

Carolin Emcke 2016

Conferment speeches
Peace Prize of the German Book Trade 2016
Sunday, October 23, 2016

The spoken word prevails.

Hinweis: Die ausschließlichen Rechte für die Reden liegen bei den Autoren.
Die Nutzung der Texte ist ohne ausdrückliche Lizenz nicht gestattet, sofern
nicht gesetzliche Bestimmungen eine Nutzung ausnahmsweise erlauben.

Kermani 2015
Lanier 2014
Alexijewitsch 2013
Liao 2012
Sansal 2011
Grossman 2010
Magris 2009
Kiefer 2008
Friedländer 2007
Lepenies 2006
Pamuk 2005
Esterházy 2004
Sontag 2003
Achebe 2002
Habermas 2001
Djebar 2000
Stern 1999
Walser 1998
Kemal 1997
Vargas Llosa 1996
Schimmel 1995
Semprún 1994
Schorlemmer 1993
Oz 1992
Konrád 1991
Dedecius 1990
Havel 1989
Lenz 1988
Jonas 1987
Bartoszewski 1986
Kollek 1985
Paz 1984
Sperber 1983
Kennan 1982
Kopelew 1981
Cardenal 1980
Menuhin 1979
Lindgren 1978
Kotakowski 1977
Frisch 1976
Grosser 1975
Frère Roger 1974
The Club of Rome 1973
Korczak 1972
Dönhoff 1971
Myrdal 1970
Mitscherlich 1969
Senghor 1968
Bloch 1967
Bea/Visser 't Hooft 1966
Sachs 1965
Marcel 1964
Weizsäcker 1963
Tillich 1962
Radhakrishnan 1961
Gollancz 1960
Heuss 1959
Jaspers 1958
Wilder 1957
Schneider 1956
Hesse 1955
Burckhardt 1954
Buber 1953
Guardini 1952
Schweitzer 1951
Tau 1950

Peter Feldmann

Lord Mayor of the City of Frankfurt

Greeting

On behalf of the City of Frankfurt, I would like to welcome you to the awarding of this year's Peace Prize of the German Book Trade to Carolin Emcke!

The site where this award is presented each year also happens to be the cradle of democracy in Germany. In 1848, here in the Church of St. Paul, the first freely elected legislative body in Germany met for the first time. Peace and democracy are inextricably linked - one is not possible without the other.

Today, we live in a largely peaceful and democratic Europe, a fact that is not least thanks to the European Union, whose current crises are a justifiable cause of concern for this very reason. Beyond our continent's borders - *both political and geographical* - we also see an utterly different, often far worse picture.

*

In August of this year, dear Carolin Emcke, you wrote in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "Each day brings terrible news and terrible images. People from Syria who have found refuge here speak of parents, siblings and friends who are holding out alone amidst the turmoil of war, week after week, month after month - with *no peace anywhere*."

But Syria is not an isolated case - *no peace anywhere*. Not even in Germany, where religious and

nationalist fanatics are poisoning the political and social climate. And *still* - or perhaps precisely *for this very reason* - you, dear Carolin Emcke, continue to plead for enlightenment, ethical behavior and humanity. Instead of raising your index finger in admonishment, you simply name things and show them *as they are*. You counter the terrible reality of war and the surfacing of resentment and misanthropy amongst us with *words - your words*.

"Against Hatred" is the title of your most recent book, and in it you remind us of the values of our open society - values we need to safeguard today more than ever. As long as we live in a world where *war* is everywhere - *no peace anywhere* - we are going to need voices that call for *peace* and humanity. Voices such as yours!

*

Dear Carolin Emcke, Frankfurt welcomes you and expresses its warmest congratulations on receiving the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade 2016!

Translated by the Hagedorn Group.

Heinrich Riethmüller

President of the German Publishers and Booksellers Association

Greeting

*Nobody
I am king nobody
carry my no-man's-land in my suitcase*

*Travel with a foreigner's passport
from sea to sea*

*Water your blue
your black eyes
the colorless*

*My pseudonym
nobody
is legitimate*

*Nobody suspects
that I am a king
and in my suitcase
carry my homeless land.*

As Chairman of the Börsenverein [German Publishers and Booksellers Association], if I start my welcome address with a poem, then it is with a purpose, namely to give space to poetry in this celebratory hour.

The poem I just recited is by Rose Ausländer, one of the most important yet almost forgotten poets of the 20th century. This poem of hers remains highly relevant today. It expresses the experience and life story of a refugee. Rose Ausländer lost her citizenship three times, she had to flee repeatedly and was often homeless; thus she stands as a representative of one of the most urgent and unresolved problems of our time, namely the expulsion and displacement of peoples. Millions of individuals – and the numbers are growing – are fleeing war and hunger in search of a safe place. They give up everything they have, and this includes their homeland but also often their identity and a sense of belonging to a cultural collective. And we all know; the conditions that are forcing these people to flee are partly our own doing; we, the people who live in security, peace and prosperity.

Of course, poems and poetry cannot help solve the problems of this world. But poetry is nevertheless a form of expression, both for poets and readers: that is, it is a way of describing the sufferings of the world and keeping them alive in our memories. We would know nothing of Odysseus – possibly the most famous refugee in humanity – if Homer hadn't written his famous epics. Troy would merely be one site among many and surely have no meaning had Homer not written of its destruction and the fate of its inhabitants. In turn, the fate of Rose Ausländer and others would not touch us as much had she not described it in her poetry and preserved it for posterity.

“Only from poets do we expect truth, not from philosophers. From philosophers, we expect conceptual thought.” These are the words of Hannah Arendt, who gave the speech honoring Karl Jaspers here in 1958 and who had a tremendous influence on this year's prizewinner. To be sure, poetry causes an effect that touches us emotionally and can stimulate us to think. Indeed, the fact that poetry has always been subversive and suspicious to rulers and dictators can be seen in current events, for example, in Turkey or Russia. Intellectuals, writers and artists are the first to be locked away,

not out of fear of their weapons but of the power of their words. In the Nazi era, the work of many German poets was burned out of fear of its potential impact. More recently, the historical testimonies and magnificent temples, tombs and theaters of Palmyra were destroyed by terrorists in an attempt to wipe out the cultural memory of an entire region and to rob it - by means of violence and war - of its ability to speak.

Carolin Emcke makes it clear to us that there is a connection between violence and speech, between violence and voicelessness. In her book *Weil es sagbar ist [Because it is sayable]*, she writes, "If victims of violence were not able to speak of what was done to them, then dictators and torturers would win." Carolin Emcke writes down what other people tell her, but also what she feels in the process, which is often fear, rage and helplessness. Her reportages and letters from her travels to some of the greatest conflict areas in our world are thus more than just the result of sober reporting. They remind us again and again that the world is in turmoil, indeed that it is on fire wherever we look.

The Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, too, depends on speech, and the speeches given by its prizewinners send out signals of peace and understanding. If we had no poets or writers who spoke of pain and war and hope and freedom, our society would be a very poor one indeed. Change for the good can only happen if we reach people via speech, that is, if we connect with them, speak to them and inspire them to think and act. Speaking can, however, also reveal the borders of our own imaginations: for example when we read about Carolin Emcke's meeting with a small Haitian orphan who asks Emcke's photographer amidst the destroyed landscape of Haiti: *Do you want to be my daddy?* When we read and hear this, it is difficult to imagine what this child must have gone through for him to be pleading for a new *daddy*. It is hard to think of an experience more despairing than this.

Seyla Benhabib, who will give the speech honoring Carolin Emcke today, has also written and taught on migration and displacement. She, too, has worked and written on Hannah Arendt, which is why I will allow myself, in conclusion, to once again quote this great thinker and 20th century philosopher whose words should make us think - especially those of us who judge refugees all too fast in a knee-jerk reaction from a position of privilege, security and prosperity. In her still highly topical essay from January 1943 titled "We Refugees," Hannah Arendt wrote: "We lost our home, which means the familiarity of daily life. We lost our occupation, which means the confidence that we are of some use in this world. We lost our language, which means the naturalness of reactions, the simplicity of gestures and the unaffected expression of feelings."

I would love to see more poems by Rose Ausländer, more texts by Hannah Arendt and more reports by Carolin Emcke taught in our schools and universities; it might help us acquire a different, more precise look at our world - and perhaps a little bit more humility.

Thank you very much.

Translated by the Hagedorn Group.

Seyla Benhabib

The Narrator as Moral Witness

Laudatory speech

I.

Carolyn Emcke's book, *Weil es sagbar ist. Über Zeugenschaft und Gerechtigkeit* (2013) [*Because it is sayable. On witness-bearing and Justice*], has as its title cover Paul Klee's famous painting – "Angelus Novus." In Thesis IX of his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Walter Benjamin who had purchased the painting in 1921, provides an interpretation: "A Klee drawing named 'Angelus Novus' shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the Angel of History... The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress." (Thesis IX)

It is not Benjamin's historical pessimism that makes Klee's painting a plausible point of entry to understand Emcke's work. In her texts one neither finds historical pessimism nor messianic optimism. It is rather the astonishment on the face of the angel of history, who spreads his wings with "staring eyes," and "open mouth" that shines forth on every page of her prose. Emcke is astonished that such things as take place in civil wars are humanly possible, that torture, rape, beatings, maiming and humiliation do really occur. Even though, as Benjamin says, one "cannot make whole what has been smashed," one can redeem it by narrating it. It is this capacity to "say" it, to tell a story about it by refusing the silence that surrounds violence, cruelty and torture that distinguishes Emcke's prose and makes her one of the most influential public intellectuals of our times.

As the text of the "Friedenspreis" [Peace Prize] states, Carolyn Emcke describes "in a very personal and vulnerable manner, how violence, hate and speechlessness can alter human beings. With 'analytical empathy,' she appeals to the capacity of all concerned, to find their way back to mutual under-

standing and communication." This "analytical empathy" is exercised by Emcke through her masterful art of narration. Walter Benjamin's essay *Der Erzähler* (*The Story Teller*) can once more serve as a guide to Emcke's craft. Benjamin begins with the observation that "experience has fallen in value." "With the First World War a process began to become apparent which has not halted since then. Was it not noticeable at the end of the war that men returned from the battlefield grown silent – not richer but poorer in communicable experience?" (362) What does it mean to say that "Experience has fallen in value"? In the first place it means that the communicability of experience has been replaced by information and by phrases.

Throughout her work, Emcke resists this impoverishment of experience through the silences that surround it; she rejects the speechlessness that is inflicted on those who have been tortured, maimed, beaten, and raped by those in power or by those who hide their own impotence through the pretense of having or being in power. Emcke, as "story teller," has developed a unique blend of reportage, philosophical reflection, and literary construction through which she "bears moral witness" to human pain in armed conflict situations but also to another kind of pain and silence experienced by those who are different – different sexually, psychologically, religiously, ethnically. Such narrative redeems the pain of the untold; breaks down the walls of silence and hurt which create the trauma of the unsayable.

Recall the opening pages of *Stumme Gewalt. Nachdenken über die RAF* [*Violence without words. Reflection on the Red Army Brigade*]: how slowly, how carefully, how patiently the story begins. It exhibits a gentleness not only toward the victim, Alfred Herrhausen, who was Carolyn Emcke's "Patenonkel" [Godfather], but toward the taxi driver, who never was paid, as a stunned Carolyn Emcke was removed from the scene.

"I am still thinking about the taxi driver. It was almost noon as the airplane from London landed in Frankfurt. I took the first best taxi in the ground floor of the airport and named without further explanation the address in Bad Homburg. He be-

trayed no expression on his face. However, he must have known *whose* house that was... Without a word, he took my old, worn-out leather bag and placed it in the trunk.” (9)

A few pages later, we are told, “I hardly thought about the taxi driver any more. He must have stood there the whole time on the pavement at the intersection. How long could that have been? How long had I stared at this car [meaning the car of Herhausen, SB] How long had I lost myself in my own thoughts?” (13)

My emphasis on such narrative details in a work which deals with one of the darkest, and still not wholly explained, chapter of post-war Germany, with its obscure connections between the RAF, the Stasi, the Verfassungsschutz (Agency for the Protection of the Constitution) and spies and provocateurs of all sides, may seem inappropriate. Yet it is precisely Emcke’s art of approaching trauma through indirection, through the work of memory which never proceeds as a single coherent storyline, but which meanders, wanders down unexpected trails and focuses seemingly on insignificant details – it is this craft that makes her into a masterful “story teller.”

In the introduction to her essay collection, *Weil es sagbar ist. Über Zeugenschaft und Gerechtigkeit*, Emcke tells of her despair as a young war reporter at her own incapacity to be able to tell of “dem Erlebten.” “How much time has lapsed since the lived experience which must be described? Was it a single act or a longer episode? Is it the first search for words for what has taken place? Is it a repetitive, hesitant, purposeless form of speaking? ... Or are there questions, well-meaning or suspicious ones which serve the witness as a narrative path?” (25) Just as for Emcke herself, confronted with the violent death of her Patenonkel, the disconnected recollection about the taxi driver serves as a “narrative path” to structure the caesura in time, of such a nature that she can no longer recall how many minutes she stood staring at her uncle’s destroyed Mercedes, in one of the most beautifully told stories of Adem, a Bosnian refugee, it is his new shoes that constitute the narrative trail. Adem’s refugee application is denied and he is returned from Germany to Belgrade, where his citizenship is revoked, he is beaten up, and then put on the plane back to Germany again. As Adem begins to tell his story, he says “‘I had brand new shoes. And they were expensive’ he said emphatically.” She asks, “When? Why? What have all this to do with his escape from Yugoslavia? What did it

have to do with his time as an asylum applicant without any protection in Germany, where he was cooped up in barracks, transported from one refugee home to another? (38-39)

Trauma research as well as psychoanalysis establish that the inability to sort out what has happened in extreme situations constitutes the core of the trauma; violence and destruction in extreme situations lead to a dissociation (Entkoppelung) from former experience. The trauma scrambles one’s memory and can only be approached slowly, with care, with sympathy, through the patient listening to the voice of the other, “with analytical empathy,” as the victim begins to approach the site of pain and hurt. Trauma is sayable precisely because someone can form the sayable into an intelligible narrative that can be shared with others. This is not only an intellectual exercise but a form of moral interaction with the other as well as an art form. Hannah Arendt’s words about Isak Dinesen, alias the Danish storyteller, Karen (Tania) Blixen, captures very well Emcke’s mission: “‘All sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them.’ The story reveals the meaning of what would otherwise remain an unbearable sequence of sheer happenings.” (Hannah Arendt, *Men in Dark Times*, 104)

II.

Carolin Emcke’s early war reportages and travels through Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Haiti, Gaza, etc. collected in her book, *Echoes of Violence: Letters from a War Reporter*, appeared at a moment when the legal and moral confusions of liberal democracies around “humanitarian interventions” produced a distinctive genre of writing by Michael Ignatieff, Philipp Gourevitch, David Rieff and others. Scrambling the distinctions between reportage and moral and political commentary, these authors helped spell out the dilemmas and hypocrisies of humanitarian interventions: why not in Rwanda in 1994 but in Kosovo in 1998-99? Why in Afghanistan in 2001, and Iraq in 2003 and in Libya not then but two decades later in 2011? And why not Syria today? While many have interpreted these wars as the neo-imperial ambitions of the world’s last hegemon, namely, the United States, they have ignored that a body of human rights and humanitarian law through which nation-states in the post-World War II period promised that atrocities like those of the years 1939-45 would never be repeated, has also been damaged in the process. The abuse of the concept of humanitarian interventions

through the diplomatic dances of a Tony Blair, as well as the violation of international law and of the International Conventions prohibiting torture through the G.W. Bush administration have led to grave damage to human rights as well as humanitarian law. We are in the midst of such legal and moral confusions, that today, nearly twenty-five years after the Balkan Wars and the Rwanda massacre, we live in a moral mist about our moral, legal and ethical obligations to “suffering strangers.”

All across Europe, right-wing and xenophobic parties have mounted an attack on international law and human rights conventions. A reactionary nativism and nationalism threatens to destroy the fragile institutions of cooperation and post-sovereignty, such as the European Union. The United States’ commitment to internationalism is being challenged by the return of an authoritarian, patriarchal ideology of the “white European stock” versus the brown and black people of the world – be they Mexicans or Syrians. The myth of the nation-state as the sole agent of world-history is being revived from Moscow to Trump’s New York towers and from London to Budapest.

Among the most important legal conventions of the post-war period, articulated in recognition of the deep links between genocide and statelessness, are the Geneva Conventions on Refugees of 1951 and their 1967 Protocols. Hannah Arendt’s analysis of the paradoxes of “the right to have rights” in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* acutely showed how “statelessness,” that is the loss of protection by a recognized legal entity, left the individual so vulnerable to persecution. Human rights, which we assumed were intended to protect human beings insofar as they were human beings alone, were rendered nugatory in this condition. In 1951, when the *Origins of Totalitarianism* was first written, Arendt had little faith that international law and international institutions could offer solutions to this situation. However, already The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), in Article 13, guaranteed the right to emigrate, that is to leave a country and to be able to return to it. Article 14 anchored the right to enjoy asylum, under certain conditions, which were further clarified by the Geneva Conventions. Article 15 of the Declaration proclaimed that everyone has “the right to nationality” and that “No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.”

Although international human rights law as well as humanitarian law, are much more developed than in Arendt’s time, today the theory and practice of refugee protection are in crisis. The definition of a Convention refugee was in the first place tailored to those persecuted by the Nazi regime and political dissidents. But under “generalized conditions of violence,” as we see in Syria and have witnessed in the past in Central and South America, refugees are not singled out as individuals but are subject as a group either to violence from their own government or by drug gangs and the para-military. In recognition of this condition that does not easily fit the one envisaged by the Geneva Conventions, in 1984 the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees was adopted by Central American countries as well as Mexico. This declaration states that “among refugees [are included] persons who have fled their country because their lives, safety or freedom have been threatened by generalized violence, foreign aggression, internal conflicts, massive violation of human rights or other circumstances which have seriously disturbed public order.”

The European Union should take into account this legal instrument which is also recognized by the UNHCR in order to alleviate the burden on “first countries of entry” such as Greece, Italy and Spain. Above all those refugees who are in the waiting period while their applications are being considered live in a kafkaesque situation: they stand “before” the laws and are subjected to them without, however, being equal in the “eyes of the law.”

Countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Austria and the UK have resorted to a regressive sovereignty in violation of the Geneva Conventions to deal with refugees as they see fit. Acts of unilateral border closings are declared with sovereign impunity, while ironically an increasingly autocratic and dictatorial government in Turkey is housing 2.7 million refugees.

It is little known that although Turkey subscribes to the Geneva Conventions, it recognizes as a Convention refugee only those originating from European territories prior to the “events occurring before 1 January 1951.” Refugees coming to Turkey from non-European territories are not regarded as Convention Refugees by the Turkish government. They fall under a Turkish directive called “The Temporary Protection Administration.” President Erdogan’s declaration to grant citizenship to eligible Syrian refugees, made shortly before the

July 15 failed military coup of this summer, is certainly the morally and politically desired outcome for refugees. However, the poisoned mixture of moral and real-political considerations which has afflicted the refugee discussion in our times is visible in this gesture as well. President Erdogan, whose electoral dominance was first challenged in last summer and then again this summer, may be looking upon the Syrian refugees as a permanent majority of close to one million voters, who would secure his hold on power.

III.

Carolyn Emcke has written not only about the “suffering of distant strangers,” but in her weekly columns as a journalist, she has regularly commented on the plight of refugees, reminding us that distant strangers are now our neighbors next door, who have come upon our lands and to whom we owe special moral obligations. She writes:

“But this is precisely what I am urging: that we develop a precise vocabulary for *our suffering for and in democracies*. We have to find increasingly more precise, more polite, more gentle words and description for what we are lacking; that we translate the concepts that hurt us, the practices that exclude us, the laws that discriminate against us into experiences that can also be understood by those who don’t know understand them, who are not familiar with them; that we thereby come to know what can be shared by all and what remains for the individual...” (178, *Weil es sagbar ist*.)

Suffering for and in democracies! *This is our world-wide challenge today.*

Dear Carolyn, in conclusion, let me say that we met and got to know each other more than twenty years ago in Jürgen Habermas’s seminars at the Frankfurt University. Thus it is such a special occasion to celebrate your person and your achievements in Frankfurt’s Paulskirche, in a city to which we both have such deep attachments, where I lived for more than ten years and where my daughter was born. I celebrate you today not only as a public intellectual whose words and whose writing honor your country, but also as a dear friend.

Together with your partner Silvia Fehrmann, since 12 years, you have created a new public sphere of reflection and debate in Berlin’s Schaubühne, as well.

I congratulate you heartily for this well-deserved prize!

Carolin Emcke

Begin

Acceptance speech

I.

Wow. So this is what it looks like from up here.

In the earlier years, starting with the awarding of the Peace Prize to George F. Kennan in 1982, I watched this ceremony *from below looking up*: my parents, in their idiosyncratic way, had only two armchairs, which meant that we children had to arrange ourselves on the carpet in front of the television. And so I lay on the rug, listening intently to the speeches given by the male recipients: and I say male recipients deliberately here, seeing as the first thirteen years I watched *from below looking up*, it was only men who were awarded the prize. Even after I had long since moved out of my childhood home, I maintained this ritual; I watched the Peace Prize lying on the floor in front of the TV. Somehow it just seemed the most appropriate perspective to take. And then, in each of the years since David Grossman received the prize in 2010, I sat where you are all sitting here today. In fact, as late as last year, on the eve of the award ceremony, I even conspired with a friend to sneak into the ballroom at the Frankfurter Hof to tamper with the seating arrangements at the pre-award banquet. (Embarrassingly enough, we were caught red handed). And now *this, here...*

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to thank the Board of Trustees of the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels (German Publishers and Booksellers Association) for this award. It fills me with a deep sense of gratitude and happy amazement.

Nobody grows alone. Some of the individuals who stood on this spot before me were existential for my own thinking. Indeed, the work of many Peace Prize recipients - and the opportunity to meet some of them in person - has made me the person and author I am today: Martin Buber, Nelly Sachs, David Grossman, Jorge Semprun and, in particular, Jürgen Habermas and Susan Sontag. The idea of now being among their ranks prompts me to perceive this prize less as an award and more as a mission, a challenge.

Nobody writes alone. There were two people indispensable to my development as a writer, and I would like to thank them specifically. First of all, my friend, the photographer Sebastian Bolesch, who accompanied me on each of my travels abroad over the course of 14 years and without whom I would not have written one word. And, second of all, my publisher and editor, Peter Sillem at S. Fischer Verlag, who has helped me transcend my doubts since my very first manuscript and without whom no book of mine would ever have been published.

II.

Many - but not all - of the men and women who stood here before me spoke not only as individuals, but also as members of a specific group. They defined themselves as belonging to a faith, an experience, the history of a specific country or a particular lifestyle: they reflected upon what it meant to speak here in the Church of St. Paul as a Chinese dissident, a Nigerian author, a Muslim or a Jewish woman - here in Germany, with its particular history.

For those individuals who have had the honor of speaking from up here, from this perspective, it often meant speaking from and about a specific perspective. They were invited here to receive this award because they had somehow dedicated themselves to working for a universal *weg*; and yet, they often still spoke as individuals who belonged to an oppressed group, a marginalized faith or a broken, war-torn geographical area.

This is certainly worth noting, seeing as we cannot be entirely sure what it means "to belong".

The modern Hebrew word for "to belong" is *shayach* and comes from the Aramaic; it immigrated, so to speak, from one language into the other, where it quite ironically became the term used to describe "belonging". In fact, the word *shayach* refers to nothing else. Unlike most other terms in Hebrew, it contains no parts of another in itself. As it were, it belongs only to itself. When the word *shayach* is used to describe something, it indicates that the thing is relevant, worthy and important.

This provides us with a useful line of thinking: to see oneself as belonging to a faith or a community implies that I am relevant to this community, that I am an important element in it.

However, belonging can also be thought of in the other direction as well; that is to say, not only am I important to the community, the faith is also important to me. Being Jewish or Catholic or Muslim makes a difference. It structures my thought processes, my habits and my day. Just as the giving of alms belongs to one person, saying grace at the dinner table or lighting candles belongs to others.

In the German language, the term “to belong” has multiple meanings: i) to be the property of someone, but also ii) to be part of a whole, a necessary element, iii) to fit or be suitable in a certain place and iv) to be necessary for something.

If I am devout, am I in possession of faith? Is religiosity something that belongs to me? Or is faith something confirmed via a struggle? In other words, what does “belong to” mean in the context of faith? Does my faith belong to me, or do I belong to that in which I have faith?

We haven’t even touched upon the question as to whether this belonging is something an individual can consciously take on. Although we can usually determine the precise moment at which an individual becomes a member of a church or a community by looking at the date of the relevant rituals of admission, it is much more difficult to pin down the moment when faith started belonging to a person.

Could it not be argued that the Passions and Cantatas of Bach had already permeated and formed me from the inside out before I was even capable of professing a faith? Did this music not belong to me – that is, did it not already create the foundation for the person I would become – before I could ever have been able to declare my membership in a community?

Now the word membership is bereft of nuance. It suggests a uniform perception, as if it were of equal relevance to us whether we were Jewish, Protestant or Muslim. As if it always felt the same – to be Kurdish or Polish or Palestinian – wherever we went. As if it weren’t possible for this membership to be differently concise in different situations. For example, when asked what it meant to him to be Muslim, a friend of mine, the theater director Nurkan Erpulat, responded by saying: “It depends on the context.”

Sometimes the Argentinean origins of the *Jacaranda* plant are particularly obvious, for example when one sees its bright purple blossoms. But sometimes it is noticeably far away from these origins, especially in Berlin, when a helicopter flying over the city heralds the occurrence of a traffic jam rather than a military putsch – at which point that ingrained fear requires some time to dissipate.

For many individuals, their own Jewish faith becomes especially palpable when they taste the sweetness of apples and honey on *Rosh Hashanah*. For others, it emerges when they find themselves sitting in the Church of St. Paul in Frankfurt listening to a speech in which the unimaginable suffering of their own families is transformed from a crime against humanity – one we have an obligation to remember as long as we live – into a mere “moral cudgel.”

In other words, is belonging something that manifests itself in connection with others, or is it something that appears when you stand out as the only one belonging to a community? In this case, the Jewish perspective was simply blocked out as belonging to our society. Which begs the question: Is belonging connected to happiness or sadness? Does a person belong when she or he is acknowledged as belonging? And, in turn, does she or he who is denied this acknowledgment belong?

In other words, who does this belonging belong to? To oneself or to another? Does this belonging come in only one or in many different forms? And, above all, how many different contexts and connections can be relevant and important to me in this sense? How many intersecting circles do I fit into and how many do I use to construct myself as an individual?

I am homosexual, and when I speak here today, I can do so only by also speaking from the perspective of this experience; that is, as someone for whom it is relevant to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, inter*, trans* or queer. Not *only* as someone who has this experience, but definitely *because* of it. This is not something one seeks out, however it is what I would choose to be again, if given the choice. Not because it’s better, but simply because it has made me happy.

The first time I fell in love with a woman, I honestly had no idea that my love would be connected to a form of belonging. At the time, I still believed that whom and how I loved was an individual matter that distinguished *my* life and was of no con-

cern to others, especially to strangers or the state. The idea of loving and desiring someone struck me primarily as an act or experience, not an identity.

It is very strange when one realizes that something so personal is so important for others. In fact, it is so important to them that they insist on being permitted to intervene in our lives and deny us our rights and our dignity. It's as if the way in which we love is more important for others than it is for ourselves: as if our love and our bodies didn't actually belong to us, but instead to those who reject and pathologize them. There is a certain irony to this: it's as if our sexuality defined much less *our* belonging and much more *theirs*. From where I stand, it often looks as if this is the same dynamic at work in the Islamophobic preoccupation with the hijab. It's as if the hijab means more to them than it does to the people for whom it is a self-evident and self-determined choice.

In any case, a circle is formed into which we are enclosed; those of us who love differently or look different. We belong to this circle regardless of the circles in or between which we otherwise move; no matter what other things set us apart, no matter what abilities or inabilities we have or which needs and characteristics mean much more to us. In this manner, something that makes us happy - something that seems beautiful and appropriate to us - becomes connected to something that leaves us injured and numb. Because we still, every day, are obliged to provide reasons as to why we should belong - not just half way, but all the way. Not just a part of us, but the whole thing. As if there was a cutoff for humanity.

It is a strange experience:

We are permitted to write books that are taught in schools, but the way we love should only be "tolerated" - according to the wishes of some parents - and in no way "respected" in school textbooks?

We are allowed to give speeches in the Church of St. Paul, but we are not allowed to get married or adopt children?

I sometimes ask myself whose dignity is being damaged here: the dignity of those of us declared as not belonging or the dignity of those who seek to deny us the rights that belong to us?

Human rights are not a zero-sum game. Nobody loses their rights when they are granted to all. Human rights are unconditional. They *cannot* be earned, nor *must* they be earned. There are no

preconditions that must be met before a human being is recognized as such and protected. Affection or dislike, approval or distaste for individual lifestyles, social practices and religious convictions cannot be allowed to play any role in this realm. This notion is the very essence of a liberal, open and secular society.

Dissimilarity is not a reason for exclusion.

Similarity is not a prerequisite for human rights.

And this is a great thing, because it means we don't have to like each other. We don't even have to understand each other or agree on what constitutes a good life. We can continue to see each other as strange, weird, old-fashioned, new-fashioned, petit-bourgeois or garish.

Allow me to put it in terms all of us here in the Church of St. Paul can understand: I'm a Borussia Dortmund fan. And, although it's hard for me to understand how someone could be a Schalke fan, it wouldn't cross my mind to deny Schalke supporters the right to freedom of assembly.

Tzvetan Todorov once wrote that "difference is corrupted into inequality, equality into identity." This is the social pathology of our time: it divides and separates us, it sorts us into identity and difference, it segregates us according to concepts and skin colors, according to origin and faith and according to sexuality and physicality, so as to use these categories to justify exclusion and violence.

For this reason, those who stood here and spoke from a particular perspective, which I am also doing today, emphasized both, that is, individual diversity and normative equality.

The freedom to believe something different, to look different, to love slightly differently, the sadness of coming from an endangered and damaged area or community, the bitter pain experienced by a certain *we* - and the yearning to use words to move beyond precisely these affiliations, to open up and call into question the codes and circles, to multiply perspectives and - time and again - to defend a universal *we*.

III.

At the moment, a climate of fanaticism and violence is running rampant in Europe. Pseudo-religious and nationalist dogmatists are propagat-

ing the doctrine of a “homogenous people,” a “true” religion, an “original” tradition, a “natural” family and an “authentic” nation. They come up with codes and concepts that include some and exclude others. They divvy us up arbitrarily and decide who has the right to belong and who doesn’t.

Everything that is dynamic, everything that is multifaceted about our own cultural references and contexts is negated. They deny everything that is individually unique, everything that makes us what we are as people, everything that makes us people who belong, that is, our struggles, our vulnerabilities, but also our fantasies of happiness. We are sorted out according to identity and difference and packed into collectives, while all types of belonging that are vibrant, delicate and contradictory are dulled and smoothed over.

Perhaps these people – these populists and purity fanatics – are not themselves standing on the street spreading fear and terror; perhaps they don’t themselves throw incendiary devices into refugee homes, don’t themselves rip the hijab off Muslim women or the Kippah from Jewish men; perhaps they themselves don’t harass Polish and Romanian Europeans; perhaps they don’t themselves attack Germans with African heritage. In other words, they aren’t necessarily the ones actively doing the hating and the hurting. Instead, they are the *enablers* of hate.

They supply the discourse with patterns of resentment and prejudice; they manufacture racist *product placements*, all those small hurtful words and images with which others are stigmatized and devalued; and they provide the mode of perception with which people are humiliated and attacked.

This exclusionary fanaticism damages not only those it seeks to victimize; it also hurts all of us who wish to live in an open, democratic society. The dogma of the pure, homogeneous and *Völkisch* (nationalist-racist) constricts our world. It diminishes the space in which we can think and see each other. It makes some visible and others invisible. It labels some as being valuable and other as worthless. It limits the imagination in which we give each other chances and opportunities. Indeed, a lack of imagination and empathy is a powerful antagonist to freedom and justice.

This is what the fanatics and populists of purity want: they want to take from us our analytical openness and ability to empathize with diversity; they want to take away the simultaneity of references that belong to us – and to which we belong;

and they want to standardize this togetherness, this mishmash of religions, origins, practices and habits, physicalities and sexualities.

They want to convince us that democratic humanism doesn’t exist. They want to misinterpret passports as the indicators of a person’s inner constitution, just so they can play us off each other. Indeed, there is something grotesque about this approach: for decades, German society denied that it was a society of immigrants; for decades migrants were seen as “foreigners” rather than as citizens; for decades they were treated as if they didn’t belong, as if they were nothing more than Turks. And now we accuse them of not being “German enough” and point to the fact that they have two passports?

My mother’s family emigrated to Argentina before the war. Every person in her family had different passports at different times, sometimes an Argentinean, sometimes a German one, and sometimes both. I still have them all, including my grandfather’s passport which was given to me by my uncle, and my mother’s passport. My niece Emilia, who is here today and, like all of her siblings, was born in the United States, also has an American passport. We are all multilingual, and we always were. But do the neo-nationalists really believe that anyone in my family is less democratic or has less respect for individual freedom and the protection of human dignity? Do they really believe that a passport says anything about that individual’s aversion to depravity and their willingness to engage in creating a democratic, open society no matter where?

I rather suspect that all of those people who were once driven out of their homes, who know what it means to flee a country or simply migrate, who feel at home in different places in the world, who are plagued by homesickness or wanderlust, who love the different sounds of irony and humor, who go back and forth and mix things up when moving from one language to another, who remember songs from their childhood that the generation after them will never know, who have experienced the ruptures of violence and war, those for whom the fear of terror and repression has become a subcutaneous experience – these people *know* quite well the value of an open democracy and of stable institutions under the rule of law. Perhaps they even know them better than those who never had to fear living without them.

They want to intimidate us, these fanatics, with their hatred and violence, so that we lose our orien-

tation and our speech, so that we become full of dismay and adopt their concepts, their false opposites, their constructed others – even their level of intellectual gracelessness. They do damage to public discourse with their superstitions, conspiracy theories and that peculiar combination of self-pity and brutality. They spread fear and terror and reduce the social space in which we should be able to meet one another and articulate ourselves.

They want to create an environment in which only Jews defend themselves against anti-Semitism, where only gays protest against discrimination and where only Muslims fight for freedom of religion; this enables the fanatics to denounce those who protest as being Jewish, members of the gay lobby or inhabitants of a parallel society. The fanatics want a world in which only black citizens rise up against racism and only feminists protest sexism and toxic masculinity so that they can defame and ridicule these groups as being “angry” and “lacking humor” respectively.

In actual fact, it’s not about Muslims or refugees or women. Fanatics want to intimidate *everyone* who commits themselves to the freedom of each unique, different individual.

For this reason, it is imperative that *all of us* feel that we are being addressed here.

For this reason, it is imperative that we do not simply delegate to “political leaders” our response to hatred and contempt. State prosecutors and investigative authorities are responsible for handling matters of terror and violence, but for all the everyday forms of disrespect and humiliation, for all the acts of shaping and ascribing carried out in supposedly homogenous collectives – these are things for which we are all responsible.

What can we do?

In 1958, Hannah Arendt wrote in *The Human Condition*: “With word and deed we insert ourselves into the human world and this insertion is like a second birth in which we confirm and take upon ourselves the naked fact of our original physical appearance for which we, as it were, take on responsibility.”

We must not allow ourselves to be rendered defenseless and speechless. We can speak and act. We can take on responsibility. In other words, we can intervene actively *with word and deed* in this increasingly brutalized world.

In order to do this, we need to have trust in what makes us human: *the capacity to begin*. We can go out and interrupt something. We can be reborn by *inserting ourselves into the world*. We can question what was passed down to us, we can determine whether it was fair enough, we can sound out the things that we were given to see if they are good, inclusive and contain enough freedom – or not.

We can start over again, as individuals, but also as a society. We can shatter our inherited inflexibilities, dissolve the structures that constrict and oppress us, move forward and discover new forms together.

We can start fresh and weave the old stories anew like the thread of the remains of chains; we can tie and untie, we can merge diverse stories together and tell a whole new story, one that is quieter and more open, one in which each and everyone is relevant.

But we cannot do this alone. It requires the participation of all actors in civil society. Democratic history is made by all of us. A democratic story is one that is told by all – not just by professional storytellers. Every individual is relevant, and this includes the elderly and the young, those of us with jobs and those of us who are unemployed, those of us with more education and those of us with less. Drag queens and pastors, entrepreneurs and officers, each and every one of us is important when it comes to telling a story in which we are all addressed and made visible. The people responsible for this are parents and grandparents, caregivers and teachers in kindergartens and schools, policemen and women and social workers just as much as club owners and bouncers. Our democratic story of an open, plural and collective *we* needs images and role models, in public offices and government authorities just as much as in theaters and films – so that they can show us and remind us of what and who we can be.

We can no longer be permitted to merely *claim* to be a free, secular and democratic society – we have to actually *be* it.

Freedom is not something one owns; instead it is something one does.

Secularization is not something we can finish; instead, it is an unfinished project.

Democracy is not a static certainty; instead, it is a dynamic exercise in dealing with uncertainty and criticism.

A free, secular and democratic society is something we must learn. Again and again. By listening to each other, thinking about each other, becoming active together *in word and deed*. In mutual respect for the diversity of ways of belonging and individual uniqueness. And, last but not least, in reciprocal admission of our weaknesses and our ability to grant forgiveness.

Is this difficult? Yes, absolutely. Will there be conflicts between different practices and beliefs? Yes, certainly. Will it be tricky to create an equitable balance between different religious references and the secular order? Definitely. But why indeed should it be easy?

We can always start again.

What is it going to take to do this?

Not much: some strength of character, some cheerful courage and, last but not least, the willingness to change one's perspective so that more and more of us find ourselves saying:

Wow. So this is what it looks like from up here.

Translated by the Hagedorn Group.

Winners of the Peace Prize and their laudatory speakers

1950	Max Tau - Adolf Grimme	1985	Teddy Kollek - Manfred Rommel
1951	Albert Schweitzer - Theodor Heuss	1986	Władysław Bartoszewski - Hans Maier
1952	Romano Guardini - Ernst Reuter	1987	Hans Jonas - Robert Spaemann
1953	Martin Buber - Albrecht Goes	1988	Siegfried Lenz - Yohanan Meroz
1954	Carl J. Burckhardt - Theodor Heuss	1989	Václav Havel - André Glucksmann
1955	Hermann Hesse - Richard Benz	1990	Karl Dedecius - Heinrich Olschowsky
1956	Reinhold Schneider - Werner Bergengruen	1991	György Konrád - Jorge Semprún
1957	Thornton Wilder - Carl J. Burckhardt	1992	Amos Oz - Siegfried Lenz
1958	Karl Jaspers - Hannah Arendt	1993	Friedrich Schorlemmer - Richard von Weizsäcker
1959	Theodor Heuss - Benno Reifenberg	1994	Jorge Semprún - Wolf Lepenies
1960	Victor Gollancz - Heinrich Lübke	1995	Annemarie Schimmel - Roman Herzog
1961	Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan - Ernst Benz	1996	Mario Vargas Llosa - Jorge Semprún
1962	Paul Tillich - Otto Dibelius	1997	Yaşar Kemal - Günter Grass
1963	Carl F. von Weizsäcker - Georg Picht	1998	Martin Walser - Frank Schirrmacher
1964	Gabriel Marcel - Carlo Schmid	1999	Fritz Stern - Bronislaw Geremek
1965	Nelly Sachs - Werner Weber	2000	Assia Djebar - Barbara Frischmuth
1966	Kardinal Bea/Visser 't Hooft - Paul Mikat	2001	Jürgen Habermas - Jan Philipp Reemtsma
1967	Ernst Bloch - Werner Maihofer	2002	Chinua Achebe - Theodor Berchem
1968	Léopold Sédar Senghor - François Bondy	2003	Susan Sontag - Ivan Nagel
1969	Alexander Mitscherlich - Heinz Kohut	2004	Péter Esterházy - Michael Naumann
1970	Alva und Gunnar Myrdal - Karl Kaiser	2005	Orhan Pamuk - Joachim Sartorius
1971	Marion Gräfin Dönhoff - Alfred Grosser	2006	Wolf Lepenies - Andrei Pleşu
1972	Janusz Korczak - Hartmut von Hentig	2007	Saul Friedländer - Wolfgang Frühwald
1973	The Club of Rome - Nello Celio	2008	Anselm Kiefer - Werner Spies
1974	Frère Roger - (keine Laudatio)	2009	Claudio Magris - Karl Schlögel
1975	Alfred Grosser - Paul Frank	2010	David Grossman - Joachim Gauck
1976	Max Frisch - Hartmut von Hentig	2011	Boualem Sansal - Peter von Matt
1977	Leszek Kołakowski - Gesine Schwan	2012	Liao Yiwu - Felicitas von Lovenberg
1978	Astrid Lindgren - H.-C. Kirsch, G. U. Becker	2013	Swetlana Alexijewitsch - Karl Schlögel
1979	Yehudi Menuhin - Pierre Bertaux	2014	Jaron Lanier - Martin Schulz
1980	Ernesto Cardenal - Johann Baptist Metz	2015	Navid Kermani - Norbert Miller
1981	Lew Kopelew - Marion Gräfin Dönhoff	2016	Carolin Emcke - Seyla Benhabib
1982	George Kennan - Carl F. von Weizsäcker		
1883	Manès Sperber - Siegfried Lenz		
1984	Octavio Paz - Richard von Weizsäcker		

Die Reden, die am 23.10.2016 aus Anlass der Verleihung des Friedenspreises des Deutschen Buchhandels an Carolin Emcke in der Frankfurter Paulskirche gehalten werden, sind urheberrechtlich geschützt. Das zweisprachige (deutsch/englisch) Buch mit den Reden von der Friedenspreisverleihung und weiteren Informationen zum Friedenspreisträger erscheint im November 2016 mit der ISBN 978-3-7657-3303-1 und kostet 14,90 €.

Kontakt

Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels e.V.
 Geschäftsstelle Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels - Martin Schult
 Schiffbauerdamm 5, 10117 Berlin
 Tel. 030/2800 783-44, Fax 030/2800 783-50
 Mail: m.schult@boev.de
 Internet: www.friedenspreis-des-deutschen-buchhandels.de