

Art, Nature, Ghosts, and Ice Cream: Transcultural Assemblages of Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau (1785–1871) and *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee*

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Introduction

Walking through Cottbus, Brandenburg, Germany, it is almost impossible to miss the visual presence one of its most famous local personas: from billboards at the train station to an eponymous bus line, Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau (1785–1871) seems omnipresent as a local historical figure and as a welcome vehicle for tourism marketing. When visitors direct their steps through his former park in Branitz at the outskirts of Cottbus, they will most likely come across an unexpected sight: two earthen pyramids. One of them is located in the middle of a artificial lake. Primary and historiographical sources tell us that this pyramid was built by Pückler in the 1850s and that it encases his remains, as envisioned by him while commissioning the construction.¹ The pyramid was finished in 1856, fifteen years before Pückler's death.² No plaque commemorates him on the pyramid. Pückler and his wife Lucie von Hardenberg (1776–1854) are only commemorated by a stone with a cross, erected posthumously on another small island of the lake. Today, the pyramid, as well as the surrounding park and its castle are maintained by the Stiftung Fürst Pückler Museum Schloss und Park Branitz (Prince Pückler Castle Museum and Branitz Park Foundation). The foundation describes its namesake and the former owner of the castle and park as “one of the greatest European landscape artists, a dandy, ladies’ man, ingenious socialite, connoisseur of exquisite food and namesake to an

1 Siegfried Neumann, “Die Begräbnisstätten im Branitzer Park,” in *Pückler; Pyramiden, Panorama: neue Beiträge zur Pücklerforschung*, ed. Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz (Cottbus: Kommunale Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz, 1999), 9.

2 Neumann, “Die Begräbnisstätten im Branitzer Park,” 11.

ice-cream.”³ During his lifetime, Pückler not only published a successful guide on landscape planning, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* (Hints on landscape gardening, 1834),⁴ but he also wrote nine travelogues about his journeys through Europe, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire. Various ice-cream recipes *à la Pückler* were already circulating during his lifetime. Today, “Fürst-Pückler-Eis” (Prince Pückler ice-cream) is a common product in the freezers of German supermarkets.

The historian Ulf Jacob tentatively traces Pückler’s historiographical adaptation by National Socialist scholars, architects, and landscape planners from the 1920s to the 1940s, to his mobilization as a representative of “humanistic cultural heritage” and of environmental awareness since the 1980s.⁵ However, as Jacob rightly observes, no comprehensive analysis of Pückler’s mobilization in the narration of German national history has yet been conducted.

Throughout the abundance of previous scholarship and popular writing, Pückler has been deployed at different historical moments as a figure of “Germanness” and—more broadly speaking—a desirable way of living, an ideal of human life. Hermann von Pückler-Muskau’s subjectivity, as it is constructed through diverse materials and discourses produced by himself and his contemporaries, as well as by later historians, is far from stable, unified, or univocal. Nevertheless, previous historiography has mostly privileged a biographical reading of Pückler’s life and work.⁶ By controlling which letters were to be preserved, and by commissioning a biography and a nine-volume publication of his letters, it was Pückler himself that began drawing together and curating the extensive archival material that has formed the basis for the majority of previous research

3 Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz, “Fürst Pückler – Eine schillernde Persönlichkeit des 19. Jahrhunderts,” accessed April 21, 2019, <http://www.pueckler-museum.eu/park-und-schloss/fuerst-pueckler.html>. Translated by the author.

4 This article will quote from the reprint of 1988, Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei: Verbunden mit der Beschreibung ihrer praktischen Anwendung in Muskau* [Hints on landscape gardening: attached to a description of their practical implementation in Muskau], ed. Günter J. Vaupel (Frankfurt am Main: Insel, 1988).

5 Ulf Jacob, “Esprit und Empirie: Konturen einer neuen Pücklerforschung,” in “... Ein Kind meiner Zeit, ein ächtes, bin ich...” *Stand und Perspektiven der Forschung zu Fürst Pückler* (Berlin: be.bra wissenschaft, 2010), 33. Translated by the author.

6 Brigitte Bender observes that secondary literature on Pückler tends to accentuate the “sparkling, fascinating personality and to consider the oeuvre only under biographical-anecdotal aspects. [...] The dominance of the biographical already dominated the judgement of the contemporaries: Through his eccentric appearance [...] and fads [...] the public expected [...] the ‘justification’ of his peculiarities through his writings.” Brigitte Bender, *Ästhetische Strukturen der literarischen Landschaftsbeschreibung in den Reisewerken des Fürsten Pückler-Muskau* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1982), 22. Translated by the author.

on him. Building on these materials, in most instances the majority of research seems stuck in the perpetuation of his historical significance as an individual.⁷ There are two problems with such an approach, which are not acknowledged in previous research. First, the emphasis on Pückler's historical importance constitutes an act of legitimization by the scholar. Arguing for the importance of Pückler is simultaneously an argument for the legitimacy of the research invested into him, without questioning the asymmetric power relations underlying the definition of historical and artistic values. Second, the research seems trapped within the institutional framework of publishing opportunities: most of the scholarship on Pückler is published through the support of the foundations in Branitz and its equivalent in Bad Muskau, the Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau (Prince Pückler Park Bad Muskau Foundation). It is in their interest to maintain a positive image of Pückler in order to preserve the castles and parks as cultural heritage and profitable tourist sites.⁸ A critical questioning of concepts of historical subject formation, of cultural heritage, and aesthetics seems highly unlikely in the institutional and financial context of most of the research published on Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau.

There has been, at the same time, a recent push within the scholarship on Hermann von Pückler-Muskau to “recover” previously silenced narratives around him. Most notably, here, are the efforts to reconstruct the life of a young black woman associated with Pückler. In 1840, this—probably under the age of sixteen—woman passed away in Muskau Castle, Saxony, after supposedly suffering from tuberculosis.⁹ This castle was Pückler's residence until he sold it due to financial difficulties in the spring of 1845. The woman is called *Machbuba* in some sources and *Ajjamé* or

7 For an overview of the recent research on Pückler as a historical individual see, for example, Ulf Jacob, “Alles fließt, oder: Nach dem Aufbruch kommt der Alltag. Drei Branitzer Tagungen im Zeichen einer neuen Pücklerforschung,” in *Resonanzen: Pücklerforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Kunst*, ed. Irene Krebs, Gert Streidt, and Volkmar Herold (Berlin: trafo, 2013), 11–14.

8 Books commissioned or supported by the Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz include, among others: Irene Krebs, Gert Streidt, and Volkmar Herold, eds., *Resonanzen: Pücklerforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Kunst* (Berlin: trafo Verlagsgruppe, 2013); Simone Neuhäuser, ed., *Sehnsucht nach Konstantinopel: Fürst Pückler und der Orient* (Cottbus: Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum, 2018); Magdi Omar, “Ajjamé/Mahbuba: Etymologie und Bedeutung. Studie im Auftrag der Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau” (Bad Muskau: Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau, 1999); Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz, ed., *Pückler, Pyramiden, Panorama: neue Beiträge zur Pücklerforschung*.

9 Sources agree that she must have been younger than eighteen years old at the time of her death, see Gottfried M. Hamernik, “Das Rätsel Ajjamé,” in *Pückler, Pyramiden, Panorama*, 104; Karl Tutschek, *Dictionary of the Galla Language*, ed. Lorenz Tutschek (Munich: F. Wild, 1845), 1:xiii.

Bilillee in others. The spelling of the names also varies between sources.¹⁰ Pückler brought her along when returning from his travels through North Africa and the Middle East from 1834 to 1840, presumably having bought her on a slave market in Cairo or Khartoum.¹¹ Her place of birth, which is speculated to have been in the former Kingdom of Gumma, Ethiopia, is equally undetermined. After her death, she was buried in the cemetery of the Protestant church in the village Bad Muskau. The grave can still be visited today, and was recently supplemented by an informative sign on the assumed biography of the young woman resting under the gravestone. Under the name *Machbuba*, the young black woman has been described in contradictory attributes in primary and secondary sources. She has been described as Pückler's "child of nature," "loyal friend and travel companion," "exotic toy," "lover," or "foster child."¹² In these dissonant, contradicting historical narratives on *Machbuba*, we witness the emergence of a subject from material sources—the miraculous coalescence of multiple, unaccounted enslaved women into the individual *Machbuba*. There are (at least) three different *Machbubas*: the literary figure of Pückler's travelogues, the archival figure that emerges from the analysis of historical sources, and the *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* whose experiences of personhood are excluded from the assumptions of subjectivity and (self-)representation in the archives.

Putting *Machbuba* into italics to refer to the subjectivity constructed through historical sources, or naming the potentialities of diverging personhoods *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* is not meant to negate the experiences, sufferings, joys, and social interactions of the young woman who rests in a grave in Bad Muskau, or to further dehumanize her. Rather, it is meant to question the very definitions of "human" and "other-than-human" that have rendered her an object of research, to remind ourselves of the limits of academic tools in the restoration of justice. By that, it is an acknowledgement of the complexity and contradictions of her experiences, which might be impossible to recover through the notions of truth and subjectivity put forward in academic historical research. Recovering *Machbuba's* subjectivity through the very sources that have rendered her as "Other" can easily lead to either her victimization or heroinization. This is

10 Omar, "Ajiamé/Mahbuba: Etymologie und Bedeutung. Studie im Auftrag der Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau"; Tutschek, *Dictionary of the Galla Language*, 1:xiii.

11 Hamernik, "Das Rätsel Ajiamé," 104.

12 Christian Tietze, "Pückler und die Pyramiden," in *Parkomanie: Die Gartenlandschaften des Fürsten Pückler in Muskau, Babelsberg und Branitz*, ed. Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Munich: Prestel, 2016), 285; Eckart Klessmann, *Fürst Pückler und Machbuba* (Berlin: Rowohlt, 1998), 69, 87, 166. Translated by the author.

problematic because, as Avery Gordon reminds us, “even those who live in the direst circumstances possess a complex and oftentimes contradictory humanity and subjectivity that is never adequately glimpsed by viewing them as victims or, on the other hand, as superhuman agents.” She proposes that we should think in terms of “complex personhoods” to avoid the self-consolidating recourse to subjectivity and agency, reminding us of the contradictions and transformations bound up in human experiences of the self.¹³

An analysis of the historiography on *Machbuba*, as will be carried out on these pages, reveals that the autonomous subject is a highly contextual, temporally, and culturally entangled concept. On the one hand, the concept depends on the existence of physical archival material.¹⁴ On the other hand, it depends on imaginaries and immaterial concepts of aesthetics, emotions, and nature, entangled with those of gender, sexuality, and race.¹⁵ In the existing archival and historiographical materials, *Machbuba* is constituted as the black, female, unfree, not-quite-human Other to Pückler’s subjectivity. Both in historical research and in accounts of their lifetimes, *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* have been received in a complex system of simultaneous invisibility and hypervisibility. Analyzing the dynamics of invisibility and hypervisibility in the context of Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau and *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee*—whose existences emerge as inextricably entangled from the archival sources—allows us to critically reflect on the previous historiography while incorporating the central questions of nationalism, race, and gender.

This paper proposes a starting point for the critical reflection on the historiography on Pückler, and its connections to national and art history. It builds on the critique of knowledge production as it is put forward in recent transcultural approaches. A transcultural perspective provides a means of critically reflecting on disciplinary boundaries and power

13 Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 4.

14 Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015), 26.

15 For useful analyses of these interconnections, see, among others Simon Gikandi, *Slavery and the Culture of Taste* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), xii; David Theo Goldberg, ed., *Anatomy of Racism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); Achille Mbembe, *Critique de la raison nègre* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2013), 17; Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault’s History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 7; Ann Laura Stoler, “Intimidations of Empire: Predicaments of the Tactile and Unseen,” in *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 2; Susanne Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies: Conquest, Family and Nation in Precolonial Germany, 1770–1870* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 5–6.

structures.¹⁶ This paper uses the attention to relationalities and local particularities of cultural concepts proposed by scholars adopting a transcultural perspective, and extends it to the concepts of “art,” “nature,” and the “human subject.” In an attempt to put transculturation into practice, this also means to question the legitimacy of objects of research. It demands reflection on the assumed dissonances of juxtaposing questions of enslavement and subjectivity alongside ice-cream, nature, and art within one analysis. That one might perceive these entities as dissonant, separate, even inappropriate objects of juxtaposition speaks to the persistence of exclusionary power relations within the production of knowledge.¹⁷ From these larger conceptual concerns, the following questions are posed in this paper: How has Pückler survived as a historical subject through being employed in such diverging narratives? In what way does this—a durability of his valorization as a male individual, artistic connoisseur, *bon vivant*, and consumer of pleasure—subsume forms of historical narrations, possible subjectivities, and temporalities? How does it simultaneously depend on those registers, the emergence of which is suppressed, and which haunt the construction of subjects and historical narratives? And how do we, as researchers, talk about these durabilities, these structuring forces, without buying into the fictions of subjectivity and stability that they promote?

I argue first that Pückler carefully crafted a self-representation of his male, white, German subjectivity through his writing and landscape planning, proposing definitions of a proper life, society, and world order. The claims to subject-positions and worldly order are made available in Pückler’s landscape planning and travel writing on examination of his *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* (1834) and of his travelogues, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich* (1844, “From Mehemed Ali’s empire”).¹⁸ Investigating the definitions of spatial, geographical, and cultural distance in his landscape theory and in his travelogues, it becomes clear that the local particularities of North Africa and of his parks in Lusatia are deeply embedded in his argumentation. Similar ideas of transformation, progress, and

16 See for example Monica Juneja, “‘A Very Civil Idea...’ Art History, Transculturation, and World-Making – With and Beyond the Nation,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 81 (2018): 463.

17 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 252.

18 The focus here lies on the travelogue, because, as Kerstin Volker-Saad observes, few letters, diary entries, newspaper articles and maps, and no visual material are preserved from Pückler’s actual travels through North Africa. The historical narrative of his “Oriental journey” is thus dominated by his travelogues, which claim to be an authentic representation of reality, but are, of course, highly edited to cater to a European readership. See Kerstin Volker-Saad, “Hermann Fürst von Pückler-Muskau in Ägypten und im Sudan 1837/38: Über die Potenziale interdisziplinärer Forschungsansätze für das Verständnis von historischen Reiseberichten,” in *Resonanzen: Pücklerforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Kunst* (Berlin: trafo Verlagsgruppe, 2013), 231.

universality are woven into his writings on the two geographically distant, differently scaled places. His writings are connected through the creation of blank spaces—geographical, physical, visual, and imaginary—that could be filled with totalizing and/or universalizing meaning. However, this paper remains mindful of Ann Laura Stoler’s radical claim that “there really is no imperial order of things.” Instead, she demands that historians attend to the “partial, distorted, and piecemeal qualities” and instabilities that underlie any claim to hegemonic knowledge.¹⁹ Thus, this paper does not attempt to introduce Pückler into colonial, imperial or orientalist canons, but rather follows Stoler’s and Gordon’s perspectives of “haunting”: to acknowledge intangibilities, transformations, and incommensurability in the writing of history and to pay attention to exactly those material and immaterial interconnections that lie beyond the conventions of names and categories.²⁰

In a second step, I argue that it is precisely the ambiguity and instability of meaning in Pückler’s work that have permitted the varying, at times contradicting, interpretations of his historical value for German history. Pückler’s name has appeared in bourgeois cookbooks and ice-cream recipes during the era of German imperialism, in the propagation of an essentially German nature under the Nazi regime, and in contemporary discourses on cultural heritage, tourism, and consumption. These shifting narratives are all held together by a claim to the world, by a moral evaluation of how to live a successful life and by ontologies of nature, art, and beauty. They are what Stoler terms “imperial formations”: categories, vocabularies, and concepts that have been mobilized within different contexts, possessing shifting potentialities.²¹ These formations recur, but they are neither continuous nor stable: they “are marked less by abrupt rupture or by continuity and not by repetition of the same [...]. Rather, they are processes of partial reinscriptions, modified displacements, and amplified recuperations.”²² Thus, this paper does not trace the stabilities of any order of things in Pückler’s work, but the moments in which stability of meaning has been claimed. In other words, the paper aims to examine why historical formations on Pückler have proven the potential for being adapted in very different political and social contexts throughout the past 150 years. Equally crucial, then, is the question in which ways the diverging possibilities of personhood of *Machbuba/Ajimé/Bililee* have been rendered

19 Ann Laura Stoler, *Duress: Imperial Durabilities in Our Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 26.

20 Stoler, “Intimidations of Empire,” 1.

21 Stoler, *Duress*, 20.

22 Stoler, *Duress*, 27.

into supporting vessels of Pückler's subjectivity. They have submitted under what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak describes as "the epistemic violence that constituted/effaced a subject that was obliged to cathect (occupy in response to a desire) the space of the Imperialists' self-consolidating other."²³ The final part of this paper will thus focus on the presences and hauntings of *Machbuba* within the historical narrations on Pückler.

Art–nature: Pückler's *Aedeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* (1834)

Pückler wrote *Aedeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei* as a guidebook for wealthy landowners in similar social and financial positions to himself. Most of his suggestions are conceptual rather than practical, and the later, actual transformation of Muskau Park significantly differed from the plans that had been announced in the book.²⁴

A large number of art and architectural historians have written on *Aedeutungen*, focusing mainly on the differences between Pückler's written visions and the transformation he, his wife Lucie von Hardenberg, and his gardener Jacob Heinrich Rehder (1790–1852) actually commissioned, or on the relationship of Pückler's landscape planning with the landscape descriptions in his travelogues.²⁵ They are accompanied by—and sometimes indistinguishable from—various lavishly illustrated large-size monographs on the parks and on Pückler's life.²⁶ Combining biographical research

23 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography," in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, ed. Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 18.

24 Cord Panning, "Muskau: Naturmalerei an der Neisse," in *Fürst Pückler: Parkomanie in Muskau und Branitz. Ein Führer durch seine Anlagen in Sachsen, Brandenburg und Thüringen* (Berlin: L&H, 2006), 70.

25 For example, Bender, *Ästhetische Strukturen*; Sebastian Böhmer, *Fingierte Authentizität: Literarische Welt- und Selbstdarstellung im Werk des Fürsten Pückler-Muskau am Beispiel seines "Südöstlichen Bildersaals"* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2007); Ina Mittelstädt, *Wörlitz, Weimar, Muskau: Der Landschaftsgarten als Medium des Hochadels (1760–1840)* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2015); Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz, *Pückler, Pyramiden, Panorama*; Urte Stobbe, *Fürst Pückler als Schriftsteller: Mediale Inszenierungspraktiken eines schreibenden Adligen* (Hannover: Wehrhahn, 2015).

26 For example, Nicole Berthy and Michael Brey, *Ich bin ein Kind der Phantasie – Beweglich wie der Schmetterling*, ed. Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau (Bad Muskau: Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau, 1999); Fürst-Pückler-Museum und Schloss Branitz, ed., *Fürstliche Bilder: Pücklers Park und Schloss Branitz in Fotografien aus drei Jahrhunderten* (Cottbus: Alfa, 2004); Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, *Parkomanie*; Kerstin Volker-Saad, *Auf nach Ägypten! Zwei Meister ihres Faches: Der Maler David Roberts und der Reiseschriftsteller Hermann Fürst von Pückler-Muskau*, ed. Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau (Bad Muskau: Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau, 2013).

with unquestioned concepts of art, nature, and subjectivity, most scholars working on Pückler have iterated one version or another of a biographical reading of the gardens through Pückler's staging of the self. While the following paragraphs will contextualize the *Andeutungen* within its particular social, political, and cultural context, they will also critically examine the interconnected concepts of "art," "nature," the "self," and "other."

An analysis of the previous scholarship on Pückler's landscape planning reveals that "nature" is predominantly defined through its absence of the human, and thus the absence of meaning. For instance, according to Ina Mittelstädt, nature functions as the principal element of Pückler's gardens. However, she proceeds to argue that nature cannot carry any meaning and thus breaks with the previous tradition of aristocratic garden planning. She concludes that "nothing is represented" in Muskau Park.²⁷ Mittelstädt's linear interpretation of the semiotics of landscape planning does not go far enough. It is exactly the entanglement of nature and art in Pückler's landscape planning that effects the production of meaning through the powerful conceptual detachment of nature from the human through an aestheticized landscape. I argue that this dissociation is part of a set of larger epistemological shifts at work at the time. According to William Adams, already in the eighteenth century "'nature' came to be defined in terms of the absence of human impact, especially European human impact."²⁸ In the context of Pückler's landscape planning, the potential "emptiness" of nature is indeed crucial. It contributes to the definition of nature as dissociated from the human, while simultaneously being readily available for human-driven transformation. In Pückler's case, nature's fundamental lack of meaning is transformed into art for the universal benefit of a society that is constituted of individuals possessing the sensibilities and the knowledge to experience its beauty.

In Pückler's work and the historiographies on him, notions of nature, beauty, and art are used systemically to both mark value and legitimate knowledge. These notions are constructed through a process of dissociation. As Timothy Morton writes, "the aesthetic is [...] a product of distance: of human beings from nature, of subjects from objects, of mind from matter."²⁹ In the illustrations that Pückler commissioned for the *Andeutungen*, we find this categorization expressed in a variety of ways. The

27 Mittelstädt, *Wörlitz, Weimar, Muskau*, 377. Translated by the author.

28 William Adams, "Nature and the Colonial Mind," in *Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Post-Colonial Era*, ed. William Adams and Martin Mulligan (Abingdon: Earthscan, 2003), 33.

29 Timothy Morton, *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 24.

illustrations are forty-four hand-colored lithographs that portray panoramic and picturesque landscapes, as well as more schematic depictions of an ideal version of Muskau Park. The illustrations also include four maps of the park before and after the envisioned transformation through Pückler. Pückler commissioned the landscape painter Wilhelm Schirmer (1802–1865) to produce the drawings on which the later lithographs were based.³⁰

The majority of the illustrations feature the central attributes of picturesque landscape traditions. The discussion of what constituted a “picturesque landscape” was an aesthetical and art-historical discourse that had prominently been led by the British aestheticians Uvedale Price (1747–1829) and William Gilpin (1724–1804), among others. The outcome of this discussion was a conventionalization of the aesthetic appreciation of landscape painting and experienced landscape. At the same time, the definition of the picturesque was—and remains—an object of constant renegotiation.³¹ The allusions of picturesque landscape traditions are particularly evident in Plate 37, *Blick vom Belvedere des Lucknitzer Hügels auf die Stadt und das Schloss* (Fig. 1, “View from the Belvedere of Lucknitz Hill on the town and the castle”).³² Here, the landscape is constructed from a singular viewpoint that clearly divides between a foreground, a background, and a middle ground. This view is framed by *repoussoir* trees and a path that directly leads the eye through the image. Plants, buildings, and objects are arranged within a visual order. Through the commissioned illustrations, Pückler directly interacts with popular discourses of the picturesque. For example, he references one of the most canonical artists of earlier landscape traditions, Claude Lorrain (1600–1682).³³ However, as Ann Bermingham writes, by the nineteenth century, the word “picturesque” had been so widely used that it had been emptied of any actual meaning. As a popular device of visual conventions, it combined both the experience of individuality and conformity.³⁴

30 Steffi Wendel, “Der Atlas zu Pücklers ‘Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei’: Die Geschichte seiner Entstehung, Restaurierung und Konservierung,” in Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, ed. Harri Günther, Anne Schäfer, and Steffi Wendel (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1996), 65.

31 See for example Simon Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye: How Explorers Saw Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 62.

32 Von Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, ed. Günther et al.

33 Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei: Verbunden mit der Beschreibung ihrer praktischen Anwendung in Muskau*, ed. Günter J. Vaupel (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1988), 28.

34 Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740–1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 84.



Fig. 1: *Wilhelm Schirmer (watercolor) and O. Hermann (lithograph), Tafel XXXVII. Blick vom Belvedere des Lucknitzer Hügels auf die Stadt und das Schloss, hand-colored lithographic plate in book, 33.8 × 49.4 cm, in Von Pückler-Muskau, Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei.*

Therefore, by the time Pückler made his contribution to the picturesque, the concept had already become a reproducible, commodified visual order. It is thus not surprising that many of the ideal landscapes in the *Andeutungen* look like variations of picturesque landscape paintings. As the *Andeutungen* volume was intended to be a handbook for wealthy landowners, its readership was most likely familiar with the visual conventions of picturesque landscape painting.³⁵ As a set of conventions, variations of the picturesque were thus not only already well established, but, in their normative patterns, permitted a flexible reproduction and adaptation to other contexts and localities—an ideal prerequisite for the economic success of the *Andeutungen*.³⁶ The mobilization of the picturesque in the *Andeutungen* also reinforces the position of a seeing, singular subject to whom the landscape is made visually available. Pückler emphasizes the importance of frames and boundaries for the “proper” experience of landscape. But, he argues, even these must appear natural and barely

35 For an insightful analysis of the relations of class, education, and the picturesque, see Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology*, 57–85.

36 Pückler writes that the book is not written for the “director of the garden, engineer, inspector, gardener.” He asks the reader to only commission them with “the technical implementation of the own ideas, in order to represent [...] an artwork that originates in the innermost individuality, formed by the proper mind.” Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 16–17. Translated by the author.

visible, as if they had not been erected by human hands. Strikingly, Pückler compares his landscape planning with the framed paintings of an art gallery.³⁷ The experience of movement through the topographical landscape and of the contemplation of a representation of the landscape thereby collapse into each other. The only difference to other forms of art, according to Pückler, is the eternally unfinished, changing character of “nature painting”: nature is “alive[;] always becoming and not being, meaning never fully fixed [...]. For this reason, a guiding, skillful hand is continuously necessary in these kinds of works.”³⁸ He thus argues for the legitimacy and continuation of visual and material order over time and through shifting contexts. Exactly because nature is governed from an invisible center of power, it can be adapted to shifting contexts without losing its power. However, centralized vision and order in Pückler’s *Andeutungen*, the fiction of spatial and ontological control, could do nothing but fail in the actual transformation of Muskau Park. There, the material circumstances of the land, Pückler’s politically and financially insecure position, and the independent interventions of his wife Lucie von Hardenberg and his gardener Rehder, destabilized and transformed any attempt to directly implement Pückler’s theories into practice.³⁹

Although previous analyses of Pückler’s landscape planning have focused on its insertion into art historical canons and its establishment as a form of art, none of the previous research has paid any attention to a lengthy passage in Pückler’s *Andeutungen* on the architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel (1781–1841).⁴⁰ Pückler introduces Schinkel—who was already well known by the time the *Andeutungen* were written—as his “genius friend.”⁴¹ The architect contributed several plans for new buildings in Muskau Park to the *Andeutungen*, for example a new, unrealized castle (Fig. 2) and a ramp (Fig. 3).⁴² Pückler introduces the plans for the new castle along with a short description of his family history. The historicizing elements of the castle, its medievalist battlements, and tower (Fig. 2), in combination with his family history function as a genealogical justification of Pückler’s noble status and rule.

37 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 37.

38 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 140. Translated by the author.

39 Panning, “Muskau: Naturmalerei an der Neisse,” 44.

40 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 239–253.

41 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 174. Translated by the author.

42 Cord Panning, “... wer Muskau gesehen, hat mir ins Herz gesehen.’ Die Entwicklung des Muskauer Parks von 1815 bis 1845,” in *Parkomanie: Die Gartenlandschaften*, 105; Hermann von Arnim-Muskau and Willi A. Boelcke, *Muskau: Standesherrschaft zwischen Spree und Neisse* (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1978), 101.



Fig. 2: *Wilhelm Schirmer (watercolor) and J. Tempeltei (lithograph),* Tafel XXIX. Die projizierte Burg nach dem Entwurf Schinkels, *hand-colored lithographic plate in book, 33.8 × 49.4 cm, in Pückler-Muskau, Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei.*

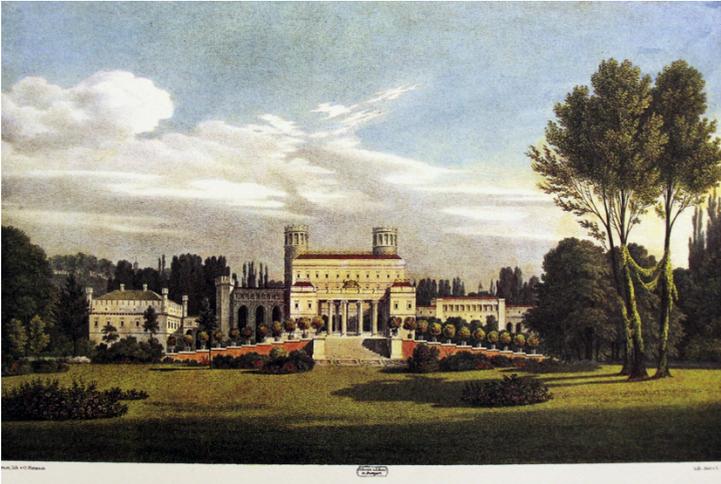


Fig. 3: *Wilhelm Schirmer (watercolor) and O. Hermann (lithograph),* Plate XV. Schloss und Rampe vom Bowling Green gesehen, *hand-colored lithograph plate in book, 33.8 × 49.4 cm, in Pückler-Muskau, Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei.*

Pückler then proceeds to quote an art critical essay on Schinkel's murals at the *Altes Museum* in Berlin over several pages.⁴³ He does not name the author of the essay, but presents "him" as "an educated spirit, a more competent judge than I am," and as an "ingenious author."⁴⁴ This ostensible modesty, like his previous appraisal of Schinkel, supports the image of Pückler as a connoisseur who is able to recognize artistic genius and taste. He claims that this aesthetic understanding is rooted beyond his own judgement—and is thus objective and universal. The murals were not yet finished in the recently opened museum at the time the essay quoted by Pückler was published. What is today known as the *Altes Museum* was the first public museum in Berlin, and hosted the royal collections of King Friedrich Wilhelm III. It is important to consider the essay in its context within a book on landscape planning, because it reveals both the educational and the social ambitions inherent in Pückler's writings.

Schinkel decided in 1823 that the mural should depict "the educational history of humanity" through allegorical figures that were adapted from Greek and Roman mythology.⁴⁵ Jörg Trempler relates the centrality of the museum project as a national, moral, and educational endeavor with the murals. According to Trempler, Schinkel's murals represent art "as the educator of the nation."⁴⁶ Both the museum and its murals were a topic of public and intellectual debate of the time.⁴⁷ Through commenting on them, Pückler marks the legitimacy of his landscape planning within wider political efforts of reform, of education, and of the making of national subjects and citizenship.

43 Interestingly, while the museum had just opened in 1830, four years before Pückler's publication, the murals only existed in the form of six gouaches produced by Schinkel between 1828 and 1834. The murals were only executed after Schinkel's death in 1841. The museum was heavily damaged during the Second World War and was later reconstructed in accordance with its state in 1830, in which the walls were simply plastered. See Jörg Trempler, *Das Wandbildprogramm von Karl Friedrich Schinkel: Altes Museum Berlin* (Berlin: Gebrüder Mann, 2001), 9–10.

44 In the footnotes of the reedition of Pückler's *Hints on Landscape Gardening* from 1988, the editor Günter J. Vaupel assumes that the essay is quoted from a member of the intellectual circle around Karl August Varnhagen von Ense, with whom Pückler frequently exchanged letters. Jörg Trempler traces the author back to Bettina von Arnim, who was indeed part of the intellectual circle around Varnhagen von Ense. She published the essay under her own name in 1836. It must be noted that, in this context, Pückler not only subsumes the name of the author and thus makes her writing work for his purpose, he also entirely ignores the gender of von Arnim, solely using the male German suffixes to describe her (e.g. *Richter, Verfasser*). See Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 242, 327; Trempler, *Das Wandbildprogramm von Karl Friedrich Schinkel*, 172; Bettina von Arnim, "Über Schinkels Entwürfe zu den Fresken in der Vorhalle des Berliner Museums," *Museum 4* (1836): 113–119.

45 Alfred von Wolzogen, *Aus Schinkels Nachlass: Reisetagebücher, Briefe, Aphorismen*, vol. 3 (Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei, 1863), 232. Translated by the author.

46 Trempler, *Das Wandbildprogramm von Karl Friedrich Schinkel*, 165.

47 Trempler, *Das Wandbildprogramm von Karl Friedrich Schinkel*, 170. Translated by the author.



Fig. 4: Wilhelm Schirmer (watercolor) and J. Renz (lithograph), Tafel XXI. Fasaneriegebäude nach dem Modell eines türkischen Landhauses, Bad und Alaunberge, *hand-colored lithograph plate in book*, 33.8 × 49.4 cm, in *Pückler-Muskau, Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*.

Towards the end of the quoted essay, the anonymous author defines the ideal state of art as one that represents “beautiful, simple nature [...]”.⁴⁸ This ideal complements Pückler’s own understanding of the relation of art and nature in the *Andeutungen*. The beautification of the landscape—“nature idealized through art”—is, to Pückler, a totalizing process that includes “the palaces and gardens of the great [and] the humble dwellings of the poor tenant” within a “harmonious whole.”⁴⁹ This also becomes evident in the illustrations of the *Andeutungen*. For instance, plate XXI depicts the smoke of an alum factory in the distance (Fig. 4). Industrial sites, such as the alum factories adjacent to Muskau Park, are not excluded from Pückler’s holistic, all-encompassing concept. They become an integral part of the visual and material order, which Pückler even presents as an attraction for visitors to the park. In the text, he praises the spectacle of a small natural volcano, a lignite “mine fire [with] continuous smoke and occasionally sparkling small flames.”⁵⁰ In addition, Pückler proposes plans for so-called “worker colonies” as habitations for the miners and the workers of the park (Fig. 5). His ordering vision thus permeates the lives of his (former) subjects who, at the time, were being transformed into Prussian citizens

48 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 252. Translated by the author.

49 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 13. Translated by the author.

50 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 267. Translated by the author.

and workers through the Prussian constitutional, administrative, social, and economic reforms of the early nineteenth century, as well as through the spatial order of their existence, their movements, and their bodies.⁵¹

In this definition, nature is a resource available for the betterment of the individual human and the entire society. It is possible to transform and reproduce this nature, a process that Pückler describes as “nature-painting (if I can call the evocation of an image like this, not through colors, but with real forests, mountains, meadows and rivers, and introduce it to the area of art).”⁵² This claim to painting is in part strategic, as it allows Pückler to position himself as an artist whose role is to transform untouched nature into an art form. To the author, art is of central utility for the governance of a society.⁵³



Fig. 5: Wilhelm Schirmer (watercolor) and H. Mützel (lithograph). Tafel XXXIX. Cottages der Colonie Gobelin, hand-colored lithograph plate in book, 33.8 × 49.4 cm, in Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*.

51 For the context of aristocratic self-legitimization and the dismantling of privileges during the Prussian reforms post-1815, see Mittelstädt, *Wörlitz, Weimar, Muskau*, 376; Lars Clausen, “Fürst Pückler auf dem Höhepunkt der Krise: Eine soziobiographische Erhellung des Landschaftskünstlers,” in *Lebenswelt und soziale Probleme: Verhandlungen des 20. Deutschen Soziologentages zu Bremen 1980*, ed. Joachim Matthes (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1981), 385.

52 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 16. Translated by the author.

53 Pückler-Muskau, *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, 145–155.

Home–travel: Pückler’s *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich* (1844)

As demonstrated above, nature and art are two concepts that are closely entangled and at times contradictory in Pückler’s *Andeutungen*. The aestheticization of an independently existing nature enables an appropriation of the land and its transformation into a utility, a consumable object. This conceptualization of nature also allows for an engagement with particular forms of ontologies of the Self and the Other. As Timothy Morton writes: “[e]nvironmental writing is a way of registering the feeling of being surrounded by others, or more abstractly, by an otherness, something that is not the self.”⁵⁴ In the *Andeutungen*, and also in Pückler’s travelogues, the Self and the Other, center and periphery, foreign and local are defined through an anthropocentric, never-stabilized process of othering nature.⁵⁵ To understand this dissociation, it is necessary to look at the spatial interactions between landscape planning and travel writing. This will indicate that Pückler’s definitions of “home” and “abroad,” “Europe” and the “Orient,” are intertwined and interdependent. The assemblages—humans, objects, plants, and other forms of beings—that he defines as distanced Other are indeed deeply intimate.⁵⁶ As Morton argues, “[d]istance and proximity are aesthetically terms. They imply a perceiving subject and a perceived object.”⁵⁷ In this negotiation of distance and proximity, it is necessary to contextualize Pückler with emerging academic disciplines of Western knowledge production. In the first half of the nineteenth century in Germany, these were just entering processes of specialization and professionalization, and thus promoted the creation of epistemological categories and typologies.⁵⁸ It is crucial to set Pückler in relation to the colonial

54 Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, 17.

55 The full chronological list of Pückler’s published travelogues is as follows: Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Briefe eines Verstorbenen*, 4 vols. (Stuttgart: Franck und Hallberger, 1830); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Tutti Frutti*, 5 vols. (Stuttgart: Hallberger’sche Verlagshandlung, 1834); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Jugend-Wanderungen* (Stuttgart: Hallberger’sche Verlagshandlung, 1835); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Semilasso vorletzter Weltgang: In Europa*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Hallberger’sche Verlagshandlung, 1835); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Semilasso in Afrika*, 5 vols. (Stuttgart: Hallberger’sche Verlagshandlung, 1836); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Der Vorläufer* (Stuttgart: Hallberger’sche Verlagshandlung, 1838); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Südöstlicher Bildersaal*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Hallberger’sche Verlagshandlung, 1840); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Hallberger’sche Verlagshandlung, 1844); Hermann von Pückler-Muskau, *Die Rückkehr*, 3rd ed. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1846).

56 For the relationship of intimacy and power in colonial discourses, see, for example, Stoler, “Intimidations of Empire,” 13.

57 Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, 24.

58 Ulf Jacob, “Hermann Fürst Pückler und die Wissenschaften seiner Zeit,” in *Resonanzen: Pücklerforschung im Spannungsfeld von Wissenschaft und Kunst*, 33–34.

endeavors of his time, exactly because he engaged with these discourses, and extensively commented on (international) politics. This does not mean that he should be defined as a colonial or proto-colonial actor. Instead, it allows us to question the prevalent assertion that German colonialism was an exception to other European expansionist movements with a clearly demarcated timeframe from the 1880s to 1919.⁵⁹ This is not to say that all colonial projects were the same. However, it should be recognized that the period when formal colonial possessions were held by the German Empire is deeply embedded within a larger network of discourses and temporalities of “close interactions and shared vocabularies” with other European powers. None of these expansionist endeavors were as totalizing, stable, and unified as suggested by colonial rhetoric and certain scholars of (post-)colonialism.⁶⁰ It is thus helpful to follow Stoler’s suggestion to make the “messy, troubled spaces of ambiguous colonial lineages” the central objects of analysis: “[R]ather than dismiss these sites as exceptional, marginal, or quasi-imperial space,” she suggests to understand them “as key points of access to imperial logics that depend on [...] the racialized distinctions in which they are cast.”⁶¹

Therefore, juxtaposing Pückler’s archives with critical analyses of colonialisms—rather than one monolithic German colonialism—is not simply a revisionist condemnation of his character, writings, or actions. Rather, I argue that a plurality of colonial projections and hegemonic ideas of appropriation are woven into a variety of materials of Europeans speaking and writing on culture, art, and traveling. These Europeans thereby participated in manifold ways in processes of hegemonic knowledge production on the world. Prince Herrmann von Pückler-Muskau engaged in these practices, too. For this reason, it is inevitable that his engagement with the local and global processes of his time be critically contextualized.

Out of the variety of travelogues that Pückler published during his lifetime, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich* is most relevant in the context of this analysis. The author not only merges landscape descriptions and political commentary, but he also describes his first encounter with *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee*, thus connecting his discussion of the aesthetic and the political with notions of gender, race, and sexuality. Because Pückler’s landscape descriptions constitute an important link between his engagement with Orientalist discourses and

59 See, for example, Andreas Eckert and Albert Wirz, “Wir nicht, die Anderen auch: Deutschland und der Kolonialismus,” in *Jenseits des Eurozentrismus: Postkoloniale Perspektiven in den Geschichts- und Kulturwissenschaften*, ed. Sebastian Conrad and Shalini Randeria (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2002), 374.

60 Sebastian Conrad, *German Colonialism: A Short History*, trans. Sorcha O’Hagan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

61 Stoler, *Duress*, 21.

discourses on “German landscape,” I will first focus on these. In a second step, I will link them to Pückler’s extensive commentary on the political situation of Egypt in *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*.

Mary Louise Pratt has worked on the close relations between travel writing and the evocation of aesthetic vocabulary. In the context of nineteenth-century British explorers, she observes three conventional tools used to create both qualitative and quantitative value in the description of their discoveries. The first tool is an *aestheticized* landscape that is described and ordered like a painting with a foreground, middle ground, background, and framing, one which is measured by its ability to arouse aesthetic pleasure. The second tool is a *density of meaning* through which the described landscape is represented in reference to the metropolitan “home.” The third tool is the mastery of the seer over the seen, which Pratt calls a “monarch-of-all-I-survey” scene.⁶² These conventions are also present in Pückler’s writing. He mobilizes vocabulary and imagery associated with “exploring” North Africa. However, Daniela Richter argues that “[t]he uniqueness of Pückler’s travelogue lies [...] not in providing new impressions of Egypt, but in reinforcing preexisting European imagery of the Orient.”⁶³

In *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*, Pückler’s described movements and experiences are highly regulated and restrained. He maintains his distance from the places he visits and the people whom he encounters, not undergoing any personal transformation. His preferred mode of traveling, he writes, is by boat on the River Nile. This allowed him to comfortably observe the landscape from a distance, framed and structured like a picturesque painting.⁶⁴ The landscape that Pückler constructs is measured along his own viewing habits and those of the anticipated reader. As Simon Ryan argues, in European landscape descriptions of the time, “[t]he landscape itself is deferred; it exists only insofar as it reminds one of a European exemplum. [...] This precludes the possibility of another [...] aesthetic appreciation [...]”⁶⁵ For instance, Pückler compares a road from Cairo to Shubra El Kheima to painted dioramas of Egypt in Vienna and Berlin.⁶⁶ Pückler not only references the dioramas, but also repeatedly describes panoramic visions. As two of the central features of nineteenth-century visual and representative

62 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2008), 204.

63 Daniela Richter, “Inside the Oriental Spectacle: Hermann von Pückler-Muskau’s Egyptian Travelogue,” *Colloquia Germanica* 46, no. 3 (2013): 237.

64 Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*, 1:138.

65 Ryan, *The Cartographic Eye*, 61.

66 Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*, 1:250. Translated by the author.

entertainment spectacles,⁶⁷ both the diorama and the panorama are forms of visual arrangement and spectacle that are implicated into the claim of European visual dominance, as Tony Bennett argues.⁶⁸ Through descriptions of panoramic and dioramic visions, the discourse of the picturesque is woven into his travelogues. As scholars of the mutations of the “imperial picturesque” by British artists visualizing the British Empire have shown, the adaptation of visual conventions—such as the picturesque—were significant both for the production of knowledge and for the appropriation of the “new” or “foreign” land. Romita Ray implores us “[t]o think of the picturesque as a historicizing process, as a way of contextualizing colonial selfhood instead of limiting it to an aesthetic engagement or visual inscription.”⁶⁹ Pückler’s resort to circulating European conventions thus speaks much of his engagement with the particular localities of his travels. The contextualization of “colonial selfhood” becomes even more evident in the moments in which Pückler fails to construct the Orient as a picture, in moments of boredom, or disappointment.

Pückler repeatedly describes his disappointment while visiting archaeological and historical sites, especially those that he describes as well known, such as the pyramids of Giza. To Pückler, the pyramids are disappointing when seen from nearby, and are not as emotionally moving as the cathedral in Strasbourg.⁷⁰ This aesthetic judgement not only emphasizes once again the importance of distance in Pückler’s viewing habits, but also indicates his continuous reference to European contexts.⁷¹ Pratt understands disappointment as one of the central aspects of the “monarch-of-all-I-survey” trope.⁷² Disappointment leads to suggestions of improvement and is thus part of appropriative visual practices, an aspect that Pückler’s travelogues share with those of imperial and colonial travelers of his time.⁷³

Pückler’s suggestions of landscape improvement are enmeshed with his commentary on the political and social situation of North Africa. Strikingly, his dense political arguments in *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich* have thus far been neglected by scholarly analysis, despite their prominent length and frequency. He repeatedly criticizes English, French, Spanish, and Austrian

67 Heinz Buddemeier, *Panorama. Diorama. Photographie: Entstehung und Wirkung neuer Medien im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1970), 13.

68 Tony Bennett, “The Exhibitionary Complex,” *New Formations* 4, (Spring 1988): 73.

69 Romita Ray, *Under the Banyan Tree: Relocating the Picturesque in British India* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 11.

70 Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*, 3:14.

71 Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*, 1:39, 41, 3:51, 174, 269.

72 Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 202.

73 Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich*, 2:108; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 201.

foreign politics in *Aus Mehemed Ali's Reich*.⁷⁴ Additionally, Pückler advocates for independent local government reforms through a male, quasi-absolute, monarchic ruler, and sees the Viceroy Muhammad Ali Pascha (1770–1849) as a role model. Thus, while he argues against the colonial possession of land and European foreign rule in North Africa, he nonetheless demands the cultural, social, and political reforms to follow European examples. He also denies the coequality of Europe and non-Europe, comparing contemporary North Africa to the European Middle Ages. He proceeds to ask his European readers to understand that the peoples of North Africa are just “naturally behind” in their state of civilization.⁷⁵

Part of the reforms that Pückler suggests or praises are linked to the disciplining of the behavior and bodies of people, especially those of women.⁷⁶ In his travelogue, gender roles and sexuality are both treated in visually and descriptively highly codified ways. For example, three passages of the third volume are printed upside-down, introduced by the cautionary headlines “Not for ladies,” “Not for ladies, and only for natural scientists,” and “Ladies are kindly asked to also skip the following, even if they can read Greek” (Figs. 6–7).⁷⁷ The last passage is a German text written in Greek letters. Like the political passages in *Aus Mehemed Ali's Reich*, all three passages have found little to no consideration in previous research. They contain explicitly erotic scenes that Pückler allegedly observed during his travels. Again, he maintains a position of distance: He never describes his active participation in any form of sexual encounter and maintains his role of the disengaged, even scientific voyeur. On these pages, Pückler distinguishes between the anticipated female European reader and the described non-European women. While the former is desexualized and asked to skip the explicit descriptions of sexuality, the latter only exists through her description as an object of male pleasure and scientific vision. Although the female reader might very well have ignored Pückler's instruction to skip the explicit passages, the othering of female sexuality is not only textual, but also visual and spatial. Because the passages are printed upside-down, they are highly distinctive from the rest of the book. They call for attention and for rotating the book to read comfortably. Gender roles are thereby used as another concept of dissociation and othering. Pückler clearly

74 See, for example, von Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali's Reich*, 1:6, 9, 17, 42, 49, 50.

75 Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali's Reich*, 1:3, 53.

76 For instance, Pückler laments the disappearance of the practice of female Egyptian dancers who, according to the travelogues he had read before departing on his own journey, would swim to the boats of travelers on the Nile to entertain them. Pückler interprets the lack of this experience as resulting from of the social, political, and moral reforms of Muhammad Ali Pascha. See Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali's Reich*, 1:145.

77 Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali's Reich*, 3:30, 279, 303. Translated by the author.

assigns different positions to European and non-European women. While defined as geographically, culturally, and racially different, they are subsumed under similar structures involving the intimate control of sentiments.⁷⁸ As Stoler writes, the intimate is a central domain of colonial control to define difference and subjectivities through the “requisition of bodies” and the “distribution of sentiments and desires.”⁷⁹

Both become evident in the codified, upside-down passages: women “here” and women “there” are assigned with different emotional and bodily roles and capacities—the former removed from any form of sexuality and the latter charged as an object of sexual desire. According to Foucault, nineteenth-century sexuality was “a result and an instrument of power’s designs.”⁸⁰

Gestorbener begraben. Er lag, insofern man die Grube machte, Gesicht und Brust mit einem Tuche umwickelt, und die Beine nackt, auf einer einfachen Bahre neben dem Grabe, während eine Menge Menschen beiderlei Geschlechts umherstanden, und wibrige Klagen ausstießen. Die Donsogeseher Mädchen passiren für große Schönheiten, und sind in der That häufig schön gewachsen, und von sanften anmuthigen Gesichtszügen. Auch hier zeichneten sich einige der gegenwärtigen durch diese Vorzüge aus, sie waren aber am ganzen Körper so mit Del und Fett beschmiert, und ihre Haare so dick damit festgebunden, daß sie unserm Geschmack unmöglich zusagen konnten.

Nicht für Damen.

Am Abend dieses schönen Tages wurden wir durch meinen Diener in einige Urtheile versetzt, der sich auf der Jagd verirrt hatte, und erst nach vielen vergeblischen Signalfschüssen und angezündeten Feuern um Ein Uhr in der Nacht unsern Ankerplatz erreichte,

Nicht für Damen,

und nur für Naturforscher.

Am Abend dieses schönen Tages wurden wir durch meinen Diener in einige Urtheile versetzt, der sich auf der Jagd verirrt hatte, und erst nach vielen vergeblischen Signalfschüssen und angezündeten Feuern um Ein Uhr in der Nacht unsern Ankerplatz erreichte,

Fig. 6: “Nicht für Damen,” in Pückler-Muskau, Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich, 3:30. “Nicht für Damen, und nur für Naturforscher,” in Pückler-Muskau, Aus Mehemed Ali’s Reich, 3:279. Note the text set upside down.

78 For the interconnections of racism and sexuality in German pre-colonial discourses, see also Goldberg, *Anatomy of Racism*; Zantop, *Colonial Fantasies*, 5–6.

79 Stoler, “Intimidations of Empire,” 2.

80 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 152.

discourses.⁸⁴ Racism and colonialism as classificatory systems are relevant in the context of Prince Pückler. The analysis of these two entangled concepts allows for a critical deconstruction of the inherent violence of the worldviews and structures that are put forward through, with, and by him. Despite his inner contradictions, Pückler claims a unique, central position of vision and power in his writings. This claim always remains an ambivalent fiction, not only because Pückler was never fully recognized as participating in the formation of disciplined academic knowledge, in the production of artworks, or in political action. As imperial formations, however, they continued to haunt the discourses on Pückler beyond his lifetime.

Taking the example of ice-cream recipes from the German Empire, and combining it with the historiography on Pückler in the 1920s to 1940s and contemporary engagements with Muskau Park as UNESCO World Heritage, the second part of this paper argues that these imperial formations are by no means a thing of the past, but have haunted and continue to haunt the production of histories of Pückler, and, more recently, *Machbuba*. In shifting contexts and meanings, these formations are put forward to define livable lives, and claim diverging orders of human and non-human relationships.

Ice-cream and national consumptions of pleasure

Browsing through the freezers of any major supermarket in Germany today, one is very likely to come across ice-cream labelled *Fürst Pückler Art* (Prince Pückler Style) or *Fürst Pückler Schnitte* (Prince Pückler Sandwich). The ice-cream is a variation of what is known as Neapolitan ice-cream in English—a combination of vanilla, strawberry, and chocolate flavored ice cream, sometimes placed between two wafers. There is a variety of publications that try to trace back the etymology of the ice-cream. According to Bernd-Ingo Friedrich, “[t]he prince did not invent it, everything else about its obscure origin is polemic.”⁸⁵ While no clear genealogy of the “Fürst Pückler” ice-cream can be written, the Pückler Museum Branitz keeps detailed kitchen records—so-called “Tafelbücher”—of what Pückler ate and served his guests between 1854 and 1871. They support the image of Pückler as an aristocratic *bon vivant* who cherished the luxury of sugary desserts and ice-cream.⁸⁶ Making use of this image, bourgeois and courtly cookbooks published recipes “à la Fürst

84 Peter Martin, *Schwarze Teufel, edle Mohren: Afrikaner in Geschichte und Bewusstsein der Deutschen* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2001), 240.

85 Bernd-Ingo Friedrich, *Das Fürst-Pückler-Eis: Geschichte, Geschichten und Rezepte* (Cottbus: Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum, 2007), 3. Translated by the author.

86 Marina Heilmeyer, “‘Alles Leben endet mit dem Tod, und jeder Tag mit einer Mahlzeit’: Fürstliche Tagebücher, Pückler-Eiscreme und die königliche Ananas,” in *Parkomanie: Die Gartenlandschaften*, 265–271.

Pückler” already during his lifetime.⁸⁷ I argue that the ice-cream—as a sweet transformed from aristocratic luxury to bourgeois consumer product—has been associated with Pückler because his subjectivity allows the imaginary identification of pleasure and taste.⁸⁸

From a transcultural perspective, dietary habits, the circulation of recipes, and the consumption of particular kinds of food in certain historical and social contexts are far from anecdotal. Rather, the analysis of their social, political, and cultural movements enables an understanding of the role of food in the construction of difference of social class and nationality.⁸⁹ A transcultural perspective thereby brings into focus the mobility of people and goods necessary for the consumption of ice-cream in Europe. The historical presence of vanilla, chocolate, and sugar—essential ingredients for what is today understood as ice-cream “à la Fürst Pückler”—is inseparable from the slave trade and sugar plantations of the Caribbean and the colonial exploitation of land and people. These relations seem barely visible today. They haunt our understanding of what constitutes a legitimate object of study and an analyzable relationality in art history (ice-cream might be excluded from both). As Sidney Mintz argues in the case of sugar, the conditions of production through the division of labor over space and time were obscured and mystified in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and continue to be to the present.⁹⁰ Thus, the connections between colonialism, consumption, and nation building have undergone a practical and ideological process of dissociation. “Fürst Pückler” ice-cream underwent several social, political, and material transformations linked to the “profound changes in dietary and consumption patterns in the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe” outlined by Mintz.⁹¹ Accordingly, Ralph Austen, and Woodruff Smith emphasize the close entanglement of the slave and sugar trades until the late nineteenth century, because the majority of

87 Ludwig Ferdinand Jungius, “Gefrorenes von geschlagener Sahne mit Früchten nach Fürst Pückler,” in *Vollständige und umfassende theoretisch-praktische Anweisung der gesamten Kochkunst*, 3 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1839), 3:163; Johann Rottenhöfer, “Feldhühnerbrüstchen nach Fürst Pückler,” in *Neue vollständige theoretisch-praktische Anweisung in der feinen Kochkunst mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der herrschaftlichen und bürgerlichen Küche*, 2 vols. (Munich: Braun und Schneider, 1867), 1:421; Johann Rottenhöfer, “Crème Renversée à la Prince Pückler,” in *Neue vollständige theoretisch-praktische Anweisung in der feinen Kochkunst mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der herrschaftlichen und bürgerlichen Küche*, 2 vols. (Munich: Braun und Schneider, 1867), 1:805.

88 See also Mittelstädt, *Wörlitz, Weimar, Muskau*, 289.

89 Atsuko Ichijo and Ronald Ranta, *Food, National Identity and Nationalism: From Everyday to Global Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 6.

90 Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (New York: Penguin, 1985), xxiv.

91 Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*, 159.

the sugar consumed in Europe was imported from the slave plantations of the Caribbean.⁹² Making no exception, Germany heavily depended on imports of cane sugar from the Caribbean for the increasing production of ice-cream in the first half of the nineteenth century.⁹³

The spread of ice-cream recipes “à la Fürst Pückler” is connected with the rise of literacy and the spread of affordable sugar. It is additionally linked to the direct reform efforts by the Prussian government between 1871 and 1918 to form their subjects into imperial, distinctly German citizens.⁹⁴ The titles of the cookbooks featuring Pückler-themed ice-cream speak of the consolidation of “national cuisine.” Books published before Pückler’s death in 1871—the year of the foundation of the German Empire—demonstrate the transition of ice-cream, sugar, and cookbooks from aristocratic luxury to bourgeois commodity. For example, an 1867 cookbook by Johann Rottenhöfer emphasizes the linkage of aristocratic and bourgeois cuisine.⁹⁵ The 1903 seventh edition of a cookbook by Carl Krackhart includes an illustration of its “Fürst Pückler Ice-Cream.” It is strikingly juxtaposed with that of a “Kaiser Wilhelm Bombe” (Fig. 8).⁹⁶

Historically, the term “ice bomb” had previously been used to describe this kind of frozen dessert. In the particular historical context of the militarization of the German Empire at the turn of the twentieth century, in which this illustration was produced, however, the ice-cream gained an aggressively militaristic connotation.⁹⁷ The ice “bomb” is topped with a crown, a flagpole, and a flag in the black, white, and red stripes of the Prussian Empire. The shape of the “Fürst Pückler Ice-Cream” might at best be described as the body of an antique column, decorated at its bottom and top with some unidentifiable greens. The layers of the depicted ice cream are brown, red, and white, from bottom to top. They thereby resonate with the color scheme

92 Ralph A. Austen and Woodruff D. Smith, “Private Tooth Decay as Public Economic Virtue: The Slave-Sugar Triangle, Consumerism, and European Industrialization,” in *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economies, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas and Europe*, ed. Joseph E. Inikori and Stanley L. Engerman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 184.

93 Guther Hirschfelder, *Europäische Esskultur: Eine Geschichte der Ernährung von der Steinzeit bis heute* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2001), 196.

94 Hirschfelder, *Europäische Esskultur*, 173, 200.

95 Rottenhöfer, *Neue vollständige theoretisch-praktische Anweisung in der feinen Kochkunst* (Munich: Braun & Schneider, 1867).

96 Carl Krackhart, *Neues illustriertes Conditoreibuch: Ein praktisches Lehr- und Handbuch für Conditoren, Fein- und Pastetenbäcker, Lebküchener, Chocolate- und Liqueurfabrikanten, Köche, Gasthofbesitzer, sowie auch für jede Hausfrau*, 7th ed. (Munich: Heinrich Killinger, 1903), 141.

97 See, for example, Emilio Willems, *Der preussisch-deutsche Militarismus: Ein Kulturkomplex im sozialen Wandel* (Cologne: Wissenschaft und Politik, 1984), 91.

of the Prussian imperial flag on the “Kaiser Wilhelm Bombe.” Here, Pückler is represented as an integral part of the militaristic imperial order, an order that penetrates both the public and domestic lives. At the same time, Pückler is turned into a consumable product. In this illustration, pleasure, consumption, empire, and national identity collapse into each other. The materiality of the ice-cream, its ingredients, and the possibility of its availability to “every housewife” are decontextualized and naturalized in the schematic blank spaces that frame the dessert.

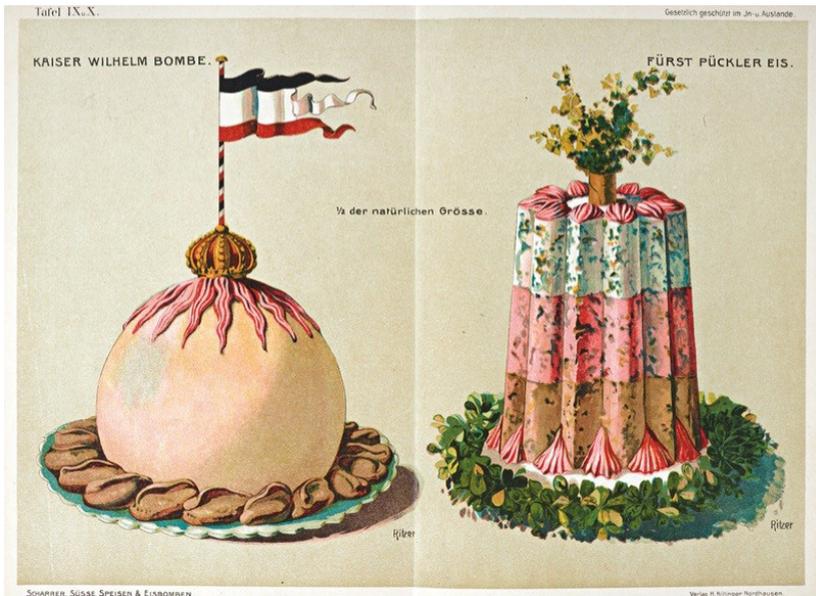


Fig. 8: Tafel IX, Kaiser Wilhelm Bombe and Tafel X, Fürst-Pückler-Eis, lithograph plates, in Carl Krackhart, *Neues illustriertes Conditoreibuch*, 1903.

Nature and National Socialism

Thirteen years after the publication of the seventh edition of Krackhart’s cookbook, Georg Mletzko submitted his dissertation to the University of Greifswald with the title *Die deutsche Landschaft bei dem Fürsten Pückler-Muskau* (The German landscape of Prince Pückler-Muskau) in 1914. Mletzko presents Pückler and his landscape planning in combination with the landscape descriptions in his travelogues as a project of “overcoming

the French taste.”⁹⁸ With Pückler’s appreciation of “the greatest variation on the surface of the world” in which “the eye must first find boundaries while surveying the surface,” Mletzko interprets the Prince as a distinctly German figure. Despite “foreign influences,” the author defines Pückler as “the founder of the German landscape garden.”⁹⁹

In Mletzko’s writing, we find the central motifs that also haunt later writings on Pückler: the centrality of vision and boundaries in the description of the landscape, the emphasis on art and aesthetics, as well as a distinct understanding of nature that is bound to a national identity. All these notions are legitimized by the claim to an objective truth. According to Mletzko, Pückler “does not freely create his landscape images or artistically combine them, but describes them purely objectively, as he finds them.” The strongly nationalist language of Mletzko’s writing, the intertwining of anti-French sentiment and a distinct German nature as a source of beauty and truth, if structured by the male, German gaze and hand, do not surprise in the context of the publication of the dissertation on the brink of the First World War.

As Timothy Morton reminds us, “[t]he nation all too often depends upon the very same list that evokes the idea of nature. *Nature* and *nation* are very closely intertwined.”¹⁰⁰ Thus, it also does not come as a surprise that the idea of a distinct German understanding of nature, as promoted by Pückler, was picked up in the 1920s and 1930s by a group of landscape planners and architects. These figures actively worked on the restructuring of Lusatia, where Pückler’s gardens and castles are located, to develop the region economically. Jacob describes the resulting development plans as efforts to socially and politically align the region with National Socialist ideas in an “all-encompassing reorganization of society and environment.”¹⁰¹ Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau was mobilized as a central figure in the historical justification of the reforms. The reforms with Pückler as their figurehead were articulated both in institutional reconfigurations and in the writings of different landscape writers and architects of the time.

For instance, the landscape planner Hinrich Meyer-Jungclaussen enforced the National Socialist conformation of the Fürst-Pückler-Gesellschaft (Fürst Pückler Society) in 1933. This organization had only been founded three years earlier. Meyer-Jungclaussen pushed forward its merging into the Deutsche

98 Georg Mletzko, “Die Deutsche Landschaft bei dem Fürsten Pückler-Muskau” (Inaugural-Dissertation, Königliche Universität Greifswald, 1914), 21. Translated by the author.

99 Mletzko, “Die Deutsche Landschaft,” 22, 52, 57. Translated by the author

100 Morton, *Ecology without Nature*, 15.

101 Ulf Jacob, *Zwischen Autobahn und Heide: Das Lausitzbild im Dritten Reich. Eine Studie zur Entstehung, Ideologie und Funktion symbolischer Sinwelten* (Dresden: Verlag der Kunst, 2003), 113. Translated by the author.

Gesellschaft für Gartenkultur (German Society for Garden Culture) that associated with the Reichsbund für Volkstum und Heimat (Imperial Union for Folklore and Homeland) and the Reichsfachamt für Heimatschutz (Imperial Department for the Protection of the Homeland).¹⁰²

In 1927, Franz Hallbaum declared Pückler's landscape planning as the "final stage of all gardens" thanks to Pückler's "will for the natural, a passionate effort for a new imagination of nature and the natural law."¹⁰³ Hallbaum linked the reorganization of the land to an individual who is able to recognize the truth as a fundamental law that is beyond human control or influence. Hallbaum's contemporary, Heinrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, published a short biography of Pückler in his anthology *Die grossen Deutschen* (The great Germans) in 1937. Similar to Hallbaum's understanding, the landscape garden was to Wiepking-Jürgensmann an artistic representation of nature and reality. He argued it represented a "healthy, happy way of life, a biological necessity for human life."¹⁰⁴ These references, not only to environmental protection but also to the urgency of biological survival, were also expressed in other contexts of National Socialist ideologies of the time.¹⁰⁵

Wiepking-Jürgensmann emphasized the potential of Pückler's landscape planning for the totalitarian restructuring of "German nature." He presented Pückler as a visionary who pushed forward the "fight for German renewal."¹⁰⁶ The author attested Pückler as having had a particularly German aesthetic sensibility of nature through which the prince achieved a "detachment of the Germanic German feeling for nature from the strict rules of the Italian-French architecture garden. [...] The German garden, which developed from Midgard, has always carried a truly spiritual notion of ownership and shelter."¹⁰⁷ The vocabulary of these descriptions does not differ much from Mletzko's analysis of two decades earlier. National Socialist landscape architects picked up already circulating ideas on individual, "true" sensibilities and the external struggle of survival of the German people. These ideas were

102 Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Grüne Biographien: Biographisches Handbuch zur Landschaftsarchitektur* (Berlin: Patzer, 1997), 260.

103 Franz Hallbaum, *Der Landschaftsgarten* (Munich: Hugo Schmidt, 1927), 56. Translated by the author.

104 Heinrich Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau und Peter Josef Lenné," in *Die grossen Deutschen* [The great Germans], ed. Willy Andreas and Wilhelm von Scholz, vol. 5 (Berlin: Propyläen, 1937), 306. Translated by the author.

105 For example, see Anne Bäumer, "Die Politisierung der Biologie zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus," *Biologie in unserer Zeit* 19, no. 3 (June 1989): 76–80.

106 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau und Peter Josef Lenné."

107 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau und Peter Josef Lenné," 303. Translated by the author.

legitimized through the claims to historical continuity and temporal linearity through the reference to Germanic mythology and to the more recent past of Pückler's landscape planning. Wiepking-Jürgensmann particularly underscored the ability of Pückler to artfully order and control the ever-changing, unstable character of nature without ever fully appropriating it.¹⁰⁸ In his understanding, the full appropriation was neither necessary nor required, because nature carried in itself the "higher laws of the universe."¹⁰⁹ Wiepking-Jürgensmann argued that in Pückler's "subconscious, primary instincts of Germanic-German landscape sentiments broke free that he, through full subordination of his individuality, integrated" into these cosmic laws.¹¹⁰ In this sense, landscape planning offered the model for an ideally structured society that conforms to National Socialist ideologies, based on a radical and violent process of exclusion and distancing. This process is justified and obscured through a claim to a reality that resides in nature, beyond human control. These relations were defined as universally true and globally applicable. Similarly, a later publication from 1941 by Paul Ortwin Rave portrayed Pückler as a prophet of German world dominance.¹¹¹

Meyer-Jungclaussen and Wiepking-Jürgensmann were both successful landscape architects under the National Socialist regime. According to Gert Gröning and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, the latter "significantly supported the National Socialist expulsion and extermination of Polish and Russian people."¹¹² The authors critically remark that the problematizing of the role of landscape planning in the theoretical support of National Socialist crimes has been neglected almost until today. For example, the Deutsche Gartenbau Gesellschaft (German Horticultural Society) continued to award the Wiepking Award to landscape architects until 1995.¹¹³ As of today, the society's history on its website entirely skips the years 1910 to 1955.¹¹⁴

108 Hallbaum, *Der Landschaftsgarten*, 45.

109 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau und Peter Josef Lenné," 308. Translated by the author.

110 Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau und Peter Josef Lenné." Translated by the author.

111 Paul Ortwin Rave, *Gärten der Goethezeit: Vom Leben in Kunst und Natur* (Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1941), 128.

112 Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Grüne Biographien*, 418. Translated by the author.

113 Gröning and Wolschke-Bulmahn, *Grüne Biographien*, 419.

114 "Geschichte: Deutsche Gartenbau-Gesellschaft 1822 e.V.," accessed April 28, 2019, <http://www.dgg1822.de/wir-ueber-uns/geschichte>.

Cultural heritage, cosmopolitanism, and consumption

The conservationist and nationalist ideas of a German character of nature and the individual ability to sense, apprehend, and ameliorate this nature still haunt contemporary representations of Pückler. Historians and tourism marketing professionals seem complicit in putting forward Pückler's individuality and the betterment of self and society through the experience of nature.¹¹⁵ They consequently align with a dissociated, dialectic idea of nature that we have previously encountered in the material of the first half of the twentieth century. Once more, the appraisal of Pückler's parks and his ideas on art and beauty are treated as universal cultural and social values that ultimately lead to a desirable world order. However, as Michael Falser cautions, "culture comprises values—and the quality label of (national to universal) cultural heritage is a normative projection in the name of authenticity, purity, and originality."¹¹⁶

Muskau Park has been inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List since 2004. The application process started shortly after the German reunification in 1990. As a part of the park lies in Polish territory since the end of the Second World War, the application was a joint effort of the German Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau and the Narodowy Instytut Dziedzictwa (National Heritage Board of Poland). Cross-border cooperation was strongly emphasized by UNESCO in their justification of their inscription of the site on the World Heritage List.¹¹⁷ This is particularly significant in the context of the 1990s and early 2000s—a time in which "[t]he events of 1989 and their aftermath brought forth a flurry of terms announcing a post-ideological, post-ethnic, post-historical, even post-political condition."¹¹⁸ These terms are, as Juneja reminds us, highly problematic if pronounced universally and globally without the consideration of diverging positionalities and epistemologies.¹¹⁹ Falser and Juneja emphasize that the "process of debordering" generates "new boundaries that are drawn across national and cultural entities and new

115 A significant exception to this trend is, again, Ina Mittelstädt's critical approach in the chapters on Prince Hermann von Pückler-Muskau in her book *Wörlitz, Weimar, Muskau*. Her problematization of Pückler's subject construction and the importance of pleasure and taste are only developed in her conclusions. In this article, they figure as the central objects of analysis.

116 Michael Falser, "Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: Methodological Considerations," in *Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission: From Decay to Recovery*, ed. Michael Falser (Heidelberg: Springer, 2015), 2–3.

117 Andrzej Michalowski et al., "Park Muzakowski – Muskauer Park Cultural Landscape: Supplement to the Documentation for the Inscription on the World Heritage List," UNESCO, July 7, 2004, <http://whc.unesco.org/uploads/nominations/1127.pdf>.

118 Juneja, "A Very Civil Idea," 462.

119 Juneja, "A Very Civil Idea," 462.

conflicts.”¹²⁰ Additionally, they continue, contemporary definitions of cultural heritage imply “a consensus on the museum-like and identity-generating function of cultural heritage and the autonomy of the modern art work.”¹²¹ But, as Falser and Juneja caution, this consensus is highly elitist and exclusive.

According to the UNESCO Committee, the Muskau Park possesses “Outstanding Universal Value” because it “exemplifies and epitomises the European landscape park tradition of incorporating and ‘improving’ nature within dramatic natural landscapes.”¹²² According to Falser, the “Outstanding Universal Values” of UNESCO are an “exclusive classification system of elitist criteria” that reproduce a global “civilizing mission and commodification” of what constitutes material and immaterial heritage and under which criteria it has to be maintained and preserved.¹²³ The idea of universal cultural heritage, as authoritatively put forward by UNESCO, thus uncritically builds on ideas of identity and the nation. It furthermore assumes a linear temporal progression. These assumptions reach back to “civilizing” European Enlightenment discourses that were adapted in processes of imperialism and nation building.¹²⁴ According to Carey Watt, the idea that certain cultural values could be universal and spread globally for the better of the entire human kind through civilizing missions was used in the nineteenth and twentieth century “to justify and legitimize the establishment and continuation of overseas colonies, both to subject peoples and to citizens or subjects in the homeland.”¹²⁵

In UNESCO’s justification for its recognition of Muskau Park as cultural heritage, nature exists independently from the human, but is available to be “improved” by the human. In the park, the argument goes, nature is transformed into an ideal by human intervention. This ideal state of nature could be universally appreciated by its visitors. UNESCO’s justification thereby reiterates landscape as an object of possessive nostalgia. According to W. J. T. Mitchell, this nostalgia reflects “a time when metropolitan cultures could imagine their destiny in an unbounded ‘prospect’ of endless appropriation

120 Michael Falser and Monica Juneja, “Kulturerbe – Denkmalpflege: Transkulturell. Eine Einleitung,” in *Kulturerbe und Denkmalpflege transkulturell: Grenzgänge zwischen Theorie und Praxis*, ed. Michael Falser and Monica Juneja (Bielefeld: transcript, 2013), 25. Translated by the author.

121 Falser and Juneja, “Kulturerbe,” 25.

122 Michałowski, et al., “Park Muzakowski – Muskauer Park,” 141.

123 Falser, “Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission,” 14.

124 Falser, “Cultural Heritage as Civilizing Mission,” 2.

125 Carey A. Watt, “Introduction: The Relevance and Complexity of Civilizing Missions c. 1800–2010,” in *Civilizing Mission in Colonial and Postcolonial South Asia: From Improvement to Development*, ed. Carey A. Watt and Michael Mann (London: Anthem, 2011), 1.

and conquest.”¹²⁶ UNESCO’s justification further praises Muskau Park as “a masterpiece of human creative genius” with “high aesthetic quality.”¹²⁷ In this way, the portrayal of Muskau Park as cultural heritage is not only dependent on its autonomy as a work of art, but also on Pückler’s autonomy as an individual subject, as the artist and creator of the park. Pückler is used to exemplify human creativity, while promoting arguments of individual uniqueness in the creation of an artwork, the park.

The UNESCO justification additionally praises Pückler’s “exotic and extravagant lifestyle [and] his cosmopolitan intellect.”¹²⁸ The problem with the allusions to a benevolent worldview and cosmopolitanism in Pückler’s character and work is that it completely ignores the apparent reductionism and essentialism that has been analyzed above in Pückler’s travelogues and letters. Additionally, Juneja reminds us,

to advocate cosmopolitanism as normative practice without questioning the understanding of culture it is premised on risks a decline into a de-historicized multiculturalism that liberal societies today put forward as a political imperative and a managerial mode to deal with diversity.¹²⁹

Additionally, the assumption that a specific character trait (in Pückler’s case, being “cosmopolitan”) can directly translate itself into a landscape and the subjective experience of that landscape is also problematic, because it implies a unidirectional transfer of Pückler’s ideas and subjectivity into the transformation of the landscape. However, one has to keep in mind that the labor of physical transformation was not executed by Pückler, nor did it end with Pückler’s death. It is thus illusionary to claim that the park could represent the worldview or ideal of a singular individual. Rather, the park is in constant transformation with a variety of human and other-than-human agents.

The permanent exhibition at the Neues Schloss in Bad Muskau *Pückler? Pückler! Einfach nicht zu fassen!* (Pückler? Pückler! Simply not graspable!) fills 800m² of the castle’s floorspace. It was opened in 2008 and cost around 1.35 million euro, provided by the state of Saxony and the

126 William J. T. Mitchell, “Imperial Landscape,” in *Landscape and Power*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 20.

127 Michałowski et al., “Park Muzakowski – Muskauer Park,” 15, 141.

128 Michałowski et al., “Park Muzakowski – Muskauer Park,” 18.

129 Juneja, “A Very Civil Idea,” 464.

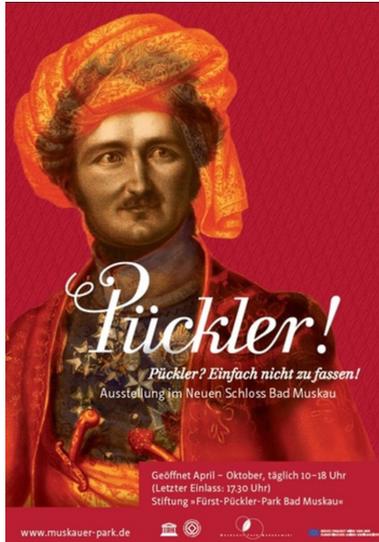


Fig. 9: Pückler? Pückler! Einfach nicht zu fassen. Poster for permanent exhibition at Muskau Castle, Bad Muskau. *Niederlausitz Aktuell*, accessed July 11, 2019, https://www.niederlausitz-aktuell.de/media/k2/items/cache/de1232d0643fbdd326c1e015a0322df6_L.jpg.



Fig. 10: Pückler? Pückler! Einfach nicht zu fassen. Installation view, Muskau Castle (photograph by the author).

European Regional Development Fund, a body of the European Union.¹³⁰ The title of the exhibition alludes to Pückler as an individual subject and his alleged eccentricity. The poster of the exhibition depicts Pückler in a turban (Fig. 9). This representation positions a signifier of the Orient as a visualization of Pückler's many fads, rendering the Orient irreconcilably Other and appropriate at the same time. Most objects within the exhibition are replicas. Various interactive exhibits use audio-visual technologies and light effects in order to illustrate Pückler's life and work. The exhibition even features an interactive indoor carnival ride. Seated in a plush "carriage," the visitor rides through a theatrical set-up of Pückler's *Andeutungen über Landschaftsgärtnerei*, with large, stylized book pages and the enlarged illustrations of the *Andeutungen* (Fig. 10). A voice-over reads aloud passages of the book, accompanied by a sound and light show. The exhibition thus clearly aims at the entertainment of the visitor and at creating an interactive, visually and sensually stimulating experience to engage with Pückler. Here, Pückler is contemporary, eccentric, versatile, and European: while the political context has changed, Pückler has survived several epistemological ruptures and paradigm shifts.

Haunted historiographies

All accounts and historiographies assembled here are partial and full of intentional blank spaces. Where Wiepking-Jürgensmann dismisses Pückler's traveling and his interest in "non-German culture" as "bizarre," most recent accounts praise Pückler's travels and allusions to cultural difference as inclusionary cosmopolitanism.¹³¹ Throughout all these narratives, individual sentiments—the abilities to enjoy nature and art, and the ability to pleurably consume—are emphasized in conjunction with the perceived Germanness of Pückler's work. This does not come as a surprise: Pückler himself, while not necessarily arguing for a unified German nation, repeatedly set apart what he saw as "German" culture and characteristics from those of other European and non-European cultures.¹³²

Detaching undesirable aspects of this nationalist mobilization of Pückler—such as the imperialist militarism of the German Empire or the destructive ideology of the National Socialist regime—does not in any form erase the cultural and racial assumptions that underlie the idea of a distinct

130 Helmut Fleischhauer, "Pückler kehrt zurück: Ausstellungseröffnung im Neuen Schloss Bad Muskau," *Niederlausitz Aktuell*, September 13, 2008, accessed July 4, 2019, <https://www.niederlausitz-aktuell.de/niederlausitz/2849/pueckler-kehrt-zurueck--.html>.

131 For example, see Wiepking-Jürgensmann, "Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau und Peter Josef Lenné," 307. Translated by the author. For contemporary accounts, see above.

132 See Stobbe, *Fürst Pückler als Schriftsteller*, 124.

national identity. Quite on the contrary, declaring something as “of the past” or as “having been overcome” carries deep political implications and brushes over the close entanglements between German nationalism and racism. Ulrike Hamann understands the “overcoming of racism” as one of “the foundational myths of the Federal Republic [of Germany],” leaving the foundational structure of racism in the definition of German national identity undiscussed.¹³³ Moreover, as Trouillot argues, past and present are interdependent: “the past is only past because there is a present.” For this reason, “pastness”—that which is defined as of the past—is not a distant, autonomously existing reality but a position.¹³⁴ Thus, the lack of reflection on racial power structures contributes to the continuation of their inherent constituent violence that permeates the above-analyzed definitions of subjectivity, taste, nature, and art.

Multiple personhoods: *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee*

The lack of reflection on racial power structures becomes particularly evident in the way in which historians, scholars, and marketing professionals—that today seem to be closely interacting in the context of the production of knowledge on cultural heritage—interpret the archival material on *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee*. In his travelogues, Pückler retrospectively crafts the experiences of different enslaved women into his narrative of *Machbuba*.¹³⁵ Archival sources, such as the letters of Pückler and of his wider network, suggest that several enslaved women were traveling with him.¹³⁶ While the experiences of personhood of these women are barely visible in the archival sources, *Machbuba*—the servant, confidant, and lover—is also put forward as a vehicle to narrate variations of a reductionist, sensationalist romance between the prince and the enslaved woman in both popular literature and research.¹³⁷ As elaborated above, most recent research has mainly focused on the reconstruction of *Machbuba* within a revisionist agenda. These efforts of revision do not question their own parameters, nor

133 Ulrike Hamann, *Prekäre koloniale Ordnung: Rassistische Konjunkturen im Widerspruch. Deutsches Kolonialregime 1884–1914* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2016), 11. Translated by the author.

134 Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 15.

135 Kerstin Volker-Saad, “Machbuba: ‘Die treuste Copie einer Venus von Tizian, nur in Schwarzer Manier,’” in *Äthiopien und Deutschland: Sehnsucht nach der Ferne*, ed. Kerstin Volker-Saad and Anna Greve (Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2006), 117.

136 Ludmilla Assing-Grimelli, ed., *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher des Fürsten von Pückler-Muskau* (Berlin: Wedekind & Schwieger, 1874), 2:117.

137 See for example Klessmann, *Fürst Pückler und Machbuba*.

do they examine the political and social contexts of inquiry. In contemporary research on *Machbuba*, a corrective, hypervisible version of her is mobilized in the service of cosmopolitan, multicultural museum and exhibition strategies, and the promotion of cultural heritage.¹³⁸ These efforts speak to the extensive body of scholarship that has emerged in recent decades, dedicated to the recovery of silences and the restoration of agency and subjectivity in the subaltern, silent, or blank spaces of knowledge production.¹³⁹ These terms, as I argue, are charged with assumptions on space, time, and subjectivity, and are entangled with their very own contexts of knowledge production.

The question of *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee*'s personhood(s) comes down to what constitutes human beings on the most intimate level, drafting boundaries between lives worth living, lives barely lived, and not-living through dislocation and transformation. The human being who rests under the gravestone in Bad Muskau under the name *Machbuba* was forced into a particular subject position in the service of sexually and racially charged fantasies. In their very specific forms of unfreedom, which might not even formally fall under the definitions of slavery, *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* were subsumed under imperial formations that "create new subjects that must be relocated to be productive and exploitable, dispossessed to be modern, disciplined to be independent, converted to be human, stripped of old cultural bearings to be citizens, coerced to be free."¹⁴⁰

Even in her death, *Machbuba* has been mobilized to signify hypervisible Otherness. In the historical sources and later historiographies, her death is used to constitute the meaning of her life as an individual tragedy, as a particular, even romanticized self-abandonment. This death is recognized as grief-worthy, but her early death becomes the most prominent and visible interpretation of her life in later representations.

138 I am here mostly referring to the recent research on *Machbuba* commissioned by the Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz and the Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park Bad Muskau, as it is put forward in their academic publications and in the plans for an upcoming exhibition on Pückler and his travels through North Africa and the Ottoman Empire. See Hamernik, "Das Rätsel Ajiamé"; Neuhäuser, ed., *Sehnsucht nach Konstantinopel*; Bodo Baumert, "Lausitzer Geschichte: Das neue Bild der Machbuba," *Lausitzer Rundschau*, February 9, 2018, accessed May 8, 2019, https://www.lr-online.de/serien/lausitzer-geschichte/das-neue-bild-der-machbuba_aid-7114969.

139 Just to mention a few, in alphabetical order: Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009); Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*; Lisa Lowe, "The Intimacies of Four Continents," in *Haunted by Empire*, 192–212; Saidiya V. Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (June 2008): 1–14; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271–313.

140 Ann Laura Stoler and Carole McGranahan, "Refiguring Imperial Terrains," in *Imperial Formations*, ed. Ann Laura Stoler, Carole McGranahan, and Peter C. Perdue (Santa Fe: SAR Press, 2007), 8.

Material and visual engagements with her death not only include the spectacle of the funeral, a funeral attended by a large part of the population of Bad Muskau. But also, *Machbuba* was commemorated by the production of a plaster cast of her hand and head, a portrait drawn on her deathbed, and a posthumous portrait by an unknown artist.¹⁴¹ As Christian Friedrich and Simone Neuhäuser point out, the portrait in which *Machbuba* is dressed in a Mamluk costume and positioned in front of a desert landscape with pyramids is less a realist representation of her than a visual manifestation of Orientalist fantasies (Fig. 11).¹⁴² As such, it resembles a portrait of Angelo Soliman (*floruit* 1721–1796) by Johann Nepomuk Steiner (1725–1793) from around 1760 (Fig. 12). Soliman was an Ethiopian who was brought to Europe as a young boy. During his lifetime, he became a prominent and respected member of society in Vienna. However, after his decease, his remains were dissected and then stuffed, dressed in an Orientalist costume, and exhibited in the Viennese imperial natural history collection.¹⁴³

The visual resemblance of the two portraits reveals the circulation of representative, formulaic tropes of the black body in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The portraits were less the representation of an individual, than they were representative of diffuse ideas on visual Otherness that forced black bodies into positions of high vulnerability and visibility in their lives and deaths. *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* and Soliman each experienced varying forms of alienation and unfreedom. Saidiya Hartman cautions that “[n]o solace can be found in the death of the slave, no higher ground can be located, no perspective can be found from which death serves a greater good or becomes anything other than what it is.”¹⁴⁴ However, in the case of *Machbuba*, the death of one of *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* is turned into a meaningful visual spectacle in favor of the very same processes of

141 Assing-Grimelli, *Briefwechsel und Tagebücher des Fürsten von Pückler-Muskau*, 1875, 7:35–36, 39; Christian Friedrich and Simone Neuhäuser, “...Und wie interessant es ist von daher zurückzukommen!” Die Orientreise des Hermann von Pückler-Muskau und seine Rückkehr in Begleitung,” in *Sehnsucht nach Konstantinopel*, 30–31. Translated by the author.

142 Friedrich and Neuhäuser, “Und wie interessant es ist,” 31.

143 Sünne Juterczenka, “‘Chamber Moors’ and Court Physicians. On the Convergence of Aesthetic Consumption and Racial Anthropology at Eighteenth-Century Courts in Germany,” in *Entangled Knowledge: Scientific Discourses and Cultural Difference*, ed. Klaus Hock and Gesa Mackenthun (Münster: Waxmann, 2012), 172; Friedrich and Neuhäuser, “Und wie interessant es ist,” 31; Iris Wigger and Katrin Klein, “‘Bruder Mohr’. Angelo Soliman und der Rassismus der Aufklärung,” in *Entfremdete Körper: Rassismus als Leichenschändung*, ed. Wulf D. Hund (Bielefeld: transcript, 2009), 81.

144 Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2008), 67.



Fig. 11: Unknown Artist, Portrait of Machbuba, oil on canvas, ca. 1840, 72.5 × 59 cm, Branitz: Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Museum Park und Schloss Branitz, inventory no. VII K1/353 (Wiki Commons, CC BY-SA 4.0, taken and uploaded by Clemensfranz).



Fig. 12: Gottfried Haid, based on an artwork by Johann Nepomuk Steiner; Angelus Solimanus, ca. 1760 × 1765, engraving, Vienna: Wien Museum (Wiki Commons, Public Domain, uploaded by Dencey).

individualization in the service of distinct subjectivities. At the same time, the deaths of the others pass unmentioned and unmourned in the historical sources and narratives.

Representations of *Machbuba*'s body in conjunction with her early death have continued to circulate up to today. Contemporary representations of her continue these fictions of subjectivity and their underlying assumptions of sexuality, race, life, and death in favor of a consumption-oriented commodification. For instance, in 2011, a souvenir shop in Branitz sold beer with the label "Machbuba. Prince and Slave. The Beer of a Great Love" with a naked woman juxtaposed in front of Pückler's pyramid.¹⁴⁵

Similarly, the exhibition area on *Machbuba* in Branitz Castle underlines specific visualities that take up Orientalist tropes. It is located in the Carpet Room of the so-called "Oriental Rooms" on the second floor of the castle. These rooms, which were partly representative and partly private during Pückler's lifetime, feature richly ornamented wallpapers with Arabic calligraphy.¹⁴⁶ Today, they hold parts of Pückler's collection of objects from Northern Africa, the Middle East, India, and China, some of which he bought during his travels. In the Carpet Room, on the wall above a showcase with *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee*'s death mask, hand plaster cast, and the memorial drawing hangs the posthumous portrait from 1840. The arrangement of objects is completed by the bronze statue *Machbuba* by the artist Hans Scheib from 1998. The body of the represented woman is entirely exposed, except for a large turban on her head and a cloth in her hands. This representation not only recreates Pückler's first description of *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* on the slave market in Cairo as "the truest copy of a Venus by Titian, only in black manner."¹⁴⁷ The headwear also emphasizes the association of *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* with Oriental fantasies, a "European gaze on the female Oriental, the male voyeurism and the perception of the colonized woman as an object of sexual desire [...]."¹⁴⁸

Through its set-up as an exhibition, this arrangement of objects makes a claim to represent *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* as a unified, "real" subject.

145 The beer was quickly taken off the market after the Stiftung Fürst-Pückler-Park und Schloss Branitz complained that it would be "an insult to the Prince" rather than because the depiction mobilizes racially and sexually discriminatory tropes. See Britta Beyer, "Halbnackt auf der Flasche: Bier aus Sachsen sorgt für Aufregung. Pücklers Muse auf einem Bieretikett," *Schweriner Volkszeitung*, August 18, 2011, <https://www.svz.de/lokales/puecklers-muse-auf-einem-bieretikett-id4345751.html>.

146 Silke Kreibich, "Zwischen Refugium und Repräsentation: Fürst Hermann von Pückler-Muskau Orienträume in Branitz," in *Sehnsucht nach Konstantinopel*, 118.

147 Von Pückler-Muskau, *Aus Mehemed Ali's Reich*, 3:7. Translated by the author.

148 Ulrike Stamm, "Die hässliche Orientalin: Zu einem Stereotyp des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Orientdiskurse in der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Klaus-Michael Bogdal (Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2007), 142. Translated by the author.

As the objects are placed in the Oriental Rooms of the castle, their arrangement is dominated by the interpretative framework of the figure of Pückler.¹⁴⁹ It is impossible to separate *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* from this framework as long as the materiality of the historical sources available limits the thinkable and the sayable. In the exhibition space, *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* haunt the processes of Pückler's self-representation exactly because there is no ultimate meaning that can be found in their lives and deaths. They expose the discontinuities in the historical narratives on Pückler and thus the potentialities of acknowledging them, instead of replacing them with definite meaning.

As Gordon writes, haunting is exactly "that moment (of however long duration) [...] when the cracks and rigging are exposed, when the people who are meant to be invisible show up without any sign of leaving [...]." ¹⁵⁰ *Machbuba/Ajiamé/Bilillee* are not alone haunting the historical narrations on Pückler. There are other complex personhoods, other humans and other-than-humans, other cosmologies. As ghosts, they are undeniably present, disruptive to the establishment of common sense. They are, among others, the nameless prisoners who Pückler hired for the massive transformation of the park in Branitz, the activities of his wife and their gardeners undermining his authoritative landscape planning, the decay of his pyramids that were built for eternity and the endless contradictions of binary oppositions of art and nature. They are stones and grasses, letters and sketches that tell other stories, other possibilities, and potentialities.¹⁵¹

Conclusion

A few fundamental questions, ruptures of rationality, and uncertainties haunt this paper. How should assemblages be read and written about without falling into the trap of benevolent, inclusionary addition? How should histories of the inherent epistemic violence of ontological and cosmological knowledge be written without feeding into conceptual master narratives, such as colonialism or orientalism? How should the role of the visual and the aesthetic be grappled with, if these concepts are complicit with previous forms of knowledge production?

Transculturation proposes thinking about the dynamics of culture, rather than understanding it as a state of being. This article, acknowledging its

149 During the writing of this article, the Oriental Rooms of Branitz Castle were closed for renovation. They are scheduled to reopen in 2020 with an updated exhibition on *Machbuba*. These revisions can therefore only be the topic of future research.

150 Gordon, *Ghostly Matters*, xvi.

151 On Pückler's use of forced labor through prisoners, see, among others, Neumann, "Die Begräbnisstätten im Branitzer Park," 13.

own processes of transculturation in its writing, is not to be understood as a definitive proposition of truth, but an open invitation for further reflections and practices.

It thus departed from the idea that a “better historiography” could emerge from attending to silenced narratives, such as those of *Machbuba/Ajjamé/Bilillee*, with the same tools and methods that have rendered them silenced. The article, however, does not represent a departure from writing and narration as practices of engagement. Understanding the writing of history as an engagement, as a creative practice of positional assemblage might, in the best case, constitute a contribution to the efforts put forward by scholars of transcultural studies. Through a critical engagement with the practices of academic writing, it might offer new grounds for transcultural studies’ continuing effort of social, spatial, and conceptual contextualization, and its shift in perspective from states of *being* to states of *becoming*.

This article can thus only serve to emphasize the discontinuities and ruptures of its terms and narratives. It has attempted to allow the silences, irrationalities, and fictions to enter the process of writing, to acknowledge its own incompleteness and instabilities. Through the assemblage of a multiplicity of materials that allow contradictory readings, my hope is that this article has shed some light on the *potentialities* of historical narrations—with all their problems and deficiencies that demand further attention and care.¹⁵²

As of today, Pückler is not the only “pre-imperial,” exclusively male historical subject who is mobilized in historical narratives of cosmopolitanism in the context of German cultural heritage.¹⁵³ Similarly, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) and the brothers Wilhelm (1767–1832) and Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) have been put forward as German contributors to contemporary post-ethnic, post-colonial, and universalist understandings of “world cultures.”¹⁵⁴ Paradoxically, these narratives strikingly skip the roughly 150 years in which Germany existed as a modern nation-state while simultaneously constructing a national history. The painful, violent contexts of these 150 years, of colonialism, imperialism, and the two world wars, are put aside in favor of a positive discourse on benevolent cosmopolitanism. In the blending of nationalism, marketing and research, as currently occurs at the Humboldt University and the Humboldt

152 Ariella Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019), 56–57.

153 “Pre-imperial” meaning here before the foundation and unification of the German Empire in 1871.

154 The Goethe Institute, for example, is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany for promoting German language and culture in ninety-eight countries around the world. See “Locations – Goethe-Institut,” accessed July 28, 2019, <https://www.goethe.de/en/wwt.html>.

Forum in Berlin, more critical inquiries are necessary to trace larger processes of revisionist, nationalist historiography. These bear the potential to connect the analyzed historiography on Pückler with that on other favored protagonists of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century.¹⁵⁵ Such an approach would enable the critical deconstruction of unquestioned categorizations and continuations of nationalism and racism.

155 In the summer of 2019, the Humboldt University Berlin celebrated Alexander von Humboldt's 250th birthday with a large number of public and academic events, see Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, "Die Humboldt-Universität feiert Alexander von Humboldt," accessed July 27, 2019, <https://www.hu-berlin.de/de/service/veranstaltungen/250-jahre-alexander-von-humboldt>; In July 2019, the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* published a cover story on Alexander von Humboldt as "the first environmentalist," see *Die Zeit*, "Der Erste Naturschützer," *Die Zeit*, July 25, 2019, 31/2019 edition; For the justification of its namesakes in the case of the Humboldt Forum, see Humboldt Forum, "FAQ – Frequently Asked Questions. Why Is the New Venue Called the Humboldt Forum?," *Humboldt Forum*, accessed July 27, 2019, <https://www.humboldtforum.org/en/pages/faq>.