Children of postcommunism

Boris Buden

A curious set of metaphors marks the jargon of postcommunist transition: *education for democracy*, *classrooms of democracy*, *democratic exams*, *democracy that is growing and maturing, but which might still be in diapers or making its first steps or, of course, suffering from children's illnesses*.[1] This language of postcommunism discloses a paradox that points at what is probably the greatest scandal of recent history: those who proved their political maturity in the so-called 'democratic revolutions' of 1989–90 have become thereafter, overnight, children! Only yesterday, they succeeded in toppling totalitarian regimes in whose persistency and steadfastness the whole so-called 'free' and 'democratic' world had firmly believed, until the very last moment, and whose power it had feared as an other-worldly monster. In the struggle against the communist threat, that world had mobilized all its political, ideological and military forces, its greatest statesmen and generals, philosophers and scientists, propagandists and spies, without ever really frightening the totalitarian beast. Yet, despite that, it calls those who chased it away with their bare hands 'children'. Only yesterday, those people got world history going again, after it had been lying on its deathbed, and helped it to walk upright again, after so long. Yet today, they themselves must learn their first steps. Only yesterday, they taught the world a history lesson in courage, political autonomy and historical maturity, yet today they must assert themselves before their new self-declared masters as their obedient pupils. Only yesterday, they were the saving remedy for fatally ill societies; today, they themselves suffer from children's illnesses, which they must survive in order to become capable of living. What miracle happened overnight? What wizard turned these people into children?

Of course, it was politics. The child that was suddenly recognized in these mature people is defined neither by an early stage of psychological development that was never really abandoned, nor as a result of the psychopathological phenomenon of infantile regression, but as a political being, a *zoon politicon* par excellence.

An ideology called 'transitology'

The human being as a political child offers itself as the almost perfect subject of a democratic restart. Untroubled by the past and geared totally to the future, it is full of energy and imagination, compliant and teachable. It emanates freedom as though its pure embodiment, but actually it is not free at all. A child is dependent; it must be guided and patronized by adults. However, this only makes it all the more suitable for serving society, as the perfect ground for a new beginning. It neutralizes all the contradictions that the sudden irruption of freedom lays bare in society, above all between those who rule and the ruled. There is no relation of domination that seems so natural and self-evident as the one between a child and its guardian, no mastery so innocent and justifiable as that over children. One does not take their freedom away, but suspends it temporarily, postpones it, so to speak, for the time being. A patronized child as political being enjoys a sort of delayed freedom. And in case one day the promise of freedom turns out to be a delusion, one can always say that it was just a children's fairy tale.

The repressive infantilization of the societies that have recently liberated themselves from communism is the key feature of the so-called postcommunist condition. It comes to light in the ideology of the postcommunist transition, a peculiar theory that addresses itself to the task of understanding and explaining the postcommunist transition to democracy. Here, cynicism becomes (political) science. From the perspective of this political science, postcommunism is understood above all as a phase of transition – that is, as a process of transformation of an 'actually socialist' (*realsozialistisch*) society into a capitalist democratic one.[2] Political science finds no reason to understand this transition in terms of a specific historical epoch. It lacks basic identity features: a specific postcommunist political subject or system, for instance, and a specific postcommunist mode of production, or form of property. In fact, political science does not need the concept of postcommunism at all. It prefers instead the aforementioned concept of 'transition to democracy'

and it even develops within this framework a special discipline with the task of studying this process: 'transitology'. It is based on the cynical idea that people who won freedom through their own struggle must now learn how to enjoy it properly. The meaning of this paradox goes far beyond the historical situation in which the postcommunist societies in Eastern Europe found themselves after 1989.

The concept of transition was introduced by orthodox political scientists in the late 1960s and early 1970s to explain various cases of regime change, principally in South America and Southern Europe. Transition originally meant nothing more than 'an interval between two different political regimes', as a minimalistic definition from 1984 put it.[3] This transition was always a 'transition from': 'from authoritarian rule', for instance, in the title of the book by O'Donnell, Whitehead and Schmitter. Basically, at that time, political science always reflected on the phenomenon of regime change retrospectively. It tried to draw lessons from historical experience *ex post*. It was not so interested in the future because the outcome of this sort of transition was more or less open. It did not necessarily end in a democracy; an authoritarian regime could be transformed into another form of authoritarian rule. At that time, it was still conceivable that a military dictatorship in South America might be replaced by a Marxist or even a Maoist dictatorship. The Chilean people, for example, democratically decided to embark with Allende on a form of 'socialist democracy', but the military junta turned them in a completely different direction.

In those days, for political science, the world was still quite complex: there were not just two competing ideological–political systems and military blocs, but also a series of anti-colonial movements in the 'Third World', providing for a certain contingency of the political. At that time, it still seemed as though there was a choice, as though history had an open end. By the end of the 1980s something had changed, and transitology began to understand its topic differently. The process of political transformation was now to be determined in advance. Its goal is always already known – incorporation into the global capitalist system of Western liberal democracy. From that point on, the concept of transition has been almost exclusively applied to the so-called postcommunist societies and denotes a transition to democracy that began with the historical turn of 1989–90 and continues, more or less successfully, mostly in Eastern Europe. This condition is familiar to the 'children of communism'. They grew up with the logic of historical determinism. However, it was the moving force of class struggle that was manoeuvring society into a better, classless future then. To be free meant, at that time, to recognize the iron laws of history and to yield to them. The trail to a better communist future was not only clearly blazed but also unavoidable.

Nowadays, they are told, they must have a similar experience; only this time, it is *the General Law of History* they have to obey unconditionally. The goal is clearly and distinctively set and its final attainment is guaranteed in advance. According to the new ideology of transition, there are no major obstacles on the way to democracy, so long as one strictly adjusts to the objective, external factors – economic, cultural, institutional, and so on. Sometimes a geographical position will suffice. 'Geography is indeed the single reason to hope that East European countries will follow the path to democracy and prosperity', writes one of the transitologists, who understands politics only as a struggle for control over external factors: 'if we really control economic growth and the institutional setting, it is very likely that democracy will occur.'[4]

Others go a step further. Our way to democracy is determined by nature itself. It is 'a natural tendency and therefore not difficult to achieve'.[5] Even the very idea of politics is based in Charles Darwin's theory of natural selection.[6] The author of this Darwinist theory of democracy, Tutu Vanhanen, also believes that democracy is universally measurable. So he introduced the so-called Index of Democratization (ID) that shows us on which level of democratization a society is situated. Accordingly, he constructed also a ranking of democratic societies. In this list, which he created shortly before the collapse of communism, he classified 61 countries as democracies, 5 as so-called 'semi-democracies' and 81 as 'non-democracies'. Only countries that earned more than 5 ID points were classified as truly democratic. Those under that level were authoritarian. The two poles 'authoritarian rule' and 'really existing freedom' (i.e. liberal democracy) define a clear line of historical development: from authoritarianism to democracy. The transition is now teleologicaly determined – that is, designed from the perspective of its intended result – and consists of climbing up the scale of democratization to the top, the condition of realized freedom in the system of liberal democracy. One only has to follow the law of nature.

Authority on one side and freedom (i.e. autonomy) on the other – these two poles also determine the ideal of an enlightened, modern education: the development of an immature child, still dependent on an authority, into an autonomous, mature citizen of a free society.

According to Vanhanen, the most important factors that affect his Index of Democratization are competition and participation. His formula is simple: the more democratic the system, the higher the level of participation and competition. The latter stands for the openness of political possibilities, for a pluralism of interests – that is, of political and ideological options. Under 'participation' we should understand voluntary involvement of citizens in political life and in making political decisions. A fully mature democracy requires mature democrats capable of autonomous thinking and acting.

Under these conceptual premisses, the process of postcommunist transition appears as an educational process following the ideal of education for maturity and responsibility. However, it also reflects all the contradictions of this old Enlightenment concept.

Education for immaturity and irresponsibility

The analogy between the historical development of humanity and the growing up of a child (its consciously controlled education) is, as is well known, an invention of the Enlightenment. Indeed, enlightenment is nothing but a transition from immaturity to maturity, or, as we read in the first sentence of Kant's famous essay from 1784, 'man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity', which he defines as 'inability to make use of one's own understanding without direction'.[7] In the same sense that the immaturity is 'self-imposed', the maturity too should be achieved as a result of one's own action. One cannot be simply declared mature – that is, released from a tutelage, be it nature, God or some master, which is the original meaning of the idea of emancipation as an acquittal, a release from paternal care, being freed from bondage. The Enlightenment idea of a transition to maturity has more of a reflexive sense, a self-emancipation. Of course, this transition should never be mistaken for a revolution. Kant's concept of Enlightenment implies an emancipation that does not take place through a revolutionary leap, but rather as a reform in the manner of thinking (*Denkungsart*), as a continuous progression which alone is capable of securing the identity of its subject, as the subject of Enlightenment.[8]

In historical developments after Kant, the Enlightenment ideal of maturity – and with it the perception of emancipation as a long-term process with an open end – was pushed more and more into the background. Another idea of emancipation took its place. Emancipation was understood now as an act of liberation from an unjustly imposed domination. The goal of emancipation is not any more a mature man but rather a society free of domination. With this move 'maturity' has lost the emphatic meaning of emancipation.

Curiously it was not until 1945 that interest in the concept recurred. Of course, this was the time of a historic transition: from fascist dictatorship to

democracy. The traumatic historical experience of the masses, which had blindly followed their Führers into the catastrophe, made the idea of autonomous, mature and responsible men and women attractive again. 'Maturity' was now recognized as a precondition for democracy.[9] After a long historical separation 'maturity' and 'emancipation' met again. This also influenced postwar philosophical reflection. Habermas, for instance, attached the emancipatory knowledge-interest to an interest in maturity. At the same time, pedagogy discovered the concept of 'maturity'; it became the goal of education, the very principle of an emancipatory educational science. The post-fascist transition envisioned the ideal of mature and responsible citizens as the final cause of the construction of a new, democratic society. It is no wonder that the process of postcommunist transition finds itself committed to the same ideal. Finally, the new condition understands itself as post-totalitarian – liberating itself ideologically and historically from both 'totalitarianisms', fascist and communist: the so-called 'double occupation' – a retroactive equalization of two ideologies and political movements that in historical reality fought each other mercilessly.

The postcommunist ideal of mature and responsible citizenship has been nowhere so clearly employed as in the development of so-called 'civil society', which, it is believed, is the true subject of democratic life, the social substratum of all democratic values, justice, and well-functioning public and human rights. This civil society is supposed to be very weak in the East European societies liberated from communism. It is still 'in diapers', one might say, which is the reason it has to be first educated, trained, developed, got going.[10] Surprisingly, nobody at the time asked the question: who, if not the civil societies of Eastern Europe brought the *ancien régime* to collapse? What was Solidarity in Poland if not the paradigmatic institution of – a resisting, struggling and radically world-changing – civil society par excellence? How has it suddenly become so weak if yesterday it had been able to overthrow communism? Who has put the Polish workers in diapers, all those brave men and women who initiated the democratic revolution, withstood the brutal repression of the counter-revolution and carried the struggle for democracy on their shoulders until the final victory? Who – and in whose interest – has put them thereafter in children's shoes, diagnosed their children's illnesses, sent them to school and to exams?

These were the cynical ideologues of transition, the masterminds of the postcommunist transformation, as we can call them. However, their cynicism has followed a logic, the logic of domination. If 'education for maturity and responsibility' is propagated in the interest of domination and thereby turns into an endless process about whose possible conclusion the educators alone decide, then the call for 'maturity and responsibility' no longer serves, as Robert Spaemann writes, 'to enlarge the circle of the mature, but rather the circle of those who are for now declared immature'.[11] Thus the child metaphors that are so typical of the jargon of postcommunist transition turn out to be a symptom of a new power relationship. They point clearly to a repressive incapacitation or putting under tutelage of the true subject of the 'democratic turn' and to its retroactive desubjectivation. We are talking about a constellation for which those words of Adorno, from his radio talk on 'Education for Maturity and Responsibility', still hold true, namely that 'in a world as it is today the plea for maturity and responsibility could turn out to be something like a camouflage for an overall keeping-people-immature'.[12]

Again, in whose interest does it happen? Who puts the protagonists of the historical change under tutelage, who robs them of their subject-status? The question is as old as the Enlightenment concept of maturity. Hamann put it directly to Kant: 'Who is … the vexed guardian [*der leidige Vormund*]?'[13] He saw him in Kant himself, or, more precisely, in the gestalt of the Enlightener. Today, these are the Western onlookers who didn't take part in the democratic revolutions of 1989–90. Far from meeting the deeds of the protagonists of the East European democratic revolutions with the 'wishful participation which borders on enthusiasm'[14] with which Kant's passive spectators once welcomed the French Revolution, they reacted to the overthrow of communism with a cynical 'participation' that reveals the wish for power and domination. In fact, they recognized in that historical event, likewise Kant's spectators of the downfall of the feudal absolutism of 1789, a 'progress in perfection' in terms of a 'tendency within the human race as a whole', but at the same time regarded this same tendency as having been long ago fulfilled in their own reality and therefore, speaking Hegelian, already historically sublated. 'You want a better world, but the better world are we' was the answer of the Western spectators to the democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe. In this sense, they are completely different from those who in 1789 so enthusiastically welcomed the news from Paris. While the latter caught sight of their own dream in the revolutionary reality of others, the former recognized in the revolutionary dream of the other nothing but their own reality.

Sergey Bratkov, #8 from the series *Birds*, 1997, b/w photo, 46 × 70 cm (courtesy Regina Gallery, Moscow)

The consequences of this difference could not be more radical. Those who finally crowned their struggle for freedom with victory in Eastern Europe have become, almost overnight, losers. This was not the effect of black magic but rather of hegemony. It is hegemony that made true winners out of the Western spectators, not only over communism but at the same time also over the protagonists of the revolution that brought down communism. Let us hear the declaration of victory in the words of this hegemony itself:

> The armies of the winners did not, it is true, occupy the territory of the losers. Still, given the nature of the conflict and the way it ended, it was logical for the losers to adopt the institutions and beliefs of the winners. It was logical in particular because the outcome represented a victory of the West's methods of political and economic organization rather than a triumph of its arms.[15]

It is not a coincidence that Michel Mandelbaum, the author of these words, and his colleague, political scientist John Mueller, speak explicitly of imitation as being the best way to democracy.[16]

It could not be worse: not only are the protagonists of the democratic revolutions robbed of their victory and made losers; at the same time, they have been put under tutelage and doomed blindly to imitate their guardians in the silly belief that this will educate them for autonomy. It is not only the arbitrariness of the new rulers, but above all the logic of their rule, that reveals itself here.

Education for stupidity

The notion 'children of communism' is therefore not a metaphor. Rather it denotes the figure of submission to the new form of 'historical necessity' that initiates and controls the process of the postcommunist transition. On these premisses, the transition to democracy starts as a radical reconstruction out of nothing. Accordingly, Eastern Europe after 1989 resembles a landscape of historical ruins that is inhabited only by children, immature people unable to organize their lives democratically without guidance from another. They see themselves neither as subjects nor as authors of a democracy that they actually won through struggle and created by themselves. It has been expropriated from them through the idea and practice of the postcommunist transition, only to return now from the outside as a foreign object that they must reappropriate in a long, hard and painful process. In the strange world of postcommunism, democracy appears at once as a goal to be reached and a lost object. Thus for the 'children of communism' the prospect of a better future opens up only from a melancholic perspective. No wonder, since their postcommunist present so remarkably resembles their communist past. It doesn't give them free choice. The 'children of communism' remain what they once already were, namely marionettes in a historical process that takes place independently of their will and drags them with it to a better future. So they are very familiar with this strange form of social life we call 'transition'. As is well known, so-called actually existing socialism was, according to its ideological premisses, nothing but a sort of transition-society from capitalism to communism. Thus, one form of transition has replaced another. However, both the absolute certainty and the pre-given necessity of the historical development have remained the constant of the transition.

As a result, the question of the future in postcommunism is considered as already answered, and the question of the past does not make sense. One does not expect the children of communism to have a critically reflected memory of the communist past. It is precisely for this reason that they have been made into children, namely in order *not* to remember this past. As children, they don't have one. Paradoxically, it is only in postcommunism that one gets a dubious impression that communism actually never existed. Already, in 1991, Jean-Luc Nancy spoke about the anger one is overwhelmed with when hearing all this empty talk about 'the end of communism'.[17] The belief that history is now finally finished with Marxism and communism, and simply so, he found ridiculous:

> As if history, our history, could be so inconsistent, so phantasmic, so flaky [*floconneuse*] to have carried us along for one hundred and fifty years on clouds that dissipate in a moment. As if error, pure, simple, and stupid error could be thus corrected, regulated, mobilized. As if thousands of so-called 'intellectuals' were simply fools, and especially as if millions of others were even more stupid as to have been caught in the delirium of the first.[18]

It is not so much the suppression of communism as a historical fact, the erasure of the communist past with all its intellectual and political complexity from the historical consciousness of postcommunism, that evokes Nancy's indignation and concern, but rather the immense ignorance with which the postcommunist world refuses to wonder about this past and its afterlife, or to ask: 'Why did this all happen?' Nancy sees in this the true, almost epochal stupidity of the postcommunist turn.

Of course, children are not stupid. However, one can make them stupid, or, more precisely, one can educate

Sergey Bratkov, #10 from the series *Birds*, 1997, colour photo, 110 × 150 cm (courtesy Regina Gallery, Moscow)

them for stupidity. In this respect, a hundred years ago, Freud wrote of intellectual inhibitions that culture implants in its pupils through education to make them more obedient and compliant. He differentiated three types of such thought-blockage – the authoritarian, the sexual and the religious – to which correspond three 'products of education', namely the good subjects, the sexually inhibited and religious people. He understood these forms of intellectual atrophy (*Verkümmerung*), as he also called it, as effects of *Denkverbot*, a ban imposed on men and women in their childhood, a ban on thinking about what was most interesting to them. In Freud's time, it was above all the suppression of sexuality that had become the self-evident task of education. Once the *Denkverbot* was successfully implemented in the realm of sexuality, it was extended to another spheres of life, becoming in this way the most important character trait of the whole personality.

What was at that time sexuality has become in the world of postcommunism politics. While the children of communism are virtually encouraged by their educators to liberate themselves sexually and to come out, as loudly as possible, with their hitherto suppressed sexual identities, to embrace unconditionally all secular values, and to become (instead of good subjects of the totalitarian state) self-conscious, free acting members of a democratic civil society, their liberated intellect seems to have no business being in the realm of the political. It is as though there is nothing there it can wonder about. As though all political questions have been correctly answered long ago; as though the only thing left to think about is how properly to implement them, how to imitate, as truly as possible, the pre-given role models and how to obediently follow the wise word of the guardian. It seems that the well-known dialectic of enlightenment, now from its political side, has caught up with the world of postcommunism. From being an education for maturity and responsibility that had been implemented to serve the new power, it has become an education for political stupidity. It has turned Kant's ideal upside down and puts its trust in precisely those people who are not able to use their intellect without guidance from another. Thus, the stupidity that Nancy ascribes to the postcommunist turn is actually an effect of this *Denkverbot* that has been imposed on the political *ratio* of postcommunism. It is above all in a political sense that people in postcommunism have been put under tutelage, made into children, and finally made into political fools.

This insight does not have to be taken as a reason for indignation but should rather motivate maturity. The 'child' as the leading political figure of postcommunism is much more than simply an instrument of the new hegemony. It is of structural importance for the fantasy

of a new social beginning that shapes the world of postcommunism so decisively. As a sort of biopolitical abstraction of the transitional society, it takes over the role of a subject that is freed from all the crimes of the communist past, so that it can enter any new social relation (including that of domination) morally clean. Moreover, as 'child' it does not have to take responsibility for the crimes of postcommunism itself: for the criminal privatization in which the wealth of whole nations has become the property of the few, almost overnight; for the new, postcommunist pauperization of the masses with all its social and individual consequences; for historical regressions that in some places have thrown the postcommunist societies, economically, culturally and morally, back below the levels that had already been reached under communism; and, finally, for all the nationalisms, racisms, fascism, bloody civil wars, and even genocides. All these phenomena appear today as unavoidable childhood illnesses, or, to put it bluntly, as unpleasant but harmless dirt on the diapers of the newborn liberal democratic society.

Sergey Bratkov, #12 from the series *Birds*, 1997, b/w photo, 46 × 70 cm (courtesy Regina Gallery, Moscow)

Do not forget: contradiction and resistance

The 'child' in postcommunism is a sort of ground zero of society on which every catastrophe, the one inherited from the past as well as the new, self-created one, can be recompensed. It is an instance of a primal social innocence thanks to which it becomes possible to integrate everything that happens, including 'the inadmissible, the intolerable' (Nancy) into a new heroic Robinsonade; and to retell it as a universally comprehensible narrative about an innocent restart. In the ideological figure of the innocent child, liberal democratic capitalist society enters the age of its unconditional ideological reproducibility. Even the most distant island can become for a time its cradle, no matter what the cost. Finally, infantile innocence has a constitutive effect for the whole horizon of individualistic (juridical) bourgeois ideology in the era of its globalization. It helps to reduce the antagonistic, political truth of human history to a relation that is structured according to the juridical pattern, the relation between perpetrators and innocent victims. One looks into history only with a sort of forensic interest, as into a corpse that can provide useful information for the court proceedings.

Hegel knew that only a stone, as metaphor of 'non-action' ('not even … a child') is innocent.[19] In this sense the fantasy of the innocent new beginning of postcommunist society is possible only from the perspective of a historical development that has been brought to a standstill and has frozen in the figure of a child as its political subject. Here, in the moment of historical transition, non-freedom is being replaced by a freedom that needs children, but only to deny itself to them.

It is therefore no wonder that, as Nancy emphasizes, one reacts to the cynicism of the time with anger. In the anger that postcommunist triumphalism provokes he saw the political sentiment par excellence, concretely, a reaction to 'the inadmissible, the intolerable'.[20] It is the expression of a refusal, of a resistance that goes far beyond what is reasonable. The anger Nancy talks about is political because it is enraged over the reduction of the political to an 'accommodation and influence peddling' that in postcommunism determines the frame of the historically possible. The anger opens a dimension of the political that unfolds only in breaking out of that frame. It is therefore the true messenger of a maturity to come that alone can put paid to the postcommunist tutelage.

It is in an 'education for protest and for resistance' that, according to Adorno, the 'only real concretization of maturity' lies.[21] He ended his talk on education with a warning – which remained literally his last public words, since he died few weeks later – a warning that can serve as a postscript to the ideology and practice of the postcommunist transition. It is precisely in the eagerness of our will to change, Adorno argued, which we all too easily suppress, that the attempts to actively change our world are immediately exposed to the overwhelming force of the existent and doomed to powerlessness. Thus 'Anyone who wishes to bring about change can probably only do so at all by turning that very impotence, and their own impotence, into an active ingredient in their own thinking and maybe in their own actions too.'[22]

The repressively infantilized child in us is nothing but a pure embodiment of our political and historical powerlessness in the ideal world of postcommunism, which, in a seizure of an epochal megalomania mistakes itself for the realization of all dreams about freedom. The only possible exit from this self-inflicted immaturity is to protest against it and to resist.

Notes

This article was first published as 'Als die Freiheit Kinder brauchte', in Boris Buden, *Die Zone des Übergangs: Vom Ende des Postkommunismus*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2009, pp. 34–51. Translation is by the author. Another chapter of the book, 'The Post-communist Robinson", is available in the catalogue of the 11th Istanbul Biennial, *What Keeps Mankind Alive: The Texts*, Istanbul, 2009, pp. 169–74.

1. I owe the reference to child metaphors to Dejan Jović, 'Problems of Anticipatory Transition Theory: From "Transition from…" to "Transition to…"', presented to the conference The Concept of Transition, Zagreb, 22–23 April 2000.
2. Here I draw again on Dejan Jović's lecture. I thank the author for providing me with its full text.
3. Guillermo O'Donnell, Laurence Whitehead and Philippe Schmitter, eds, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore MD, 1986, p. 3.
4. Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1991, p. ix.
5. John Mueller, 'Democracy, Capitalism, and the End of Transition', in Michael Mandelbaum, ed., *Postcommunism: Four Perspectives*, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 1996, p. 117.
6. Tutu Vanhanen, *The Process of Democratization: A Comparative Study of 147 States, 1980–88*, Crane Russak, New York, 1990, p. vii.
7. Immanuel Kant, 'An Answer to the Question: "What is Enlightenment?"', in *Practical Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996, p. 17.
8. Manfred Sommer, *Identität im Übergang: Kant*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1988, p. 123.
9. Ibid., p. 130 ff.
10. Those democratic activists in Eastern Europe who tried during the 1990s to get financial support from the West for their projects simply could not avoid the phrase 'development of civil society' in their applications. It was as though this phrase was a sort of universal key for opening the cash boxes of the 'free and democratic world'.
11. Robert Spaemann, 'Autonomie, Mündigkeit, Emanzipation. Zur Ideologisierung von Rechtsbegriffen', *Kontexte* 7, 1971, pp. 94–102, here p. 96. Quoted in Sommer, *Identität im Übergang*, p. 133.
12. T.W. Adorno, *Erziehung zur Mündigkeit*, Suhrkamp, Frankfurt am Main, 1970, p. 143; T.W. Adorno and Hellmut Becker, 'Education for Maturity and Responsibility', *History of the Human Sciences*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1999, pp. 21–34.
13. Johan Georg Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. V, ed. V.W. Ziesemer and A. Henkel, Wiesbaden, 1955ff., pp. 289–92. See Sommer, *Identität im Übergang*, p. 125.
14. Immanuel Kant, *The Conflict of the Faculties* [1798], trans. Mary G. Gregor, Abaris, New York, 1979, p. 153.
15. Michel Mandelbaum, 'Introduction', in Mandelbaum, ed., *Postcommunism*, p. 3.
16. Mandelbaum: '[W]here intense competition is the rule, [imitation] is the best formula for survival'; ibid., p. 30. As a comment on the process of transition in Eastern Europe, Mueller writes: 'Imitation and competition are likely to help in all this.' Mueller, 'Democracy, Capitalism, and the End of Transition', p. 138.
17. Jean-Luc Nancy, 'La Comparution/The Compearance: From the Existence of "Communism" to the Community of "Existence"', trans. Tracy B. Strong, *Political Theory*, vol. 20, no. 3, August 1992, pp. 371–98, p. 375.
18. Ibid., p. 376.
19. '[I]nnocence, therefore, is merely non-action, like the mere being of a stone, not even that of a child', G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977, p. 282. If this warning doesn't suffice, one should remember Roberto Rossellini's 1948 *Germany Year Zero*.
20. Jean-Luc Nancy, 'La Comparution', p. 375.
21. Adorno and Becker, 'Education for Maturity and Responsibility', pp. 30–31; translation amended.
22. Ibid., p. 32.