

wolfgang borchert the man outside

Wolfgang Borchert *The Man Outside*: A Profound Exploration of Post-War Despair and Humanity

wolfgang borchert the man outside stands as a compelling and poignant work that captures the raw emotions and turmoil of post-World War II Germany. This drama, written by Wolfgang Borchert, delves deep into the psyche of a returning soldier who faces the harsh realities of a society that has moved on without him. The play, often regarded as a cornerstone of post-war German literature, offers a gripping portrayal of alienation, loss, and the search for meaning amid devastation.

If you've ever wondered about the human cost of war beyond the battlefield, Borchert's work provides a powerful lens through which to understand the emotional and psychological scars borne by those who returned "outside" the familiar world they once knew.

The Historical Context Behind Wolfgang Borchert *The Man Outside*

Understanding the backdrop against which Wolfgang Borchert wrote **The Man Outside** is essential to fully grasp the depth of its narrative. Written in 1947, shortly after the end of World War II, the play reflects the widespread disillusionment experienced by many Germans. The country was physically destroyed, morally fragmented, and emotionally exhausted.

Borchert himself was a young man who experienced the war firsthand. His personal struggles with illness, imprisonment, and the trauma of battle informed his writing, lending it authenticity and urgency. **The Man Outside** is not just a story about one man; it is a representation of a whole generation's despair and alienation.

Post-War Germany: A Nation in Ruins

The immediate post-war period in Germany was marked by scarcity, homelessness, and a shattered social fabric. Soldiers returning from the front lines often found their homes destroyed, families changed or lost, and communities fractured. Borchert's protagonist embodies this experience, embodying the "outsider" status of many veterans who felt disconnected from the society they fought to protect.

Wolfgang Borchert's Life and Influence

Borchert's brief but intense literary career was shaped by his experiences as a soldier and prisoner in the war. Suffering from tuberculosis and other ailments, he wrote with a sense of urgency and a desire to bear witness. His works, including **The Man Outside**, often explore themes of guilt, loss, and the search for redemption, making him a voice for those grappling with the aftermath of conflict.

Exploring the Themes in Wolfgang Borchert *The Man Outside*

At its core, **The Man Outside** is a story about alienation. The protagonist, Beckmann, returns home only to find himself estranged from the world he once knew. This sense of being “outside” is a powerful metaphor for the psychological distance between returning soldiers and civilian life.

Alienation and Isolation

Beckmann’s struggle with isolation is palpable throughout the play. Despite his desperate need for connection, he is met with indifference or hostility from those around him. This reflects the broader societal inability or unwillingness to reintegrate veterans who carry the invisible wounds of war. Borchert’s portrayal invites readers and audiences to empathize with the loneliness and despair experienced by many in post-war society.

The Futility of War

Another dominant theme in **The Man Outside** is the futility and destruction wrought by war. Borchert does not glorify battle; instead, he exposes its senselessness through Beckmann’s shattered psyche and the ruined world he returns to. The play challenges audiences to reflect on the cost of conflict—not just in terms of lives lost but in the emotional devastation that lingers long after the fighting ends.

Search for Meaning and Redemption

Despite the bleakness, **The Man Outside** also explores the human desire for meaning and reconciliation. Beckmann’s journey is one of attempting to find a place in a world that seems indifferent to his suffering. This quest resonates universally, reminding us that even in the darkest times, the need for understanding and hope persists.

Character Analysis: Beckmann as the Embodiment of Post-War Trauma

Beckmann, the central figure in **The Man Outside**, is a deeply complex character whose experiences mirror those of many real-life soldiers returning from war.

Beckmann’s Psychological Struggles

Throughout the play, Beckmann grapples with intense feelings of guilt, anger, and despair. His

inability to communicate effectively with others highlights the chasm between his internal world and the external society. Borchert uses Beckmann's fragmented speech and erratic behavior to symbolize the fractured state of a man traumatized by war.

Beckmann's Isolation from Society

Beckmann's physical and emotional isolation underscores the broader theme of alienation. He is rejected by neighbors, strangers, and even his own family, which emphasizes how veterans often found themselves marginalized. This rejection deepens his sense of being an outsider and fuels his internal turmoil.

The Literary Style and Structure of *The Man Outside*

Borchert's writing style in **The Man Outside** is notable for its starkness and poetic intensity. The play's structure supports its themes, using fragmented dialogue and symbolism to evoke the chaos and confusion that Beckmann experiences.

Use of Symbolism

Throughout the play, Borchert employs symbolic elements such as the ruined landscape and the recurring motif of "outside" to reinforce the themes of destruction and alienation. These symbols create a haunting atmosphere that lingers with the audience long after the play ends.

Dialogue and Language

The dialogue in **The Man Outside** is terse and often disjointed, mirroring Beckmann's fractured mental state. Borchert's choice of language conveys urgency and desperation, drawing the audience into the emotional core of the character. This style also reflects the broader existential crisis faced by post-war Germany.

The Impact and Legacy of Wolfgang Borchert's *The Man Outside*

Since its publication and staging, **The Man Outside** has had a profound influence on German literature and theater. It is considered one of the first works to confront the psychological aftermath of World War II in a direct and unflinching manner.

Influence on Post-War German Literature

Borchert's candid depiction of trauma and alienation paved the way for other writers to explore similar themes. His work helped shift German literature towards introspection and social critique, moving away from nationalist narratives to more human-centered stories.

Relevance in Contemporary Times

Even decades after its creation, **The Man Outside** remains relevant as a study of the human cost of war. Its exploration of PTSD, societal rejection, and the search for identity resonates with audiences today, reminding us of the ongoing need for empathy towards veterans and those affected by conflict.

Performances and Adaptations

The play continues to be performed worldwide, often in translations, highlighting its universal themes. Contemporary productions sometimes incorporate modern elements to connect Borchert's message with current issues surrounding war and displacement.

Tips for Studying and Appreciating Wolfgang Borchert's *The Man Outside*

For those approaching **The Man Outside** for the first time, here are some helpful pointers to deepen your understanding and appreciation of the work:

- **Consider the historical context:** Familiarize yourself with the state of Germany after World War II to better understand the societal backdrop.
- **Focus on the themes:** Pay attention to the recurring motifs of alienation, guilt, and redemption, which are central to the play's emotional impact.
- **Analyze Beckmann's character:** Observe how his dialogue and actions reflect his internal turmoil and the broader human experience of trauma.
- **Reflect on the language and symbolism:** Notice how Borchert uses fragmented speech and symbolic imagery to convey complex emotions.
- **Engage with performances:** Watching different theatrical interpretations can provide new insights and highlight various aspects of the play.

Engaging with **The Man Outside** through these lenses can transform it from a simple narrative into a profound meditation on humanity's resilience and vulnerability.

Wolfgang Borchert's *'The Man Outside'* remains a landmark piece that captures the emotional landscape of a broken world. Its enduring power lies in its honest portrayal of a man—and a society—struggling to find a way back from the brink. Through Beckmann's story, Borchert invites us to confront uncomfortable truths about war, loss, and the enduring human spirit.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is Wolfgang Borchert, the author of 'The Man Outside'?

Wolfgang Borchert was a German poet and playwright, best known for his works written shortly after World War II, including 'The Man Outside' (Draußen vor der Tür).

What is the central theme of 'The Man Outside' by Wolfgang Borchert?

'The Man Outside' explores themes of alienation, trauma, and the difficulties faced by returning soldiers in post-World War II Germany.

When was 'The Man Outside' written and first performed?

'The Man Outside' was written in 1947 and first performed in 1947, shortly after the end of World War II.

What is the plot of 'The Man Outside' by Wolfgang Borchert?

The play follows Beckmann, a soldier recently returned from war, who finds himself alienated from society and struggling with the psychological scars of his experiences.

How does 'The Man Outside' reflect post-war German society?

'The Man Outside' reflects the disillusionment, trauma, and social rejection many soldiers felt upon returning to a changed and fractured Germany after World War II.

What literary style and techniques does Wolfgang Borchert use in 'The Man Outside'?

Borchert uses expressionist and post-war realism techniques, characterized by emotional intensity, sparse dialogue, and symbolic imagery to convey Beckmann's inner turmoil.

Why is 'The Man Outside' considered an important work in German literature?

'The Man Outside' is significant for its honest portrayal of the psychological impact of war and its critique of society's inability to reintegrate returning soldiers, marking a key moment in post-war German literature.

Additional Resources

Wolfgang Borchert *The Man Outside: A Profound Exploration of Post-War Despair*

wolfgang borchert the man outside stands as a seminal work in German literature, encapsulating the raw emotions and existential turmoil experienced in the aftermath of World War II. Written by Wolfgang Borchert, a notable German playwright and author, this play delves deeply into themes of alienation, trauma, and the moral ambiguity that defined the shattered psyche of post-war Germany. Its enduring relevance and powerful narrative have cemented its place as a crucial text in understanding the societal and individual consequences of war.

Context and Background of Wolfgang Borchert *The Man Outside*

Set against the bleak landscape of post-war Germany, Wolfgang Borchert's play reflects the immediate psychological and social aftermath of a devastated nation. Borchert himself, having served in the war and experienced imprisonment, imbues the narrative with authenticity and urgency. Written in 1947, the play was initially banned by Nazi authorities but gained recognition after the war, becoming a powerful voice for a generation grappling with loss and disillusionment.

The play's title, "The Man Outside" (originally "Draußen vor der Tür"), metaphorically represents the protagonist's alienation from a society that no longer feels like home. This outsider status echoes the widespread feelings of displacement among returning soldiers and civilians alike, who found themselves estranged from the very world they had once known.

In-depth Analysis of Themes and Narrative Structure

At its core, Wolfgang Borchert *the man outside* explores the profound loneliness experienced by individuals in a post-conflict society. The protagonist, Beckmann, returns from the battlefield to find his home and life irrevocably changed. His search for meaning and belonging is complicated by the indifference and moral decay he perceives around him.

Alienation and Existential Crisis

Borchert uses Beckmann's character to depict a man caught between the horrors of his past and an uncertain future. The play's narrative structure, fragmented and episodic, mirrors Beckmann's fractured mental state. His wanderings through the city streets and encounters with various characters illustrate the pervasive sense of isolation and despair that plagued many post-war individuals.

Alienation here is not merely physical but deeply psychological. Beckmann is "outside" in a metaphorical sense — outside society's norms, outside empathy, and outside hope. This theme resonates with the existentialist philosophy prevalent in the mid-20th century, where individuals grapple with meaninglessness in an absurd world.

Trauma and Moral Ambiguity

Wolfgang Borchert the man outside is unflinching in its portrayal of war trauma. Beckmann's internal struggles are compounded by the external reality of a society struggling to reconcile with its collective guilt and suffering. The play refrains from offering simplistic heroes or villains, instead presenting a morally complex landscape where survival often entails compromise and ethical ambiguity.

Borchert's use of stark dialogue and bleak imagery emphasizes the psychological scars left by violence and loss. The play's refusal to romanticize war or its aftermath challenges audiences to confront uncomfortable truths about human nature and societal responsibility.

Literary Significance and Stylistic Features

Wolfgang Borchert the man outside is widely regarded as a cornerstone of Trümmerliteratur, or "rubble literature," a genre characterized by its focus on the devastation following World War II. Borchert's concise, poetic language and minimalist staging contribute to the play's intense emotional impact.

Symbolism and Metaphor

The play's title itself is a potent symbol. Being "outside" reflects Beckmann's exclusion not only from physical spaces but also from social and emotional belonging. Throughout the play, Borchert employs recurring motifs such as darkness, cold, and silence to underscore themes of isolation and despair.

Moreover, Beckmann's interactions with other characters, each embodying different facets of post-war society — from opportunists to dreamers — serve as metaphors for the fractured German identity. These encounters provide a microcosm of a nation struggling to rebuild amidst ruins.

Minimalism and Realism

Borchert's stylistic approach combines minimalism with stark realism. The sparse dialogue and simple stage directions allow the emotional weight of the characters' experiences to take center stage. This technique aligns with the Trümmerliteratur movement's emphasis on authenticity and directness, stripping away literary embellishments to convey the rawness of human suffering.

The Impact and Legacy of Wolfgang Borchert The Man Outside

Since its post-war emergence, Wolfgang Borchert the man outside has had a lasting impact on both German literature and theatrical tradition. Its honest portrayal of the human condition in times of

crisis continues to resonate with audiences and scholars alike.

Influence on Post-War German Culture

The play became a cultural touchstone for a society seeking to confront its recent past. It offered a framework for understanding the psychological wounds inflicted by war and the challenges of reintegration. Educational curricula across Germany often include the text to facilitate discussions about history, trauma, and morality.

Comparative Analysis with Contemporary Works

When compared to other post-war literature, such as Heinrich Böll's novels or Günter Grass's works, Borchert's play stands out for its immediacy and concentrated emotional intensity. While Böll and Grass explore broader social and political themes, Wolfgang Borchert zeroes in on the individual's existential plight, making it a unique contribution to the canon.

Modern Relevance and Interpretations

In today's global context of displacement, conflict, and societal upheaval, the themes explored in Wolfgang Borchert the man outside remain strikingly pertinent. The play's exploration of alienation and trauma transcends its historical setting, offering insights into the universal human struggle for connection and meaning.

The ongoing interest in Borchert's work is reflected in contemporary theatrical adaptations and academic discourse. Modern productions often emphasize the play's psychological depth or reinterpret it through the lens of current social issues such as refugee crises and post-traumatic stress.

Pros and Cons of Staging Wolfgang Borchert The Man Outside

- **Pros:** The play's emotional intensity and timeless themes make it a powerful tool for engaging audiences in critical reflection. Its minimalist staging offers creative flexibility for directors, enabling innovative interpretations.
- **Cons:** The play's bleak tone and existential themes may challenge audiences seeking more conventional narratives. Its historical context requires careful framing to ensure accessibility for contemporary viewers unfamiliar with post-war Germany.

Wolfgang Borchert the man outside remains a profound artistic testament to the human cost of war and the enduring quest for identity and belonging. Its continued study and performance not only

honor Borchert's legacy but also invite ongoing dialogue about resilience, empathy, and the complexities of the human spirit in the face of adversity.

Wolfgang Borchert The Man Outside

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wolfgang borchert the man outside: Gegen die Fußgängermentalität Simon Sahner, 2023-03-06 Schreiben war gut. Besser als die Gemeinschaft mit Menschen war, über sie zu schreiben, und dann nicht an ihnen haften zu bleiben, sondern weiterzuhüpfen wie die Kugel im Roulettekessel. Jörg Fauser Während Ende der 1960er Jahre die Gruppe 47 langsam Auflösungserscheinungen zeigt und Hans Magnus Enzensberger den Tod der Literatur beklagt, erscheinen in kleinen Verlagen die ersten Romane von Jürgen Ploog Cola-Hinterland (1969) und Jörg Fauser Tophane (1972). Zur gleichen Zeit trifft der Übersetzer Carl Weissner nicht nur Allen Ginsberg und Diane di Prima in New York City, sondern auch Charles Bukowski in Los Angeles. Beinahe unbemerkt vom literarischen Establishment entwickelt sich in diesen Jahren in Anlehnung an die US-amerikanische Beat- und Undergroundliteratur in der Bundesrepublik eine literarische Strömung, die – in den Worten von Ploog – gegen die Fußgängermentalität deutscher Nachkriegsliteratur anschreibt. Hatte Rolf Dieter Brinkmann noch mit ACID (1969) und Silverscreen (1969) amerikanische Gegenwartslyrik in größeren Verlagen publiziert, bewegen sich Fauser, Ploog und Weissner im sogenannten Underground und suchen nach Wegen, den Geist amerikanischer Highways und Großstadtdschungel in ihrem eigenen Umfeld zu finden. Die Spuren der Beat- und Undergroundliteratur in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zeigen sich als Nebenströmung westdeutscher Literaturgeschichte, die vor allem in den Jahren 1960 bis 1980 einen Gegenpol zu der Literatur bildete, die aus der Gruppe 47 hervorgegangen war. In ihrer Geschichte deuten sich Authentizitätsdiskurse, Männlichkeitsrituale und ein Schreiben an, das immer an die Grenzen gehen will.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: Rezeption der deutschsprachigen Literatur in der Türkei II Ali Osman Öztürk, Cemal Sakalli, Mehmet Tahir Öncü , 2020-12-20 Literatur schreitet im Allgemeinen über die eigenkulturellen und eigensprachlichen, bzw. die literarischen Grenzen

hinweg und lebt in anderen kulturellen Topografien weiter. Die Rezeption deutschsprachiger Literatur in der Türkei ist ein wichtiges historisches Beispiel für diese Grenzüberschreitung und die Genese der Literatur in einer fremden Sprache. Die unter dem Titel *Rezeption deutschsprachiger Literatur in der Türkei* herausgegebenen beiden Bände beabsichtigen, die Reflexion über deutsche Literatur in der Türkei voranzubringen und auf Rezeptionsvoraussetzungen und Leseinteressen der türkischen Germanistik aufmerksam zu machen und somit zum Wissen über die Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Literatur im türkischen Sprachraum beizutragen. Die Arbeit setzt sich zum Ziel, die diachronische und die synchronische Rezeptionsgeschichte einzelner deutschsprachiger AutorInnen in der Türkei zu recherchieren und zu dokumentieren, wie dieser deutsch-türkische Gedankenaustausch über Literatur und Kultur stattgefunden hat. Die Beiträge sind chronologisch geordnet, damit ein geschichtlicher Überblick bzw. ein literaturhistorischer Zusammenhang zu den sozialen und politischen Beziehungen der beiden Kulturräume ermöglicht wird. Dieser zweite Band widmet sich hauptsächlich zeitgenössischen AutorInnen.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: Oxford AQA History: A Level and AS Component 1: The Quest for Political Stability: Germany 1871-1991, 2015-09-10 Retaining all the well-loved features from the previous editions, *The Quest for Political Stability: Germany 1871-1991* has been approved by AQA and matched to the 2015 specification. With a strong focus on skills building and exam practice, this book covers in breadth issues of change, continuity, and cause and consequence in the period of German history through key questions such as how was Germany governed, what was the extent of social and cultural change, and how effective was opposition? Its aim is to enable you to understand and make connections between the six key thematic questions covered in the specification. Students can further develop vital skills such as historical interpretations and source analyses via specially selected sources and extracts. Practice questions and study tips provide additional support to help familiarize students with the new exam style questions, and help them achieve their best in the exam.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: Fiction from Tegel Prison Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 2010-09 This book discloses a great deal of Bonhoeffer's family context, social world, and cultural milieu. Events from his life are recounted in a way that embodies and illuminates his theology. Characters and situations that represent Nazi types and attitudes are a form of social criticism and help to explain Bonhoeffer's participation in the resistance movement and the plot to kill Adolf Hitler, for which he was hanged.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: The Postwar Antisemite Lisa Silverman, Professor of History and Jewish Studies Lisa Silverman, 2025-08-29 In the wake of the Holocaust, Austrians, Germans, and others often turned to a figural Antisemite to come to terms with their altered political, economic, and cultural circumstances and to shape new national and moral self-understandings. This spectral figure of the Antisemite came into being after Nazi atrocities made explicit expressions of antisemitism socially taboo in Europe and the United States. As *The Postwar Antisemite* explains, the damaging effects of the figural Antisemite, set in motion in Central Europe immediately after the Second World War, spread far beyond Europe's borders and continue to this day.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: *Narrative as Counter-Memory* Reiko Tachibana, 1998-07-30 CHOICE 1999 Outstanding Academic Books The wartime and postwar cultural histories of Germany and Japan show similar experiences of defeat, occupation, and then the reconstruction of powerful societies. Little previous research has examined the literary works that reflect these contacts and parallelisms. For the first time, this book offers an extensive comparative study of German and Japanese narratives that serve as a form of counter-memory, in Foucault's phrase, for the two cultures. Rather than attempting to present objective or comprehensive views of history, these narratives draw upon personal memories to offer subjective, selective, and individualistic reports. They provide an alternative (or counter-memory) to more official versions of World War II and its aftermath. Major writers such as Mishima Yukio, Ibuse Masuji, Oba Minako, Gunter Grass, Uwe Johnson, Christa Wolf, and the Nobel Prize winners Oe Kenzaburo and Heinrich Boll are set in

the context of lesser-known writers, including a nine-year-old child, a medical doctor, a woman who served as a journalist, and a former prisoner, to provide a broad cultural basis for understanding responses to the war from within the two societies. This book combines a broad historical scope with detailed examinations of important individual texts, with both aspects securely set on a firm foundation of historical and literary scholarship. The rhythm of alternation between synthetic generalizations and close textual explication (yielding interpretive insights while providing lucid and economical exposition and summary) allows for carefully balanced and integrated comparisons.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: *Nazi Characters in German Propaganda and Literature* Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, 2018-06-19 Winner of the 2019 Choice Outstanding Academic Title Stereotypical characters that promoted the Nazi worldview were repurposed by antifascist authors in Weimar Germany, argues Dagmar C.G. Lorenz. This is the first book to trace Nazi characters through the German and Austrian literature. Until the defeat of the Third Reich, pro-Nazi literature was widely distributed. However, after the war, Nazi publications were suppressed or even banned, and new writers began to dominate the market alongside exile and resistance authors. The fact that Nazi figures remained consistent suggests that, rather than representing real people, they functioned as ideological signifiers. Recent literature and films set in the Nazi era show that “the Nazis”, ambiguous characters with a sinister appeal, live on as an established trope in the cultural imagination.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: *Articulate Necrographies* Anastasios Panagiotopoulos, Diana Espírito Santo, 2019-07-16 Going beyond the frameworks of the anthropology of death, *Articulate Necrographies* offers a dramatic new way of studying the dead and their interactions with the living. Traditional anthropology has tended to dichotomize societies where death “speaks” from those where death is “silent” – the latter is deemed “scientific” and the former “religious” or “magical”. The collection introduces the concept of “necrography” to describe the way death and the dead create their own kinds of biographies in and among the living, and asks what kinds of articulations and silences this in turn produces in the lives of those affected.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: *North Atlantic Civilization at War* Patrick Lloyd Hatcher, 2016-07-01 This book recounts the World War II journeys of a soldier, a ship, and a bottle of spirits through, and around, five great turning-point battles. Those battles were influenced more by geography and climate than by generals and admirals. Properly titled they would be known as the Battles of the Sky (Britain), the Sand (El Alemein), the Snow (Stalingrad), the Sea (North Atlantic), and the Shore (Normandy). Slogging their way through this quintet are an eighteen-year-old G.I. from Missouri (as seen through his letters home), an ugly duckling of a Liberty ship (as seen through its Armed Guard reports), and a bottle of rum (as traced by those who, after the war, made money in selling war souvenirs). It is the history of the North Atlantic sea basin and its extensions at war: the story of the lulls between battles, when America's teenage warriors often watched war movies (Humphrey Bogart made and Warner Brothers released seven during the war), sang or listened to popular tunes by songsmiths like Irving Berlin, and drank rum-and-Coke (while listening to Dick Haymes sing the hit Rum & Coca-Cola). While accessible and vastly entertaining, this is a serious work of history. By treating World War II in Europe much as Fernand Braudel treated the origins of Western civilization in his masterpiece *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Hatcher brings Braudelian detachment to his narrative.

wolfgang borchert the man outside: *In the Shadow of the Holocaust & Other Essays* Constantin V. Ponomareff, 2023-12-14 The main thrust of this collection of essays, excluding those on Russian literature, is to visualize the European Holocaust from a number of different vantage points - the historical and cultural, the political and individual, the psychological and social, and the critical and literary. This wider perspective, especially as it relates to the range and extent of human suffering, suggests that a redefinition of the twentieth-century Holocaust is now timely.

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wolfgang borchert the man outside: Coming Home? Vol. 1 Sharif Gemie, 2014-07-18 The wars of the twentieth century uprooted people on a previously unimaginable scale to the extent that being a refugee became an increasingly widespread experience. With the arrival of refugees, governments of host countries had to mediate between divided national populations: some wished to welcome those arriving in search of refuge; others preferred a strategy of exclusion or even expulsion. At the same time, refugees had to manage conflicts of the self as they responded to the loss of nationhood, families, socio-political networks, material goods, and arguably also a sense of belonging or home. While return migration was usually perceived by governments and refugees alike as the best solution to the dilemmas of forced displacement, consensus about the timing and dynamics of how this would actually occur was very difficult to achieve. In practice, the return of refugees to their countries of origin rarely, if ever, produced a wholly satisfactory outcome. Conflicts clearly resulted in forced displacement, but it is equally true that forced displacement created conflicts. The complex inter-relationship of conflict, return migration and the sometimes chimerical, but still compelling, search for a sense of home is the central preoccupation of the contributors to the two volumes of the *Coming Home?* series. Scholars from history, literature, cultural studies and sociology explore the tensions between nation-states and migrants as they have anticipated, implemented or challenged the process of return migration during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This book begins with Western Europe and progresses to Central and Eastern Europe from the period of the Spanish Civil War to the Cold War era, whilst the second volume – *Coming home? Vol. 2: Conflict and Postcolonial Return Migration in the Context of France and North Africa* – shifts the focus to the colonial and post-colonial framework of the French-North African nexus. What emerges from the two volumes of essays is that, as ambiguous and sometimes ambivalent as home could appear, it was nonetheless central to migrants' preoccupations about returning.

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