
Monumental Drapery: The Aesthetic Evolution of the *Wrapped Reichstag*¹

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Jeanne-Claude and Christo's *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin* (1995) takes as its object the German parliament building. Several layers of conflicting historical significance surround the Reichstag, causing ambiguity in Germany about the status of the building as a national symbol. Considered from a German perspective, the building bears the contradictory marks of the eras of constitutional monarchy during the Wilhelmine Empire and the wild phase of parliamentary democracy in the Weimar Republic, as well as the one-party rule of Hitler's Third Reich. Furthermore, in a divided Berlin the Reichstag's location itself took on symbolic meaning. Post-war boundary lines split the building between East and West, with one of its towers situated in the Soviet occupied zone. Once the Berlin Wall was constructed in 1961, the Reichstag remained visible from the East but until 1989 it was physically inaccessible to East Germans. These historical circumstances and inherent symbolism of the building attracted the Christos to the suggestion of wrapping the Reichstag.

In 1972, Christo began creating the first of over one hundred drawings, collages and scale models that Jeanne-Claude would sell to fund the project. These designs also became the crucial tools the artists would use as they met with German politicians, intellectuals and businesspeople in their twenty-four year long struggle for permission to wrap the Reichstag.² During the project's planning period the artists encountered repeated opposition from Germans who feared that the proposed wrapping would insult the dignity of a building burdened by its history. In this essay I will show how the "tasteful" appearance of the final design enabled the project's approval by parliament and yet simultaneously contributed to the pervasive reluctance on the part of many Germans to address the ambiguities of their nation's past. I will argue here that the Christos' drawings, collages and models underwent an extraordinary metamorphosis between the first drawing in 1972 and the long-awaited event in 1995. I will demonstrate that the earliest designs looked more like packaged refuse and less like a

dignified building. Successive design modifications, however, shifted the visual effect of the *Wrapped Reichstag* toward a classicizing aesthetic. Thus the project, which originally appeared as a building held hostage by ropes and fabric, was transformed into an homage to the Reichstag, its wrapped appearance making reference to what I read as Classical drapery.³ In order to illustrate the complex relationship of the design's evolution to the *Wrapped Reichstag's* reception, I will contextualize the project in terms of the political criticism the Christos encountered during the planning phase prior to installation, demonstrating how the late design came into agreement with a tradition of Western aesthetics known to educated Germans. I will set the symbolic building's aestheticization against the *Wrapped Reichstag's* popular reception in order to provide a deepened reading of the potential for historical remembrance at stake in the Christos' project.

The Christos themselves trace the form of the design to their early wrapping projects of the 1960s, including *Package on a Table*⁴ and *Project for a Wrapped Public Building*.⁵ These images of packaging were materialized in the 1968 *Wrapped Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland*⁶ and the 1969 *Museum of Contemporary Art, Wrapped, Chicago*.⁷ The placement of the ropes on these buildings and objects gives the impression of constriction and containment. This visual association with binding, together with the verbal connotations of packaging, would be levied against the *Wrapped Reichstag* by opponents. The earliest designs for the *Wrapped Reichstag*, for example a 1972 collage,⁸ bear a striking resemblance to the early wrapped objects. The basic contours of the Reichstag are visible beneath the fabric: the four corner towers, the prominent portico with its inscription on the west façade, and two mounds where roofline decoration is positioned. The ropes are looped over each other at irregular points and none are absolutely parallel to the ground, dipping down under the force of the intersecting lines. The large spaces between the ropes are of varying size and shape, adding to the impression of randomness and chance. With this early design, a trend began for ensuing sketches to evoke a sense of disorder and the haphazard.

In a 1974 collage,⁹ a view from the southwest continues the sense of prevailing disorder. The random placement of ropes and their knots as well as bulging fabric between the ropes give the wrapped building a strong appearance of encasement or constriction. By masking the two courtyards flanking the central Plenary Hall, the design implies that the building is being concealed beneath its wrapping, as though the actual form and function of the building were secondary to the aims of the artists. The folds in

the collage fabric are not connected to real architectural features on the Reichstag itself, giving the building a bulky appearance reinforced by the sketchy shadows indicated in charcoal.

A 1977 collage,¹⁰ showing the Reichstag with a plan of the building below, continues the predominant themes of concealment and randomness. The two courtyards remain obscured by fabric. An evolution has begun, however, in the lines representing the play of shadows on the fabric, which now seems to conform to vertical axes rather than bulges as in earlier designs. Along the roofline, the architectural details of the four towers and sculptures are given more specific shape. Despite these design modifications the ropes still run diagonally across the façade, roof and portico, maintaining the impression of a building that has been covered and tied up or contained in a sack.

Ten years later, in a 1987 collage,¹¹ Christo diminished the prominence of the ropes while he stressed the verticality of the play of light and shadow created by the folds. The architectural forms beneath the fabric were still articulated in blocky forms, but the covered surface of the building now appeared relatively ordered and regular compared to previous drawings. Christo's choice to add a map showing the Berlin Wall coursing past the Reichstag amplified the tension between the symbolic building and its position on the threshold of east and west.

After a few years' hiatus from the project, Christo resumed creating drawings and collages when, in 1991, Bundestag President Rita Süßmuth expressed her interest in helping the Christos realize their plans.¹² I argue that the *Wrapped Reichstag's* distinctly dignified, transformed design encouraged politicians to support the project, for example Heribert Scharrenbroich (CDU parliamentary delegate), who had been a staunch critic of the Christos' proposal. The culmination of the Christos' campaign for official permission for their installation was signaled by the unprecedented parliamentary debate and roll-call vote in February 1994, when delegates were asked to decide on the constitutionality of the artists' use of a government building. I describe the debate as unprecedented, because it was the first time that the German Parliament had directly addressed an artistic project.¹³ The break from traditional voting protocol, which typically runs along party lines, added further significance to the event. The roll-call vote points to a theme that has been an age-old subject of discussion among historians of art referring back to Kant's influential *Critique of Judgement* (1790): taste is a matter of individual assessment; even the State as an entity representing

the people cannot enforce a unified perception of taste. It is plausible that Bundestag delegates were aware of the Kantian intellectual tradition and may have seen themselves as implicated in the potential conflict of public and private use of reason.¹⁴ Their consideration of the constitutionality of the proposed wrapping had to be balanced with consideration of constituent opinion as well as consideration of the aesthetic effect of the *Wrapped Reichstag* in its final design. Given that a majority of the delegates voted in favor of the *Wrapped Reichstag*, and given that several former opponents were persuaded to support the project, I believe that the classicizing appearance played a pivotal role in the successful outcome of the parliamentary vote.

In the parliamentary debate, as in the two decades leading up to it, opponents twisted translations of the official project title, "Wrapped Reichstag," to equate wrapping with the negative connotations of "packaging" in an attempt to stop what they described as defamation of the symbolic building.¹⁵ Critics interpreted the project as trying to package history neatly as though to store it forever in the past, an impossible task to be sure. In spite of the dignified connotations of the official German title *Verhüllter Reichstag*¹⁶ some Germans used the verb *verpacken*, or to pack up, to describe the act of wrapping. The derogatory use of *verpacken* points to opponents' fears that the artists' manipulation will desecrate the Reichstag.

In attempting to pin down the effects the Christos' fabric would have on the symbolism of the Reichstag, commentators considered the artwork's effect on Germans as a people caught up by their history. Andreas Huyssen described a useful, albeit very particular and subjective, model for explaining Germany's relationship with its past. As he explains, Germany has gone through a development from restitution ("Wiedergutmachung") for crimes committed during the war, to reconciliation ("Versöhnung") epitomized by Willy Brandt's stilted efforts at the Warsaw Ghetto Monument, to a search for redemption ("Erlösung") exhibited in the proliferation of monuments in Germany (Huyssen 182). Huyssen evokes the term *Entsorgung* used by critics of Germany's monumental obsession, a term that encapsulates a dynamic I believe contributed to some politicians' skepticism of the *Wrapped Reichstag*. *Entsorgung*, a play on words which ironically refers to the public disposal of radioactive "historical" waste, neatly takes care of complicated memories surrounding a national symbol, effectively replacing them with aesthetic memories of a monument charged with its past. *Verpacken* ultimately suggests "taking care

of" the memories associated with the Reichstag's history. Brandishing this term in opposition to the Christos' project, critics exposed the underlying fear that the Reichstag would not be honored, but instead would be "dealt with" and discarded from historical conscience. The balancing of semantic connotations together with the visual impact of the project as it progressed from the appearance of a package to antique sculpture enabled its parliamentary approval by alleviating suspicions that the Christos were making light of the fears of *Entsorgung*. The positive connotations of classicizing drapery thus precluded such negative associations that might have resulted if the design had not been modified, although as I will discuss, secondary memory evident in the published visitor responses threatened the Christos' installation with a dynamic related to *Entsorgung*.

In the changing social and political atmosphere in Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Christos' project had a certain appeal of daring accompanied by a design that had become distinctly dignified. Indeed in Christo's drawings and collages created between 1991 and 1995, coinciding with the artists' increased lobbying activity, the basic form of the design remained constant. A 1995 drawing¹⁷ exemplifies the evolution the design underwent. The folds of the fabric are drawn in vertical lines, emphasizing the gathers around the façade decorations. The blue ropes are understated and give no hint of constriction, but instead accentuate the building's forms as Winckelmann would espouse, as I shall discuss below. The overall feeling of the drawing is one of stately confidence and classical order, not of randomness and constriction as in the early designs.

As became apparent in the parliamentary debate, many politicians expected visitors at the *Wrapped Reichstag* to engage in a deeply contemplative remembrance of the building's history, thus promoting a resolution of Germany's complex relationship with its past. In spite of the elegant transformation of the Reichstag through the Christos' fabric, in my opinion the party-like response of the spectators problematizes the process of working through the conflicting meanings of the building as a national symbol. Indeed, part of engaging memory is overcoming resistance to remembering in order to facilitate the process of what Freud calls "working-through," or the assimilation into the present of memories from a repressed past (Freud 155-56). In theory, by providing an occasion for the German people to come together specifically for remembering, the Christos offered the German nation an opportunity to work through the past individually and as a community. In practice, however, the tacit desire for uncomplicated

memories that disavow uncomfortable aspects of German history aids the development of so-called secondary memory.

In his discussion of *les lieux de mémoire* the French historian and theorist Pierre Nora describes secondary memory as "the acute effect of a new consciousness, the clearest expression of the terrorism of historicized memory" (14). In this description secondary memory pastes itself over primary memory, assigning to it the very identity of *being* a memory. The effect is to disconnect the subject from the event that produced primary memory. At the *Wrapped Reichstag* spectators young and old could develop a new cognizance of the building's history, a new memory to "replace" any uncertainty about what this building means for the German nation. In essence the spectators would be subjected to the trap of remembering the moment of remembrance, allowing distance to creep in between the individual viewer and more direct contemplation of the building's ambiguous role in history. The development of secondary memory of the Reichstag specifically as a "wrapped" Reichstag thus precludes exploring often conflicting and generation-specific memories of the past itself.

In contrast to the derogatory twist of the term wrapping into *verpacken*, I argue that the visual evidence provided by the project designs supports the reading of the Christos' wrapping as drapery,¹⁸ a form that can be read in the context of western aesthetics. In describing their project in publications about the *Wrapped Reichstag*, the Christos mention the traditional depiction of fabric in painting and sculpture of various media,¹⁹ a tradition of which educated Germans would be aware. The fabric used to wrap the Reichstag has a shiny, reflective obverse and a matte reverse, thus by extension an inside and an outside. This detail contributes to the function of the material as drapery, making the Reichstag into an object available for contemplation and "disinterested" admiration.²⁰ A *wrapped* Reichstag implies a utilitarian function of the fabric; indeed if the *Wrapped Reichstag* had been merely a packaged building, less fabric could have been used, thus reducing the volume of necessary materials and expense of the project. Nonetheless, the Christos chose to provide plenty of fabric specifically so that the fabric would fall into artistically rich folds. I contend that the folds were essential to the final design and thus constituted the *Wrapped Reichstag* of 1995 by drapery and not by packaging, as it was in 1972.

I argue that parliamentary approval and the popular appeal of the Christos' project depended on an Enlightenment-era discourse on aesthetics of classical drapery exemplified by scholars Winckelmann (1717-

1768), Lessing (1729-1781), and Hegel (1770-1831), who each addressed the proper appearance of drapery according to his own ideal. It is on the basis of these three scholars' ruminations on drapery that I wish to ground my interpretation of the *Wrapped Reichstag* as an aesthetically successful artwork. Learned Germans of 1995 would have been aware of the aesthetic tradition in which these three scholars play a part, making it plausible that politicians would have been predisposed to favor a classicizing appearance on the basis of German intellectual heritage. Furthermore these politicians, for whom a draped Reichstag met aesthetic expectations, no longer had to worry about the envisioned spectators at the *Wrapped Reichstag* developing wrong perceptions of a building that would serve as the renewed seat of parliament soon after the Christos' fabric was removed.

For Winckelmann, as he wrote in his 1755 *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture*, drapery belongs to the three characteristics of antique works, the first two being beautiful nature and noble contour (31-33). For him, the folds of the drapery should harmonize with the whole, following the gentle curves of the nude body. Naturally, Winckelmann wrote about the human form, and not about draped architecture, but nonetheless his observations regarding graceful drapery can be applied to the *Wrapped Reichstag*. Winckelmann valued thin, light, veil-like drapery that does not conceal the beautiful contour of the body underneath the cloth. He criticizes the heavy folds and the stiffness of the "moderns," who were, for him, his eighteenth-century contemporaries. If one were to consider the individual folds of the *Wrapped Reichstag*, one might mistakenly identify the folds as heavy and massive. I believe, however, that Winckelmann would regard the effect of the whole rather than the individual parts. If one were to regard the *Wrapped Reichstag* in its entirety, the folds appear to flow naturally from the contours of the building, falling in small folds resulting from larger folds. The drapery gives the building the appearance of a lightweight object, not Wallot's massive stone edifice that it is in actuality. For Winckelmann, drapery should reveal the contour and structure of the body beneath the fabric. The Christos' drapery, sturdy though it may be, hugs the contours of the Reichstag, revealing its form and making it stand out against the surrounding skyline, into which it had faded over the years as it sunk into public subconscious and became an object taken for granted, but not one necessarily revered for its historical content, let alone its form.

Whereas Winckelmann desired that the body remain visible under

its drapery, Lessing maintained that a veiled object necessarily disappears. In his treatise on the famous sculptural group, *Laocoön* (1766), Lessing wrote of the freedom inherent in invisibility: "This invisibility [of the battle between the gods] gives the imagination free rein to enlarge the scene and envisage the persons and actions of the gods on a grander scale than the measure of ordinary men" (66). In contemplating the activities of the gods who are by nature invisible to the human eye, the mind is free to formulate the narrative and arrange the action. Similarly, when the Reichstag dons the Christos' drapery, the building becomes invisible to the observer, whose imagination is then free to associate the Reichstag with a higher level of existence or a grander scale than just a building or just an "art happening." For Lessing, the veil functioned as a signal for the viewer; he advised his readership that "you must imagine yourselves that he [the veiled hero] is invisible" (68-69). This relates to the *Wrapped Reichstag*, whereby the Reichstag remains visible in its contours, as Winckelmann would have had it, but the viewer should take an active role in the process and imagine that the building is invisible, thus completing the veiling process in his or her mind. As an invention that allows a certain action to take place unseen, the veil serves as a means to an end; action enabled by disabling of vision. What should disappear or become invisible when the Reichstag is wrapped depends on the subjectivity of each spectator. As a tool of veiling, the Christos' wrapping alerts the viewer that what can be seen physically is not usually seen fully.

In contrast to Winckelmann and Lessing, Hegel connected the need for freedom to drapery as he expressed in his treatise *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art* (published 1835-38). He suggested that artists should treat drapery according to architectural principles, whereby the body underneath the drapery should be able to move freely as though in an architectural environment constructed of fabric (746). He wrote that "the mantel especially is like a house in which a person is free to move" (747). He favored clothing pinned at one point which allows the fabric to hang spontaneously, falling in folds and free formations that depend on the weaver of the fabric (747). The Christos' fabric is indeed fixed on the rooftop of the building and secured once around the top of the façade and once at the bottom, splitting the elevation of the building auspiciously into thirds. This arrangement of ropes directly contrasts with the constriction evident in earlier designs, where the wrapped building conveyed the antithesis of freedom. Hegel wrote that "[...] the body is one thing, the clothing an-

other, and the latter must come into its own independently and appear in its freedom" (747). He indicates that drapery should not be subservient to, nor restricting of the body, rather that drapery should allow freedom of body movement as well as freedom of the drapery from the body. The Reichstag's drapery had a life of its own, played out in the individual folds that fall according to their will, unencumbered by metaphors of constriction. These principles of freedom central to Enlightenment philosophy were apparent in the Christos' final design as well as the ultimate installation, which were thus in keeping with traditional expectations regarding the appropriate form of drapery.

A fair assessment of the project's reception requires determining the source of the widespread expectation that the *Wrapped Reichstag* would affect a change in German historical consciousness. The artists and art commentators made statements concerning the *Wrapped Reichstag's* potential role as a public catalyst for confronting and even resolving Germany's difficult past. The art historian Wieland Schmied set the stage, perhaps, for later commentators on the motivations underlying the *Wrapped Reichstag* when in 1977 he posed the questions:

How will the people – and here, people become the public – react? Will they realize that the example of the wrapping – and therefore the emphasis on a historical building – not only touches a chapter of our history, but touches our German presence, our everyday life, in which we live quite comfortably and without too much thought? [...] Are thoughts being activated or only emotions provoked? (5)

Schmied acknowledged the complexity of the proposed *Wrapped Reichstag* as affecting a level of consciousness deeper than a superficial reference to the history of the Reichstag. He believed that through the Christos' action not only the complexities of the Reichstag's reputation would be made manifest, but also a kind of communal need for soul-searching amidst a growing complacency. Gerhard Ullmann stated in 1994 his view of the effect the Christos' project would have: "Whether pragmatic or idealistic, Christo's ambiguous wrapping in no way unlocks itself through the veiling and unleashing of state symbols. The provocative content of this action lies in the mobilization of concealed national feelings" (55). This expectation of a "mobilization of concealed national feelings"

echoes Schmied's suggestion that the *Wrapped Reichstag* will touch a German presence lived without questioning the *status quo*.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude, however, made no specific claims about the project's ability to affect anything more than piqued perceptions of the building's identity. Despite what I read as Christo's persistent reluctance to concede to the diversity of responses Germans would have to the *Wrapped Reichstag*, he nonetheless relished the vehement reactions to his highly contested project. When asked in 1994 if his project had an "emotional rationale," Christo responded:

I am so excited that I can create so much turmoil in the German psyche [...] all about an art experience. How the people are resisting the art experience. How they are mired up in the art experience [...] of course, that is something that would attract a lot of passion, could turn in all kinds of directions, arouse all kinds of emotions; and can mirror in some way the German angst and soul, and the feelings of Germans right now. (qtd. in Couture 27-28)

In effect, Christo answers here Schmied's 1977 question of whether the *Wrapped Reichstag* activates thoughts or provokes emotions. I would argue, on the basis of his statements, that Christo was more interested in provoking emotions rather than promoting concentrated discussions of Germany's role in recent history. In spite of the artists' seemingly intentional ambiguity, political commentators' published statements perpetuated the assumption that the *Wrapped Reichstag* would affect a public conversation about Germany's past. It is my interpretation, however, that the *Wrapped Reichstag* fell short of this implicit presupposition and, furthermore, the elegant appearance of the draped building contributed to the emergence of secondary memory, as discussed above.

The realized *Wrapped Reichstag* on view to the world from 23 June to 6 July, 1995, was true to the final design and yet appears to have arrived at an even more classicizing aesthetic than the latest drawings suggested. The basic forms of the Reichstag were accentuated by the placement of the ropes around the structure. The fabric was pulled taut over the corner towers and sculptures and gathered again by ropes that secured the fabric against the building, allowing the folds to fall freely to the ground. The emphasis in the final installation had shifted emphatically to vertical lines. The only elements that interrupted this vertical direction were the two sets

of inconspicuous ropes extending around the girth of the building. The ultimate appearance of the *Wrapped Reichstag* secured its reputation as an international sensation.

Over the course of the planning process, the name *Wrapped Reichstag* maintained a tenuous balance between negative and positive connotations despite the deliberate misuse by opponents wanting to thwart the project. In removing overtly negative metaphors in the handling of the fabric, the realized *Wrapped Reichstag* encouraged people to interact with each other under positive circumstances, resulting in the double-edged sword of renewal and denial. In the final analysis, the invitation for playfulness rather than communal remembrance at the *Wrapped Reichstag* attracted five million spectators to Berlin.²¹ In a year of increased German self-scrutiny, coinciding with the fifty-year anniversary of the end of World War II and the Holocaust, the *Wrapped Reichstag* lightened the mood around the building, although perhaps to the detriment of German historical consciousness. While secondary memory of the Reichstag as the scene of a two-week long celebration has screened out any dark memories of the building's history, the event enabled the smooth return of parliament to Berlin in 1999. This perception is exemplified by Sir Norman Foster, architect of the renovations and new dome, who noted that for him the removal of the *Wrapped Reichstag's* fabric signaled the removal of history's weight from the Reichstag, thus smoothing the transition of the building into the next phase of its history (Welfing 183).²² The Christos' project, I argue, could never have dazzled the crowds, had it not been for the visual associations conjured by the transformed design, which enabled parliamentary approval. Despite my reading of the *Wrapped Reichstag* as a blockage to memory, the international attention Berlin received as a result of the Christos' endeavor largely redeems the project from dismissal on critical and political grounds. The *Wrapped Reichstag* will go down in Berlin history as the artistic celebration of a city eager to renew its reputation as the dignified capital of an undivided German nation.

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Notes

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² These drawings, collages, and scale models are collected in one volume along with facsimiles of the Christos' correspondence with politicians and scholars as well as photographs documenting meetings with these individuals and the final project installation in June and July, 1995. See *Christo and Jeanne-Claude: Verhüllter/Wrapped Reichstag Berlin 1971-1995*. New York and Cologne: Taschen, 1996. Hereafter cited as "Christos, 1996."

³ My analysis presented here deepens a reading of the *Wrapped Reichstag* designs that other art historians alluded to in describing the appearance of the final installation. *Journal of the Arts* correspondent George Armaos praised the Reichstag project pointing out that "[...] the decisive factor in its success was the use of the fabric [which made the Reichstag look] like an ancient statue lit in the clearing of a wood" (Armaos 28-29). David Galloway made passing reference to the Reichstag's wrapping as drapery: "The orchestration of those shifting effects was achieved by the wind [...] which could turn the heavy folds into delicately rippling draperies" (86). Gen Doy's brief and particular discussion of the *Wrapped Reichstag* in her recently published book *Drapery: Classicism and Barbarism in Visual Culture* supports my argument here. Her interpretation of the wrapping is concerned with the moment of revelation when the drapery is removed, a process she links to the public unveiling of sculpture and the packaging of consumer goods (179-180).

⁴ *Package on a Table*, 1961; Collection Jeanne-Claude Christo, New York; for illustration see Jacob Baal-Teshuva.

⁵ *Project for a Wrapped Public Building*, 1961; Collection Jeanne-Claude Christo, New York; for illustration see Baal-Teshuva, 139.

⁶ *Wrapped Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland*, 1968; see photograph of installation by Thomas Cugini in Baal-Teshuva, fig 33.

⁷ *Museum of Contemporary Art, Wrapped, Chicago*.

⁸ *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin*, 1972; Collection Allan Frumkin, New York; for illustration see Christos, 1996: 18.

⁹ *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin*, 1974; Private Collection, Germany; for illustration see Christos, 1996: 35.

¹⁰ *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin*, 1977; Private Collection, Europe; for illustration see Christos, 1996: 55.

¹¹ *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin*, 1987; location unknown; for

illustration see Christos, 1996: 120.

¹² Süssmuth was formally introduced to the Christos' *Wrapped Reichstag* project in 1989 when she was given a copy of the book *Christo-Der Reichstag* (edited by the Christos' colleagues Michael Cullen and Wolfgang Volz). In September of that same year she intimated that she liked the project, but could not commit to supporting it yet. November 9, 1989 the Berlin Wall fell and on October 3, 1990 Germany was reunited. In June 1991 the Bundestag voted to move the capital and the seat of the Bundestag back to Berlin. One month later, Süssmuth declared her commitment to helping the Christos realize the *Wrapped Reichstag* (see chronology in Baal-Teshuva, 37-38). Based on this sequence of events, I suspect that for Süssmuth, it was more the turn of political events that led her to support the project, rather than the sheer appeal of the project's aesthetic.

¹³ The German *Grundgesetz* (Constitution) protects free expression in Article 5 (§1, Satz 1) from which flows the guarantee of the freedom of art: "Art and science, research and teaching are free" (Article 5, §3, Satz 1). See Germany, Deutscher Bundestag, *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland; Die Grundrechte*, Art. 1-19. Bonn: Deutsche Bundestag, 1998. Beyond these specific references to the freedom of art and expression, the *Grundgesetz* is silent on the usage of a federal building in a work of art. Thus the Christos and their project managers in Berlin could not have foreseen the tangled political path ahead of them that would ultimately lead to a parliamentary debate about the fate of the project.

¹⁴ Kant states that as long as a person's public use of reason (meaning published statements) does not directly conflict with the requirements of a civil post, that person is free to express his opinion. He warns, however, that as soon as a person's public use of reason infringes on the person's private (meaning official) duties, that person must give up his office. Although he states that the "entire fair sex" lacks the competence to think for themselves, and thus cannot achieve enlightenment by their own volition, it is nonetheless clear that women can become enlightened individuals (see Kant, "What is Enlightenment" 54-60).

¹⁵ In particular, opponents who participated in the Bundestag debate on 25 February, 1994, turned the title of the project against itself. Dr. Burkhard Hirsch (F.D.P.) was one of the project's opponents who craftily turned the *Wrapped Reichstag* into the *Packaged Reichstag* through his critical remarks. He stated, as recorded in Christos, 1996: "Now Mr. Christo is coming and packing (verpackt, 208) everything" (218). He continues, "Why don't we also pack (verpacken, 208) the Brandenburg Gate if it pleases the artist? [...] There is nothing to pack (zu verpacken, 208) and there is nothing to wrap (zu verhüllen, 208)" (218). The meaning of the German word 'verpacken' has a negative connotation in this context: "to tie together in a parcel" (Grimm 956). Interestingly, the titles of art journal essays also contributed to the misuse of the project title *Wrapped Reichstag*. For example, Gerhard Ullmann makes direct reference to the semantic trick mentioned above that would apply to the early designs for the *Wrapped Reichstag*.

(Ullmann 55). The turn of phrase in such titles suggests the degree to which the name of the Christos' project was as significant as its content and appearance.

¹⁶ Supporters of the Christos' project underscored positive translations of the title to emphasize "veiling" and the notion of honoring the building. Wieland Schmied's description of the Christos' motives for wrapping the Reichstag reflects this aspect of the semantic twist. He explains that Christo "deprives us of familiar objects by wrapping them and thus [by] making them strange and mysterious he makes us curious. Rediscovered from their wrappings, we see them with a new awareness, new eyes" (Schmied 2). Simply changing the name of the project, however, could not resolve the mixed meanings surrounding the act of wrapping this national monument.

¹⁷ *Wrapped Reichstag, Project for Berlin*, 1995, Private Collection; for illustration see Christos, 1996: 249.

¹⁸ Inherent in the term drapery is a direct relationship with art; the two are conjoined by aesthetics. While the basic definition of "to drape" is "to cover with, or as with, cloth or drapery; to hang, dress, or adorn with drapery" (OED 641), the more frequently used connotation of the word is "to arrange or adjust (clothing, hangings, etc) in graceful or artistic folds" (OED 641). Along the same lines, "drapery" means "the artistic arrangement of clothing in painting or sculpture" (OED 641), and "the stuff with which anything is draped, or artistically covered; clothing or hangings of any kind, especially the clothing of the human figure in sculpture or painting" (OED 641). Whereas "wrapping" carries the double-sided meaning of enfolding and at the same time restricting or disguising, "drapery" carries the positive connotations of artistic intention and enhancement. The difference between the uses of the two words is significant to the *Wrapped Reichstag*, given the changing appearance of the design over time.

¹⁹ See for example press releases in Baal-Teshuva 8-9 and *Christo & Jeanne-Claude: Verhüllter/Wrapped Reichstag, Berlin, 1971-1995*: 93.

²⁰ Kant defines beauty as something that invites "disinterested pleasure", meaning a pleasure free from need (see Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*). In this sense, the very beauty of the *Wrapped Reichstag* encouraged visitors to step back from the need to situate oneself in relation to German history, creating a kind of internal sublime distance that Kantian disinterestedness provides. I argue that precisely this disinterested pleasure in the *Wrapped Reichstag* as an aesthetic object allowed for development of a blockage to memory in the form of secondary memory.

²¹ Spectator commentary recorded extensively in articles from *Die Zeit* 7 July - 14 July 1995; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 28 June - 8 July 1995; *TAZ - Die Tageszeitung* 26 June - 8 July 1995, Berlin edition; and *Der Spiegel* 26 June - 8 July 1995 attest to the effects of secondary memory on viewers and underscores the perception of most interviewees that the *Wrapped Reichstag* transformed the Reichstag into the backdrop for an extended party and not, I would argue, for commu-

nal remembrance.

²² This volume offers a well-documented history of the Reichstag's most recent reconstruction, including photographs of the competition entries for the new dome design.

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The Socialist and Post-socialist *Jugendweihe*: Symbol of an Evolving East(ern) German Identity

Anna Saunders

In 1990, after a life-span of merely 40 years, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) ceased to exist. During this short lifetime, the state went to great lengths to create amongst its citizens a strong GDR identity, in order to secure their loyalty and devotion, and thus the state's very future. This proved necessary not only due to the mental and physical insecurities left in the wake of the Second World War, but was further heightened by the presence of West Germany, and the need to "compete" for legitimacy. In the attempt to form a new emotional bond with its people, the GDR thus developed a rigorous program of national festivals, rousing demonstrations of state loyalty and ritual ceremonies designed to infiltrate every-day life, to compensate for the lack of firm historical foundations, and to provide a substitute for religious celebrations. As the GDR matured, so too did its ceremonies developing increasingly quasi-religious characteristics. A socialist naming ceremony, for example, was introduced as an alternative to baptism, couples could get married at socialist marriage ceremonies, and a harvest festival was adopted as a state occasion (Neubert 194-95). In 1958, the First Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party (SED), Walter Ulbricht, also announced ten "Gebote der sozialistischen Moral", by which all GDR citizens were to abide, and socialist ideology even subscribed to the concept of an "after-life": the future utopia of communism.¹ A "state-religion" thus rapidly formed, aiming not only to challenge the role of the Protestant and Catholic churches, whose beliefs and independence proved to be a thorn in the side of the GDR, but also to create loyalty to the socialist state amongst its citizens, thereby promoting a strong national identity.

The *Jugendweihe* was the ultimate example of the way in which religious symbolism was employed to both these ends. As a socialist equivalent to religious confirmation, in which 14-year-olds swore an oath of loyalty to the socialist state, it clearly aimed to draw young people away from the grasp of the Christian community, whilst also imbuing them with the