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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/9783110275766-012

URN: urn:nbn:de:hbz:464-20170112-084724-7

Link: http://duepublico.uni-duisburg-essen.de/servlets/DocumentServlet?id=43153

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Quelle: Margaret McCarthy (Hg.): German Pop Literature. A Companion. Boston; Berlin: De Gruyter 2015 (Companions to Contemporary German Culture, vol. 5), S. 263-284

Thomas Ernst

Pop vs. Plagiarism: Popliterary Intertextuality, Author Performance and the Disappearance of Originality in Helene Hegemann

On 15 March 2010, three days before the €15,000 Leipzig Book Prize was awarded, eighteen people stepped up as the first signatories to the 'Leipziger Erklärung zum Schutz geistigen Eigentums' [Leipzig Declaration for the Protection of Intellectual Property], among them Noble Prize winner Günter Grass and the famous East German writer, Christa Wolf, two icons of post-WWII German literature. As representatives of the 'Verband deutscher Schriftsteller' [Association of German Authors], they proclaimed:

> When plagiarism is considered prize-worthy, when intellectual theft and forgery are accepted as art, this attitude demonstrates a careless acceptance of copyright infringement in the literary establishment.
>
> Every literary work is an original work of art. That is true of all forms of text production, even of literary collages [...]. Copying without permission of and acknowledgment of the intellectual creator is casually seen as a peccadillo by the younger generation, at times out of ignorance regarding the value of creative work. However, it is an offence – as is supporting such an understanding of art.[1]

While it did not mention her by name, the declaration obviously referred to the eighteen-year-old author Helene Hegemann, whose debut novel *Axolotl Roadkill* (2010) earned her a place among the nominees, though the prize ultimately went to Georg Klein for *Roman unserer Kindheit* [*Novel of Our Childhood*] (2010). The declaration intensified debate about her text, which in January 2010 had been widely and enthusiastically praised by literary critics until, after a scoop by blogger Deef Pirmasens on 5 February 2010, it was scandalized as plagiarism.[2]

The signers of the declaration implicitly attacked a 'younger generation', succinctly sketching out different poetic concepts: words like *art* and *work*, *creativity* and *originality*, are put in opposition to *the internet*, *intellectual theft*, *falsification*

1 See 'Leipziger Erklärung zum Schutz geistigen Eigentums' (https://vs.verdi.de/urheberrecht/aktuelles/leipziger-erklaerung).

2 See Deef Pirmasens: 'Axotlotl Roadkill. Alles nur geklaut?' (http://www.gefuehlskonserve.de/axolotl-roadkill-alles-nur-geklaut-05022010.html).

and *plagiarism*. Indeed the 'Leipzig Declaration' marks a generational conflict, since most of the signers (all between sixty-one and eighty-four years old, except for three authors over fifty) could be Hegemann's parents, if not her grandparents.

And yet, there is a contradiction in the declaration: even literary collages are named as works of art. But the term *original* is reserved for the first time occurrence, while the literary technique of collage describes the artistic combination of previously existing elements (the French 'coller' means to glue). While one could argue that even a collage, the act of putting existing elements together in a new way, can be artistically original, one would have to define the border, where an 'original collage' of textual elements turns into 'plagiarism' of the same.

Using this dilemma as a point of departure, this essay will show how *Axolotl Roadkill* is not really a form of plagiarism, but rather an example of a partially intertextual book with pop literary self-reflexivity, compounded by a problematic authorial performance. Through its techniques, the novel – which also deals with pop culture themes – continues a pop literary tradition forty years after it emerged in contradistinction to the *littérature engagée* of authors like Günter Grass and Christa Wolf.

One cannot prove this claim without first digressing into the seminal concepts of 'originality' and 'genius' as they came to dominate the literary discourse starting in the eighteenth century. The general, modern concept of 'intellectual property' still provides the basis for the distinction between 'original creation' on the one hand and 'literary plagiarism' on the other. Since the 1960s, however, literary theory has become increasingly open to approaches like Michel Foucault's discourse analysis and theories of intertextuality which have questioned traditional conceptions of authorship, originality and intellectual property.

Postmodern media culture seems destined to subvert the categories of literary originality and genius, especially in pop literature – in the aesthetic play with techniques like collage, and on the level of author performance, literary self-presentation. Renowned, indeed prize-winning authors, like Elfriede Jelinek, Thomas Meinecke or René Pollesch could serve as examples for this development. However, by way of examining the beginning of Helene Hegemann's novel *Axolotl Roadkill* from inside a pop theoretical perspective I aim to show that this novel wears its intertextual character and the staging of autobiography on its sleeve. I also hope to show, *pace* the verdict of the 'Leipzig Declaration', that a different kind of 'value of creative work' presents itself in pop literary discourse, whose interest is aesthetic rather than criminal.

From Author-as-Genius via Intellectual Property and Plagiarism to Theories of Intertextuality: Theoretical Remarks

In his history of the genius concept Jochen Schmidt has traced how the *Sturm und Drang* period, wrestling with the polarity of imitation and originality, gave rise to a *Genieästhetik* in which 'the concept of imitating nature transitioned into that of creation; mimesis became creation',[3] and literary creativity was understood along the lines of the divine creation of nature. Authors like Goethe or Hölderlin appear to be prototypes of the 'author-as-genius' whose works were canonized as exceptional and original, thus not simply imitative.

Arising in the 1760s, the *Genieästhetik* replaces the previously dominant paradigms 'mimesis' and 'poetics' as a new programme which demands that texts be 'unique,' as Gerhard Plumpe has shown.[4] He points to the example of Immanuel Kant who proposed to Germanize the French loan word '*Génie*': 'How about expressing the French word *Génie* with the German 'unique spirit [eigentümlicher Geist]'?[5] Both concepts, however, come to be used side by side in the course of the nineteenth century, with the 'genius' describing the original creator of literature, that is a specific form of authorship, and the 'unique' being subsumed under the concept of 'intellectual property' which establishes a legal relation of ownership between the author and his or her literary creation, theoretically justified by, among others, Johann Gottlieb Fichte in 1793.

Leaning on his philosophy of the subject, Fichte presumes that it is physically impossible and otherwise improbable that the creator of a literary text and his reader can possess the forms of thought, the connections between ideas and their signification in a particular work in exactly the same manner. On the contrary, the reader would have to appropriate, on reading, the author's thoughts in his own, modified way 'because no one can make [the author's] thoughts his own without altering them. The thoughts thus remain his exclusive property for-

3 Jochen Schmidt, *Die Geschichte des Genie-Gedankens 1750–1945. Volume 1. Von der Aufklärung bis zum Idealismus* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1985), p. 13.

4 Gerhard Plumpe, 'Eigentum – Eigentümlichkeit. Über den Zusammenhang ästhetischer und juristischer Begriffe im 18. Jahrhundert', *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, 23 (1976), pp. 175–96 (pp. 195, 187).

5 Immanuel Kant, 'Anthropologie in pragmatischer Hinsicht', in *Schriften zur Anthropologie, Geschichtsphilosophie, Politik und Pädagogik 2. Werkausgabe Band XII*, ed. by Wilhelm Weischedel (Frankfurt a. M: Suhrkamp, 2000), pp. 395–690 (p. 544).

ever.'[6] Though a book as a physical object can change its owner, the 'thought property' that it contains can only be appropriated into a new form; the original form of thoughts will always remain irrevocably with the author.

Now Fichte can easily justify that the author's entire text must not be reprinted without permission because the author retains control of the original and complete structure of thoughts. What remains more complicated, however, is the question if or how individual quotations from literary texts might be inserted by other authors into their own texts. Fichte is indifferent to this question. He first points to the rule of clearly marking quotations from literary texts with inverted commas, then he speaks of how one must distinguish between quoting small or large passages, speaking of various 'gradations'. Additionally, imitations are a different matter if they involve a media switch: 'copper engravings of paintings are not simply copies; they change the form'.[7]

Since the nineteenth century the debate about the boundary between permitted and illegal quotations from other texts has been characterized by the concept of 'plagiarism', that is 'the conscious appropriation of another's intellectual property by presuming authorship' which is foremost defined judicially.[8] Of course literary theory is aware that determining plagiarism is not always straightforward. The cultural situation, the interaction between the urtext, presumed plagiarism, notions of authorship and the literary public sphere may influence the verdict.

Philip Theisohn recently stated in his 'unoriginal' literary history of plagiarism: 'The societal rules for the use of intellectual property are always in flux; they can be very rigid, but at times they can actually force plagiarism'.[9] In addition it may be a programmatic task of literature to push the envelope, thus '(re)-defining what is a legitimate use of another text and what is not.'[10] Theisohn's broad study of plagiarism, which covers examples from ancient Greece to the present, reflects on the writing strategies of canonized authors like Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Jean Paul, Karl Philipp Moritz, Christoph Martin Wieland, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Heinrich Heine, Theodor Fontane, Franz Kafka, Bertolt Brecht, Claire Goll, Paul Celan, Wolfgang Koeppen and Max Frisch.

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6 Johann Gottlieb Fichte, 'Beweis der Unrechtmässigkeit des Büchernachdrucks. Ein Räsonnement und eine Parabel', in *Sämmtliche Werke* (Berlin: Veit & Comp, 1846), VIII, pp. 223–44 (p. 228).

7 Fichte, 'Beweis', pp. 230, 236 f.

8 Florian Fischer, *Das Literaturplagiat. Tatbestand und Rechtsfolgen* (Frankfurt a. M.: Lang, 1996), p. 3.

9 Philipp Theisohn, *Plagiat. Eine unoriginelle Literaturgeschichte* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2009), p. 29.

10 Ibid., p. 28.

During the 1960s, in the aftermath of literary modernism and the historical avant-garde, and parallel to early pop literature, new theoretical approaches developed which radically questioned the interpretive fixation on 'authorial genius', the 'self-contained work' and 'originality' as an aesthetic category. In 1969 Michel Foucault characterized the idea of an author's intellectual ownership of their texts as 'odd' and recalled epochs before this notion was established, when 'the texts that we call 'literary' today (reports, stories, epics, tragedies, comedies) used to be spread and consumed without ever asking about authorship: ... their actual and presumed age would legitimate them'.[11] Ultimately Foucault calls for distinguishing various, discursively produced 'author functions' on the one hand and the literary texts on the other, before borrowing a question from Beckett: 'What matter who's speaking?'[12]

It seems like a variation on the theme when the issue is taken up by theories of intertextuality. Leaning on Michail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva developed her broad conception of intertextuality in 1967: 'Every text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations, any text is the absorption and transformation of another'.[13] In this understanding literature is seen from a poststructuralist perspective, as part of a universal culture of references that is inescapable.

Later theorists have transformed this broad concept of intertextuality into various more differentiated versions, giving us more precise tools for analysis. In *Palimpsestes. La littérature au second degré* [*Palimpsests*] (1982), Gérard Genette distinguishes five different types of transtextuality, which he describes as forms that bring one text 'in a manifest or concealed relationship to other texts', from the most concrete intertextuality, that is direct references to another text, to hypertextuality, characterized by more general allusions to another text.[14] Working with numerous examples from world literature, he describes distinct forms of transtextuality: quotation or plagiarism in the case of intertextuality, parody, travesty or pastiche in the case of hypertextuality.

Genette's work has found a following in Germany too. Ulrich Broich, Manfred Pfister and others have described different ways of marking intertextuality and propose a scale of intertextuality as well as an analysis of single-text and sys-

11 Michel Foucault, 'Was ist ein Autor?', in *Schriften zur Literatur*, by Michel Foucault (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1988), pp. 7–31 (pp. 18–19).

12 Ibid., p. 31.

13 Julia Kristeva, 'Bachtin, das Wort, der Dialog und der Roman', in *Texte zur Literaturtheorie der Gegenwart*, ed. by Dorothee Kimmich, Rolf Günter Renner and Bernd Stiegler (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1996), pp. 334–48 (p. 337).

14 Gérard Genette, *Palimpseste. Die Literatur auf zweiter Stufe* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp 1993), p. 9.

tematic references; they also describe forms of intertextuality in the context of linguistic, genre and media transformations. Like Genette, they are after a 'more narrowly defined concept that makes it possible to distinguish intertextuality from non-intertextuality and to separate historically and typologically different forms of intertextuality'.[15]

Whether you adopt the broad, poststructuralist concept of intertextuality or prefer to use a more intricate model to differentiate intertextual from non-intertextual elements (as I will do in my Hegemann analysis), either way you will presuppose that the construct of the original, inventive literary creation is questionable. A further consideration, however, will be to examine how pop literature makes specific uses of intertextual and intermedial processes.

Intermedial Author Performance and the Cultures of Quotation: Regarding a Theory of Pop Literature

Since it was introduced in German speaking countries in the 1960s by Hans Carl Artmann and Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, pop literature has often been marked by an experimental poetics of quotation and intermedial games of authorial staging. Even today these are treated suspiciously by a tradition of criticism and scholarship that had, at least initially, been among the targets. Early pop literary texts are inspired by Pop Art, the American Beat Generation in literature, and musical trends that start out as counterculture before they enter the mainstream of a postmodern media society in the subsequent decades.[16] Thomas Hecken looks at Anglo-American and German documents with programmatic and self-reflective contents between 1966 and 1973 that try to answer the question 'what is pop?', and he lists a whole range of – partly contradictory – characteristics of the new movement.

Hecken understands pop as opposition to a bourgeois, high culture aesthetic that sees literature as a leading societal medium, does not ironize authorship and

15 Ulrich Broich and Manfred Pfister, 'Vorwort der Herausgeber', in *Intertextualität. Formen, Funktionen, anglistische Fallstudien*, ed. by Ulrich Broich and Manfred Pfister (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1985), pp. IX–XII (p. X).

16 See Andreas Huyssen, 'The Cultural Politics of Pop: Reception and Critique of U.S. Pop Art in the Federal Republic of Germany', *New German Critique*, 4 (1975), 77–97. Parts of this chapter are a condensed version of Thomas Ernst, *Literatur und Subversion. Politisches Schreiben in der Gegenwart* (Berlin: transcript, 2013), pp. 185–202.

prefers to treat literary texts as the original creation of a natural consciousness with moral authority. By contrast pop culture defines itself through its interest in technology and media, its 'aesthetic (and sometimes moral) inferiority', 'the devaluation of (supposed) authenticity and realness', processes of 'posing and self-styling' and the feature he names first: an 'aesthetics of superficiality'.[17] All of those provoke bourgeois morals and the traditional sense of order. This affront of a pop cultural aesthetic to bourgeois high culture has persisted, which Hegemann's example will show.

The literary discourse on pop literature has tried to elucidate such constitutive characteristics of popular culture, although we should concede right away that, along with the catch-all term 'pop', the concept of pop literature is so vague that its analytic quality seems questionable. This has led Eckhard Schumacher to call it 'expendable' and 'heuristically inconclusive'.[18] Likewise, Frank Degler and Ute Paulokat declared the year 2001 the 'end of German pop literature' in their work *Neue Deutsche Popliteratur*.[19]

I still assume that the concept, however open it may be, remains meaningful in relation to specific aesthetic processes that have historically been effective in pop literary texts. In 2001, as the Germanist discourse about pop literature began to intensify, Johannes Ullmaier brought things down to the loose formulation that 'pop literature is everything that Martin Walser is not', before he went on to add a twenty-four part catalogue of characteristics to define pop literary texts.[20] My own contribution to the debate at the time used a deliberately broad understanding of pop literature in a first attempt to place it historically in a German-speaking context.[21]

In the meantime a lot of monographs and anthologies have appeared that offer an abundant range of definitions for pop literature, with treatments of particular texts or authors in specific historical, cultural or medial contexts with regard to the pop literary field. To name only the examples that relate to my present discussion: pop literature is directly linked to intertextuality or processes of copying, serving as a 'method of writing the present' by way of 'quoting, tran-

17 Thomas Hecken, *Pop. Geschichte eines Konzepts 1955–2009* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009), pp. 286–90, 278, 293, 298, 265.

18 See Eckhard Schumacher, 'Das Ende der Popliteratur. Eine Fortsetzungsgeschichte (Teil 2)', in *Poetik der Oberfläche. Die deutschsprachige Popliteratur der 1990er Jahre*, ed. by Olaf Grabienski, Till Huber and Jan-Noël Thon (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), pp. 53–67 (p. 65).

19 Frank Degler and Ute Paulokat, *Neue Deutsche Popliteratur* (Paderborn: Fink, 2008), p. 114 f.

20 Johannes Ullmaier, *Von Acid nach Adlon und zurück. Eine Reise durch die deutschsprachige Popliteratur* (Mainz: Ventil, 2001), p. 12.

21 See Thomas Ernst, *Popliteratur* (Hamburg: Rotbuch, 2001).

scribing, copying, cataloguing' (Eckhard Schumacher);[22] as a 'new archivism' or a 'literature of secondary words that works with a language of things already said' (Moritz Baßler);[23] as a kind of writing that is aware of a tradition which it transfers intertextually into the realm of the popular (Frank Degler and Ute Paulokat).[24] Johannes Ullmaier has noted, however, that 'beneath the stream of pop' and its fundamental intertextuality of medial copying there is a 'counter flow': this is the radical literary montage of the 'cut-up' which he sees emanating from William S. Burroughs, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and Jürgen Ploog. Like pop literary methods, it uses medial copying. But where pop literature 'makes another copy', the cut-up is more interested in the margin of surface images and the formalism of the montage. Apart from asking what kind of knowledge archive is being quoted (high or subculture), one can also distinguish techniques of literary montage, along with their different effects.[25]

In addition, scholars of pop literature like to point out that pop authors have a penchant for performances: they confidently play with (multi-)medial performances of authorship in which they appear as 'pop stars'.[26] Using von Stuckrad-Barre's *Transcript* (2001) as an example, Rolf Parr has described the specific connection between the textual and the performative staging of authorship, characterizing them as 'forms of literary media-simulation'. He argues that the intermedial character of pop literary texts with a specific kind of author-performance in the medial public sphere makes the presumed unity of the author subject with itself impossible. We are dealing with a kind of writing 'that continually stages itself as literary (media) life and in doing so already anticipates its own mediation in the public sphere'. However, this second act is not played by the sovereign author, privy to specific knowledge about the text. Rather, it is the 'publicly interpreting mediator of texts that belong to the previously active author function named Stuckrad-Barre'.[27] The argument is that pop literature is marked by the aesthetic play of differences with, on the one hand, 'ego plurality' in writing and

22 Eckhard Schumacher, *Gerade Eben Jetzt. Schreibweisen der Gegenwart* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2003), p. 13.

23 Moritz Baßler, *Der deutsche Pop-Roman. Die neuen Archivisten* (Munich: Beck, 2002), pp. 184–85.

24 See Degler and Paulokat, *Neue Deutsche Popliteratur*, pp. 85–96.

25 Johannes Ullmaier, 'Cut-up. Über ein Gegenrinnsal unterhalb des Popstroms', in *Pop-Literatur*, ed. by Heinz Ludwig Arnold and Jörgen Schäfer (*Text + Kritik*, *Sonderband* [2003]), pp. 133–48 (pp. 145–146).

26 Degler and Paulokat, *Neue Deutsche Popliteratur*, pp. 15–24.

27 Rolf Parr, 'Literatur als literarisches (Medien-)Leben. Biografisches Erzählen in der neuen deutschen Pop-Literatur', in *Deutschsprachige Gegenwartsliteratur seit 1989. Zwischenbilanzen –*

author performances in various public spheres on the other, all played masterfully on different medial stages.

A fitting metaphor for the multilayered connections between text and author is the image of the 'DJ author' who samples text material and, like a DJ, compiles it to make a new song or text. Gerald Fiebig may have been the first to reflect on and question this image in the German-speaking discourse about pop literature. In 1999 he pointed out that 'upon closer inspection ... *every* novel' reveals itself as having 'many tracks' or being a 'text with many voices'.[28] This metaphor has been used repeatedly by scholars, especially in discussions of author, DJ and musician Thomas Meinecke. However, Katharina Picandet has shown convincingly – with regard to Meinecke, no less – that this image is only partially applicable to literary authorship: it can describe quoting techniques that already existed before the technology of sampling came about, but not a specific kind of musical quality that feeds into literary intertextuality.[29]

Next to Meinecke's intertextual pop novels, the plays of Rene Pollesch, a former director of the theatre "Volksbühne im Prater" in Berlin, provide a good example of intertextual pop literature. Pollesch mixes philosophical and sociological theories into his texts, along with fragments from various media formats, marketing and political slogans as well as everyday phrases to create a self-reflexive 'discourse theatre'. In his play *Stadt als Beute* [*City as Prey*] (2001), part of the *Prater Trilogy*, Pollesch refers to a sociological study with the same title in order to reflect on changing urban spaces.[30] Pollesch himself has declared, in an obvious antithesis to a tradition of author- or text-centred theatre: 'I am not going to pass myself off as an individual producer of texts who sits at his desk producing works of genius [...] That is [...] the result of the fact that my texts develop during rehearsals. If there is a text at the end, it contains the work of rehearsals.

Analysen – Vermittlungsperspektiven, ed. by Clemens Kammler and Torsten Pflugmacher (Heidelberg: Synchron, 2004), pp. 183–200 (pp. 185, 187).

28 Gerald Fiebig, 'Jäger und Sampler', *testcard. Beiträge zur Popgeschichte*, 7 (1999), 232–39 (p. 233).

29 For a positive view of the metaphor of the 'DJ author' see Florence Feiereisen, *Der Text als Soundtrack – der Autor als DJ. Postmoderne und postkoloniale Samples bei Thomas Meinecke* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011); and for its problematizing see Katharina Picandet, 'Der Autor als Disk(urs)-Jockey. Zitat-Pop am Beispiel von Thomas Meineckes Roman *Hellblau*', in Grabienski, Huber and Thon, *Poetik der Oberfläche*, pp. 125–41.

30 See Klaus Ronneberger, Stephan Lanz, and Walther Jahn, *Die Stadt als Beute* (Bonn: Dietz, 1999).

No-one can determine that'.[31] From 2001 to 2006 Pollesch collaborated at the Berlin Volksbühne with the dramaturge Carl Hegemann, whose daughter Helene became an object of controversy in 2010 when the bourgeois tradition of literary creativity and authorial image clashed with the practices of the pop generation.

Neither a Wunderkind nor a Plagiarist: Helene Hegemann's *Axolotl Roadkill* as an Example of a Popliterary Novel with Intertextual Elements

Born in 1992, Helene Hegemann tasted success early, both as director and writer: her radio play *Ariel 15 – oder die Grundlagen der Verlorenheit* [*Ariel 15 – or the Foundations of Forlornness*] was chosen as a 'Radio Play of the Month' in 2008. Her film *Torpedo* earned her the Max Ophüls Prize in 2009. Literary critics were full of anticipation when her debut novel *Axolotl Roadkill* was published by Ullstein in 2010, and initial reactions were enthusiastic. Her novel was described as 'a sensation' by the *FAZ*[32] and the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*,[33] and the young author was hailed as a 'literary ball of lightning' *(Die Zeit)*,[34] 'a wunderkind of the Berlin alternative scene' (*Der Spiegel*),[35] or 'a wunderkind of literature' (*Focus*),[36] to quote only some of the exemplary praise from important newspapers and magazines. All these very positive responses emphasize three elements: the author's young age, her socialization in the theatre scene of Berlin's *Volksbühne* and the extraordinary power of her novel's language. And yet it is conspicuous that the novel is rarely considered 'completely authentic' even if parallels between the

31 René Pollesch, 'Ich bin Heidi Hoh. René Pollesch im Gespräch mit Jürgen Berger', in *www-slums*, ed. by Corinna Brocher (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2003), pp. 341–48 (pp. 346–47).

32 Maxim Biller, 'Glauben, lieben, hassen. Helene Hegemanns *Axolotl Roadkill*' (http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/helene-hegemanns-axolotl-roadkill-glauben-lieben-hassen-1911200.html).

33 Georg Diez, 'Zum Glück. Helene Hegemann wird im Februar 18 und hat ein sehr erstaunliches Buch geschrieben', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23./24. 1. 2010.

34 Ursula März, 'Literarischer Kugelblitz. Im Koksnebel: Helene Hegemanns heftiges Romandebüt' (http://www.zeit.de/2010/04/L-B-Hegemann).

35 Tobias Rapp, 'Das Wunderkind der Boheme' (http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/a-672725.html).

36 Anonymus, 'Wildes Wunderkind', *Focus*, 1. 2. 2010.

author's biography and her protagonist Mifti are undeniable. Tobias Rapp writes in *Der Spiegel* that the novel has 'something to do with Hegemann's life – but in a limited way'.[37] Nadine Lange writes in the *Tagesspiegel* that the novel is intertextual and 'extends beyond an autobiography. Hegemann's highly artificial language is peppered with references to Christoph Schlingensief or the radical U.S. author Kathy Acker. In addition there are references to pop music with a pronounced retro feel'.[38]

Axolotl Roadkill tells the story of the sixteen-year-old drop-out, Mifti, who lives in a kind of commune with her siblings Annika and Edmond. Her mother has passed away, having largely neglected her children. Her father works in the Berlin cultural scene and lives with his younger girlfriend. The novel describes Mifti's radical self-doubt and her unsuccessful attempts to give her life meaning through excessive behaviour at parties with drugs and sex, including with her older best friend Ophelia. In her diary and in an email conversation with Ophelia, she reflects on her continual failures. She acquires an axolotl in order to represent her inertia – a 'nocturnal salamander' that 'just won't grow up'.[39] It appears, according to Hannelore Schlaffer, simultaneously as a 'totem of contemporary youth and in the title of the work as a symbol of refusal'.[40] The first person narrative of fifteen-year-old Mifti begins with the words 'O.k., die Nacht, wieder mal so ein Ringen mit dem Tod, die Fetzen angstgequälten Schlafes' [OK, the night, once again a struggle with death, the shreds of sleep tortured with anxiety]. The novel ends with a letter from her late mother who rebukes Mifti: 'Es macht mich wirklich krank, wenn ich all die Scheiße höre, die du von dir gibst. In der Hölle ist für dich ein Platz' [It really makes me sick when I listen to all the shit you give off. In hell there's a spot reserved for you].[41]

The themes alone place the novel in the pop literature rubric: it focuses on a youthful protagonist who rebels against bourgeois values; her party life, sexuality, and drug use are openly described, and the text also covers various media, from television to music and the Internet, including 'Edmonds iTunes-Bibliothek' [Edmond's iTunes-Library].[42] In addition, the para-textual elements and

37 Rapp, 'Das Wunderkind der Boheme'.
38 Nadine Lange, 'Torpedo Girl. Ich ist ein Drogentrip: *Axolotl Roadkill*, das erstaunliche Romandebüt der 17-jährigen Helene Hegemann' (http://www.tagesspiegel.de/kultur/literatur/rezension-axolotl-roadkill-ich-ist-ein-drogentrip/1669326.html)
39 Helene Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill* (Berlin: Ullstein, 2010), p. 138.
40 Hannelore Schlaffer, 'Die Göre – Karriere einer literarischen Figur', *Merkur*, 65 (2011), pp. 274–79 (p. 276).
41 Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, pp. 9, 204.
42 Ibid., p. 18.

the titles of sections signify the novel's intertextual and intermedial strategies: it opens with the motto of a private television channel ('We love to entertain you' from Pro 7).[43] In her concluding acknowledgments Hegemann thanks writer/director Rene Pollesch and, prominently, avant-garde author Kathy Acker, known as an anti-copyright activist.[44] Chapter titles are predominantly marked quotations from bands – from *Pink Floyd* to *Portishead* – or from popular 'stars' like Franz Beckenbauer and 'Sexy Julia', or from authors like David Foster Wallace. A typical chapter title with a marked intertextual reference is: 'Frustrated Women (I mean, they're frustrated) (*The Standells*)'.[45]

It is not only in its para-texts and chapter titles where the text – already characterized as pop thematically – uses different intertextual processes and archives; the text itself is littered with many marked quotations from popular culture. Mifti once quotes Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* when she says: 'Toto, I've a feeling we are not in Kansas anymore'. Ophelia reports on her intertextual and intermedial artistic activities: 'Ich habe mit zwölf einen ganzen Roman geschrieben, der nur aus Songtexten von Nick Cave zusammengeflickt war. "Next to me lies the print of your body plan like the map of a forbidden island."' [At twelve I wrote a whole novel cobbled together with song lyrics by Nick Cave. 'Next to me lies the print of your body plan like the map of a forbidden island'].[46]

The description of the figures via pop cultural coordinates, which Rolf Parr has described as constitutive for pop literary texts, in opposition to a bourgeois subject philosophy of internalized values, is illustrated in the novel's very first pages.[47] Mifti's father is called an old-time, left-wing culture worker whose character is solely explained in external, pop cultural fashion via 'depressive Musik' [depressing music], namely 'Melvins, Julie Driscoll, Neil Young'.[48] An accidental acquaintance of Mifti is described as follows: 'O-Ton heterosexuelle Kommunikationsdesignerin in blaugraugestreifter Strickjacke' [Direct quote, heterosexual communication designer in a blue-grey striped knit jacket];[49] her older brother Edmond is, among other things, 'eine Mischung aus Marlon Brando und äh, wem denn noch, keine Ahnung, er besitzt eins der weltweit nur fünfhundertmal existierenden Paare goldener Pro Bowl 2007 Air Force 1 von Nike [...] Fan von Ray Davis' [a mix of Marlon Brando and eh, whatshisname, no idea, he owns

43 Ibid., p. 7.
44 Ibid., p. 207.
45 Ibid., p. 132.
46 Ibid., p. 43, p. 159.
47 See Rolf Parr, 'Literatur als literarisches (Medien-)Leben'.
48 Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, p. 13.
49 Ibid.

one of only 500 existing pairs of golden Pro Bowl 2007 Air Force 1 by Nike (...) a fan of Ray Davis].[50] Pop cultural references like musical taste, clothing style or consumer choices serve as primary or partial means of characterization. That the text seeks the company of pop literature is also signalled at the beginning: the fourth page of the actual narrative cites a 'pop culture text' regarding the question 'weshalb die Avantgarde TROTZDEM bauchtanzt' [why the avant-garde NEVERTHELESS does belly dancing]. Page seven features a quotation from Ulf Poschardt's 'sagenumwobene[m] Sachtext über die Praxis der DJ-CULTURE' [legendary monograph on the practice of DJ-CULTURE].[51] The novel acknowledges its references to pop cultural archives and theories early.

In addition, meta-reflections on literary or linguistic processes for montage of available elements permeate the text. On the one hand, these reinforce its literary quality; on the other hand, they serve as a signpost that radically questions the category of 'originality'. In the first paragraph Mifti observes: 'Früher war das alles so schön pubertär hingerotzt und jetzt ist es angestrengte Literatur' [It used to be like everything was like spewed out in a cool puberal way, and now it's *literature*].[52] I would paraphrase this sentence as follows: 'I, the narrator, used to write ingenious texts in one fell swoop; now I write *real literature*, which is clearly not characterized by any genius creative processes but rather by intensive interaction with a canon beyond the narrative of originality, which takes a conscious effort.' In the second paragraph of the novel, Mifti, having just woken up from an afternoon nap, notices that 'so viele Gedanken da sind, dass man seine eigenen Gedanken nicht mehr von den fremden unterscheiden kann' [there are so many thoughts that you can't separate your own thoughts from the others].[53] This merging of one's own and others' elements is revisited metaphorically two pages later. Mifti reflects on two 'vollgekotzte[ ] Kleidungsstücke' [pieces of clothing with puke all over them]: 'Ist das die Kotze eines Wildfremden, der mich in einer stark frequentierten Unisextoilette überrascht hat? Ist das meine Kotze? Bringt mich das mir jetzt irgendwie näher? Ich fange offenbar echt an, die wichtigsten Details zu vergessen' [Is this puke from a complete stranger who surprised me in an over-frequented unisex bathroom? Is this my puke? Does this bring me closer to myself somehow? I really seem to start losing the most important details]. And a few sentences later she observes: 'Ich habe meine [...] Patchworkgeschichte ver-

50 Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, p. 14.
51 Ibid., pp. 12, 15. See also Ulf Poschardt, *DJ Culture. Diskjockeys und Popkultur* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1997).
52 Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, p. 9.
53 Ibid., pp. 9–10.

loren' [I have lost my (...) patchwork story]'.[54] The motifs are very similar: her own and others' thoughts (or 'elements') merge in the protagonist's world. But it is neither useful nor possible to try and separate the various elements. These examples culminate on page seven of the actual novel in a dialog between Mifti and Edmond which assumes the character of a manifesto. Edmond starts:

> – Is it mixed by you? It's mixed like shit! Berlin is here to mix everything with everything, Alter!
>
> – Ist das von dir?
>
> – Berlin is here to mix everything with everything, Alter? Ich bediene mich überall, wo ich Inspiration finde und beflügelt werde, Mifti. Filme, Musik, Bücher, Gemälde, Wurstlyrik, Fotos, Gespräche, Träume...
>
> – Straßenschilder, Wolken...
>
> – ...Licht und Schatten, genau, weil meine Arbeit und mein Diebstahl authentisch werden, sobald etwas meine Seele berührt. Es ist egal, woher ich die Dinge nehme, wichtig ist, wohin ich sie trage.
>
> – Es ist also nicht von dir?
>
> – Nein. Von so'nem Blogger.
>
> [– *Is it mixed by you? It's mixed like shit! Berlin is here to mix everything with everything.* Dude!
>
> – Is that yours?
>
> – *Berlin is here to mix everything with everything, dude*? I help myself wherever I find inspiration and take wing, Mifti. Films, music, books, paintings, sausage poetry, photos, conversations, dreams...
>
> – Street signs, clouds...
>
> – ... light and shadow, exactly, because my work and my theft become authentic as soon as something touches my soul. It doesn't matter where I get things from, it's important where I take them.
>
> – So it's not yours?
>
> – No, from some blogger].[55]

54 Ibid., p. 12.
55 Ibid., p. 15.

Even the reflections on the 'mixing principle' are taken from another source (and from another medium): a blogger.[56] The novel thus confesses its literary technique here in that the narrator Mifti is inspired by a slightly older male named Edmond who reports on being inspired by another source. It is a meta-fictional moment which declares that a 'mixed work' becomes 'authentic' precisely as thievery if it is assembled in aesthetically persuasive form. Michael Peter Hehl considers this passage an adaptation of Kathy Acker's poetics, whom Hegemann explicitly credits in her acknowledgments.[57]

The novel thus features numerous marked quotations from popular and canonical sources. The text signals at the very beginning that its protagonist repeatedly mixes various 'foreign' elements in her life (and consequently in the remainder of the book as the reader may surmise) in the same way it denotes the text's writing strategy as intertextual. The scandal about the text's presumed plagiarisms began on 5 February 2010 and focused on the many unacknowledged sources that Hegemann used. However, in light of my previous discussion it seems questionable whether her intertextual approach can still be described with terms like 'unacknowledged' or, following Theisohn's definition of plagiarism, 'conscious appropriation of another's ideas with the presumption of authorship'.[58] It is also obvious that in Deef Pirmasens we find a blogger who has landed a scoop because his pop literary knowledge extends beyond the high culture seismograph of newspapers' arts and leisure sections. On his blog, *die gefühlskonserve. deef pirmasens as seen in real life* [c*an of feelings. Deef pirmasens as seen in real life*], he initially uses only six examples under the heading 'Axolotl Roadkill: all just ripped?' in order to show how close some descriptions from the novel are to Airen's wordpress blog, particularly descriptions of party nights in the Berlin club Berghain.[59] Over the next two days Pirmasens added further examples to the list of cross-references and showed that the final letter from Mifti's dead mother is in good part a translation of the song 'Fuck U' by the English band *Archive*. A typical

56 See Pirmasens, 'Axolotl Roadkill'. Pirmasens links in his post the sentence 'Berlin is here to mix everything with everything' with Airen's blog, but this entry from 28 June 2008 is, however, no longer available on Airen's blog. (See http://airen.wordpress.com/2008/06/05/berlin-is-here-to-mix-everything-with-everything/).

57 See Michael Peter Hehl, 'Digitale Bohème vs. Bildungsbürgertum. Kultursoziologische Perspektiven auf Helene Hegemanns *Axolotl Roadkill*', in *Das erste Jahrzehnt. Narrative und Polemiken des 21. Jahrhunderts*, ed. by Johanna Bohley and Julia Schöll (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2011), pp. 259–78 (pp. 269–70).

58 Fischer, *Das Literaturplagiat*, p. 3.

59 See also Airen, *Strobo* (Berlin: SuKuLTuR, 2009).

example of Pirmasens' juxtaposition of a Hegemann passage and Airen's original sources looks like this:

Axolotl Roadkill, p. 11:

> 'Meine Existenz setzt sich momentan nur noch aus Schwindelanfällen und der Tatsache zusammen, dass sie von einer hyperrealen, aber durch Rohypnol etwas schlecht aufgelösten Vaselintitten-Installation halb zerfleischt wurde' [Right now my existence consists only of dizzy spells and of the fact that it's been half mangled by a hyper-real but, due to Rohypnol, low-res installation of vaseline tits].

Compared to Airens' blog posting *Einerseits* [*On the One Hand*] on May 28, 2009:

> '[...] für Erwachsene, mit farbigem Schattenspiel auf hyperrealen aber durch Rohypnol etwas schlecht aufgelösten Vaselintitten [...]' [(...) for adults, with a colourful play of shadows on hyper-real but, due to Rohypnol, somewhat low-res vaseline tits (...)].[60]

Pirmasens connected these discoveries, which were later picked up by the print-media and turned into the scandal, with two theses. The first is his accusation of plagiarism against Hegemann, because 'instead of simply letting herself be inspired by others and quote them she copied them'.[61] However, he made distinctions that were largely ignored in the subsequent debate: there is a marked quotation from David Foster Wallace on the one hand, and there are unacknowledged quotations from Airen on the other.[62] In my reading this is representative of Hegemann's intertextual approach. Pirmasens' second thesis addresses the newspaper critics: given the self-reflexive hints at a collage principle outlined above, they should have recognized the necessity of looking further: 'A Google search would have led to Airen's blog and with it to his novel'.[63] Indeed, most of the reviews emphasized the connection between Mifti and Hegemann which was also pushed by the publisher Ullstein. The condensed message on the back cover reads: 'Ich bin sechzehn Jahre alt [...]. Ich bin in Berlin. Es geht um meine Wahnvorstellungen' [I am sixteen years old (...). I am in Berlin. I'm talking about my delusions].[64]

60 Pirmasens, 'Axolotl Roadkill'.
61 Ibid.
62 See Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, pp. 4, 193.
63 Pirmasens, 'Axolotl Roadkill'.
64 Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, back cover. Doris Moser has analyzed these effects of authenticity caused by the media communication of Helene Hegemann in detail: Doris Moser: '*Frame and Fame*. Literaturvermittlung als Medienkommunikation am Beispiel von Helene Hegemann und

The print-media critique suddenly found itself in a bind: it had presumed authenticity but was now faced with unacknowledged intertextuality. Some reactions seemed downright furious and accused the text and its author of deliberate deception for economic reasons. Andreas Kilb, for example, observed in the *FAZ* that the novel 'would not even have done half as well on the market or in reviews if it [had not been staged] as the cry for help by a very young original genius'.[65] In the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Bernd Graff sounded even more direct with the charge that Hegemann's unmarked quotations undermine the elementary principles of the literary market, which basically aligns him with the 'Leipziger Erklärung'. Graff demands a 'genuine authorship', which he regards as a prerequisite for literary prizes, authors' royalties, and the appearance of authors on talk shows. Hegemann's particular form of unmarked intertextuality would have to be 'understood as product piracy, and the literary industry cannot afford this. It would be destroyed'.[66]

An extension of the print-media's invective can be found in scholarly responses. While Philip Theisohn's book *Literarisches Eigentum. Zur Ethik geistiger Arbeit im digitalen Zeitalter* [*Literary Property*, subtitled *An Essay on the Ethics of Intellectual Work in the Digital Age*] (2012), has a slightly different concern, it is nonetheless instructive in this context. Theisohn addresses the pop culture elements through which I have been reading Hegemann's text. His 124-page essay makes the claim that in the digital age there is no more working on coherent texts and no literary memory is being constructed. In other words: '[B]ecause we no longer *appropriate* [aneignen], we are no longer willing or able to make anything *our own* [zu eigen haben]'. Theisohn's basis is the bourgeois understanding of individuality, work, property as well as education in the service of subjectivity, against which pop artists of the 1960s positioned themselves. Theisohn thus finds in Hegemann 'presumed contexts and intertexts' which are 'grafted, but nothing of it is actually understood, conceptually examined, comprehended'.[67] In other words: in the drop-out Mifti, the novel features a young woman 'who

Axolotl Roadkill', in *Doing Contemporary Literature. Praktiken, Wertungen, Automatismen*, ed. by Maik Bierwirth, Anja Johannsen and Mirna Zeman (München: Fink, 2012), pp. 191–216.

65 Andreas Kilb, 'Entriegelung der Sinne. Vom "poète maudit" zur verfluchten Poetin: Die junge Autorin Helene Hegemann hat sich von dem Roman *Strobo* des Bloggers Airen inspirieren lassen. Was taugt die Vorlage?', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 9. 2. 2010.

66 Bernd Graff, 'Paradies der falschen Vögel. Von Bricolage bis Mashup – der Streit um Hegemanns Kulturtechnik des Zitats', (http://www.sueddeutsche.de/kultur/streit-um-hegemann-paradies-der-falschen-voegel-1.63810).

67 Philipp Theisohn, *Literarisches Eigentum. Zur Ethik geistiger Arbeit im digitalen Zeitalter. Essay* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 2012), p. 124.

can never attain something like education, self-fulfilment, reflectiveness, her own style'. Theisohn hardly takes time to reflect on the pop cultural challenge to this concept. Instead he reaches the verdict: 'Perhaps it isn't very good literature, maybe it isn't literature at all'.[68] This leads to the more basic question of literary value, which gets different answers from 'bourgeois literature' and 'pop literature' respectively, particularly in relation to 'character', which intertextual strategies are used and if an author can be understood as the original creator of innovative ideas.

Michael Peter Hehl takes a contrary position in his analysis of the novel and the plagiarism scandal. He looks at the events from a cultural sociology perspective as a conflict between the 'digital Bohemian' on the one hand and an educated middle-class public on the other. Hehl shows in his analysis that the figure of the drop-out Mifti is shaped in reaction to concepts of subjectivity inside a bourgeois modernity. As a reaction to this backdrop, Mifti tries out different versions of 'subjectivity in the creative milieu of postmodernity', among which one finds 'intertextual processes that connote something counter-cultural and that transgress the boundaries of copyright'.[69] The conflict between the bourgeois biblio culture and the use of digital media within the postmodern creative milieu becomes increasingly pronounced, according to Hehl. The debate around Hegemann is thus simply a particularly typical symptom; first, in her author performance alone, the 'plagiarizer' and the prodigy – that outgrowth of the literature industry's *genius* in bourgeois modernity – come apart;[70] second, Hegemann lacks critical distance on societal processes because her novel questions the very possibility of distance – as all of pop culture traditionally does. This leads Hehl to see the public debate on *Axolotl Roadkill* as 'a continuation of the novel' that 'dramatizes central aporias of contemporary culture'.[71]

If one views Hegemann's novel as representative of pop literary writing as it is practiced and understood in contemporary postmodern, creative milieus, one discovers, however, problems and aporias different from the bourgeois critique which is suspicious of the entire concept. First, there is the problem that in the 1960s the pop cultural revolt against bourgeois notions of subjectivity could be

68 Theisohn, *Literarisches Eigentum*, p. 57.
69 Hehl, 'Digitale Bohème', pp. 268–69.
70 Ibid., p. 274.
71 Ibid., p. 275. Jan Süselbeck follows also the thesis that *Axolotol Roadkill* 'is not a document of a *fraud* but a poetological principle of copying which is demonstrated by the text itself'. Jan Süselbeck, 'Zwischen Intertextualität und Plagiarismus. Literarische Antworten auf Fragen der Originalität seit 1990', in *Literatur und Theorie seit der Postmoderne*, ed. by Klaus Birnstiel and Erik Schilling (Stuttgart: Hirzel, 2012), pp. 121–36 (pp. 132–33).

understood as a counter-discourse or a subversive act, but in this day and age a 'universalized youthfulness' appears as a 'hegemonic subjectivity model of the present'.[72] While it was possible in the 1960s to conceive of flat hierarchies, autonomy and creativity as aspects of political resistance, a more flexible capitalism with its continually growing service sector has incorporated these forms of work. In his description of the 'New Capitalism', Richard Sennett asserts that 'in the attack on routine a new freedom of time appears, but its appearance is deceptive [...] The age of flexibility is the age of a new power'.[73] Second, it is striking that in her novel Hegemann draws on youthful, alternative cultures and digital forms of writing, but in doing so is not aesthetically consistent. Linguist Michael Szurawitzki has shown for example that the emails between Mifti and Ophelia appear progressive in medial terms but the language used actually belongs to an age of letter-writing. In this sense Hegemann's is an 'analogue digital literature'.[74]

Finally, one must ask why Hegemann chose to conform partially with the rules of the biblio culture when writing a pop literary text, with its incorporation of email communications and the intertextual reference to a blog. In the face of numerous acknowledged quotations – for the Wallace excerpt rights were actually obtained and acknowledged in the first editions – the inconsistent behaviour on the part of writer and publisher seems odd (despite the many self-reflexive remarks at the beginning of the novel).[75] This contradictory stance was amplified after Pirmasens' scoop when Hegemann defended her method nonchalantly. Once again she explained her intertextual process: she 'couldn't care less where people get their whole experimental set up. What matters is where they take it'. Her novel would formally reflect the 'detachment from all the copyright excess towards the right to copy and transform'. In the end she denounces herself as 'totally thoughtless and egotistical' and apologizes to the authors whose texts she used. On the other hand her publisher Siv Bublitz stated that the position of Ullstein is 'unequivocal': sources have to be named and their use must be permit-

72 Ibid., p. 263.

73 Richard Sennett, *Der flexible Mensch. Die Kultur des neuen Kapitalismus* (Berlin: Siedler, 2000), p. 75. In Germany Holm Friebe and Sascha Lobo have tried to describe the more flexible and immaterial younger workers as a 'digital bohème'; Ulrich Bröckling, in recourse to Foucauldian technologies of the self, has approached those commercialized forms of subjectivity sociologically; see Holm Fiebe and Sascha Lobo, *Wir nennen es Arbeit. Die digitale Bohème oder: intelligentes Leben jenseits der Festanstellung* (Munich: Heyne 2006); Ulrich Bröckling, *Das unternehmerische Selbst. Soziologie einer Subjektivierungsform* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2007).

74 Michael Szurawitzki, 'Zur E-Mail-Kommunikation in Helene Hegemanns Roman *Axolotl Roadkill* ', *Muttersprache*, 121.2 (2011), pp. 118–32 (p. 130).

75 Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, p. 4.

ted by the author.[76] By the fourth addition, and after clarifying legal issues, specifically with the small publisher SuKuLTuR, *Axolotl Roadkill* appeared with an appendix titled 'Sources and Acknowledgments'.[77] It meticulously lists twenty of the novel's references to Airen's weblog along with many others such as texts by Kathy Acker, Rainald Goetz, Jim Jarmusch, Malcolm Lowry or Valérie Valère. This belated paratext factually transforms the unmarked quotations in the novel into citations.

Precious 'Plagiarism'? Helene Hegemann's *Axolotl Roadkill*, the Conflict between Bourgeois and Pop Literary Aesthetics and the Copyright Debate

My close reading of Helene Hegemann's *Axolotl Roadkill* has shown that newspaper reviewers saw their standards of authenticity violated, although the novel – in its paratexts, its chapter titles, and its actual text (by way of marked quotations and meta-reflections) – makes no real secret of its intertextual approach. Given that those schooled in the blogosphere will find the reference to Airen's blog easy to decode, the text itself addresses the inescapable merging of one's own thoughts with the foreign as a method for developing any complex identity, and it states that an aesthetically successful mix constitutes a form of authenticity, a claim which Hegemann repeated in her apology. The true defendant would thus be the print media critics themselves, as Jürgen Kaube wrote in the *FAZ* regarding the 'Hegemann case': the 'cultural establishment' had imagined a 'wunderkind' and had 'possibly brought an actual child sacrifice to their phantasmagoria'.[78]

76 '*Axolotl Roadkill*: Helene Hegemann und Ullstein Verlegerin Dr. Siv Bublitz antworten auf Plagiatsvorwurf' (http://www.buchmarkt.de/content/41393-axolotl-roadkill-helene-hegemann-und-ullstein-verlegerin-dr-siv-bublitz-antworten-auf-plagiatsvorwurf.htm).

77 Hegemann, *Axolotl Roadkill*, p. 203.

78 Jürgen Kaube, 'Germany's Next Autoren-Topmodel. Hat Helene Hegemann selbst geschrieben oder nur abgeschrieben? Ihr Roman *Axolotl Roadkill* dokumentiert weit über Plagiatsfragen hinaus die Verkommenheit des Betriebs, der sie feiert', (http://www.faz.net/aktuell/feuilleton/buecher/plagiatsfall-helene-hegemann-germany-s-next-autoren-topmodel-1943229.html). What the 'Hegemann case' made stingingly clear to print media critics is that they have to open themselves up to pop and subcultural, as well as digital knowledge archives. See my argument in Thomas Ernst, 'Wer hat Angst vor Goethes Pagerank? Bewertungsprozesse von Literatur und Aufmerksamkeitsökonomien im Internet', in *Kanon, Wertung und Vermittlung. Literatur in der*

From a pop literary perspective, which probes the novel for its knowledge archives, montage techniques and author performance, other problems and aporias are more interesting than the plagiarism charge. There is the prominent paradox of a kind of writing that embraces the new media but conforms to the regulations of the literary industry. There is the mixed message of an unintended kind: the publisher marketed the author as a 'young authentic voice' (for instance on the back cover) in spite of her intertextual process and meta reflections on an irreversible remix of her own thoughts and outside sources in both personality and writing. The paradox continued in their respective responses to the public accusations: the author justified her poetics, but eventually called herself egotistical and apologized; the publisher spoke of illegality, then made retroactive deals and printed a substantially revised edition. One cannot call this a confident pop literary play with intertextual processes, mining of different knowledge archives and clever intermedial author performances. This is especially because the history of plagiarism has established a big difference 'between, on the one hand, a writer who insists on the aesthetic necessity of his plagiarism in a poetic manifesto of sorts, and the poet who is accused of plagiarism from the outside, in public'.[79] In this sense it appears that Hegemann allowed others to define her author performance when she made her (indifferent) public apology.

In her use of pop literary strategies of intertextuality and author performance, Hegemann exposes the wide gap between the bourgeois tradition of literature and its pop cultural challenger. She does not quite reach the levels of Thomas Meinecke, René Pollesch, or Elfriede Jelinek, whose techniques are more complex and more confident. It is not justified from a pop aesthetic that she quotes well known sources 'properly' while those from subculture or digital sources remain unmarked. Airen, whose work may not be impressive linguistically, looks more masterful in this debate: his second book *I am Airen Man* (2010) concludes with the 'EDITORISCHE NOTIZ: Airen hat für den vorliegenden Roman Texte aus seinem Blog www.airen.wordpress.com verwendet und sich dies selbst genehmigt' ['NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER: Airen has used texts from his blog www.airen.wordpress.com with his own permission'].[80]

Wissensgesellschaft, ed. by Matthias Beilein, Claudia Stockinger, Simone Winko (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), pp. 305–20 (pp. 316–18).

79 Anne-Kathrin Reulecke, 'Ohne Anführungszeichen. Literatur und Plagiat', in *Fälschungen. Zu Autorschaft und Beweis in Wissenschaft und Künsten*, ed. by Anne-Kathrin Reulecke (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2006), pp. 265–90 (p. 285).

80 Airen, *I am Airen Man* (Munich: Blumenbar, 2010), p. 174.

Hegemann can be faulted for inconsistency, but the relentless broadsides from print media reviewers, scholars and senior authors (as in the 'Leipzig Declaration') show that certain pop literary approaches are still not afforded the status of true literature. Digital copying currently calls into question how the 'Gutenberg galaxy' handles the production, distribution and reception of literary texts, though neither copyright reforms nor literary and medial discourses on work and authorship have really dealt with this. As early as the 1990s Martha Woodmansee noted that 'the law has yet to be affected by the "critique of authorship" initiated by Foucault'.[81] Richard A. Posner likewise demands that we depart from the seemingly clear distinction between the original creation and the intertextual plagiarism. He finds the latter vague and calls for analyzing the 'gray area [...] in which creative imitation produces value that should undercut a judgment of plagiarism – indeed an imitator may produce greater value than an originator'.[82] Despite its shortcomings, *Axolotl Roadkill* may well turn out to be an inspiration to such a project of productive copying.

Translated by Joachim Ghislain and Margaret McCarthy

81 Martha Woodmansee, 'On the Author Effect: Recovering Collectivity', in *The Construction of Authorship. Textual Approbiation in Law and Literature*, ed. by Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Duke: Duke University Press, 1994), pp. 15–28 (p. 28).
82 Richard A. Posner, *The Little Book of Plagiarism* (New York: Pantheon, 2007), p. 108.