peasants and workers but the majority of the population, who, despite their numbers, were excluded from politically representing themselves. With theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the term “subaltern”

¹⁴ Said, Edward W. Foreword. Selected Subaltern Studies. Ed. by Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. New York: Oxford Univ. Pres., 1988. V-X.

¹⁵ Steyerl, Hito. Die Gegenwart der Subalternen. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Can the subaltern speak? Postkolonialität und subalterne Artikulation. Mit einer Einleitung von Hito Steyerl. Wien: Turia + Kant, 2008. 7-16.

moved from the historical-political level to the level of discourse criticism. In her key paper “Can the Subaltern speak?”¹⁶ Spivak analyzes the circumstances surrounding the suicide of a young Bengali woman that indicates a failed attempt at self-representation. Spivak examines the position of Indian women and their twofold suppression, as victims between British imperialism (who read the widow sacrifice as evidence of barbaric Indian backwardness) and Indian local patriarchy (who constructed the widows as guardians of tradition). The order of discourse does not allow these women to make their voices heard, and Spivak concluded that “the subaltern cannot speak” (ibid. 104). She negates any autonomy of the subaltern group that consists of the majority of the population, but elaborates “If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (ibid. 82f.). She claims an epistemic violence that constitutes the order of discourse: even if women speak, the order of discourse prevents the articulation of certain circumstances. As Spivak links the term “subaltern” to the question of representation, she argues against any positivism that the subject is not a oneness or an undivided individual (ibid. 69f.). This means, that for the subaltern group there is no representation or speaking-for through an advocate (i.e. one theorizing intellectual, or a political party) possible.

When we employ Spivak’s concept of the subaltern, and transfer it to the discourse of music, we may ask: can we read the scream as an articulation of

¹⁶ Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *Can the Subaltern speak?* Williams, Patrick and Laura Chrisman. *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory. A Reader*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. 66-111.

the subaltern? At first, it seems that Spivak's political philosophy does not apply to the case of the Tokio Hotel fans. On the surface, it seems that youth are generally able to talk, and by just attending a concert or listening to music they show no real activism. Since Spivak reads the silent suicide of a young woman as "subaltern rewriting [of] the social text of *sati*-suicide" (ibid. 104), we also may have to look closer at the screaming of the Tokio Hotel pop fans. Like the suicide of the young Indian female, a scream is not a narrative in itself. It also does not "speak" or tell us a story. If actions speak louder than words, however, we may consider whether the scream speaks to us.

A scream as such does not convey meaning or sense, much less is it a linguistic exchange between sender and receiver. Even if it is nonverbal and does not describe anything, it seems to be a kind of communication. The scream transmits a kind of movement, and this performative element seems to try to approach the Other. Its significance lies not in the content, but in the form of movement. Outside of the hegemonic power structure of grown-ups, the pop music fans of Tokio Hotel could have been speechless in an eloquent silence which only could be read in a space "between the lines". Instead, in the scream they act without committing themselves to anything. In this way, we can read the female youth of Western countries as a marginalized group that stands in a space of difference, and reaches out to the Other without forcibly inscribing any attribute or fixations. (We could call this mode a writing of the 'symbolic feminine'.) While the collective scream does not achieve a dialogic level of utterance, it can be read as a cultural practice. Even when the scream of the fans of Tokio Hotel stays unheard and is dispatched as entertainment for minors, the scream seems a subversive

contesting of their situation of inequality. The fans's identity seems to be one that is only defined by their difference, just like the 'true' subaltern group Spivak is writing about. They stand outside of the hegemonic discourse and are not able to use it. If we try to read their resistance, we have to search on a nonverbal level. The screaming in the fan community provides a space for adolescents to participate and articulate their anger and frustration about being socially and economically disenfranchised in a special way. Screaming may be considered a kind of (un)conscious politics. It can be read as a symbolic articulation of a subaltern group which in a new way continues the struggle for a firmer identity (as we have seen while discussing the question of expression). This cultural practice demonstrates a hierarchy that can be found not only in the context of colonial production, but also in the social context of Western societies of today, and not only in terms of class and caste, but also in terms of age and gender. Through asking the question of the subaltern, we show an (im)possibility to be heard, because in this exemplary reading the position of adolescent Western women seems to be – similar to that in the Lacanian psychoanalytical theory – outside of the symbolic order but elsewhere. In conclusion, we may say that the silenced subaltern are able to speak, but they are speaking in a different way.

In screaming, the fans of Tokio Hotel show resistance through a symbolic strategy. How does this strategy operate? A scream includes a social as well as a linguistic act that claims something. The psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan argues (cf. 126 et seq.)¹⁷ that a scream demands not only the

¹⁷ Lacan, Jacques. Schriften II. Weinheim: Quadriga, 1986.

satisfaction of needs (for example the need to be fed) which it actually articulates, but also shows already a symptom of the Symbolic in a claim, which is the never fully adjustable claim for love. According to Lacan, the scream splits up, and targets not only tangible goods but the attendance of the Other (for example a parent). He implies a privilege of the Other, as the power to refuse or to satisfy the needs of the one who screams. In this way, according to Lacan, the Other's attendance transcends any activity. The Other's privilege as a surrogate for the cause of desire consists in the paradoxical gift of love as something that the Other does not have but gives. The claim of the one who screams points to the unconscious desire of any human being. In other words, the claim is bound to an identificatory, idealizing function of the attendance of the Other, which is used to envision the identity or presence of the one who screams. Drawing on Lacanian theory, we can read the scream accordingly as a cry for satisfaction (for example, for more rights and autonomous space), and a claim for love with an insatiable desire that cannot be met. The scream seems to be a kind of approach to the Other. This approach shows a gesture of touching the Other, connected with an appeal (cf. Leipelt-Tsai 65 et seq.).¹⁸ This appeal only seems to dissolve the separation to the Other in a kind of ecstasy. Concentrated into a scream, this kind of approach tries to enforce the claim for love and attention. The fans identify and mirror themselves in the picture of an ideal (like one of the band members). Through screaming, they try to assume control over the Other, to become a subject with imaginary power. The screaming as *mise en*

¹⁸ Leipelt-Tsai, Monika. Aggression in lyrischer Dichtung. Georg Heym – Gottfried Benn – Else Lasker-Schüler. Diss. U Hamburg, 2007. Bielefeld: transcript, 2008.

scene seems to be for an audience that is actually not attending the music show, that is the adults. Powerless and powerful, as well as active and passive at the same time, the screaming represents the desire of the fans to be more than they are, and to gain the recognition of the Other without the force of inscribing. The Song “Schrei” shows not only the question of self-perception of female youth in particular, but a psychosocial issue of human beings in general.

The phenomenon of Tokio Hotel seems an empowering alternative to the experiences at school with condescending teachers, or parents and family members, which are usually disciplinary and limiting. We can say that youth of many countries may enact new forms of resistance at a “micrological level through everyday practices and choices about how to live” (McRobbie 162), and also through their choices of music and style. This regards mostly female youth as described by McRobbie, but also some male youth of different nationalities. We see resistance here not in terms of class struggle, but as a symbolic way of expressing and negotiating their struggle against stricter parental control (for instance the regulation of leisure time). Compared to previous generations, most of the youth in Western cultures¹⁹ today have a bigger space available to create a personal and autonomous area, but, they still have to find alternative strategies against societal strategies that symbolize a future general subordination in their life.

British cultural theorists assumed that the youths’ aesthetic is a dominated aesthetic in which youth are constantly obliged to define

¹⁹ This may except female youth in Muslim cultures. This issue has to be left to an examination in another analysis.

themselves in terms of the dominant aesthetics. However, we should also take into consideration that the interplay between dominant and subordinated culture is not unilateral. We could go further and question the prefix “sub-” of the term ‘subculture’, as it is not necessarily inferior to the more dominant cultures, and its space should not be placed hierarchically under the more dominant cultures. Youth subculture always changes under constraint to differentiate itself from the more dominant cultures, and therefore indirectly codetermines the future dominant culture, which has been affected through the subculture.



Tom Kaulitz <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tokio_Hotel>, 27 June 2009 (detail of “Tom Kaulitz of Tokio Hotel performing in Sursee, Switzerland“, 2006 by Pascal Parvex <http://www.parvexfilm.com>. This photo was released into GFDL – i.e. GNU General Public Licence – by its author and copyright owner, Pascal Parvex)

Ethnic style?

The essay “Tokio Hotel. Translating German Pop Culture” discussed one example of visual style construction of the band Tokio Hotel as an atypical appearance of most current Western popular musicians, and illustrated the symbolic significance of singer Bill Kaulitz’s appearance, with his Gothic clothes and eye make-up, and his translation of the imagery of “manga” into Western pop rock music style. In the symbolic position of a *bishōnen*, his gender is not decipherable and makes room for a new mode of a playful and self-confident femininity. At first sight, the other Tokio Hotel band members may appear to be androgynous because of the looks of their lead vocalist. Under the surface, however, by being an all-boy band and therefore not including female members, some of them also sport a sense of traditional machismo. Sitting in the back and framing the other three band members, the Tokio Hotel drummer Gustav Schäfer usually bares the upper part of his body to show off his muscles. He has short hair, wears common boxer shorts and seems to maintain a trope of simple masculinity that is not outside the prototypical heterosexual defined rock music genre. Wearing long straight hair that falls into his face, the bassist Georg Listing seems a little less gender-coded, but this resemblance to a hippie or glitter rock style fades quickly, since he does not wear out-of-the-ordinary clothing and uses mostly male body language on stage. He does not look rebellious like a rock and roll ‘bad boy’, but seems generally adapted to the group style. On stage, they neither wear flamboyant outfits nor pose as subversive stars, but more like ordinary musicians simply playing pop rock music. They do not offer an outcast or a machismo image like that often seen in male hard rock bands. It

seems as if the three other band members are out of place and do not fit to the flashy outfit of their singer.²⁰

However, the stage persona of Bill Kaulitz's twin brother Tom Kaulitz, the Tokio Hotel guitarist, offers yet another ambiguous stereotype. It seems not as ambiguous as his twin brother's since he publicly comments on his interest in female companionship on his official homepage. Nevertheless, he mirrors his brother in that he also colors his hair, and displays body piercing on his face (on his lower lip) to differentiate himself from older musicians of the category "popular music in the German language". Why does Tom Kaulitz's stage persona look entirely different on closer inspection, not only different from that of the other members of the ensemble but also from that of his twin brother? For twins it is a particular problem to construct a personal identity, and to differentiate themselves from each other. On the official homepage of the band, his brother Bill usually emphasizes that the twins cannot live apart from each other. Even if Tom's extravagant style is not as flamboyant as Bill's, in particular his hairstyle is most important for his stage persona imagery: his Jamaican dreadlocks, a hairstyle that originated from Ethiopia, are an attempt to create the exotic effect of a foreign culture.

Tom Kaulitz's visual style looks peculiar and adds diversity to the features of the band, since he has long, fair-haired dreadlocks, partly covered with a trendy rapper style baseball cap and topped by a tam. This refracted

²⁰ Cf. Nordsee-Zeitung, Bremerhafen, 7 March 2010, "[Kreisichen und Eiscreme bei Tokio Hotel](http://www.nordsee-zeitung.de/Home/Nachrichten/Norddeutschland/Kreisichen-und-Eiscreme-bei-Tokio-Hotel-_arid,320551_regid,1_puid,1_pageid,15.html)": „Gitarrist und Bills Zwillingbruder Tom, Bassist Georg und Schlagzeuger Gustav passen mit Jeans und T-Shirts so gar nicht zum schrillen Outfit ihres Sängers.“ See <http://www.nordsee-zeitung.de/Home/Nachrichten/Norddeutschland/Kreisichen-und-Eiscreme-bei-Tokio-Hotel-_arid,320551_regid,1_puid,1_pageid,15.html>, 7 March 2010.

form of aesthetics suggests an Afro-Caribbean Rastafarian style, and alludes to the artist Bob Marley and his reggae music, although the band Tokio Hotel never plays any reggae or rap music. Tom Kaulitz teams this style with baggy pants and extremely oversized T-shirts. Behind this apparent contingency of looks actually lies a strategy of translating and rewriting ‘black’ stylistic resources into a new hybrid style. Through his loose worn clothes and caps, the stage persona of Tom Kaulitz tries to capture the prestige of cool US street-life ‘blackness’, and invites the audience to identify themselves with the verve and energy of an attractive, new mixed-cultural style. He also tries to portray a Rastafarian style although not actual featuring darker-toned skin or looking ‘colored’. In distinction to the style of ‘Caucasian’,²¹ youth with the same hairstyle called “crustie[s]” (Nayak 116), who look extremely dirty and wear unkempt matted dress, Tom Kaulitz’s face and clothes radiate spotlessness. The crustie-style image would usually reflect an anarchistic rejection of clean consumer culture in favor of ecological and recycling ethics, since crusties are known to reuse and recycle waste in dumpsters and on the streets, partly as a political statement against unused resources. The crustie-style should also signal a connection to street life and “homelessness” (McRobbie 160), voluntary or forced, as a kind of social reality. However this unstable life seems not reflected in the case of Tom Kaulitz, when his cap sometimes even exactly matches the color of his new T-shirt. His visual style construction touches but does not cross the perceptions of race (and therefore does not seem as acquired or serious as the gender bending of his twin

²¹ Here the term ‘Caucasian’ does not refer to a belief in a fixed white ‘race’, but describes only people with lighter-toned skin.

brother). Tom Kaulitz's stage persona tries to make the concept of a so-called 'white' ethnicity slippery, even if his stiff body language has nothing to do with a Rastafarian style.

Long and untamed hair usually symbolizes rebellion; growing hair is also associated with mourning, or patience and an ascetic lifestyle. Rastafari would associate dreadlocks with a spiritual journey that one takes in the process of growing hairlocks²² without interfering through cutting, combing (or even without washing the hair) at all. Still, what seems a most natural pattern for a hair-do to people with darker-toned skin and/or with curly hair is not natural for people with fairer skin and/or straight hair. The hairstyle of Tom Kaulitz seems to show a kind of artificial and inappropriate visual style in the dominant music discourse, or may we say at least a very new hairstyle that disturbs and subverts common concepts of style in the context of a German pop music band. Formerly, this hairstyle was seldom worn by people of Caucasian ethnicity in the music business. Still, we could read the dreadlocks of Tom Kaulitz's stage persona as reminiscent of the former headdress of British singer-songwriter Boy George. He emerged on the international pop music scene in the early 1980s with the band "Culture Club", which belonged to another music genre and played blues, pop and reggae. The name of the band stresses "that everyone is part and parcel of the same race"²³ and should be respective of all cultures in the world. In those days, Boy George's unisexual image was accentuated with a Peruvian style

²² Cf. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rastafarians>>, 7 March 2010.

²³ See the [Official Culture Club Website](http://www.culture-club.co.uk/content/biog_index.htm), Biographies, Boy George <http://www.culture-club.co.uk/content/biog_index.htm>, 7 March 2010.

hat, kaftan-like clothes, and dreadlocks with colorful paper knotted into his plaits.²⁴ His serious and overdone androgynous style of dressing could be described as a kind of British New Romanticism, which shook the gender category while crossing the border between conventional male/female concepts in traditional Western societies. (Unfortunately, he did not stay a mystery, and after his coming out he lost his ‘chameleon status’.)

The image enhancing connection to “Culture Club”, with its implication of world cultures and its negation of the concept of different races, implies the common political position, that we humans are only a mixture with more or less colorful skin tones. On the other hand, the calm and silent Tom Kaulitz lacks the piedness and radiance of Boy George, although the hairstyle could cause him to be compared to Boy George. Unlike George, Tom Kaulitz, with his loose and plain colored clothes, does not show the slightest trace of femininity. Still, with his mixed-cultural style he tries to subvert the way race is imagined, opening up future possibilities of expression formerly considered strange or deviant to the youth in Europe and other Western countries. His masculine new ‘race-hybrid’ style disrupts and opens up a space for negotiation of new concepts, attracting male and female fans. According to M. Mac An Ghail, dreadlocks worn by young men can be read as a “resistance to schooling authorities”.²⁵ In connection to our close reading of the lyrics of the song “Schrei”, where we have already read a protest of

²⁴ See the video with Boy George interpreting the song “Karma Cameleon” on <http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x1328k_boy-george-karma-chameleon_music>, 7 March 2010.

²⁵ Mac An Ghail, M. *Young, Gifted and Black*. Milton Keynes UK: Open UP, 1988 (qtd. in Nayak 116).

adolescent pupils against domineering adults like teachers and parents (see above), we may also interpret Tom Kaulitz's dreadlocks as a form of resistance that is linked to school and authority. The hybrid clean crustie-style of Tom Kaulitz is not a wish to be 'black', but signifies the (un)conscious desire to be equipped with superior and even mythical qualities, or at least to be different from the stereotypical images of common folk. The wearing of dreadlocks by Caucasian youth can be read as a fetish of the so-called 'black style'. In that regard, the hybrid crustie-style signifies the fantasy of crossing over to the Other, which is both hated and desired as well as disparaged and envied. It incorporates and connects the very own and the foreign, and unites them in an ambivalence of both denial and recognition of difference at the same time. Its function is to try and convey power over the Other, i.e. not only the Other in general, but, in the case of the stage persona of Tom Kaulitz, also power over the supposed threat of the enormously successful US American musicians with darker-toned skin. This reflects an imaginary fusion with the subjected Other to reduce the lack of the youth through transferring it to the Other. This practice of alienation and de-individualization can be read as an attempt to assimilate himself with the Other in order to overcome what is lacking. The typical structure of fetish is one of a riddle, since it combines something with its the opposite: it preserves and communicates the mediation between the familiar and the unfamiliar. In the case of Tom Kaulitz's stage persona, the wearing of dreadlocks symbolizes the denial of an insufficient or instable identity, and a symbolic

safeguarding against lack (and ultimately against death).²⁶ The function of this subcultural symbolism aside from the quest for identity seems to be an expression of unresolved contradictions and oppression in the more dominant culture(s). Symbolic styles and rituals can be a response to the break-up of traditional community lifestyle and family patterns, becoming poriferous ‘patchwork’ structures.

The stage persona of Tom Kaulitz tries to produce a new space for his audience to toy with fantasies about one’s own identity. Nevertheless, with his pale skin under his kempt dresses his figure seems still be more notable for associations of a more fixed race identity, i.e. ‘whiteness’. Furthermore, dreadlocks are not a ‘natural’ style but are politically constructed in a particular historical moment to strategically contestant “white dominance” (c.f. Nayak 116).²⁷ In this regard, the hairstyle of Tom Kaulitz seems odd and could be read as a masquerade, since it operates against his Caucasian skin tone. We can read it as an aporia, i.e. a contradiction in itself. The inconsistency of Tom Kaulitz’s visual style construction could be one of the reasons why he now (on their third album “Humanoid”) changed his hairstyle to a new one, black colored cornrows, a hairstyle worn by both males and females, which also originates from Ethiopia but, even if common in Africa, was popularized in Western cultures primarily²⁸ by African Americans,²⁹ and

²⁶ This symbolic substitute can be viewed as a fetish fantasy, as a replacement of the mother’s phallus which is male, while at the same time maternal-feminine, and thus united in the undecidability of opposite tendencies. Cf. Lacan, Jacques. *Schriften I*. 4th ed. Weinheim: Quadriga, 1996. 7-41, and especially about the fetish 31.

²⁷ Nayak, Anoop. *Race, Place and Globalization. Youth Cultures in a Changing World*. Oxford (UK): Berg Publishers, 2003.

²⁸ An exception is the particular eponymous hairstyle of actress Bo Derek in the 1979 Blake Edwards film *10*, in which she had a beaded and plaited cornrow hairdo, now named after her.

seems a little less foreign since its style is not mixed in itself (like the blond African style of crusties), and it is already established from sports and music discourses in the US. Can we read this ambivalence in visual style as a mockery? This is possible, but when we read Tom Kaulitz's hybrid style as a fetish, an mockery effect is not firmly determinable, since it follows the ambivalent movement of an oscillation. The impact of his ambivalence can be menacing to authority.

In this regard, we also can link the wearing of African hairstyles by Caucasian youth to Homi Bhabha's³⁰ concept of mimicry. He wrote: "colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*. Which is to say, that the discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence" (c.f. Bhabha 122). Traces of this ambivalence and ambiguity can be read in the stage persona of Tom Kaulitz as well. He (as well as his brother Bill) seem to mimic otherness in a new kind of travesty. Trying to occupy two places at once, his means of struggle is a strategy of subversion. While the identity of the colonial subject according to Bhabha seems almost the same but not white, Tom Kaulitz's identity is made to be seen as almost the same but not black. Tom Kaulitz's stage persona attempts to mimic the style of cool US American 'black' people who dominate the discourse in the fields of popular music, thereby questioning concepts of race. In that view, we can describe

²⁹ Cf. wikipedia english < <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornrows>>, 8 March 2010. In this style the hair is braided into a series of French braid like locks that appear to cling to the head and travel down to the back of the neck.

³⁰ Bhabha, Homi K. The Location of Culture. (1994) With a new preface by the author. New York: Routledge, 2004.

this resistance of symbolic nature with Bhabha as an (un)certain act of “mimicry” (ibid.) that translates and alters the inscriptions of power.

Characteristics

As a fetish, the meaning of the transposed ‘black style’ of Tom Kaulitz always changes between familiar and foreign, and cannot be read in only one way. It touches concepts of race (like ‘whiteness’ or ‘colored’), tries to contest them, and may possibly enable youth to critically reflect on any marginalization in society. Because of his style’s apparent cleanliness and consumer friendliness, however, it still maintains a position that to the Western eye seems ‘secure’ and far away from the image of a foreign race that may be frightening due to its unfamiliar exotic or/and unknown background. (At least these seemingly artificial imitations of a mixed culture does not scare the female pop fans from predominantly Caucasian countries who are between 10 and 18 years old.) The stage persona of Tom Kaulitz marks only a symbolic community with the exotic, and with the Other.

If Tokio Hotel would exhibit a sterile blackness/whiteness dichotomy as seen in some older German bands, such as the 1970s disco music formation “Boney M.”, which consisted of four Caribbean members in the predominantly Caucasian country Germany, we could read this as an offer for exotic voyeurism. At that time, it seemed as if in Germany a cultural imprint of its horrific past still lingered somewhere deep in the country’s collective social mind, engraved over generations and not so easily rectified. In this new context, however, the fusion of the band Tokio Hotel into an ‘Afrocaribbean-

Japanese-German' multinational hybrid style shows a form of symbolic resistance to racism and to the aesthetic cultural norm. Reading Tokio Hotel as an allegory of Germany, they appear as an indication for another step forward in the direction of a new socially pluralistic transformation.

We often cannot find an obvious conflict at the interface of power and powerlessness, but beneath the surface we sometimes find a subtle symbolic message that is transposed, disrupting dominant codes through the process of culture translation and style-re-contextualization. In our reading of Tokio Hotel as an example of German pop culture, this essay has demonstrated the postcolonial effects of a new hybrid image on pop music fans, touching and destabilizing the concept of race and concepts of domination. While destabilizing the culture/subculture binary opposition, we addressed the cultural practice of screaming in our close reading of the lyrics of Tokio Hotel's famous song "Schrei" and read a protest of adolescent youth against domineering authority as a symbolic articulation of a subaltern group, extending the concept of the subaltern into Western societies. In addition, we employed Homi K. Bhabha's concept of mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other" concerning the guitarist Tom Kaulitz's stage imagery, which we read as another kind of symbolic resistance that tries to rewrite the inscriptions of power. In both cases, we come across a generic problem of human beings: the (impossible) desire to find a firm identity, to mirror themselves in the Other, and at the same time to be different from him or her.

With an extreme dress code that reconsiders race and gender identity, both Kaulitz brothers as stage personae seek to take on the semblance of the

‘exotic’ Other, pleasurable and alluring. As ambivalent as their signification may be, in translating former excluded styles, (re)negotiating and adopting cultural (ex)change, the hybrid styles reconstruct an identity which seems to offer new possibilities for which the youth of many countries are longing. Still, authenticity and original oneness as such is not existent, and can only be temporarily imagined. Critics who sometimes doubt the ‘authenticity’ of Tokio Hotel seem to miss the most important point of the band: it is not an ‘original’ band from an alleged hermetically sealed culture and identical with itself, but a complex (post)modern composition that mixes the already long-accepted categories, disrupts old boundaries of pop music discourses, diverts or changes simplistic flows of culture, and makes the way for new possibilities and connections.

In the (post)modern era, a country’s music still appears as a representative of the nation. The subcultural symbolism of the pop music band Tokio Hotel, however, does not stress national characteristics, at least not what was traditionally regarded as typical ‘good old German style’. Yet Tokio Hotel’s fragmented hybrid style shows a principle of openness to the Other, and in this way may still be considered a kind of (un)conscious politics which in this case is not ‘undermining’ the nation-state, but multiplying the colorful and diverse fragments of its country.

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