

## REVIEW ESSAY

### Keeping Distance: Alf Lüdtke's "Decentred" Labour History

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LÜDTKE, ALF. *Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus*. Ergebnisse, Hamburg 1993. 445 pp. Ill. DM 38.00.<sup>1</sup>

Both during the outbreak of World War I and at the beginning of the national-socialist dictatorship, the German labour movement proved incapable of enforcing its emancipation ideals, despite its apparent power. The defeats of 1914 and 1933 left an indelible mark on twentieth-century history. Attempts to explain these losses have been the focus of many debates over the years.

The gulf between the "true (objective) interests of workers" on the one hand and behaviour (subjective) that appears to run counter to such interests on the other hand presents a major dilemma. "How was it possible that the [German] masses marched off to war in 1914, although not with unmitigated delight, certainly willingly? More important, why did the great majority remain loyal (despite numerous counter-movements) until the collapse of the political and military leadership in the autumn of 1918? Most of all, how was it possible that the overwhelming majority acquiesced to German fascism, and that [they] generally accepted national socialism and often greeted it with enthusiasm, even after several years of [Nazi] rule? How can we explain the obvious support from most Germans for the murderous intensification and outward expansion of the [Third] Reich until well into the war?" (*ES*, pp. 12–13).<sup>2</sup>

This rift between objective situations and subjective acts was already a topic of debate by the 1930s. Interpretations other than purely political explanations (which emphasized the inaccurate party lines of social democratic and communist leadership) were more likely to stress Ernest Labrousse's "third level":<sup>3</sup> mentalities, popular discourses, and the like.

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter quoted as *ES*. I would like to thank my colleague Götz Langkau for his suggestions.

<sup>2</sup> Lüdtke has added a second question: "How was this acquiescence, loyalty, and participation consistent with [. . .] contrarities and even uprisings [. . .]?" (*ES*, p. 13).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted according to Pierre Chaunu, "Un nouveau champ pour l'histoire sérielle: le quantitatif au troisième niveau", in *Mélanges en l'honneur de Fernand Braudel* (Toulouse, 1973), vol. II, pp. 105–125, here 108.

On the one hand, Erich Fromm and Wilhelm Reich, both psychoanalysts, each offered their views on the influence of authoritarian family relationships that predisposed large segments of the German working class to accept unpleasant situations.

On the other hand, Ernst Bloch, a communist philosopher, described the problem of non-synchronism in his book *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (1935). Each stage of social development includes synchronous and non-synchronous incidents. Synchronous incidents are objective and subjective phenomena that correspond precisely to the social requirements of the moment. For example, modern capitalists and class-conscious wage labourers are synchronous because their states of mind reflect objective conditions. Non-synchronous cases, however, would include clerical employees, small artisans, or small farmers, whose working conditions are pre-capitalist in some respects and whose views, desires, and states of awareness reflect these relationships: they believe large capital threatens their very existence and long for the pre-industrial era. This second group, which the Communist Party mistakenly considered backward or reactionary, is not, in fact, exclusively retrospective. It also harbours a strong anti-capitalist rage with which the labour movement might have sympathized. The synchronous approach was wasted on such people and turned them into easy targets for national socialism.<sup>4</sup>

After World War II and especially since the 1960s, when the recent past was subjected to a critical review, the initial focus of German historians lay on the general course of their own history. East German scholars applied the theory of state monopoly capitalism and defended an explanation for “1933” that was primarily based on macro-politics, claiming that social democracy had disoriented large segments of the working class, which was essentially anti-fascist, and that this process had doomed communist politics, which were generally correct.<sup>5</sup>

While these Marxist-Leninist analyses also surfaced in West Germany (Reinhard Kühnl, Reinhard Opitz), a school soon became dominant that called itself “historical social science”. This school, which began to publish its own journal (*Geschichte und Gesellschaft*) in 1974, was exceptionally prolific. Its ambitious protagonists (e.g. Jürgen Kocka, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Heinrich August Winkler, Klaus Tenfelde) tried to construct a comprehensive neo-Weberian “history of society”

<sup>4</sup> Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Zurich, 1935), also in Bloch, *Gesamtausgabe*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt/Main, 1962). In English: Ernst Bloch, “Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to Its Dialectics”, *New German Critique* [hereafter *NGC*], 11 (1977), pp. 22–38; Oskar Negt, “Non-synchronous Heritage and the Problem of Propaganda”, *NGC*, 9 (1976), pp. 46–70; Anson Rabinbach, “Ernst Bloch’s *Heritage of our times* and the Theory of Fascism”, *NGC*, 11 (1977), pp. 5–21.

<sup>5</sup> A review of the GDR interpretation appears in Dietrich Eichholz and Kurt Gossweiler (eds), *Faschismusforschung. Positionen, Probleme, Polemik* (Berlin, 1980), esp. pp. 323–415.

(*Gesellschaftsgeschichte*), which was intended to integrate the development of the working class and the labour movement in a general, structural historiography.

Both the Marxist-Leninist and the neo-Weberian historians applied their own versions of a modernization theory, which identified one or more main trends in social development that became the basis for evaluating the historical phenomena under investigation. It is significant, however, that the structural historians tended to be more sophisticated than the Marxist-Leninists, in part because their research dealt not only with economic concerns and political parties, but also covered areas such as demographics, social politics, social stratification and leisure activities in detail.

A major shortcoming of both dominant movements in German social history was their focus on "objective" processes. As Raphael Samuel once noted in a different context, their history was mostly "history with the people left out".<sup>6</sup> This approach evoked protest. The rediscovery of Bloch, Fromm and Reich encouraged several authors to attempt "downward" openings of the analyses. The work of Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt was especially influential. In three of their books, they tried to develop a theory about specific proletarian experiences. In *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (1972), they stressed that two methods were available for "organizing" experiences: the bourgeois approach, which forces experiences into general diagrams, and the proletarian method, which is based on self-organization. The authors believed that the labour movement had organized experiences according to the bourgeois method too frequently in the past, which caused major aspects of workers' existence to go unnoticed and could form the essence for a successful national-socialist enticement. Kluge and Negt have elaborated on this approach, which they deliberately presented in fragments, in that monumental work *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (1981) and in *Maßverhältnisse des Politischen* (1992).<sup>7</sup>

In the 1970s, the arguments of Bloch, Fromm, Reich, Kluge and Negt were a tremendous source of inspiration for a group of young historians that rejected the centrist historical perspective of the historians guided by modernization theory. In a programmatic essay, Hans Medick, a member of this group, wrote:

<sup>6</sup> There were some exceptions. For example, see Jürgen Kuczynski, *Geschichte des Alltags des deutschen Volkes*, vols 1–5 (Berlin, 1980–1982), and Klaus Tenfelde, *Sozialgeschichte der Bergarbeiterschaft an der Ruhr im 19. Jahrhundert* (Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 1977).

<sup>7</sup> Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Öffentlichkeit und Erfahrung* (Frankfurt/Main, 1972); English version: *Public Sphere and Experience*, trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Daniel and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis, 1993); idem, *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt/Main, 1981); idem, *Maßverhältnisse des Politischen* (Frankfurt/Main, 1992). Also see: Oskar Negt, "Don't Go by Numbers, Organize According to Interests", *NGC*, 1 (1974), pp. 42–51; idem, "Ernst Bloch: The German Philosopher of the October Revolution", *NGC*, 4 (1975), pp. 3–16.

Such a [modernization] perspective is a way of seeing that positions historical phenomena either to the centre or the margins of the historical process, according to their supposed role in the “great transformation”. To the degree, lesser or greater, that these phenomena are thought to be “engaged” through modernization, industrialization, and the emergence of bureaucratic and national states, they are either relegated to the margins or brought forward to the centre of history.<sup>8</sup>

Against this unilinear approach, the “rebels” juxtaposed non-synchrony, which deals with experiences and processes that do not fit in the general scheme. This alternative strategy would serve two purposes:

On the one hand [it makes] apparent that phenomena which were too quickly assumed to be immutable and ahistorical, and therefore incidental to the historical process, can not only be historically important but that they also had a very contradictory and many-layered history long before this modern period. [. . .] On the other hand, the ethnological view, implicated in the concern with “marginal manifestations”, provokes new kinds of historical sensitivity. It leads to a greater awareness of the uniqueness, difference, and otherness of historical phenomena, something which is rather obscured by the application of universalizing, passepartout categories (such as role, economic growth, bureaucracy).<sup>9</sup>

To reconstruct these non-synchronies, historians would have to act as ethnologists in their own country and view everyday events from an outsider’s perspective.<sup>10</sup>

Alf Lüdtke has been a major force in applying this “decentred” approach to working-class history. Following some tentative explorations in the early 1970s,<sup>11</sup> he published two rather programmatic texts. In the first essay, which appeared in 1976, he polemicized against the Marxist-Leninist analysis of national-socialism because it neglected the complex relationship between historical synchronies and non-synchronies.

<sup>8</sup> Hans Medick, “‘Missionaries in the Row Boat’? Ethnological Ways of Knowing as a Challenge to Social History”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29 (1987), pp. 76–98, 82.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> In 1978, this endeavour resulted in an international study group of historians and social anthropologists, established at the initiative of Robert Berdahl, Alf Lüdtke, Hans Medick, David Sabeau and Gerald Sider. See Robert Berdahl *et al.*, “Il ‘processo lavorativo’ nella storia: note su un dibattito”, *Quaderni Storici*, 14 (March–April 1974), pp. 191–204. The group’s publications include: Robert Berdahl *et al.*, *Klassen und Kultur* (Frankfurt/Main, 1982); Hans Medick and David Sabeau (eds), *Emotionen und materielle Interessen. Sozialanthropologische und historische Beiträge zur Familienforschung* (Göttingen, 1984); Alf Lüdtke (ed.), *Herrschaft als soziale Praxis* (Göttingen, 1989).

<sup>11</sup> For example, see his criticism of the modernization theory in Alf Lüdtke, “Der Prozeß der kapitalistischen Industrialisierung – Eine Problemskizze”, *Sozialwissenschaftliche Informationen für Unterricht und Studium* [hereafter *SOWI*], 3 (1974), 1, pp. 1–4 and his discussion of the theories of state monopoly capitalism and organized capitalism in Michael Geyer and Alf Lüdtke, “Krisenmanagement, Herrschaft und Protest im organisierten Monopol-Kapitalismus (1890–1939)”, *SOWI*, 4 (1975), 1, pp. 12–23.

Lüdtke highlighted the specific role of state repression in Germany and the need to study "socially *different* forms and peculiarities" used by people to cope with their everyday lives.<sup>12</sup> While Lüdtke elaborated on both statements in his career, I shall focus on the second one.<sup>13</sup>

In his second programmatic text (1978), Lüdtke elaborated on his programme for reconstructing proletarian daily life. In classical Marxist style, he stated the objective of investigating the relationship between mode of production (*Produktionsweise*) and mode of life (*Lebensweise*).<sup>14</sup> Lüdtke emphatically opposed all theoreticians who presumed a direct and deterministic connection between mode of production and mode of life and who assumed that material interests formed the only meaningful link between both spheres.

In the implementation of his research programme, Lüdtke has concentrated on male workers in German large industry between 1860 and 1945. He presents seven case studies (all previously published in the period 1980–1991)<sup>15</sup> in the anthology under review as concrete illustrations of his perception of the new approach. Lüdtke's essays reveal his talent for subtle analysis and for observing conflicts and oppositions in individual and collective behaviour and attest to his tremendous ability for historical empathy. Whether he is describing food preparation and

<sup>12</sup> Alf Lüdtke, "Faschismus-Potentiale und faschistische Herrschaft oder Theorie-Defizite und antifaschistische Strategie", *Gesellschaft: Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie*, 6 (1976), pp. 194–241, here 216. This essay does not appear in the anthology under review.

<sup>13</sup> Lüdtke's main contributions to historical analysis of German state repression in English are: "The Role of State Violence in the Period of Transition to Industrial Capitalism: the Example of Prussia from 1815 to 1848", *Social History*, 4 (1979), pp. 175–221; idem, "The State and Social Domination in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-century Prussia", in Raphael Samuel (ed.), *People's History and Socialist Theory* (London and Boston, 1981), pp. 98–105; idem, *Police and State in Prussia, 1815–1850* (Cambridge and Paris, 1989).

<sup>14</sup> Alf Lüdtke, "Alltagswirklichkeit, Lebensweise und Bedürfnisartikulation", *Gesellschaft: Beiträge zur Marxschen Theorie*, 11 (1978), pp. 311–350; reprinted in *ES*, pp. 42–84. Compare Marx and Engels: The "mode of production [. . .] is a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are." Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, in idem, *Collected Works*, vol. 5 (London, 1976), p. 31.

<sup>15</sup> Some texts or excerpts from texts have also appeared in English. Chapter Four ("Lohn, Pausen, Neckereien") was published as "Cash, Coffee-Breaks, Horseplay: *Eigensinn* and Politics among Factory Workers in Germany circa 1900", in Michael Hanagan and Charles Stephenson (eds), *Confrontation, Class Consciousness, and the Labor Process. Studies in Proletarian Class Formation* (New York, 1986), pp. 65–95; Chapter Five ("Die Ordnung der Organisation") bears a resemblance to "Organizational Order or *Eigensinn*? Workers' Privacy and Workers' Politics in Imperial Germany", in Sean Wilentz (ed.), *Rites of Power. Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 303–333.

A section of the long, concluding, synthetic chapter ("Arbeit, Arbeitserfahrungen und Arbeiterpolitik") was published as "Polymorphous Synchrony: German Industrial Workers and the Politics of Everyday Life", in Marcel van der Linden (ed.), *The End of Labour History?* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 39–84. I have quoted passages from *ES* that have already appeared in English according to the existing translations.

consumption, illegal coffee-breaks, or the phenomenology of factory labour, Lüdtké consistently makes a convincing case for the inability of a single hermetic theory to incorporate concrete proletarian experiences in their entirety.

One essential argument in Lüdtké's analyses is his observation that people never submit totally to any systemic logic, whether it is imposed by corporate managers, labour leaders, or state officials. People always retain their need for individual freedom of movement, for a certain aloofness from others, and for a sense of being on their own. Lüdtké tenaciously belabours this core idea, which unfortunately adds a highly repetitive tone to his work.

Lüdtké calls this pursuit of aloofness *Eigensinn*. As suggested by the title, *Eigensinn* is the book's key concept.<sup>16</sup> *Eigensinn* is difficult to translate. It denotes having one's own sense, self-willed behaviour, obstinacy, intractability and pigheadedness. One of the fairy tales by the Grimm brothers (*Das eigensinnige Kind*) is a fitting illustration of the true meaning of *Eigensinn*:

Once upon a time there was a child who was wilful, and would not do what her mother wished. For this reason God had no pleasure in her, and let her become ill, and no doctor could do her any good, and in a short time, she lay on her death-bed. When she had been lowered into her grave, and the earth was spread over her, all at once her arm came out again, and stretched upwards, and when they had put it in and spread fresh earth over it, it was all to no purpose, for the arm always came out again. Then the mother herself was obliged to go to the grave, and strike the arm with a rod, and when she had done that, it was drawn in, and then at last the child had rest beneath the ground.<sup>17</sup>

Lüdtké has applied his own interpretation to the concept of *Eigensinn*: it signifies all modes of behaviour exhibited by individuals to create some autonomy, a distance briefly or for extended periods between themselves and their surroundings, both from authorities and from their fellow workers. *Eigensinn* can find expression in keeping a pig in the garden (*ES*, p. 181), arriving at work late or quitting early (*ES*, p. 90), spending a long time in the lavatory during working hours (*ES*, p. 96), or sabotaging the production process (*ES*, p. 112). "*Eigensinn* was expressed and reaffirmed by walking around and talking, by momentarily slipping away or daydreaming, but primarily by reciprocal body contact and horseplay" (*ES*, p. 140).

Lüdtké's favourite example of *Eigensinn* is taken from a text by Paul Göhre, a Protestant pastor who, around 1890, spent six weeks anony-

<sup>16</sup> Despite the concept of *Eigensinn*'s essential role in the work of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge (see their *Geschichte und Eigensinn*), Lüdtké insists that he developed the notion independently. See Alf Lüdtké, "'Kolonisierung der Lebenswelten' – oder: Geschichte als Einbahnstraße?", *Das Argument*, 140 (1983), pp. 536–541, 541, note 7.

<sup>17</sup> *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales* (London, 1975), pp. 534–535.

mously with turners and drillers in a large machine construction workshop in Chemnitz. Göhre noted:

More than anything else these people teased one another, scuffled and tussled – indulged in horseplay, where and whenever it seemed possible. People looked for friends, and acquaintances; clay was thrown at someone who passed by, the slipknot of his apron was untied from behind, the plank of a seat was pulled away while a fellow worker took a break, someone's way was blocked unexpectedly or they "pulled someone's leg". But, to be sure, especially favoured among older workers at the end of the week was another form of horseplay: "beard-polish". Shaving was a once-a-week affair, a common practice among workers, and was performed usually Saturday night or Sunday morning. By the end of the week, the worker whose beard had grown in would grab the head of a chap with more tender cheeks, lips, and chin, and would rub his face against the youth's face, a process which of course had a quite painful result. Before the victim realized just what had happened to him, the wrongdoer had already disappeared. (ES, pp. 109, 137–138)<sup>18</sup>

This horseplay during work (and outside official coffee-breaks) helped workers create a distance not only from their supervisors and corporate regulations, but also between one another. This mutual aloofness could even lead to stealing each other's tools (ES, p. 143).

Lüdtke perceives *Eigensinn* as an important political force. To counter the narrow view of politics ("the formulation, achievement, and sustained organization of collective interests" [ES, p. 161]) he submits a broader perspective, where politics serve as "the articulation and expression of both individual and collective needs" (ES, p. 163). Lüdtke considers this expansion desirable to prevent politics from being reduced to activities carried out by leaders and organizations that overlook the tremendous efforts of the "common people" to prevail in times of uncertainty. The traditional view belittles the "complex or antagonistic aspirations of these people", neglects "the intense perseverance of working-class men and women, their abilities to endure hardship, to be respected, to enjoy life" (ES, p. 163).

In fact, working-class politics operated in two arenas: one encompassed politics in the narrow, formal sense, while the other arena was devoted to "private politics". The labour movement organizations pertained to the first arena, and, even when workers became active in the movement, they maintained their base in the other sphere.

Lüdtke therefore relativizes the importance of the parties, unions and co-operatives in the lives of German workers. He is justified in noting that "participation in various organizations [. . .] remained something of an auxiliary feature of workers' lives, for men and women alike" (ES, p. 171).

<sup>18</sup> Paul Göhre, *Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter und Handwerkerbursche* (Leipzig, 1891), pp. 77–78. Compare Lüdtke, "Cash, Coffee-Breaks, Horseplay", p. 78; "Organizational Order or *Eigensinn*?", p. 310; "Polymorphous Synchrony", p. 52.

The distinction between both arenas runs even deeper: “The separation of political arenas not only distanced workers from formal organizations; it was also a feature of organized workers’ experiences *within* these organizations” (ES, p. 173). Lüdtke speculates that workers often attended events such as mass meetings and demonstrations for reasons other than those assumed by organization leaders. Socializing and camaraderie were at least as significant as “narrow” political considerations.

Lüdtke has stressed repeatedly that *Eigensinn* and “keeping distance” are concepts that do *not* fit in the binary logic of obedience *or* resistance (ES, e.g. pp. 185–186, 257, 338).<sup>19</sup> To Lüdtke, resistance means “strategically optimizing the effectiveness of behaviour” (ES, p. 142), whereas *Eigensinn* signifies joyful expenditure of time on the spot “without any calculation of effects or outcomes” (ES, p. 140). The concept of *Eigensinn* therefore resembles Georges Bataille’s *dépenses*, which are modes of behaviour that are not integrated in the logic of accumulation and accounting (such as “laughter, heroism, ecstasy, sacrifice, poetry, eroticism, and others”).<sup>20</sup>

Lüdtke seems to be making two allegations: (i) the relationship between obedience and resistance is a zero-sum game in which one party wins and the other loses; and (ii) *Eigensinn* cannot be subsumed under this zero-sum game. The first assumption is dubious, as one wonders why it should be impossible for *both* “players” to win or lose in this game. The second assumption is even riskier. Of course, the workers polishing their beards are unlikely to consider obedience and resistance in the process. On the other hand, do historians need this perspective? Perhaps these scholars can perceive meanings in human actions that have gone unnoticed by the actors themselves. Hegel called *Eigensinn* “a freedom that has become stuck in bondage”.<sup>21</sup> This statement actually reveals the term’s ambivalent nature. Nothing prevents historians from viewing *Eigensinn* as a combination of obedience and resistance if they are particularly interested in the dialectics of adaptation and protest. Lüdtke seems aware of this problem; he admits that the boundaries between *Eigensinn* and calculated resistance remain “blurred and fluid” (ES, p. 142) and notes that *Eigensinn* can benefit integration in existing relationships, as became clear in 1914 (ES, p. 185). In basing *his* interpretation on the probable interpretations by the historical subjects of his research of their own

<sup>19</sup> Also compare Lüdtke, “Herrschaft als soziale Praxis”, in idem, *Herrschaft als soziale Praxis*, pp. 9–63, 50.

<sup>20</sup> Georges Bataille, “L’expérience intérieure”, in idem, *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 5 (Paris, 1973), pp. 7–181, 11.

<sup>21</sup> G.W.F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, ed. Hans-Friedrich Wessels and Heinrich Clairmont (Hamburg, 1988), I, IV, A, p. 136.

behaviour, Lüdtke shows that he equates levels of analysis that should have remained apart.

This anthology documents the course of Lüdtke's work since the mid-1970s. After his debut as a Marxist, Lüdtke became a historian open to postmodern schools of thought. In his great concluding essay, which he wrote in 1993, he resists the "assumption that all phenomena are interconnected, inter-mediating with each other". Instead, he advocates an approach "that leaves open the question of the mediation between or the mutual interconnectedness of social phenomena (and thus likewise their presumed continuity)" (*ES*, p. 385). Lüdtke does not take the final step toward fragmentary thought. He acknowledges that his approach may be "fraught with inconsistency" (*ES*, p. 385) – an indication that while he does not believe a consistent theory is possible at this time, he still considers it worthwhile.

Lüdtke's course of development is reminiscent of Clifford Geertz, the anthropologist who has become his ever-increasing source of inspiration. Geertz also manifests "finer and more elaborate descriptions of culturally situated phenomena with less emphasis on theoretical or methodological rigor".<sup>22</sup>

Lüdtke's investigations have turned the spotlight on aspects of workers' lives that used to be neglected by historians. This is his great and lasting achievement. He has not even begun to integrate these aspects into a broader framework of interpretation, however, which was his explicit goal at the outset. In particular, Lüdtke has failed to clarify the relationship between the political arenas – the task that represents "the greatest challenge", as Eve Rosenhaft noted.<sup>23</sup> The defeats of 1914 and 1933 cannot be understood exclusively in terms of *Eigensinn*; formal political developments are at least as important: actions by labour parties, the authorities, and so on.

While I do not wish to label Lüdtke's work as apolitical, as some critics have,<sup>24</sup> I do believe that rejecting modernization theories without offering an alternative (which might consist solely of an "open" philosophy of history) has kept the arena of "micro-politics" from being associated with "greater politics" and broader social changes in general.<sup>25</sup> Lüdtke has recently admitted that this situation presents a problem,

<sup>22</sup> Paul Shankman, "The Thick and the Thin: On the Interpretive Theoretical Program of Clifford Geertz", *Current Anthropology*, 25 (1984), pp. 261–270, 269. Also see, from a somewhat different perspective, Bob Scholte, "The Charmed Circle of Geertz's Hermeneutics", *Critique of Anthropology*, 6 (1986), 1, pp. 5–15.

<sup>23</sup> Eve Rosenhaft, "History, Anthropology, and the Study of Everyday Life", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 29 (1987), pp. 99–105, 103.

<sup>24</sup> For Lüdtke's reply to critics, see: "Rekonstruktion von Alltagswirklichkeit – Entpolitisierung der Sozialgeschichte?", in Berdahl *et al.*, *Klassen und Kultur*, pp. 321–353.

<sup>25</sup> This reproach is not new. See Detlev Peukert, "Glanz und Elend der 'Bartwicherei'. Eine Replik auf Alf Lüdtke", *Das Argument*, 140 (1983), pp. 542–549.

although he has yet to provide more than a vague indication of how a link might be established.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> In one interview, Lüdtke claimed that the concept of appropriation (*Aneignung*) connected the macro and the micro levels: "This concept serves to investigate how people appropriate the conditions they encounter: the processes, the types of friction and suffering, as well as opportunities for creativity and change. It encompasses everything, from the things that change to those that remain the same. The open quality of the idea of appropriation fascinates me." Reinhard Sieder, "Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Aneignung der Verhältnisse. Ein Gespräch mit Alf Lüdtke", *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 2 (1991), 2, pp. 104–113, 109.