

A Poetics of Place
Günter Kunert's Poem Sequence
"Herbstanbruch in Arkadien"
from his Volume *Fremd daheim*

Leonard Olschner
University of London

"After a certain point return is no longer possible. This point must be reached."

—Franz Kafka

Poetry, to Günter Kunert's mind, necessarily exists in a web of seeming contradictions: in the tension between the lyrical voice and the reader; in the internal relationship of the text both to itself (as a specific utterance) and to the world outside the text (its potential universality); and in the external appeal of the poem to a heterogeneous but comparatively small and self-selecting audience (*WS* 281-83). That Kunert has held fast to this principle illustrates merely one of the continuities of his work, as his recent collection of poetry *Fremd daheim* (*Foreign at Home*, 1990) bears articulate witness. For here the force of paradox spirals inward from the book title itself to the title of the first sequence of poems, "Herbstanbruch in Arkadien" ("Beginning of Autumn in Arcadia"), and from here to a significant number of the poems contained in that sequence. In part, a dialectic of only provisionally resolvable antagonisms results, but at a deeper level Kunert defines a poetics of place by which he—without, strictly speaking, writing autobiographical poetry—attempts to determine where the lyrical subject (or voice) is situated with respect to its origins and to trajectories into a future.

One need not, indeed perhaps should not intermingle direct biographical data with poetic expression, since that could blur

semantic distinctions and distract from the potential of texts to achieve universal rather than merely subjective expression—an important distinction in Kunert's poetics. But it is not gratuitous to note Kunert's exclusion from school and marginalization among peers during the Nazi years as a result of his mother's being Jewish. This alone would suffice to create a sense of exile, of the absence of home or of home as a place existing elsewhere (Keune 35). Much later another sense of loss appeared, as Kunert witnessed in a timely collection from the late 1980s, *Aus fremder Heimat* (*From an Alien Home*): "We can lose our home while in its very midst. . . . When estrangement, confinement and isolation increase, when apprehension about one's own security intensifies, when fear grows, then home [*Heimat*] loses its home-like character [*Heimatlichkeit*]" (*Exil* 100).¹ The context here is Kunert's widening sense of isolation in the GDR since the 1960s and his move to the Federal Republic. He unequivocally denies that he finds himself in exile, however, because of both the shared language and the shared literary heritage, but at the same time he does note that moments of alienation undermine a continuity of self: "When we regard the place where we were born, grew up and spent a significant part of our existence as a biotope assigned to us that may have functioned as an extended second skin, then the person who was relocated, was 'exiled,' the emigrant discovers that he or she is skinless in unfamiliar surroundings and thus permanently vulnerable" (100 . . . 107). Kunert then revealingly speaks of the author "einst in seinem früheren Daheim" 'once in his earlier at-home' (108)—a phrase that will echo in the poems written during the same years (the late 1980s), without pathos or sentimentality and most decidedly without any investment in the West German *Heimat*-renaissance of the 1980s.

The title *Fremd daheim*, at once thematic and programmatic, constitutes a framework for the collection of poems and supports these texts in the manner of an organ point, not least because of the opposition of poems of finding or returning to the self next to poems thematizing or commemorating travel and places abroad (such as London, Rome, and sites in Greece). Indeed, the title of the volume's first poem, "In fremder Heimat" ("In a Foreign Homeland" *FD* 9), underscores this tendency. On a metaphorical level, these texts become excursions into the self. A poem entitled "London im Juli" (*FD* 102), which makes immediately apparent just how strongly the speaker relates exterior cityscape to interior

psyche, commences with the lines:

Heimgefunden zu sich selber
zum Ursprung aus Gassen und Gängen
in aller steinernen Stille.
Liebliches Labyrinth
verkommener Fluchtwege
(FD 102)

Having come home to one's self
to the source comprising alleyways and pathways
in a stoney quietude.
Delightful labyrinth
of neglected escape routes

Consistent with this, the final poem of *Fremd daheim*, "Reisebericht" ("Report on Travels" FD 119), evokes dream-states and reality in conjunction with leaving and returning, thus conjoining end and beginning within this volume. In an interview Kunert elaborated on this point: "Just as dreaming naturally recalls, among other things, reality, living, experience in alienated form, one alienates oneself through travel: we become another in other places" (Steinecke 311).

This is not a new development in Kunert's writing, since the tendency, though pronounced since the volume of poetry *Abtötungsverfahren* (*Means of Destroying*, 1980), existed even before his departure from the GDR to the Federal Republic in 1979 (Kasper 113). The opening lines of his poem "Im weiteren Fortgang" 'In Continuing Progress' (WF 53) from the early 1970s indicate as much:

Durch Türen doch
hinter keiner das erbangte Daheim
endlich Geborgenheit
dauerhaftes Ausruhen
Freunde
nichts
dahinter als die alten Versprechen:
neue Türen.

Through doors, yet
behind none the feared At-home
finally security
permanent rest

friends
nothing
behind them but the old promises:
new/more doors.

“Daheim” of course resonates with diffuse and disparate meaning, containing elements of utopia and the impossible hope of attaining some original condition. Precisely this is what the paradoxical title *Fremd daheim* strives to communicate: that namely the place, as a memory construct called home, always retains some aura of the foreign, and conversely, that the foreign nowhere precludes the potential presence of some aspect of home, of a place to which one can, on some level, return.

The cover of *Fremd daheim* reproduces a drawing in pen and ink chosen by Kunert, “Der verlorene Sohn” ‘The Prodigal Son’ (1920) by Alfred Kubin, for whom the writer expressly harbors great admiration.² Kubin’s sketch, which in its thematic re-contextualization of the parable of the Prodigal Son functions here in analogy to the pictorial image in Baroque emblemata (complementing the *inscriptio* [*Fremd daheim*] and the *subscriptio* [each of several individual poems]), portrays a shirtless and barefooted man in the lower right foreground seated on the ground with his back leaning against a wall to the right. His left hand clutches the side of his head in a position of patent anguish. Barren branches peer over the wall. Two buildings in the gradually rising center background continue the vanishing line begun by the wall: the nearer one, a barn with ladders leading to the roof, carries the designation “Depot,” and the one behind it, with an elevated stair leading to an entrance, is the main house. Billowing clouds, perhaps even a brewing thunderstorm, cover the sky. The flat space between the man and the house, though unobstructed, seems uncannily disinviting, a further separation and obstacle to a return. The lithograph of 1923 based on this sketch somewhat more distinctly clarifies the flat space as water, in which, before the buildings, a face and a cross are barely intimated.

This representation of the Prodigal Son focuses on a critical moment of the parable: not that of the son’s paternal embrace and re-inclusion in the family, but the son’s arrival at the periphery of his father’s land, at which point the son falls to the ground in an ambiguous state of despair or fear or indecision, perhaps not knowing what the closed doors might conceal, or fearing with

anticipated regret what the irreversible decision to return might occasion. It is a modernist reading of the parable analogous to some readers' suspicions and various authors' conclusions in our time that Odysseus could not possibly have simply settled back into quotidian concerns in Ithaca after two decades of war and wanderings (recall Kazantzakis' *Odisia*, 1938). In his speech opening an exhibition of his work in 1926, Kubin said: "Whether we realize it or not, we all profoundly harbor the legacy of an enormous personal past in ourselves." He then relates this to his art: "This is the native soil of art. . . . Anyone can pull off the trick of becoming at home here who intimately cultivates the memories of his past" (Raabe 50).³ This quote would appear little more than fortuitous if it did not indicate a nexus of Kunert's affinity with Kubin, a nexus worth exploring further—for example, in terms of art articulating a home in memory. At this point it also becomes difficult to resist the temptation to digress by turning to Kubin's eloquent autobiographical memoir "Besuch in der Heimat" ("Visit at Home" 1930), which both stages a return and demonstrates its impossibility.

Time's always implied transformation of the one returning after having been in far-removed places leads to the "Herbstanbruch in Arkadien," the paradoxical title of the opening sequence of 31 poems in *Fremd daheim*, which Kunert composed in the late 1980s.⁴ Arcadia represents the postulated mythological and paradisiacal condition of humanity before time began, usually intimating a state which, in its utopian aspect, one would long to re-attain. In Schiller's words: "All peoples who possess a history have a paradise, a condition of innocence, a Golden Age; indeed, all individuals have their Paradise, a Golden Age which they recall with greater or lesser enthusiasm, depending on the degree to which the poetical is a part of their nature" (468). "Herbstanbruch" not only suggests that time has intruded in Arcadia, but that both time and Arcadia are beginning to wane—the implication of this for Kunert's poetry being an awareness of an *Endzeit*, both of a sense of loss of that to which one would desire to return, and of a utopia one would wish to recuperate. Kunert does not long for blissful totality and idyllic innocence, but he does vigilantly locate and collect splinters of utopian matter without any illusion as to utopian fulfillment ("Und jede Scherbe schafft Verlangen / nach Ganzheit: Wie sie niemals war" 'And every shard creates desire / for wholeness: as it never existed,' *FD* 58). In recent years Kunert has

insisted, in reply to criticisms, that he is not morbidly pessimistic, and specifically in view of the Arcadian subtext and the attendant disillusionment in the here and now in much of his poetry, such perceived pessimism becomes at least a matter for debate.

For reasons such as the foregoing, Kunert frequently revisits a cluster of motifs, albeit not in any strident, belabored, or obsessive manner, but in intersecting, even kaleidoscopic patterns. In "Herbstanbruch in Arkadien," these motifs include the foreign and the familiar, home and homecoming, memory, history, time, origins and identity, and furthermore they demonstrate the complex nature of journey and return, which always implies return to the self. "Wo gehen wir denn hin?" asks Novalis—whose "Blaue Blume" ("Blue Blossom") Kunert evokes in "Botanische Expedition" (FD 21)—and answers: "Immer nach Hause" ("Whither are we going? Always towards home" 325). Such return home is for Kunert never a return to Arcadia, whose very evocation implicitly seeks inclusion in notions of *daheim* and *Heimat*. His poem "Feuerwanzen" ("Firebugs," FD 12) closes with lines in which "Eden" becomes a synonym for childhood and Arcadia, with the observer recalling the fascination with the insects

in einem fremden Garten meiner Kindheit
 und längst von uns gemeinsam
 verlassen wie Eden

in a strange garden of my childhood
 and long ago abandoned by us both
 like Eden

Here an echo of pre-history, of *Garten Eden*, confirms both the standpoint of the lyrical voice and the direction not towards which but from which it is speaking. In fact, more so than is immediately apparent, the first six poems of the sequence—"In fremder Heimat" ("In Foreign Homeland"), "Erwachen" ("Awakening"), "Aus meiner Vorgeschichte" ("From my Prehistory"), "Feuerwanzen," "Kind-heitserinnerung" ("Childhood Memory"), and "Biographie" (FD 9-14)—form a coherent mosaic of self-reflection, memory, and return. It is no coincidence that a final period is lacking in all of these poems (just as in five further poems of this sequence), since this suggests the poet's having consciously renounced closure and affirmed post-Arcadian existence that is always provisional, always in flux, and subject to revocation and transformation. Every return is

merely an approximation undertaken at the cost of some degree of alienation, alienation becoming the price extracted for the journey, for perception, for poetry. "Man zieht in die Fremde, die man selber ist" 'we all go into foreign regions which we are ourselves,' writes Kunert (*WS* 205), and this is a formidable and never-ending task. Manfred Jurgensen observes: "The poem proves to be the place to which the poetic voice travels: a destination distant but within reach, in which home [*Heimat*] and the foreign coincide in a new familiarity" (90 *et passim*). Wulf Segebrecht, in his review of *Fremd daheim*, is less willing to presuppose such harmonization: "For the duration of the journey a homecoming to the foreign takes place. If a goal ever became visible, then the traveller would literally be finished." Home-seeking may be aporetic, but even more it is utopian; its place of consummation is the poem, whose mere reading by another can, according to Kunert, be a return after aimless wanderings. In the lyrical subject there appears a "Windhauch aus Utopia" 'gentle breath from Utopia' (*WS* 293). Ultimately, the return to the self we must read as intense awareness of self as though this were "home," hence "return" paradoxically becomes a metaphor precisely for not coming "home": if "home" is a place at all, then this place is situated in the self and in the self alone as defined by the poem. This is yet a further paradoxical twist since the poem need not thematize return as an act having come to completion.

The title poem of the sequence, "Herbstanbruch in Arkadien" (*FD* 26), stakes a position squarely in the present. This present denies cyclical continuity by denying return and affirming the brevity of life, without, however, proposing any transcendence through the poem.

Ein Vogelzug; der letzte:
Keiner kehrt wieder.
Das abgefallene Blatt
wächst nicht mehr nach.
Nur der Asphalt erträgt
zeitweilig unsere Hast
mit der wir verschwinden.
Und der Einmarsch von Toten
hält an
lautlos gewöhnlich:
Unbesieglische Macht:

Ungesichter:
 . . . hier wir . . .

A migration of birds; the last:
 none returns.
 The fallen leaf
 does not grow back.
 Only the asphalt tolerates
 for a time our haste
 by which we leave.
 And the invasion of the dead
 continues
 as usual in silence:
 Unconquerable force:
 Unsightly countenances:
 . . . we here . . .

If the advent of autumn signals Arcadia's end, as we established above, then only one final autumn can occur; hence one final migration of birds will take place, never to return. In antiquity the flight of birds provided a basis for auguring events, and in a sense this image self-destructs: it presages that soon there will be nothing to presage; the metaphor produces a meaning that turns on itself. "Keiner kehrt wieder" refers to not a single bird, to none, to no one. Similarly, the leaf does not re-grow in different form because there will be no spring and subsequently no rejuvenation. These lines 1-4 negate the continuity and continuation of individual existence, and lines 5-7, moving from imagery taken from nature to that of the city, state the direction in which life moves as though this were its purpose. This is modern-day *memento mori*, not sublimely elegaic but undialectically resignative: "Und der Einmarsch von Toten / hält an / lautlos gewöhnlich." Invincible death besieges and invades the living. The series of colons (lines 10, 11, 12)—which we might designate as a non-verbal but rhetorically valid epiphora—takes the text into a calculatedly gradual disintegration analogous to the meaning conveyed by its lines. From the growing and virtually quantitative presence of death, the text moves to a designation ("Unbesiegleiche Macht:") and from there, led by the colon, to ambiguous and transitional "Ungesichter:": this word not only negates or monstries or de-individualizes "Gesicht" as a tendentially allegorical gesture of the text towards depersonalizing

the many dead, but also recalls the rarer meaning of "Ungesicht" as a "being with mask" (as documented in Jean Paul by Grimms' *Deutsches Wörterbuch*). "Mask" in turn is a translation of the Latin *persona* and hence, in conjunction with the deictic "hier," the completed mediation, from death to the final line, culminates in "...hier wir...." The three dots of ellipsis preceding and following "hier wir," so suitably termed *points de suspension* in French, make the final words an intermittence, a sign or verification of life between nothing and nothing, between dust and dust. It is not totally surprising that, in view of texts such as this, some critics find the Kunert of recent years pessimistic. Segebrecht concludes that "Kunert's poetry is the radical utterance of his obsession with death. Its intensity, not its colorfulness, is through and through comparable to the Baroque infatuation with death; however, it is reduced by the dimension of a consoling transcendence."⁵ Segebrecht is not the first critic to see the presence of the Baroque in Kunert's work, nor is Kunert the first poet of this century to exploit specific affinities with the Baroque—one need only recall Kunert's early mentor, Johannes R. Becher.

The closing poem of the sequence, "Meine diversen Adressen" (FD 39-40), has six sections, each of them designating a place of perception or of writing while at the same time addressing an aspect of this writing. The themes progress from the seemingly trivial next to a self-ironical statement about writing poetry, to the evocation of destruction in history ("Und der Rauch in der Ferne / steigt aus den brennenden Städten / unaufgehörter Vergangenheit" 'And the smoke in the distance / rises out of the burning cities / of unceased past,' vs. 12-14), to meditations on death and the poets. The final section joins the end of the sequence with its beginning:

Vordem Modell
 vollendeter Hoheit und Harmonie
 Göttliche Sphären.
 Der Kosmos besteht
 neuerdings aus gravitationellem
 Vergessen. Fremdkörper
 leiblos und lieblos
 machen sich fort nach Nirgendwo.
 Auf einem davon
 wähnst du dich daheim
 sogar.

Formerly the model
 of perfected majesty and harmony
 Divine spheres.
 The cosmos consists,
 of late, of gravitational
 oblivion. Foreign bodies
 incorporeal and unloving
 make off towards Nowhere.
 On one of them
 you fancy yourself to be at home
 even.

If the text appears abstract, obscure, inaccessible, and slightly sarcastic, then the reason for this would lie in an attempted recuperation—at least in terms of a poetic articulation—of a potentially re-constructable universe. The framework contrasts ideal (“Modell / vollendeter Hoheit und Harmonie”) and reality, the reality defined as increasingly expanding oblivion. Whether or not the “Fremdkörper” carry monadic qualities or not—that is, whether or not they form the essentially interrelated building blocks of reality—is perhaps of lesser consequence than the fact that the lyrical subject, in addressing him/herself, understands them as incorporeal and fully impersonal (linked by the consonance of “leiblos und lieblos”). This is where the sarcasm’s efficacy begins to take hold, for the place the bodies wish to attain is “Nirgendwo,” which we can read as a tolerable translation of “utopia” (*ou-tópos*). The “Fremdkörper” are those alien to utopia, and for this reason the speaker indicates that he/she only seems to be at home (“wähnst du dich daheim”), but in fact is not. In this context “wähnst” participates both in the notion of the deceptive assumption and, in going back to the much earlier meaning of “Wahn” ‘delusion’ as “hope,” in that of an encouraging illusion. No return is possible, and “daheim” is reduced to a chimera. The one return that does prove possible connects this text with the first poem of the sequence, “In fremder Heimat” (FD 9), in which the subject maintains itself (“das eingefleischte fremde Ich”) among the preserved dead and the artefacts of history that find a neutralizing resting place in the local castle. Documenting this state through poetic articulation produces the text and as such a place, and about such a place Kunert said: “[The poet] can be neither expelled nor expatriated from this text, it is his true home [*Heimat*]” (VS 50). No other concrete geographical

place would seem to carry the same significance as a *Heimat*, not even the most obvious one, Berlin, since this place, consisting of many places created at different historical moments and by different people, many of whom perished during the Shoah, has in the past half-century become no longer recognizable (Kunert, "Stoff").⁶

Since experiencing foreign and unknown places produces analogies to the self, Kunert repeatedly identifies interior landscapes. In a poem such as "Gordion im Oktober" ("Gordion in October" *FD* 114) Kunert may speak of a long-silenced place, but the place itself speaks of the known quantities of such interior landscapes:

kein Zeuge
der Wächter in seiner Bude:
Nur Nachhut
einer Vergangenheit. Von deren
andauernder Niewiederkehr
ist hier von allen Steinen
die stumme Rede:
(vv. 8-14)

no witness
the watchman in his hut:
only the rearguard
of a past. Whose
incessant neverreturn
all stones bespeak here
in silent speech:

The past and memory or the admonition against forgetting have figured prominently in Kunert's poetry for many years, and indeed more than two decades ago, several years before leaving the GDR, he stated, when asked to describe the continuity of his lyric poetry, that only imprecise designations like "revocation of forgetting," "timeliness of things past" or "past as premonition" could give a general idea of tendencies in his work (Richter 57). It should come as no surprise that the *Wende* of 1989 failed to cause a crisis in Kunert's lyric production. His own *Wende*, or perhaps a series of them, had taken place earlier—1950 with the recognition by Becher and the publication of his first volume of poetry, *Wegschilder und Mauerinschriften* (*Signposts and Wall Inscriptions*); 1963 with the

beginning of official reprimands; 1979 with his departure from the GDR—but not in 1989. Segebrecht had noted the lacking influence of the *Wende*, and Kunert concedes the same in an interview, published in 1995, in which he emphasizes that the GDR was not his sole or main theme, largely because he found himself, after 15 years in the Federal Republic, on the margin of events. Many other things have “interested and moved” him, things such as the past in relation to his biography, but also ecological questions and the sciences (Keune/Durzak 18-20). Also in 1995 Kunert published in *Akzente* his poem “Abgang” (“Departure”) containing lines—

Auch ich verließ eine historische Stätte,
die keine Heimat war.

I too left an historical place
that was not home.

—that indicate a continued sense of loss and of a precluded return. Place, being a non-entity, becomes portable as the biographical baggage of a voice displaced, but consciously and relentlessly concerned with place more complexly defined than a facile understanding would feel comfortable with. “Gartenheimkehr” (‘Return to the Garden’), one of the poems Kunert has contributed to this issue of *STCL*, bundles some of the thematic strands that have concerned us here and substantiates again the continuities of place and return.

Notes

1. Since the word *Heimat* conveys many meanings and especially emotive valences that English can only incompletely capture—home, homeland, home-country, home surroundings—I will sometimes retain the German word.

2. Kunert stated this in a letter to me dated 20 October 1995. See too his “Paraphrase über eine Zeichnung Alfred Kubins” (Paraphrase on a Sketch by Alfred Kubin”) and “Zu Alfred Kubins Zeichnung ‘Die Müllerin’” (“On Alfred Kubin’s Sketch ‘The Miller’s Wife’”) in Kunert, *Kramen in Fächern: Geschichten, Parabeln, Merkmale* (Berlin, Weimar: Aufbau, 1968), 124-25.

3. In *Zeitwende* 3 (1927), 195-96, quoted in Raabe, 50. The lithograph “Der verlorene Sohn” is reproduced in Raabe, 115.

4. I choose "sequence" since the series of 31 poems does not in any strict sense form a "cycle." Kunert states in the letter just mentioned that he himself would prefer the designation "Abteilung" ("section") to "Zyklus." Kunert also provided the date of composition for these poems.

5. See also Böttiger: "In the first section, 'Herbstanbruch in Arkadien,' we are prepared for death [*Exitus*] in bucolic elegies."

6. Cf., of course, *Berlin beizeiten* (1987), Kunert's volume of poetry that preceded *Fremd daheim*.

Works Cited

Böttiger, Helmut. "Letale Liederlichkeit. Günter Kunerts Gedichtband 'Fremd daheim.'" *Die Zeit*, (5 October 1990): 11.

Günter Kunert. *Beiträge zu seinem Werk*. Ed. Manfred Durzak and Hartmut Steinecke. Munich, Vienna: Hanser, 1992.

Jurgensen, Manfred. "Ort und Reisen in der Lyrik Günter Kunerts." *Kunert-Werkstatt* 89-105.

Kafka, Franz. *Hochzeitsvorbereitungen auf dem Lande und andere Prosa aus dem Nachlaß*. Ed. Max Brod. Frankfurt a.M.: S. Fischer, 1953. 39.

Kasper, Elke. "Untergangs- oder Überlebenskunst? Eine Lyrikdebatte und ihre Folgen." *Günter Kunert* 102-18.

Keune, Manfred E. "Günter Kunert—Konturen seines literarischen Werkes." *Kunert-Werkstatt* 29-50.

_____. and Manfred Durzak. "Es geht alles seinen ungestörten Gang. Gespräch mit Günter Kunert." *Kunert-Werkstatt* 13-28.

Kubin, Alfred. "Besuch in der Heimat." *Aus meinem Leben. Gesammelte Prosa mit 73 Abbildungen*. Ed. Ulrich Riemerschmidt. Munich: Ellermann Verlag, 1974. 179-85.

Kunert, Günter. "Abgang." *Akzente* 42 (1995): 82.

_____. *Berlin beizeiten. Gedichte*. Munich, Vienna: Hanser, 1987.

_____. "Deutsch-deutsches Exil." Afterword. *Aus fremder Heimat. Zur Exilsituation heutiger Literatur*. Ed. Günter Kunert. Munich, Vienna: Hanser, 1988. 100-12. (*Exil*)

_____. *Fremd daheim. Gedichte*. Munich: Hanser, 1990. (*FD*)

_____. "Für wen schreiben Sie?" Kunert, *Warum schreiben?* 286-94. (*WS*)

- _____. "Gartenheimkehr." Typescript.
- _____. *Im weiteren Fortgang. Gedichte*. Munich: Hanser, 1974. (WF)
- _____. *Kramen in Fächern. Geschichten, Parabeln, Merkmale*. Berlin, Weimar: Aufbau, 1968.
- _____. "Paradoxie als Prinzip." Kunert, *Warum schreiben?* 275-85. (WS)
- _____. "Der Stoff, aus dem Gedichte sind." *Akzente* 41 (1994): 102-07.
- _____. *Vor der Sintflut: Das Gedicht als Arche Noah. Frankfurter Vorlesungen*. Munich, Vienna: Hanser, 1985. (VS)
- _____. "Warum schreiben." Kunert, *Warum schreiben?* 202-05. (WS)
- _____. *Warum schreiben? Notizen zur Literatur*. Munich, Vienna: Hanser, 1976. (WS)
- Kunert-Werkstatt. *Materialien und Studien zu Günter Kunerts literarischem Werk*. Ed. Manfred Durzak and Manfred Keune. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 1995.
- Novalis: *Schriften*, 1: *Das dichterische Werk*. Ed. Paul Kluckhohn and Richard Samuel, with Heinz Ritter and Gerhard Schulz, rev. Richard Samuel. Stuttgart, etc.: Kohlhammer, 1977.
- Raabe, Paul. *Alfred Kubin. Leben, Werk, Wirkung*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1957.
- Richter, Hans. "Interview mit Günter Kunert." *Weimarer Beiträge* 20:5 (1974): 51-66.
- Schiller, Friedrich. "Ueber naive und sentimentalische Dichtung." *Schillers Werke. Nationalausgabe*, vol. 20: *Philosophische Schriften*, pt. 1. Ed. Benno von Wiese with Helmut Koopmann. Weimar: Böhlau Nachfolger, 1962. 413-503.
- Segebrecht, Wulf. "Im Auge des Orkans: Günter Kunert schreibt trotzdem Gedichte." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 October 1990: L 14.
- Steinecke, Hartmut. "'Das Gedicht? Zu den Akten.' Ein Gespräch mit Günter Kunert." *Günter Kunert* 306-35.