

FROM RUBBLE TO REVOLUTIONS AND RAVES:
LITERARY INTERROGATIONS OF GERMAN MEDIA ECOLOGIES

Kai-Uwe Werbeck

A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures.

Chapel Hill
2012

Approved by:

Dr. Richard Langston (Advisor)

Dr. Eric Downing

Dr. Mark Hansen

Dr. Jonathan Hess

Dr. Ken Hillis

© 2012
Kai-Uwe Werbeck
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

ABSTRACT

**KAI-UWE WERBECK: From Rubble to Revolutions and Raves: Literary Interrogations of
German Media Ecologies
(Under the Direction of Dr. Richard Langston)**

This dissertation queries the ways in which West German literature interrogated its role in larger media environments at three pivotal historical moments in German postwar history: the rubble years, the student revolts, and Germany's reunification. I argue that after moments of social and political unrest, the later twentieth-century German media ecologies so prominent in West German urban centers became more dynamic, allowing for fluid exchange and dialogue between newer and older media, an ecology in which a particularly attentive and intermedially sensitive subset of literature occupied a unique and unmistakably critical position; within postwar and contemporary German media ecologies, these texts, I argue, reflect on both the affirmative condition of dominant media environments as well as their political potential when reordered according to a literary vision. In a word, this dissertation contends that exemplars of German literature from the second half of the twentieth century have continually positioned themselves as critical monitors of and agents in the ever-evolving state of German media ecologies. The first chapter compares Wolfgang Staudte's seminal rubble film with the depiction of the city in the rubble literature of Heinrich Böll in order to illustrate how these two media were instrumental in retracing the afterlife of German Expressionism. The second chapter centers on the literature in the wake of the unsuccessful German student revolutions in 1968 as well as its documentaries and field

recordings as an urban aesthetic of resistance to political and cultural complacency. The epitome of this aesthetic, which I locate specifically in the works of Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, challenged the leading medium of the day, television, and rethought the streets as a place where interventions into mediated life could be waged during a post-revolutionary period characterized by political standstill. The final chapter focuses on the intersection of the Internet and literature from around the late 1990s and queries specifically the work of writer Rainald Goetz. Goetz explores Berlin and its nightlife through a poetics that centers on the assumed immediacy of the World Wide Web, championing a culturally determined communality over a national one. Beyond just demonstrating the highly mediated nature of the West German urban experience, these three case studies confirm that in an age of rapid technological developments and continually evolving new media, literature has held its ground as a major constituent in the German media ecologies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank my parents, Kurt-Uwe and Doris Werbeck, for their support. I extend special thanks to my advisor Dr. Richard Langston who invested a lot of time and thought in this project. I would be amiss if I failed to thank the German Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where I spent six great years, and my committee members for their input and feedback. I am also indebted to my friends (and proof-readers) Stephanie Gaskill, Elise Harris, and Alex Fulk. Elizabeth Schreiber-Byers deserves credit for formatting this dissertation. Last but not least, I am grateful to my wife Susanne Gomoluch for her love and her encouragement.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| List of Figures: | viii |
| List of Abbreviations: | x |
| Introduction: The Place of Literature in German Media Ecologies..... | 1 |
| I. The Ecological Metropolis: The City in Literature..... | 12 |
| II. Art in Ruins: An Ecology of Rubble..... | 18 |
| III. Television's Specters: An Ecology of Revolutions | 24 |
| IV. Party Like It's 1999: An Ecology of Raves | 32 |
| Chapter One: Walking in Waste Lands: Ruin-Gazing in German Rubble Film and Literature | 41 |
| I. From the Flâneur to the Rubble-Gazer | 41 |
| II. Navigating the Aftermath: Situating Rubble Literature and Film | 50 |
| III. Into the Ruins: The Mobility of Morality | 53 |
| IV. From Rubble Film to Rubble Literature: The Cinematic Ruin And Its Discontents..... | 70 |
| V. Coloring Cologne: Cinematic References in <i>Der Engel schwieg</i> | 85 |
| Conclusion | 101 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter Two: Documenting the Downfall: The Deconstruction of the Televisual City in Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's Multi-Media Art | 103 |
| I. The Life and Death of Rolf Dieter Brinkmann | 103 |
| II. Television's Nemesis: Situating Brinkmann's Later Work | 111 |
| III. Nature, Culture, and the Urban Grid: Brinkmann's Instant Photography | 118 |
| IV. Re-Recording Cologne: Brinkmann's Poetics of Erasure and Repetition | 130 |
| V. Poeticizing Urban Space: The City as Text in <i>Westwärts 1 & 2</i> | 144 |
| Conclusion | 161 |
| Chapter Three: The Virtual Metropolis: The Decentralization of Post-Wall Berlin in Rainald Goetz's <i>Heute Morgen, Eine Geschichte der Gegenwart</i> | 163 |
| I. The Nights and Days of Rainald Goetz | 163 |
| II. Writing the New Berlin: Situating <i>Heute Morgen, Eine Geschichte der Gegenwart</i> | 171 |
| III. Into the Dark: Fairy Tales from the Urban Underground in <i>Rave</i> | 179 |
| IV. Recording the Periphery: <i>Abfall für alle</i> as an Internet Diary | 197 |
| V. From Internet Diary to Novel: Navigating Berlin in <i>Roman eines Jahres</i> | 208 |
| Conclusion | 221 |
| Conclusion: German Media Ecologies in the 21 st Century..... | 223 |
| Bibliography | 236 |

LIST OF FIGURES:

- Fig. 1.1. Mertens walking in the rubble, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.2. Mertens and Susanne in their apartment, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.3. Mertens's reflection in a puddle of water, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.4. Mertens and Susanne walking through a nocturnal Berlin, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.5. Mertens and Brückner traversing the destroyed landscape, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.6. A mother begs Mertens to help her daughter, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.7. The forlorn Mertens in a church, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.8. People returning to Berlin on a train, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.9. A POV shot from Susanne's perspective, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 1.10. Susanne looking at a broken mirror, still from *The Murderers are among us*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.
- Fig. 2.1. A typography of *Coal Bunkers*, photographs by Bernd and Hilla Becher from 1967-1993. Copyright © by Sonnabend Galerie.
- Fig. 2.2. Vein-like trees against a pale sky, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.
- Fig. 2.3. The city appears behind the trees, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.
- Fig. 2.4. Images of urban decay, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.
- Fig. 2.5. Street signs in the city, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.
- Fig. 2.6. Exemplary page-layout in "Westwärts," from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.
- Fig. 2.7. Section three of "Westwärts" "intruding" into section two, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.

Fig 2.8. The text in “Westwärts” “coagulates” and “clogs” the page, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.

Fig. 2.9. Poetry “embedded” in the city, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt Verlag.

Fig. 3.1. Rainald Goetz and WestBam at a hotel conference room, photograph from *Rave*. Copyright © by Suhrkamp Verlag.

Fig. 3.2. Cloudy sky above a beach, photograph from *Rave*. Copyright © by Suhrkamp Verlag.

Fig. 3.3. View from inside an apartment, photograph from *Rave*. Copyright © by Suhrkamp Verlag.

Fig. 3.4. Exemplary page layout, from *Abfall für alle*. Copyright © by Suhrkamp Verlag.

Fig. 4.1. Stalagmite with a cave painting, still from *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. Copyright © by Creative Differences et al.

Fig. 4.2. “Rediscovered” Graffiti Mural *Every Picture Tells a Lie* by Banksy, photograph courtesy of Katharina Adamietz.

Fig. 4.3. 3D sidewalk chalk drawing in the German city of Geldern by Edgar Müller; photograph. Copyright © by worldphotocollections.blogspot.com.

Fig. 4.4. Sprayer admiring graffiti on a subway train; still from *WHOLETRAIN*. Copyright © by Aerodynamic Films.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

| | | |
|-----------------|---|--|
| <i>Mörder</i> | = | Staudte, Wolfgang. <i>Die Mörder sind unter uns</i> . Germany: DEFA, 1946. |
| <i>Engel</i> | = | Böll, Heinrich. <i>Der Engel schwieg</i> . München: DTV, 1997. |
| <i>Nachwort</i> | = | Brinkmann, Rolf Dieter. "Ein unkontrolliertes Nachwort zu meinen Gedichten." <i>Literaturmagazin 5: Das Vergehen von Hören und Sehen – Aspekte der Kulturvernichtung</i> . Eds. Hermann Peter Piwitt, Peter Rühmkopf. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976. 228-250. |
| WSS (XX) | = | Brinkmann, Rolf Dieter. <i>Wörter Sex Schnitt: Originaltonaufnahmen 1973</i> . Herbert Kapfer; Katharina Agathos. Eds. Intermedium Records: 2005. Followed by a letter and a number. The letter denotes the label-color of the five CDs (G = green, O = orange, P = pink, Y = yellow, B = blue) and the number the track on the respective CD. |
| WW | = | Brinkmann, Rolf Dieter. <i>Westwärts 1 & 2; Gedichte</i> . Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2005. |
| <i>Rave</i> | = | Goetz, Rainald. <i>Rave</i> . Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1998. |
| <i>Abfall</i> | = | Goetz, Rainald. <i>Abfall für alle: Roman eines Jahres</i> . Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1999. |

Introduction: From Rubble to Revolutions and Raves

The Place of Literature in German Media Ecologies

In spite of the disasters of National Socialism and World War II, Germany's postwar cities remained vessels full of media, complex and bristling media environments. Naturally, Nazi Germany was as much an experiment in building political ideologies as it was in media environments. According to one scholar, the National Socialists' propagandistic instrumentalization of media was "eine wesentliche Ursache für die Katastrophe [...], die von Deutschland ausgegangen war" ["a significant part of the catastrophe triggered by the Germans"] (Wilke, 15-16). It should not come as a surprise that German intellectual history after 1945 devoted an enormous deal of attention to the fate of German media ecologies after fascism; specifically, this attention focused on the intersection of literature, media, and politics. A prominent example of this was the heated exchange between Ernst Bloch and Georg Lukács, among others, about whether or not literary Expressionism had paved the way for National Socialism.¹ Even though these debates were about literary style and political representation in prewar film and literature, they also illustrated well the lingering question underlying subsequent discourses on mass media and politics after the Second World War.

To be sure, West German media was under constant scrutiny (both externally and internally)

¹Their debate on the dangers and merits of Expressionism and Realism can be retraced in English translation in the seminal *Aesthetic and Politics*. See also the introductory Presentation I in the book, pp. 9-15. In this collection of essays, Lukács claims that "if literature is a particular form by means of which objective reality is reflected, then it becomes of crucial importance for it to grasp that reality as truly is" (33). Bloch answers this by rhetorically asking, "what if Lukács's reality – a coherent, infinitely mediated totality – is not so objective after all?" (22).

after the fall of National Socialism due to their links to the Third Reich's Ministry for Propaganda, which is why West German media ecologies are a fascinating site of inquiry if one seeks to understand the role of literature after the Second World War.²

In the long shadow of fascism, both the Bonn Republic and the Berlin Republic found themselves in a particularly sensitive position concerning the pitfalls and promises of mass media, especially their ability to fulfill or fail the political *Bildungsauftrag*, West Germany's constitutional mandate for media to be educational.³ West German popular media, in particular, remained under scrutiny both by the state and intellectuals, producing a climate of caution supplemented by a philosophical canon that often presented mass entertainment as aesthetically inferior and politically dangerous. Aimed at the first true postwar *Leitmedium* of television, Theodor Adorno set the tenor in his 1953 essay "Prolog zum Fernsehen" ["Prologue to Television"].⁴ Identifying an increasing conflation of media signals, he predicted a "traumlosen Traum" ["dreamless dream"] in which "erst das Zusammenspiel aller aufeinander abgestimmten und dennoch nach Technik und Effekt voneinander

²The scope of this project does not allow me to include the situation in the GDR. The particular conditions in the totalitarian system with regard to media and culture are too different from the FRG's to be taken into account without expanding this chapter beyond its intended breadth.

³Hermann Glaser states that after the Second World War radio (and later television) was implemented by the Allies with the "kultureller Auftrag" ["cultural mission"] of a "durch Aufklärung bestimmte multimediale Zukunft" ["multi-media future determined by enlightenment/elucidation"], a goal that arguably remained unfulfilled due to the demands of a capitalist market for populist entertainment (1997; 459). While radio was the prime means of information dissemination, re-educational propaganda, and the networking of the sectors under the control of the Allied Forces, external control was replaced by a certain economic system in a critical turn towards Americanization under the capitalist market.

⁴For an extensive discussion of the term *Leitmedium* see Daniel Müller's et al two volumes of *Leitmedien: Konzepte – Relevanz – Geschichte* and Wilke's seminal book *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*. Following these two sources, I understand the term as a dominant single medium in a specific historical moment that holds a critical function in terms of societal communication and public life. However, in the light of recent debates on *Leitkultur* in Germany, it has to be acknowledged that *Leitmedium* is a loaded term, especially in relation to nationalism and culturally "acceptable" values. In 2000, the politician Friedrich Merz coined the controversial term *Leitkultur*, "a 'leading' or 'guiding' mainstream culture to which all immigrants were expected to adapt" (Göktürk, 965).

abweichenden Verfahren [...] das Klima der Kulturindustrie aus[macht]” [“only the interplay of all the synchronized but nonetheless technologically and effectually differentiated processes determines the climate of the culture industry”] (2002; 200-201). The intricate interplay of different media, Adorno warned, cements the grip of the dreaded culture industry via the dazzling conflation of signals: “Je vollständiger die Welt als Erscheinung, desto undurchdringlicher die Erscheinung der Ideologie” [“the more complete the world is a semblance, the less penetrable the appearance of ideology becomes”] (Adorno, 2002, 201).⁵ Television and the surrounding culture industry writ large were thus stigmatized by Adorno as a homogenizing phantasmagoria. His “dreamless dream” arguably found its intensification in the increasingly complex media ecologies of the second half of the twentieth century, systems the predominantly operated in urban spaces.⁶ We can see, then, how literature with its unique position in West German culture plays a critical (and even privileged) role in the debates on the ideological dangers of mass media in the Federal Republic.

Adorno’s analysis of the ideological powers of mass media proved to be one of the paradigmatic blueprints in postwar Germany, but it also prompted important counter discourses. Arguably, the most prolific voice among those proposing a less adversarial relationship between man and media was Walter Benjamin, who did not live to see its development after 1945. Turning his attention to media theory in the 1920s, Benjamin was convinced that mass media could play a critical role in the revolutionary subject’s capacity

⁵Andrew Hewitt argues that Adorno insists “that popular culture unmasks the unacknowledged barbarism upon which Western culture has always been predicated” (837). It is thus a revealing symptom – a “gesture of demystification” – but not an antidote to the ailment of Enlightenment (ibid).

⁶In Hewitt’s reading of Adorno and Max Horkheimer’s seminal work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which contains the essay on the culture industry, “the subject of the culture industry conforms not because he fears the consequences of nonconformity, but because the possibility of nonconformity has been foreclosed by the cultural values that inform his social interactions and political choices” (836).

for understanding historical mechanisms of oppression and change.⁷ For all his emphases placed on revolutionary potential, Benjamin's position was nevertheless closely tied to that of Adorno's dire, more hopeless one, especially when we remember just how much Benjamin's writings were the result of his heated exchanges with his friend.⁸ In contrast to Adorno, Benjamin did not shy, however, away from affirmative engagements with mass culture like film, "seeing an entire network of agents – some human and some not – engaged in the production of the artwork" (Waters, 793).⁹ Conceived as a series of historical case studies indebted, in part, to Benjamin's theory of mediated apperception, this dissertation weds Benjamin's ideas about participatory media aesthetics with an analysis of the role of literature in the critique and hegemonic reshaping of broader West German (mass) medial environments; over the course of three case studies, I shall show how extensively literature contributed to the making of media environments at various interrelated levels, doing so often in unique, supremely literary ways. As will be seen, the exemplars of West German literature chosen for this study strive to partake in media ecologies in historical time, but more specifically at those historical junctures when dominant ecologies are perturbed by social, political, or even cultural unrest like the end of Nazism, the student movement and reunification. By conceiving German cities after capitulation as vessels containing media

⁷As Benjamin states in the "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," "the way in which human perception is organized [...] is conditioned not only by nature but by history" (23). With regard to film, for example, these new modes of perception lead to "an interest in understanding themselves and therefore their class" (Benjamin, 2008; 34).

⁸As Bernd Witte write in his intellectual biography of Benjamin, "In spite of the annoyance and humiliation to which (Benjamin) thus found himself exposed, he always sought to absorb the editors' (Adorno and Horkheimer's) objection, in all essential points, into his own thinking" (156).

⁹Very much concerned with what he called human apperception, Benjamin paid attention "to the agency of the machine in the creation of the artwork" which amplifies human cognitive abilities and transforms and reconstructs social relations (Waters, 794).

ecologies, the texts under investigation in this dissertation ask us to first clarify what ecology means within literature's awareness of itself as a medium among media.

Both a methodological approach and a field of study, media ecology primarily evolved out of the works of three seminal thinkers like Marshall McLuhan, Walter Ong, and Neil Postman. These media scholars “built upon an intellectual tradition that has its roots in the ancient world, a tradition that coalesced in response to the revolutions of communication, media, and technology of the 19th and 20th century, and brought it into the 21st century” (Strate, 17). The term deliberately evokes notions of environmental systems in which countless elements coexist but also clash with one another. Using the terms media ecology, media constellation, and (postprint) mediaverse interchangeably, literary scholar Michael Wutz speaks of a “vast, chaotic, and level playing field in which energies and interests intersect and mutually determine and reshape one another” (6). According to media theorist Matthew Fuller, the term ecology was used originally in biology in order “to indicate the massive and dynamic interrelation of processes and objects, beings and things, patterns and matter” (2). Within the configuration of this dissertation, media ecology means studying multiple contesting “media to sustain a relatively stable notion of human culture” (ibid). As such, literature is to be grasped as “a subset of media, and thus of discursive storage, calculation, and transmission systems” that aggressively challenge the very system of which it is a part (Fuller 4). Its own cultural tradition in the land of poets and thinkers, however, marks literature as an intensely critical “subset,” a major element in the ecology. As Lance Strate further elucidates, a media ecology “is a network of ideas, individuals, and publications, and it is possible to follow the links of the network in any number of different directions” (20). He adds that ecologies are also “concerned with understanding media in a

historical context” (19). In the spirit of these observations, the questions propelling this dissertation are threefold: the development of German ecologies after 1945, their idiosyncratic contingencies due to the media history of the Third Reich; and literature’s power to intervene in these formations. In pursuit of plausible answers to these three concomitant questions, this dissertation methodologically juxtaposes the literary alongside other dominant media, be it the radio, the television or the Internet. The interaction and exchange between media plays itself out against the backdrop of concrete German social history anchored in German urban centers.

My approach to German literature in media ecologies is not unprecedented. In the field of German Studies, Stefanie Harris proposes the fruitful concept – similar to Matthew Fuller’s adaptation of the term “ecology” – “mediascape” to refer to “the traditional and the new media of [a] period for the recording and transmission of knowledge as a collective whole that suggest a relationship to the world as constituted or conditioned by those media through which we perceive, experience, and represent the world” (2). She strengthens the notion of reciprocal influence when she concludes that “the alteration or introduction of new media by necessity changes the composition and perspective of other, already ubiquitous media, and further, introduces the possibility that traditional conceptions of literature may no longer be able to contain that increasingly hypermediated world” (2-3). Her claim that literature is embedded in a mediascape and productively interacts with the respective newcomers from a certain historical moment resonates with both the diachronic and synchronic side of this study.¹⁰ Her assessment of a perspectival recalibration of already-

¹⁰Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin propose the concept of *remediation* in their book of the same name. Remediation is first and foremost defined as “the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms” (5). Bolter and Grusin further claim that “our culture wants both to multiply its media and to erase all traces of mediation; ideally it wants to erase its media in the very act of multiplying them” (5). Bolter and

established media like literature translates into a re-reading of literary texts through the lens of new technologies and arts – in which literature, to be very clear, is more than just the “outdated” medium – that also takes into account the presence of a concrete mediality. This said, Harris’s book serves as a prequel to this dissertation, as it spans the years 1859 to 1930 and thus functions as a precursor to the work undertaken in the subsequent pages. Most importantly, Harris sets the stage for my engagement with literature as a critical voice in the constitution of media ecologies in which I do not only re-read literature through new media but also attempt the opposite.

From a methodological standpoint, Harris’s groundwork supports the idea of the metropolis as the epicenter of media ecology. More generally, it could be argued that both Harris and I contend that media ecologies constitute a map superimposed over that of the physical city. Following Jerome McGann’s assertion that “we are not facing the extinction of a species,” namely the book, this dissertation does not adopt the stance that literature has needed or felt it necessary to defend itself vis-à-vis the onslaught of newer forms of media. In light of the case studies in this dissertation, evidence suggests that a strong gravitational pull on the literary has surged after historical moments of crisis and change. Based on the observations in the three chapters of this project, I claim that in spite of proclamations of its death or its endangered status literature occupies a salient position in German media ecologies over time. Setting off chain-reactions that stir hitherto crystallized constellations into motion, literature clashes with other media constituents and – rather than just being mere appendix or reflection – offers unique answers to pressing socio-political and cultural questions raised by the confluence of media precisely because of its medial specificity.

Grusin discuss questions of media-convergence and the invisible interface, an approach that this dissertation reverses. The plainly visible, audible, and textual ‘locking horns’ of different media in an age of increasingly seamless remediation ignites interest, appears as idiosyncratic, and thus administers sensual shocks.

This premise supplements recent studies on new media, media ecologies, and “new” literature. For example, Steven Shaviro uses the term “mediasphere” to denote a “world of images and sound bites” in which “the electronic media are to us what ‘nature’ was to earlier times” (64). While Shaviro’s term evokes structural similarity to ecological systems and their mutual influential organic relations, it also insinuates that it is electronic media that has become the “natural aesthetic habitat” of mankind. Similarly, media scholar Paul Levinson compares the media landscape to a biological system, arguing that “media compete with one another for our time and patronage and live and die as much as living organisms in the Darwinian [...] world,” while they also work to each others benefit (2). This dissertation argues against the deterministic fear that literature might be outdated – fallen prey to the medial newcomers – and finds it very much alive and kicking, involved in excessive exchanges with the new kids on the block and pulling off stunts it alone is capable of, even if it productively reappropriates, cites, or refers to other media. Beyond just demonstrating the highly mediated nature of the West German urban experience, the three case studies in this dissertation not only confirm that in an age of rapid technological developments and continually evolving new media, literature has held its ground as a major constituent in the German media ecologies. My readings also proof that literature wanted something from the media ecology. What exactly this was is the problem at stake in each chapter.

Whereas the switch to topographical readings of German “spatial turns” has gained currency in the humanities for the last two decades, histories of German literature in relation to its cutting-edge, diverse multi-media ecologies have been neglected.¹¹ What this

¹¹Jaimey Fisher and Barbara Mennel, for example, argue in the introduction to their collection of essays on *Spatial Turns* that “German Studies seems particularly well suited to analyses of space, given the long-term centrality of space and spatial imaginary to German culture (the struggle for a nation state, territorial wars of aggression, and constantly changing borders)” (9).

dissertation suggests is thus a historical examination of the function that literature fulfilled in the dominant and emergent media ecologies in the long shadow of the Third Reich. As Wurz argues, words that “make up a literary narrative have endured for centuries” and “demonstrated their endurance at a media-historical juncture when their durability has been under siege by the successive pressure of the electric and electronic media following the long dominance of print culture” (3). Embedded in a system sensitive to the potential abuse of mass media, the literary texts under consideration all bespeak a tendency to open themselves up to their ecologies, no matter how dangerous they might be. Not only then does literature withstand the electronic “pressure,” it even harnesses it to its own advantage as it pushes aesthetic sensibilities forward in meaningful and stabilizing ways. Operating in increasingly mediated realms, West German postwar literature repeatedly displays a desire to transfer ideas across media boundaries in order to affect debates on ethics, to gauge interiority, or to question narratives of belonging. In all the case studies, ecologically linked texts assume a corollary between social, political, and cultural unrest and spiking intermedial dialogues, resulting in a less adversarial understanding of mass media. In these dialogues, literature remains a major force despite (or even precisely because of) the accelerated exchange between media, triggered, as it seems, by moments of rupture.

These moments and their effects on media ecologies can be sketched out as follows: Cinema and literature’s shared fascination with urban rubble after 1945 (as exemplified by works by Wolfgang Staudte and Heinrich Böll); the hybrid interventions of tape recordings, photography, and poetry into the dominion of television around 1968 (as exemplified by Rolf Dieter Brinkmann’s multi-media work); and the literary adaptation of online writing and publishing techniques (as exemplified by Rainald Goetz’s literature) after 1989. With regard

to the media ecology into which these writers release their texts, concrete critical intentions become apparent. As will be shown in far greater detail in the course of the first case studies, Staudte harnessed cinema's visuality and indexicality – its link with past time – to comment on the construction of an anti-fascist Germany after World War II, whereas Böll cited and exploded Weimar filmic conventions in his prose in order to advocate a new way of seeing beyond the merely ethical narrative characteristic of Staudte's film. Böll thus utilized his rubble novel *Der Engel schwieg* to trigger a debate on the role of Expressionism (and by extension Modernism) within West German postwar art. He used Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns* as a point of departure, embracing the film's ethic and anti-fascist agenda while refuting its conventional, melodramatic style. In the long run, then, Böll argued for a reconfiguration of the ecology, proposing a "letting in" of new means of representation.

Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, a quarter-century later, wrestled with the homogenizing powers of television as a medium that fuses sound, image, and text in the space of one's private abode. Signifying the political standstill felt after the failure of 1968 on the aesthetic realm, he ripped apart the ecology of the mid-1970s in an attempt to revive a – what he perceived to be – petrified art, pointing out the critical differences between media and their unique potentials, rather than their "unifying" qualities. In an era obsessed with specters of media monopolies, Brinkmann set his eyes on the repressive force of television's marriage of sight and sound – as a 1970s medial update of National Socialism's *Gleichschaltung* – and singled out and perturbed individual streams in the form of sounds and words. Using these medial building blocks, he subsequently created a form of poetry that rearranged the cut ups into new lyrical configurations, suggesting that the media ecology after 1968 should never

settle down and rather keep moving. He invested literature with the power to administer shocks, a quality that politics – in Brinkmann’s view – had long lost.

Lastly, Goetz – in *Rave* and *Abfall für alle* – reacted to the digital turn after the fall of the Wall and claimed that *the* postreunification Berlin novel is an impossible endeavor, while suggesting at the same time that the inclusion of electronic literature into the avant-garde enables authors to capture the city in its paradoxical totality as an eternal fragment. Goetz hybridizes the genre of the diary with the instantaneous access and simultaneity of Internet publishing in order to query both the underground spaces of metropolitan night clubs and Berlin’s surface after reunification to devise an experimental literature that productively pairs analog and digital writing, proposing culturally determined (and intoxicated) communality as a replacement for dull urban life in the new normal German capital. In other words, he blazed the trail for the acknowledgement of the latest addition to the ecology as aesthetically relevant and pushed for a permeability of media boundaries in order to engage with questions of belonging and exclusion. The thread running through this dissertation, then, is the proposition that the ecological systems which the chosen texts inhabit and share enable, enrich, and even elevate their own aesthetic potential and make a claim for the power and importance of literature in a century of increasing medial diversity.

Throughout the dissertation, the cities-cum-media ecologies associated with the primary texts in this dissertation are more or less clearly delineated by concrete spatial and temporal coordinates. Cologne is home to (although not necessarily of love) the Nobel-prize winning moralist Heinrich Böll, whose posthumously published rubble-novel *Der Engel schwieg* (written from 1949 to 1950; published in 1992) is featured prominently in the first chapter. It is also important to notice that Cologne, like Dresden, Hamburg, and Berlin, was

nearly completely destroyed during the War. Brinkmann's 1973 field recordings as well as his posthumous 1975 collection of poetry constitute the centerpiece of the second chapter and have strong ties to this city on the River Rhine as well: Cologne as the post-revolutionary place where Brinkmann intercedes in the hegemony of television. Unlike Berlin and Frankfurt a. M., however, Cologne had not been a hotbed of the student revolts in the late sixties; the city's narrative is one of another kind of repression, Catholicism and political conservatism, against which Brinkmann's texts waged battle. In chapter three, Berlin figures as Goetz's homebase and thus the main site for his Internet diary published in hard copy as *Abfall für alle* in 1999. The writer and cultural critic's infatuation with techno culture and the DJ lifestyle pulled him toward urban centers where underground music cultures thrived. In Goetz's narration *Rave*, Berlin's night life plays a pivotal role and conveniently refers back to the complementary work in chapter one of this dissertation, namely Staudte's 1946 rubble film *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, set and filmed, in part, in the actual ruins of the destroyed city.¹² These samples of German urban life from after the Second World War up to the end of the millennium provide the framework for a discussion of literature's unique ability to engage questions concerning the relation of media to democracy, fascism, and national identity, respectively.

I. The Ecological Metropolis: The City in Literature

The fact there is a strong correlation between urban space and media ecologies is corroborated, in part, by the wealth of existing scholarly writings on the metropolis and

¹²At the beginning of the twentieth century, "Berlin represented the modern metropolis [while] Munich displayed a far more conflicted identity. Liberal and conservative forces clashed, because the programs of the avant-garde contrasted sharply with the *Heimatkunst* movement which distrusted the rapidly changing way of life and the increasing social mobility" (Grabovszki, 142). This assessment, of course, changes over the course of the century and the individual chapters address the role of the locale accordingly.

literature. The city has always been strongly associated as the quintessential space of media – whether in terms of production, consumption, and display – to the point where the two terms overlap. Large urban centers in modern Europe have also inspired literary and scholarly writers to think of them as polysemic panoramas replete with media signals.¹³ While the city quickly advanced as a dominant motif in European literature since the end of the eighteenth century, the later arrival of the metropolis in the belated nation-state of Germany brought about a special German form of writing and, for that matter scholarship on the city. As becomes clear quickly, literature and the media ecological space of the metropolis often share a common ground. One of the leading scholars on the topic, Burton Pike, for example claims that a tension exists between the temporal activity of reading the city as a book and viewing it as an “inherently spatial image,” and that “this unavoidable association with spatiality conflicts in modern literature with the dominating convention of time” (1981, 120). As Pike’s interest in space and time infers, these tensions are a productive tool for literary analyses that go beyond the limitations of both the text’s diegetic world and the form of the novel. The media-ecologies of the twentieth century includes paintings, photographic images, and subsequently – as the number of available media gradually increases – film, tape, and binary code. In line with the ecological framework of this dissertation, the tensions that Pike points out as well arise through the interplay of competing forms of media in urban spaces.

What all of the texts chosen for close analysis in this project have in common is an interest in the literary and its relation to other non-literary media; all of the selected primary texts exhibit internally a persistent feeling that literature allows for unique insights into the

¹³The big German cities, such as Berlin and Munich, and their representation in literature appeared a little later than their French or British counterparts, around the fin-de-siècle. Ernst Grabovszki states that “the metropolis, particularly London and Paris, had early on become a popular topos in literature. The rise of the metropolis in Germany and Austria was relatively new, however” (142).

state of urban media landscapes. Given its prominence as a literary motif and object of contemplation in German-speaking literature, the city-as-media network has inevitably sparked the interest of many literary scholars. Working within the discipline of German Studies, Angelika Corbineau-Hoffman and Pike have covered considerable ground by tracing the developmental phases of the literary city from the Baroque to Modernism; curiously, such research rarely moves beyond the year 1945 and thus leaves out the media explosions that took place during the second half of the century. Nevertheless, Corbineau-Hoffmann makes the important claim that the representation of the city in literature represents all the experiences, which – in a reference to Georg Simmel – “der Großstädter in der Realität auf Distanz halten muss” [“which the city dweller has to keep away from him in reality”] (12). She conceives of literature as a buffer zone – an artform as an autonomous sphere – in which the text prepares the city dweller for his daily experiences with the urban environment, an environment determined in large part through media signals that permeate it. However, her remarks also suggest that postwar German literature demarcates the aesthetic realm from its surrounding reality, an assumption that the close readings in this study challenge as they postulate a permeability of life and art that plays itself out in the virtual realm of media ecologies. Corbineau-Hoffmann also claims that the history of the literary city is infused with the Sisyphean task of capturing a totality of ever-changing ecologies, such that the successful representation of totality remains a fallacy. She sketches out a history of the city novel, whose seminal contributions attempt to cope with the fleeting urban totality through tableaux, paintings, sketches, montages, and ultimately collages, an evolution of “visual” metaphors that predicates the utilization of new media vis-à-vis the literary as the next logical

step. If, as Corbineau-Hoffmann believes, the totality of the city is ever-changing, then literature seeks new ways of addressing this perpetual flux.

In contrast to Corbineau-Hoffmann, Pike's writings also make some provocative and distinctively German literary claims. He argues that "the city in the novel acts as a spatialising device for consciousness, providing a grid that orders perceptions and actions," an observation that for him includes realist and modernist texts (2004, 112). Pike traces the "movement from stasis to flux," from fixed identities and spaces into "a succession of fluid and unpredictable juxtapositions," as the quintessential element of the modern city novel (1981, 27). For the German novel after World War II he observes that precisely because of the increased fluidity, "the city as image has more or less totally lost its 'face,' its unique identity. Urbanness has become a universal characteristic of western societies" (2004, 111). Whereas Corbineau-Hoffmann's argument of literary buffer zones remains detached, Pike lumps together distinctive places in the featureless abstractions of *the* modern city. It is doubtful whether the "modern" fluidity of the city actually results in a complete loss of discernible features – many cities in German postwar novels offer a distinctive "face" through their landmarks and historical significance, for example – or even if the conflation of different spaces into the amorphous mass of *the* German city advances the overall debate over urban literature. Rather, the apparent lack of uniqueness can be attributed to homogenizing socio-culturally developments and super-imposed medial layers that render the distinctive features of a concrete city such as Berlin or Cologne more difficult – but by no means impossible – to identify. To identify these characteristics, then, it is helpful to respond to the very system that might obscure them in the first place. By this I mean precisely the technological apparatuses and the artifacts they produce that are such a vital part of the media

ecology in order to reveal what remains hidden from unaided perception. However, this utilization of Benjamin's "optical unconscious" only makes sense when the city under consideration is approached as a concrete place embedded in a sharply defined historical framework.¹⁴

Beyond Pike and Corbineau-Hoffman, there exists a wide range of scholarship that interrogates the role of literature in changing urban contexts and whose general arguments – which more often than not ignore German literary history – can be expanded and utilized for a medial analysis. Hana Wirth-Nesher, for example, argues in her Anglophone study on *City Codes* that “we might learn more about how we read cities, in and out of art, by paying attention to detailed aspects of the urban setting in novels of widely divergent points of view” (3). Her main argument not only pitches the literary city as a manual for the physical city, it also proposes a poly-perspectival shift in representation of the city and also a spatial move, from “the house representing the continuity of tradition, family, social class, and conventional order” to the public spaces of the city (18). This “conflation of the public and the private self” in the modern urban novel, Wirth-Nesher contends, results in a chronotope of the city in which “a construction of the self is far more dependent on the ‘street’ than it is on domestic resources” (20). From her point of view, public urban spaces hold the key to an adequate representation of the metropolis and the tense individuals populating it, a notion that this dissertation takes beyond the English novel into the media ecologies of postwar Germany. Wirth-Nesher inadvertently gestures towards a particular German progression in which the frequently urban, but still very much private, setting of nineteenth-century poetic

¹⁴For Benjamin, Jennings explains, “in the optical unconscious the world presents itself to the photographic apparatus in an aspect different from any it could ever present to the unaided human eye” (265).

realism gave way to a literature that sought permanently to offer unique perspectives of public space from a medial vantage point.

The studies above set the stage for my project (and sketch out omissions and blind spots), but it is this dissertation that brings together the scholarship on German literature *and* its reciprocal relation to media ecologies. It does so mostly in the introduction to each chapter in a context relevant to the primary texts. As the selected texts all engage those media prevalent to their historical moment, their narratives and forms grant powerful insights into the role of German literature *vis-a-vis* the development of media ecologies. Ultimately then, a project like “From Rubble to Revolutions and Raves” must establish a media history of postwar Germany from the years under Allied occupation to the end of the millennium (and beyond) in order to launch individual analyses within the historical trends, patterns and rules of their respective ecologies. In the remainder of this introduction, I weave together – as concisely as the scope of this study allows – the three key German historical junctures in question with their political, social, and most importantly, media-cultural undercurrents. This process foreshadows the three main chapters of the dissertation and substantiates the terms of engagement with which I will approach the primary texts. In doing so, I set up the main arguments about the literary cross-medial experiments of Heinrich Böll, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, and Rainald Goetz. As will be seen in each case study, all of their texts make claims to the lingering vitality of literature in an era of rapid medial innovation and competition.

II. Art in Ruins – An Ecology of Rubble

The first media ecological period under investigation spans the rubble years that followed the Second World War, between Germany's unconditional surrender on May 8, 1945, up until the early phase of the *Wirtschaftswunder*, the "economic miracle." This period of newfound prosperity began toward the end of the decade under the aegis of West Germany's first chancellor, the Christian Democrat and former mayor of Cologne, Konrad Adenauer and the *Wirtschaftsminister* [Minister of Economy], Ludwig Erhard. Allied forces controlled the country and the four divided sectors of the German capital, Berlin. The destroyed cityscapes were the stage on which the victorious powers determined the future of Germany. Many cities were reduced to rubble and the shaky capitalist market of the Weimar Republic had long since completely collapsed. The media were subject to heavy censorship in order to ensure a democratic or socialist "re-education" of the German people and had suffered strong blows in terms of both physical destruction and damage to their reputation and credibility. Well aware of the ideological and "re-educational" powers of mass media, the Allies pushed for their quick reimplementation.¹⁵ During the air raids many movie theatres and film studios had been destroyed and access to film stock but also paper was limited.¹⁶ While cinema quickly gained back its prewar ground due mostly to the American

¹⁵As Jost Hermand puts it "In dem Willen, einen Rückfall der Deutschen in den Faschismus ein für allemal unmöglich zu machen, waren sich die Alliierten weitgehend einig. [...] Alle Verantwortlichen in Rundfunk, Presse, Verlagswesen und Theater wurden darum einer genauen Prüfung unterzogen" ["the allies were united in the wish to forever prevent the German people from relapsing into fascism. All of those in prominent positions as far as radio, newspapers, publishing, and theater were concerned, were thus scrutinized closely"] (1986; 89). As Jürgen Wilke points out, the year 1945 meant a "Neuanfang [...] für die gesellschaftlichen Kommunikationsmedien, also für Presse, [...] Rundfunk und Film" ["new beginning for the social media, that is for print media, radio, and film"] (15). He concludes that the "Bruch mit der Vergangenheit [...] hier besonders stark [war], tiefgreifender als in anderen Lebensbereichen" ["the break with the past was particularly fierce here, deeper than in other areas of life"] (ibid).

¹⁶Hermann Glaser states that "until the end of 1945, 1,150 cinemas were reopened in the Western occupation zones, compared to the 6,484 cinemas of 1944. [...] Along with the radio, the cinema offered one of the few

interest in and saturation of the market and the Soviet's wish to educate and implement socialist impulses, literature – distant second to newspapers in the print media sector – had to wait until the 1950s before it regained its former qualitative status.¹⁷ The media ecology of the time was thus one of standstill; most medial influences were induced from the outside.

While the Allied Control Council was clearly a unifying force, the media ecology of the time was nonetheless diverse, and not only because of the significant rifts between the victors. During the rubble years, radio was clearly the dominant medium, mainly because its technological prerequisites – both on the sending and the receiving end – were still comparatively widely accessible. In fact, even toward the final days of the war the radio transmissions were broadcast almost without interruption in a futile attempt to boost the morale of a German people that knew it had lost the war.¹⁸ Thus, most visual and literary artists had to cope with an exceedingly instable media ecology and were thus forced to deal with what little resources they had at their disposal; many turned to the aural arts. Many creative heads operated in an ecology still very much defined by what it could *not* do. Many were haunted by what it *had* done until just recently. But the means of production and public

opportunities for entertainment and information. It comprised the center of social and cultural life both in the city and in the country” (1986; 263). And Hermand reminds us that “unmittelbar nach dem Krieg wurde die Herstellung von Büchern erst einmal stark eingeschränkt” [“immediately after the war the production of books was very limited”] (1986; 91). And Maggie Hoffgen adds that “more than half of the living space in Germany was destroyed” and this includes many of the cinemas which were often located in urban areas (66).

¹⁷Ingo Stoeckert argues that the 1950s witnessed three major and at times conflicting literary trends: a return to the German classics such as Goethe and Schiller, a partial incorporation of Modernism into the mainstream as anti-Nazi art, a heightened interest in escapist *Heimatliteratur* along with the restoration of German literature to the global map in 1959 through novels by Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, and Uwe Johnson.

¹⁸Arnulf Kutsch calls radio the “wirkungsmächtigste Mittel” [“the most powerful tool”], the medium that “bis in die letzten Kriegstage [...] die aufdringlichen Durchhalteparolen des Reichsministers für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda verbreiteten” [“kept disseminating the obnoxious rallying calls of the ministry for public enlightenment and propaganda into the final days of the war”] (60). There was only a 23 hour long silence in the ether between the last Nazi and the first Allied broadcast.

confidence the cultural sphere lacked, produced a creative climate that, in a certain way, mirrored the improvised routines that governed life in the ruins. As visual stimuli, the omnipresent ruins enabled visual artists to film at powerful on-location sites, while the rubble literature of the time – if it did get published – presented topics rooted in extraordinary experiences. I examine cinema and literature instead of radio because I am interested a significantly shifted urban geography and the role that rubble plays in the formation of a new media sensorium.

In spite of radio's dominion in the immediate postwar period, it was always a blind medium, one underqualified to document the destruction of German cities. In chapter one I therefore examine cinema and literature instead of radio because I am interested in ruins as landmarks of a significantly shifted urban geography and the role the rubble plays in the formation of a new aesthetic. As "aural ruins" are difficult to reproduce without taking recourse to language – although the sound of crumbling buildings would be a feasible exception – I focus on the connections and tensions of those two forms of media who are not, in the broadest sense, *blind*.¹⁹ The public longing for undemanding entertainment in demanding times, however, also ensured that the rubble genre had a difficult time garnering broad public interest and support. Writers and directors alike also confronted a complex bureaucratic discordance among the victors, while those who succeeded in the realization of their projects often found a working environment in which financial success was not a motivating factor (the films produced in the Soviet sector, for example) and one, surprisingly, without "Vorzensur" ["pre-censorship"] (in most publishing houses in the Western sectors) (Glaser, 1986; 92). The media ecology of the immediate postwar era thus oscillated between

¹⁹Lutz Koepnick contends that "to hear the sound of ruins is to experience what denies any hope for experiencing perceptual synthesis" (2008; 201). The essay from which this statement is taken, however, focuses on rubble film and is thus invested in the combinatory effects of sounds and images.

a paralyzed infrastructure, strict but uneven censorship, contrasting ideologies, conflicting needs, and rare opportunities of unexpected, almost schizophrenic, creative freedom – even though, of course, the Allies still had the last “word,” which they first and foremost spread over the airwaves.²⁰

Affected by the severe discreditation of German artistic traditions under Hitler, the rubble genre, Maggie Hoffgen argues, “focused mainly on the disorientation of returning soldiers in a country faced with material, mental, and psychological breakdown” (66). She also contends that “the main character of [*Die Mörder sind unter uns*] shares many similarities with post-war literary figures” (ibid). Jost Hermand locates a “*veristische[s]* Dichtungskonzept” [“realist poetic”] concept in rubble literature, “*bei dem das Realistische und das Engagierte eine untrennbare Einheit bilden*” [“in which realism and political engagement entered into an inseparable symbiosis”] (1986; 131). The literary genre had its apex in 1946 and 1947, while it “*durch den Kalten Krieg, die Währungsreform, die Gründung der Bundesrepublik und die damit verbundenen Verharrungstendenzen wieder in den Hintergrund gedrängt wurde*” [“was pushed to the background by the Cold War, the currency reform, the founding of the Federal Republic and the resulting tendencies toward hesitancy”] and the same can be said about its cinematic counterpart (ibid). However, the genre ultimately proved unpopular in its own time. Rubble films, some scholars claim, in addition suffered from the fact that “*für den Film [...] nach 1945 besonders schwer [war], sich als ernstzunehmendes, kritisches Medium durchzusetzen*” [“for German film it was particularly difficult to establish itself as a serious and critical medium”] (Hermand, 1986; 141). Recent scholarship has begun to question such pejorative views. William Rasch

²⁰During the Third Reich, “loudspeakers were installed on street corners” and inexpensive radio sets – the so-called Volksempfänger [people’s receiver] – were available to almost all citizens, creating a distinctively aural “German” space (Fritzsche 795).

provocatively attacks positions on rubble films such as Hermand's by sarcastically exclaiming "to watch them, actually *watch* them, would seem to be superfluous" (4). But during the rubble years these films indeed almost went unnoticed.²¹ The actual urban topography and rubble film and literature's connection with the difficult present situation hampered the acceptance and tolerability of the genre writ large.²²

The opening chapter of this dissertation argues that a new literary type emerged as a motif in the *Trümmerliteratur* and *Trümmerfilme* [rubble literature and rubble film] of the immediate postwar years. The protagonists of this aesthetic movement – whom I call the rubble-gazer – faced almost insurmountable physical challenges after his return from the front and also renegotiated the "rupture of civilization."²³ The rubble-gazer undertook a critical reformulation of the task of the Weimar flâneur in so far as the latter's art of getting lost in and looking at the city became an inescapable condition that also entailed a new regime of perception.²⁴ After 1945, Walter Benjamin's man on the *Schwelle* [threshold] was

²¹Glaser sums up the situation by remarking that "still there was rubble, yet no one wanted to see rubble films anymore" (1986; 269). When *Die Mörder sind unter uns* finally got released in the Western zones in 1948, attendance was strikingly low. As Hermand puts it, the viewers demanded entertainment that "eine zeitlos-heile Welt des Ewigen, Naturhaften, Mythischen oder Religiösen zu beschwören versuchte" ["tried to evoke a realm of the eternal, of nature, myths, and religion, suspended in time"] in order to grow grass "über die Krater und Trümmerberge" ["on the craters and rubble mounds"] (1986; 165).

²²Hermand defines rubble literature as a political genre. He comments on Böll's works, "von denen zwar manche bewusst ‚banal‘ angelegt sind, das heißt auf jede Sentimentalität verzichten und auf den ersten Blick wie karge Realitätsstenogramme wirken, die jedoch gerade durch ihren Null-Jargon, mit dem sie das Inhumane des Krieges und der Nachkriegszeit beschreiben, eine besonders aufreizende Note haben" ["of which some are meant to be banal, which means they renounce any form of sentimentality and appear as sparse short-hands of reality, which, however, precisely because of their zero-jargon describe the inhuman climate of the war and the rubble years in an especially provocative way"] (1986; 133).

²³This is a term coined by the German-Israeli historian Dan Diner during the German *Historikerstreit*, a heated academic exchange that debated the Holocaust's status as a historical singularity (quoted in Jarausch, p. 12).

²⁴As Peter Buse et al write, the flâneur was "open to stimuli and walks the street of the modern city at a slow and leisurely pace, an observer and recorder of modernity, the archetypal modern subject, passive and open"

replaced by types such as the *Heimkehrer*, the soldier coming home, and the *Trümmerfrau* (the women of the rubble). For these rubble-gazers nothing outside the ruin existed and thus there was hardly a vantage point from which to take in the totality of the destruction as a threshold, let alone a detached observer.²⁵ While people still walked the streets (or what was left of them), the overall situation had changed drastically by nature of the existential crisis as a result of the air-raids.²⁶ Thus, the literary and cinematic rubble-gazer traversed an alien landscape that went beyond Benjamin's more subtle alterations of city life, so that a completely new experiential mode became necessary.²⁷ The rubble-gazer attempted to regain and communicate a moral code but was also invested in a new way of "seeing" the city and it is of particular interest to this project to observe how rubble literature handles this visual feat.²⁸

To answer this question, the chapter first follows Dr. Hans Mertens, the protagonist in Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, who is destined to eventually become *the* new ethical

(4). The emergence of National Socialism and its "effort to create a new aural and visual space," however, dashed the flâneur's hopes to produce new organizations of perception and declared him a fossil, arguably as outdated as the department stores that doubled as his Berlin training grounds (Fritzsche, 795).

²⁵See Greffrath, who claims that the *Heimkehrer* actually accounted for the majority, "zwei Drittel" ["two-thirds"] of the protagonists in rubble-film (197).

²⁶As Anke Gleber writes, "the flâneur is the precursor of a particular form of inquiry that seeks to read the history of culture from its public places" (4). Graeme Gilloch describes the flâneur as "the stroller [...] who finds delight and pleasure in ambling contentedly and unhurriedly through the city" because "to promenade without purpose is the highest ambition of the *flâneur*" (152). It is easy to see how concepts of leisurely pace, public places, and delight and pleasure became problematic.

²⁷Georg Simmel famously put forth the concept of the blasé city dweller. In his seminal essay "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Simmel attributed the big city with the ability to create specific psychological conditions so that people living in a metropolis developed particular identities and character traits.

²⁸Gleber proposes to transcend "the efforts to record flânerie by way of written texts, and moving toward a flânerie that informs other media and new forms of 'writing' by way of images" and argues for an evolution of the flâneur (6).

man. Advancing the common reading that the rubble is merely an expressionist projection of his psychological condition, I claim that Mertens acquires his new morality by actually walking out of an intoxicated urban night into the sober daylight of a destroyed Berlin. The gradual process of overcoming his physical and psychological apathy transpires in the media ecology of the streets and the rubble functions not just as a stage setting but as a real place which Mertens confronts. The didactic lesson that helps him to revive his spirits creates a “mobility of morality,” a physical mobility mirrored in the visual language of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* that varies in expressionist degree. Hans Schnitzler, the rubble-gazer in Böll’s *Der Engel schwieg*, on the other hand, attempts more than just an ethical renegotiation of space, even though the text repeatedly emulates the expressionist idioms of Staudte’s film. Schnitzler’s walks, however, result in a new phenomenology as he learns to read the topography and geology of the urban wilderness as a particular German space between the fateful excesses of culture and the revenge of nature.²⁹ The media ecology at work between film and novel illustrates the limits of the visual representation of rubble gazing, suggesting that – although Staudte’s film successfully equates bodily movement with morality within established conventions – it is actually Böll’s text which is critical of pre-War conventions and proposes a whole new register of sensual experience suitable for the remaking of German cities.

III. Television’s Specters – An Ecology of Revolutions

The second (media) historical period – set center stage in Chapter 2 – took place in the streets of the rebuilt West German cities in the aftermath of the 1968 student revolts,

²⁹As Robert Shandley argues, “the physical environment, especially the cities, from which many had fled and to which they now returned, had been completely altered. The bombings and battles transformed Berlin from a modern metropolis to a peculiar wilderness of rubble” (1).

which, while a failure politically, resulted in a cultural revolution.³⁰ The Federal Republic's economic miracle continued to foster a new blossoming of late capitalism before it stagnated for the first time after World War II toward the middle of the 1970s. At the same time a younger West German generation began to reexamine previously suppressed debates on both the failed student revolt and the unsuccessful confrontation with the Nazi past of the fathers in a "fatherless" society. These debates transpired in a media ecology dominated by television, which, as an apparatus, for the first time promised simultaneity – what Edgar Wolfrum calls a "räumlich-soziale Doppelexistenz" ["spatio-social double-existence"] – between depicted public events and private moments of (visual *and* aural) perception and pleasure (155). Television had in the eyes of the left-wing intelligentsia become an instrument of sedation and manipulation.³¹ Literature, in the opinion of some critics, was, on the one hand, much more culturally valuable, but, on the other hand, heavily criticized for not being revolutionary and critical enough.³² The political left attacked both television and (conservative and populist) newspapers as control mechanisms employed by both monopoly capitalists and a conservative or even reactionary state; this battle would later culminate in

³⁰For more details, see Wolfrum, p 269.

³¹In *Baukasten zu einer Theorie der Medien*, the left-wing intellectual Hans Magnus Enzensberger argues that "alle diese [elektronischen Medien] gehen untereinander und mit älteren wie Druck, Funk, Film, Telefon, Fernschreiber, Radar usw. immer neue Verbindungen ein" ["all these electronic media always connect with each other as much as older ones such as press, radio, film, phones, telegraphs, radar etc."], and thus turned the "Bewußtseins-Industrie zum Schrittmacher der sozio-ökonomischen Entwicklung spätindustrieller Gesellschaften" ["consciousness-industry into a pacemaker of the socio-economic development of late-industrial societies"] (2002; 254).

³²As David Roberts writes, "the left-intellectuals had to admit that after twenty years of Group 47, manifestos, and declarations, they had nothing to show for their efforts other than that their literary production was, in the deepest sense, politically unproductive" (894).

the domestic terrorism of the German Autumn of 1977.³³ This decade-long crisis expressed itself in the form of doubts about West Germany's capability of true democracy. The student movement and many left-wing intellectuals stigmatized the nation as eternally conservative and capable only of economic progress but nothing else (and even this was challenged by the oil crisis of 1973), the result of a social climate of political deadlock, expressed on the governmental level through the Grand Coalition of 1966. An affront to print and television's colonization of private realms, the student movement's attacks on complacency thus took place predominantly in semi-public and public spaces, for example in lecture halls, and of course, in the streets.

The economic miracle of the Adenauer-era had also quickly got West Germany's ailing media ecology going again. By 1970, German cinema had recuperated both quantitatively and qualitatively, after the long criticized Americanization of popular German culture. The rubble films of the late 1940s (and their financially more lucrative successors, namely the colorful *Heimatfilme* of the 1950s) were challenged by the Young German Cinema auteur-directors behind the *Oberhausen Manifesto* of 1962.³⁴ This loose group of filmmakers openly attacked what they believed to be a stagnant cookie-cutter film industry that emulated Hollywood rather than engaging with urgent national problems. Television, a

³³The medial landscape became the target for the criticism of the political left during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The student movement in particular adopted certain views of the Frankfurt School and several of its criticisms were aimed at the media, such as the Axel Springer publishing house. As Jochen Hoffmann and Ulrich Sarcinelli argue, the media "als Teil der ‚Kulturindustrie‘ standen [...] unter einem prinzipiellen Manipulationsverdacht und galten gerade nicht als ‚natürliche‘ Verbündete im Kampf für mehr Demokratie" ["were under general suspicion due to their ideological proximity to the culture industry and were not naturally considered allies in the battle for more democracy"] (727). In general, the existing ecology was, despite its many successes, often perceived as anti-democratic and labeled as one of manipulation.

³⁴Between 1947 and 1960 over 300 Heimatfilms were released, "makeshift domiciles for a nation in need of psychological and material shelter" (Rentschler, 2004). As Eric Rentschler argues, "these sentimental tales displayed a reassuring world of intact communities and unspoiled landscapes," tales that had firmly taken root in the cultural consciousness in 1951 after the release of the genre's first great hit, Hans Deppe's *Grün ist die Heide* (2004, 939).

relatively new contender, then homogenized and bound together a media ecology that attracted large audiences to popular films, sported a diverse independent literary and newspaper market, and entertained a highly decentralized cluster of culturally sophisticated federal radio stations. Launched in 1952, German television quickly established itself as the new *Leitmedium*, a development fostered also by the hotly debated addition of a second national channel in 1963 and the introduction of color TV four years later. The percentage of people living in the Federal Republic of Germany who watched TV on a regular basis increased from 80.000 to 16 million between 1955 and 1970.³⁵ As a disseminator of information, television marginalized radio and newspapers, the dominant media of the 1950s. In 1973, approximately 90 percent of West German households had access to a television set, whereas twenty years earlier the radio-television ratio had been 13.5 million to 0.3 million.³⁶

As television continued to grow in popularity, the private space of “das traute Heim” [“the cozy home”] increasingly became permeated by images from all over the world and beyond, establishing the medium as a tool of conflation.³⁷ Major televised events such as the 1954 Soccer World Cup in Switzerland, John F. Kennedy’s visit to Berlin in 1962, the

³⁵See Hoffmann and Sarcinelli, p. 723. See also Jost Hermand, who states that “die Zahl der regelmäßigen Rundfunkhörer in der Bundesrepublik zwischen 1959 und 1966 von 94 Prozent auf 82 Prozent der Gesamtbevölkerung zurückging, während die Zahl der Fernsehteilnehmer, die sich an diesem Medium gar nicht satt sehen konnten, in den gleichen Jahren mit einer solchen Schnelligkeit anwuchs, daß es zeitweise gar nicht genug Geräte zu kaufen gab” [“the number of regular listeners in the Federal Republic of Germany decreased from 94percent to 82 percent between 1959 and 1966 while the number of those who could not get enough of television increased so drastically during the same period that there was a shortage of television sets”] (1986; 329-330).

³⁶These numbers are taken from Glaser, 1991; p. 421.

³⁷Marie Luise Kiefer claims that the new apartment was “bis weit in die sechziger Jahre Symbol des Neubeginns und der Anerkennung des Rechts auf ein Privatleben. Die zusätzliche Freizeit konzentrierte sich entsprechend auf das Zuhause, die Familie und – die Massenmedien” [“was the symbol of a new beginning and the right to a private life up until the mid-60s. The additional free-time was accordingly concentrated on one’s home, family life, and mass media”] (436). To be clear, in the mid-60s, there was still a 1.5 million unit shortage in terms of living space. Ten years later, however, when Brinkmann recorded his tapes, this situation had much improved.

landing on the moon in 1969, and the continuous visual and aural presence of the Vietnam War – including the subsequent worldwide student protests – soon contributed to a collective and iconic cultural memory.³⁸ As television claimed the evening as the prime time of media consumption, radio, in order to remain competitive, adapted a program focusing more strongly on entertainment. In other words, the two media converged to a certain extent, while radio, of course, still relied on aural signals rather than a fusion of images and sounds – but its previous diversity and cultural boldness decreased because it had to cater to popular demand. An attempt was made at challenging this development through the emergence of avant-garde radio formats, such as the *O-Ton-Hörspiel*. By and large, however, listening to the radio was something that happened on the go – people listened to easy-to-digest broadcasts in their cars and at work, at times, as a rule of thumb, when they did not have access to the new dominant medium.³⁹ Radio in the 1970s thus became strongly associated with movement, while television as an apparatus was perceived as static, stationary, and private.⁴⁰ Radio even showed first signs of stabilization in its ongoing process of competing

³⁸As Bernd Sösemann discusses, it was the Vietnam War and the accompanying coverage that “bildete den politischen Hauptkristallisationspunkt der allgemeinen Unzufriedenheit” [“formed the political crystallization of the general dissatisfaction”] and thus played an important part in the emergence of world-wide student protests (676). For the first time, a mediated event was involved directly in the production of its own counter-movement.

³⁹See Glaser, who argues that radio more and more constitutes a “Nebenbei-Medium, selbst dann wenn es auf populistische Programme setzt” [“background-medium even when it broadcasts popular programming”] (1997; 466). Horst O. Halefeldt supports this thesis by stating that the radio of the 70s was not a “Zuhör-Medium [...], sondern die Erfolgsgeschichte des Nebenbei-Mediums” [“medium to listen to, but rather the success story of an apparatus you turn on while doing something else”] (226).

⁴⁰Siegfried J. Schmidt points out that the mid-70s witnessed a paradigm shift in relation to the means of mass communication. Technological advances erased temporal and spatial boundaries and “die Videotechnik verwandelte das zuvor flüchtige, aber scheinbar authentische Fernsehen in ein individuell manipulierbares, konservierbares Medium und veränderte den Charakter der Fernsehrezeption als öffentlicher Gesellschaftskommunikation” [“video technology transformed the formerly fleeting but seemingly authentic television signal into an individually manipulable, conservable medium and changed the very character of TV reception as a public means of societal communication”] (529-530).

with television after an initial slump and period of adjustment.⁴¹ Nonetheless, its domination was broken as television bundled discrete visual and aural signals into one convenient package.

Chapter two revisits Germany's media ecologies a couple of years after the attempted student revolution of 1968 and focuses on the work of the rebellious poet Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, in particular his tape recordings, photography, and poetry. The intricate interplay between Brinkmann's black-and-white snapshots, avant-garde audio recordings, and experimental writings on the city assaulted the dominance of television's hegemonic visual culture and interrogated its stigma as a medium of manipulation. Brinkmann found the crisis of German postwar culture best expressed in TV's moving images, a quality of purported but ultimately fake progress which he labeled the "ideology of the keep-on-going." Television had established itself as the dominant new medium, falsely promising actuality, simultaneity, and perpetuation of information and entertainment – an aesthetic of conflation that Brinkmann found replicated in the city.⁴² This situation had to be reversed as far as Brinkmann was concerned, and, channeling the *Tendenzwende* of the mid-1970s, he too declared that the, albeit "mediated," personal was the new political. He reinvented himself as an urban artist, taking over (and apart) Germany's ecology in the name of his aesthetic of deconstruction rather than on the big political stage. Brinkmann conducted his wrecking-ball

⁴¹Halefeldt speaks of a radio "Renaissance" between 1971 and 1985/86, due to a structural assimilation of certain TV techniques, and a focus on radio's apparent advantages and inherent strengths, such as "Beweglichkeit und Schnelligkeit" ["mobility and promptness"] (219).

⁴²The most prominent theorist on television in the 1960s is arguably Marshall McLuhan, who took into account the technological specs of television's cathode ray tube as the foundation of his media philosophy. For McLuhan, the gaps between pixels on a television screen have to be actively filled by the viewer. He argues that "the TV image offers some three million dots per second to the receiver. [...] The TV image is *now* a mosaic mesh of light and dark spots [...]. As in any other mosaic, the third dimension is alien to TV, but it can be superimposed" (313). He concludes by saying that "The TV image requires each instant that we 'close' the spaces in the mesh [...]" (McLuhan, 314).

intervention into the FRG's encrusted structures in the wake of the student revolts but decidedly demarcated from the movement in his literary intentions.

After 1966, the Grand Coalition between the CDU and SPD, the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, removed any form of opposition in the German parliament.⁴³ Even though by the mid-1970s the Grand Coalition had long since given way to a social-liberal form of government (under Chancellors Willy Brandt and later Helmut Schmidt), Brinkmann still sensed an impossibility of progress, a condition that primarily worried him with regard to aesthetics. For him the key to intervening in the paralysis lay in a close examination of the city – a space that he perceived as always-already mediated – rather than in West German politics. He undertook a gradual deconstruction of conflated signals back into discrete visual, aural, and textual cut ups, which he then perturbed even further. Brinkmann decided to do this on his own rather than to further invest in the collective and physical re-taking of the streets, as propagated by the student movement and anti-establishment theorists. Kindred spirits of Brinkmann, the French school of Marxist geographers intervened in similar fashion into urban space, hoping to transform the metropolis into a place of resistance.⁴⁴ In contrast to this highly political reclaiming of the street as an ideological battleground by the angry masses, however, Brinkmann's tapes, photographs, and poems were a means to single-

⁴³The climate of perceived cultural and economic "acceleration" clashes with a narrative of political deadlock that Stephen Brockmann calls "characterized by a seemingly static society and authoritarian structures" (2010; 395). Vis-à-vis the "hyperstabil und starr" ["hyper-stabile and unflexible"] Grand Coalition of the two German catch-all parties, CDU and SPD, the Vietnam War, the "conservative" structures of higher education in Germany, and the assumed unwillingness of the older generation to confront their Nazi past, the student movement as well as communist, left-wing, anarchist and terrorist groups positioned themselves in various forms of opposition (Wolfrum, 505).

⁴⁴Henri Lefebvre, in his writings on spatiality, for example, exclaimed a "right to the city," while the *Situationists* exercised this right via a psycho-geographical approach to an urban landscape they believed to be a critical space in capitalism's society of the spectacle (46).

handedly – but no less angrily – wreak medial havoc in the Western city.⁴⁵ What he shared with the French theorists, as I will show, was a belief in the city as an ideological battleground full of symbolic powers.⁴⁶

Brinkmann paid close attention to the intricacies of the media ecology that surrounded him, utilizing its logic to adequately cut the intertwined media channels – and the city itself – into manageable units again. Chapter 2 thus sketches out Brinkmann’s deconstructive phases by looking at his tape recordings on *Wörter Sex Schnitt*, the photographs that frame his poetry in *Westwärts 1 & 2*, and the titular poems from that anthology. Brinkmann unmasked what he believed to be the absence of steady progress in German culture and argued for consciously applied, and thus positively connoted, techniques of repetition, erasure, and disruption made possible by technological apparatuses. In relying heavily on the material aspects of a given media, Brinkmann took Marshall McLuhan’s famous dictum that “the medium is the message” to new extremes and into his own hands. After the SDS had officially disbanded in 1970 – a move resulting in the emergence of various autonomus groups operating both from within and without of Germany’s constitution – Brinkmann saw no alternative to his aesthetic attacks. After cutting apart the ecology’s conglomerated streams into its single components, he was capable of attacking the

⁴⁵Gilles Ivain, associated with the *Situationist International* but not a member of the movement, extended Debord’s theories and applied them to architecture. Without going into great detail, Ivain envisions the city as a playground-space in which architecture facilitates the construction of situations: “Die Architektur ist das einfachste Mittel, Zeit und Raum *ineinanderzufügen*, die Wirklichkeit zu *modulieren*, träumen zu lassen [...] ein Mittel zur *Erkenntnis* und zur *Handlung*” [“Architecture is the most obvious means for a *symbiosis* of time and space and a tool to *modulate* reality, to let people dream [...], a *cognitive* tool and a call to *action*”] (54).

⁴⁶In the tradition of Lefebvre, Debord and the *Situationist International* advocated an “aimless” walking in the city in order to train one’s “psycho-geographical” understanding. Psycho-geography means the effects that the geographic milieu has on the emotional state of the subject. The act of drifting itself is defined by Debord as follows: “Unter den verschiedenen situationistischen Verfahren ist das Umherschweifen eine Technik des eiligen Durchquerens abwechslungsreicher Umgebungen” [“Among the various situationist methods, the aimless drifting [*dérive*] is a technique of an on-the-fly traversal through varied surroundings”] (2008; 64).

televisual city through experimental art, reminiscent of Romanticism's hopes for "the coming of utopia through the reign of poetry," even though he ultimately had to concede the impossibility of a permanent escape (Furst, 49).

IV. Party Like It's 1999 – An Ecology of Raves

The third and last historical phase under consideration began with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a period that from a medial standpoint witnessed the promised arrival of simulations and simulacra, the end of history, and an incredulity towards meta-narratives.⁴⁷ It also saw the emergence of the World Wide Web out of the military and academic complex in the early 1990s. The conditions for experiencing urban space in Germany were reconfigured yet again after the invention of the microchip in 1971 in a way that ultimately resulted in a "Medialisierung des Alltags und der gesamten Lebenswelt" ["medicalization of the quotidian and the whole public sphere"] (Wolfrum, 410). According to media theorists like Paul Virilio, the urban subject now gauged himself against the networks of the proverbial global village, whose digital spaces re-territorialized the temporal flows of power structures and questioned the role of the body vis-à-vis national boundaries.⁴⁸ This led to a contraction of

⁴⁷Next to Françoise Lyotard's seminal *The Postmodern Condition*, see Paul Virilio, who argues about the pixel that the digital image not only loses one but rather all dimensions. "Finally the fractionary dimensions are the heirs to that Lost Dimension, the informatic punctum, the pixel that allows the instantaneous projection of data, the representation of a synthetic, digital form-image, which [...] is also a presentation in true size of the form-object" (109). Jean Baudrillard famously assumes the absence outside or behind the image. "Such would be the successive phases of the image: it is a reflection of a profound reality; it masks and denatures a profound reality; it masks the *absence* of a profound reality; it has no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum" (6).

⁴⁸In *Open Sky*, Virilio established his concept of *telepresence*, the collapse of space and time in cyberspace. Telepresence counters the 20th century paradigm in which the idea of traversing through and covering of vast areas of space was dominant. This move from real-space infrastructures, such as airports or railway station, to interactive and immaterial ones, leads to the phenomenon of "**being telepresent**" (10). "The urbanization of real time is in fact first the urbanization of *one's own body* plugged into various interfaces" so that the body is "becoming the last urban frontier" (11).

spaces, a “paradigm of reflexive modernization” that “cancels out spatial contiguity as the precondition for instantaneous communication” (Von Moltke, 2005; 13).⁴⁹ However, with this ultimate convergence of formerly discrete media into digital code, some theorists warned, total control awaited at the end of literature.⁵⁰ As the patron saint of media determinism, Friedrich Kittler famously claimed that “the general digitalization of channels and information erases the differences among individual media” so that “any medium can be translated into another” is a case in point (1-2). Kittler’s posthumanist stance envisions “data flows once confined to books and later to records and films [...] disappearing into black holes,” carrying “so-called Man” along with them (xxxix).⁵¹ With regard to Kittler’s *Aufschreibesysteme* – discourse systems that had already changed significantly between 1800 and 1900, from the paradigm of Romanticism to that of Modernism – there emerged a postmodern “discourse system 2000” in which the digital with all its spatial and temporal implications allegedly reigned supreme and the body appeared as increasingly disconnected from experience; sucked into the black holes of an information vacuum.

Two important paradigm shifts in German media, which took place from the 1980s and continued well into the 1990, accompanied the theory of media determinism. One concerns the privatization of German television, long held in public hands, and the other the proliferation of the Internet in Germany. In the mid-80s, German television underwent

⁴⁹In *The Consequences of Modernity*, Anthony Giddens similarly speaks about an “emptying of space” in which the tissue of spatial experience is significantly altered (18).

⁵⁰We can trace a media historical trajectory from Italian futurism to Vilem Flusser to Friedrich Kittler and Fredric Jameson that, from different perspectives, foretold the “death of literature, and of the novel more specifically, in a world dominated by the assemblage of (post)modern communication technologies” (Wurz 2).

⁵¹In John Johnston’s reading of Kittler, “what passes for ‘reality’ – i.e. the meaningful mixing of words and images – will only hold together until the separation of media that defines our modernity has ended” (3).

critical changes that resulted in an expansion of broadcast materials.⁵² Arguably the single most important event took place on June 16, 1984 when the so-called “Drittes Fernsehurteil” [“the Third Decree”] of the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* [“the Federal Constitutional Court”] paved the way for the dual system of “öffentlich-rechtliches” [“regulated under public law”] and commercial television, which had been, up to that point, unconstitutional in Germany due to a fear of an ideological misuse of private networks.⁵³ The privatization of the market not only changed the German TV landscape in terms of content (and, some would say, quality), but also initiated a further stage of fragmentation and specialization in the field of mass media. In any case, the media ecology became more pluralistic and open. The emergence of commercial television increased options as much as it increased the amount of images to which the individual was exposed and triggered debates on the ability of the Germans to digest these onslaughts.⁵⁴ The notion arose that TV programming became more and more geared toward instant gratification and populist entertainment, while losing sight of its ascribed postwar *Bildungsauftrag* [obligation to be educational] and its function as a pronounced bulwark against the reemergence of fascism.⁵⁵ Amidst anti-nuclear, feminist, and

⁵²Hermann Glaser offers the following numbers which illustrate the overall development: “Die Fernsehprogramme erwiesen sich jedoch als durchaus attraktiv: 1984 saßen die Bundesdeutschen pro Tag 1 Stunde vor dem Fernseher, 1990 waren es in allen Haushalten 2 ½ Stunden” [“the television programming, however, proved to be rather attractive: in 1984 an average German citizen spent one hour in front of the screen, by 1990 it was two and a half hours per household”] (1997; 461).

⁵³For more information on the *Rundfunkurteile*, see Hans-Jürgen Papier and Johannes Möller’s essay on “Presse- und Rundfunkrecht” (449-468).

⁵⁴As Edgar Wolrum argues, “Privatisierung und Kommerzialisierung des Fernsehens führten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [...] zu Kontroversen darüber, wie es mit der Medienkompetenz der Bürger bestellt sei” [“privatization and commercialization in the FRG led to debates about the media competence of its population”] (410).

⁵⁵Peter Ludes sums up the general development of television in Germany from the 1980s to the 1990s: “Die Anknüpfung an jeweils ältere Medien, beim Fernsehen an Hörfunk, Presse, Theater und Kinofilm, die

world-peace movements – fueled by various globally broadcast world-historical events from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s – TV’s newly structured landscape aided and abetted of another, less serious way of life: the German *Spaßgesellschaft*, a society hell-bent on having fun that, as the cultural critic Neil Postman predicted, might amuse itself to death.

Toward the middle of the decade, the number and availability of easily reproduced and manipulated digital images and the means for their dissemination in Germany’s ecology multiplied again as the nation fully realized the potential of the “flächendeckende Verkabelung” [“nationwide wiring”] of the mid-1980s. Slowly replacing earlier digital media such as *Bildschirmtext* [Btx or video-text], the Internet produced a new cultural topography, a “space” experienced as habitable.⁵⁶ The main factor for this digital revolution was the growing distribution of home computers in Germany, an addition to the ecology whose ever-disappearing borders mirrored the Cold War’s dismantled geographies.⁵⁷ The two decades that pass between the historical moments captured in Chapters 2 and 3 felt the impact of the World Wide Web on a global level. As a reaction to the Soviet launch of the satellite

Durchsetzung des Fernsehens gegenüber diesen Medien in Verbreitung, Nutzung und Reputation, die Ergänzung des Fernsehens durch Videorecorder, Fernbedienung, Kabel- und Satellitenverbreitung und Ende der neunziger Jahre die Konkurrenz zu Fernsehprogrammen in Multimedienetzen sind Phasen, die sich aus der Perspektive der Medienkonstellationen ableiten lassen” [“the points of contact between older media and newer ones, television connects with radio, press, theatre, and cinema, the resulting gradual replacement of the latter by the former, forms of use and reputation, television’s supplementation by VCRs, remote controls, cable and satellite providers, and toward the end of the 1990s the competition in the form of multi-media networks: all of these are phases that can be deduced from the perspective of the media ecology”] (258).

⁵⁶The cultural geographer Ken Hillis argues that the Web is neither a text nor a space, “though discursive strategies coupled to the eye’s perceptive faculties of engagement with movement encourage the desire to naturalize the belief that it is” (27).

⁵⁷Glaser calls this the “Chip Revolution” and lists some commonplace criticisms such as “die Veränderung der Arbeitsplatzstruktur (Computerisierung als kommunikative Isolierung) oder der Rückgang der familiären Lebensweise (in den Großstädten besteht die Hälfte der Haushalte bereits aus Alleinlebenden)” [“the change in working place structures (computerization as communicative isolation) or the cutback in family life (in the big cities every second household is a single-person household)”] (1997; 49).

Sputnik, “the first digital network, ARPANET, was brought online with four nodes at four different universities” in 1969 (Youngman, 11). With regard to Germany, Jürgen Wilke states:

[hat] das Internet [...] in den letzten Jahren wegen seines offenen Zugangs eine rasante Expansion erlebt. Voraussetzung dafür war zunächst, daß sich der Personal Computer (PC) weltweit ausbreitete. In der Bundesrepublik hat sich seine Zahl seit Anfang der neunziger Jahre fast verdreifacht, von 7,5 Millionen (1991) auf 21,3 Millionen (1997). Damit wurde eine Zahl von 24 PCs je 100 Einwohner erreicht.
(753)

[the Internet has undergone rapid expansion in the last couple of years because of its accessibility. The prerequisite for such an expansion was the global spread of the PC. In the Federal Republic its numbers have tripled since the early 1990s, from 7.5 million in 1991 to 21.3 million in 1997. This equals a ratio of 24 PCs per 100 citizens.]

With the global establishment of the personal computer as a household item during the 1980s and the evolution of the Internet into a ubiquitous network in the mid-1990s, the media ecology entered a stage of decentralization and vanishing national boundaries.⁵⁸ This development was detrimental to Germany’s wish to regulate the media.

Both the repositioning of the body vis-à-vis digital experience and the emergence of a heightened interest in instant gratification and distractions converge in the third and last

⁵⁸The digital and the urban seemed even more mutually influential than cinema and the city, generating a further convergence of urban space and new media. The digital city figured prominently, for example, in classic computer games such as Wil Wright’s *SimCity* (1989), a city-building simulation game. New digital possibilities inspired 3-D walks through virtual versions of real cities (not to mention the increasing reliance on GPS navigation systems), and, on the other end of the spectrum, the Internet in turn influenced the concrete landscape of the city.

chapter. It situates Rainald Goetz's massive *Heute Morgen, Geschichte der Gegenwart* after the digital turn and amidst the rise of the Internet and also looks at the techno movements of the 90s. In 1999, the year when Goetz published the lion's share of his "history of the present," Germany's parliament finally moved from its "provisional" headquarters in Bonn to Berlin, completing the long transition of the city into the country's capital on the level of government. Caught in a whirlwind of reconstruction and vanishing borders, Berlin had itself become a postmodern city on the move in which architecture "reveals the past traumas whose traces are still lodged in the spaces of everyday life" (Dimendberg, 954).⁵⁹ For Goetz, however, the reconfigured cultural and medial "spaces" of a reunified Berlin, including its night clubs, first and foremost triggered an experimental foray into the act of writing in the digital age. Goetz's nocturnal subjects are party-goers who immerse themselves in intoxicating mass events and transfer these Dionysian experiences into literature.⁶⁰ As Elisabeth Bronfen notes, the urban night replaces "den Feenwald des romantischen Nachtstücks" ["the enchanted woods of Romanticism's nocturnal pieces"] (382) with a different *terra incognita* (382). Focusing on these explorable spaces, Goetz's texts suggest that the new political master narrative overshadowed the fact that new exciting urban, post-national stories emerged at ground zero of Germany's new capital. Chapter 3 is thus a story of how transgressive literature exploited the uncharted territories of post-Wall Berlin, while

⁵⁹Wolfrum states that "sich die Deutschen [seit der Wiedervereinigung] in einem Prozeß der Wieder- oder Neubildung der Nation [befinden...]. Einmal mehr sind die Deutschen unterwegs" ["since the reunification the Germans have been caught up in a process of a reconstruction and bringing-into-being of their nation. Once again, the Germans are on the move"] (496).

⁶⁰The cultural historian Joachim Schlör examines this mythical quality of the city and argues that only the urban night renders it intelligible. While the day is the time for work, economy, and rationality, the nocturnal city is a celebration of pleasure and entertainment but at the same time a "place of terror and [...] danger" whereby both facets form a constitutive whole (Schlör, 10).

the nation was draped with stories of completeness and closure replayed again and again in a media-ecology that now included digital technology.⁶¹

An analogue to the advent of the Internet, techno culture facilitated what Goetz saw as both the post-national urban experience ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and, moreover, a new breed of electronic literature in the new millennium: one that irritates linear narrativity, highlights a multitude of sensory perceptions, distorts time and space, suspends history through intoxication, and embraces the immediacy of the moment. Goetz's Internet diary *Abfall für alle* allowed for the ad-hoc mediation of experience without any of the usual restrictions typical of publishing, thus challenging the immutability associated with the printing press and books. His new medium was cool and detached and possessed a logic capable of framing and expressing his urban experiences without much delay. His interest in the Internet thus stemmed from a wish to recalibrate the act of writing and to devise a form of literature capable of dealing with the end of twentieth century, the end of divided Germany and the end of the city as a mediated space where national identities unfold. The techno event mediated by the Internet diary and in prose created a form of excitement, which Goetz regarded as entirely absent in German society writ large.⁶² For Goetz, a new "secret" sense of

⁶¹As Gehler explains, "the structural problems of the unified state (budget deficits, mass unemployment, integration of people with an immigrant background, backward technology, etc.) remained largely unresolved," due to the sugarcoating power of the euphoria – perpetuated in the media – that followed the reunification in 1990 (232). Similarly, Jarausch claims that "the joy over the unexpected unity soon gave way to uncertainty about the consequences of returning to normalcy" (229). While physical traces of the division vanished rather quickly, he concludes, "the people carried 'the wall in their heads' much longer" (230).

⁶²In order to follow the historical debate on "Euphorie, Ernüchterung und Reformpolitik," see also Edgar Wolfrum's cultural history of postwar Germany *Die geglückte Demokratie*, pp.471-506. In fact, he writes, "wurde der Anschluß an das westliche System 1989/90 von den meisten Ostdeutschen gefeiert. Doch auf die großen Erwartungen und Versprechungen folgten bald Ernüchterung und Enttäuschungen" ["the inclusion in the Western system 1989/90 was euphorically celebrated by the East Germans. However, the great expectations and promises were soon replaced by set-backs and disappointments"] (488).

spatial and spiritual belonging emanated from the underground clubs of the metropolis out into its streets.⁶³

In order to sketch out Goetz's multi-media map of Berlin, the final chapter follows a trajectory that begins with his "Nachtleben Erzählung" [night-life narration] *Rave* before it moves on to the aforementioned Internet diary, an ambitious project that in 1999 was also released in hard-copy as a *Roman eines Jahres*. This fluent transition from prose-piece to online experiment to the "solidification" of the diary into a "novel" allowed Goetz to look at the city from various angles, suggesting an attraction between literary representation and fleeting experience.⁶⁴ Although his party lifestyle hardly evoked the notion of serious political engagement on his part, Goetz queried Germany's condition precisely through his interaction with metropolitan life in the mid-1990s.⁶⁵ Thus, Goetz's texts situate themselves vis-à-vis *Metropolenliteratur*, the minor literary canon seeking to produce *the* quintessential post-Wall Berlin novel. Opposing this trend, his works suggest that there can be no single text that encompasses the totality of Germany's capital and that rather a collage – steeped in musical experiences – is necessary to represent it. If all this sounds like an update of Richard Wagner's "suggestion of an original musicalized language before words" (Morris, 259) and a

⁶³Joel Kotkin addresses issues of identity and spirituality in the cities of the 21st century and argues that "urban areas, in the end, must be held together by a consciousness that unites their people in a shared identity" (157). What was achieved by the priests in earliest times, is now achieved through dominant paradigms, such as "due process, freedom of belief, the basic right of property," altogether values that can be easily abolished (159). In Goetz's case, two of the reincarnations of the pre-modern priest are the DJ and the author.

⁶⁴As Wurz contends, the novel "capitalizes on its technological belatedness or anachronism to claim and reclaim new vistas of representation" (5).

⁶⁵Wolfrum states that looking at its youth cultures allows the onlooker to discern the direction of a society. He contends that the fragmentation of the 68 movements (i.e. return to the political parties, anarchism, terrorism" increased toward the 1990s. The pluralization of styles and sub-cultures results in "neue[n], 'non-verbalen,' auch politischen Protestformen" ["new, non-verbal forms of protest"] (504). Rather than a mere and often criticised "postmodern[e] hedonistische Toleranz" ["postmodern, hedonistic tolerance"], events such as the Love Parade in Berlin literally expressed an increase in social, cultural, and physical mobility (Wolfrum, 416).

drawing on myth as “a focused primal source of human experience [...], reducing mere history to its eternal essence,” then following should be noted (Morris, 255): Goetz, despite his reliance on all available media channels and his apparent cultural elitism, actually shoots the *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total work of art] and its *völkisch* [nationalist] undertones to pieces. His Bayreuths are in fact the abandoned bunkers of an underground Berlin, and his massive urban *Bildungsproject Heute Morgen* ultimately disavows the possibility of a stable perspective on Berlin, even going so far as to say that the Germany no longer offers a stable nationalist narrative of self or belonging.

Chapter 1

Walking in Waste Lands: Ruin-Gazing in German Rubble Film and Literature

*Our eyes remember the graveyards, and our eyes see the rubble:
the cities are destroyed, the cities are graveyards,
and all around them our eyes see buildings arising that remind us of stage settings.*

Heinrich Böll⁶⁶

I. From the Flâneur to the Rubble-Gazer

The German *Heimkehrer*, the soldiers returning from the battlefields of the Second World War, had not only often suffered from severe trauma, they also found their home significantly altered, politically, affectively, and spatially. In his 1952 speech “Bekenntnis zur Trümmerliteratur” [“In Defense of Rubble Literature”] Heinrich Böll observed that Germany’s cities had been bombed into “graveyards” (272).⁶⁷ The destroyed urban spaces further reminded Böll of “stage settings,” a perceptual phenomenon that prompted him to

⁶⁶Taken from Böll, “In Defense of ‘Rubble Literature,’” pp. 272-273.

⁶⁷Böll delivered his speech “In Defense of ‘Rubble Literature’” in the waiting hall of Cologne’s central train station on the occasion of the so-called Wednesday Discussions. In his address, Böll drew attention to the crisis of the genre, explicitly linking it to the act of seeing that figures so prominently in this chapter. Addressing the critiques which Trümmerliteratur faced, he writes that “what was odd, suspicious even, was the reproachful, almost injured tone accompanying these labels: although we [the authors of rubble literature] were not, apparently, being held responsible for the war, for the ruins on all sides, we were obviously giving offense by having seen these things and continuing to see them” (269-270).

devise a literary form capable of representing these distortions (ibid).⁶⁸ To be sure, looking at urban spaces in Germany immediately after the Second World War posited a difficult task on many levels and mass media were a means to bring it to the attention of the German people. Symptomatically, the flâneur – arguably *the* most discussed concept of urban, mobile, visual experience – was seemingly dead and gone, even though he left some shoeprints.⁶⁹ However, walking the city had not come to an end and the shell-shocked *Heimkehrer* were in a particular position to wander among the rubble. This chapter locates one medial type of these homecomers – the rubble-gazer⁷⁰ – in the ecology of rubble film and literature.⁷¹ I define the

⁶⁸Andreas Huyssen claims that the 20th century in particular produced a “very different imagery of ruins,” one in which “Roman ruins are sanitized and used as mise-en-scene for open-air opera performances” and “industrial ruins are made over into cultural centers” (2010; 19). Huyssen suggests that the ruin has become an inherently visual object, reminiscent of *mise-en-scenes*, evoking the image world of cinema.

⁶⁹Dirk De Meyer et al argue that “today’s spectatorial consumer should be seen as a direct heir to the popular middle-class flâneur described by Benjamin” (131). Lutz Koepnick locates “present-day flâneurs” vis-à-vis changing visual practices and concludes that they “wish to slow down their pace and, in the mode of Hessel [and] Benjamin [...], behold the new capital with their shutters wide open” (2008; 255). Parvin Gasemi argues that after the sandwich-board man “no bell was tolled for the death of the flâneur for he metamorphosed into a great variety of urban characters” (74). Tester states that the flâneur was “tied to a specific time and place,” but that “he has been allowed to take a number of walks away from the streets and arcades of nineteenth-century Paris” (1). Harald Neumeyer considers a flâneur “im Zeichen der Postmoderne” [“in the light of postmodernity”] possible, but hesitates to wager a bet on what he might look like (396). According to Tester, the flâneur has “walked into the pages of the commonplace,” but remains “more than a little elusive” (1). In her article “Les Flâneurs du Mal(l): Cinema and the Postmodern Condition,” Anne Friedberg looks, for example, for the postmodern flâneur at the mall and elsewhere but concludes that “traffic and the decline of the arcade may have killed the *flâneur*” and that “his perceptual patterns - distracted observation and dreamlike reverie - became the prototype for those of the consumer” (421).

⁷⁰See also the anthology *Ruins of Modernity*. The ruin-gazer – the term from which I derive the rubble-gazer – is by no means a new concept, but has only been recently (re-)discovered as a critical vector in the process of Europe’s journey into modernity. Julia Hell and Andreas Schönle sketch out his impressive genealogy that, among other illustrious name, includes Giovanni Batista Piranesi, G.W.F. Hegel, Napoleon Bonaparte, Caspar David Friedrich, and Carl Spengler. All of these artists, statesmen, and thinkers agreed in their conceptualization of the ruin as renegotiating the present by confronting the perceiving subject with a (often pre-modern) past.

⁷¹According to cultural historian Amir Eshel, “in Germany [some] ruins were left as *Menetekels*: haunting skeletons which never tire of reminding us the unprecedented scars inflicted by the world wars” (134). Right after the war, however, such an understanding of the ruins is absent, given the fact that in some cities there was more rubble than intact infrastructure.

the rubble-gazer as someone who inhabited the films and literature of postwar Germany, affected both by the utter devastation that had gradually befallen many of the urban centers during the air raids and the people's psychological burden of being complicit to the Holocaust.⁷²

The rubble-gazer returned as an attentive if reluctant urban Ulysses in whom the Weimar flâneur and the ancient ruin-gazer converged.⁷³ Harald Neumeyer argues that the flâneur has always been a fluid concept, his premise being that “ausgehend von der Minimaldefinition, daß der Flâneur richtungs- und ziellos durch die Großstadt streift, [...] die Figur des Flâneurs als ein ‚offenes Paradigma‘ gesehen werden [soll]” [“starting from the minimum definition that the flâneur roams the city without direction and aim, the figure of the flâneur should be seen as an open paradigm”] (17). Jaimey Fisher expands upon Neumeyer's “open paradigm” in a specific German context and detects not only a postwar survival of the flâneur, but also explicitly locates his return – as the *Heimkehrer* – in the years after 1945.⁷⁴ Although Fisher concedes that “the harsh contingencies of everyday life overwhelmed any would-be wandering dandies,” he argues that “rubble-films like *Die*

⁷²As Dagmar Barnouw puts it, “the general cultural collapse at the end of the war inhibited the formation of a ‘normal’ temporally structured identity sustained by a ‘normally’ selective and fluid complex of memories. What the evidence forced Germans to believe and thereby accept as their responsibility contradicted in most cases their memories of what they had known at the time when the events occurred. The burden of responsibility seemed overwhelming precisely because it denied them authority over their past, their memories, their historical identity” (168).

⁷³For Julia Hell, the genealogy of the second urban type involved in remapping the city, the ruin-gazer, begins with Scipio, who is said to have wept after Rome's armies sacked and destroyed Phoenician Carthage in 146 B.C. The reason for his emotive outburst, she argues, was that “the imperial subject contemplates the metropole of a mighty empire in ruins while thinking about the future of his own empire” (170). Hell then illustrates literature's affinity with this weeping type, when she locates “the archaic genre of the lament for the fallen city” in Virgil's *The Aeneid* (171).

⁷⁴Benjamin, in the title of his essay on Franz Hessel's *Spazieren in Berlin*, already heralds “The Return of the Flâneur.” Tester argues that this returned flâneur is already a watered down version, “a passive spectator duped by the spectacle of the public” (14). There appears to be an implied historical pattern of the flâneur's recurrence impacted by the media and urban landscapes at his disposal.

Mörder sind unter uns deploy th[e figure of the flâneur] in order to simultaneously invoke and problematize modern metropolitan contexts and experiences” (2005; 462).⁷⁵ Given the fact that he was regarded as a “recorder” of modernity, what role, then, did new media play in the postwar flâneur’s documentary efforts?⁷⁶ This chapter goes down this road and presents two concrete examples of rubble-gazers – one, a protagonist in a film and the other, in a novel – in order to illuminate Germany’s struggle in coming to terms with both the recent past and the new social order under occupation. As the term rubble-gazer already implies, perception played a formative role in this struggle, and I suggest that the “training ground” for those returning from the front had first been the battlefield, supplanted then by an urban landscape from which no distance could be achieved. The rubble-gazer returned after experiencing violent spatial disruptions into a space that did not welcome threshold observers.⁷⁷ With regard to the ecology of the rubble years his emergence contributed to a jump-start and reorientation of media in shambles.

⁷⁵These “Heimkehrer-flâneurs,” Fisher claims, are often mediated types who explore “in panoramic and quasi-touristic fashion, once familiar cities – familiar to the viewers both from lived experience, but also cinematically” (2005; 466).

⁷⁶Michael Jennings et al state that Benjamin’s work includes innovative reconsiderations of key modernist problems, namely “the role of the urban crowd as an optical device [...]; the significance of *actual* optical devices such as panoramas [...] to the new conditions of metropolitan experience; and especially the modern practices of display and advertising” (5).

⁷⁷Arnold-De Simine argues that “um Trümmer als Ruinen wahrnehmen zu können, bedarf es einer Patina, einer Verbindung der Ruine mit der Natur” [“in order to perceive the ruins we need a patina, a connection between the ruin and nature”] (258). For the rubble-gazer this patina obviously does not exist, “es fehlte [...] der unerlässliche historische Abstand zur Katastrophe” [“the indispensable historical distance to the catastrophe was missing”] (ibid). In contrast to many earlier man-made devastations now the ruin wasn’t a single building, but rather “ganze Stadtteile [die] in Trümmer lagen” [“whole neighborhoods lay in ruins”] (ibid).

Traversing the destroyed city, the rubble-gazer simultaneously renegotiated Germany's first postwar media ecology.⁷⁸ We find him maneuvering a medial landscape still tainted by its cooption into Joseph Goebbels's propaganda machinery and as such at the forefront of aesthetic debates to come. The rubble-gazer's capacity for the acquisition of new perceptual patterns as the result of war experiences transpired in an environment whose sensibilities were mainly determined by dearth and dominated by radio and supplemented by film and print media. Even though radio played the most critical role, the particular logic of the rubble years' media ecology was by no means exclusively aural but also visual and it was in image and text – mediated by the cinematic apparatus and the printed word in their own unique ways – where Germany's narrative of renewal unfolded. Contrasting instances of rubble-gazing in the genres of rubble film and literature allow us to track the wandering subject as he ventures beyond a new moral code into a new phenomenology. The postwar rubble-gazer, moving from film to literature, productively interceded into the contested and paralyzed spaces of the destroyed metropolis. He found himself confronted by a landscape in which lived experience came eerily close to the psychological projections that had dominated German Expressionism.⁷⁹

I thus want to suggest that rubble film and literature interrogate the perceptual distortion produced by the war experiences through the inclusion of expressionist techniques vis-à-vis more realist moments. These stylistic switches achieve more than just a breach of

⁷⁸This chapter uses the terms rubble and ruin interchangeably. Although there are, of course, differences with regard to temporal qualities – slow erosion over time versus a sudden disintegration, for example – I find it particularly interesting that during the rubble years this distinguishability is nearly absent.

⁷⁹Edgar Wolfrum, for example, states with regard to the severely destroyed Cologne that “aus einem Kulturvolk [...] wieder Höhlenmenschen geworden [waren]” [“a civilized nation had turned into a group of cavemen”] (32). And as historian Michael Gehler puts it, life in these cavernous ruins was a “matter of getting by from day to day,” with not much attention being paid to a future beyond tomorrow (12).

boundaries, they also inject a specific German debate on art and politics into the text.⁸⁰ This debate goes beyond Expressionism alone, it also triggers a rethinking of the aesthetic power of German media after the war. Expressionism – both filmic and literary – has a particular relation with fascism in Germany. Siegfried Kracauer famously detected a premonition of Hitler in the seminal 1920 expressionist film *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* [*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*] (in the character of the eponymous hypnotist) and Lotte Eisner in retrospect correlated Germany's haunted screen with the “tortured soul” of contemporary Germany before the Second World War (17).⁸¹ This chapter finds the twentieth-century rubble-gazers in Heinrich Böll's novel *Der Engel schwieg* and Wolfgang Staudte's film *Die Mörder sind unter uns* still walking in the long shadows of Expressionism. The respective male protagonists, Hans Schnitzler and Hans Mertens, traverse spaces that echo the movement's play with light and darkness. The idea that psychological dispositions are mirrored in the physical surroundings is also of grave importance. However, rather than to simply claim that *Der Engel schwieg* and *Die Mörder sind unter uns* are expressionist texts – something that has been done before – I show how both texts utilize variations in style to highlight the importance of a *physical* engagement with the razed city that queries the state of art and media after a fascist Germany. Mertens, the protagonist in *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, embarks on a quest for the new ethical man that equates physical mobility with progress

⁸⁰The Expressionism debate of yore revolved around “a style and mode of presentation that undermined conventional notion of representation and mimesis” (Nägele, 842). Pitting Expressionism and Realism against each others, intellectual heavy-weights from Klaus Mann to Bernhard Ziegler to Georg Lukács weighed in on both sides of the divide. At the core of the debate lay the question whether Expressionism had succumbed to a “formalism that disfigures the familiar and repeats the alienation of the modern world in the decadent products of many modern artists” or whether it had in fact been the only feasible reaction to modernity (ibid).

⁸¹Stephen Brockmann reminds us that Kracauer accused the director Robert Wiene “of having added a reactionary frame story to the original scenario [...] thus transforming a purportedly revolutionary story into a conformist one” (2010; 61).

(supported by the film's alteration of styles between expressionist and more "realist" sets) while Schnitzler – the textual figure – is ultimately invested in a phenomenological turn that explodes the heritage of older (cinematic) conventions in prose.⁸² In other words, Böll wants to open up the ecology and make it susceptible to new influences.

Mertens and Schnitzler witness the dawn of a new era as a divided Germany awaits its futures to be decided by the Allies, a historical junction with implications for the social, political, and aesthetic realm. They both traverse destroyed urban landscapes in search of a new humanism that becomes possible – as the narratives of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* and *Der Engel schwieg* suggest allegorically and literally – by walking out of the night into a brighter day.⁸³ Both wandering rubble-gazers gradually transform into better men, renegotiating the struggle over space and time primarily signified through the interplay of darkness and light, a strongly contrastive visual register that in Böll's case even spills over into the novel.⁸⁴ Both texts use expressionist motifs and techniques – either affirmatively or critically – not to corroborate Kracauer's claim of Germany's preposition to blindly following authority, but rather to measure how severely perception in Germany was out-of-tune after the sensory shocks of the Second World War and to determine what needed to be

⁸²As Rodney Livingstone et al argue with regard to the debate on the "first German version of modern art," Expressionism "was upstaged by more 'radical' movements [...], while in Germany the anti-revolutionary mood and cynical 'realism' of Neo-Objectivity [...] made their idealism look naively theatrical" (12).

⁸³Mertens in particular begins as an intoxicated type. While his alcohol consumption first allows him to become a rubble-gazer he has to sober up before he can complete his transformation. According to Jaimey Fisher the street "serves [...] as intoxicant," whose narcotic effects alter the perception of those who walk the city (2005; 467). In his reading the act of rubble gazing allows for intoxicated insights into the urban fabric that remain inaccessible to less sensitive (and less mobile) observers.

⁸⁴Bettina Greffrath notes that Mertens physically experiences the rubble, locating him "zwischen Gestern und Morgen, zwischen Vergangenheit und Zukunft" ["between yesterday and tomorrow, between past and future"] (197). His gaze, she concludes, "nimmt die Umwelt nicht erkennbar wahr" ["perceives the environment as distorted"], an out-of-tune mode of experience that marks his perception as similar to that of the pre-war flâneur but also as significantly altered (198).

done to set things straight.⁸⁵ While Staudte's film relies heavily on the visual force of the ruins, it is illuminating to ask what Böll's novel brings to the table. Juxtaposing the two texts illustrates that the literary one by necessity approaches urban walking and the rubble differently – albeit not independently – from its cinematic pendant, even though they are mirror images of each other in many other aspects and draw upon each other.

Cross-examining Mertens's walks through a cinematic rendition of Berlin with Schnitzler's meanderings through the literary representation of Cologne after the catastrophe, I also set up the act of walking the city as a politically meaningful act – what I term the “mobility of morality.” I thus first offer a new reading of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* that takes into account the physical involvement in the remapping of obliterated German urban space. I then show how Böll's novel intervenes differently in urban experience and how it carves out its own aesthetic space within the sound- and image-dominated media ecology of the rubble years. Referencing rubble film, Böll's novel achieves what cinema is not easily predisposed to materialize: not only does it circumvent the visual distractions of the photographic ruins, but it also goes deeper than the film's moral didacticism and comments on the media ecology of its historical moment. The rubble-gazer, Böll argues, not just negotiates a new ethics of the humane, but also challenges film's black-and-white compositions and utilizes a colorful variegated urban botany as a symbol of *individual* sensory adjustment. Whereas film implicitly compares National Socialism's bankrupt delusions of grandeur to the eventual destruction of their concrete and ideological architectures, *Der Engel schwieg* reincorporates the ruins as a tool to measure (and rectify) the imbalance of subjective perceptual patterns.

⁸⁵In his book *Von Caligari zu Hitler*, Kracauer speaks of a “Disposition des deutschen Volkes,” [“disposition of the German people”] revealed in the films of the Weimar era, that could explain Hitler's rise and coming to power (18).

II. Navigating the Aftermath: Situating Wolfgang Staudte's *Die Mörder sind unter uns*

Wolfgang Staudte's 1946 *Die Mörder sind unter uns* [*The Murderers are among us*] is not only the first German postwar film, it is also considered one of the paramount exercises in rubble film. Many media historians and scholars call the DEFA-production one of the most important contributions to the resurrection of German film.⁸⁶ Its director, Staudte, born in 1906, worked as an actor during the Nazi regime (for example in Veit Harlan's anti-Semitic film *Jud Süß*). After the war, he obtained the necessary license as a filmmaker from the British administration. He was, however, not allowed to actually shoot the film that was later to become *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Staudte then approached the Americans, who informed him that the anti-fascist project that fermented in his mind ran counter to the cultural policy that the United States pursued at that time.⁸⁷ Staudte did not fit the ideological mold of democratic consumerism with his cinema of the present.⁸⁸ The Soviet authorities, however, quickly "granted Staudte's wish to make the first German anti-fascist film" in accordance with their interest in the "eradication of Nazism and consequently the re-education of the German people toward (socialist) democracy" (Hoffgen 64). On March 16, 1946 – one day after the contract between him and the German Central Administration was signed – Staudte began shooting his narrative both on location in Berlin's streets and at the

⁸⁶Dagmar Barnouw states that "if the film has been seen as the most important of the German *Trümmerfilme*, it is for the unmediated, unmatched visual power of its literally inhuman protagonist" – a reminder of the possible threat that the spectacle of the ruin poses to the individual characters who roam the terrain (2008; 53).

⁸⁷As Maggie Hoffgen reminds us, the rationale behind US film production and distribution was "to expose [Germany's] population to alternatives to the propaganda film" and the acknowledgment of "a backlog of Hollywood films" which they wanted to position at the newly emerging market of Germany (64).

⁸⁸I am referring here to Staudte's investment in a filmic project that deals with the current socio-political events surrounding its production.

former UFA Studio in Babelsberg. The film was released in the Soviet sector the same year on October 15 but was not screened in the Western sectors until 1948.

Die Mörder sind unter uns tells the story of Dr. Hans Mertens, played by Ernst Wilhelm Borchert, a former pediatrician who, after his return from the Eastern front, struggles with his existence in the rubble.⁸⁹ He frequently walks the streets of Berlin and lives in a dilapidated apartment that belongs to Susanne Wallner, played by Hildegard Knef, a young woman who returns to the city after having been liberated from a concentration camp. Sharing the apartment, Mertens and Susanne – after a period of uneasy co-existence – fall in love. When Mertens learns that Major Brückner – who is responsible for a massacre among Polish civilians – is still alive and well, he sets out to kill him. Brückner, who has easily adapted to the new socio-political situation under occupation, presents himself as a good democrat, model citizen, and entrepreneur, concealing his eager partaking in the atrocities of the National Socialists. It is only thanks to Susanne's intervention that Mertens does not shoot Brückner in the film's climax. Instead, the eponymous "murderer among us" is convicted and sentenced to jail in a fair trial. Given its plot, it comes as no surprise that scholarship on *Die Mörder sind unter uns* has been very much interested in its moral intervention into Germany's immediate postwar renegotiation of guilt. These readings by and large see the ragged psychological condition of its protagonists mirrored in the physical destruction that plays such an important role in the film's *mise-en-scene*.

⁸⁹I use his last name throughout in order to avoid confusion as he shares his first name with the protagonist in *Der Engel schwieg*, Hans Schnitzler.

The focus on expressionist elements in *Die Mörder sind unter uns* as signifiers of guilt dominated critical scholarship up until a decade ago.⁹⁰ Recently, however, exciting inroads have been made into the rubble, seeing the ruin as more than just psychological projection. More often than not these new approaches invest in expanding our understanding of the film's visual registers – both on the diegetic level and beyond – that tentatively suggest that *Die Mörder sind unter uns* attempts to throw its expressionist frame into relief. As part of this paradigmatic vanguard, William Rasch admits that “it may be true that rubble films were ‘largely blind’ to what concerns today’s viewers” but he immediately follows this up with the question “what [it is] in those films” that evokes blindness (4). In other words, analyzing these films in greater detail allows scholars to detect elements that have been overlooked in earlier as historically contingent sensibilities change. Lutz Koepnick asks of us to keep in mind that “to live among ruins is to live in a world in which the visual and the auditory no longer add up to a whole anymore” (2008; 199).⁹¹ He thus moves beyond a purely expressionist reading and suggests a severe perceptual distortion affecting the German people. Johannes von Moltke, finally, examines “the aesthetic, ontological, and epistemological imbrication of cinema and ruin in modernity” (2010; 396). He proposes a “broadly realist representational mode that unites ruins and cinema by virtue of their shared

⁹⁰Bettina Greffrath, as a case in point, emphasizes that in “In [...] DIE MÖRDER SIND UNTER UNS [...] die Ruinen vor allem für die seelischen Zerstörungen, die der *Krieg*, d.h. das Vergangene in den Menschen angerichtet hat [stehen]” [“in THE MURDERERS ARE AMONG US the ruins signify mainly the psychological damage that the *war*, i.e. the past has inflicted in the people’s minds”] (218). Eric Rentschler recently remarked sarcastically that “in fact, rubble plays a prominent role in the rubble film,” as if scholars had to be reminded of the obvious (2010; 418). Critiquing a certain disregard for the ruin as more than a prop, Rentschler contends that “already in [Die Mörder’s] initial image, rubble assumes the double guise of a commanding physical presence and an objective correlative for a man who is a virtual wreck” (2010; 430). He thus concludes that “rubble [...] becomes a character in its own right that is linked to a human drama and the narrative trajectory” and consequently takes on an anthropomorphic quality (ibid).

⁹¹For the aesthetics of rubble film, Koepnick concludes, this means a full frontal attack on “the production of ruins as a Wagnerian total work of art,” a modernist ripping to pieces of anything that resembles a congruent whole (2008; 202).

indexical link to the past” (2010; 396).⁹² He establishes a correlation between the rootedness of both the cinematic image and the physical structure of the rubble in an earlier moment. This chapter expands on these acute observations, but also retains fragments of the expressionist reading without which any reading of the film runs the risk of being incomplete. In a nutshell, the diegetic didacticism at the one end of the spectrum and the emerging interest in the genre’s multiple visual grammars at the other converge in the film’s strolling protagonist, Mertens. All this results in a new reading that cross-references the film’s narrative with its accomplished technical realization, while taking into account the noticeable instances of urban walking.⁹³

To be sure, *Die Mörder sind unter uns* is steeped in expressionist imagery: ignoring this facet dilutes any reading of the film. However, it is clearly not a purely expressionist film and thus categorical confusion ensues. Robert Shandley contends that the bombed-out buildings form expressionist “urban canyons,” a visual quality that evokes film as an appropriate medium for capturing the surreal condition in the cities (1).⁹⁴ Difficulties in determining its style, however, soon arise. Hoffgen, for example, states that “nothing is more real than real locations” (66) – what she terms the dominating visual aesthetic of Staudte’s

⁹²The temporal vectors of cinema, von Moltke argues, serve as “a material connection that links the [...] resident of a bombed-out city contemplating (if not living in) ruins to the past” (2010; 398).

⁹³The issue of movement and a particular pedestrian perspective has come up in recent scholarship on *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, but is either eclipsed by the moral project of the narrative or neglects the cinematic choices that accompany it. Silke Arnold-De Simine explicitly addresses the effects of the rubble and argues that “bei Staudte [...] die Ruine als räumliche und zeitliche Schwelle inszeniert [wird]: In der Ruine wird die Zeit räumlich erfahrbar und der Raum erhält eine temporale Dimension” [“Staudte sets up the ruin as a spatial and temporal threshold: time can be experienced spatially in the ruin and space is assigned a temporal dimension”] (267). While her argument is sound, the actual agent of this temporal and spatial threshold-crossing remains implicit.

⁹⁴Shandley’s urban canyons are a “lawless wasteland,” with “trash and papers blowing by [...] reminiscent of tumbleweeds” which he reads as “symbols of the past being delivered to the character” (32). The iconic tumbleweed in particular illustrates that Shandley understands rubble film as a close relative of the US Western.

film – while Shandley makes his readers aware that “we are not being shown what Berlin really looked like in 1945” (32). Shandley argues that the ruins in Staudte’s film are “stylized versions of ruins mostly created in the studio and used as a backdrop” (120). Although his “backdrop” proposition unnecessarily weakens the actual importance of these painted and matted ruins, the collocation of stylized rubble and a more “realistic” one is hermeneutically productive.⁹⁵ I argue that the move from genuine on-location shots to the use of sound stages in some scenes in the film bespeaks an attempt on Staudte’s part to switch registers, which is to say to vary the degree of expressionist saturation. The following section compares key scenes to illustrate how *Die Mörder sind unter uns* employs cinema’s visual language not only to unabashedly link urban mobility with the overcoming of the psychological standstill, but also to query the heritage of Expressionism that doubles as a barometer of the state of perception in Germany.⁹⁶ In line with Rasch’s argument on “blind spots,” the question becomes what exactly walking in the ruins allows Mertens (and by extension the viewers) to see.

III. Into the Ruins: The Mobility of Morality

Die Mörder sind unter uns is strongly invested in mobility and the reclaiming of space through everyday practices as it reflects interior distortions onto exterior, physical

⁹⁵Barnouw claims that war photography “allowed [Allied photographers] to see the true beauty of the ruins cleansed of all human life, one-dimensional shapes in visually exciting, immutable constellations” (2008; 46). To be sure, she talks about photographs here so any application to film is complicated by the latter’s reliance on movement. The overall concept of the photographic ruin as “immutable” and “cleansed of all human life,” however, gestures toward the contribution to a new modernity that rubble *literature* could make.

⁹⁶Maggie Hoffgen marks the film’s chiaroscuro photography as a temporal metaphor, where the “shadows of the past are still with [Mertens]” (67). She also points out that the eventual dissolving flashback to Brückner’s crime against humanity links the two Christmases – the one on which the massacre took place and the one on which Mertens attempts to avenge it – “relentlessly [link Brückner] to the deaths for which he is responsible” (69).

structures in order to get Germany moving again. It is thus surprising that relatively little scholarly interest in this facet of the text is evident. As a proxy for the whole lamed nation, the former soldier Dr. Hans Mertens suffers from the spatial politics of the Nazis and their after-effects. As Jamie Fisher argues, “Nazism, both in its cultural imaginary as well as military execution, relied not only on organized mobility [...] but also on the mental geography such mobility and mobilization wrought” (2008; 188). Seeking to rectify this problematic relation to modernity and movement, Mertens literally has to get worse – read: lose himself in expressionist landscapes – before he can get better. Slowly getting the Third Reich’s marching rhythm out of his system, he evolves from a drunkard who stumbles through uncanny spaces into a focused, mobile agent who remaps Berlin’s bombed-out topographies: a form of progress equated with physical movement, a “mobility of morality.” While Fisher contends that, “if a new kind of mental geography had been advocated and had taken hold during the Nazis’ ‘total mobilization’ and war [...] then the post-war period would have [...] to invoke and dismantle this geography and mapping,” Staudte proposes a critical physical engagement with the city as the prerequisite for Germany’s regaining of momentum (2008; 176). Urban walking contributes to the development of the film’s protagonist rather than just employing the city and its ruins as a mental projection or, worse, a visually impressive but altogether detached stage-setting. I claim that Staudte’s confrontation with the urban landscape through his *entfesselt* cinematography – the freely roaming, highly subjective unchained camera of Weimar cinema, first used in F.W. Murnaus’ 1924 movie *Der letzte Mann* [*The Last Laugh*] – is as critical for his redefinition of the German narrative as the overtly didactic agenda that propels Mertens forward psychologically.

Whereas many scholars understand the spatial distortion expressed in this sequence solely as a signifier of Mertens's inner disorientation, I would like to point out that *Die Mörder sind unter uns* varies in its degree of expressionist stylization over the course of its 80 minutes and raise the question why it fluctuates. To be sure, Mertens initially makes his entrance as an expressionist apparition, someone external to the present moment both on the structural and the narrative level of *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Mertens does not yet belong to the space he enters, visually emphasized through the off-kilter relations established between him and the environment. Mertens "emerges" out of a cross – an object that conceals him at first – and rises from a realm outside of history into a city unhinged, a transition that the aesthetic choices of the film underscore. Staudte suggests that movement through the city – even though marred by a profound incompatibility between the individual and his environment – becomes the prerequisite for the moral project with which the film ultimately engages. Mertens gradually finds his way back into the flow of things through walking. As Mertens slowly finds traction again, the film's visual style moves from vertical movement – often coupled with expressionist imagery – toward horizontal panning and a more realist style. If the apparatus is indeed a measure of Mertens' internal constitution as so many have argued, this cinematographic trajectory suggests that the protagonist begins to see his home Berlin and its disfigured landscape anew, not with the "cynical, desperate eyes of German Expressionism, but rather with new optimistic eyes" (Brockmann 2010; 206). However, it also begs the question if the film's own inventiveness successfully manages to convey such a fundamental change in perception, the tug-of-war played out between between Modernism and Realism.

In *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, Friedl Behn-Grund and Eugen Klagemann's skillful cinematography move beyond supporting the narrative arc such that the camera itself transport meaning beyond the purely diegetic and becomes an index of mobility itself. The camerawork of the film's measured opening shot captures piles of rubble and links the palpable feeling of standstill to the representation of debris in a crisp black-and-white aesthetic indeed reminiscent of Germany's formerly haunted screen, a haunting now a feature of everyday life. The first frames are shot as close-ups which, for a couple of seconds, set the signifiers of physical destruction into relation with several other pregnant signs in the *mise-en-scene*. Among the various objects that litter the landscape are a helmet, a tin can, and withered weeds. The city is present, but for the time being remains a blurred background that, out of focus, occupies the upper fifth below the frame line. Although the opening frames can hardly be mistaken for a still photograph, movement is essentially absent. Staudte opted for on-location shots, and immediately makes the audience aware that his film resides on the border between the dream-like quality reminiscent of expressionist painting and cinema and the raw "the world speaks for itself" approach of Italian Neo-Realism.⁹⁷ Bound between these two styles, the *mise-en-scene* at the beginning of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* conveys the paralysis of time through stationery objects that have outlived their purpose, their standstill amplified through the slow-moving cinematography and the scarce use of editing.

After a couple of seconds, the static camera breaks out of its immobility and tilts, revealing the setting to be a ruined urban landscape organized by a starkly contrastive visual field. The vertical camera movement breaks the static lingering of the viewer's gaze and

⁹⁷Neo-Realism originated in Italy after the Second World War. The non-commercial movement championed the use of high-speed, grainy-film stock, actual locations and decor, near natural lighting, an reliance on nonprofessional actors, an unobtrusive camera, and a loose causality of the plot (see Feinberg, pp. 54-55). I am not claiming that *Die Mörder sind unter uns* is a neo-realist film, but rather that it contains counter-elements to its expressionist heritage that are similar to the tenets of the Italian genre.

draws attention to cinema's affinity with motion. The blurred ruins of Berlin come into sharp focus and exhibit a display of buildings set against a leaden sky. The vertical congruence between the tilt and the dilapidated buildings, however, does not communicate temporal flow, but rather confirms that the German postwar city is a space that has lost its points of reference, spatially and temporally. The dominating image is a grave-marker pointing directly at a tank, equating urban space with the military complex and its relation to death (1:29; see Fig. 1.1.). The dominating atmosphere in the streets of Berlin is a color-drained standstill, a condition the film's visual composition reinforces via its use of up and down movement rather than horizontal panning. Moving the camera through Berlin's rubble canyons, the scene's tilting movement is not executed in a straight 90° line. It carries subtle traces of a swish pan, hinting at an underlying wish to break free from the vertical axis that an "unseen" force apparently imposes. However, this invisible force is found lurking in the overwhelming presence of the ruins, stony reminders of fascism's rigid top-to-bottom hierarchy.⁹⁸ The impulse to renegotiate mobility is evident, but for the moment results only in the much discussed Dutch-angles of the film's opening sequence. The canted rubble path on which Mertens then enters the *mise-en-scene* is presented as uneven ground, a diagonal borderline that appears alien and askew in relation to Berlin's geometry – such as the rubble mounds and the cross.

⁹⁸Anke Pinkert equates the vertical cinematographical style, also used in *Die Mörder unter uns*, with the "semantic field of *Fallen* [falling]" (70). Based the film's narrative, I rather treat it as a visualization of National Socialism spatial politics and nationalist ideology.



Fig. 1.1. Mertens walking the streets of Berlin, still from the opening sequence of *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

During first minutes of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* Mertens continuously appears as if trapped in jelly – expressed through an at best vertical and at worst motionless visual register that, over the course of the film, gradually gives way to a horizontal and mobile one. He sluggishly strolls down the street in a relatively long take of 45 seconds, while the camera follows him – without any cuts – from a long shot to a medium close up. The canted angles that dominate the first scene render his walk a continuous descent – from the upper left of the frame to the lower right – so that the spatial confusion adds to the suspended temporality of an assumed necropolis. Mertens slowly traverses Berlin's streets as little boys, playing in the ruins, run past him. The kids move faster than Mertens, but within the scene they bounce back from the diagonal lines established through the composition, thus not making any true progress in this space between war and death. The scene then quickly bypasses the familiar topos of children as the signifiers of the future. This weight of being the future, Staudte insinuates, rests squarely on the shoulders of grown men, which is to say, on those who knew the city both before the war and after. In the shadows of the rubble, the camera reluctantly

abandons its vertical trajectory and follows Mertens diagonally, adapting to his slow pace. When he suddenly stops, the camera lingers on for the duration of five seconds while the protagonist looks around and takes in the ragged concrete ridges of the metropolis. His rubble-gazing is a slow-motion process, slightly out of tune with the surrounding landscape. The score at this point is an upbeat jazzy tune at odds with the bleak visuals, but supportive of the absence of progress in its own repetitiveness. The small delay in movement and the slight disjunction between sound and sight suggests a period of sensual adaptation that Mertens undergoes before he proceeds with his walks through Berlin.⁹⁹ In contrast to Benjamin's flâneur the rubble gazer is initially unaware of and uninterested in the "historical index" of the rubble that flashes right in front of his eyes.¹⁰⁰

The prelude to Mertens's metamorphosis into a proficient rubble-gazer continues with his initial encounter with Susanne Wallner in "her" apartment – the first scene to include dialogue – about ten minutes into the film. During the "silent" opening scenes Mertens stumbles through the urban canyons without any apparent purpose.¹⁰¹ In the subsequent

⁹⁹The opening sequence concludes as soon as the film's composition establishes Mertens's incentive for his stroll. Utilizing a shot from behind Mertens rather than a point-of-view shot, the scene reveals that he is headed for a dance club whose nondescript sign promises "Tanz-Stimmung-Humor" ["dance-entertainment-humor"] (2:14). The audience sees what Mertens sees, but not exactly from his perspective and always somewhat delayed which suggests that his gaze is not yet fine-tuned to the "mobility of morality." As Mertens strides toward the club's entrance, the film abandons the rubble gazer, leaving the audience exposed to impressive wide shots of a bleak urban environment that underscores the "superhuman sharpness and distance of the camera eye" that stands testament to the more realist currents that permeate the film (Barnouw 46).

¹⁰⁰As Benjamin suggests several times, for example in the *Arcades Project*, "images produced in particular historical moments are related to images of prior epochs through a 'historical index,'" creating a flash, a critical moment when we can learn about our historical condition through the connection with an earlier one (Jennings, 17).

¹⁰¹Lutz Koepnick critically states the (seemingly all too) obvious – and thus often overlooked – logic that it takes "synchronized sound [...] to articulate silence" (2008; 207).

apartment sequence, he and Susanne explicitly refer to the ruins.¹⁰² The city is a necropolis, Mertens explains, as he leads Susanne to one of the broken windows and prompts her to take a look (10:42).¹⁰³ Except for a brief glimpse, obscured by a door frame in a gloomily lit medium-shot, the scene spares out the urban panorama that Mertens describes. The *mise-en-scene* depicts the two of them looking at the city through a broken window whose ragged shards of glass superimpose fissures over the two observers (10:54). As the actual landscape remains unseen, Mertens accuses Susanne of leaving the city and its inhabitants during a time of crisis, the literal collapse of society. Mertens dares Susanne, telling her, “Gehen Sie ruhig durch die Ruinen, dort finden Sie ihre Gräber noch” [“go ahead, walk through the ruins, there you will still find their graves”] assuming that – given her admittedly unbelievably lively appearance – she had abandoned her fellow citizen hidden in the countryside (11:03).¹⁰⁴ Mertens advocates looking at and traversing the “urban cemetery” as a necessary means for understanding the city, an advice that he himself heeds rather selectively up to this point. Despite his frequent strolls, Mertens retains an apathetic passivity and distance.

In the midst of Mertens and Susanne’s deliberations about sharing the apartment, Staudte briefly grants the viewer the panorama he omitted in the preceding scene (13:25). While explaining his inability to share the apartment with anyone, Mertens loses control and yells at Susanne. During the subsequent moment of forced composure, he steps in front of

¹⁰²In terms of sequentiality, my reading omits the film’s second sequence in which Susanne arrives in Berlin. However, this sequence is set center stage in the following sub-section of this chapter.

¹⁰³Dagmar Barnouw reads the visual composition as proof that “there is no clear distinction between inside and outside and the apartments are constantly invaded by rubble carried in by wind, rain, and snow” (2008; 52). Although her observation is acute, I still believe that Staudte – even though the boundaries are blurred and leaky – still retains an outside/inside dichotomy.

¹⁰⁴As the audience learns early on, however, Susanne was actually incarcerated in a concentration camp for reasons that have to do with her father. This is one of the tidbits of information revealed about Susanne’s past. Her exuberant vitalism, given the circumstances, is another indicator for her rejection of the past.

another window that frames a nocturnal still life of Berlin. The dark urban landscape – a sound-stage background strongly gesturing toward expressionist motifs – mirrors Mertens's understanding of the city as a realm of the dead, dark and theatrical (see Fig 1.2.). After Susanne convinces him to stay, he agrees in principle but also flees the apartment immediately, headed for the otherworldly space of the city at night. Interestingly, Staudte does not include a scene in which Mertens actually moves from the apartment to the dance club which is the setting for the next sequence. The elusive panorama seen from the window alone sets the tone for his escape. Mertens refuses to see the ruins that dot the urban landscape and trades them in for the inebriated atmosphere of bars and brothels – the streets literally remain invisible while he gives in to the allure of intoxication. The rubble-gazer closes his eyes to the destruction that has befallen Berlin, a city lacking of recognizable landmarks. The cloak of night covers the ruins and, after a cut, the film immediately shows Mertens, drunk, at a dance club, a space that clearly belongs to the nocturnal realm established in the preceeding sequence (15:00). However, with dancehall music still playing in the background, a lap dissolve – a transition between shots in which one shot begins to fade out as the next shot fades in – then gradually cuts from the graceful movements of a dancer to the awaking streets of Berlin.



Fig 1.2. Mertens and Susanne in front of a window framing a nocturnal “Berlin,” still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

After Mertens leaves the dance club, we see his reflection in a pool of water, distorted by ripples which result from falling rain drops, a cinematic convention evoking the visual blur of a person half asleep (18:51). The rippled and unstable reflection – through the overlapping imagery of the lap dissolve still connected with the oneiric world of the club – in turn gives way to a crisp and unvarnished representation of the rubble (see Fig. 1.3.). For several seconds, the city exists in an in-between state of dreaming and awakening, reminding viewers that they, too, are looking at a representation of the rubble. Morning has broken, and the rubble-gazer confronts the city in a stupor as he turns from shadowy apparition to a corporeal being. The ruins in this segment are shot on location, shifting the mode of representation from the artificiality of the nocturnal realm to the more authentic black-and-white rubble of Berlin’s daily struggle. The continuous tilting shot that elevates the perspective from a puddle of mud to a medium-to-long shot of Mertens staring at the destroyed buildings culminates in a total shot that captures the barren landscape of Berlin and thus completes the transition from one aesthetic register to another. Mertens’s transformation

into the responsible new “Adam” at the end of the narrative finds its subtle starting point in this scene, but he has not yet fully arrived at the city. Walking Berlin from dusk till dawn – a sobering experience on more than one level – slowly becomes the prerequisite for stirring his dormant social and political agency.



Fig. 1.3. Mertens’ shadow reflected in a pool of water, still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

The next sequence featuring rubble takes place after a scene in which Mertens reprimands Susanne for her attempt to clean up the apartment (22:41). While Susanne, lingering statically inside the domestic sphere, resumes her work – both in terms of the household and her former profession as a visual artist – Mertens prefers “Spazierengehen” [“taking a walk”] because, as he claims, “man hat ja jetzt so viel Platz auf den Straßen” [“there is so much room now”] (23:36). Utilizing a hard cut the film then switches back to the canyon-like cityscapes. The film’s most pronounced moment with regard to the blurring of styles takes place in the “night scene where the couple walks through a passage of ruins,

the ridges of structures in the background carefully lit” (Rentschler; 2010; 432).¹⁰⁵ It is remarkable how difficult it is to decide whether the scene was shot on-location or employed a sound-stage or a matte painting (35:30; see Fig.1.4.). Both registers, the expressionist and the (neo-) realist, fuse in this sequence – actually shot on location – in which Mertens’s moral quest reaches its tipping point. After this scene, urban mobility remains absent for some time, with the exception of brief glimpses out of the window and a short shot that shows Mertens walking the city. He is shaken by his memories – not yet visualized at this point and only hinted at via sound effects – after coming face to face with the war criminal Brückner, whom Mertens believed dead (45:45). This revelation, Staudte insinuates, paralyzes his protagonist and keeps him from roaming the streets for an undisclosed period of time. The fact that Staudte alludes to Mertens’s trauma exclusively via sounds implies that his memories only gradually ascend to the surface and that his senses are still not working in unison.



Fig 1.4. Mertens and Susanne discussing their feelings for each other, still from *Die Mörder*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

¹⁰⁵Rentschler reads this scene – during which the couple confesses their mutual love for each other – as a leaving behind of the rubble, turning the ruins into static (background) images of the past in the process. He detects the “telos of the narrative” in Mertens and Susanne’s need “to take leave of the past so that they might occupy a rubble-free future” – a “manifest destiny” that will find its “definite incarnation in the Heimatfilm” (2010; 432).

The centerpiece in *Die Mörder sind unter uns* with regard to the amalgamation of mobility and morality takes place after this prolonged absence of explicitly depicted urban experiences – and again plot and cinematography complement each other as Mertens crosses over to the other side of the expressionist divide into less artificial territory. Brückner asks Mertens, whom he deems more knowledgeable in terms of Berlin's urban topography, to lead him to a "Lokal, wo es auch ein paar nette Mädchen gibt" ["a bar where I can also find some nice girls"] (51:02). He agrees, with the intention of killing Brückner already fermenting in his mind. While the film's art direction sets up the urban landscape as a desolate and lawless waste land in which a murder might go unnoticed, the actual walk through the ruins plays out differently, both on the level of its content and visual structure. The establishing shot to the whole sequence is the first one to include clear horizontal panning associated with Mertens – a remarkable change in visual style in contrast to the film's opening sequence (see Fig 1.5.). Although disrupted by several slightly canted perspectives, the scene conveys an overall feeling of progression, supported by the fact that the sequence was shot completely on location. In the ruins, Brückner does not navigate as effortlessly as Mertens, at one point exclaiming, "Halt, Mertens, laufen Sie mir doch nicht weg, ich bin doch fremd in dem Gebirge hier" ["stop, Mertens, don't run away from me, I am unfamiliar with these mountain ranges"] (51:45). As the topography grows increasingly more unpopulated, Brückner starts feeling disoriented because, in contrast to Mertens, he did not sufficiently engage with the city – in his tidy bourgeois home he has not descended into Berlin's expressionist underbelly before reemerging as a proficient rubble-gazer that has accepted the rubble as part of his new home.



Fig. 1.5. The camera pans along as Brückner and Mertens walk through the desolate landscape, still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

Brückner calls the postwar urban geography the “reinste Wüste” [“the most barren of deserts”] a desolate space which one doesn’t want to see and therefore “vergessen sollte” [“should forget”] (52:59). As Mertens answers “aber das kann man nicht” [“but you can’t”], the close-ups of the two actors become almost completely static again, suggesting that the fragile mobility of morality is threatened during this looming moment of vigilantism. This moment of suspended movement and progress is resolved by the sudden intrusion of human life into the allegedly barren desert. The desperate woman, who materializes in the ruins like a *deus ex machina* looking for a doctor to help her suffocating child, exerts a strong urgency for mobility (see Fig. 1.6.). She seemingly emerges out of thin air and inadvertently keeps Mertens from shooting Brückner with her cry for help (53:03). As she runs through the rubble in clear panic the camera swiftly pans along, paralleling her “contagious” movement. The subsequent hands-on treatment of the suffering child puts Mertens back on track in terms of his work ethic and moral purpose in life. Among the main characters, only Brückner – with his privileged and secluded life style – perceives the postwar ruins as totally flat, both

on the level of their historicity and spatiality. Whereas he, unfazed by the emergency, decides to proceed as planned and patronize the nearby bar, Mertens – for the first time in the narrative – visibly enters a ruin other than his dilapidated but relatively intact apartment and the bars and dance clubs he frequents at night (54:00).



Fig.1.6. A panicking mother begging Mertens to help her suffocating daughter, still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

The space into which Mertens enters is rank and dark, full of shadows that only barely obscure the degree of physical damage – a condition emphasized visually by the utilization of vertical movement and canted angles again. As this return to the visual language at the beginning of the film suggests, accessing the ruin is not a pleasant task. He treats the suffering child and contributes to a new cycle of life in the ruins. On his way home, Mertens appears to be a changed man – the short montage that shows his walk through the rubble is full of energy and horizontal movement (1:01:10). Once he arrives at the apartment, he confesses his love for Susanne and finds shelter from his inner demons, not through an act of violence but rather because of his newfound mobility and literacy of the ruin. At this point, the chiaroscuro compositions of the preceding scenes have given way to a more traditionally lit tableau that evokes the *melos* of Frank Capra more than the expressionist borrowings that

permeate *Die Mörder sind unter uns* up to this point.¹⁰⁶ Both aesthetic choices, however, remain ultimately permeable, producing an oscillation of styles that I read as a signifier of the instability inherent to both paradigms. Using this fluctuation in accentuation to second-guess Staudte's intention to make an anti-fascist film would be unfair and untenable. One must wonder, however, if *Die Mörder sind unter uns* draws a much more complex picture of the German situation in the rubble than it is usually credited with.

With Christmas approaching – the very day when Brückner ordered the massacre in the Polish village three years ago – Mertens become restless again and Staudte's visual idiom follows suit, switching back to expressionist compositions. One last time Mertens takes recourse to rubble-gazing, a task that he, as the chronological jump in the narrative suggests, has neglected after the preceding, cathartic event. He walks into another ruin, a church, whose destroyed state allows snowflakes to swirl inside the structure during mass (1:09:35). With the choir singing, Staudte places Mertens in a composition whose loose framing presents him as utterly forlorn (see Fig 1.7.). The sheer force of the rubble weighs in on him as he casts a feeble shadow on the walls and threatens to paralyze him again: German inwardness threatens to make a last stand. Leading up to this last temptation, the decidedly expressionist scene depicts him as demarcated from the worshippers who – despite their undeniable presence – are visually absent in the long shot in which we only hear them sing (1:09:51). The snow represents his internal coldness, an allusion, too, to the dangers of being frozen into immobility. The film finally allows its audience to watch the events as they transpired in the Polish village. After the hectic flashback – full of lap dissolves and disjunctive splits between sounds and images – Staudte completes his educational project on

¹⁰⁶Barnouw claims that the “dominant elements of the film are not light and shadow but shadows darkened by the lighting technique, a play with gradations of darkness,” whose “effect is a feeling of dizziness, like stumbling and groping amidst a plethora of images turning into ‘allegories’” (2008; 49).

the level of narrative while its form retains a disquieting nervousness. The rubble repels Mertens and triggers a relapse as he caves in to the repressed urge of killing the war-criminal. The motif of the cinematic ruin then disappears during the concluding moments in which Susanne keeps Mertens from killing Brückner. Objectivity and rationality reign supreme at least on the diegetic level of the film's final frames. In any case, Germany's streets – real and cinematic – might not be as clear-cut a space as scholarship on Staudte often claims.



Fig. 1.7. A forlorn Mertens in a destroyed church, still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

During the film's final minutes Staudte refrains from splicing in any more rubble scenes as Mertens's reintegration into a temporal trajectory through urban experience has come full circle. As this chapter has shown thus far, Staudte establishes physical mobility – an engagement with that which is out there – as the prerequisite to morality and employs the ruins as reminders of the postwar subject's ethical obligations to face the destruction and the history behind it head on. The rubble is not merely the antipode to Mertens's coming-to-terms with the past, but it also actively participates in his quest for a new German narrative, a feat that the film underscores visually through its changes in styles and its symbolic camera movement. Mertens walks the city and discovers that the rubble contains life and that the

ruined city is still a home. He enters the interior of the city which enables him to see them as a path toward a humane future rather than tombs. Thus, Staudte's rubble film contributes to shattering fascism's geometrical choreographies and vertical hierarchies, but falls short as regards the adequate representation of the shift in moral code. While its visual style supports the physical mobility advocated in the narrative, it fails in other aspects due to the very same characteristics that make it appear ideal for the task in the first place. The following transitional section performs an analysis of the film's second sequence to point out the moments when its visual dimension obfuscates truly new modes of perception. This excursus then segues into a reading of Böll's rendering of the rubble in *Der Engel schwieg* – which openly references cinematic Expressionism – with the intention of highlighting literature's idiosyncratic approach to rubble-gazing.

IV. From Rubble Film to Rubble Literature: The Cinematic Ruin and Its Discontents

While *Die Mörder sind unter uns* successfully correlates physical movement with progress, it is not completely successful in setting up new genre markers – let alone an aesthetic – that match its daring agenda. The film eventually fails to expand on its expressionist borrowings, even though they repeatedly throw the film's themes into stark relief. Staudte relies on established conventions such that the only idiosyncratic images he conceives are those of the crisp black-and-white ruins. The visual force of the cinematic rubble is, however, also the film's greatest burden: the spectacle threatens to overshadow everything else, from cinematic inventiveness to dialogue. Dealing with what happened, this suggests, becomes palatable only in the guise of melodrama. The following section bridges the gap between film and literature by approaching the urban ruins from a different angle. It

prepares the ground for Heinrich Böll's novel *Der Engel schwieg*, which references cinematic techniques, by arguing that film gets tangled up in the stasis of photographic images and relies on established genres. Scholarship has looked at this intersection of Böll's writing and the history of cinema. Jennifer M. Kapczynski argues that in his 1954 novel *Haus ohne Hüter*, Böll "suggests that films help forge a national narrative, but expresses skepticism about the contributions of current cinema, which he criticizes for its investment in a systematic erasure of the past" (853). Kapczynski refers to the crisis of German postwar cinema, whose quality arguably became so bad that in 1961 no domestic recipient was deemed deserving of the German film prize for best motion picture. I would like to point out that *Der Engel schwieg* preceded the "cinematic novel" *Haus ohne Hüter* by several years and thus already prefigured the critique of the state of German postwar cinema, which was to be rectified only later with the emergence of the Young and New German Cinema of the 1960s and 70s.

As Kapczynski points out correctly, Böll believed that "the critical traditions of the cinema might, paradoxically, be kept alive in literature," while film itself rendered itself impotent in a whirl of *Heimat*-colored cotton candy (855).¹⁰⁷ Starting from this observation, I seek to take the "surrogate" role of literature even further and suggest a more complex relationship between cinema and Böll's semi-cinematic writing. My return to *Der Engel schwieg* also means that Böll had thought about the problems of German film *before* the Geva-colored *Heimatfilm* – as the epitome of its qualitative decay – produced its first great hit in 1951. Thus, I would like to return briefly to the genre that actually influenced Böll

¹⁰⁷I am referring to the popular genre of the escapist *Heimatfilm* that co-dominated the German market in the 1950s, which Wolfdietrich Schnurre called an utter failure and "the result of emphasis on entertainment and box office returns instead of cultural enlightenment" (quoted in Kapczynski, 853).

during the immediate postwar years, namely the rubble film. This proves that the author's play with color and light was not a direct response to the ubiquitous postcard-style of *Heimatfilm* – which, at best, were a parallel phenomenon – but rather a reaction to the limits of postwar film in its infancy. The preceding section has already touched upon the aesthetics of light and dark and its coding of brightness that dominates *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, both in the alteration between night and day and the stark contrasts of dark rubble and bright backgrounds. It is safe to say that the film shies away from visual and metaphorical grey areas.¹⁰⁸ Paying attention to the chiaroscuro lighting that Staudte employs to underscore Mertens's moral quest also enables us to see stylistic similarities to *Der Engel schwieg*, which in turn makes it possible to show where the novel breaks new ground and how it critiques the state of cinematic images. The sequence in Staudte's film in which Susanne Wallner returns to Berlin actually alludes to new – albeit ultimately unrealized – filmic ideas and sets up the altered modes of sensory perception and urban experience established in Böll's novel.

The sequence under consideration introduces Susanne as she arrives in Berlin on a train. The train brings home the displaced masses of modernity in general and Mertens's future love interest in particular. The filmic composition retains the canted angles so dominant in the opening sequence as the train pulls through a destroyed environment that visually cuts the frame in half diagonally, visually setting up a border line (see Fig 1.8.). The approaching train still functions but nevertheless signals its belonging to a different time and place with a still intact infrastructure, one that includes the concentration camps at which the train also hints. When it eventually arrives at the partly ruined station (after having literally

¹⁰⁸Dagmar Barnouw points out that “Staudte did not allow his human characters the shades of gray of their unstable, unreliable war memories” but concedes that “his filmic representation of the treacherous living rubble with its dangerously ambiguous shades of darkness [...] is still a remarkable achievement” (2008; 53).

cut urban space in halves), the train releases a large number of people which move directly toward (and past) the camera before the focus settles on a young woman, Susanne. She also comes, the montage insinuates, from another place, demarcated from the here and now into which the train intrudes. As the narrative of the film makes very clear, Susanne – even more so than Mertens, who is at least granted one visual and several aural flashbacks – is an individual completely without a past who has no direct influence on the spaces outside. Interestingly, it is her arrival that also signals the possibility of rupture of modern cinematic space *per se*.



Fig. 1.8. Susanne arrives in Berlin on a train, still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

Susanne's introduction into the reconfigured urban environment is intensified through a point-of-view shot, which is a significant choice given just how poorly fleshed-out her character is (3:24). Through her experiences at the concentration camp, she already knows how to look at the city, a perspective that Stephen Brockmann calls "female," and as such "breaks free from many of its Expressionist Weimar models" (2010; 205). The duration of the POV shot – a perspective which the audience is altogether denied in Mertens's case – is uncharacteristically long, a striking fact given that first-person perspective is often associated

with the unconventional in cinematic idioms.¹⁰⁹ Staudte does not take recourse to editing and thus evokes a certain continuity only to question it again by selecting unconventional angles and camera perspectives. He hints at the possibility of a coherent temporality among the spatial chaos and implies that the cinematic image is able to reveal and challenge the city's disjunctive quality – something the film alludes to throughout but never firmly establishes. As Susanne moves through the station hall, the POV shot approaches a faded poster that reads “das schöne Deutschland” [“the beautiful Germany”] (3:39; see Fig. 1.9.). Through Susanne's eyes, the film directly confronts the viewers with the task of establishing a new way of seeing, contrasting the photograph with the rubble. What is left undisclosed is in how far this is in fact an “unexpressionistic” gaze. When another lap dissolve replaces the photograph on the poster with the “real” ruins of a tall building, Staudte for the first time links the rubble to a sensorial shift that affects lived experience. The gradual replacement of one image with another simultaneously indexes continuity and rupture and in doing so complicates both. In her role as the driving force behind the coming of the new man, Susanne prefigures the importance of rubble-gazing so central to *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, while she herself remains cut-off from the city. Soon after her return to Berlin she has to fulfill the gender-biased conventions of popular US genres, such as the Western, the melodrama, or the film noir, to which Weimar cinema was an acknowledged forbearer.

¹⁰⁹The new media scholar Alexander R. Galloway aligns the first-person perspective either with characters which are “intoxicated, frightened, or otherwise out-of-joint” or with “aliens, criminals, monsters, or characters deemed otherwise inhuman” (2006; 50).



Fig. 1.9. Point-of-view shot from Susanne's perspective, still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.

When Susanne – by implication still equipped with the piercing gaze of the camera established in the preceding POV-shot – eventually arrives at the front of the house in which her apartment is located, the scene's composition shifts toward an inherently expressionist atmosphere. It is the first scene in *Die Mörder sind unter uns* to switch over to sound stages, and there is a short prelude to it that has so far been very much overlooked in academic discourse. I attribute the scene's profound uncanny quality to the presence of a force that threatens to tear open the fabric of Staudte's seemingly simplistic story of new beginnings. It is also the moment when Susanne actually "sees." The chiaroscuro lighting – with its vertical and horizontal beams confining the scenery and patches of light and darkness contrasting each other – sets the dream-like tone for Susanne's return and it is this scene that indeed points to Böll's more daring project of a new legibility of the city. The camera shows her from behind as she approaches the rugged façade of the building. Before she crosses the threshold into this more private space, she pauses briefly and gazes at her abode, a smile spreading on her face. This positive affective reaction sits squarely with the assumed outward projection of her tormented psychological disposition, which is why I suggest that the scene

is not simply an expressionist mindscape. It is also a comment on the state of the medium of film itself, and the role it plays in theories of reflection and representation. The audience is only able to see her smile because the camera zooms in, past Susanne, a technical feat that catches her reflection in a broken mirror as the underlying city “shines” through (5:13; see Fig. 1.10.). If we indeed see a subconscious symptom breaking through, it seems to be that of the film itself rather than solely that of its female protagonist.



**Fig. 1.10. Susanne arriving at her apartment, still from *Die Mörder sind unter uns*.
Copyright © by DEFA-Stiftung.**

The shattered mirror image of Susanne occurs in the first scene in the film that uses stage-sets instead of on-site locations, emphasizing the schizophrenic and artificial nature of cinema. To be sure, economic necessity and filmic convention dictated the use of sets, but it is still striking that Staudte initiates the first shift in art-direction in this scene. The mildly disturbing theatricality of the streets in front of Susanne’s apartment resonates with her reflection in the mirror and functions as a reminder that – as we learn from cinema itself – sensory perception is subject to manipulation. Staudte proposes an investigation into the status of the rubble which he believes to be wedged between physical construct and psychological reflection. Something hides in its cracks and fissures, bespeaking a complexity

that Mertens's quest never unearths. Toward the right of the frame we spot a make-shift fence, whose wooden bars only barely allow a powerful light to filter in, a visual hint at an illuminating force seeking to break through. With cinema being an art-form reliant on the light beam of the projector, I read the rays of light quelling through the rifts as the medium's attempt to produce new ways of cinematic representation. At the same time, the scene's expressionist feel gestures toward an involuntary and stifling over-utilization of the ruin as an all-too powerful visual marker, relying too strongly on its oneiric optics which relegate the ruin into the realm of dreams and myths and thus keep the "light" from breaking through to the other side. It literally blots out that which lurks behind the fence. In other words, the visual threatens to simply overpower other important faculties of experience, a brief moment of existential doubt in perception that is lacking elsewhere in the film.

This analysis of the film's struggle with its own mediality can even be taken further. After Susanne's arrival, a sequence follows in which she runs into Mertens in her old apartment. As has been discussed above, these indoor scenes are the first to employ dialogue, gesturing toward the role of language. Up to this point, the director conveys his intentions completely through cinematic means and background noise, suggesting that it is in fact a well-known visual language that "writes" Germany's narrative, a beaten path leading back to normalcy. While one could assume that the absence of spoken language in the first sequence – with the notable exception of some instances of the words written on walls – is an elaborate indictment of the standstill whose resolution is set in motion once the talking starts; it turns out that verbal communication remains secondary to the visuals of the movie throughout. This overall inferiority of verbal communication to seeing draws attention to Staudte's quest for an urban mobility that first and foremost depends on a visual awareness of the topography

of the city. And even though this chapter has isolated meaningful moments in the film's language – understood here as the optical language of cinema and its equation of camera movement with historical progress – Staudte assumes that there is *one* universally applicable way to look at the ruins. He thus suggests that spatiality and temporality can return to where they were before the war, an assumption that undermines any attempted break from the past.

Through his strong preference for the visual – even for cinematic standards – over other senses, Staudte not only underplays the importance of haptic and phatic impressions, he also implies that language does not constitute the primary arena in which Germany's guilt must be renegotiated; an interesting choice given the National Socialists' infatuation with an aggressive Aryan rhetoric and their reliance on radio as ideological transmitter. It should be reiterated that Staudte's cinematic rumination on ethics successfully addresses and deconstructs the Nazis' "aestheticization of politics" on the diegetic level, but fails to do the same for its rhetoric and its formal inventiveness.¹¹⁰ To be sure, juxtaposing the filmic (ideological) bombast of, say, a Leni Riefenstahl with an at times expressionist depiction of what the Third Reich had turned into over the course of 12 years offers a powerful visual accusation of National Socialism's wretched aspirations. Thus it operates metonymically in that it visualizes the then-and-now of Hitler's regime through the ruins of that which was supposed to last for a thousand years.¹¹¹ The remainder of this chapter shifts its attention to the relation between ruin-gazing and an aesthetic turn brought about in rubble literature. This

¹¹⁰I am referring, of course, to the famous last line of Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," "*such is the aestheticizing of politics, as practiced by fascism. Communism replies by politicizing art*" (2008, 42; italics in the original).

¹¹¹Julia Hell speculates whether the ruinous history – their historical index – of the Third Reich was inscribed in its cities from the beginning. Hitler's urban vision – as it was to be realized by Albert Speer – had been planned with its future ruins already in mind. "We do not know," Hell concludes, "whether Hitler and Speer expected their monuments to slowly disintegrate, be overtaken by nature, or be sacked by enemies. But we may safely assume that they did not expect them to be reduced to rubble by Allied air raids within four years" (186).

is not meant as a claim to literature's general superiority over cinema, but as a way to show how Böll's novel explicitly illuminates dark corners of rubble-gazing that remained off-limits to film precisely through the implementation of a decidedly black-and-white cinematic language in its opening chapters. Böll both foresees the looming crisis of German film and offers a proposal for its reversal before the fact. The didactic potential and the aesthetic of ruin-gazing in film thus resurface in Böll's text not as a bland imitation of cinema, but rather as a set of ideas that the author uses to cement his own claim for a new sensorium that moves beyond the predominantly visual and entertains the idea of unstable perspectives in the rubble.

Rubble is surprisingly absent from the academic discourse on Böll's *Trümmerroman Der Engel schwieg* (written from 1949 to 1950, rejected by the publishing house Middelhaue in 1951, and published posthumously in 1992) and urban walking is even further reduced in its impact insofar as it functions as an obstacle course and has nothing to do with the broader agenda of the genre.¹¹² The ruins in *Der Engel schwieg*, however, do more than just offer a setting in which an ethical quest unfolds. Hans Schnitzler, the novel's rubble-gazer, is not exclusively invested in an aesthetic of the humane; he also searches for a new mode of perception inscribed in the topography of Cologne. Gazing through his "eyes" this section compares the filmic with the literary ruin, arguing that the latter succeeds in an equally powerful and far-reaching, albeit different, renegotiation of the societal standstill. This renegotiation transpires not only in the realm of language, but also draws inspiration from the "language" of cinema, thus proposing new ways of seeing through language that

¹¹²Moray Mc Gowan stresses that many of Böll's early works deal with the "physical and moral rubble of the post-war German cities" (448). The 1952 essay, he concludes, "is a reminder that 'Trümmerliteratur' [...] was less an immediate post-war literary trend than a subsequent reaction to the aesthetic and ideological continuities manifest in much literature of the latter 1940s" (ibid).

build on the conventions of rubble film only to then go beyond them.¹¹³ This chapter thus focuses on Böll's novel not only because it is one of the seminal rubble texts but also because it is – as far as the medial differences allow – structurally similar to *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Both works portray a male character who returns from the front. Both characters embark on a quest for morality among the ruins of their respective hometowns.¹¹⁴ Both texts present a female counterpart who in one way or another aids the rubble-gazer in reentering the flow of things. Both incorporate theological undertones and a more or less overt religious symbolism.¹¹⁵ But the ultimate reason for the pairing of the two is their compatible treatment of visual tropes, their media differences notwithstanding.

In expressionist fashion, *Der Engel schwieg* and *Die Mörder sind unter uns* share an affinity with the interplay of light and darkness. The chiaroscuro lighting that produces

¹¹³The appropriation of film's black-and-white aesthetic for his literary texts is a frequent technique in Böll's writings. In his interpretation of Böll's 1954 novel *Haus ohne Hüter*, for example, Bernd Balzer detects a "Lichtdramaturgie des Films" ["filmic dramaturgy of light"] in the structure of the text (134). Jennifer Kapczynski argues that *Haus ohne Hüter*'s "episodic arrangement and flashback structure evokes the experimental film of the time" (852). In general, Christine Hummel adds, Böll's oeuvre is "maßgeblich durch formale Systemreferenzen auf das Medium Film geprägt" ["significantly influenced by formal references to the medium of film"] (93). Böll, she claims, "schreibt sich ein in die Tradition der literarischen Moderne, die mit den Mitteln des Films arbeitet" ["inscribes himself in the tradition of Modernism which works with filmic elements"] (ibid).

¹¹⁴*Der Engel schwieg* – like *Die Mörder sind unter uns* – thus clearly evolved out of the concrete urban mobility and rootlessness of the rubble years: Böll himself was not only a soldier but also an avid city walker. Viktor Böll et al point out that the young Böll was entranced by the city. The rise of the National Socialists triggered the loss of Böll's "gegenüber dem Schulbesuch alternativ bevorzugten Art seiner 'Lebensform' [...]: das Umherschweifen in den die Schule und sein Zuhause umgebenden Straßen" ["preferred way of life during his school years: namely the floating in the streets surrounding his school and his home"] (Viktor Böll et al, 19). Due to the Nazi terror in the streets, the city turned into "zerstörte[s] Gelände" ["destroyed terrain"] (ibid). Given the fact that Böll was drafted in 1939 and remained – except for some short periods of *Heimatururlaub* – on the front almost until the end of the war, it can be argued that he experienced the shock of the drastic reconfiguration of a metaphorically destroyed cityscape into an actual ruin.

¹¹⁵Christine Mielke singles out the historically Catholic Cologne as a city in which the "theologische Lesart der Trümmer" ["theological reading of the rubble"] can often be found (148). The relative intactness of the Cologne Cathedral, she argues, – and here she explicitly mentions *Der Engel schwieg* – "wird zu zum Zeichen für göttliches Wohlwollen" ["a sign of divine benevolence"] (ibid). We will later see why this reading is problematic in Böll's novel.

rubble film's "urban canyons" is instrumental in Böll's novel but then is later reversed by forceful color tropes, a stylistic device employed to symbolize the shift in perception that the text's protagonist undergoes.¹¹⁶ Although Böll extensively cites the chiaroscuro lighting of Germany's haunted screen – in particular during the first half of *Der Engel schwieg* – he also acknowledges this established cinematic style as problematic for the new course of postwar Germany. As one of the few scholars taking on the rubble in Böll's writing in its own right, Elizabeth Snyder Hook adopts the dominant reading of Staudte's rubble, claiming that the ruins in Böll's text are not only "presenting the damages sustained during the war in physical terms" (138).¹¹⁷ Böll, she states, also "considers Germany's inner destruction," its "physical and emotional upheaval," signified through the rubble, an interpretation that already is unsatisfying for any cinematic reading of Staudte's film and becomes even more limiting as a literary argument (ibid). In contradistinction to Hook's claims, I argue that the novel's frequent references to film are only a starting proposition for a text that eventually alters filmic techniques for literature's interest in surveying ground-zero Germany. In a nutshell, *Der Engel schwieg* evolves out of a monochromatic twilight into Technicolor, but also interrogates this development. As the narrative of the novel progresses, the rubble-gazer learns to disregard the old mental maps of Cologne, suggesting that the streets of the

¹¹⁶In her study on the intertextuality in Böll's work, Hummel, too, isolates "vereinzelt bildkünstlerische [Referenzen]" ["isolated references to the visual arts"] in *Der Engel schwieg*, but omits an in depth explanation as to why they dominate the text (67).

¹¹⁷Snyder Hook's reading contradicts McGowan who finds it problematic that Böll's protagonists' "very powerlessness and insignificance absolves them of moral responsibilities for events" (448-449). Rather, the question of the responsibility of ordinary people – Böll's well known "aesthetic of the humane" – is very much present in their interaction with the ruins as a commentary on the status quo of German guilt (McGowan 454).

disfigured city have to be approached with a new sensual arsenal that does not take recourse to older protocols of apperception.¹¹⁸

The working title of *Der Engel schwieg* was *Kinder des Lichts* [*Children of Light*], an allusion not only to the Bible but also to the German term *Lichtspiel* [play of light] – a synonym for *Kino* – featured so prominently in the novel and, as a motif, the gravitational center of my close reading.¹¹⁹ Still blinded by the “light” of explosions and detonations, Schnitzler adopts to the environment that is his “home,” but that also appears unhomely now.¹²⁰ The distinctively filmic quality at the beginning of *Der Engel schwieg* becomes apparent in a scene in which – and here I must disregard the chronology of the book momentarily – Schnitzler, visits a church, a scene that, as we remember, has a counterpart in Staudte’s film. Readers can take notice how the text deploys stark visual language conjuring up a dense black-and-white imagery: “die hohe graue Flanke der Kirche war aufgerissen zwischen zwei Pfeilerstützen, breit und hoch, und in der Öffnung stand das Tageslicht grau und hell” [“the tall, grey face of the church was torn open between two beams, vertically and

¹¹⁸Heinrich Vormweg states that while reading Böll he gets the impression that there is meaning “im Erlebnis der Straße [...], nicht der Straßen als hohler Fassaden, sondern als belebter Straßen, als Straßen, in denen es hin und her ging” [“in the urban experience, not mere in the hollow facades of the streets, but as lively places, streets full of life”] (82).

¹¹⁹Anke Gleber reminds us eloquently that “fairgrounds, markets, streets, and cinema [...] belong to the traditional haunts of of scopophilia. [...] The flâneur is most vividly affected by the lights on display: an enthusiasm for visual shocks that relates his spectatorship and the scenes he views to the spaces and *Lichtspiele* of early cinema” (71). The German play of words on “light” and “play” encapsulates the idea of flickering, moving images as well.

¹²⁰Götz Großklaus reads the erasure of the cities as a “kollektive Erfahrung des Verlustes von ‘Herkunftswelt’ und ‘Heimat’” which “machte die deutsche Nachkriegsgesellschaft ,ortlos’” (122). As a result, he claims, “verfiel sie einer ans Zwanghaft grenzenden (Auto-)Mobilität” (ibid). Quoting Böll’s expose, Middelhaue’s 1950 publishing note identifies a “heimkehrende Generation, die weiß, daß es keine Heimat auf dieser Welt gibt” [“a returning generation that know that there no such thing as home in this world”] (see Bellmann, 1994, 193).

horizontally, and in this opening daylight stood grey and bright”] (Engel 123).¹²¹ The atmosphere is solemn and quiet – the light actually stands still – evoking the aural quality of a silent film in which inter-titles inform viewers, “drinnen war es still” [“it was quiet inside”] (Engel 123).¹²² Schnitzler perceives a ruined building where “aus dem großen Riß in der Flanke fiel das Licht grell in die Zerstörung” [“the blinding light spilled into the destruction through the crack in the façade”], a silent space cut into by rays of light, staged as an expressionist tableau (Engel 123).

The scene retains the stark, static contrast between light and dark spaces: “Ein breiter Mauerriß zeichnete sich scharf und schwarz wie das Schattenbild einer Treppe von oben bis unten ab. Oben im Gewölbe stand der Himmel wie ein scharf ausgezacktes Stück Grau, und er sah einen zweiten tiefe Riß, der bis in die große Flankenwunde lief, schmal werdend, mit hellem Licht gefüllt [war]” [“a wide cleft in the wall delineated a black, sharp, shadow-image reminiscent of a descending staircase. Up there in the vault the sky stood like a sharply ragged piece of grey that stretched as far as the building’s wound, gradually narrowing and filled with bright light”] (Engel 123-124). The destruction also affects several statues and

¹²¹Hummel reads the religious motifs in the novel as follows: “In [...] *Der Engel schwieg* werden die sich in menschlichen Schicksalen (vor allem der Kriegsheimkehrer) abzeichnenden Kriegsfolgen mit alttestamentarischer Bildlichkeit umschrieben. Auf diese Weise wird die Nazivergangenheit Deutschlands als Grund für die Verwüstungen des Krieges transzendierte und dem (gläubigen) Rezipienten ein Bewältigungsmuster für die erlittenen Beschädigungen angeboten” [“*Der Engel schwieg* circumscribes the effects of the war, mostly the fates of those coming home, in an old-testament imagery. This transfigures Germany’s Nazi past into the cause of the destruction and offers the (religious) recipient a means to cope with the suffered damage”] (54).

¹²²There is also an aural dimension to *Der Engel schwieg*. Whereas Staudte’s “silent” opening sequence overloads its visuals with meaning, *Der Engel schwieg* suggests that there is a story inscribed even when no one talks. Schnitzler enters the crypt, the place from where he hears “Gesang unter sich” [“singing from down below”] (Engel 125). These voices – in the form of a religious song – “klangen dünn, gefiltert, engelhaft, es schienen nur wenige zu sein, sie sangen ohne Begleitung” [“sounded thin, filtered, angelic, there only seemed to be a few and they sang without accompaniment”], they are weak and difficult to hear (Engel 126). These sounds ascend from the realm of death – the crypt – and are sung in a “dead” language, foreshadowing the critical role of communication in the novel.

religious figures, one of which, although not located in this church proper, is the novel's titular angel. The statues remain "stumm" ["mute"] and "blass" ["pale"], figures that in their "Verblichenheit leuchtend" ["shining in their faded appearance"] convey both corporeality and dissolution [ibid]. The whole composition, I contend, conflates church and movie theatre, dark places illuminated meekly by a source of light that produces fading visual images. This play of "light and darkness" – according to Lotte Eisner a tension between the natural and the artificial, the real and the fantastic – is the very stuff of expressionist filmmaking. *Der Engel schwieg* thus locates the German postwar city at the threshold between reality and image so that both paradigms bleed into each other.

In general, the cinematic techniques emulated in *Der Engel schwieg* renegotiate Cologne via their reference to film. Schnitzler, for example, descends into the ground below the church, where "die Gewölbe" ["the catacombs"] in his claustrophobic angst, "schienen sich zu neigen [...], stürzen und ihn [zu] begraben" ["seemed to bend, ready to tumble down and to bury him"] (Engel 126). He experiences space as inherently unstable and the visual language borrowed from film allows Böll to convey the otherworldly quality of rubble-space. When Schnitzler finally meets the chaplain, his smile "erschien ihm überirdisch, fast so unwirklich wie der helle und reine Gesang, der aus der Krypta zu ihm hochgestiegen war" ["appeared to be celestial, almost as surreal as the clear and pure chant that ascended from the crypt"] (Engel 128). Even the pivotal character of the chaplain is „almost unreal,” emphasizing the camera-like quality of Schnitzler's perception. Tellingly, when the chaplain offers food to Schnitzler and the latter tries to grab it, "es gelang ihm nicht" ["he couldn't"], indicating not only a lack of stamina but also the presence of two planes of existence (Engel 130). Böll suggests that it is necessary to adjust one's perceptual modes to renegotiate

Germany space in the destroyed cities – and the reader should be on the lookout for these new instruments of orientation. After having identified the novel's expressionist foundation, I read the novel as a meditation on perception and communication. I look in particular for instances of seeing as the protagonist traverses the bombed-out city and readjusts to Cologne's sensual stimuli and recast topography.

V. Coloring Cologne: Cinematic References in *Der Engel schwieg*

In his apologetic speech “Bekenntnis zur Trümmerliteratur” [“In Defense of Rubble Literature”], Heinrich Böll suggests a correlation between the visual and the literary, a correlation also apparent in the working title of his essay, “Das Auge des Schriftstellers” [“The eye of the author”]. It cannot be conclusively proven that Böll had actually seen *Die Mörder sind unter uns* prior to penning *Der Engel schwieg*. However, Böll was a “self-styled cultural critic [with] a strong interest in the development of German film” and it can be assumed that he was very familiar with the genre if not a particular title (Kapczynski, 852). When he released his novel *Und sagte kein einziges Wort* [And never said a mumbling word] in 1953, four years after *Die Mörder sind unter uns* had been screened in West Germany, he recycled the beginning of *Der Engel schwieg* almost verbatim, an indication that his evaluation of the filmic style had not changed.¹²³ If anything, the development of German film during the period of the economic miracle fortified Böll's assessment that aesthetic sensibilities were still an area of contention. As this section argues, the aesthetic of *Der*

¹²³Böll expanded several fragments into the full-fledged novel *Der Engel schwieg* between 1949 and 1950. The Opladen based publishing house Middelhaue announced the work as a release scheduled for 1951 under the title *Der Engel schwieg*. However, the novel remained unpublished until 1992, although variations of certain sections (including some characters) actually made appearances in other texts by Böll, most notably *Und sagte kein einziges Wort* which is often considered its sister novel. For a detailed analysis of the “recycled” passages from *Der Engel* in *Und sagte kein einziges Wort* see Werner Bellmann's essay “Von ‚Der Engel schwieg‘ zu ‚Und sagte kein einziges Wort.‘” The opening sequence of *Der Engel schwieg* returns verbatim in *Und sagte kein einziges Wort*, with the notable distinction that in the latter a woman stumbles across the angel statue.

Engel schwieg undergoes a significant transformation as it starts out with the expressionist imagery discussed above before it moves to the implementation of complicated color codes in order to intervene, via literature, in debates on ethics.

Let us take a step back then and refamiliarize ourselves with *Der Engel schwieg*. Böll's story revolves around Hans Schnitzler, a deserter who returns to his hometown on the Rhine on May 8, 1945, the date of Germany's capitulation. The day of Schnitzler's homecoming thus coincides with the beginning of Germany's *Zero Hour*, the hotly debated "new beginning" of the German narrative. Upon his return to Cologne, Schnitzler carries with him the last will and testament of his fellow soldier Gompertz who, through complex circumstances, switched identities with Schnitzler only to be later executed for going AWOL. Plagued by guilt, Schnitzler seeks out Gompertz's wife Elisabeth in order to fulfill the last wishes of her late husband. On his way through the ruins Schnitzler also acquires a worn-out coat in whose pockets he finds an envelope with an address written on it. The plot then follows Schnitzler on his walks through the city, first to Elisabeth's apartment and subsequently to the address on the envelope – an itinerary determined both by chance events and the imperative to deliver a message. At the latter location he meets Regina Unger, a widow, who allows the homeless Schnitzler to move into her dilapidated apartment. Amidst the everyday struggle for food and other means of sustenance, a delicate love story develops between them. After several aimless strolls through Cologne – its streets, hospitals, and churches – Schnitzler breaks out of his apathy and embraces life again. *Der Engel schwieg* is a collection of loosely connected vignettes bound together by a moral project. The project is invested in Germany's return to normalcy, and thus unquestionably reminiscent of rubbles

films such as *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, from which it also borrows with regard to visual style.¹²⁴

While the sequence in the church discussed above arguably constitutes the strongest expressionist moment with regard to Schnitzler's quest, the novel operates with a multitude of similarly expressionist scenes. It is thus helpful to return to the beginning of the narrative and to note that it oscillates between two protagonists: Hans Schnitzler and the villainous Dr. Fischer. My close reading centers on the former, since his scenes are those that deal with urban movement while the latter remains static. The novel's first sentence evokes a dilapidated urban environment, abruptly introducing the protagonist Schnitzler in the third person. The protagonist's entry into the story takes place in a decisively slow-paced fashion, reminiscent of Mertens's first appearance in *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, even though we see the latter for the first time during the day. Schnitzler, the text insinuates, belongs to the night. Böll establishes his *Heimkehrer* [homecomer] instantly as part of the city, already a part of the rubble, even though this is by no means a positive condition. "Der Feuerschein aus dem Norden der Stadt war stark genug, ihn die Buchstaben über dem Portal erkennen zu lassen: ‚...cent-Haus‘ las er und stieg vorsichtig die Stufen hinauf" ["the glow of the fire from the northern part of the city allowed him to read the letters above the entrance: ‚...cent-house‘ he read and carefully climbed the stairs"] (Engel 5). The glow of the fire that illuminates the urban landscape emphasizes the importance of light and darkness as recurring stylistic devices in the novel. This homecomer is on a nocturnal walk – illuminated only by the distant fire, moonlight, and electric light "aus einem Kellerfenster" ["from a basement window"] – confronted by the fragmentation of urban space (Engel 5). As the letters "...cent-

¹²⁴In addition, Elisabeth's story intersects with that of Dr. Fischer, a relative of the deceased Herr Gompertz. Although being a hardline Catholic, the scrupulous Fischer challenges the testament for personal financial gains. Due to his scheming, Elisabeth loses the money and eventually dies.

Haus” imply, the building on which they are printed is destroyed: like its protagonist, the landscape in *Der Engel schwieg* is marked by destruction. The scene, too, evokes the black-and-white cinematic tableau of an ephemeral expressionist underworld dominated by ruins in which the window itself resembles a screen.

Schnitzler walks slowly through the darkness, his shadow “ein schwaches Gespenst mit schlackernden Armen, das sich aufblähte und dessen Kopf schon über den Rand der Mauer hinweg ins Nichts gekippt war” [“a weak ghost with dangling arms that grew bigger and whose head had already tilted over the wall into nothingness”] (Engel 5). The literary rubble-gazer appears grotesquely disfigured, a tottering apparition walking in the shadows of Expressionism.¹²⁵ Its ghostly qualities mark Schnitzler as an entity external to earthly realms as his extremities seemingly stretch into oblonged shapes. Schnitzler walks over some “Glassplitter” – the broken remains of a window, probably – before becoming aware of a “Gestalt im Dunkeln” [“figure in the dark”], establishing the novel’s leitmotif of untrustworthy sensory perceptions (Engel 5). He is startled at first, but then “erkannte im schwachen Licht einen steinernen Engel mit wallenden Locken, der eine Lilie in der Hand hielt” [“in the faint illumination he recognized an angel statue with flowing locks that held a lily in his hand”] (ibid).¹²⁶ The eponymous angel, however, is silent, a static monument

¹²⁵Later the reader learns that walking the city is “ein schrecklicher Kampf” [“a terrible struggle”] (Engel 128). At one point, Schnitzler “schleppte [...] schleppte sich schon neun Stunden durch die Trümmer der Stadt und hatte nichts bekommen, nicht einmal das, was ihm versprochen gewesen war” [“had dragged himself through the rubble for nine hours and gotten nothing, not even that which had been promised to him”] (ibid).

¹²⁶As Christine Hummel states, this “Insigne verweist auf Gabriel, dessen Name aus dem Hebräischen übertragen ‚die Stärke oder Schöpfungskraft Gottes bedeutet’ [“insignia points to Gabriel, whose name in Hebrew means God’s strength and power of creation”] (50). She concludes that he “ist der Engel der Verkündigung und der Zeugung, der Geburt und aller Anfänge” [“is the angel of revelation and conception, of birth and beginnings”] (ibid). It is apparent that Böll uses the statue ironically during a period in dire need of these characteristics – however, Gabriel is not the one to bring them about. “Vertical” signifiers of religion – the Cologne Cathedral comes to mind – are conspicuously absent. Rather, Böll – in the spirit of the French Catholic

whose “Gesicht und Haar [...] mit dichtem dunklem Staub bedeckt [waren]” [“face and hair were covered in thick, dark dust”] (Engel 6). Schnitzler’s initial excitement for the statue gives way to disappointment as soon as he brushes off the layer of dust that covers the icon and thus reveals the “grausame Lack der Frömmigkeitsindustrie” [“gruesome varnish of the piety industry”] (ibid). Instead of a religious icon, the angel is revealed as an inferior copy and a mere commodity. Schnitzler’s reliance on vision deceives him, a hint at the novel’s endorsement of an attentive gaze that pierces the surface and questions the possibility of a universal understanding and a synchronized world-view.

After this sobering encounter, Schnitzler enters the basement of the hospital where he hopes to find Elisabeth. He is immediately engulfed by “schwüle, säuerliche Luft” [“humid, acidic air”] (Engel 6). He accesses an underground cavern in which “[es] von irgendwo tropfte” [“it dripped somewhere”] so that “[sich] die Flüssigkeit [...] mit Staub und Schutt [vermengte] und [...] die Stufen glitschig wie den Boden eines Aquariums [machte]” [“the liquid blended with dust and debris and rendered the ground slick like in a fish tank”] (ibid). The aquarium analogy sets up an environment in which movement is considerably slowed down and communication distorted into muffled underwater echoes. Even though he moves from darkness into the flickering neon light, his vision remains deficient. Schnitzler spots a sign that reads “Röntgensaal, bitte nicht eintreten” [“X-ray room, please do not enter”], a medical technique that allows insights into the state of things otherwise imperceptible to the unaided human eye (ibid). However, these insights are by implication distorted, since the

and language philosopher Leon Bloy – finds grace coupled with poverty and argues more a more “down to earth” approach toward faith.

x-ray is only a black-and-white abstraction of the actual body (ibid).¹²⁷ For the time being, Schnitzler does not really see, regardless of the increase in illumination brought about by the neon-light. Looking for Gompertz he runs into a nun, who tells him about Gompertz's discharge two days earlier and advises him to "geben Sie acht, es sind viele Streifen auf der Straße. Man ist sehr streng" ["be careful, there are a lot of police in the streets. They are very strict"] (Engel 12). While this statement literally admonishes Schnitzler – the deserter – to be careful, it also advises him to function analogously to the x-ray: that is to screen the underlying structures of the city and reveal what remains unseen by the naked eye.

Eventually, Schnitzler talks to a doctor who hesitantly helps him out with papers from a dead patient and bestows a worn-out coat on him. When Schnitzler asks the doctor for the papers, the latter first calls him "verrückt" ["crazy"], the former counters, saying "Ich will nicht in Gefangenschaft. Ich wohne hier, habe allerlei zu tun – zu *suchen*" ["I don't want to go to prison. I live here and have a lot to do – to *look for* something"] (my emphasis, Engel 14). What exactly he is searching for remains unsaid – he is, however, not just referring to his task of delivering a message to Elisabeth. Given the way the narrative unfolds, Schnitzler is on a quest for a new home, both physically and metaphysically.¹²⁸ His task forces Schnitzler to come out of hiding, leaving the underground behind in order to deliver messages and to learn that old protocols of navigation are no longer valid. In the pockets of his "new" coat Schnitzler finds a letter that the former owner had put there. The address on the letter reads

¹²⁷We find the motif of the x-ray also in Staudte's film. The windows in Susanne's apartment are in part covered with x-rays as a means to isolate the place. In both texts they signify and focus on the act of looking into underlying structures, linking *Der Engel schwieg* and *Die Mörder sind unter uns* through their use of symbolism. Böll also used it as a metaphor when he talked about the author Wolfgang Borchert and called for a "writer's X-ray gaze," the ability to see what has not yet "surfaced in the optical realm" (quoted in Kapczynski, 851).

¹²⁸One of the many aliases which Schnitzler uses during the course of the novel is Erich Keller, literally "cellar," a name fitting for someone hiding in the basements of the city.

“Regina Unger [...], Märkische Straße 17” and curiosity prompts Schnitzler to embark on a second journey through the city in order to find the unknown woman. His urge to find Unger suggests an element of chance as Schnitzler is driven by the vague possibility of new encounters. As soon as he ascends back to the surface – leaving the “stöhnende[n] Menschen” [“sighing human beings”] behind – Schnitzler seeks out his former apartment and “die Stelle, an der das Haus gestanden hatte, fand er sofort” [“he immediately found the location at which the house had stood”] (Engel 23). The adjustment of his modes of sensory perception begins at this point.

Schnitzler resumes his walks and navigates the city “an der Zahl der Schritte, die von der Straßenkreuzung noch zu gehen waren, oder irgend etwas an der Anordnung der Baumstümpfe, die einmal eine hohe und schöne Allee gebildet hatten” [“by counting the number of steps it took to walk from the intersection to the building, or something about the formation of the tree trunks that had once flanked the wide and beautiful avenue”] (Engel, 23). Cologne is a waste land, in which “ihm lange Zeit keine Menschen [begegneten]” [“for a while he met no other people”] (Engel 43). Rubble-gazing, coupled with the readjustment of the sensual apparatus, Böll insinuates, is an energy-consuming task. “Um vom Gürtel zur Rubensstraße zu kommen” [“It took him almost an hour to get from the belt to the Rubensstreet,”] the narrator observes, “brauchte er fast eine Stunde, für einen Weg, den er früher in zehn Minuten hatte gehen können” [“a route that he had walked in ten minutes before the war”] (Engel 43). This reduction of speed can be explained through the physical obstacles the rubble gazer has to circumvent, but there is also a distortion at work that evokes cinematic techniques in order to express spatial incongruity. This alludes to the persistence of vision, the cinematic phenomenon that turns 24 frames per second into the semblance of

movement and edits together discrete images so that spatial and temporal coordinates become seemingly continuous. *Der Engel schwieg* presupposes cinema's logic (and the reader's knowledge thereof) and its ability to create the illusion of coherence when there is none as a point of departure.

Der Engel schwieg replicates the tension between continuity displayed on the surface and a disruption occurring at a deeper, syntactical level. During the one and a half pages devoted to Schnitzler's walk through the rubble – strikingly disproportionate to the prolonged time-span it actually takes him to get from point A to B – the word “scheinen,” to appear or to seem, is used frequently, tearing holes in the fabric of the text:

In der Rubenstraße *schien* kein Haus mehr zu stehen, [...] hinter einer Kulisse leergebrannter Hausfassaden hörte er schwere Fahrzeuge brummen, die in Richtung Rhein zu fahren *schienen* [...]. Vom Hause Nummer 8 stand noch ein Eingang und ein paar Zimmer unten *schienen* heil zu sein. (my emphasis, Engel 43-44)

[In the Rubensstreet no house *seemed* to be intact, behind the setting of several flame-cut facades he heard the hum of heavy vehicles that *seemed* to drive toward the Rhine. The entrance to building number 8 was still intact and several rooms *seemed* to be untouched]

Schnitzler begins to perceive the rubble as a mere semblance of the former city, a mirage that prompts him to second-guess his methods of navigation. Aural and, in particular, visual signals are presented as unreliable so that the rubble gazer has to devise new ways of “seeing” the city. Schnitzler enters a building, leaving behind a space in which “alle [...] langsam gingen” [“everybody moved really slowly”], as if in slow-motion and thus separated

ontologically from him (Engel 43). Schnitzler ultimately meets Gompertz as he looks “durch ein bläuliches Oberlicht in die leere schwarz-gebrannte Hülle des Hauses hinein” [“he looked through a blue-limned skylight into the blackened shell of the building”] and again our attention is drawn to corrupted and compromised techniques of looking. The bluish glass taints Schnitzler’s vision, a plausible reference to early cinema’s use of tinting, a technique in which different uniform colors were painted onto each frame, sometimes in assembly line fashion, giving the impression of color (Engel 45).¹²⁹ As he presents Elisabeth the testament, his way of looking at the city begins to evolve further, away from the austere black-and-white or tinted aesthetic of expressionist cinema toward what we might think of as an explosion of colors.

After his visit with Elisabeth, Schnitzler’s incentive to keep walking through the transforming landscape is a “zusammengeknüllte[r] Briefumschlag” [“crumpled envelope”], on which he finds a random name and address (Engel 54). He reads it again and begins his search for Regina. As soon as Schnitzler sets out on his new goal, the cityscape transforms significantly, “die Trümmer, durch die er nun gehen musste waren anderer Art” [“the rubble through which he walked were suddenly different”] (ibid). Color seeps into the scenery as the rubble turns into “mit dichtem Grün überwucherte Hügel, auf denen kleine Bäumchen wuchsen” [“lush hills, covered with green grass, on which small trees grew”], and therewith leaves behind the chiaroscuro poetics of rubble film (ibid). The city resembles “sanfte kleine Hügel, zwischen denen die Straßen wie Hohlwege erschienen, friedliche ländliche Hohlwege” [“delicate, small hills between which the streets appeared as narrow passes, peaceful and pastoral”] (ibid). Schnitzler’s gaze lingers on lush pastoral scenes, overgrown and reclaimed by nature, a stark contrast to the sepia-toned cinematic moments earlier in the

¹²⁹See William H. Phillips’s *Film: An Introduction*, p. 65 for a detailed account of this technique.

text, such as the one in the church or at the hospital. He gains a new perspective that allows him to see the ruins not as a stage or set, but rather as a natural landscape. Schnitzler enters these paths, “er ging sehr lange in diesem Hohlweg” [“followed this narrow pass for a long time”] and passes over into a new urban-pastoral space, a changed ecology (ibid).

However, urban space is not simply naturalized, the strangely bucolic idyll – the new media ecology – is “von groben Holzmasten gesäumt, die die Hochleitung der Straßenbahn trugen” [“lined by crude wooden beams that carried the power lines for the trams”] (Engel 54). Not only are the signifiers of modernity still part of the landscape, Böll’s word choice – “Hohlweg,” literally a hollow pass – simultaneously conveys a notion of instability and the idea that the hollow path is engulfed by but also demarcated from the more modern remainder of Cologne. Despite Schnitzler’s newfound purpose to find Regina – and the perceptual distance to the urban destruction this apparently grants him – the city still carries traces of the starkly drawn monochromatic image with its patches of sensual deprivation and overstimulation. What complicates this simultaneity of layers further is the fact that Böll’s story infuses itself with simplistic symbolism in which color equals a new way of seeing with critical depth. So while the narrative sets up splashes of color as a powerful contrast to foregoing black-and-white visuals, it nevertheless is keenly careful not to reduce such claims to a flat analogy. Pointing to cinematic registers as much as he does, Böll complicates the perceptual transition – the making transparent of the city – he exercises in front of our reading “eyes”.

It is important to note that the mediated landscape is not completely rendered in Technicolor. Rather we find a black-and-white screen dotted with splashes of color, a composition that alludes to the permeability of borders and the leaky demarcations of styles.

This juxtaposition of expressionist “spell of light” with bursts of color is not without historical significance. During the Third Reich, Stephen Brockmann notes, “color film was to be part of the German effort to compete with and ultimately defeat American cinema” (2010; 147). *Agfacolor*, then, in particular in extravaganzas such as Veit Harlan’s 1945 morale booster *Kolberg*, was an attempt to elevate German cinema technologically and ideologically beyond the black-and-white heights to which it had long aspired. With the emergence of the *Heimatfilm* in the West only a few years after the debut of the first rubble film, *Gevacolor*, too, became the color film stock of choice for materializing fantasies of *Heimat* rooted in an ethical codex of community.¹³⁰ In light of the illusions of color from the past and the future, Staudte’s rubble film *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, for example, punctuates the fact that Nazis considered expressionism’s “feeling for chiaroscuro” as grounds for its defamation as a “degenerate art;” if Staudte’s film “is [...] a stylistic proclamation that the Nazi period has come to an end not just politically but also artistically,” then Böll’s return to the use of color imagery can be reasonably read as a reclaiming of an aesthetic that was tainted by National Socialism (Brockmann, 2010; 199). Since Böll, of course, does not simply propose the renunciation of black-and-white aesthetics as the remedy to fascism, his kaleidoscope of linguistic imagery is rather a powerful statement on the fluidity of perception and the openness of genre.

However, not all that shines vibrantly is coded affirmatively. Not yet having readjusted his senses completely, Schnitzler has a difficult time switching between different patterns of perception. While waiting for the tram, Schnitzler “erblickte sehr weit hinter diesen grünen Hügeln die Silhouetten ausgebrannter Häuser und die häßlichen Stümpfe

¹³⁰For a detailed account on *Heimatfilm*, see in particular the introduction to Johannes von Moltke’s 2005 book *No Place like Home*, pp. 1-18.

zerstörter Kirchen” [“he spotted the silhouettes of gutted houses and the ugly stumps of bombed-out spires far away behind these green hills”] (Engel 55). These sights, simultaneously evoking the destroyed Cologne and the spatially and temporally distant battlefields of the Second World War, function as a backdrop to a green landscape, creating a parallax between foreground and background that visualizes a clash of optical layers. Looking around, Schnitzler discovers “die Lichtreklame einer Bar, die innerhalb eines großen Ringes einen Hahn gezeigt hatte” [“the neon-sign of a bar that had displayed a rooster in a large ring”] (ibid). The neon sign depicts “einen tanzenden Gockel, dessen feuerrotes Licht inmitten der gelben und blauen und grünen Reklamen immer aufgefallen war” [“a dancing rooster whose fiery light amidst the yellow and blue and green advertisements had always attracted his attention”] (ibid). The green hills are by no means easily distinguishable from the world of commodities as their colors indeed bleed into each other. While the “sanfte Hügel” [“soft hills”] bespeak a romantic idea of the German ruin, the neon-sign signals a more recent, personal, and mundane past: a symbolic conflation of past and future. The colorful advertisements compliment the green hills and at the same time are set apart from them. Their ultimately irreconcilable opposition and the impossibility of establishing clear lines of demarcation emphasizes their unstable condition and the need for a perceptive adjustment that might ultimately be incapable of focusing on both planes at the same time. In fact, Schnitzler “warf seinen Blick zurück” [“he cast a glance back”] and perceives the two layers shifting back and forth between depth and flatness, between blurriness and sharp focus as he tries to juggle impressions, both present and past (Engel 55).

The desired moment of congruence between the two layers in the *Vexierbild* [puzzle-picture] might be impossible to achieve; any rubble-gazer has to attune his perception to the

barrage of conflicting perspectives as completely as possible. Those still operating within the established visual register – in *Der Engel schwieg* represented through the aesthetic of rubble film – have not yet attained this new way of seeing as they cling to old conventions and rigid ecologies. What is more, these spectral individuals constitute a majority in the streets.

Schnitzler observes that “allmählich [...] sich Leute an der Station [sammelten]; es war nicht ersichtlich woher sie kamen, sie schienen aus den Hügeln zu wachsen, unsichtbar, unaufhörbar, schienen aus dieser Ebene des Nichts aufzuerstehen, Gespenster, deren Weg und Ziel nicht zu erkennen war” [“step by step people gathered at the station; he couldn’t tell where they came from, they appeared to emerge out of the hills, perpetually they seemingly rose from this plane of nothingness, specters whose path and goal was indeterminable”] (ibid). The systematic references to cinematic techniques in *Der Engel schwieg* attribute a particular incorporeal aura to these aimless wanderers who seemingly appear out of thin air, disregarding spatial and temporal continuities. Schnitzler, who struggles fiercely to get his vision into sharp focus, is set up as a counterexample, someone capable of perceiving the contradictions embedded in the city’s multiple visual fields. The text resorts to sights and sounds as the surface symptoms of these contradictions, for example “als das Kreischen und Klingeln der Bahn zu hören waren” [“when the screeching and ringing of the trains became audible”], shocking Schnitzler out of his apathy (ibid). What *Der Engel schwieg* is after, then, is the realization that the adaptation to the new situation has to happen on a personal level.

As the love story between Regina and Schnitzler evolves, his ability to navigate the city improves, and his mobility increases accordingly. “Er ging so schnell er konnte, wählte die Straßen, in deren Mitte schmale Gänge ausgeschaufelt waren, und erreichte die Straße,

von der die Rubenstraße abzweigte schon um neun” [“he walked as fast as he could, picked those streets in which narrow paths had been excavated and reached the street from which the Rubensstraße branched off already at 9am”] (Engel 89). Whereas earlier in the story his movements are considerably slowed down, Schnitzler now traverses urban space with great ease. The newfound agility excites him, so that he “sich auf die Trümmer der Badeanstalt [setzte] um das Pochen seines Herzens zur Ruhe kommen zu lassen” [“sat down on the rubble of the public pool to calm down his heartbeat”] (Engel 90). Again the color green seeps in and breaks through the surface, suggesting that it is actually a biological process that propels Germany forward: “Die grünen Kacheln der Badeanstalt waren vom Regen und Schnee der letzten Tage ganz sauber geworden, sie strahlten im Sonnenschein; irgendwo lag eine Kabinentür, grüngestrichen, hellgrün mit einem schwarz-weiß emaillierten Nummernschild” [“The green tiles of the public pool had been cleaned by rain and snow over the last days, they gleamed in the sunlight; somewhere lay a changing room door, painted in lime green and adorned with a black-and-white enamel sign”] (ibid). Within this diorama of the city, colored motifs of progress enter the scenery very explicitly, gradually preparing the reader for the text’s final moments that will starkly contrast with Schnitzler’s experiences. The narrator notices that “man konnte das Datum der Zerstörung an der Bewachung der Trümmer feststellen: es war eine botanische Frage” [“it was possible to determine the date of its destruction through the rubble’s degree of overgrowth: it was a botanical question”] and it is here that Schnitzler rediscovers life in the destruction (ibid). It is no coincidence that, after he realizes the creative potential of botanical forces, he immediately perceives “zwei Jungen [die] jetzt über die Trümmer geklettert [waren]” [“two boys who climbed over the rubble”] (Engel 91). They literally deconstruct the ruin and “fingen an, die herausgeschleuderte

Kabinentür sachkundig auseinanderzuziehen” [“started to take the changing room door apart like professionals”] (ibid).

When the novel’s perspective switches to Dr. Fischer, the epitome of the “Frömmigkeitsindustrie” [“piuosness industry”], a Catholic without compassion, Böll demonstrates, using medial metaphors, how Fischer misreads his environment. For the negatively connoted Fischer, the “dunklen Fensterrahmen” [“dark windowframes”] frame “das phantastische Bild der Trümmer: rauchgeschwärzte Häuserflanken [...] – grünüberwucherte Haufen” [“the fantastic scenery of the rubble: façades blackened by smoke – overgrown piles”] (Engel 96). Fischer is incapable of reading the city. For him the rubble remains a mere image seen through the rectangular shape of the window, reminiscent of the silver screen. In contrast to the chapters that feature Schnitzler, Fischer is never shown walking the city. Rather he remains static, content with looking at Cologne. While Schnitzler arduously reconfigures his perception, the villainous Dr. Fischer illegally appropriates the testament of Elisabeth’s husband, which will make a friend of his – Elisabeth’s father-in-law – the sole beneficiary of the inheritance.¹³¹ After Dr. Fischer forcefully takes the testament from Schnitzler, the latter returns to his beloved Regina where his final engagement with the rubble ensues. Disappointed by the cold-blooded calculation of the opportunistic Catholic Dr. Fischer, Schnitzler stumbles across the angel statue from the beginning of the narrative of one last time. As Schnitzler leaves the hospital after the altercation with Dr. Fischer, he perceives “die Figur im vollen Licht” [“the statue in full light”], suggesting that Schnitzler is seeing clearly now. At first, “die Figur schien ihm zu winken” [“the statue seemed to wave“]

¹³¹ As far as Regina is concerned, Böll makes it very clear that thanks to her, Schnitzler manages to cope with his existence in the rubble. “Er hatte das Leben angenommen, und es drängte sich für ihn hier zusammen: eine kurze Spanne Unendlichkeit, die voll Schmerz und Glück war...” [“he had accepted life and it condensed into this moment: a short moment of infinity, full of pain and joy”] (Engel 136).

but when Schnitzler turns slowly to face the angel, he realizes “die starren Augen blickten an ihm vorbei,” [“the motionless eyes gazed past by him”], revealing its smile as a “schmerzliches Lächeln” [“painful one”] (Engel 185). Its movements are eventually only figments of Schnitzler’s imagination while in fact there is only standstill. But the narrative does not stop here and moves once again from light to darkness. The novel’s last chapter focuses on Dr. Fischer – who still dwells in the monochromatic twilight – and thus functions as a frame of reference, suggesting that the standstill remains valid for some but not for others.

At Elisabeth’s funeral Dr. Fischer hands over the last will and testament of her husband to her father-in-law, who then tears it to pieces. This symbolic break-down of communication is further emphasized through the presence of the angel from which Schnitzler had walked away in the preceding chapter. The toppled statue lies face down in the dirt, rain pouring from the heavens. The reader learns that “nur sein bläuliches Ohr war makellos” [“only his blue-hued ear was unstained”], whereas the remainder of the angel is covered in mud, encrusted and immobilized (186). The unspoiled ear implies that communicative acts are absent in Fischer’s case. The angel “schien zu lauschen” [“appeared to listen”] but also remains silent, while “seine prachtvollen Locken [...] vom gurgelnden Dreck umschlossen [wurden], und seine Armstümpfe [...] immer tiefer hinein in die Erde zu greifen [schienen]” [“his magnificent curls were surrounded by the gurgling dirt and his truncated arms appeared to reach deep down into the earth”] as the statue becomes completely embalmed (Engel 189). The text reverts to an absence of colors and one last time evokes the expressionist lighting of rubble film, even though this time the contrastive elements are reduced. Visual, haptic, and aural *darkness* dominate the scene, “im schwarzen

Schlamm,” “dunklen Horngriff des Regenschirms,” or “ein dunkles Gemurmel, [das] als Echo aus dem Innern des kleinen Tempels [kam]” [“the black mud, the dark knob of the umbrella, or a dark murmuring”] (186-188).¹³² Fischer’s greed and the denial of personal guilt lead to the (incorrect) notion of closure. As Böll implies, Fischer suffers from a severe disconnection from Germany’s narrative and it is telling that the novel ends with him – a pessimistic coda to Schnitzler’s success that prefigures Böll’s constant critique of West German society to come.

Conclusion

After the rise of National Socialism and the resulting destruction of many German urban centers, media (including literature) had to reposition itself. As this chapter has shown, the rubble-gazer exemplified on screen and in prose sought after a “mobility of morality” that renegotiated the aesthetic standstill in postwar Germany’s ruins. Due to the draw of the ruins for literature and cinema, rubble texts were able to rethink the conditions for the making of a new moral code through new ways of looking at the city. In utilizing cinema’s link with the spectacle and literature’s lack of the visual element respectively, both Wolfgang Staudte and Heinrich Böll’s works are invested in the renegotiation of German art as well. Whereas *Die Mörder sind unter uns* relied on the moving image to equate physical mobility with mental agility, *Der Engel schwieg* adopted cinematic techniques in order to propose a truly new register of seeing: one that challenges old conventions and turns the black-and-white aesthetic of rubble films on its head, ultimately arguing for a deep distrust toward any form

¹³²In Christine Mielke’s reading of the angel-motif in Rolf Peter’s famous photograph “Dresden nach der Zerstörung am 13.02.1945, for example, “[wird] die Ruinenlandschaft [...] nicht als Übergangszustand dargestellt, sondern als vollendet wirkender abgeschlossener Status des vollständigen Destrution, der durch einen letzten versteinerten Zeugen vorgeführt wird” [“the ruins are represented through a last, petrified witness not in a transitional but rather a completed state of destruction”] (142).

of all-too-obvious visual signals. Böll thus proposed – taking a detour through film – that the media ecology needs to open up in order to find new means of expression. The literary form allowed him to point this out because the spectacle of the ruin did not overshadow its intention.

Böll's frequent use of words such as "semblance" and "appearance" hints at an understanding of sensory perceptions as inherently unreliable. Whereas Mertens finally learns how to properly confront the ruins, Schnitzler figures out that any universal mode of engagement is ultimately unattainable. Thus, the book vehemently attacks the rather conventional representations of the city employed in *Die Mörder sind unter uns*. Advancing this dilemma of the media ecology, Böll argues that a morality derived from established codes cannot sustain itself. From this perspective, Staudte's Berlin is stigmatized by Böll as a ghostly realm of old ideas – regardless of whether the film's visual mode utilizes on-location shots or sound stages. Böll juxtaposes his color-explosion with the stark black-and-white language of cinematic expressionism typical of *Die Mörder sind unter uns* for an increased sensory impact, a promise fulfilled in color film, but one rendered more powerful only when contrasted against the backdrop of the black-and-white aesthetic. Since it is still rooted in pre-war (and war-time) registers of filmmaking, Böll implies, Staudte's film does not offer a truly new and adjusted urban phenomenology – literature had to lead the way. As the next chapter will show, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann believed that this malaise perpetuated itself into the age of television.

Chapter 2

Documenting the Downfall: The Deconstruction of the Televisual City in Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's Multi-Media Art

Und nachts wandern wir durch ein wüstes Feld voll verkrüppelter Vegetation am Stadtrand, Autolichter auf der Autobahn, Mond über geisterhaften Landschaften, vom Zugfenster aus gesehen, eine leere weiße Telefonzelle, dreht sich bei der Fahrt durch eine Stadt vorbei.

[And at night we wander through a desolate field on the outskirts of the city, full of crippled vegetation, headlights on the highway, a moon above spectral landscapes, seen from the window of a train, an empty white phone booths flashes by, while we pass through a city]

Rolf Dieter Brinkmann¹³³

I. The Life and Death of Rolf Dieter Brinkmann

In 1975, a moment of inattentiveness cost the rising star of German poetry Rolf Dieter Brinkmann his life. He was run over by a van while crossing a busy London street. Distracted by the neon-sign of a pub, Brinkmann had forgotten that the English drive on – what was for him – the wrong side of the road.¹³⁴ The poet-cum-urban ethnographer was killed walking the mediated city, a mode of experience that constituted a pivotal part of both

¹³³Taken from Brinkmann's essay "Unkontrolliertes Nachwort zu meinen Gedichten," p. 244.

¹³⁴Brinkmann's long time friend and editor Dieter Wellershoff recapitulates, "er hatte, so impulsiv wie er war, in einem Augenblick der Unaufmerksamkeit den englischen Linksverkehr missachtet und war vom Seitenspiegel eines Lieferwagens am Kopf getroffen worden und offenbar an einer Hirnblutung gestorben" ["As impulsive as he was, he had during a brief moment of inattentiveness disregarded the English left-hand traffic and was hit over the head by the side view mirror of a van and apparently died of a cerebral hemorrhage] (4). Christoph Buch, informs us in a newspaper article that it was a "verkehrsreiche Straße" ["busy street"] which Brinkmann wanted to cross, "angelockt von einem Restaurant mit der Leuchtschrift ‚Shakespeare's: Open day and night'" ["lured in by the illuminated advertising of a restaurant"]. Not only then was heavy traffic alone the cause for Brinkmann's moment of inattentiveness, but also, according to Buch, the luring fascination of the neon-sign.

his cultural criticism and his experimental poetics.¹³⁵ The bitter irony underlying his death is that Brinkmann, often moody and at times downright depressive, died during a period in his life that was brimming with artistic energy. As many of his friends and acquaintances, such as Nicolas Born and Dieter Wellershoff, attested, the mid-1970s were indeed a productive time for him. Shortly before his death, he had presented his poems at a British poetry festival and was firmly set on writing his second novel, an, for obvious reasons, unfinished project that Brinkmann built up in his many material collections – published posthumously and usually referred to as his *Materialbände*.¹³⁶ Ultimately, he not only lost his life doing what he knew well – documenting the city – he was also killed in an environment chock full of stimuli and signals that at the same time entranced and disgusted him.

In its suddenness Brinkmann's death reflected the peril in his desperate obsession with the city as the quintessential modern medial space. In the tradition of the French *Situationist International* and their logic of Carnival revolt, Brinkmann exposed himself to the urban landscape and its sounds, images, and texts to collect a pool of resources and instigate disturbances.¹³⁷ This risk he took was thus the prerequisite for the production of his art, an endeavor that materialized in photography, sound recordings, and poetry rather than

¹³⁵Some scholars see in Brinkmann a descendant of the flâneur. Thomas Groß, for example, subsumes city-walkers such as Brinkmann under the term “Streuner-Subjekt” [“straying subject”], arguing that the “lustvolle Sich-gehen-lassen [...] Ausdruck des Wunschs, aus seiner belasteten, fremdbestimmten Geschichte auszubrechen [ist]” [“the relish in drifting is an expression of the wish to break free from an irksome and heteronomous story”] (Groß 122-123).

¹³⁶Brinkmann catalogued urban landscapes worldwide, producing a wealth of material for his cut up text and image collages *Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand, Rom Blicke*, and *Schnitte*, which together are referred to as the *Materialbände*.

¹³⁷A direct line can be drawn from the *Situationist International* to Brinkmann and their avant-garde interest in the reunion of (city) life and art. Leading figures of the German student revolt – a movement that Brinkmann supported for a while – saw themselves as “off-shoots of the Situationist International, which saw itself as the true inheritor of the Surrealist revolution” (Roberts 893).

prose, a surprising development that Brinkmann might not have expected but which he embraced.¹³⁸ After he had spearheaded the German pop-movement and written the controversial novel *Keiner weiß mehr* in 1968, Brinkmann became a disillusioned recluse only to turn his energies to producing multi-media art. Among the mountain of source materials involved in his painstaking quest for a new type of literature are Brinkmann's lesser known and only marginally researched 1973 tape recordings and the photographs that frame *Westwärts 1 & 2: Gedichte*, "his last collection" in which Brinkmann "fuses his various American influences (Beat writing, New York poets such as Frank O' Hara, and pop) with his knowledge of the European tradition" (Woolley, 10-11).¹³⁹ The tape recordings, the black-and-white photography, and also poetry – the textual medium he is best known for – constitute a large portion of his own late ecology.¹⁴⁰ Their media specificity contributes in unique ways to Brinkmann's assault on the Western city, which he saw as an "always already" mediated space – a sprouting ecology into which he interceded – that was only

¹³⁸Richard Langston argues that Brinkmann's urban text-and-image collage *Schnitte* is indeed a fragment of the incomplete novel and as such indicative of its projected final form. It attempts, Langston claims, "a solution for seeing again in acoustics" and thus proposes a new way of looking at the mass-mediated city (167).

¹³⁹The title of the 2005 CD release of the tape recordings is *Wörter Sex Schnitt: Originaltonaufnahmen 1973*. Although it is an extensive collection, the released material only contains about 50% of the recordings. The title is not Brinkmann's own but was picked by Maleen Brinkmann and the editors of the CD-set. The tracks are titled according the first words uttered on the respective recording.

¹⁴⁰Holger Schenk classifies the three stages of Brinkmann's artistic orientation as follows: "Nach 1970 zog sich Brinkmann weitgehend aus dem Literaturbetrieb zurück, und erst nach seinem Tod erschienen die wichtigsten Werke, die er in den Jahren 1970-1975 schrieb: Der Gedichtband *Westwärts 1 & 2*, der Gedichte von 1970-1974 enthält und im Mai 1975 erschien, sowie *Rom, Blicke*, eine Sammlung von Briefen, die Brinkmann 1972/1973 aus Rom an Freunde [...] schrieb. Dieser Band erschien erst 1979. In beiden Werken ist ein Bruch mit Beat, Pop und Underground erkennbar, so daß diese Werke – in Abgrenzung zur ‚frühen‘ (bis 1966/67) und ‚mittleren‘ (1967-1970) Schaffensperiode – als ‚spätere Texte‘ Brinkmanns bezeichnet werden" ["After 1970 Brinkmann withdrew from the literary scene, and only after his death did his most important work, which he wrote between 1970 to 1975, get published: the poetry collection *Westwärts 1 & 2* which contains poems written between 1970 and 1974 and was released in the May of 1975, and also *Rom, Blicke*, a compilation of letters which Brinkmann sent to friends from Rome in 1972/1973. The latter was released in 1979. In both works a break with the beat, pop, and underground scene becomes apparent so that these works – in delineation to his 'early' (until 1966/67) and his 'middle' (1967-1970) period are labeled Brinkmann's 'later' works"] (VIII). This chapter follows this periodization.

tolerable when cut up.¹⁴¹ Harnessing a variety of media, Brinkmann dissected the media ecology metropolis in images, sounds, and poetry and set out to hack his path through an urban jungle that he understood as similar to the dangerous, stifling logic of television, a “Medium, alles gleichmachend” and “mittelmäßig” [“homogenizing, mediocre medium”] (WSS O1).

Of all the different media Brinkmann trafficked in, television, the master medium, was consequently not one. As I argue in this chapter, Brinkmann’s media ecological experiments constantly frame television as their nemesis and provide him with a “Gehörschutz [...] um nicht das Fernsehen und seine Frau hören zu müssen” [“ear protector so that he does neither have to listen to the TV nor his wife”] (WSS P4). His turn toward aural, poetic, and visual cut ups of the city was a reaction to the medial development of the 1970s and its logic of undifferentiated signals in which “mit Literatur [...] nicht mehr weiter zu kommen ist” [“literature cannot help us”] (WSS P2).¹⁴² Brinkmann found discrete media collapsed into a mash-up of signals, resulting in the dissolution of meaningful communication.¹⁴³ For him television also propagated a false continuity, both on the

¹⁴¹The literary technique of the cut up originates in the beat culture around William S. Burroughs by way of the general semanticist Alfred Korzybski (see Langston). Steven Shaviro defines the cut up as a “kind of pre-digital sampling” which allows artists to “literally cut pages of written text in half and paste them together in new configurations” (68). Shaviro explains that Burroughs understood cut ups as “valuable tools to scramble the dominant codes and to break down our pre-programmed associations,” while also worrying that “cut ups have only limited efficacy since they still assume, and still serve, the viral replication of the dominant language” (ibid). It is worth mentioning that Brinkmann’s *Materialbände* not only cut up written texts but also images, from postcards to private photographs.

¹⁴²Moray McGowan attests that Brinkmann “attacked the privileged role both of the poet and of the poetic image as a metaconstruct imbued with higher reality,” a “postmodern aesthetic subverting artistic norms by drawing on the images, texts, and products of popular culture” (478). The line between art and the everyday is therefore not only blurred for Brinkmann, but eventually erased altogether.

¹⁴³Interestingly, Brinkmann embraced tape recordings, photography, and poetry at a moment in his life in which, as Michael Strauch points out, language and image skepticism and a problematic relation to “Wirklichkeit und Gegenwart” [“reality and the present”] dominated his thinking more than ever before (27).

technological level – the cathode ray steadily spurting out pixels – and on the level of content – its non-stop barrage of images and sounds – that concealed the absence of actual progress. Television thus operated diametrically to Brinkmann’s own poetics of actuality, authenticity, and credibility because it obfuscated the differences between forms of media and blurred boundaries between lived experience and recorded materials.¹⁴⁴ Although Brinkmann criticized television, it should be noted that he did so not because he understood it as a symptom of capitalism, as so many among the left were wont to do. Since he subscribed by no means to a Marxist agenda, Brinkmann’s quarrel with the medium stemmed rather from a deep discontent with the form of aesthetic experience it produced.

For Brinkmann, the despicable real-time and live-stream *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total work of art] television was not confined to the black boxes in Germany’s living rooms. In his later poetics, urban walking constituted a moment of medial liberation from a stifling condition in which television was to be found everywhere. He states “ich geh durch lange Massenmedienkorridore” [“I walk along the long mass-media corridors”] (WSS O7), a labyrinthine maze that produces “ein nächtliches, langsames Schlendern” [“a slow nocturnal strolling”] a gradual decent into perceptual darkness and immobility (WSS G2). The whole city had absorbed the negative characteristics of television into its ecology, a cesspool of indifferentiated signals Brinkmann deemed almost impenetrable: a televisual realm of the conflated and the inauthentic. Everywhere he discovered “in den Straßen die Phantomleute, [...] überall die Medienköpfe” [“in the streets, phantom people, these media-heads

¹⁴⁴Eckhard Schumacher argues in his study on “Schreibweisen der Gegenwart” [“Dictions of the Present”] that Brinkmann’s art “produziert im Akt des Schreibens zugleich auch das, was sie beschreibt, was sie in der Form der Schrift präsentiert” [“simultaneously produces in the act of writing that which it describes, what is presented in its written form”] (17). Schumacher is correct in pointing out that Brinkmann’s “Jetztzeit” [“now-time”], his preferred authentic moment between standstills, movement, and sudden stops, queries misconceptions about Germany’s condition but doesn’t extend his observations beyond the poems (109).

everywhere”] (WSS O4).¹⁴⁵ However, navigating the city also meant the opportunity to break up these unwanted consolidations. His later texts employ techniques of distortion and manipulation of source materials and emphasize the presence of the apparatus in order to draw attention to the dizzying multitude of concurring media signals comprising television city. His tapes, photographs, and poems work together to disrupt these media conglomerations and perturb the discrete streams even further to render them meaningful. What in *Keiner weiß mehr* had still been a tender infatuation with the wonders of the cinematic city – with its “Gras in Technicolor” [“grass in Technicolor”] and its “blauglasige Cinemascopewolken” [“clouds-in-Cinemascope, made of blue glass”] – completely deteriorated into a televisual horror-film only a couple of years later (216; 218).¹⁴⁶

For Brinkmann, the engagement with Germany’s media ecology on his own terms offered the opportunity to see through and then cut up the urban televisual panorama. He writes that “je mehr das Körpergefühl, in der Gegenwart anwesend zu sein, vorhanden ist, desto mehr ist das Wissen vorhanden, daß das, was erstarrt und aufgebaut ist, eine Kulisse ist, durch die man sich hindurchbewegt” [“the more the physical feeling of being there is present, the more one understands that that which freezes is actually a constructed stage-setting through which one passes”] (Nachwort; 243).¹⁴⁷ The city was a sound-stage

¹⁴⁵This metaphor is one of the staples of 1960 media criticism. It comes up verbatim in the writings of Austrian cultural critic and philosopher Günther Anders, who argues that television renders life “ungültig und phantomhaft;” “Wenn das Phantom wirklich wird, wird das Wirkliche phantomhaft” [“when the phantom becomes real, reality turns into a phantom”] (214).

¹⁴⁶Hermann Rasche notes that “the author Brinkmann is not an interpreter; rather he considers himself as the seismographic recorder, the chronicler in a non-stop horror film of endless decay deprivation and devastation in the world” (247).

¹⁴⁷Brinkmann argues that “technische Medien” [“technological media”] are “[beherrscht] durch Schriftsprache” [“dominated by written language”] (WSS P3), an argument that reverse engineers Marshall McLuhan’s famous dictum that the medium is the message. See his seminal book *The Extension of Man. Traces of the Situationist*

constituted of different interwoven media streams and in order to disrupt them Brinkmann operated simultaneously on multiple levels. He took three coterminous steps of synchronic production that allowed him to deconstruct this massive stage-setting, Adorno's "dreamless dream."¹⁴⁸ It is arguable that Brinkmann's texts do so in three steps bridging three different media: First, Brinkmann visualized the confusing urban grid with its kaleidoscopic organization by denying the possibility of a center in his photographs; at the same time he interrogated the changing relations between nature and culture within the urban landscape. Secondly, he framed his tape recordings as attacks on the specter-like condition of West German society – the dematerialized state of German society brought about by television city – vehemently questioning the validity of master narratives and assaulting them with noise. Finally, his poems (above all "Westwärts" and "Westwärts, Teil 2") unveil the metropolis as an accumulation of empty signifiers that have no meaning. All three primary texts query Germany's situation under the sway of television in their own unique ways as Brinkmann executes his merciless sledge-hammer-style demolition in the name of aesthetic and medial redemption.

To understand why Brinkmann chose to explode urban space through art, it should help to briefly recapitulate that the city permeated and informed his work from the beginning of his literary career. Urban space fulfills a critical function in all of Brinkmann's works, starting with his first published short-story "In der Grube" (1962). Carsten Lange argues that urban space in Brinkmann's writings has a political and dynamic meaning for the walking

International's critique of the spectacle – defined as "capital accumulated to the point where it becomes image" – are also recycled in Brinkmann's re-appropriation of the city as a sound stage, with the notable distinction that the latter does it to salvage language rather than the proletariat and the fact that Brinkmann believes in the advantages of properly utilized mass media (Debord; 24).

¹⁴⁸I use the term deconstruction in the traditional sense of the word, devoid of any allusions to Jacques Derrida. When applied in this chapter it is meant synonymously with Brinkmann's aesthetic acts of taking the city apart.

subject out and about in the public sphere: “Der Mensch gliedert, ordnet und bewertet den Raum auch auf gesellschaftlicher Ebene, indem er ihn mit Geboten und Verboten, mit Ritualen, Tabus und dergleichen belegt” [“Human beings subdivide, order and evaluate space also on a social level by implementing requirements, bans, rituals and taboos”] (49). After his pop-phase had ended in the late 1960s, Brinkmann grew to understand and despise the Western city as a vessel for media signals and felt compelled to attack it wherever he went. While many of his poems are thus “enabled by the space of the metropolis,” his unforgiving renunciation of the city clearly reached its apex toward the end of his life (Woolley; 11). By the early 1970s, the city had irrevocably become a place beyond redemption for Brinkmann, as he admits “ich habe [Köln] immer gehasst” [“I’ve always hated Cologne”] (WSS O2). Sibylle Späth reminds us, too, that Brinkmann nevertheless continued using images that had their origin “in der Großstadt und ihrer anonymen Menschenmasse, in der sich der Schriftsteller als Flaneur und Voyeur treiben läßt” [“in the big city and its anonymous masses in which the author floats as flaneur and voyeur”] (1989; 16).¹⁴⁹

The most formative moments in Brinkmann’s life, as far as his role as a one-man wrecking crew is concerned, transpired during his stay in Rome from 1972 to 1973.¹⁵⁰ The time he spent at the Villa Massimo in the Italian capital and the numerous strolls he undertook in Rome – documented extensively in his photographs – fueled his already

¹⁴⁹This flâneur analogy recurs frequently in scholarship, but assumes an ultimately beneficial relationship with the urban environment on Brinkmann’s part that is untenable. In his book *Die Wiederkehr der Flaneure*, Matthias Keidel explicitly argues that in *Rom, Blicke* Brinkmann pursues an extreme form of “flanierender Wahrnehmung” [“promenading perception”] and pitches him as a postwar flâneur (197). Brinkmann himself refers to flânerie and decides that he deliberately changes his mode of experience from nervousness to the leisurely pace of the flâneur but admits that both modes of urban experience irritate him (see *Nachwort*). After all, unlike Walter Benjamin, he is not interested in the pre-history of capitalism and solely set on laying waste to what he perceives. Labeling Brinkmann a flâneur thus unnecessarily limits the scope of his artistic endeavor.

¹⁵⁰Judith Ryan points to Goethe’s Italian Journey of 1786-1788, stating that the Rome Brinkmann’s “experiences seems like nothing more than the ‘ruins of western history,’ deceptively inflated by the expectations with which German tradition has endowed it” (962).

considerable disgust toward cities and were the prelude to his multi-media experiments. The Italian capital repelled Brinkmann, as it made very clear to him that urbanism had become a global form of cancer eating away at creative potential.¹⁵¹ While Brinkmann steadily pointed out the ugliness of cities – he calls Cologne a “Müllgrube” [“landfill”] (WSS P6), “riesige Kloake” [“giant cesspit”] (WSS P7) and “katholisch verpestet” [“contaminated by Catholicism”] (ibid) – he nevertheless continued to engage with this ecology. Brinkmann realized that the streets were not a revolutionary space of the masses and that the short-lived student movement and the politically charged literary scene established around it had been unable to acknowledge this lacuna. He thus renounced the revolutionary potential of the group protesting in the streets and turned instead toward literature as the tool for deconstruction. He went out to tear the televisual city apart through the production of highly idiosyncratic and subjective photographs, recordings and poems, using a multitude of media in order to assault the televisual spaces he so despised. In effect, Brinkmann attempted to beat the “devil” mass media at his own game.

II. Television’s Nemesis: Situating Brinkmann’s Later Work

Urban walking was of grave importance to Rolf Dieter Brinkmann; this form of engagement with the media ecology was a method of rethinking the city as a mediated space and therewith set him apart from the more hands-on revolutionary protocols of the German student movement. Brinkmann had followed this counterculture for a while before taking

¹⁵¹As Späth argues: “Ob Chicago, London oder Köln macht hier keinen Unterschied mehr. Parkhäuser statt Wohnungen, Autos statt Menschen beherrschen [...] das Bild der Stadt. Menschliche Sprache ist in diesen Bildern zur leeren Formel der Werbung und der Verbotsschilder geworden” [“Whether Chicago, London, or Cologne doesn’t make any difference in this respect. Parking lots instead of apartments, cars instead of people dominate the image of the city. Human language has turned into empty formulas of advertising and prohibitory signs in these images”] (1989; 76).

leave and returning to the streets alone as an iconoclast who had lost his faith in the power of the collective. Consequently, Brinkmann went a step further and took on not just Cologne or Rome but all Western cities and did so on his own terms, using a variety of media and apparatuses. To this end, he became a peculiar modern recorder who experienced reality more through “die verschiedenen Medien als durch unmittelbar eigenes, aktives Erleben” [“the various media than through one’s own unmediated active experience”] (Späth 95). This shift in his poetics, from pop-poetry to media-criticism, expressed itself, for example, in Brinkmann’s infatuation with the Kodak Brownie, a type of instant photo-camera that he carried with him on many of his urban walks and with which he took thousands of pictures, most of which have never been published or made accessible to research. Brinkmann’s interest in new ways of seeing was arguably a painful process. He admits, for example, on tape that “ich ging blutend durch Köln [und] schau mir weiter alles an” [“I walked through Cologne, bleeding, and look at everything”] (WSS O8). He also demanded of others “guckt doch selber zu” [“to look for themselves”] and addressed in particular self-proclaimed cultural critics, asking “warum könnt ihr denn alle nicht mehr genau sehen?” [“why is it that you are all incapable of looking at things?”] (ibid). Perceiving and experiencing the media ecology of the city – supplemented by electronic devices – had become one of his artistic prerogatives. As Langston notes, Brinkmann believed in the necessary “active involvement of the body in verbal-visual communication,” augmented by technological apparatuses (180). The bionic Brinkmann, existing in a medial nightmare, quickly zoned in on his arch-enemy: television.

By the early 1970s television had claimed the number one spot in West Germany’s media landscape. Television not only granted access to movies, game shows, prime time

news, and sports events, it also allowed for their consumption in the private spaces of one's own apartment. Combining images, sounds, and texts into a continuous barrage of readily available data, television clearly appealed to popular tastes because of its seeming immediacy, its entertainment and information values, and its simultaneous reliance on image, text, and sound. This also means, however, that these signals attracted attention when presented in isolation again. As Langston states, technological apparatuses such as tape recorders were for Brinkmann "tools for undoing the spectacles in movie theaters and on television that invariably enforce superficial ways of visualizing the world without ever really seeing it" (166). In order to maximize this effect, Brinkmann not only spliced television's signals back into discrete channels – in the tradition of Dadaism – he also tore images from other images and sounds from other sounds, fighting Friedrich Kittler's fear of the confluence of media streams. He thus proposed an aesthetic in which the ability of the recorder, the camera, and even the typeset of a poem to produce fractured signals was foregrounded. Channeling the *Situationist Internationals* Guy Debord and Gilles Ivain, he revealed the city as a street theater that had gradually and clandestinely adopted the spectacle of television and which needed to be disassembled again.¹⁵²

In 1974, shortly before his death, Brinkmann wrote an "Unkontrolliertes Nachwort zu meinen Gedichten" ["An uncontrolled Afterword to my Poems"], an essayistic text on poetry from which it is possible to extract his view on the West German city and its relation to mass

¹⁵²Hermann Glaser lists the "verkürzende Aktualität, sekundäre Authentizität, fiktive Glaubwürdigkeit, [...und] simulierende Überzeugungskraft" ["syncopated actuality, second-order authenticity, fictive credibility and simulating persuasiveness"] as the predominant forces of television (1991; 421). He thus offers us a short-list of the prevalent critiques often leveled against television.

media.¹⁵³ He begins the afterword with a reaffirmation of his general criticism of the city and his language skepticism in particular. Evoking a ghostly realm, he states that “Die Traurigkeit der künstlich in den Wörtern eingesperrten Menschen ist nicht einmal fragwürdig. [...] Die Stadt ringsum ist abgestorben, das Gespenstische der Straßen und Bauten kommt nun deutlich zum Vorschein, da die Läden und Geschäfte geschlossen sind“ [“the sadness of the people incarcerated in artificial words is not even questionable. The surrounding city is extinct, the ghostly atmosphere of the streets and buildings comes to the fore”] (Nachwort 229-230). What Brinkmann calls “das Gespenstische,” the spectral, describes a condition that echoes television’s misleading representation of reality; all that remains is a space devoid of progress and life. Brinkmann repeatedly evokes the image of the ghost – that which once inhabited the world but now haunts it as an entity untouched by time – and defines his concept of “gespenstisch” more precisely: “Warum nicht zugeben, daß ein Sprachbezirk, ein Land, das jahrelang ausgeräubert worden und runtergekommen ist, nur noch aus Gespensterstraßen und Gespenstermenschen besteht?” [“Why not admit that a certain linguistic region, a rundown country that has been depleted for years, now only consists of ghost-streets and ghost-people?”] (Nachwort 230). For Brinkmann, Germany was a realm of apparitions whose denizens were disembodied (which rendered their relation to space problematic) and who dwelled beyond the moment of death (which contested temporality). These ghosts dwelled in the the ephemeral, flickering spaces of the televisual city.

The revolutionary cultural ferment that could be sensed in Young German Film and the literature of the student movement had given way to a “general feeling of exhaustion and

¹⁵³Rowohlts 2005 reprint of *Westwärts 1 & 2* includes the essay, emphasizing the importance of Brinkmann’s last prose text for the poems. Also, the essay uses a rather poetic style of writing, thus blurring the boundaries between essayistic and poetic forms.

disappointment” in the mid-1970s (Brockmann; 2010, 295). The imagery of spectral existence is thus clearly linked with mass media – as a cultural beyond – and their heightened presence in the city. As Brinkmann points out:

Und ein Land, ein Sprachbezirk, ein Land, wird sicher eingehen, wenn keine Möglichkeit zu sprechen mehr vorhanden ist, da jeder Ansatz eines poetischen Empfindens verfolgt, „fertig gemacht“, ausgerottet wird durch Massenmedien und ihre Angestellten, daß ein Sprachbezirk abstirbt, in dem keine Fantasieimpulse und kein mehr oder weniger freies Sprechen und Artikulieren erlaubt ist (Nachwort 230).
[And any country, any linguistic region, any country will surely wither away when there is no opportunity to talk because every iota of poetic sensation is persecuted, ‘worn down,’ by the mass media and its minions so that a linguistic region dies as soon as there are no fantasy impulses and no free expression and articulation left]

For Brinkmann the absence of fantasy impulses is synonymous with standstill, a cultural immobility that ultimately results in clichés and empty phrases.¹⁵⁴ He equates this realm of the ephemeral with West Germany’s media ecology which also lacks new impulses and thus form and substance. Brinkmann attacks its false mobility and renegotiates its progress or, more precisely, absence thereof, calling for a literature capable of saving the day. In Brinkmann’s case, this means the possibility of reading the city anew as a poetic experience

¹⁵⁴Words and phrases, when replicated in public discourse, hollow themselves out and quickly turn into repetitive and empty clichés. Burglind Urbe calls these clichés myths. As Urbe states, Brinkmann searches for “Mythen, die unser gegenwärtiges Bewußtsein kolonialisieren und für die Wahrnehmung des Alltags verstellen” [“Myths that colonize our mind and thus render it compatible with the quotidian perception”] (15).

capable of revealing the medial overload of the city and shattering the televisual character of the metropolis, including its clichés.

In West German society, Brinkmann states, the moving neon-lights of advertisements “täuschen Leben vor,” fake life such that nothing but the afterlife of the ghost exists (Nachwort 238). This non-life produces a blurred form of pseudo-movement, when in fact the city is still mired in a standstill covered up by blinking lights. As Brinkmann explains further in the following quote:

ich staune oft wie fremd alltägliches Leben ist, gehe ich eine Straße entlang, sehe ich den Betrieb ringsum, höre ich die Geräusche, und sei es nur das Geräusch einer um die Ecke biegenden Straßenbahn, rieche ich diese verdorrte farblose Luft, sehe ich die Bewegungen, die verzogenen Gesichter der Dinge. (Nachwort 235)

[I’m often amazed just how alien everyday life is, I walk down a street looking at the bustle around me, hearing the sounds, sometimes only the noise coming from a tram that bends around the corner, smelling the seared color-drained air, watching the movement and the distorted face of things.]

The distorted surface of the city and the stale air appear alien to Brinkmann, but he also finds something exciting in its noises, its images, and its linguistic signs. Traversing the city and paying attention to its discrete elements – such as the sound of the tram – provides him with the material he needs to crack down on the Western metropolis. Brinkmann believed that cities were televisual cesspools and thus breeding grounds for the cliché, threatening to stifle

artistic expression.¹⁵⁵ Langston points out that “in a world saturated by electronic media [...] literature in 1973 was only valid in terms of its ability to afford writers the chance to wage war against the omnipresent effects of mass media” (168). Brinkmann’s own literary production then had to engage with urban space flooded by TV by using an appropriately adjusted *modus operandi*. Brinkmann devised a literary approach that allowed him to both isolate the three main elements of the mediated city – moving images, sound bits, and cookie-cutter language – as a distracting spectacle waiting to be undone and to create an aesthetic out of it. Brinkmann’s approach was not a successive one, however. Rather he took aim at West Germany’s media ecology concomitantly by commenting on visual, aural, and textual signs whenever they crossed his path, an approach resulting in the production of interconnected networks of experimental art that still communicated their differences and, as a result, facilitated new critical perspectives.

Amidst television’s assertion of perpetual flow, Brinkmann’s texts advocate the possibility of going back, of re-recording, and of becoming aware of the rupture between seemingly fluid signals in order to perceive the present as temporally and spatially fragmented.¹⁵⁶ Brinkmann thus engaged with what Jacques Attali calls “a society of repetition in which nothing will happen anymore” and demanded close attention to the “empty” spaces between stand-alone units, implying that the gap – the cut up – is not at all

¹⁵⁵Brinkmann proposed a form of language opposed to clichéd language, a term that denotes a form of communication that Holger Schenk labels as “künstliche Sprache, [...] die bewußt gewollte und auf die Spitze getriebene Distanz zur Umgangssprache” [“artificial language, the deliberately maxed out distance to the vernacular”] (11). It is a form of language that, for Brinkmann, is synonymous with kitsch. Schenk further contends that “Die Überschwemmung mit Kitsch war erst möglich, als die Entwicklung in der Technik weit genug fortgeschritten war und Massenmedien – vor allem das Fernsehen- hervorbrachte.” [“The kitsch-overflow became possible only after the technological development had progressed far enough and produced mass-media and here especially television] (22).

¹⁵⁶Brinkmann was acutely aware of Modernism’s assumption that “conscious repetition of patterns is always based on choice and results in changing the pattern that it could supposedly only repeat: therefore repetition has the potential of producing something new” (Stoehr, 338).

empty (5). The brief audible click that signals the re-recording, the epistemological break between two photographs, and also the proverbial “reading between the lines” in poetry; for him all these forms had something to say about urban space and the historical self-awareness of post-1968 West Germany. The main foci of this chapter, the photographs that frame the poetry collection *Westwärts 1 & 2*, its lyrical centerpieces “Westwärts” and “Westwärts, Teil 2,” as well as the Cologne tapes interconnect with and refer to each other on multiple levels. These texts share a trajectory grounded in their synchronic moment of production and their interest in a similar theme, namely the city. Furthermore, they are representative of the different media which Brinkmann appropriated at exactly the same time. When read in conjunction with one another, Brinkmann’s three distinct media-streams show that in spite of the specificity of their respective medium they all focused on the same problem: namely a clogged media ecology and the possible means of cleaning it up.

III. Nature, Culture, and the Urban Grid: Brinkmann’s Instant Photography

The visual phase of Rolf Dieter Brinkmann’s deconstruction of the televisual city unfolds in the realm of instant photography. The snapshots that frame the 1975 poetry collection *Westwärts 1 & 2* at first glance share a topical similarity with the industrial photography of German visual artists like Bernd and Hilla Becher. The Bechers photograph industrial buildings from a street-level viewpoint and combined them in typologies. Their black-and-white grids – such as their 1967-1993 *Coal Bunkers* – focus the viewers’ attention on structural similarities and individual particularities unfolding through time (see Fig. 2.1.) However, while the Bechers are interested in a diachronic documentation of urban

development, Brinkmann had a completely different agenda.¹⁵⁷ During this phase of his step-by-step isolation of the various signals that permeate the city he partook in the exposition of a synchronic crisis of experience. In contrast to photographers like the Bechers, Brinkmann did not store memories on photographic film in order to document progress and change, but rather to visualize the deterioration of stable perspectives and the petrification of art. Attacking the standstill of creative production in West Germany and the larger issue of social paralysis covered up by television, he employs photography's materiality to reveal the disjunctive and immobile condition of the ecology.

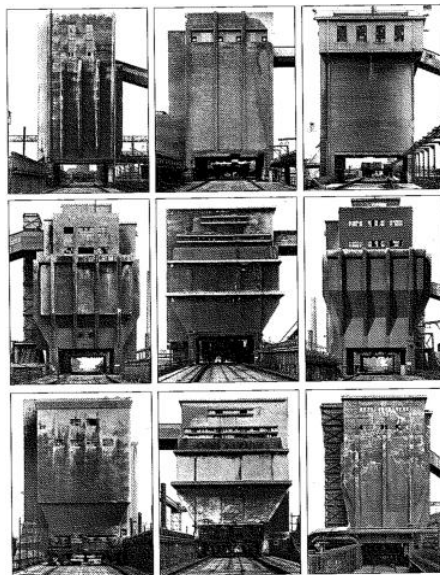


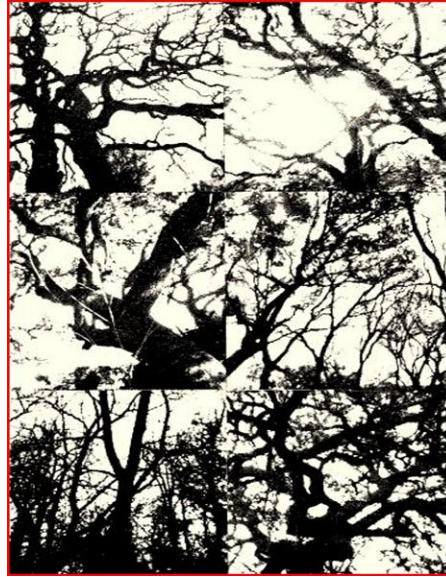
Fig. 2.1. A typography of *Coal Bunkers*, photographs taken by Bernd and Hilla Becher from 1967-1993. Copyright © by Sonnabend Galerie.

Brinkmann's Instamatic photographs frame the poems collected in *Westwärts 1 & 2*.

Wolfgang Strauch thus claims that “diese Bindefolge und die Durchsichtigkeit des Materials [es] erlauben [...], daß Texte von Bildern und Bilder von Texten durchdrungen werden”

¹⁵⁷In his essay on William Burroughs in *Der Film in Worten* [*The Film in Words*], Brinkmann advocates an “Erzählen in Wortblöcken und Vorstellungsfeldern” [“a narration in word- and idea-clusters”] which lead “in den Bereich des Traums” [“in the domain of the dream”] (204). This dream is defined as a new configuration of the relation between sound, text, and image and finds its expression in photography – the raw material of cinema.

[“the sequentiality and the transparency of the material enable texts to be permeated by images and vice versa”] (Strauch 53). In contrast to Brinkmann’s other wild collages – such as the ones in the material collection *Schnitte* – I argue, however, that they already show a relatively clear-cut relation between image and text. No pictures are inserted between the poems, a choice that limits the permeability between the frame and the contained elements to a minimum. Brinkmann thus suggests quite literally a necessary move toward the separation of channels and signals. The very organization of photo and work in *Westwärts 1 & 2* thus signals an investment in questions of containment and demarcation, in itself a comment on the crippling power of media ecologies. The first twelve pages of *Westwärts 1 & 2* present six pictures each, all of which are allotted the same amount of layout space, an allocation that results in the superficial similarity with the Bechers’ coal bunkers, even though the latter clearly demarcate the pictures from each other (see Fig. 2.2.). Brinkmann’s particular configuration creates the notion of a grid – *the* urban pattern of order *par excellence* – while the content of the pictures subtly challenges this geometrical structure. He implies that *Westwärts 1 & 2* engages with the city’s organizational principles, but also its boundaries. In fact, his photography draws attention primarily to the contradictions of the city and produces a visual trajectory that moves from nature to the city to death and then back to an altered natural state contained within the frame lines of the photographs. The photographs at either bookend of *Westwärts 1 & 2* retain this layout and locate the reader right in the middle of a city. Traffic signs and writings on facades reveal a patchwork-topography comprised of other disconnected places and texts. This effortless switch from one city to another supports Brinkmann’s overall claim of an interchangeability and temporal instability endemic to the Western metropolis and its highly mediated ecologies.



**Fig. 2.2. Vein-like trees against a pale sky, photographs from *Westwärts 1 & 2*.
Copyright © by Rowohlt.**

The dominant structure of most grids are the conflicting perspectives in the juxtaposed pictures and the resulting de-centered aesthetic, a slightly disorienting mixture of points-of-views, ranging from ground level shots to bird's eye perspectives. These changes suggest that the photographs evolve along a broken temporal and spatial axis whose chronological order cannot easily be assessed in retrospect. The degree to which they resist this assessment also clearly varies. The trees on the first page, for example, still evoke continuity and connectivity. What we see in general is a collection of discrete moments that creates a notion of continuity, only to make the careful observer aware that space and time are exposed to disruptive incisions. Brinkmann's visual narrative starts with trees before it proceeds with the gradual insertion of urban motifs and it is the former set in which the confusing perspectives are less pronounced. The trajectory slowly moves from nature to culture, including images of advertisements and buildings. When the second installment of photographs continues after the poems, this trajectory is partly reversed. What begins in the city culminates in depictions of symbols, icons, and indexes of death embedded in a

distinctively urban environment before it solidifies into a semi-natural state. Although the city never goes away completely, the trees reoccur more frequently toward the end of the volume and the very last picture shows only a tree, juxtaposed, however, with an organic looking streetlamp. In other words, the photographs depict a conflation of cultural and natural motives. It is thus productive to tease out the relation of the organic and the non-organic in the pictures and to ask what narrative Brinkmann has in mind as he travels along this visual path.

The first page shows a series of black-and-white pictures of bare-branched trees (see Fig. 2.2. above). Their dark, organic, and vein-like shapes – reminiscent of calligraphy, dark ink on white paper – stand in stark contrast to the pallid sky in the background.¹⁵⁸ At first, the trees, stand-ins for the literary structures, in the pictures seem to have points of connection, creating the impression of a continuous network through which they retain a stable perspective and fluidity. A closer look, however, reveals the ultimately discontinuous quality of the six juxtaposed photographs, in particular at the frame lines even though the photographer takes great care to keep distance and angle constant. The pictures produce a false notion of sequence and assume a deceiving spatial and temporal connection that is ultimately absent. Thus, while the tree motifs create the impression of connectivity, they immediately contest this notion coherence as they struggle with their containing medium – an allusion to the state of art. The meandering branches exude a feeling of organic development, while the inconsistencies at the seams carefully contradict this impression. While Sibylle Späth detects a “gleichbleibende Perspektive auf eine uralte, scheinbar tote Natur,” [“fixed perspective, looking at ancient, seemingly dead, nature”], I contend that the trees are very

¹⁵⁸Referring to Fig. 2.2., Sibylle Späth describes the trees as “dunkle Scherenschnitte” [“dark silouhettes”] and “ein genaues Abbild des menschlichen Nervensystems” [“a concise reproduction of the human nerve system”] (1989; 76).

overtly still alive and overall less obedient to the grid than the subsequent “urban” photographs (1989; 76). In analogy, Brinkmann suggests, literature produces a temporary buffer zone that absorbs part of the city’s shocks. The trees are thus more than a mere “Spiegelbild des Bewußtseins des Autors, der ihnen ihre stumme, geschichtslose Existenz neidet” [“mirror image of the author’s consciousness, who envies their silent, ahistorical existence”] (ibid). They allegorically point toward written words, insinuating that they, too, struggle with the fossilization of West Germany’s natural and cultural sphere. The “biological” force of the barren trees – the natural act of writing ultimately framed by the grid – throws the geometrical structure into relief. It softens the impact of the ordering impositions of culture, at least breaching the grid at its frames for a split-second. Their ultimate failure to break free is a concession to Brinkmann’s own existential desperation and his disbelief in conservable literary relevance. Brinkmann thus suggests a degree of resistance inherent in nature that decreases as the degree of cultural contamination increases. This “natural” resistance translates into a poetic ever on the move.

Come page three, we find the photographs still dominated by the calligraphy of trees. However, a distinctively urban landscape appears in the background, at first barely visible and hardly noticeable against the still stark contrast between the branches and the sky (see Fig. 2.3.). The grid, Brinkmann suggests, threatens to take over and absorb the organic pattern and the resulting amalgam is neither exclusively natural nor cultural, but rather occupies a third category in between – a hybrid state of nature and culture in which the former is the loser. The trees now appear plastered onto the geometry of the grid – dead writings on the wall if we uphold the calligraphy analogy – suggesting that the architecture of the metropolis becomes a screen or a billboard for a deflated art. From page 4 onward, the

city creeps in even more overtly – for example via a clearly visible skyline – occupying and pushing out natural space and thus rendering it more submissive to the grid. There is one composition in which the branches of a tree that half conceals a tower-like stone structure appears to jump over into the top-left photograph on the next page. The latter photograph, however, shows a dilapidated urban environment and the “extension” of the branch turns out to be the shadow of a telephone pole. In other words, we see the organic being assimilated into the artificial, literature turning into clichés hardly distinguishable from non-art.



**Fig. 2.3. The city appears behind the trees, photographs from *Westwärts 1 & 2*.
Copyright © by Rowohlt.**

Nature and culture are, from Brinkmann’s point of view, both confined by the televisual city and its checkered wide-screen panorama, but separated in the degree to which they succumb to its forces of fossilization. While Brinkmann’s narrative is a historiographic one, history eventually comes to a screeching halt. The city’s mediated condition results in the crystallization of creative energy into a static monument in which movement is absent and progress is beautifully but impotently trapped in amber. The sequential structure of the earlier pictures in which flow is implied – and at the same time challenged mostly through

the repetition of confusingly similar motifs – is gradually replaced by iconic allusions to movement conserved as show-cases of frozen time in which the city forcefully establishes itself as the main element. Still thinking in allegorical terms, the images foretell the fate of art in such an environment and thus become prophecies of their own downfall. Even though Brinkmann establishes both nature and culture as prisoners of the visual spectacle – we see people “walking” on the sidewalks, cars “driving” in the streets, and billboards “appearing” in the background – the trees at least stand a chance of exploding the grid, while the people in contrast are already static copies: the phantoms that populate Germany’s ecology. The photographs depict encounters with the allegedly mobile city, yet their mimetic value is reflected in their suspension of temporality and physical paralysis. Brinkmann suggests that the standstill of Western society – ghosts caught in the act so to speak – becomes increasingly vexing given the media ecology’s reliance on moving images. If modernity used to be defined by an increasing impermanence, this impermanence has become an illusion, a static snapshot of its former paradigm of acceleration.

Through their idiosyncratic arrangement, Brinkmann’s street-scenes further comment on the fragmentation of the city in terms of sensory impressions. Multiple perspectives illustrate the distortion of the urban sphere, a process of slow erosion that Brinkmann visualizes through the composition and the layout of his pictures. While the trees exude an organic flow and a mesmerizing – if uncanny – beauty, the street compositions appear as much more instrumental. The six pictures on the left in Fig. 2.3. (above) simultaneously trigger a feeling of disorientation and express an inability to find a secure position from which to look at the city, an interpretation that challenges the never-ending stream of signals emanating from television screens. All six images force themselves onto the onlooker at once

and, through their kaleidoscopic quality, represent the city as a fractured space full of conflicting perspectives. While the branches remain relatively easy on the eye, the urban motifs completely refute linear processing. Part of these dizzying tableaux are instances of language – words such as “Rama” [a brand name], “walk,” “one way,” “exit,” “Polizia,” “Car W[ash],” and an inverted “Autobad” dot the landscape – that gesture toward the off-kilter quality of urban space, a deficit seemingly fixed in the sphere of television, but ultimately only painting over the severe disconnections.¹⁵⁹ Since established perspectives can no longer be trusted, Brinkmann sets out to devise his own visual grammar in which the snapshot becomes the new blueprint for a critical aesthetic.

Even though they appear random, Brinkmann’s photographs are in fact semantically consistent. They do not communicate through language, but rather through their visual constellation. After the city invades and corrupts the trees in the first photos, Brinkmann’s snapshots repeatedly capture cultural artifacts such as angelic sculptures and transmission lines in the streets of the city (see Fig. 2.4). These cultural symbols are associated with unattainable kingdoms of heaven and the invisible leash with which technology tethers modern man to its environs respectively. The poles of the transmission lines are also instrument and expression of the bureaucratic order. These visual elements bespeak a standstill endemic to the city, a stifling notion of immobility and lack of direction. Brinkmann utilizes the camera to x-ray the city and he implies that the whole city is in fact suspended in time. While the angels refer to a better place beyond the one right in front of the viewer’s eyes, the lines metonymically signify the perpetual belief in the progressive power of mass communication. Looking beyond these structurally different but functionally similar

¹⁵⁹For Brinkmann, the urban realm is ordered via linguistic units – words which the photographs present as static, like blurbs in a comic strip.

decoys allows Brinkmann a glimpse at the city's "modern" spaces that for him equate the unattainable religious planes of redemption with the fake-totality of television. Thus Brinkmann presents West Germany's cultural sphere as a perverse palimpsest in which nothing can be told apart. It presents itself as a realm devoid of degree, direction, and differentiation – there is only one homogenous, mediated super-space left to maneuver, a condition supported through the conflating logic of television.



Fig. 2.4. Images of urban decay, photographs from *Westwärts*. Copyright by © Rowohlt.

The space of the modern city is filled with death and decay: As Judith Ryan puts it, comparing the writings of Durs Grünbein with the works of Brinkmann, “skulls actual and metaphorical are never far beneath the surface” (964). Next to a naked body of a “dead” girl and cut-down trees, Brinkmann places the picture of a memorial, the stone figure of a soldier located in what appears to be a churchyard, complemented by a high concentration of dilapidated buildings and railroad tracks seemingly leading nowhere (see Fig. 2.4. above). The memorial is a mnemonic device – a reminder of something already gone – that conjures up memories of war and, due to their particular location, religion. Urban space in general,

this composition implies, is as much a thing of the past as the monuments that dot it. It is by no means differentiated from the past: through the motifs he selects Brinkmann automatically equates cities and their ecologies with death. The middle picture on the left margin even depicts Brinkmann himself, sitting on a bench and staring back at us apathically. This suggests that he, too, is trapped by the grid that frames urban life. He also makes onlookers aware – casting his piercing gaze – that art can function as a shock treatment. The motifs that Brinkmann's camera captures are in general distinctively urban, but also stand for that which leads away from the city, even though – as the pictures tell us – escape might be impossible in the long run. The railroad tracks establish deceptive spatial vectors, while the decayed houses bespeak a temporal process of sedimentary erosion, linking the temporal with the spatial dead-end. Several photographs include iconic images that allude to the bombed out cities and the deportation of people to the concentration camps. Brinkmann insinuates that West Germany only superficially recovered from the standstill of the Second World War and that the after-effects are still there, in front of our eyes, waiting to be recorded. As his photographic technique is deliberately random – as the use of an instant camera implies – Brinkmann insinuates that each click of the camera stands a very good chance of capturing the obiquitous decay.

In the grids that compose the second set of photographs the city moves to the background, although it never goes away completely, suggesting that any hope for a complete return to an earlier bucolic state is futile but still needs to be attempted. The first six pictures retain their explicitly urban motifs, but gradually the trees reappear and with them several allusions to a more natural, organic state. As the number of bleak, deserted landscapes increases – including more depictions of railroad tracks and abandoned buildings

– the few instances of natural elements never completely regain their hold on the scenery. The city has irrevocably merged with nature, and art can only resist crystallization for the briefest moment before it is regulated and subdued. A traffic light commanding the urban individual to “walk” and a contradicting street sign labeled “DO NOT ENTER” further stress how mobility is policed, suggesting that Brinkmann’s juxtaposition of motifs indeed mirrors the dead end which assimilative systems produce (see Fig. 2.5.). In his photographs, he thus alludes to an understanding of art that can only prevail if the aesthetic turns toward the paralytic and makes it its own – that is, if it indeed does disregard the “stop signs” and embraces the labyrinthian ecology, the maze of the city, head on.



Fig. 2.5. Street-signs in the city, photographs from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt.

Overall, Brinkmann argues that West Germany’s hope for progress away from its fascist past and mobility are false as long as literature does not intervene forcefully. The feared paralysis is already always there, solidified into images and urban topographies that suggest a straight line when in fact temporality is fractured, moving forward in disjunctive leaps at best. In Brinkmann’s hands, technological apparatus exposes this misconception of

the FRG's firm and affirmative belief in steady progress. With regard to the Federal Republic's media ecology, Brinkmann takes a first step in his separation of sound, image, and text with the photograph. While his photographs are slices of frozen time (and reveal the city as crystallized in such an aggregate state) his Cologne recordings, the center piece of the following section, rely on the ostensibly flowing quality of analog sound, which they also unmask as ultimately false.¹⁶⁰ While the photographs represent the containment of the organic and the cultural in the logic of the urban grid – and the way language becomes a mere surface written on the city's walls – the tape recordings are located at the other end of Brinkmann's counter-ecology on account of their dependence on sounds. They thus allow for a critical revaluation of the role language plays in Brinkmann's poetics, a role that is far more dynamic rather than static. Whereas in the photographs words are few and far between, sound (including that of language) takes center stage in the tape recordings. On his journey toward media ecological poetry, the microphone and Brinkmann's voice become the styluses that transfer Cologne into a different representational mode – namely that of a running commentary.

IV. Re-Recording Cologne: Brinkmann's Poetics of Erasure and Repetition

In the 30 years that passed between the fall of the Third Reich and the mid-1970s, radio went from being the bull horn of the Führer's voice to West Germany's favorite background noise. For Jacques Attali, noise is “a resonance that interferes with the audition

¹⁶⁰A third variant of Brinkmann's visual engagement with the city – after the cut up in *Schnitte*, and the series of photographs that frame his poems – can be found in one of the *Materialbände*, namely the *Erkundungen*. From page 270 to 273, for example, the book contains collages that fuse text with photographs and maps. Brinkmann manipulates the material – this is the map – in a rather old-fashioned way. In order to communicate movement, he uses a black marker to trace his walks on the map. On the map on page 273 he not only recreates the itinerary of his stroll via lines and arrows, but also jots down explanatory phrases such as “Blick auf das Dorf” [“view of the village”] (*Erkundungen*, 273).

of a message in the process of emission,” in other words an act of violence “experienced as destruction, disorder, dirt, pollution, and aggression against the code-structuring message” (26-27). For Rolf Dieter Brinkmann the idea of violence in sounds, already embedded in the Federal Republic’s media ecology, could not be anything but fascinating. So, when the Cologne-based public radio station WDR approached him with the request to record his everyday life on tape, he agreed without hesitation and jumped right in. The WDR then provided him with the equipment necessary for the project. Brinkmann himself explained, “Tonbandgerät vom WDR geliehen [...] und dann bin ich durch Köln gegangen” [“I borrowed a tape recorder from the WDR and walked through Cologne”] (WSS B6). Eventually, the radio station broadcast 49 minutes edited together from a total of approximately 650 minutes of raw recordings. The tapes remained in Brinkmann’s possession and have been made public, in parts, by his widow only very recently. *Sex, Wörter, Schnitt* – the title of the commercial release – groups Brinkmann’s recordings around the aural dimension of the city and his conception of metropolitan space as a prison made of words. Brinkmann became increasingly interested in the fluid act of walking.¹⁶¹ His own obsession with progress is mirrored in a medium that is similarly durational, but at the same time omits the visual element assumed so prevalent to his mode of cultural (and physical) navigation. Sound is immaterial and, as Attali stresses, “unavoidable, as if, in a world now devoid of meaning, a background noise were increasingly necessary to give people a sense of security” (3). Brinkmann, it seems, had finally found a way to penetrate the walls and heads of West Germany’s private spaces from outside.

¹⁶¹In the 1970s Brinkmann became increasingly interested in the fluid act of “Gehen, das für seine späteren Texte, wie etwa für seine Hörfunkmontage [...] so wichtig wird” [“walking that becomes so important for his later texts, such as his radio collages”] (Grzimek 34).

The dearth of scholarship on the recordings – especially when compared to Brinkmann’s poems – is a result of the former’s assumed status as a mere appendix to his “primary” literary work. In his review of *Wörter Sex Schnitt*, “Frieden ist der Kiff der Seele – Rolf Dieter Brinkmann im O-Ton,” Olaf Selg pejoratively calls the tape recordings the “Soundtrack” to Brinkmann’s poems, reducing them to an ancillary ornament to Brinkmann’s poetry. If the recordings do incite closer analysis it is often as ruminations on his media theory – which is surely what they are in part – but rarely do scholars, with the notable exception of Richard Langston and Eckhard Schumacher, approach them beyond their explicit programmatic meaning as materializations of Brinkmann’s fascination with the present.¹⁶² I read his recordings as being on par with his photography and even the poems of his later period. Taken together, they are in their own way aesthetic assaults on the media ecology of the city and critical interventions into urban experience. Brinkmann leaves hardly any doubt about how much he values these tapes, stating that “am liebsten höre ich Stille, dann einzelne Geräusche, dann Musik” [“I love silence the most, followed by isolated sounds and music”] (WSS B6). His recordings contain all of the above: moments of (relative) silence, single sound snippets, and even music, all of which touch upon Attali’s claim that steady noise could be a result of a fading sense of security. With his tape recordings, Brinkmann set out to recover the act of violence in noise in a media ecology lulled by television’s (and also mainstream radio’s) constant chatter and soundtracks.

The recordings were taken around the time of the first oil crisis of 1973, an event that preceded Brinkmann’s return to West Germany from Rome, a historical moment that

¹⁶²Langston, for example, argues that “the tape recorder has the potential not just to critique but also to alter perception and experience” (165).

heralded the coming of postmodern patterns of space and time.¹⁶³ Brinkmann refers explicitly to the event when he envisions a city as quiet as what he experienced “in dem Winter, als die sogenannte Energiekrise, die schäbige Erfindung zur Verteuerung von Waren ‘durchgeführt’ wurde” [“in the winter during which the so-called energy-crisis, this shabby, made-up price increase in commodities, was ‘executed’”], a time when the West German government forbid its citizens to drive cars on four Sundays in the November of 1973 as a reaction to the energy shortage (Nachwort; 239). Critical here is not so much his remark that the oil crisis was orchestrated by capitalists in the Middle East, but rather that a city without cars – and thus without acoustic pollution – sparked his interest. With the cars absent, the overpowering noise of the machines was gone and Brinkmann rejoices that “ich hörte wieder die Schritte von Menschen auf der Straße und das Sprechen auf der Straße” [“I heard the footsteps and the talking in the streets again”] (Nachwort 239-240). Brinkmann thus implies that sound functions as a concealing device within the media ecology – a white-noise generator, so to speak – with regard to West Germany’s spectral condition. It produces a “cacophony” that can be reversed when the background noise is reduced to a minimum, whereby the minute details of the metropolis – including language – become distinctively audible again in spite of the perpetual din of technology.

The Cologne tapes, then, are an attempt to achieve such a separation, reappropriating the airwaves from the Führer. The recordings belong to the cultural phenomena of *Radiohörspiele* [radio plays] in the broadest sense. During the Weimar Republic, the radio play had served as a medium for avant-garde experimentation, before it was appropriated for

¹⁶³David Harvey argues that the oil crisis in 1973 represented a collapse of spaces, a “time-space compression,” that created an increased interest in spatiality (284). The Marxist critic Harvey, as Edward Soja points out, understands the city as “embedded in the restless geographical landscape of capital, and specified as part of a complex and contradiction-filled societal spatialization that simultaneously enhances and inhibits, provides new room and imprisons, offers solutions but soon beckons to be destroyed” (102).

the project of ideological *Gleichschaltung* [enforced conformity] in Nazi-Germany.¹⁶⁴ After the Second World War, artists such as Ingeborg Bachmann, Günter Eich, and Walter Jens, revived the radio-play for which the model “is not the live broadcast but a mode of self-interrogation conducted by a thinking mind” (Siegert 863).¹⁶⁵ Ingo Stoehr points out that “at the beginning of the 1960s a new phase emerged in the development of radio that is referred to as the ‘new radio play’” (305). He concludes that “while radio had incorporated sound effects before, in the 1960s experimentation with a wider variety of sounds, including recordings of actual sounds, montages, and stereophonic sound, increased” (ibid). Consequently, Bernhard Siegert adds, some of these plays, especially after 1968, “derived [not] from literature at all, but from film,” pieces in which the cut became paramount (865). Among these new radio plays was the so-called *O-Ton Hörspiel*, “montages of found and collected material, usually with a specific social theme,” and we can see how Brinkmann’s recordings fit in (McGowan, 470). Brinkmann’s Cologne tapes occupy a methodological middle-ground: he sets sounds center-stage (again), utilizes the “cinematic” cut for a “blind” medium, and fuses his “inwardness” (his monologues) with the outward world. In the process, he becomes an extremely mobile type.¹⁶⁶ By 1973, radio had become a medium on the move, in contrast to the more private and stationary event of watching television, which also seems alluringly counter-intuitive with regard to Brinkmann’s quest for interiority.

¹⁶⁴See Bernhard Siegert’s essay “Coming to Terms with the past” for more information on radio plays.

¹⁶⁵These plays were often reductive with regard to sound effects, instead emphasizing an acoustics “in which language itself stood at the very center” (Siegert 863).

¹⁶⁶For a more detailed account, see Michael Bull’s cultural history of the personal stereo *Sounding out the City*, in which he argues that “sound is no respecter of ‘private’ space as it is multiple and amorphous” and that “the analysis of urban experience through the sense of vision has been the predominant one in urban and cultural studies” (116).

Brinkmann, however, was even more interested in the materiality of the medium than the specifics of dissemination. After all, only a small part of the tapes actually aired in 1974. Said materiality allowed him to fuse the external sphere with an interior – that is subjective – sphere, while at the same time the medium complicated this fusion. The technology of the apparatus – the recorder – was itself as critical to Brinkmann’s task of challenging West Germany’s belief in steady progress as the medium’s association with movement and its eventual invasion of the airwaves. In his study on cultural origins of sound reproduction, Jonathan Sterne argues that the idea of recording “carries within it a distinctively threefold sense of time” (310), namely “The geologic decay of the medium; the linear sense of historical time and an immutable break with the past; and a cyclic notion of time based on the fragment, the sonic element of an event” (332). Brinkmann’s recordings expand on these three senses: the recordings are eventually linear in their form as tracks etched on magnetic spools; they capture the urban ecology as cut into fragments beyond any narrative coherence; and they are geological in their overt manipulation of the material and its “geometrical” layers. In contrast to the photographs, the recordings operate out of an overtly durational framework. Instead of capturing a static slice of time, they play out between point A and B of a track. Omitting the visual element, the tapes draw attention to the (assumed) linearity of language and sound only to attack this supposedly coherent narrative right away. Up to this point, even progressive radio-plays had often relied on fade-outs and pauses, techniques that Brinkmann pushed beyond their limits through his poetics of repetition, erasure, and manipulation.¹⁶⁷ While the fade signals a smooth transition from one discursive continuum into another, the cut disrupts one narrative and forcefully superimposes another.

¹⁶⁷See Siegert’s essay in which she argues that the “cut exhibits the materiality of the medium [while] the fade-out and fade-in disguises by creating imaginary depth” (863).

At a cursory glance, Brinkmann's tape recordings seem to defy editorial control and appear as unmediated and chaotic reproductions of Cologne's street life. According to Katarina Agathos, Brinkmann is a "multimedialer Chronist, dessen Zugriff auf die eigene Gegenwart immer ein Versuch möglichst detailgetreuer Wiedergabe direkter und nicht durch Vermittlungsanstrengungen verfälschter Sinneseindrücke war" ["multi-media chronicler whose access to his own present is always an attempt at a true-to-detail representation of direct sense impressions rather than mediated and distorted ones"] (booklet, *Wörter Sex Schnitt*). However, listening closely to what the tapes have to say – something rarely done in scholarship on Brinkmann – and how they say it challenges this observation. Agathos's "natural randomness" and her claim for a lack of edited material are refuted by a strong sense of topical intervention and technological manipulation on Brinkmann's part. The "scarred" tape recordings make it clear that the reproduction of direct sensory perception was not his prime directive. Despite their engagement with the present moment, the tape recordings are neither live broadcasts nor are they unedited. Rather, Brinkmann exerted control and superimposed new recordings over earlier ones, erasing and distorting the latter in the process. As a result, his fragments paradoxically functioned as sign posts in an all-too-homogenous ecology. The older tracks remain audible only where he left them deliberately intact, spikes of sound that peek through auditory sediments, illustrating the value of concurring positions. What is more, he screamed into the microphone, scratched on the spools with his fingernails, and manipulated the speed of the recordings, pointing toward the residue of aural shock and violence still theoretically endemic to noise, including the materiality of its carrier medium.¹⁶⁸ This is not to say that Brinkmann was not after the

¹⁶⁸ Attali puts it well when he says: "diminished intellectual capacity, accelerated aspiration and heartbeat, hypertension, slowed digestion, neurosis, altered diction: these are the consequences of excessive sound in the

authentic sounds of the metropolis, but rather that he also altered them significantly. He thus makes it very clear that the underlying urban experience is by no means a coherent, uninterrupted, and unmediated one to begin with. Rather, the city is an after-image in which the sudden cut signals that something is withdrawn from experience.

Of the 37 tracks released on *Wörter Sex Schnitt*, only a handful qualifies as “urban” recordings. My analysis focuses on tracks that Brinkmann actually recorded while walking the streets (and their ecologies), rather than those that were taken in an apartment or in semi-public venues. Brinkmann’s walks through Cologne reveal the city as a mere semblance, an apparition constituted by media signals. He mentions the “Widerschein der Verkehrsampeln in den Pfützen” [“the reflection of traffic lights in the puddles of water”] (WSS Y1), distorted reflections of an object meant to police. Brinkmann spends “lichtlose Tage in Köln” and presents what is first and foremost a visual impression as language, insinuating that underneath the illuminated spectacle only a gloomy semi-darkness remains (WSS G6). Cologne’s insubstantiality becomes the recurring theme recorded and replayed on tape, reduced to sounds and moments of silence in between. As he walks the streets, Brinkmann chronicles the city on “geräuschlos gewordene Tonbänder” [“tape recordings rendered silent”], likening the city to the effluent quality of the impotent – read: bereft of sounds – recordings (WSS G2). More than anything else, Brinkmann’s utterances disrupt the linear progress of the track and compartmentalize it into sections. Nothing seems to hold together, and the city deteriorates into a mere patchwork of sensory impressions, a switch between at least two different layers of experience. Walking under a “gelber, schmieriger Kölner Himmel” [“yellow, greasy Cologne sky”] (WSS Y1), Brinkmann passes by other pedestrians, navigating a “Konsumwelt, Hochhäuser, Baumgespenster” [“consumer world, highrises, environment”] (27).

spectral trees”] (ibid). With the ghosts of trees standing watch, he collects “Gesprächsfetzen” [“fragments of discourse”] (ibid), remnants of a ghostly discourse in its own right, decontextualized but also revalued through its fragmentation and as such both a testament to a “künstlich gefärbte Gegenwart” [“artificially colored present”] and the possibility of new creations (ibid). His footsteps become the metronome that gauges the city against the false and artificial progress signaled by the sounds of the passing cars. In the end, the recordings make us acutely aware of the technological but ultimately insubstantial noises that permeate the media ecology.

Brinkmann utilized his aural shocks to jump start Germany’s saturnine aesthetic realm out of its complacency. He thus also intervened into politics through this cutting up of “coagulated” sentences and putting them back together in a different context.¹⁶⁹ Through the re-organization of language Brinkmann implicitly participated in power-discourses. He kept close control of the tracks, both in inciting incidents and calling the shots as to what remained audible, even within a polyvocal environment. The mediated landscape conceals the deeper, non-linear, and sometimes unarticulated German “narratives,” those that lie hidden beneath the image-and-sound barrages of modern mass media. Equally, the resulting “narrative” of the tape recordings cannot be read for a coherently unfolding story, at least not without also taking into account their form. Whatever German “story” Brinkmann wished to tell, it can only be gleaned from a broader hermeneutic perspective that takes into account the chosen medium. Not only is the narrative of the recordings not plot driven, the results also

¹⁶⁹Brinkmann, while walking “unter Verkehrslichtern” [“under traffic lights”] dreams up “eine ganz andere Welt” [“a completely different world”], a world without „TEXACO-Fahnen” [“TEXACO-flags”] and „erloschenen STIFTS-Pils Reklamen” [“lapsed STIFTS-beer advertisements”] (WSS Y4). He envisions a world that is not governed by empty signs which in this particular case – as Brinkmann stops talking for several seconds and realigns the microphone – are the car sounds in the streets (ibid). In this new world, the traffic lights, banners, and billboards are not the organizing principles of society but rather organically embedded within the urban landscape. Again, Brinkmann argues for a more organic inclusion of culture into the ecology of the city.

illustrate that one layer of noise can be superimposed on another in some sort of Brechtian alienation effect. Several times Brinkmann rewound the tapes and added new recordings on top of older ones, drawing attention to the “constructedness” and imbricatedness of mass media. He simultaneously disrupts and replays the city’s signals, rendering the sounds of urban space audible in their disconnected form, a form he emphasizes in his language when he separates his words from each other through pauses: he walks “durch / die / gespenstische / Kulisse / der / Gegenwart” [“through / the / ghostly / sound-stage / of the / present”] (WSS P1). The actual act of recording is foregrounded and the mechanical clicking of the recorder remains clearly audible. Brinkmann captured the city’s complex sound tapestry as a disconnected and concurring succession of sounds that do not add up – a disconnection that in the end produces their critical power.¹⁷⁰

Re-recording helped Brinkmann expose the city as a mediated space embedded in, what Attali calls, a “society of the sign” in which television is the supersign (4). The tapes force upon us the realization that the mediated city is nothing but an old recording, the echo of some long gone original. On the track “Da gehe ich an alten Läden vorbei” [“I’m walking past old store fronts”], Brinkmann turns into the ghost of an flaneur while narrating the necropolis (WSS Y4). Surrounded by street noise – buses passing by, his steps on the sidewalk, drafts of air – he finds himself illuminated by the light of a sickly “grüne Lichtreklame” [“green neon sign”] while exploring the streets of Cologne (ibid). His running commentary, superimposed over the background noise, briefly turns Brinkmann into one of the city’s many ghosts, someone capable of entering the afterlife. As a literal recorder of modernity, Brinkmann reproduces this “dead” city and mentions the “alte Kleider” [“old

¹⁷⁰Frederic Jameson famously states that the postmodern “looks for breaks, for events rather than new worlds, for the telltale instant” (ix). He also claims that “depth is replaced by surface, or by multiple surfaces (what is often called intertextuality is in that sense no longer a matter of depth)” (12).

clothes”] and “verblichene Seidenstoffe” [“faded silk fabrics”] in the shop windows as a stroller who predominantly perceives the outdated and threadbare condition of the displayed goods (ibid). He states, “ich gehe an Autolichtern vorbei” [“I’m walking past head lights”], incorporeal stimuli which, he admits, hurt his eyes – Brinkmann, it becomes clear, does not belong (ibid). The headlights of the cars and the fading commodities on display transform the city into an Orphic underworld, the green neon light mentioned above cast an oily reflection in puddles of water, the sound of cars faintly audible in the background.

For Brinkmann, the city is not only a threadbare fabric but also a place where repetition reigns supreme and the radio delivers the soundtrack to the atrophy of experience. A close reading – as far as this term is applicable – of the recordings needs to focus on the technical apparatus as a means of rendering audible this repetition. The track “Samstag den 10. November” [“Saturday, November 10”] denotes a concrete temporal moment, namely this particular day in the November of 1973 and then repeats it incessantly (WSS B4). The track thus immediately addresses its own repetitive structure and by analogy draws attention to the looped urban condition. Brinkmann explains in a monotone voice: “das Abhören der Geräusche, die gelöschten Bänder einer vergangenen Unterhaltung, nochmal und nochmal” [“the listening to/monitoring of sounds, the erased tapes of a past conversation, again and again”], suggesting an eternal return of the ever-same in communication (ibid). This is immediately followed by the disjunctive sound of the much-utilized mechanical click (the stopping or pausing of the recorder), often succeeded by a reiteration of the date. Even though Brinkmann disrupts the recordings, he nevertheless returns to the same date over and over again. He then rewinds and reuses the tape, only to stop it again and re-record so that only a fragment of the earlier material is preserved. This overbudding technique produces a

loop that conveys urban time as inherently circular. Violating the loop, Brinkmann leaves noises signaling the transition from one recording to another and then suddenly he states: “[unintelligible utterance] ich weiß nich’ ob die dich überhaupt inspirieren” [“I don’t know if they actually inspire you”] (ibid). Together, the recording draws attention to a crisis of linear storytelling and the failed power of language to illuminate the crisis of art. After a five second intermission, the first segment resumes only to be again interrupted several times by empty breaks, silences that prepare the listener for the return of the same phrase: “November 10.” Attempts to break out of the the loop appear futile but nonetheless reveal the paralytic condition of German life by echoing out the surroundings.

On the track “Schneematsch” [“Sludge”], Brinkmann records himself speaking while walking the cold streets of Cologne. He traverses the city and tracks down people who “laufen mit den Wörtern” [“walk with the words”] rather than against them (WSS B7). The eponymous crust of sludge is audible under Brinkmann’s muffled footsteps, evoking a vast, barren landscape. What starts out as a face-value description of a wintery city can also be read allegorically. The sludge, which Brinkmann levels physically through walking, points toward the crusted condition of language that has piled up in the streets of the Germany, a condition that also speaks directly to the “fixed” structure of the tapes. Brinkmann seeks to crack these patches of ice with noises and words, a task that – as the track “November 10” shows – consumes a lot of energy, if the breaking-through is possible at all. When transcribed in its entirety – that is including noise patterns and background sounds – the track begins as follows: “[street noise, including a car passing by] [rain drops] [footsteps on sludge] [street noise continues]” (WSS P5). In the meantime, Brinkmann remains silent for almost one and a half minutes. When he eventually disrupts this uncomfortably prolonged

absence of language, Brinkmann utters “Schneematsch... Schneematsch auf den Straßen... und dieses wunderliche Gefühl” [“sludge...sludge in the streets... and this weird feeling”], a phrase again cut off from his further elaborations by a clearly audible, albeit brief, recording pause (ibid). The track continues after this pause, “[footsteps] [cars passing by] ...überlege ich, wo ich überall schon gewesen bin, dieses hin und her zwischen den verschiedenen Situationen” [“I ponder where I’ve been so far, the back and forth between the various situations”] (ibid). Brinkmann’s “weird feeling” is triggered by the layers of ice and snow that demobilize the media ecology, freezing the subject into place under the sludge so that no one can really get away. Brinkmann intervenes into the city’s alloy of concurrent noises of which his own voice is the pick to crack the ice so that literature can become mobile again.

The frozen urban environment elicits affective responses from Brinkmann and in response he inscribes it as much in the tapes as in the subject matter. At one point in “Schneematsch” he begins to yell “verdammte Scheiße hier” [“fucking shit here”], an outburst that causes the recording to over-amplify, a technological feedback to his voice that links the subject with the apparatus and the city and a reminder that the subject is tethered to the surrounding ecology (WSS P5). Ravaging the ecology, his screaming physically contests the capacity of the machine to capture audible experience and thus gauges its limits. Brinkmann’s voice literally exceeds the abilities of the apparatus and reveals its potential power of containment. Brinkmann creates again imperfections – cracks in the ice of television city – through which he positions his artful documentaries as diametrically opposed to mass media’s polished appearance. He presents the city as a place bombarded by decibels which cannot be reflected, a media ecology that functions only one-way, a situation that needs to be rectified. The moment of rupture between that “weird feeling” and

Brinkmann's emotional outburst comes when he exclaims "alles ist in Deutschland untersagt" ["everything is prohibited in Germany"], a reaction to his encounter with a "no trespassing" sign in the streets of Cologne, a provocation and call for the transcendence of limits (ibid). Brinkmann sees a policing force present not only in the concrete geography of the city, but also in its (medial) signs: "ich kann weiter gehen, es ist grün" ["I can walk on, there is a green light"] (WSS Y2). In short, Brinkmann's act of transgressive urban walking confronts the restricted spaces of the city by over-stepping boundaries and thresholds, calling for a reshuffled and flexible ecology.

Finally, Brinkmann's medial infractions inevitably touch upon the political, and are therewith still carrying traces of the impulses of the student revolution. Instead of literally taking to the streets *en masse*, however, Brinkmann's revolt takes the form of recording the city's sounds and disrupting the social conduct on the streets on his own terms: as Attali claims, "possessing the means of recording allows one to monitor noises, to maintain them, and to control their repetition within a determined code" (87). On his way to a new literature, Brinkmann argues that every time people in the public domain of the street become aware of his recorder, their initial reaction is "Mißtrauen" ["mistrust"] followed by an act of "Aufspielen" ["acting up"] (WSS O1). The sudden intrusion of the microphone – perceived as a violent act – reminds people of the possible form of control inherent in mass media and allows Brinkmann to intrude into their comfort zones. The realization that what they say is recorded, stored, and could be repeated triggers distrust. It is, however, not the technological apparatus *per se* that produces these effects. Taking hand-written (an index of the literary) notes elicits very similar reactions from the citizens of Cologne. In one of the recordings, Brinkmann states, "ich gehe eine Straße entlang [...] und notiere mir einen Eindruck" ["I'm

walking down a street, taking notes”]; an aggravated passer-by demands to know from Brinkmann, “schreiben Sie mich auf?,” which literally translates as “are you writing me down” but which colloquially refers to the police issuing a citation and at the same time alludes to the act of literary production (WSS P6).¹⁷¹ The transformation of the undocumented moment into a documented record provokes a fearful and aggressive reaction. Brinkmann’s documentation of an “Eindruck” [“impression”] is experienced as intrusive as his recordings and they ultimately isolate Brinkmann as an exceptional urban walker, someone who doesn’t coast through the cityscape but rather rips it up. Although there is no communicative exchange between Brinkmann, the transgressive pedestrian, and others on the streets, his technologically facilitated methods for taking notes is an attack. This happens, I claim, because he reminds people of the public status of city space and the language that secretively constitutes and orders it. This focus on the most fundamental building block of communication – language – eventually leads Brinkmann to an evaluation of the role of literature in general and poetry in particular in the media ecology of the mid-1970s.

V. Poeticizing Urban Space: The City as Text in *Westwärts 1 & 2*

Rolf Dieter Brinkmann saw himself first and foremost as a poet, hell-bent on keeping language from turning into clichés. Thus, after images and sounds he turned toward the city as a text, challenging what he perceived to be a solidification of language and art into meaningless, empty shells. The logic of the (visual and aural) cut up resurfaces in the poems in his lyrical magnum opus *Westwärts 1 & 2: Gedichte*. Brinkmann wrote these poems

¹⁷¹ Another instance infuriates a man who urges Brinkmann to go away. When his quite aggressive demands do not produce the intended result, the man threatens him in a tellingly capitalist way, namely by saying “muss ich meinen Chef holen” [“I have to call my boss”] (WSS Y2). There is also an elderly citizen who becomes agitated when she is unable to discern whether Brinkmann is taking notes for a newspaper article or “sich selbst” [“himself”] (WSS Y1).

between 1970 and 1974, roughly during the same period in which he collected the various other materials discussed in this chapter so far. The poems differ from the other texts, perhaps above all, in their status as accepted literary works, even though their content and form bleed into the other elements of his personal media ecology. Because of its genre, *Westwärts 1 & 2* deals with the cityscape in a specific way that traditionally omits the visual and the aural: Brinkmann nevertheless returns to these sense impression in writing and insinuates a concrete proximity between urban space and art. If the city, as he believed, is ultimately governed by sound, images, and language then it can also generate a transgressive poetics of its own. While roaming the streets of Cologne, Rome, and Austin, TX, Brinkmann devised an aesthetic form adequate to his urban experiences. The technique of the cut up also materialized in poetry, drawing but also expanding on the effects of his photographs and recordings. The typeset in *Westwärts 1 & 2* recreates the urban labyrinth in all its shapes and forms converging in different conflicting perspectives reminiscent of Concrete Poetry.¹⁷² The unforgiving grid returns in the layout of “Westwärts” [“Westbound”] and “Westwärts, Teil 2” [“Westbound, Part 2”], the two poems I look at for my close readings. In contrast to the photographs, however, the pattern loses some of its geometrical rigor and renegotiates its frame: the grid’s form dissolves immediately. Brinkmann thus creates a “poetic” city that brings his various critiques of disrupted and fragmented urban space together.

In contrast to the photographs and the tape recordings, Brinkmann’s post-1969 poems have sparked a lot of scholarly interest. Burglind Urbe argues that *Westwärts 1 & 2* is testament to the fact that “Brinkmann soziale Kollektive, Gruppen, Parteien, sogar den

¹⁷²This 1960s art movement of visually and/or acoustically marked texts assumed that “in addition to an anarchical pleasure in playing with linguistic material in a way that was not prescribed by social norms or linguistic rules [...also] aimed at political meaning by making the reader aware of the fact that life in society can be as empty as linguistic rituals” (Stoehr, 303).

Begriff Gesellschaft prinzipiell ablehnt” [“Brinkmann in general rejects social collectives, groups, parties, even the term society”] (14). In other words, the volume approaches language as a collective system, one, as Urbe further claims, that “Erfahrung der Wirklichkeit unmöglich macht” [“renders the experience of reality impossible”] (176). Sibylle Späth sees the language in Brinkmann’s poetry collection as a tool with which “der Autor mit seinen Gedichten nicht nur die grammatische Struktur sprachlicher Äußerungen zertrümmert, sondern [...] auch die Regeln der semantischen Ordnung [durchbricht]” [“the author not only shatters the grammatical structure of locutionary acts, but also the rules of any semantic order”] (1989; 77).¹⁷³ Both Brinkmann’s anti-social stance and his problematic relation to language are undoubtedly visible in the poems, but it is doubtful whether these facets are the sole viable hermeneutic focus for readers of *Westwärts 1 & 2*. The former approach neglects the formal aspects of the poems, while the latter assumes a senseless destruction of language without placing any valence on the content. Jonathan Woolley argues that “Brinkmann’s implied author is not indifferent to the reader, and that his refusal to provide the reader with clarity is in fact part of his ethical project” (8). In other words, *Westwärts 1 & 2* assigns meaning not despite of but precisely due to its resistance to formal norms. Woolley’s implied “ethical” author gestures toward the relation between the lyrical I and the individual who reads the poems, even though it is problematic to assume that Brinkmann’s intentions were primarily ethical. On this note, Antje Krüger points out an “Ästhetik der Oberfläche” [“an aesthetics of the surface”] at work in the poems and therewith marks Brinkmann’s poetics as

¹⁷³Martin Grzimek also perceives a “Zerstörung [...] in den Schnitten” [“destruction in between the cuts”] (35) in Brinkmann’s work but partly counters Späth’s claim by saying that “abgesehen einmal von einigen Gedichten (und Fotos) des ‘Westwärts’-Bandes, hat Brinkmann nach 1970 keinen Text veröffentlicht, der nicht von dieser Zersplitterung [...] geprägt wäre” [“except of some poems (and photographs) in *Westwärts*, Brinkmann did not release any texts after 1970 that weren’t affected by this fragmentation”] (34).

highly interested in surfaces, a reading that points to the general approach to the following close readings (287).

Looking at both their form and content reveals the role “Westwärts” and “Westwärts Teil 2” assume in Brinkmann’s exploding of Germany’s media ecology, exemplified through the signal-fusing logic of television city. In other words, Brinkmann argues for the reconfiguration up of the current constellation, highlighting the need for a flexible engagement with the media at hand and a heightened intermedial exchange. The grid of the city now returns as text – a written form based on the image and sound – utilizing the medium’s unique possibilities in terms of the representation of spatiality. The literary techniques he uses to poeticize the urban landscape strongly resist linear reading habits. The poems’ syntactic and semantic units are often a sentence or even only a single word, usually ripped out of the televisual city during one of his walks. The layout of the poem, with its random changes in perspective and notational systems borrowed from Brinkmann’s own photographic and recording techniques, cuts “Westwärts” and its sequel into fragments, this discontinuous quality amplified by its division into three larger sections, free of rhyme scheme and meter. The exclusion of traditional metrics distances the poems from a canon that reaches back to antiquity and suggests that the media ecology is neither bound nor guided by ordering principles. In spite of their affirmed micrological non-linearity, readers can still make out the two poems’ overarching trajectory, namely their back-to-back stories about a lyrical I who flies to the United States and then later returns to Germany.

In an attempt to assign meaning where there is none, the poems recapitulate this journey through a disjunctive succession of random sensory impressions turned into language that conflate text and space. The layout of the first page of the poem directly confronts the

reader with this puzzling lyrical replication of imagined geographic space, a city void of rhythm in which the grid appears randomly reshuffled (see Fig. 2.6.). Layout techniques produce parallel columns that include indented lines, varied line spacing, and at times the cohabitation of two semantically unrelated elements in the same line. “Westwärts” trives evokes the spaces of the city as well as its stimuli, but accomplishes more than just imitation. The first words of the first poem are “die wirklichen Dinge, die passieren...keine Buchtitel, Inhalte, Zitate” [“the real things that happen...not book titles, contents, quotes”] (WW 66). The ellipsis between “passieren” and “keine Buchtitel” emphasizes something left out. The term “Zitate,” as semantics and grammatical structure insinuate, belongs to the preceding line. In terms of the page layout, however, the term is demarcated from “Buchtitel” and “Inhalte” through a line break. The line does not continue where one would expect it to, namely at the beginning of the next line – it rather sits at the far right of it. From the beginning, even what appears to belong together remains ultimately demarcated in “Westwärts,” a condition the reader also recognizes in the pictures and the recordings. What the reader perceives only in the poem, however, are moved-around building blocks (that is written language), an exploded grid that still suggests the “speed-lines” of its own reconfiguration.

Westwärts

Die wirklichen Dinge, die passieren ... keine Buchtitel, Inhalte,
Zitate.

1 Sonne brüllt am Tag, Unterholz, verkrüppelte Vegetation,
sandverwehte Straßen,

in London steige ich um.

Ein kalter Wind weht durch die Halle. Das

Transparent schaukelt, Fortschritt, Frieden
Kartoffeln im Computer.

Dann werde ich durchsucht.
Mich fröstelt.

Am Gebäude wächst eine Wiese vorüber.

Auf einmal, da war ich, an dieser Stelle, in meinem Leben.

Einige Zeilen weiter hob das Flugzeug ab. Die nächste Zeile
hieß, eine matschige Winterdämmerung in New York, bleiche
rosa Wolken fern und

nah ein Neger in Uniform vor der Tür,
der mit dem Kleingeld spielt.

Beobachtung: ich schaute

auf das Flugfeld und hatte plötzlich das Gefühl, ich
hatte keine Vergangenheit mehr.

Ich schaute (Die Negation
der Zustände ringsum
reichte nicht länger
aus.)

durch die gläserne Wand.

Auch das ging vorbei,

westwärts. (Anschnallen!)

(Drehtüren, Maschendraht,
Autobusse: „Ei läi in äh Field

Nun kamen

66

Fig. 2.6. Reproduction of the first page of “Westwärts,” exemplary of the poem’s fragmented layout; from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt.

From the first line onward, “Westwärts” confronts the reader with the breakdown of linearity and the recasting of the optical grid and thus visualizes a lack of direction, endemic to the Western metropolis. The third and fourth line “1 Sonne brüllt am Tag, Unterholz, verkrüppelte Vegetation, / sandverwehte Straßen” [“1 the sun roars during the day, undergrowth, crippled vegetation, streets blown over by sand”] evoke the confusing urban perspectives depicted in Brinkmann’s aforementioned photographs, a decaying landscape from which the lyrical I flees westwards, which is to say, away from West Germany toward the United States (WW 66). The absence of classical meters severs the connection to the lyrical German tradition of the eighteenth century and alludes to a city unbound and a subject

– for better or worse – roaming on “free foot” without points of reference. The lyrical I appears for the first time in line five – its late appearance signaling the same problem of being contained we witness in the photographs. Not only is his movement contrasted with the static sand-covered streets and the crippled vegetation, the composition also creates an opening between the lines, a path for the lyrical I to traverse the poem between its “textual” obstacles. “Westwärts” heralds movement, both literally and figuratively, using a typeset that graphically resembles jumbled gridirons of the city as well as the buildings that dot it. These word-buildings emulate an urban landscape, “city-blocks” littered with linguistic signs, reminiscent of a city map or a (visual) collage of urban impressions. The poem thus creates a vexing dual-perspective: one is personal, bound to a moving observer surrounded by linguistic signs, and the other evokes an abstraction of the bird’s eye perspective in which the reader looks down at the city from above, even though the grid does not remain ordered geometrically. Ultimately, however, these perspectives conflict and never quite match, both an indictment of and remedy to undifferentiated ecologies.

There are two perspectives at work in “Westwärts.” the first perspective – the ground-floor perspective of the lyrical I – grants access to his thoughts, but also to random visual and aural impressions. Through this perspective, the reader follows the lyrical I to Austin, Texas. “In London steige ich um,” he comments, compressing several hours into a few lines and states that “einige Zeilen weiter hob das Flugzeug ab. Die nächste Zeile hieß, eine matschige Winterdämmerung in New York” [“couple of lines later the plane took off. The next line was, muddy winter dusk in New York”] (WW 66). On this trip, the first-person perspective is taken to an extreme in exclamations such as “Fleisch einführen verboten” [“it is forbidden to import meat”], which, given in the overall context of air travel, relates to the warning signs at

airports perceived by the traveler (WW 67). This sign is set apart from the remainder of the text and thus resembles a sign in the physical “Schild” [“sign”] sense of the word. We can infer how the lyrical I stands in front of this sign – which he simultaneously perceives both as text and as an actual object on which the words are written. After this moment of immobility, the lyrical I then boards the plane – “Washington ist nichts anderes beim Drüberfliegen, nachts, als eine Menge Funzeln in der Dunkelheit” [“when flying over Washington, it is nothing but a lot of dim lights in the dark”] – which brings us quickly to the second perspective at work in “Westwärts” (WW 67).

This second perspective utilizes the bird’s eye view looking down at the city – disembodied and freed of physical constraints. From this perspective, any personal attachment to the observed environments dissipates and the reader is left with a depopulated city map, on which “reading between the lines” equals traversing empty streets in a zig-zag course. The poem depicts the city as blocks of language, a motif that, as we recall, recurs frequently in Brinkmann’s work from the early seventies. Taken a step further, we see at the gilded network of the media ecology and its synapses. “Westwärts” blends these different perspectives and conflates the fragmented impressions of a single traveler with the poetic city that the poem’s layout evokes. From the vantage point of the first-person perspective, the lyrical I arrives at his final destination in the United States where space has turned into pure sign, “(Villa Capri, Motor Hotel, 2400, N. Interregional Highway, Austin Texas 78705),” a mixture of the visual and the textual (WW 68). Looked at from “above,” Brinkmann’s abode during his stay at the University of Texas as a guest lecturer is presented in block form, resembling the basic floor plan of a house. The “villa” thus emulates a stylized building, an initially square structure, conflating the bird’s eye of the reader and the ground perspective of

the urban walker – and eventually neither remains stable. As the lyrical I travels from city to city – from an undisclosed place in Germany to London to New York, Washington and finally Austin – he approaches these new ecologies with excitement.¹⁷⁴ Initially, mobility grants the lyrical I relief from Germany’s standstill, but the fact that the lyrical I just keeps going “west” until he returns to his homeland hints at the impossibility of getting away.

Attentive readers must notice how the first section of “Westwärts” evokes a heightened sense of pace, rushing the reader through the city along a constellation of words without settling down: “Abflammende Nacht / westwärts / rotierender Sternhaufen, [space] Trampelpfade” [“a singeing night / gyrating star clusters / dirt tracks”] (WW 68). However, this sprint ends with an allusion to the looped, repetitive quality of the city. As soon the movement comes to a halt, this implies, the standstill catches up to him. Before section one ends, the lyrical I states “& dann fing ich noch einmal mit der Zeile an, Auf einmal, da war ich, an dieser Stelle, in meinem Leben” [“and then I began with that line anew, suddenly I was there, at that particular juncture of my life”] (ibid). These lines correspond to a similar line at the beginning of the first stanza, referring to the layover in New York, “auf einmal, da war ich, and dieser Stelle in meinem Leben. Einige Zeilen weiter hob das Flugzeug ab” [“suddenly I was there, at that particular juncture in my life. A couple of lines later the plane took off”] (WW 66). Brinkmann suggests that the poem does not smoothly evolve along uninterrupted spatial and temporal axes and is rather constantly threatened by becoming a cliché. In other words, even the apparent acceleration and its being on the move do not necessarily guarantee meaningful progress. Rather, literature is constantly fighting for its life in a hostile mass media ecology

¹⁷⁴As Ingo Stoeckl contends, Brinkmann felt a “tremendous sense of temporary liberation [...] as writer-in-residence at the University of Texas at Austin” (350).

The second section of “Westwärts” then significantly alters the layout and reduces the break-neck speed of section one. Section two refines the grid and appears as an ordered, slowed-down structure made of neatly centered text blocks. Its “stanzas” are consistently three lines long, bespeaking a more rigid ecology. In spite of this order, they still do not rhyme, suggesting that harmony of any kind still remains incomplete business. The first stanza within section two ends with a period and presents itself as a compact and hermetic unit in analogy to a city that seemingly allows for easy navigation but at the same time hampers progress. The other stanzas contain run-on lines, as if its inherent order immediately and subtly begins to break down – literature striving to come into contact with other signals. The poem equates the block layout in section two with Germany’s standstill, easier to comprehend but excluding all the nooks and crannies of the first, “westbound” section. The poem gestures toward its own struggle to capture the urban condition and embeds paralytic poetry in a more mobile one. From another perspective, one could say that what had been reconfigured and assembled anew strives back toward its earlier contiguity, a contiguity loathed by Brinkmann. Finally, section three – the last in “Westwärts” – revisits the typeset of the first section but also expands upon it, offering a frame in which section two sits as the viral core. Its fragmented, indented, and decentralized layout evokes the opening section in which the lyrical I travels to the United States. In section three, too, the reader finds utterances in quotation marks and parentheses, which assign different modes of representation to different notational systems and create competing perspectives. Returning to question of interpretation above, one striking feature, however, sets section three of apart from the first one: namely a segment that intrudes into the seemingly more orderly pattern of

section two, cutting up the latter's neat structure and bridging the two sections in the process (see Fig. 2.7.).

Leberwurst auf der Brust, eine schwarze
 Lakritzstange im Bauch, die Kinder
 Spiele abgeholt. Hat jemand

 seinen Staubmantel mit den
 Ausweisen am Haken vergessen? Nun muß
 er im Traum sprechen und spricht,

 gibt Auskunft
 über das Land. Was antwortet, sind
 Polizisten in Grün, Striche, Sätze

 Gebrauchsanweisungen für die Sätze
 und Bilder im Traum, der die Dinge
 schreibt und schreibt: bis zum

 Ende, wo sich keiner mehr
 rührt, auf dem Papier.

3.
 „Du schaffst es,“ angekommen. Da bin
 ich
 in diesem enormen
 Raum,
 „der Westen“
 „oh bähbie“
 Dreck.
 Oder nimm die Variationen, die in den
 ausgesparten Zwischenräumen
 sind,
 Eine Fortsetzung
 wollte sich bei mir nicht
 einstellen,
 westwärts,
 vierundzwanzig

(& das tägl. gewöhnl. Leben,
 immer noch ungesichert,
 „zuviel auf den Straßen
 herumgelatscht, wa?“ oder auf
 Achse/ lange Gespräche nachts
 in vergammelten Parks)
 (als das Farbfernsehen
 zu Ende war,)

kosmische
 Rock'n'Roll Musikstation,
 in der Nacht,
 „die Äpfel, Bill,
 die Äpfel,“ wie Hart Crane
 in den weißen Gebäuden rief.

„Think Trees“
 „I break for Animals“
 (du steigst
 um)

70

Fig. 2.7. Section three of “Westwärts” “intruding” into section two, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt.

In analogy, Brinkmann's experimental poetics invades the more traditional lyrical form of section two, suggesting a hostile take-over of established poetical conventions through the urban cut ups – or, conversely, replication of distorted grided structures – that constitute section one and three. Ultimately, however, there is no way of telling if section three actually invades section two or if, maybe, the latter spills over into the former as the

demarcations already begin to blur, contaminating, as it were, the artwork. The first interpretation suggests an tendency in the ecology to open itself up, while the second one fears the viral intrusion of an anti-body. At the end of section three a continuous line appears within the structure of the poem. From the bird's eye perspective, the line is reminiscent of a wall, an obstacle that eventually stops the "walk" between the building blocks of the poetic city. Like the audible clicks on the re-recorded tapes and the frame-lines of the pictures, the continuous line tacitly draws the attentive observer's attention to the appearance of limits. The typeset of "Westwärts" reminds its readers that the lyrical I has reached not so much his final destination, but a moment of immobility. Still in Austin, he speculates about a possible return to an undisclosed location when he asks "würde ich zurückkommen?" ["would I return?"] (WW 71). The poem concludes with the words, "hier in der Gegend, mit den wandernden Häusern, nachts [...] als ich den leeren, weiten Parkplatz überquerte" ["here in the neighborhood, with the wandering houses, at night as I traversed the empty, wide parking lot"] (ibid). The houses – the linguistic building blocks that, after all, constitute "Westwärts" – are moving while the lyrical I inevitably slows down. This description of the empty parking lot is the last line in "Westwärts," located at the bottom of the page.¹⁷⁵ For a brief moment the lyrical I hesitates and this is all the time that the cliché needs to catch up. Turning the page, the sequel to "Westwärts" already awaits the reader, mercilessly dragging him (and the lyrical I) back to where he came from.

All of these ambiguities present themselves particularly well through poetry. Similar in layout and style, "Westwärts, Teil 2" takes the lyrical I back to the streets of Germany, and thus suggests an inevitable return to the dreaded standstill, arrested only in the tensions

¹⁷⁵The effect is even stronger in the 1975 Rowohlt print that features a layout that ends the poem halfway through a page, leaving 50 % of the page empty.

endemic to literary texts. The first part's confusing sense of space, time, and perspective also dominates the sequel, expressing a fatalistic certainty that one cannot escape (and risk) immobility for long, even though this is exactly what happened. Part two is considerably longer than the prequel (it consists of five sections), and its layout – despite certain parallels – is much more cramped and cluttered, a comment on the vertiginous condition of Brinkmann's hated home. At times, the “walk” through the text that was still possible in part in “Westwärts” becomes impossible, when said path is blocked by words that leave hardly any space between them. The poem also includes blocks that align text to both left and right margins, visually clogging the poem completely (see Fig. 2.8.). The first of two such blocks contains the statement “diese Freiheit habe ich jedesmal körperlich gespürt, sobald ich die Grenze, die zugleich die Grenze der Sprache und des Verständnisses war, das verordnet wurde, verließ” [“always felt that freedom physically as soon as I left the prescribed border that was both the limit of language and understanding”] (WW 77). This observation on “freedom” is contained in language that suggests that an escape from the urban environment can at best be temporary. Hence, poetry has to keep moving faster than television's ghosts can follow. Incarcerated in words, the lyrical I returns to Germany: part two begins “Zurückgekehrt in dieses traurige, alte Europa [...] an einem Samstag frühen Nachmittag im Mai 1974” [“returned to this sad, old Europe on an early, Saturday afternoon in the May of 1974”] (WW 72). Immediately, he spots “das Gespenst eines Gepäckträgers in der weiten, leeren Halle des neugebauten Airports” [“the ghost of a baggage porter in the wide, empty terminal of the new airport”] – the phantom people that populate Germany, whose plane of existence is “der weite, leere betonierte Platz [und] eine versteinerte statische Zeit, die meine Bewegung momentlang auszulöschen drohte” [“the wide, empty concrete space and a

petrified, static time which threatened to extinguish my mobility for a couple of moments”]
(ibid).

Sollten sie jetzt auf der Schnecke reiten?
Sollten sie jetzt landeinwärts schauen?
Landeinwärts, weiter, hatte jeder das Gedächtnis
verloren.
Sie zogen ein paar dreckige Bilder
hinter sich her. Sie spuckten sie aus.
Das dreckigste Bild ist das tote Haus.
Das dreckigste Bild ist ein versteinertes Abendessen,
woran die einzelnen Personen versteinert sitzen, ehe sie
aufstehen und aus dem Zimmer gehen. Das dreckigste
Bild ist der Tod. Du siehst ihn überall in allen Formen.
Du fotografierst dich selber: Ich hasse Euch.

Du drückst Nummern in die Tasten. Du machst Briefköpfe. Du unterschreibst.
Du formulierst Rechtsbriefe. Du trittst stellvertretend auf. Du kriegst ein
Abonnementmittagessen. Du verhandelst im Namen anderer. Du träumst vom
Wochenende und Campingliegebetten und liest in einer populären Biografie.
Du denkst am Sonntag an das, was noch abzuzahlen ist. Du trinkst in der
Unterhose Kaffee. Du hast dir die Redewendungen gemerkt, daß jeder es
schwierig hat, wenn du einmal auf einen schwierigen Fall triffst. Du hast lange
gebraucht, bis deine Unterschrift unleserlich wurde unter den Briefen, die du
am Montag diktierst. Du drückst wieder eine Nummer der automatischen
Sprechanlage. Du windest dich prima durch. Du bist nicht zu fassen. Du hast
eine Frau, von der du dir vorstellst, wenn sie sich abends auszieht, sie sei je-
mand andres. Du schaust durch die abgetönten Fensterscheiben im Sommer.
Du hast das Oberhemd aufgekrempt und den obersten Hemdknopf aufge-
knöpft. Du hast die Tonbänder sauber. Du bist nicht einmal Konfetti. Du bist
nicht einmal eine Papierluftschlange. Du bist ein Leser.

Ist dieser eine Tag der Ballsaal des lebendigen Todes?
Und kalte Schatten liegen in der Bratpfanne?

„In diesem Koffer ist dreckige Wäsche,“ sage ich an der
Grenze, wo sie mich durchsuchen.

Ohne Fahrschein fährst du nachts in den Träumen die unsichtbare U Bahn
der Seele, es sind Wörter.
Es ist die weiße Sprache, die unsichtbar wird,
wenn ihr sie sichtbar zu machen versucht. Es ist
die Spirale, die sich dreht.

81

**Fig. 2.8. The text in “Westwärts” “coagulates” and “clogs” the page, from
Westwärts 1 & 2. Copyright © by Rowohlt.**

Back in Germany, the lyrical I’s gaze falls upon the city, “in der Ferne in einem
Dunst” [“in the hazy distance”], the act of escaping and coming back converged into one
expression (WW 73). He penetrates the fog that hides the city, even if he does not have the
power to completely dissolve it. The lyrical I – and by implication poetry in general – can at
best stay one step ahead of the standstill and retain distance from it. The first section out of

five that composes “Westwärts, Teil 2” focuses on the arrival at the airport. What follows is a torrent of random expressions presented in two parallel columns, suggesting that the lyrical I is unable to compute any of his impressions chronologically. The poem emphasizes these sensual or neural failures through its layout. When words and phrases turn into clichés, Brinkmann claims, meaning has to be conveyed not via content alone, but through the experimental reordering of their constellation. “In dieser gespenstischen Gegenwart” [“in this ghostly present”] [...], the lyrical I “ging durch die Innen Stadt, ein Museum” [“walked the streets of down/town, a museum”] (WW 76). The contrast between the present and the use of the narrative past directs attention to the cliché’s contamination of the present, labeling the city a space where ancient artifacts are on display. As the lyrical I walks the city, familiar motifs return: “die Nacht war eine zerfetzte Kulisse, ‘Petroleum’ glühte eine Schrift, ,Ersatzteile‘ in roter Schrift” [“the night was a shredded stage-setting, the word ‘petroleum’ glowing, ‘spare parts’ in red lettering”] (ibid). Once more, language has been transformed into advertisements, the “fiery neon-signs” Walter Benjamin hails as superior to criticism in *Einbahnstraße*.

As the lyrical I walks on – into section 4 of “Westwärts, Teil 2” – the old Germany and its stifling media ecology creep back into the foreground. He spots “Lautsprecher an der Straßenbahn” [“the speakers of a tram”] and hears “Einsteigen bitte!” 1 Befehlston / in deutsch” [“get on the bus, 1 commanding tone, in German”] and wonders if that was ever his language: a thought he ultimately rejects (WW 77). He concludes “ich gehe an Schatten vorbei. Schattenmenschen bevölkerten die Straßen, redend” [“I walk by shadows, shadow people inhabited the streets, talking”] (ibid). The lyrical I is located among the other walkers on the ground level, immediately engulfed by sounds and sights. “Westwärts, Teil 2” reveals

language as cut up, static blocks of words that have become part of their surroundings. Poetic language has been absorbed into the larger environment, rendered indistinguishable from the other textual elements that constitute urban space. As the lyrical I approaches his depressing home, “Westwärts, Teil 2” includes a portion of text whose typeset suggests a traditionally lyrical form (see Fig. 2.9.). This poem within the poem begins with the words “manchmal ist die Stadt / innen still, jede Seiten / Straße scheint direkt / in einen größeren / Raum zu führen, /wo keiner ist, nur weiße Wolken” [“Sometimes the city is still inside, every side street appears to lead directly into a bigger space, where no one dwells but white clouds”] (WW 85). The poem identifies a space hidden away in the metropolis that contains nothing but clouds, a white, ephemeral form correlated with the void between words on a page. Since he is incapable of actually entering these sheltering “spaces,” the lyrical I eventually goes on and “schleppte meinen Koffer zur Haltestelle [...] westwärts” [“heaved his luggage to the bus stop, westbound”] (WW 87). “Westwärts, Teil 2,” thus presents itself as a short break from the cultural heterogeneity, a reprieve, however, that is already in the process of getting assimilated into the media ecology “as we read.”

aus deinem Körper hervor, Schau nach, wohin sie gehen...
 Alles Flickwörter? Also warum bist du nicht stumm...
 Die Tagräume in der Dämmerung verblassen auf
 dem Papier. Hier bin ich und gehe in dem lieb-
 lichen Nachmittagsschatten, der die Straße nicht nur
 schwarz und weiß wie eine Erinnerung
 fleckt, die Löcher hat. Ich kann durch sie
 entweichen und atme auf. Ich bin froh,
 daß ich kein anderer bin. Wie einfach die
 Umgebung wird, nachdem das klar ist. Die Sonne
 scheint lautlos, ich mag sie und das, was sie
 tut, lautloser als die Katze blinzelt, die
 auf dem Autoblech sitzt, faul, ausgestreckt,
 in ihrem eigenen, unüberschaubaren Tagtraum,
 lautloser als ein Schatten. Ich bin für sie
 draußen. Das Gehen ist ein Lied
 in meinem Kopf, lautlos und
 ohne Wörter! „Was ist mit den Tümpeln, Rimbaud?“ (Was ist mit deinem
 abtaulenden Bein, im Zug, mit der Schwester,
 Umsteigen in Paris, die alte Daguerreotypie?
 Hast du dich zu lange in der Hölle aufgehalten?
 Und Fritz, der oben im Zimmer mit Kamillentee
 behandelt wird, Nietzsche? Er wird zum Klavier
 geführt, das an der Wand steht, und
 er macht etwas Musik, während
 der Fotograf die richtige Einstellung
 sucht.) Ja,
 manchmal ist die Stadt
 innen still, jede Seiten
 Straße scheint direkt
 in einen größeren
 Raum zu führen, wo keiner
 ist, nur große weiße Wolken

85

Fig. 2.9. Poetry “embedded” in the city, from *Westwärts 1 & 2*. Copyright © by Rowohlt.

Desperate, the lyrical I in “Westwärts” rhetorically asks toward the end of the poem, “musste man in der Gegenwart immerzu sich erinnern, an sich selbst? Man war doch kein Gespenst” [“does one always have to remember oneself in the present? After all, we were not ghosts”] (WW 72). Not being a ghost – ephemeral denizens of Germany’s televisual cities – can only be ensured when we do not constantly remember the past but rather focus on the present. Brinkmann’s later works – tape recording, photograph, and poem alike – pull all registers to find spaces to breath in televisual city, spaces that are nonetheless part of the media ecology out of which they operate. Firmly believing in the city as an always already mediated space, Brinkmann sets out to record the urban landscape in order to expose the standstill underneath its moving media extravaganza and make a case for an explosion of its

incompatibilities. His digging up layers of decrepitness common to all cities renegotiates the problematic connection of the Western metropolis to television, a relation that always keeps him on the run. Even his favorite medium, poetry, succeeds only temporarily in its administration of shocks and ultimately succumbs to the threat of the televisual city, leaving Brinkmann without a place to go.

Conclusion

Deeply frustrated by the cultural complacency that not only emanated from West Germany's millions of television screens, but also by the televisual character of West German urban spaces, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann ascribed revolutionary potential to pared down art forms limited to an individual medium. He needed three discrete media to add up to television. Once he achieved this, he was capable to render the signals asunder and prevent them from forming the whole that is television, or conversely, amounts to so much more than static ecology of TV city. He retook the streets on his own terms as an aesthetic space in which the standstill of the metropolis could be successfully contained for a while – and maybe even changed for the better. Brinkmann thus created a transgressive poetics that allowed him rethink both an experimental literature and an experimental city. Since for Brinkmann the world in which he lived was a ghost town – faking life through its blinking lights, ubiquitous images, and transmitted sound waves that imitated movement – he harnessed various separate but dialoging media to reveal this spectral condition. He attacked the paralytic and fragmented state of German art through a cutting apart of fused signals into discrete images and sounds and beyond. Brinkmann's multi-media art, then, should not exclusively be understood through its content, but also by taking into account the specifics of

the presented material, cumulating in a new urban poetics of repetition, disruption, and fragmentation.

Shortly before his death Brinkmann realized that the second novel he wanted to write would have been incapable of representing German interiority (and its points of contact with the media sphere) faithfully. Rather, the diverse materials collected as a pool of resources turned out to be the aesthetic snapshots he needed to make a final stand. He reconfigured the media ecology and argued for a reversal of homogenizing tendencies. An eventual escape from the metropolis and its conflation of signals, however, seemed impossible for Brinkmann as he desperately sought to stay a step ahead of the cliché bred by an ecology dominated by television. Nonetheless, his art remains a powerful indictment of the mediated state of the modern city. Brinkmann died – in a state of euphoria – while trying to deconstruct and contain the very environment that eventually caused his death. In the two decades after his death, Brinkmann's attempted disentangling of fused channels was thwarted by an even greater acceptance of conflated signals, including the binary code of the World Wide Web. Changing the ways in which media circulated both at home and in public, the transition into the digital age brought with it a further amalgamation of channels that would have Brinkmann coming back from his grave as a vengeful ghost in his own right. In order to query this next shift in German media ecologies, we must now turn to the work of Rainald Goetz.

Chapter 3

The Virtual Metropolis: The Decentralization of Post-Wall Berlin in Rainald Goetz's *Heute Morgen, Eine Geschichte der Gegenwart*

*Die Zeit wird kommen, sprach der Herr, da ich zu den Menschen sprechen werde.
Und er nahm sich als Werkzeug die Members, die da waren: Members of Mayday.
Er sprach: sehet her und kommt alle, denn ihr seid alle Teil von meinem Reiche,
das da kommen soll, das königreiche Königreich der Räusche und Geräusche.*

[And the Lord said: The time will come that I shall talk to mankind. And He chose as His heralds the Members that had gathered around Him: Members of Mayday. He said: look here and cometh all since thou are members of My Kingdom that shall be, the Kingdom of many Kings of intoxications and sounds.]

Rainald Goetz¹⁷⁶

I. The Nights and Days of Rainald Goetz

Rainald Goetz's conversion into an "apostle" of techno music coincided with the drastic geographic shifts that marked the final years of the 20th century. The end of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and Germany's reunification in 1990 all led to the spatial transformation of European cities that proved optimal for a growing techno sub-culture, full of "Räusche and Geräusche" ["intoxications and sounds"] (Rave 79).¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶Taken from Goetz's narration *Rave*, Frankfurt a. M., Suhrkamp, 1998, p. 79.

¹⁷⁷Techno's genealogy is complex. The interested reader is referred to Ulf Poschardt's cultural history of DJing in which he also documents the development of electronic techno music. Poschardt states that the term techno has been used "since 1985 for a variation of house music that became one of the most successful kinds of dancefloor, and which was incarnated in dozens of versions in the early 90s: from dreamy ambient via hip-hop-related breakbeats to the relentlessly hard and fast sounds of Gabba [...]" (313-314). It is worth noting that house music – of which techno is a sub-genre – shares its pedigree with gospel and its "secularized pop-

Especially in the formerly divided city of Berlin techno acolytes quickly appropriated the subterranean, abandoned, and hitherto inaccessible catacombs for clandestine insider events known as raves.¹⁷⁸ Goetz, a former-punk-turned-raver, had taken the German literary scene by storm in the eighties with angry novels, poems, and plays.¹⁷⁹ Goetz then changed his poetics from these “Punk-beeinflußten Collagen der achtziger Jahre” [“the collages of the 1980s, influenced by punk”] to one rooted in techno culture in which he had already found “zu einem versöhnlichen Verhältnis von Text und Bild” [“a conciliatory relation between text and image”] (Weingart, 97).¹⁸⁰ He confessed that he spent the “hedonistischen 80er Jahre verkrochen in Philosophie, Melancholie und Text” [“the hedonistic 80s, holed up in philosophy, melancholy, and literature”] while in the 90s he painted the town red “wie nie in [s]einem Leben” [“like never before in his life”] (Abfall 449).¹⁸¹ Prior to this, Goetz had found himself “bei lebendigem Leibe einrücken ins Reich des TODES” [“entering the realm of death

variants,” R&B, soul, and disco (Poschardt; 255). As Poschardt claims, techno thus still contains traces “of salvation and release” (254).

¹⁷⁸In Poschardt’s words, the “Rave represented a new music, a new youth culture and a new kind of party and club night” (289). It is the form of mass event most closely associated with the emergence of techno culture.

¹⁷⁹Moray McGowan argues, Goetz writes texts in which “of immense density and complexity, but above all angry energy” (495). The aggressive and subversive energy of punk music, however, gave way to a more party-oriented culture of glow-sticks, LSD, and colorful clothing.

¹⁸⁰With regard to these changes, Thorsten Rudolph argues in his study on Goetz that “*Irre* von 1983 und *Rave* von 1998 zwei kategorial verschiedene Modelle hinsichtlich der epistemologischen Voraussetzungen, der ästhetischen Umsetzung und der politischen Implikation vorführen” [*Irre*, published in 1983 and *Rave*, published in 1998 present to categorically different models with regard to their epistemological prerequisites, their aesthetic execution, and their political implications”] (16).

¹⁸¹Poschardt explains these two models from a sub-cultural standpoint, stating that “where punk lived off hatred, fury and shock, the acid house movement and its successors tried to achieve a fundamentally aggression-free, peace-loving attitude. It was about fun, sex, and drugs” (288). He concludes that “the children of the generation of ’68 had learned from the mistakes of their parents and punk. They no longer wanted to protest for some vague utopia, but rather to realize their idea of a happy life in the immediate present” (288).

alive”] (Celebration 73).¹⁸² “Die Erlösung aus diesem Leben,” he concludes, “brachte der Acid-House-Hype, der via DJ Hell im September 1988 München erreichte. Seither habe ich mit dem Ausgehen nie mehr aufgehört” [“Deliverance was achieved through the Acid-House hype that arrived in Munich in the September of 1988 with DJ Hell. I haven’t stopped going out ever since”] (ibid). This infatuation with Berlin’s night-life allegedly transformed the artist Goetz, who Hubert Winkels had earlier called “die notwendig politisch-militante Verkörperung des Dandys im nachbürgerlichem Zeitalter” [“the necessary politically militant embodiment of the post-bourgeois dandy”], into an apolitical and decadent party boy (230).¹⁸³ His later works, I argue, do show that Goetz did much more than just to resort to empty exercises in hedonistic styles after he became a “Member of Mayday.”¹⁸⁴ Goetz contributed significantly to the creation of a new literature that mapped out alternative patterns and identities for life in Germany’s newly reunified, bristling capital.

When Goetz started exploring Berlin, he made personal experience the guiding principle of his avant-garde *Metropolenliteratur*. Linking the act of writing with the act of urban exploration, he asked, “Warum nicht mal die Sachen direkt in Augenschein nehmen, über die man schreibt? [...]” [“Why not cast a glance at the stuff you write about directly?”],

¹⁸²Goetz adequately expressed his desperation when he cut his forehead with a razor while reading poetry at the Ingeborg-Bachmann-competition in Klagenfurt in 1983. For an in-depth analysis of the performance and the ensuing scandal, see Jan Drees’s *Rainald Goetz – Irre als System*.

¹⁸³Poschardt acknowledges Goetz as a narrator who “with each step [...] writes the ground beneath his feet, and other people’s feet” (306). There is a strong focus on the decisive moment of walking the city in relation to the production of art. Poschardt calls Goetz a “chronicler of night life” whose fascination with the “bright, fast, loud world of the clubs and discotheques leads him, after his years of apprenticeship in Munich, to Hamburg, Berlin, New York, London, and Ibiza” (308).

¹⁸⁴“Members of Mayday” refers to an annual German techno event, the Mayday, and is the name of a DJ collective that collaboratively produces its “hymns.” Although the Mayday took place in an official, non-derelect, and above-ground building – the Dortmunder Westfalenhallen – the secluded subterranean spaces that hosted the at times illegal techno parties were often abandoned, dilapidated, and off-limit locations that had outlived their intended functions either in West Germany’s capitalist or the GDR’s socialist system.

a collision “zwischen der eigenen geistigen Form und dem realen Körperding” [“of one’s own mind and the actual body-thing”] (Rave 176-177).¹⁸⁵ Goetz’s newfound fascination with urban culture had to do not only with the paths of the city less traveled, but also with the crypto-Nietzschean experience allegedly native to it. Quoting a 1992 club-flyer, cultural historian Ulf Poschardt defines these techno experiences as “the pure extasy [sic] of being in total harmony with his or her surroundings” (289). About the rave in particular, he concludes that “it’s about feeling communality, a shared social experience, a feeling of life. [...] The rave is about the combination of drugs, light and music,” part of a media ecology that includes digital media and DJ culture (291).¹⁸⁶ Techno promised the masses Dionysian encounters, and post-Wall Berlin offered an abundance of such night-life venues.¹⁸⁷

Searching for an experimental literature to communicate his urban experiences – both nocturnal and diurnal – Goetz translated them into an eclectic multi-media project entitled *Heute Morgen: Eine Geschichte der Gegenwart* (1998-2000), a massive five-part publication including the Internet diary *Abfall für alle*, two prose texts (*Rave* and *Dekonspiratione*), the journalistic image-and-essay collection *Celebration*, and the avant-garde play *Jeff Koons*.

¹⁸⁵Goetz admires techno’s ability “mit minimalen Elementen, mit minimalen Variationen, die Musik eines maximalen Effekts zu machen, eines maximalen Aussagereichtums. In dieser Minimal-Maximal-Spannung kommen zwei so grundlegende Momente der Kunst, der Architektur, der Logik, der Technologie usw zusammen” [“to create a maximum effect, a maximum wealth of assertion in music with minimal elements and variations. This tension between the minimum and the maximum thus contains two fundamental moments of art, architecture, logic, technology etc”] (*Abfall* 489). He also released the 1994 CD *Word, Soziale Praxis, Ästhetisches System* on which he recites passages from his text *KRONOS* over electronic music.

¹⁸⁶Paul D. Miller, also known as DJ Spooky, directly links the World Wide Web to music, arguing that it is “a legacy of the way that DJs look for information” (14). The aesthetic of the remix, in other words, resurfaces in the realm of the Web’s hypertext, an eclectic database that complicates copyrights laws and the question of authorship and where “everything is sample” (Jordan et al, 102).

¹⁸⁷Techno echoes Friedrich Nietzsche’s dream-like collective and its ability to tap into art as the realm of redemption and justification of life as laid out in *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* [*The Birth of Tragedy*]. Poschardt calls techno “the music of absolute immediacy and the sound of pure physics. While disco and house still tried to produce immediacy via seduction, glamour, charm, eroticism or elegance, techno, with brachial violence, directly entered the nerve centre and sent signals from there to the body” (316).

This chapter proposes that *Heute Morgen* is a cluster of literary puzzle-pieces that feed off techno culture and capture the city dweller's multiple perspectives, the raver's intoxicated narratives, and the nation's concurring histories clashing during a time when – from a geo-political standpoint – Germany had found closure through reunification.¹⁸⁸ In other words, Goetz argues for an eclectic, urban, and post-national media-ecology that includes mass culture.

I focus on the two most city-centric of the five texts from *Heute Morgen*, namely *Rave* and *Abfall für alle*, and claim that they are both studies in Berlin's city life situated vis-à-vis the demands of art in the light of digital culture. I choose these two texts because of their complimentary relation to each other, a connection that might not be apparent at first sight.¹⁸⁹ *Rave* queries the literary text's ill-suitedness to render the Dionysian experiences of clubbing, taking place predominantly at night.¹⁹⁰ The diary, in contrast, seeks the total representation of a mediated urban landscape during the day. *Abfall für alle* and *Rave* –

¹⁸⁸The five texts that constitute *Heute Morgen* are numerically labeled, from 5.1. to 5.5. The first digit, 5, situates *Heute Morgen* in the overall trajectory of Goetz's literary oeuvre in which every released text is assigned a number. His first novel *Irre*, for example, is labeled 1 while the 1993 play *Festung* is ranked 4.1. *Rave* carries the notation 5.1, while the Internet diary turned novel *Abfall für Alle*, written and published earlier, marks the voluminous end point, 5.5. The experimental "Stück," play, *Jeff Koons* and the journalistic essay and image collection *Celebration: Texte und Bilder zur Nacht* complete the cycle. *Jeff Koons* and *Celebration* are numbered 5.2 and 5.4 respectively, while the last part of the project to be published, *Dekonspiratione*, is labeled 5.3. The 2009 text *Loslabern* carries the notation 6 and thus marks *Heute Morgen* as completed. This mixed up trajectory "der Geschichte der Gegenwart" suggests temporal breaks and inconsistencies between the texts but also illustrates continuities.

¹⁸⁹Goetz actually calls *Dekonspiratione* "die Taggeschichte, das Gegenbuch zu Rave" ["a story of the day, the counter-book to Rave"] (*Dekonspiratione* 138). Moving away from the idea that "bei Kultur handle es sich um EINEN lesbaren, verständlichen, sinnhaften Text" ["culture is ONE readable, understandable, meaningful text"], Jochen Bonz contends that in *Dekonspiratione* "der Text [...] sich auf[löst], es kommt zum Zusammenbruch, zur Auflösung der Welt" ["the text dissolves, a break down occurs, the world disintegrates"] (89).

¹⁹⁰In his study on the city at night, the cultural historian Joachim Schlör argues that it has something of a jungle and "is inevitably expelled into the realm of prehistory and mythology. None of the many histories of lighting, which in their different ways all describe the triumph of light, is able to dispense with preliminary description of the impenetrable terrain of the nocturnal as an alien region of fear that is conquered and finally subjugated" (57).

although related – thus become mutually exclusive as the fictional and the autobiographical have to be separated. In the first sub-section of this chapter I read *Rave* as deeply invested in the transformation of intoxicated underground urban mass experience into literature, a transformation that demands the return of a narrative that the rave seemingly suspends. Sketching out his approach to *Rave*, Goetz explains himself that “man kann weit weg abtauchen müssen oder wollen, in diese Welten und Erfahrungen. Aber um davon berichten zu können, muß man zurückkommen in die Nüchternheit” [“even if you have or want to plunge into these worlds and experiences, you have to return to the sober surface when you want to report about them”] (Abfall 94). He claims that an immersion in the clubs and the discovery of the urban landscape from below grants insights – “was man da zu sehen bekommt, von sich und von allem, das steht einem nicht zu, als Mensch, jedenfalls nicht dauernd” [“what you are able to perceive about yourself and others, you are not entitled to see as a human being, at least not all the time”] – that exceed those of more detached observers (Abfall 803).¹⁹¹ *Rave* gazes at the dark side of the city – Goetz calls this a realm of “real” fairy-tales – an environment that, in order to be preserved as art, depends on experimental forms of representation.

As the counterpoint to *Rave*, *Abfall für alle* completes a massive avant-garde kaleidoscope of the metropolis that utilizes the Internet as a frame, a rather new medium at

¹⁹¹Goetz repeatedly refers to the critical moment during which forces of forgetting and reflection clash: “Das Erleben, so blindwütig es auftrat, sehnte sich zugleich danach, sich zu verstehen. Und will das schon im selben Moment wieder vergessen, will das Verstehen zerstören, das Verstandene von neuem Erleben wieder zu Unsinn sich erklären lassen, durch Neues, wieder Wirres, Tolles” [“Experience, no matter how blind, wanted to understand itself. Once it realizes that it wants to forget, to destroy this understanding, declare that which is understood silly and transform it into something new, confusing, awesome”] (*Rave* 255).

the time that had gained momentum shortly before 1999.¹⁹² *Abfall für alle* charts Berlin's changed topography in gross detail; the new technology allowed Goetz to experiment with the parameters of publication and therewith push the institutional limits of literature – in particular its distance from its audience. In his diary Goetz chronicled a year in his life experimenting with the Internet as a tool, a medium in the truest sense of the words that he wields to update the way literature is read. While scholarship on *Abfall für alle* has largely concentrated on its origin as an Internet diary and the temporal ramifications of its own technological mediation, the spatial co-ordinates so prevalent in the text have been neglected – even more so with regard to the text's subsequent publication in hardcover, sub-titled “Roman für alle.” My reading treats the two versions of *Abfall für alle* as distinct evolutionary stages in *Heute Morgen*: first as a meditation on Internet literature and then as a tentative update of the *Zeitroman*, a novel that captures a concrete place at a specific historical juncture. The diary features an individual afloat in the metropolis and thus belongs to a German modernist tradition that includes authors such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Robert Musil, Uwe Johnson and Günter Grass.¹⁹³ They all have produced monumental novels which extract “sedimental layers of every-life,” not, however, to “mythologize [the] material but rather to shape it into rhythmic patterns” (Hörisch, 934).¹⁹⁴

¹⁹²Paul Youngman elaborates that from a global perspective “the ten years between 1969 and 1979, the number of hosts rose from the original four to 188, then to 159,000 in 1989, and 43,230,000 in 1999. By 2006, there were nearly 440,000,000 hosts on the World Wide Web” (11).

¹⁹³The literary label “dilettant” can be applied to the characters in Goetz's work in order to link them with a broader German modernist tradition. The dilettant “lives for the moment, cultivates his individuality and subjectivity, pursues pleasure and [...] is the embodiment of modern fragmentation and formlessness” (Haxthausen, 689).

¹⁹⁴The works that come to mind are the seminal novels *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (Rilke), *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (Musil), *Jahrestage* (Johnson), and most recently *Ein weites Feld* (Grass).

Goetz's diary should thus be read vis-à-vis earlier literary traditions in order to tease out its own urban "rhythms" with regard to the genres of *Bildungs-*, *Zeit-*, and *Künstlerromane*. The juxtaposition of different media and genres within the over-arching five-volume framework of *Heute Morgen* illuminates Goetz's search for an experimental poetics that engages critically the making of Germany's new old capital. *Rave* captures the intoxicated urban night in fiction, even though it playfully retains an autobiographical foundation. The Internet diary *Abfall für alle*, on the other hand, offers a decidedly autobiographical and inclusive panorama of Berlin that is in fact an ever-evolving construction site. The sober events chronicled in the massive "Roman für Alle" are substantively and formally detached from the intoxicated vignettes in *Rave*. The diary presents a vast collage of Berlin that eschews the idea of a cohesive and continuous text and presents the German metropolis and its stories as constituted by loops, fractures, and overlaps. Through a close reading of these texts I show that Goetz's writing sets up the city at night to be vastly different from the one during the day and to this end it differentiates between representations of intoxicated playgrounds – detached from any historical trajectory – and attempts to record Berlin's bustling, ever-changing spaces through the emerging medium of the Internet. The texts suggest that in 1999 the new capital still was a place equally determined through the coincidences and marginalities characteristic of its night-life rather than unified narratives. Finally, turning toward the hard-copy release of *Abfall für alle, Roman eines Jahres*, I address the overlooked fact that Goetz deliberately transformed his "blog" into a book – a "novel" even – that does indeed tell a story. The reconstituted text constructs the city as a space for unhindered exploration, a new mode of mobility that soon encounters insurmountable obstacles.

II. Writing the New Berlin: Situating *Heute Morgen, Eine Geschichte der Gegenwart*

Despite the project's comprehensive scope and its pastiche of different media, styles, and genres (such as plays, essays, and short stories), Rainald Goetz defines *Heute Morgen* as antithetical to the concepts of totality, inclusion, and concentration. Read vis-à-vis the theological concept of *apokatastasis pantheon*, the restitution of the whole, *Heute Morgen* is a monumental fragment which is treated as the new "whole." As a project writ large, *Heute Morgen* repeatedly features urban spaces, inferring that these spaces, too, do not amount to a totality anymore. Goetz remarks that his *Geschichte der Gegenwart* [*History of the Present*] is the result of an urge to write a text, focused on the present moment, that:

NICHT alle Aspekte abdeckt, in dem NICHT alles drin ist, was ich im Moment denke, mal EIN Stück machen, nicht eine Trilogie, eines, in dem aber das Gesellschaftsstück, das Familienstück und das Monologstück zusammen kommen. Eine Erzählung machen, die die Nacht zum Gegenstand hat, eine die dem Tag gehört. Also nicht Konzentration, wie noch bei Festung, am extremsten natürlich bei Kontrolliert, sondern Expansion, Teilung, Explosion. Bits and Pieces. Parts and [...] private parts. (114)

[does not cover all aspects, that doesn't contain everything I think about right now, write ONE piece, not a trilogy, one that fuses comedy of manners, family story, and monologue. Write a narration that centers on the night, one that focuses on the day. Exactly not concentration as in Festung or, most extremely, in Kontrolliert but expansion, division, explosion. Bits and pieces. Parts and private parts]

At the same time breaking up and consolidating the logic of the Internet as being a hyper-textual (that is fragmented) totality, Goetz divides his texts up into segments, discrete units that have different foci and perspectives and allocate different facets of experience to different sorts of texts. These “bits and pieces” stand in relation to each other, but at the same time relieve him of the burden of capturing totality in a single text – a totality that city life in Berlin does not seem to offer to begin with and that is also problematic with regard to the emergence of digital culture.¹⁹⁵ In other words, while digital culture allegedly enables users to access “everything,” the logic of binaries is always one of separation.

Goetz’s post-punk aesthetic is as much indebted to urban life as to the fragmenting techniques of remixing, sampling, and DJing and the party scene surrounding techno culture.¹⁹⁶ With its emphasis on Berlin’s street and night-life, Goetz’s writing can be considered a distant relative to the genre of German *Metropolenliteratur*, which includes works by authors such as Roman Libbertz, Tanja Dückers, and Elke Naters, among others.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵The historian Michael Gehler argues that the “patterns of thinking from the Cold War had become fixed in people’s minds, so that the relations between people in East and West were fraught with loaded baggage and were out of sync” (237). This observation even leaves aside other conflicting perspectives, such as those of foreigners living in a unified Germany.

¹⁹⁶As Schumacher claims, “Ausgangsmaterial für den DJ ist bereits produziertes Material, sind Schallplatten, die über zwei Plattenspieler und ein Mischpult zusammengefügt, über ‘Mix, Cuts & Scratches’ aneinandergeschnitten, gegeneinander ausgespielt, akzentuiert und manipuliert werden” [“the DJ’s source material is already produced material, records which are synchronized through two turntables connected via a mixer, pasted together through ,mixes, cuts, and scratches,’ replayed against each other and thus accentuated and manipulated”] (2003; 144).

¹⁹⁷For the protagonists in novels such as Libbertz’s *Triebjagd*, Dückers’s *Spielzone*, and Naters’s *Königinnen*, who all navigate the clubs and raves (and the city as a playground in general), it is often the spectacle that “made it possible for Germans to rethink what it means to be German in a globalized culture, to reevaluate critically the legacy of their past, and to reinsert the body and its pleasures into postnationalist negotiations of culture and community” (Koepnick 1999; 233). The aesthetics of urban culture in *Metropolenliteratur* touches upon questions of the ideological power of the spectacle. Writing about Christo’s wrapping of the Reichstag, Lutz Koepnick identifies as Germany’s long standing fear of “the false gods of aesthetic politics and charismatic authority” (1999; 20). Goetz’s challenge becomes obvious: “If we consider every spectacle as

Corinna J. Heipecke calls the genre “Berlin-Romane,” a post-reunification literature that emerged in the early 1990s and that sought to update modernism’s great urban novels – most notably Alfred Döblins 1929 *Berlin Alexanderplatz* – for the unified city (45). As Heipecke claims, *Metropolenliteratur* is interested in the capital “as a site of urbanism [...] and [...] the symbol of an exclusively German condition” (45). Mascha Kurtz argues that „Metropolen [...] einen Mythos [brauchen]” [“the metropolis demands a myth”] which is why every author that “etwas mit Substanz erzählen will, das nicht im Ruhrgebiet spielt, [...] Berlin als Schauplatz wählen [muss]” [“wants to tell a meaningful story not set in the Ruhr region has to pick Berlin”] (48). This section elucidates what *Rave* and *Abfall für alle* contribute to the field of literature on Berlin, even though they are not among the genre’s usual suspects. I bring them up not to appropriate Goetz’s writing for the cause of *Metropolenliteratur*, but rather to illuminate the stark differences between an assumed attempt to cover everything and the impossibility of such an endeavor. I argue that Goetz, in successive steps, identifies Berlin as a landscape honeycombed by subterranean spaces disconnected from the fallacious totality above; a place permeated by media signals inviting people to explore the periphery and not just the centers; and ultimately, an ecological system kept in motion through chance encounters, a type of random floating eventually curtailed by clashes with other inhabitants. None of these perspectives, however, remains stable; in fact Berlin turns out to be a city that – due to its perpetual being on the move – ostensibly resists containment and solidification and thus needs a plethora of media to be captured rather than a single one.

Over the course of the last decade, literary scholars such as Stephen Brockmann, Stuart Taberner, and Katharina Gerstenberger have argued that the arrival of *the*

potentially or even necessarily fascist, don’t we lose sight of significant distinctions that matter for the evaluation of competing political agendas today” (Koepnick, 1999; 12)

quintessential post-reunification Berlin novel of the realist or modernist mold might not happen any time soon.¹⁹⁸ Gerstenberger in particular claims that “the appearance of a ‘masterpiece’ that could perform such as task for the post-wall era might be more than a question of time [...]. It may also no longer be what writers aim to achieve” (5). She further points out that the “critics’ calls for *the* Berlin novel – for one canonical text that could capture and explain the experience of unification – came when the appeal of ‘master narratives’ was waning” (7). In other words, German city life might be “too diverse, too ambiguous, and too influenced by global developments to be captured in one novel” (Gerstenberger 1). From Gerstenberger’s point of view, it takes a kaleidoscope of texts to succeed in the representation of Berlin, a collage, one might add, that Goetz expands beyond the medium of the novel into the realm of experimental media art. *Heute Morgen* is Goetz’s most pronounced attempt to “write” the city and situate the result within the ecology. He samples and then stitches together a conglomerate of images, sounds, and texts that captures post-Wall Berlin in all its facets, insinuating, however, that Berlin is still “unfixed,” temporally and spatially, ten years after Germany’s unification. *Heute Morgen* exceeds Gerstenberger’s notion of the kaleidoscopic “Berlin novel” and proposes a flexible and mobile multi-media literature of, what Samuel Weber, calls “–abilities,” the suffix that walks the thin line between “empirically observable fact and structural possibility” (6). When reading the single parts of *Heute Morgen* closely, one cannot help but discover traces of this potentiality, the floating in a “totality of data,” practiced in the metropolitan areas of the late twentieth century that is both, a large connected system and a slew of smaller networks.

¹⁹⁸See Brockmann’s *Literature and German Unification*, Taberner’s *German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond*, and Gerstenberger’s *Writing the New Berlin* for more detailed accounts of the genre.

Suggesting that Goetz's later work is part of Germany's *Metropolenliteratur* makes it necessary to clarify the role of the city in his texts and to discern why he should be considered a particular chronicler of this ecology. His immersion in techno culture, paired with his affirmative interest in new medial forms, taught Goetz to look at Berlin (and, by analogy, cities around the globe) differently. Goetz's outlook on urban space changes as the result of his being part of a movement that either illegally congregated in abandoned bunkers or legally appropriated the streets for its parties, for example during open-air events such as the *Love Parade*. His retained ties with the avant-garde literary scene of the 1980s and his first-hand experience of the DJ culture (Goetz traveled extensively with the entourages of musicians such as WestBam and Sven Väth) also contributed to his status as an insider with an idiosyncratic "technological" perspective. Following the internal trajectory of *Heute Morgen*, this chapter moves from its first installment 5.1., the "Nachtleben-Erzählung" *Rave*, to the final one, the (Internet) diary *Abfall für alle*, and hence from the most specific aspect (urban night-life) to the broadest one (the city as a complex media-ecological system). Before we deal with the texts in greater depth, however, is it helpful to take a step back and briefly recapitulate how *Heute Morgen* has been received academically with regard to its mediality.

Scholarship on *Heute Morgen* has often treated its five constituents as one indifferentiable mass and mainly focused on two, at times interrelated, aspects. The first queries the role that technology (both in terms of techno culture and the implementation of new media) plays in Goetz's poetics as far as time is concerned. The second aspect centers on a language of immediacy that dominates Goetz's writing, an "immediacy" often primarily associated with the medium of the Internet that figures so prominently in *Abfall für alle*,

when in fact it goes far beyond that. Reconciling both approaches, Hubert Winkels claims that:

Technik, Urbanität, Massenunterhaltung, gleißende Werbefassaden, das Rauschen der technischen Medien, Sounds, [...] die Überproduktion von Meinungen, Identifikationsmustern und leuchtenden Bildern, der gesamte nicht mehr (literatur-) schriftliche, sondern tendenziell elektronisch gesteuerte Zeichenraum ist [Autoren wie Goetz] nicht mehr Bestätigung eines Bildes fehlgeleiteter Zivilisation, sondern Material mit dem Literatur umzugehen hat. (16)

[technology, urbanity, mass-entertainments, glistening billboards, the white noise of electronic media, sounds, the surplus production of opinions, patterns of identification and blazing images, the whole non-literary but tendentially electronically regulated signspace are no longer affirmations of the misguided civilization but rather materials with which literature has to interact]

Winkels insinuates that for Goetz the city is a space permeated by media signals, a condition mirrored both in the genealogy of *Heute Morgen* and its content, the steady stream of references made to media culture. How exactly this saturation with images, sounds, and texts plays out in Berlin is the core question of this chapter's first sub-section.

Eckhard Schumacher advances Winkels's argument on *Heute Morgen*'s particular medial form(s) and isolates techno music as a critical part of Goetz's poetics. Schumacher sketches out connections between the music and the broader socio-cultural sphere surrounding it. He argues that:

es [...] nie nur um die ‚Augenblicklichkeitskunst‘ des DJs und nie nur um die Form [geht], den Sound, den Rhythmus, [...] das ‚Bum-bum-bum des Beats‘ in eine rhythmische Sprache zu übertragen [...], sondern immer auch um das, was Goetz das ‚Sozialexperiment Dance‘ nennt. Es geht um Partykommunikation, um Gesprächsfetzen, gestörte Dialoge, wirre Erzählungen und das Abhängen im Plattenladen. (2003; 147-148)

[it's never been exclusively about the DJs 'art of the present moment' and never just about the form, the sound, the rhythm, about a translation of the 'boom-boom-boom of the beats' into rhythmic language but also about what Goetz calls the 'social experiment dance music.' It's about party communication, snippets of conversations, disturbed dialogues, confusing narrations and the lounging in a record store]

The poetic techniques central to this "Sozialexperiment" are fragmentation, distortion, and multi-voiced collages. Moritz Baßler also identifies this "DJ-Poetologie" ["DJ poetics"] but calls it a failure, mostly because "meßbare musikalische Kriterien wie Geschwindigkeit (etwa: beats per minute) [...] ja kaum auf Prosa übertragbar [sind]" ["measurable criteria such as speed {for example, beats per minute} can hardly be applied to prose"] (146). Baßler's pejoratively claims that Goetz succumbs to the purely decorative lure of "Authenzitätseffekte" ["effects of authenticity"] such as "Satzabbrüche" ["aposiopesis"] (144).¹⁹⁹ Even though pop-culture in general and music in particular are of great interest to

¹⁹⁹Baßler sees in *Rave* hardly more than "zitierte Schnipsel" ["cited snippets"] whose "gehäufte Aposiopesen [...] suggerieren, daß da unmittelbar hinter und neben dem Sprechen eine Realität [ist], der die Sprache bei allem Bemühen nicht beikommen, geschweige denn je adäquat sein kann" ["whose frequent use of aposiopesis

Goetz, the argument that he is after a direct translation of techno music into literature ultimately proves to be limiting and does not do the ambitious project justice.

Thorsten Rudolph exemplifies the second major approach to Goetz's later writing, which focuses on the production of a literary voice adequate to the adrenalin rush of the present moment. Rudolph argues that Goetz's post-reunification texts query "ob und wie Gegenwart, ein Moment, ein 'Jetzt' überhaupt darstellbar oder – in der Form der Schrift herstellbar sind" ["whether and how the present, a moment, a 'now' is representable or – producible in writing at all"], taking recourse to new media (15). Baßler again plays devil's advocate and criticizes *Heute Morgen*'s investment in the present moment as a "sentimentalisches Projekt, das nicht zufällig an Probleme der Aufschreibesysteme um 1800 gemahnt" ["a sentimental project that is not coincidentally reminiscent of problems with the discourse systems around 1800"] (145). According to Baßler, Goetz bemoans the "Zwang der immer zu spät kommenden Aufzeichnung" ["the compulsion of the ever too late recording"] (ibid). In similar fashion, Axel Schalk claims, "if Brinkmann shaped each moment according to the rules of poetry, Goetz adheres to time-honoured 'Sprachskepsis' ['language skepticism'], which manifests itself primarily in senseless juxtaposition" (294). I disagree with Baßler and Schalk's reading of Goetz's texts and explicitly assume that the "senseless juxtaposition" of media and genres, images and texts, and collages of random impressions is precisely what produces meaning within *Heute Morgen*. I do retain, however, a general interest in the relation between language and representation that comes to the fore in my reading of *Rave*.

suggests that immediately a reality exists behind and next to language which the latter can neither cope with nor be ever adequate, no matter how hard we try"] (144-145).

Both major fields of inquiry also touch upon the question of temporality in *Heute Morgen*, an important aspect of Goetz's work that I wish to expand on. Elke Siegel convincingly claims that Goetz's writing is "infused with [a] passion for time and temporality," an observation she finds supported in the fact that many of his titles refer to the "*Datum*": 1989, *Kronos*, and of course *Heute Morgen* (235). Natalie Binczek notes that the texts create an "Asymmetrie, die die Bedeutsamkeit des einzelnen Moments vor dem Gesamtverlauf auszeichnet" ["asymmetry that favors the importance of a single moment over the trajectory"] (291). This asymmetry, she claims, is a result of Goetz's self-understanding as a recorder, who "[auf]zeichnet [...], was seine Aufmerksamkeit in Büchern oder Zeitschriften, vor allem aber im Fernsehen erregt" ["records whatever sparks his interest in books or magazines, but above all on TV"] (ibid). Both arguments are sound and account for a significant portion of Goetz's poetics with regard to the temporal changes brought about by digital culture. However, what has been neglected in scholarship on Goetz's texts is what they actually have to say about their main object of contemplation: namely the city as a media ecology. This chapter thus strikes a balance between form and content and advances the above interpretations by incorporating the spatial aspects of Goetz's aesthetic into the temporal analysis. It also seeks to differentiate – where possible – between the author Goetz and his personas in the texts, and to treat *Heute Morgen*'s five installments as separate medial entities, even though they frequently interconnect and engage in exchanges.

III. Into the Dark: Fairy Tales from the Urban Underground in *Rave*

In the 1998 narration *Rave*, a group of techno enthusiast descends into the night clubs, becoming nocturnal heirs to the Weimar flâneur. As Elisabeth Bronfen claims in her essay on

the flâneur at night, “die von künstlicher Helligkeit ausgeleuchtete Vernetzung nächtlicher Schauplätze macht eine ganz andere Karte der Großstadt erkennbar als bei Tag” [“the artificially lit network of nocturnal settings renders visible a completely different map of the metropolis that the one we see during the day”] (382). *Rave* consists of a sequence of *Momentaufnahmen* [snap shots] of techno culture, the DJ life-style, and party nights and thus produces the alternative urban maps that Bronfen talks about. These snapshots utilize an experimental style of writing that relies on fictional anecdotes that have their origin in the lived experiences of the author. Urban life thus turns into an alloy of fact and fiction, a liminal space whose neon-romantic narratives are located on both sides of the ontological fence: Goetz calls his night-life stories “echte Märchen aus realen Nächten” [“true fairy-tales from real nights”] (*Rave* 224). Instances of urban intoxication, this suggests, are relegated to the realm of fantasy – Berlin’s exciting undergrounds as virtual places detached from the city above might only be myths. As the book cover informs the reader, *Rave* tells “Geschichten aus dem Leben im Inneren der Nacht,” a multiplicity of narratives from night-life’s inner sanctum, with an emphasis on the plural use of the term “Geschichte,” meaning both history and story. The word choice suggests an organization of space that differentiates between interiority and exteriority, access and exclusion, while the temporal aspect gestures at instances of darkness, nocturnal encounters impossible during the light of day. Interestingly, however, not all of *Rave*’s vignettes take place at night, which suggests that the core of the night-life that Goetz talks about is not necessarily bound to a particular time but rather a mind-set.

Rave’s narratives of intoxication are decidedly fragmented and oscillate between several narrators, altogether members of the in-crowd, thus suggesting a ruptured temporality

and an understanding of Berlin as polyvocal. *Rave* traces the “adventures” of a group of insiders that effortlessly navigates the city, its recreational areas, its clubs and bars, in short, “das große Abenteuer der Nacht” [“the great nocturnal adventure”] (122). My focus is on these “adventures” in *Rave*, a narrative arc that is often neglected in scholarship, but that can be deduced from the trajectory of its three sections, including the black-and-white photographs that preface each chapter. *Rave*’s narrative unfolds from section to section to section: the first chapter – “Verfall” [“decay”] – focuses on urban night life in the clubs, while subtly moving from immediate representations of the rave to instances of reflection, the urge to tell the world what is actually going on “down there.” The second chapter, “Sonnen Busen Hammer” [“Sun, Breasts, Awesome”], leaves the underground clubs behind – “Wir stolperten hoch und taumelten raus. [...] Mein Gott ist das hell hier” [“we stumbled upstairs and staggered out. My god, it’s really bright outside”] – a painful return to the surface of the city, followed by an “escape” to sunnier places (Rave 89). This sunnier second section, too, keeps in touch with techno-culture as it focuses on the travels of DJs to well-known rave strongholds such as the Canary Island Ibiza. It is noteworthy that the middle section also contains a large portion on a drug deal gone awry that clearly presents itself as a made-up figment that has no relation whatsoever to Goetz’s life, no matter how distorted (Rave; 134pp). Chapter three – “Die Zerstörten” [“The Destroyed”] eventually revisits the dance floors, but retains a more analytical stance toward these experiences and their representability. By noticing how the titles of the three chapters describe a process of decay, we begin to ask the question: What exactly decays over the course of the narration?

The answer to this question can be found when we read the text in conjunction with the photographs that preface each of *Rave*’s three sections. *Rave*, I argue, is about the

corrosion of Germany's historical grand narrative after reunification. All three images create tensions and contradictions, setting the tone for a literary project bent on fragmenting the city. The first photograph strongly contrasts the atmosphere of disoriented intoxication prevalent in *Rave*'s first section. The photograph shows Goetz and his close friend DJ WestBam in front of a desk on which sit a laptop and a keyboard (see Fig. 3.1).²⁰⁰ A sign in the background reads "Inter Continental" and reveals the place as a nondescript hotel conference room somewhere in Germany. Next to the various technological gadgets, sheets of paper and books can be spotted, alluding to the supplementary relationship between technology and writing, visual media and literature. In more than one way, the picture links mobile electronic equipment with the production of literature, a subtle nod towards *Abfall für alle*. The setting is mundane and suggests a collaboration of Goetz and WestBam as it displays a well-known German author working with an influential German techno DJ. The composition tells us that techno does not exclusively happen in some underground bunker located in the outskirts of Berlin. Very likely, this collaboration is also not happening at night, but even if it does, Goetz and WestBam are not part of any rave that might be going on. It insinuates that techno has arrived in the mainstream and also that the Dionysian experiences that the reader is promised in *Rave* – and which are yet to come from a narratological standpoint – do not correspond to the reality of techno culture. From this relatively secure composition – a visual image referring to something that arguably not takes place during the events recounted in the narration proper – displayed in this static (and, one

²⁰⁰Also coming from a punk-background, WestBam (born as Maximilian Lenz) became a well-known German techno DJ, producer, and label executive. He also organized the first Mayday rave – an event chided by critics as the sell-out of techno – and published the book *Mix, Cuts & Scratches* in cooperation with Goetz in 1997. Interestingly, *Mix, Cuts & Scratches* – a collection of interviews, images, and reflections on techno culture, published with Merve Verlag Berlin rather than Suhrkamp – follows the notational system of Goetz's works. In fact, it is 5.5.1. even though it was released two years before *Rave*, which is 5.1. Similar to the photograph discussed above it turns history on its head and presents that which came first as a supplement to the last part of *Heute Morgen*, the Internet diary, notated as 5.5.

might add, sober) photograph, *Rave*'s opening lines suddenly release the reader into the ever so confusing darkness of the techno club-turned-text. In short, as day turns to night, *Rave*'s narration stands in stark contrast to what is shown in the picture, prompting the reader to expect contradictions in the structure of the text, and also in its stories.



Fig. 3.1. Rainald Goetz and WestBam at a hotel. Photograph prefacing the first section of *Rave*. Copyright © by Suhrkamp.

After the introductory photograph and the quote, *Rave* begins abruptly, dropping the reader off *in medias res*. The first line of narration starts with an ellipsis followed by a dash, bespeaking a notion of incomprehensibility and incommunicability: “... – und kam mir in Zeitlupe entgegen” [“... – and approached me in slow-motion”] (*Rave* 17). Both semiotic signs suggest that pieces of information have been omitted, namely the events that took place prior (and outside) to this particular decelerated moment in the club – in other words, that which is being presented excessively in *Abfall für alle*. This way of opening the narrative suggests that the characters in *Rave* are disconnected from the time and place outside the club; they literally leave Berlin behind. Taking LSD and dancing for 12 hours straight severs

their ties to the world above, a fully-chartered city and as such devoid of fascination for them. The only piece of evidence gesturing toward a “before” is the photograph mentioned above, everything else turns from broad, inclusive panorama to selective sensory perception. Just like *Rave*’s first narrator (one of many more to come), the reader begins his descent into the underground spaces of the city without any points of spatial or temporal reference. The techno clubs function as bubbles in which temporality is suspended and history altogether absent – a void filled with beats and strobe lights. The sense of sound turns into a haptic phenomenon: “Ich hatte das Picken der Sechzehntel superhell in meinen Fingerspitzen” [“I felt the pinch of the 1/16 beats super-bright in my fingertips”] (*Rave* 17-18). These instances of synesthesia suggest a decidedly embodied but also narrow and distorted mode of perception.

The perspectival fluctuations that permeate *Rave*’s first lines and the resulting feeling of disorientation – a hectic zooming-in and -out that Goetz calls the “Splittrige” [“the splintered”] – is what defines and validates urban experience at the beginning of the text (*Abfall* 510). Berlin’s nights, *Rave* suggests, are captured best as prose blown to smithereens, insinuating that nocturnal encounters in Germany’s techno culture are ideally represented as fragmented hybrids between lived experience and story-telling. Beneath Berlin’s concrete, fairy-tales of belonging and excitement still endure. The paradigmatic literary techniques in *Rave* – multiple and unidentifiable (third and first person) narrators, elliptical sentences, and disconnected scenes – emulate the multiplicity of experiences through an adequate multiplicity of literary voices, disjunctive impressions, and the rhetorical figure of aposiopesis. The following example, describing a random encounter in a techno club, illustrates these techniques: “Und sah William, wie er seine Arme öffnete, und rief: ‘Hwill!,

hey Hwil!, wie schauts?‘ ,Bestens! Selber?‘ ,Auch!‘ Und ich erzählte ihm von dem eben hier gedachten Satz. Er: ,WAS?‘” [“and saw William, how he opened his arms, and said: ‘Hwil!, hey Hwil!, whassup?’ ‘A lot! What about you?’ ‘Same here!’ And I tell him about this sentence I had just thought and he goes: ‘WHAT?’”] (Rave 25). *Rave*’s first section repeatedly turns the city into discontinuous slices, but connotes the resulting breakdown in continuity positively. This suggests that a multiplicity of parallel narratives uttered in different languages still determined the discourses in Germany’s capital ten years after the geo-political fusion of the German states, a Babel-like concurrence of voices that appropriates different channels of communication.

The question of representation in *Rave* is inextricably intertwined with the modernist search for an adequate literary language.²⁰¹ The alternation between tenses – in which the present intrudes into the past – emulates night life’s blurring effects on temporality. The text suggests that both temporal planes are related to each other but also highly unstable, while space remains the constant element in the equation. Entering the club brings about a change in temporal experience from past tense to the present, one that also shifts from a first-person narrator to one that talks in the third person: “Der Strom auf dem Gang *nahm* Wirr auf in sein mildes, gemächlich dahinwogendes Schieben und Gehen, Wogen, Tippeln und Trippeln, Tapern und Taumeln, [...]. Halle aller Hallen, Wandelgang in Ewigkeit. Wieder, neu, und immer wieder neu und nie gesehen: Menschen *kommen* dir entgegen” [“the stream in the corridor *absorbed* Wirr into its mild, unhurried undulation, its pushing and walking, its surging, mincing, scurrying, scuttling, and staggering flows. Hall of halls, colonnade into eternity. Again, new, always new and never seen before: people that *approach* you”] (Rave

²⁰¹ As Schumacher observes, *Rave* uses the “Vergangenheitsform des Imperfekts [...] von der ersten Seite an” [“simple past from page one onward”] although the text constantly switches “unvermittelt in Präsenzsätze” [“abruptly into the present tense”] to draw attention to the question of time (148).

52; my emphasis). Berlin's clubs become places where the historical trajectory that determines the city during the day erodes until there is no cohesion – no points of connection – left. As the narrator descends into the club, the music suddenly hits and completely engulfs him, shielding him off: “Dann stand ich mitten in der Musik. – Schub” [“there I was amidst the music – thrust”] (Rave 17). Piece by piece, the scenery is revealed as an event in which communication – due to the sound waves and the excessive consumption of drugs – is significantly distorted, a distortion rendered “visible” in literature.

This altered form of experience that *Rave* replicates drowns out the outside world in its force-field of bass lines and changes visual conventions through chemically and technologically manipulated perception, underscored by strobe and black lights, a mechanism the text describes as the “Schwarzlicht-Stroboskop-Zerhacker” [“black lights-strobe lights-shredder”] (Rave 43). The text reproduces these “shredder” effects, evoking an environment that rapidly oscillates between drastically different moments of seeing and non-seeing, sound and silence. These moments alternate so quickly that ultimately differentiation becomes impossible. The club-goer taps both visually and bodily into new registers of experience, “das Kaputte, Beglückte, Vertrauen und Zartes, die vielen Signale, schnell, kurz, ganz klar, vom nächsten schon wieder verwischt” [“fucked up, raptured, trust and softness, many signals, fast, short, clear, blurred by the next thing”] (Rave 19). In this storm of stimuli, the subjectivity of the raver dissolves as soon as it comes into contact with techno music – nothing is meant to last. The first person narrator gazes at the dance-floor and the text relays his thoughts as epileptic fragments, “Dann sah ich, wie sie mir ihr – Und drehte mich – Und lauter neue Blicke” [“Then I saw how she – and I turned around – and lots of new looks”] (Rave 18). In tune with techno's break-beats, none of these sentences come to an end.

Toward the middle of the paragraph, the first person narrator transmogrifies into a third person narrator as if the “I” had become a detached observer of his own body. These new registers of seeing, hearing, and moving allow the raver to detect spaces where “sich einige, für diese musikalische Raumwirkung gerade speziell empfängliche Leute versammelt [hatten]. [...] DER Ort um zu tanzen” [“some people who were especially susceptible to this musical ambiance had gathered. THE place to dance”] (Rave 80). The club harbors a non-national community, determined instead through the cultural ability to heed the call of techno’s staccato siren song.

Interestingly, however, *Rave* conserves its fractured and disorienting structure only half-way through its first section, before cracks first begin to appear. While the text feverishly keeps switching between narrators, the prose adopts a slower rhythm and becomes less frantic: “‘Was soll ich denn jetzt machen?’ fragt Jasmin. Und Johanna, die diese Geschichten schon kennt, wiederholt einfach noch mal alles” [“‘What am I supposed to do now?’ Jasmin asks. And Johanna, who already knows these stories simply repeats everything one more time”] (Rave 66). These two sentences exemplify the general change within the formal structure of *Rave* as it moves away from its frenzied beginnings toward more cohesive representations of Berlin’s underground caverns. The ability for reflection returns slowly and expresses itself in an urge to contemplate and write down what happens in the basements and clubs. One of the first person narrators thinks as if he was already writing about his immediate experience: “Und ich dachte, in einzelnen Worten: >Wirrnis, - Komma, Gedankenstrich - , Doppelpunkt: ANGENEHM. Ausrufezeichen!< Es war mir jetzt im Moment aber zu anstrengend, das genau so auch zu notieren” [“And I thought, in single words: >confusion, comma, dash - , colon: NICE. Exclamation mark!< It was, however, too

exhausting to jot this down correctly”] (Rave 31). The narrator considers jotting down his thoughts, but is unable to accomplish this. This failure, however, is only temporary. Twelve pages later another (or the very same) narrator admits that “stand ich im Getümmel, und mein Füller huschte blau über das gewackelte Papier vor mir” [“I stood amidst the locomotion and my blue pen flitted across the shaking paper in front of me”] (Rave 43). He is capable of verbalizing his experiences, his pen transferring intoxication into text, even though the act still takes some effort. The literary representation of night-life begins at this point, suggesting a literary text that depends on the immediacy of altered states of mind of its characters.

As its narrative progresses, *Rave* substitutes the underground clubs for exotic, sunny locations. The photograph that prefaces section two shows a sunny beach and waves rolling in (see Fig. 3.2.). The picture allocates three-fourth of its composition to the clouds in the sky. This image, too, represents nothing that stands in relation to the rave and its predominantly industrial locations. Rather, it expresses freedom and the ability to go to faraway places basked in sunlight. We are left with a rectangular frame containing nature, suggesting a view of a paradisiac place. The vast expanses of sky within the frame further evoke a feeling of horizontality that foreshadow the section’s recurring motive of upward mobility: “Taumelnd also und stolpernd kommen sie da alle hoch, einer nach dem anderen, und halten sich die Augen zu, und geben Laute der Plage von sich, der Klage” [“Reeling and stumbling, they all ascent, one after the other, and they shade their eyes with their hands and emit sounds of dismay and lamentation”] (Rave 100). Contrasting the serene atmosphere in the photograph, the transitional moment from darkness to light is one that prompts lament, evoking the notion of an exhausting (re-)birth. The ravers are spit out of the clubs, forced to leave their safe-havens and re-enter the city above ground; and one is left to wonder if

literature is forced to follow suit. The image of ejection is followed by the heading for the section, “Sonne Busen Hammer,” the intrusion of decidedly vernacular language into the black-and-white Garden of Eden. While the “sun” foreshadows the section’s focus on sunny places, “breasts” link the section to sexuality and fun. The last word, in a literal translation meaning “hammer,” is also an outburst of excitement and approval. Given *Rave*’s interest in processes of decay, however, the actual meaning of “hammer,” both a constructive and deconstructive tool, should be kept in mind: the text is on the verge of shattering something that has been built up so far. The unattributed quote that finally begins the section asks, “Do you feel allright [sic],” making the reader aware that the future that awaits the ravers might not be as bright and positive as its preface implies.



Fig 3.2. Cloudy sky above a beach. Photograph prefacing the second section of *Rave*. Copyright © by Suhrkamp.

As soon as the group of ravers leaves the club, the sun “mit ihrem Atomlicht [...] scheinte [sic] und schaute sie jedem in die Augen hinein, leuchtete tief hinunter, jedem ins Herz” [“with ist nuclear light shone and gazed into everyone’s eyes, illuminated him deep

down inside, in his heart”] (Rave 99). The city – in this case Munich – returns with a vengeance, as they perceive a “Breite Straße, leere Straße” [“broad street, empty street”] (ibid). In the first section of *Rave*, the reader hardly ever learns anything about the urban landscape *per se*, at best it is possible to catch a reference to a club that enables us to assume the city. This suggests that initially the location does not matter as it explicitly remains disconnected from the event downstairs. Once the rave ends, however, – “Wann wird es wieder dunkel?” ‘Das kann noch dauern” [“When will it be dark again? That might take a while”] – the real city awaits (Rave 100). The raver enters one underground space in one place and exits the techno party into another as soon as the night is over. The sequence of these random places appears “zerhackt,” just like the strobe light sensations that determine sense perception during the rave. *Rave* exercises a city-roulette that explodes any feeling of continuity; all that matters is the party, while the surrounding urban landscapes become interchangeable. One narrator in *Rave* suddenly states: “Im Traum war ich in dieser Nacht versteckt an einem fremden Ort, in einer unbekannten Stadt. Ich war in einer völlig anderen Geschichte” [“in my dream I was hidden in a foreign place at night, in an unknown city. I was part of a completely different story”] (Rave 107). However, even though it will take “a while” before it gets dark again, *Rave*’s narrative remains on the move. Only briefly “steht [still] die Hitze da, [...] glühte die Sonne, kein Mensch bewegt sich” [“the heat stands still, the sun radiated, no one moves”], before the entourage resumes its “adventures” (Rave 114).

One of the narrators observes that “Das ‘Roxy’ auf der anderen Seite der Straße hat sich gefüllt, da sitzen die Leute zum Frühstück” [“The ‘Roxy’ across the street is packed, people are having breakfast”], an uneventful and calm day-lit scene from which the ravers appear separated (Rave 121). However, just as the text establishes the diurnal city, “THE

SAGA CONTINUES” as the intoxication returns without warning and a new paragraph cuts right into the diurnal tableau like a scream (Rave 125). The succeeding paragraph begins abruptly, with a first person narrator stating, “Ich liege am Boden, im Gras unter Bäumen, und wundere mich nicht, daß mein Körper revoltiert und in ruhig anbrandenden Wellen wilde Spasmen hochschickt” [“I’m lying on the ground, in the grass beneath the trees, and it doesn’t come as a surprise that my body is revolting, sending wild spasms up my body in calm waves”] (ibid). The actual transition from day to night is excluded, arguably forgotten by the narrator, a textual absence that signals that which cannot be narrated: All we learn is that his body purifies itself after of the toxins responsible for its high. The party, “im Garten des nach Klo-Containern stinkenden Outdoor-Suicides” [“in the garden of the Suicide outdoor section where it smells like chemical toilets”] is neither located underground nor is it an aesthetically pleasant event (ibid). From this representation of the breakdown of the body – which experiences “Bilder [...], Gedanken, eine so ruhige Sukzession. Wie ich falle” [“images, thoughts, a quiet succession. How I am falling”] – the text then proceeds immediately to the sunny places promised in the photograph at the beginning of the section, highlighting again the texts erratic course and the inconsistencies that the nocturnal city sets up constantly (ibid). This imagery gestures towards the difficulty to reproduce linguistically what happened, tentatively equating the will to narrate the night with the act of throwing up.

From this revolting moment of self-cleansing, the narrative jumps to a vacation that a group of DJs takes in Spain. Part of the entourage, the narrator explains: “Nun gut. Die anderen sind aufgestanden, und an den Pool gekommen, und machen da jetzt bißchen Krach, springen rein, und spritzen rum” [“Well, this others have gotten up and come to the pool, they raise a little ruckus, jump in and splash around”] (Rave 127). Just as *Rave* injects the

nocturnal fairy-tale into the larger framework of *Heute Morgen*, its own internal structure is equally “corrupted” by a segment that is in parts made up and thus subverts the text’s presentation as fiction distilled from lived experience. There is a plot element in *Rave*’s second section – a story about a drug deal that could have come straight out of a thriller – which Goetz himself debunks as fiction in *Abfall für alle*. There he admits that “jemand an Rave das Fiktions-Einsprengsel mit der Deal-Geschichte als irgendwie störend empfunden [hat]” [“someone perceived the interspersed fictional element about the deal in *Rave* as somewhat distracting”] (*Abfall* 522). Goetz concludes that he only needed to “an nicht mehr als drei Stellen jeweils vier Worte nur RAUS nehmen müsste, und diese Störung wäre weg” [“take OUT four words at not more than three points and this perturbation would be gone”] (*ibid*). The drug-deal story occurs halfway through the book and thus constitutes *Rave*’s center, suggesting that at the core of Berlin’s nocturnal narratives lies nothing but made-up stories. What is important, however, is that Goetz evaluates these fictions positively: Berlin is bound to return to these nocturnal narratives via a digital detour.

After this intrusion of pure fiction, *Rave* reluctantly returns to the urban landscape and its clubs in a more documentary vein as before. This shift suggests that the narration is not interested in the decay of the raver’s body, but rather in the dissolution of “history” into “story.” The final section is titled “Die Zerstörten” [The Destroyed] and insinuates that the process of decay begun in section one and furthered in the middle part of *Rave* has been completed (*Rave* 183). The quote that follows on the next page reads “We’ll never stop living this way,” affirming what has transpired so far (*Rave* 185). The accompanying photograph shows a dimly-lit apartment that is only sparsely decorated (See Fig. 3.4.). The viewer’s attention is drawn to the huge window that dominates the composition and which

allows a glimpse of houses in a city; the visible buildings do not correspond to iconic images of the capital but rather evoke a quite provincial place, even though, of course, this is very likely Berlin. Compared to the first photograph, the perspective is now elevated, gone are all the hints at DJ culture. While the walls, the chair, and the folding table remain in the dark, the window admits beams of light to filter into the room. This is a scene where the writer pulls back from the darkness of the rave and the daylight of the drug deal. At the border of light and darkness, this suggests spaces of writing as a refuge. The picture neither contains representations of night-life nor does it evoke feelings of ecstasy – a necessity and a loss at the same time. Rather we are offered a contrastive perspective that links the bright exterior of the city to the dark, interior spaces of an apartment. If we look closely, we can spot sheets of paper are strewn all over the floor in disarray (and also on the table and even pinned to the wall), implying that this is the apartment of a writer whose task it is to tell the stories that constitute the capital.



Fig. 3.3. View from inside an apartment. Photograph prefacing the third section of *Rave*. Copyright © by Suhrkamp.

Section three opens with the exclamation, “Ich mache es diesmal anders und erzähle allen, was ich gerade schreibe” [“I’m gonna do it differently this time and tell everybody what I am writing on right now”], underscoring the interpretation that the photograph shows a writer’s apartment as a liminal space between the rave and a drug deal (Rave 189). Daylight intrudes, metaphorically establishing a straight line between acts of perception and their representation on paper. However, rather than enabling the reader to see more clearly, the beams are uncomfortably bright. This moment of “tainted transparency” – literature as the window pane that allows readers to “look at” the city while at the same time blinding them – is then suddenly cut short by a sub-section titled “NÄCHSTE NÄCHTE” [“NEXT NIGHTS”], signaling a return to the dark, nocturnal side of the city. Despite the title, however, the first anecdotes deal, at best, with the periphery of techno culture, rather than with its “inner sanctum.” For example, the text tells of people buying drugs: “Der Mann von vorhin spricht mit einem Dealer, gibt ihm Geld” [“The man I just met talks to a dealer, he gives him cash”] (Rave 195). The urban landscape in which these deals go down evokes desolation and boredom: “Der Fremde steht groß, dunkel und finster an der Ecke bei den schweren Bäumen, wo der Park beginnt, zur Stadt hin aufhört. Es ist Nacht geworden. Und es ist kalt geworden” [“The unknown man stands tall, dark and gloomy on the corner next to the heavy trees, where the parks begins or ends in relation to the city. Night has fallen. It has gotten cold”] (Rave 190). One of the narrators, a man named Schütte, drives through this bleak environment, “Die Frankfurter Straßen und Schulen, Sonntagabend. Die Stadt ist leer. Das Taxi fährt dahin. Schütte raucht” [“Frankfurt’s streets and schools, Sunday night. The city is empty. The taxi glides through it. Schütte is smoking”] (Rave 194). Schütte is on his way to the airport and even though he has a goal his journey seems aimless. At the airport,

“man hört die Flughafenatmo. Reden, Rauschen, Ansagen und Ausrufungen, Dialoge in Fetzen” [“one can hear the airport ambient. Talking, white noise, announcements and calls for travelers”], acts of communication as meaningless as those in the clubs (Rave 190). However, what was positively connoted at first now smacks of desperation. Looked at from the distance, then, the ecstatic life of the DJs is not that glamorous anymore. In this respect, *Rave* morphs into a “window” onto city-life below.

The paragraphs of *Rave*’s last section oscillate between different cities, quickly jumping from Frankfurt to New York to Munich and beyond: “Andere Stadt. Paris. Paderborn. Emden” [“Another city. Paris. Paderborn. Emden”] (Rave 194). The airports resemble corridors that connect urban landscapes across the globe, such that these spaces lose their distinctive features: *Rave* loses its ability to keep up. Schütte, for example, “geht durch die unteren Hallen der Flughafenanlage. Effekt des Neons. Die schlaffen Farben. Überall Menschen, Türen, Zeichen, Abzweigungen. Lichter, Reflexe” [“walks along the lower halls of the airport. An effect of the neon light. The meek colors. People everywhere, and doors, signs, junctions. Lights and reflections”] (Rave 198). Schütte’s experiences are toned-down replications of the club nights, reduced in power as they have become “schlaff” [“meek”] (Rave 198). Unable to navigate, Schütte “irrt durch diese Hallen und Gänge. [Er] hat sich verirrt” [“goes astray in these halls and hallways. He is lost”] (ibid). What was exciting in the clubs – getting lost, being afloat – has become a negative experience. Schütte reacts by leaving the surface world behind as fast as possible, seeking refuge in the underground clubs: “Schütte trifft Tiermann und sie gehen gemeinsam aufs Klo, gehen zusammen in eine Kabine und nehmen Kokain” [“Schütte runs into Tiermann and they go to the restrooms together, into one of the stalls where they do cocaine”] (ibid). As a result, Schütte again experiences

“die einzelnen Handlungsteile [...] übertrieben zerhackt, isoliert und dadurch in ihrem Sinngehalt [...] traumatisiert vor” [“the discrete parts as exagerrately fragmented, isolated and thus traumatizing in their meaning”] (Rave 199). The perceptual fragmentation that dominates section one briefly returns, but this time these events are not communicated as first-person experiences. Rather, the reader follows Schütte in the third-person, which suggests that the immediacy of section one is no longer sustainable. Toward the end, *Rave* represents the intoxication almost exclusively from the perspective of an uninvolved writer sitting in his darkened office in an anonymous apartment somewhere in the city.

Rave’s last section retains this observational quality almost throughout. Only twice do the paradigmatic techniques characteristic of its beginning resurface. As “Schütte, Tiermann, eine Unbekannte, Bruder Maßlos, er und ich” [“Schütte, Tiermann, an unknown woman, Brother Self-Indulgent, he and I”] meet at a club, they snort cocaine: “Wir haben uns möglicherweise für diese Nacht jetzt vorläufig hier mal so ein bißchen ein- und festgekokst” [“maybe, we have ‘cocained’ ourselves into this place for the time being”] (Rave 248). In these intrusive moments, the paragraphs and the sentences become shorter – emulating the style of the book’s very first pages – until an anonymous voice in *Rave* utters, “Zeit vergeht” [“time passes”] and thereby comments on the unavoidable reconnect with the history “above” (Rave 250). At some point one narrator exclaims “pff,” expressing exhaustion and deflation, before the narrative breaks down into “dingens, ä” [“thingy, um”], meaningless phrases, or as the narrator evaluates it, “brutalste Verstörung” [“completely through the wind”] (Rave 251). We find the second example at the very end of the text. The final four pages follow the group of ravers into the morning light. The narrator explains, “wir tapern hinaus. Völlig am Ende” [“we exit the building, complete done in for”], a statement that not only refers to the morning

after the party, but that also comments on the state of the text itself (Rave 270). This group of people still tells stories to each other and decides to repeat the phrase “Nein, wir hören nicht auf, so zu leben” [“No, we’re not gonna stop living this way”] (ibid). This is not only the moment when the party is over, it also signals the limits of a narrative of the urban night. Although the characters resolve to go on living underground, Goetz’s project shifts its energies in order to look at post-Wall Berlin from yet another perspective.

IV. Recording the Periphery: *Abfall für alle* as an Internet Diary

While *Rave* is a call to arms for a turn toward fiction in spite of history, *Abfall für alle* is very much invested in the latter. Published as an online diary from February 1998 to January 1999, *Abfall für alle* belongs to the long German cultural tradition of diary writing, a genre that usually relies on temporal progression.²⁰² Elke Siegel links the emergence of the diary as a decidedly literary genre with the rise of the “modern subject,” interested in himself, but also “the lands, the people, and events experienced during travels” (237). The genealogy she sketches out begins with Caspar Johann Lavater in the eighteenth century and continues into the nineteenth century with important writers such as Friedrich Hebbel. She observes that “even when the world is reflected on, at the center – and at stake – is precisely the “I” trying to hold onto itself and its time in the middle of world-history” (238). There are other notable diaries, such as those of the Early Romantic Novalis, chronicling his descents into the nights of his own subconscious, the German realist Theodor Fontane’s travel notes, and Franz Kafka’s diaries, like his absurdist literary masterpieces never intended for publication. A shift in the position of the individual vis-à-vis history becomes apparent when the diary enters the twentieth century; in the last century, the autobiography positions itself

²⁰²For a detailed account on the diary genre in the German context, see Siegel’s essay, pp. 237-239.

vis-à-vis the sweeping changes of the time.²⁰³ The genre is perpetuated by thinkers such as the German writer and philosopher Ernst Jünger, whose vitalist writings influenced Goetz.²⁰⁴ Goetz opted for that literary form that contains “the absolutely formless,” that is any form of content, within the “strictly formal,” the date-bound structure of the diary (Siegel 239). What sets his apart from other examples of the autobiography from the twentieth century is the fact that Goetz chose to publish his diary online. From a media historical perspective, Goetz published a blog when the genre just had gained momentum in Germany.²⁰⁵

During the late 1990s and early 2000s, German literature – including autobiographical genres – repeatedly ventured into digital territory after Goetz had blazed the trail. Online projects such as *pool*, started by the well-known German writers Elke Naters and Sven Lager, come to mind. Founded as a platform where authors such as Christian Kracht and critics such as Moritz von Uslar could publish texts without the intervention of editors, the Internet collection of experimental poetry, insider comments, and thought experiments was discontinued in 2001, after only two years online. Like *Abfall für alle*, *pool* “survived” in book form when it was published as *The Buch*, a selection of *pool* texts that also include frantic email exchanges between the editors. Thomas Hettche’s Internet project *Null*

²⁰³ A similar conflation of the literary and the autobiographical vis-à-vis the limits of language is also apparent in the works of Elias Canetti, most notably in *Die gerettete Zunge*, *Die Fackel im Ohr*, and *Das Augenspiel*. As Ascher argues, this technique supports Canetti’s “belief that individual time should be seen in the context of historical time” (925).

²⁰⁴ Goetz mentions that he “las die Tagebücher von Jünger, Krausser oder Rühmkopf, und dachte immer: wenn man nur wüßte, wie es JETXT steht, was er JETZT macht, JETZT denkt” [“read the diaries of Jünger, Krausser, or Rühmkopf and always thought: if I only knew what’s going on NOW, what he is doing NOW, what he is thinking NOW”], gesturing at the urge to write down and publish the diary as fast as possible (*Abfall* 567).

²⁰⁵ Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray note that “Blogging, which developed from online diaries in the mid-1990s, expanded substantially beginning in 1999, following the release of blogging software” (44). Goetz is thus as the forefront of a growing movement and the entries in *Abfall für alle* show just how much he struggled with the technological aspects of the medium.

underwent the same development and is now available in hardcopy. The concept behind *Null*'s publication in book form, edited by Hettche and the German writer Jana Hensel, is that of a celestial constellation. Grouped together as a "Sternenkarte" ["map of stars"] printed on the cover, the entries in *Null* arguably form their own interconnected system. After the project had been completed, the website remained available for a while on the homepage of its publisher Dumont. While Hettche had hoped to preserve *Null* as, what he called, a "museum," it, too, was eventually deleted.²⁰⁶ As Siegel claims with regard to this kind of literature, "the speed of the Internet coupled with the daily imperative of the diary create the perfect storm for addressing the hypertemporality of the emphatic Jetzt ["Now"]" (237). In any case, the media ecology is again involved in an act of exchange and extension.

Siegel's remark also sums up the basic academic consensus that the Internet version of *Abfall für alle* functioned independently of most conditions and restrictions that are part and parcel of traditional publishing. The massive Internet diary rendered Goetz's personal life public in the greatest of detail on a daily basis.²⁰⁷ Goetz declares that "für 1989 habe ich in einem knappen halben Jahr über 3000 Seiten Text rausgegast, mit der Hand" ["in 1989 alone I churned out 3000 hand-written pages over the course of six months"] (*Abfall*, 474). This explains why the Internet was a practical medium for him, but only hints at the benefits that made an online diary worthwhile for him in spite of the opposition such a genre might

²⁰⁶Similar literary endeavors are the more politically oriented multi-author online diary *tage-bau* (<http://www.tagebau.tyrakel.de/wordpress/>) and the literary criticism portal *Lit-Ex* which specializes on deliberately "mean" reviews (www.lit-ex.de).

²⁰⁷Eckard Schumacher comments on this overproduction of excess material – its title refers to trash for a reason – thrown at the reader. As Schumacher argues, "Abfall wird weder als wertloser noch als besonders wertvoller Rest begriffen, sondern als Material, das zufällig anfällt und gerade deshalb – auch im Rückgriff auf kanonisierte Darstellungsformen – unvorhersehbare Kombinationen aus dem Augenblick ermöglicht" ["trash is neither understood as particularly useless nor useful but rather as a material that accumulates coincidentally and thus allows unpredictable combinations out of the present moment– also in connection with canonical forms of representation"] (2001, 199).

face from literary circles.²⁰⁸ Goetz connotes much of the eponymous “junk” in his diary positively and explicitly positions it in opposition to the linguistic cleanliness of most literary purists. He explains, referring to the crazy, hypnotic villain of expressionist German film, Dr. Mabuse, he “schreibt, schreibt, schreibt [...], weil so viel DRIN ist, was RAUS muß – leuchtet einem völlig ein” [“keeps writing and writing, because there is so much that needs to get out – makes perfect sense to me”] (Abfall 35). Goetz fulfills the role of the filthy antagonist and outcast with glee and approaches the city as a space overflowing with fringe impressions waiting to be recorded.²⁰⁹ What happens in the process, however, is that the autobiogpahy turns into something else as the stories told in the diary increasingly transform into second-order observations. The life of the writer is not exclusively his own, he willfully becomes a receptacle for mediated snippets that have their origin somewhere else in the ecology.

Goetz’s choice of the medium of the Internet diary thus stems from an interest in “ununterbrochener Produktion” [“uninterrupted production”] and a certain loss of responsibility (Abfall 71). He explicitly states that “man dauernd viel Müll schreibt. [...] Aber ich glaube nicht, daß man diesen Müll durch [...] einzelne Verbesserungen zu etwas Richtigem machen kann” [“we always write a lot of trash. But I just don’t believe that this trash can be turned into something valuable through selective improvements”] (Abfall 188). Only extensive literary production, Goetz argues, enables the author to capture the critical

²⁰⁸Schumacher detects an aversion towards the fusion of literature and the medium of the Internet in literary criticism. He mentions authors, such as Botho Strauß, who have attacked “Internet-Literatur-Projekte wie *Null* und *pool*” [“Internet projects such as *Null* and *pool*”] as non-literary (2001; 191). In one concrete example, Schumacher singles out feuilleton critic Iris Radisch for her disregard of the Internet as a literary medium, after what he deems, an argument exercised “ohne übermäßigen Lektüreaufwand an Rainald Goetz” [“without spending too much time actually reading Goetz”] (2001; 192).

²⁰⁹Goetz functions, Siegel points out, like a photo-camera, a technological “aid for capturing the overwhelming data of the present, particularly the margins that escape immediate perception” (235).

events of the ever-moving city; the writer becomes an open shutter of a camera. This approach made it possible for him – as he later stated on the sleeve of the hardcopy of *Abfall für alle* – to write “das Buch [...], das ich bin. Das ich immer schreiben wollte, von dem ich immer dachte, wie könnte es gelingen, das einfach festzuhalten, wie ich denke, lebe, schreibe” [“the book that is I. The one I’ve always wanted to write, of which I’ve always thought it would be capable of simply capturing how I think, live, and write”]. It also suggests that *Abfall für alle* approaches the city as a space in which the “media” trash piles up: images, sounds, and texts are disregarded because of their assumed lack of aesthetic value, but nevertheless define urban life in post-Wall Germany. His project, I contend, is thus an inherently inclusive one in that it argues for an appreciation of what is considered (culturally) worthless and marginalized. At the same time, however, the authority and authorship of the individual are to a certain extent curtailed by the intrusion of other narratives via mass media which is why the literary comes in handy.

Televised images, newspaper fragments, and random public announcements, among other media channels, become the building blocks of *Abfall für alle*, a written text after all. Speaking about his experiences as an indiscriminate collector of media snippets, Goetz bemoans that:

es immer so lange DAUERT, bis diese Dinge zurückkehren können, in veränderter Gestalt, in eine veränderte Welt: seltsam. Man würde sich einfach mehr GLEICHZEITIGKEIT der ganzen Widersprüche wünschen, einen viel offeneren Krieg der Positionen, eine schnellere Wucht der Kollisionen der gegensätzlichen Sichten, Haltungen, Ideen, Perspektiven (Abfall 55).

[it always TAKES so long until these things can return, in an altered form, into a changed world: strange. One would just wish for more SIMULTANEITY in all these contradictions, a more overt war between the various positions, a faster and harder collision of opposite viewpoints, stances, ideas, and perspectives.]

His exercise in equality, however, aims at the creation of friction, the ad-hoc juxtaposition of warring positions that find fulfillment in plurality rather than consensus. On this note, Schuhmacher argues that Goetz “verarbeitet, registriert, inventarisiert [...] in Abfall für Alle die verfügbaren Kanäle und Sendeflächen, Fernsehen, Internet, Zeitungen, [...] Platten, [und] Partytalk” [“processes, registers, takes stock of all available channels and platforms in Abfall für alle, from television to the Internet to newspapers”] (2001; 2006).²¹⁰ The Internet diary is thus a means to “write” a text reminiscent of television broadcasts, which is to say fast, inclusively, and without interruption. The periphery – that which usually remains excluded from discourse – thus becomes part of the narrative and thus blurs the line between agency and passive reception. The Internet diary also allows Goetz to publish excessive amounts of random material only a couple of hours after he discovered them “floating” in the streets, making a claim for the value of the coincidentally captured and pitching new, media-focused modes of urban exploration.

The urban ecology that *Abfall für alle* presents is permeated by all kinds of media signals, creating a text in which a non-synchronous experience reigns supreme. We should not overlook, though, that the diary forces multi-media signals into an organizing, literary corset. The author’s open infatuation with the multi-media systems of the 1990s – “für mich

²¹⁰As Schuhmacher further explains, “Goetz nutzt das Medium Schrift, um das zur Sprache zu bringen, was üblicherweise den Bildern, dem Fernsehen, den neuen Medien zugeschrieben wird” [“Goetz utilizes the medium of writing to verbalize what is usually attributed to images, television, new media”] (2001, 2006).

ist Fernsehen so was, wie für andere die Natur” [“for me television is what nature is for others”] – can hardly be overlooked, but this does not change the fact that the end point is indeed a diary (Abfall 97). Goetz is an avid TV consumer: the segment “MAYDAY XIII AND THE MOTHERFUCKING SAGA CONTINUES,” for instance, locates the author in “Berlin” on “Freitag, 1. Mai 1998” [“Friday, May 1st 1998”] (Abfall 242). The television broadcast is the 1998 Mayday, a large rave that takes place in Dortmund on the night of May 1st. At “1009” Goetz admits that he watched “fast die ganze Viva-Übertragung von Mayday” [“almost the complete VIVA Mayday coverage”] (Abfall 243). For him, television is something “Herrliches, Geheimnisvolles, [...] Unerschöpfliches” [“great, mysterious, infinite”] (Abfall 119). He considers television “DER öffentliche Raum überhaupt, über allem, für alle, das Firmament. Was jeder sehen kann, wie er will, nach vollkommen eigenem Ermessen, nach eigener Lust” [“THE public space, above everything else, for everybody, the canopy. That which everybody can watch/see, after their own fashion, satisfying their own desires”] (Abfall, 120). Despite these liberating effects, the medium television falls short as a mediator for communal experience because of what it cannot do, namely “Viele zeigen, Situationen in Räumen, Räume überhaupt” [“to show the masses, situations in spaces, spaces in general”] (Abfall 244). The visual mass medium television, even though it has become second nature to the city-dweller, is incapable of depicting urban space precisely because this space is one of the masses. In other words, a single medium, according to Goetz, is insufficient for the faithful representation of urban experience.

Television is consequently not the only medium referenced continually in *Abfall für alle*, the pool of resources channelled into the medium of literature. Aural snippets from radio broadcasts and textual fragments from newspaper articles complete the urban media ecology

reflected in the (written) Internet diary. In an exemplary entry the author states, “was ist / der Kerl für dich? / nur ein Psychopath? / oder die gewöhnliche Krankheit / der Gesellschaft? / meldet wer im WDR” [“what does that guy mean to you? Only a psychopath? Or the ordinary sickness of society? Someone reports at WDR”] (Abfall 24). Citing the German public radio station WDR as a source, Goetz reproduces the media fragments floating through the city. There are also instances of literary fragments: Reproducing the style and slogan of Germany’s most popular tabloid *Bild*, one diary entry reads, “neue / Enthüllungen / morgen / in Bild! / Bild dir deine Meinung” [“new / disclosures / tomorrow / in Bild! / Form your own opinion”] (Abfall 32). The list of such examples is long and the affirmative medial kaleidoscope established in *Abfall für alle* captured particularly well in the following paragraph: “1256 Albert/ Bildchen gefaxt / Foto aus der taz, von AP oder so / Gemälde / Straßenszene in New York / Autos, Fußgänger, Fassaden, Werbungen, Lichter / und hinten hoch oben / zwischen Schriften, Zeichen, Linien / riesig der öffentliche BILDSCHIRM / mit Clinton drauf” [“1256 Albert / telefaxed an image / photo taken from the taz, from Associated Press or whatever / painting / New York street scene / cars, pedestrians, facades, advertisements, lights / and in the background, high above / between writings, signs, lines / a huge public SCREEN / showing Bill Clinton”] (Abfall 28). Goetz describes a photograph that, structured like a Chinese box, contains an image within an image within an image, gesturing toward the diary’s own intricate concatenated structure and assuming a conflation of media signals as the dominant paradigm with which the autobiography must engage. The gravitational pull exerted on these signals is ultimately of a literary origin.

The fascination that the Internet (as a fault line of visual, aural, and textual communication) exerted on Goetz stems from its presumed ability to compute different

signals and bring them together in a single medium, even though it should be noted that all of this happens linguistically in the diary. Interestingly, the only “images” in *Abfall für alle* are black pages that contain white roman numerals and that compartmentalize the diary into seven sections. The online version does not contain any video- or sound-files. Characteristic of its new medium, *Abfall für alle* regularly incorporates reflections on the nature of the Internet. Goetz describes himself sitting at a desk, when he is suddenly confronted with an “ABSTURZ des Computers” [“system crash”] (Abfall 29). The Internet of the late 1990s is an alien environment to Goetz, the act of blogging complicated by cumbersome and user-unfriendly interfaces. In a section tellingly titled “the dark stuff” he writes that he “eine Stunde in den Innereien des Computers gewühlt [hat]” [“he rummaged around in the innards of the computer”] (390). Goetz “demonizes” the machine and states, “dann mit dem Computer gestritten [...], bekam ich die Rückmeldung vom sogenannten bösen MAILERDÄMON, daß irgendwas nicht geklappt hat” [“then I argued with the computer, received feedback from the so-called evil MAILERDEMON, telling me that something hadn’t worked out”] (Abfall 32). He nonetheless continues to work with the Internet. Goetz writes that “zum ersten Mal also war ich unter meiner Adresse auf meiner Abfall Seite” [“for the first time I accessed Abfall via its web address”] and he awaits in anticipation “wie DAS NETZ reagiert auf das, was ich tue” [“how THE NET reacts to what I do”] (Abfall 151). Goetz is not so much interested in how his readers might react to the content of the diary – after all, they have no opportunity to comment let alone alter the material – but rather how the medium affects his writing about the city, in particular on the level of language.²¹¹

²¹¹As Natalie Binczek observes, “nie bekommt man den Eindruck, Goetz wolle sein Projekt aus den Händen geben, um es mit seinen Lesern im Sinne einer gemeinsamen Handlung, einer ‘prozessorischen Aktivität’ zu teilen” [“one never gets the impression that Goetz wants relinquish control over his project in order to share it with his readers in the sense of a collective action, a ‚processual activity‘”] (309).

One desirable side-effect of the Internet as DIY-publishing interface is that literary language undergoes a transformation in the process, bringing it closer to the spoken idioms that fill Berlin's streets. According to Goetz, the young medium has the potential to change "gedruckte Sprache" ["printed language"] through the orality of "kollektive Praxis" ["collective actions"] of the network into a less artificial form of literary prose, precisely because the medium itself is not considered a medium for art (Abfall 185). He considers written language narrow and "wenig nah an den realen Vielfaltformen der Sprache" ["not very close to language's real varieties"] (Abfall 185). Goetz contemplates the strange effect "den das Sprechen auf das Schreiben hat" ["that talking has on writing"] claiming that in poetry "[man sich] nicht mehr FREI in der Schrift [...] bewegen kann, wie es doch erstrebenswert ist" ["one cannot move around FREELY in language, the way it should be"] (ibid). Thus, he uses the Internet and the emphasis on orality common among new media as a mediator that affects the relation between the act of talking and writing. Goetz calls texts such as his Internet diary "Zwischentext-Formen" ["transient forms"], hoping that "das dauernd getippte Sprechen so vieler Leute via Internet [...] auch so langsam die gedruckte Sprache so [sic] bißchen verändern würde" ["the continuously typed talking of so many users on the Internet would eventually change the printed word itself"] (ibid). The Internet diary thus not only alters the speed with which Goetz is publishing and the ability to circumvent the institution of literature – read: his publishing house Suhrkamp – but is also instrumental in keeping up with a city-narrative permanently on the move as an evolutionary stepping stone.

Goetz's Internet diary (and his making use of the initial medium) is but one step in a trajectory that ultimately aims at a book release, suggesting that the medium book is still of

great value to him. After language has adapted a less formal style online – most prominently through its casual reception and perpetuation – Goetz solidifies the fluidity of the Internet into a more “static” medium, the hard-copy of *Abfall für alle*, thereby insinuating that new media in fact strive backwards to become older forms. Goetz states:

ich kenne keinen Informationsträger, der als Objekt so schön ist, wie ein BUCH. [...]

Man kann die Form der Sukzession wählen, oder mit einer Geschwindigkeit, um die normale Computer und Textprogramme das Buch immer noch beneiden, im

Datenganzten floaten, springen, sich treiben lassen. (Abfall 155).

[I am not aware of any medium more beautiful than a BOOK. You can choose an approach of succession or delve into and float in the pool of data at a speed that still makes computers and text processing programs jealous]

Goetz suggests that the book is a more appropriate vessel for urban experience than the Internet, while it nevertheless retains “die spezielle Öffentlichkeitsform des Internets, die in einer fast gegenstandslosen, abstrakten Verfügbarkeit besteht, wo ein Text also mehr als Möglichkeit vorliegt” [“the particular public form of the Internet that expresses itself in an almost abstract availability in which a text is accessible more as a potentiality”] (Abfall 357). As his Berlin diary “slows down,” it invites the reader to approach it as a literary text that has much to tell about Germany’s capital beyond the fact that it is a landfill for random media signals. What exactly the vessel is filled with, is the question asked in the final section of this project. In any case, it is more than just the PDF of an online diary.

The eventual publication of the diary in book form definitely suggests that the older medium triumphs over the electronic newcomer after the latter has fulfilled its task to render the periphery of underground urban perception into a legible narrative. As soon as the Internet diary becomes a “novel,” this medial transformation suggests that the digital original is dispensable. Any attempt to locate the latter’s whereabouts reveals only an after-image: its URL www.rainaldgoetz.de takes the user to a screen where the domain is offered for sale. In light of the media shift of Goetz’s autobiography project, the next sub-section argues that the hard-copy of *Abfall für alle* functions differently from its virtual mirror image. With the open structure of the Internet now sufficiently harnessed and crystallized into a book, the focus shifts from the fascination of a new medium’s instantaneity toward the formation of narrative in the autobiography-turned-“novel.” Scholars tend to overlook the fact that *Abfall für alle* also tells a story that engages with Berlin (among other ecologies) in a particular way: it is highly invested in maximizing the movement and mobility of its actors and agents. To this end, the remainder of this chapter examines *Abfall für alle* as a novel not of instantaneity but rather of mobility in order to illustrate what drives Goetz into the urban underground in the first place. In the process, we shall discover what I call Goetz’s “ethics of movement” subtending the entirety of his project.

V. From Internet Diary to Novel: Navigating Berlin in *Roman eines Jahres*

On its book sleeve, Rainald Goetz calls *Abfall für alle* a “Roman für alle” [“novel for everyone”], and therewith emphasizes that the hard-copy differs from the online publication with regard to its fictional undercurrent. He still labels it a “Tagebuch” [“diary”], but also a “Reflexionsbaustelle, Existenz-Experiment. Geschichte des Augenblicks, der Zeit, Roman

des Umbruch-Jahres 1998” [“a self-reflexive construction site, experiment of my existence. History of the moment, of time, a novel accompanying the watershed year of 1998”]. Goetz’s labels were not unrelated to the urban discourse of the day. In the late 1990s, Berlin was considered a city of construction sites, a space constantly undergoing spatial transformation in the aftermath of political change. As Andreas Erb puts it, referring to both literature and the city as under construction: “kein Ort, an dem nach einem festgelegten Plan ein durchkalkuliertes verwirklicht wird. Sie ist eher Schau-Platz von [unfertigen] Sensationen” [“no place which is realized in accordance with a fixed, well-calculated plan. Rather, it is a space in which to perceive unfinished sensations”] (7). The author of the diary also finds himself under construction, an “unfinished” character who seeks inspiration and fulfillment in the streets of Berlin. The book’s layout with its fragmented forms, its elliptical style, and its polyvocal language(s) creates a textual rendition of the ever-changing metropolis (see Fig. 3.4). *Abfall für alle* is packed with rigid temporal markers committed to upholding the logic of chronology; sub-entries for any given date are preceded by a four-digit number which function as the time code. This technique draws attention to the passing of time, permanently reminding us that we are following the protagonist through a year of his life. However, it also underscores that these temporal markers are now subject to the rigid immutability of its printed carrier medium.²¹² As a result, the intended *Bildung* (*development*) of the writing subject is at the same time sped up and confined to a loop. In other words, the *Bildungsroman 2000* might be one without discernible *Bildung*.

²¹²Paul Levinson likens print media to “hieroglyphics carved into a pyramid” in order to illustrate how unchangeable the wedding of words to paper actually is (97).

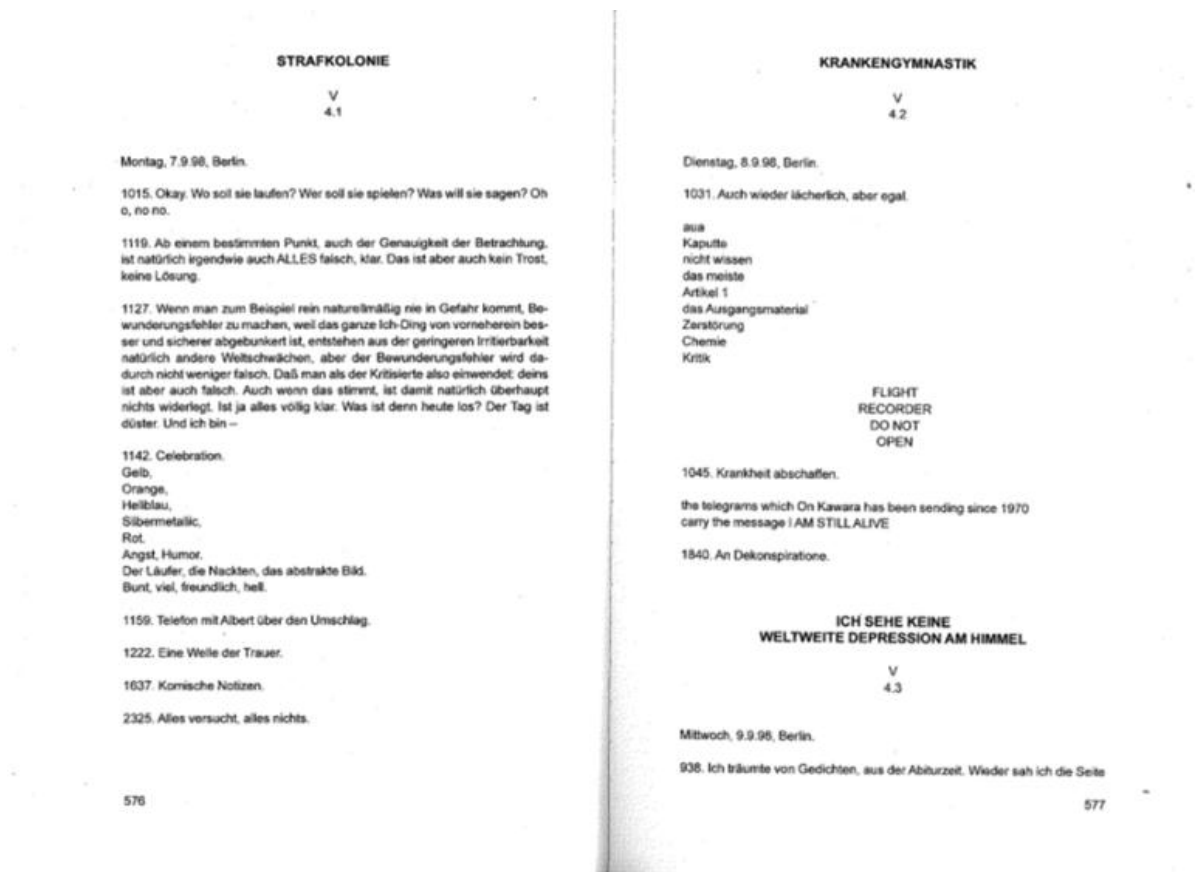


Fig. 3.4. Exemplary page layout in *Abfall für alle* (hard copy edition). Copyright © by Suhrkamp.

Compared to *Rave*, three major differences become immediately apparent in the “novel.” First, while *Rave* is narrative in form – Goetz defines it as “etwas kleines Schnelles, Kurzes, Böses, ein Ausschnitt, etwas Ungerechtes, ein Zeitpartikelchen, eine Gewalttat. Eine Sache von 100, 200 Seiten” [“something small, fast, short, evil, an extract, something unfair, a temporal particle, an act of violence. 100, 200 pages long”] – the hard-copy of *Abfall für alle* is a 900-page tome chronicling the life of a single, largely anonymous individual (Abfall 229). Consequently, the diary comes across much more inclusive than *Rave* in terms of its motifs and more egocentric with regard to its perspective. Second, while *Rave*’s language matches the purported fascination with the Dionysian experiences in the clubs, *Abfall für alle* resorts to a restrained and sober tone and focus, even though the two texts shares some

formal techniques. Goetz explicitly comments on certain poetic decisions in *Rave*, “die vielen Dialogszenen, und die Mischung aus Prägnanz und Verwischtheit des Ablaufs, der Handlung. Wie in echt. Einzelne Momente stehen ganz präzise heraus, dann wieder nur Schemen, vergehende Zeit” [“the many dialogues, and the mixture of conciseness and blurred lines in the plot and the story. Like in reality. Single precise moments stick out, followed by silouhettes, elapsing time”] (Abfall 506). Finally, while *Rave* makes techno culture its *leitmotiv* instances of night-life are largely absent from the diary.

The two texts thus occupy different ends of the urban spectrum as Goetz’s protagonists walk from the darkness of the techno clubs into the light of day. The entries in *Abfall für alle* are often rather short – this is especially the case at the beginning of the diary – such as the exclamation “1718 time time time – time marches on –” or stretch over several pages and emulate the form of a traditional novel; this the latter phenomenon is particularly prominent as the diary progresses (Abfall 16). This “thickening” of the plot implies that time gradually stretches out as the author proceeds on his odyssey through the capital. The amount of impressions he has to cope with multiply, highlighting the urban walker’s ability to take in an increasing number of sensual stimuli. As far as the diary’s main themes are concerned, the final installment of *Heute Morgen* revolves around two major narratives: one is the act of writing as Goetz repeatedly reflects on the production not only of *Abfall für alle*, but also other texts belonging to the *Heute Morgen* pentalogy, such as *Dekonspiratione*, that he worked on at the time. It thus contains elements of a *Künstlerroman*, as it comments explicitly on the state of literature in post-Wall Germany. The second recurring topic in *Abfall für alle* is the city, and predominantly – even though by no means exclusively – Berlin. We readers thus find ourselves also confronting a *Zeitroman* that paints a portrait of

the capital during an ongoing period of reconstruction and change. In drawing parallels to these genres, I seek not to force *Abfall für alle* into a corset, but rather to show that a serious engagement with its narrative is very much of use to understanding its intentions of engaging with an evolving media ecology. To treat the diary simply as a text whose only merit is its digital point of origin is to disregard the observational powers and literary historical indices it contains, especially when read against *Rave*.

The cover of *Abfall für alle*'s hard-copy edition mentions the "Raum des Medialen" ["the medial sphere"] and the "Leben eines Schreiber-Ichs in Berlin" ["the life of a writer-subject in Berlin"] in one sentence, and thus explicitly sets up a correlation between the city as a lived space and a medial environment. In its new form, *Abfall für alle* loses its former drive to react quickly to the ongoing changes that dominate Berlin's topography. It's thus reasonable to argue that the "novel" *Abfall für alle* about an urban nomad on a quest reacting to the ecology around him, searching for a virtual Berlin, a parallel world close hidden from plain sight, and an appropriate urban mobility in which chance and coincidence – like on the Internet – promise relief from the pre-determined paths of post-Wall Germany. The quest in the diary is that of a highly subjective first person narrator – the first lines are "Los gehts. Mittwoch, 4.2.98, Sonnentag, Berlin. Anruf von Herrn Häberlen. Ich soll jetzt mal mit Texten rüberkommen" ["here we go. Wednesday, February, 4th 1998, Sun{ny}day, Berlin, Mr. Häberlen called. He urged me to finally deliver the texts"], a call for making haste (Abfall 13). A couple of entries later this narrator identifies himself as the author of the diary, "1739 guten Tag, Goetz hier" ["1739, hello, it's Goetz speaking"] (Abfall 17). It is for these reasons why I use here on out the term "author" and the proper name Goetz interchangeably.

The author's everyday life in the city is presented in great detail throughout the text, and this includes his modes of mobility. He employs three recurring modes of traversing the city: he walks, he rides his bike, or he takes the subway train. All three fulfill different mobility functions as they create a network of paths reminiscent of hypertext. On his desperate quest to find access to the "secret" Berlin, the actual urban landscape is reduced to its minimum, a bare skeleton of spatial markers. In its early days around the turn of the century, Lutz Koepnick argues, the subway trains traversed a "world of fogged-up seeing and preordained ennui [where] nothing ever enters the traveler's visual field in form of a shock" (2007, 132). He thus calls the gaze through the subway window "the nightside of the modern spectacle" during the beginning 20th century (Koepnick 2007; 133). For the author of Goetz's diary, looking out the subway window also reveals post-Wall Berlin as a city in which no shocks or surprises whatsoever are left to experience. One exemplary segment in which he moves through Berlin on a subway train looks as follows:

1853. Indische Straße

1854. Luise-Schröder-Platz

1855. U-Bahnhof Osloer Straße [...]

1904. Schönhauser Allee Bornholmer Straße (Abfall 192).

During Goetz's underground rides, the topography of the city is solely defined through the names of the subway stations and their relation to time tables, the life of an author – as much as the trains – running on tracks and departure times. The subway experience thus oscillates between moments of text and emptiness, leaving not even a modern "nightside" to discover.

Looking at the city from below through the framing device of a window does not reveal anything important to Goetz, except the void that honeycombs the capital. At one point, the time tables even remain completely empty, that is they only offer temporal coordinates but do not mention the accompanying stops: “Mittwoch, 30.9.98, Berlin. / 1201. / 1217. / 1329. [...] Aussichten eher duster” [“Wednesday, September, 30 1998, Berlin. 1201. 1217./ 1329. The forecast rather bleak”] (Abfall 616). The physical space in which most of *Abfall für alle* takes place remains conspicuously absent; time passes without anything happening. Physical movement in the digital age leads nowhere; accordingly the modes of perception also have to change.

When *Abfall für alle* does describe cities at all, it does so in a perfunctory way and cuts up vectors in the process. The diary represents Frankfurt, for example, as “Stadt der Banken und schönen Häuser, der Straßen mit den vielen Bäumen” [“city of financial institutes and beautiful houses and streets lined with trees”], defined through a succession of short sensory perceptions (Abfall 29). On his way to his publishing house Suhrkamp, Goetz takes a cab and reproduces the following snippets while first cruising through the streets before navigating the corridors of a building:

925 im Taxi / -guten Morgen / -Morgen / -bitte in die Lindenstraße 29, zum
Suhrkamp Verlag / -hmmh [...] 1101. Gräfstraße 76. ARBEITSSICHERHEIT /
1102. Institut für deutsche Sprache und Literatur II / 1125. Prüfung. Bitte nicht
stören. Im Aufzug: / -Prüfung in was? / -Konzentration und Wettbewerb / -das klingt
gut / 1151. Herr Bieber (Abfall 182-183)

[925 in a taxi, good morning, morning, Lindenstraße 29, please, Suhrkamp publishing house, hm, 1101 Gräbstraße 76, Institute for German Language and Literature II, 1125 exam in progress, do not disturb. In an elevator: what kind of exam? Concentration and competition. Sounds good. 1151 Mr. Bieber]

Frankfurt, too, consists of a loose accumulation of street names and signs, filled with decontextualized pieces of dialogue. This preset configuration of city space is reinforced as the author travels further. After his stop at Suhrkamp, Goetz takes the train, the “S 8 nach Wiesbaden, über Frankfurt Flughafen und Mainz” [“line 8, final destination Wiesbaden via Frankfurt airport and Mainz”] (Abfall 183). He gets off the train at the airport and flies back to Berlin. The diary clearly has no interest in coherent city maps, suggesting that spatial continuity is not an important feature of this subjectively experienced landscape. In general, this hyperlinked city has not much to offer from this sober perspective and leaves the individual yearning for a different spatial experience. While moving through cities, Goetz focuses on the thoughts that come to him when he moves through an urban space chock-full of media signals rather than on presenting its concrete topography; medial orientation takes precedence over topographical ones. The city is rendered an interior, a subjective space that is given shape through the act of writing, while its spatial features remain obscure. Goetz thus internalizes the very features that are symptomatic of the underground club as described in *Rave* as he searches for the essence of the metropolis.

As the protagonist of *Abfall für alle* continues his search for meaningful urban experiences, he takes recourse to an absent-minded floating that he remembers from the clubs and that mirrors the act of Internet surfing. The act of walking the streets puts him in a

different mood than riding the subway: “Mit dem Buch, Jurek Beckers Poetik Vorlesung, war ich gestern nachmittag [sic] die Müllerstraße einmal rauf und einmal wieder runter getaumelt” [“carrying the book, Jurek Becker’s lectures on Poetics, I had tumbled up and down the Müllerstraße yesterday”] (Abfall 241). Carrying a book, the protagonist becomes like flotsam in Berlin, feeling dizzy and reeling: “Geile Hitze, heißester Tag des Jahres, heiß gepreßte Luft. In der Stadt ließ ich mich treiben, wollte nebenher lesen, das ging gar nicht. Viel zu viele Sinnesdaten” [“awesome heat, hottest day of the year, hot, compressed air. I allowed myself to float through the city, trying to read, but that didn’t work out. Too much sensual data.”] (Abfall 470). As he succumbs to the flow of the masses, he reaches a mundane trance-like state in which he acutely picks up on the topography of the metropolis precisely because his view remains blurred and out of focus. Being unfocused enables the urban explorer to gain a new perspective. Keeping the “shutter” open allows the diary’s protagonist to see what does not reveal itself at first sight: he avoids the beaten paths and declares the whole of Berlin his area of exploration. Finally, while Goetz associates walking with a certain welcomed dizziness and trains with the revelation of the urban landscape as a fragmented space, riding his bike offers yet another, fluid perspective on the city: one that proposes an ethics of movement that is ultimately doomed to fail.

When Goetz cruises through the capital in this altered, continuous, absent-minded state, the city suddenly pulses with movement, it is full of synthesized sights and sounds: “Die Leute kommen aus allen möglichen Weltbereichen. Rocker, Hysteriker, Normalos, Transen und Studenten. Sie machen sich auf den Weg, sie fahren durch die Stadt, es ist NACHT, die Lichter, die Autos, der Sound” [“the people come from all works of life. Rocker, hysterics, normal people, transsexuals and students. They are on their way, they

drive through the city, at NIGHT, the lights, the cars, the sound”] (Abfall 771). Their random paths intersect and the city at night becomes the arena where they collide, “Wieder in den Bus, wieder aufs Motorrad, wieder in den Wagen, weiter” [“on the bus, again, back on the motorcycle, in a car, pushing on”] (ibid). The excitement that grows out of these unplanned collisions, however, is short-lived, as others disturb the author’s unhindered mobility. The resulting clashes of personal lives are literal at times, for example, when Goetz is run over by a “Motorroller [...], weil ich ausnahmsweise den Fehler machte und am Radlweg fuhr, in der Stromstraße, und nebenher in einem Aufsatz las, den ich beim Wegfahren im Briefkasten gefunden hatte” [“scooter, because, for once, I was reading an essay that I had found in my mail box while driving”] (Abfall 444). This particular situation creates tensions that Goetz perceives very acutely on his bike. He rhetorically asks “warum beobachtet man die Szenerie nicht wirklich?” [“why don’t we really pay attention to the scenery?”] (Abfall 825). Goetz answers his own question, stating “weil man mit was völlig anderem beschäftigt ist. Weil der Automatismus der Verkehrsteilnahme eine ganz besondere Art von DENKEN freisetzt. Fast bewusstlos, schweifend, grundsätzlich und weit” [“because you are occupied with something completely different; because the automatism of traffic participation sets into motion a particular way of THINKING: almost unconscious, sweeping, fundamental and wide”] (ibid). Gliding through the city on wheels, then, triggers and trains a new mode of perception, a less interrupted one in which the city reluctantly reveals its secrets, but which is inherently difficult to preserve.

The author’s technique of gliding proposes an ethics of movement in which “those who belong” continually navigate the city on their own terms. Goetz campaigns for a new flowing mobility, a freedom to explore Berlin. However, such a technique inadvertently

encounters obstacles and repercussions in the form of restricted passages and inconsiderate people. Goetz witnesses, for example, a “Große Huporgie auf der Straße” [“lots of honking in the streets”], a reaction to someone who blocked the middle of the street with their car (Abfall 83). “Wichtig ist auch” [“It’s paramount”], he comments sarcastically, “daß man das Auto mitten auf der einspurigen Straße stehen läßt, daß sonst niemand mehr vorbeikommt” [“that you leave your car in the middle of a one-way street so that one else might pass”] (ibid). Later, while the protagonist is riding his bike, he is passed dangerously close by a “Proll-Golf mit schwarz getönter Rückscheibe, kurz darauf ein röhrender weißer BMW mit Zusatzchrom überall” [“a flashy car with a tinted windshield, followed by a roaring, white BMW with lots of chrome parts”] (Abfall 148). Reasoning that the city is the place “wo man in Ruhe seinen Verbrechen nachgehen kann” [“where you can commit your crimes undisturbed”], Goetz implies that the majority of the population restricts free mobility and even severely limits the urban explorer. This runs counter to his proposition that “jeder [...] sich allein und nach eigener Fassung in der Welt herum bewegen zu dürfen, wo und wie er will” [“everybody should be allowed to move after their own liking, where and how they want”] (Abfall 316). Post-Wall Berlin is a space that should be experienced without any prescribed trajectory so that “Leute, die weder geistige noch materielle Souveränität über ihr Leben haben, wenigstens dies haben wollen: die Freiheit sich zu BEWEGEN wie sie wollen” [“people, who neither have the mental nor material control over their lives, at least have this: the freedom to MOVE any way they wish”] (Abfall 669). The opportunity to follow one’s own intuition becomes synonymous with a mental and physical freedom that, for Goetz, is lacking in Germany’s cities during the day and might only be found in the nocturnal community of the raves – if only, as *Rave* suggests, as fairy-tales – and on the Internet.

While *Abfall für alle* deals extensively with everyday life and its various pastimes, it largely leaves out moments of intoxication and the few night-life instances in the diary come across as decisively sober when compared to similar sequences in *Rave*. In the disco Fat Fugo, Goetz “nippete an meiner nüchternen Cola” [“sipped on my sober Coke”] while those around him are “gut angetrunken” [“pretty buzzed”] (Abfall, 145). “Nüchternheit” [“sobriety”], Goetz claims, “dauert einfach, das kommt der Zeit entgegen. Rausch nicht. Sein Moment ist zeitenthoben, will deshalb vielbesungen, Ewigkeit. Rausch soll nie aufhören, das geht bloß leider nicht” [“takes time, which lends itself to temporality and duration. Intoxication doesn’t. Its moment is suspended in time and thus wants – as we know from many songs – eternity. Intoxication should never end, but this is impossible”] (Abfall 520). When sober, Goetz perceives Berlin as a regulated space that involves too many people; he writes, “auf der Parade, in den ersten Stunden, bevor der Rausch kam. Dann natürlich nicht mehr. Dann war ja, wie gesagt, alles nur noch herrlich. am Grab eines Engels wird sich unsere Poesie entzünden” [“at the Love Parade, during these first hours before the buzz; after that, of course, not anymore because from this moment onward everything was just great. Our poetry ignites at the grave of an angel”] (Abfall 530). Referring to the Love Parade, he equates his intoxication with the moment when reunified Berlin transforms itself into a different, less hostile, and more exciting place. In *Abfall für alle*, moments like these lead to epistemological breaks that go directly from “457 Total dicht wieder daheim” [“457, back home, totally hammered”] to “1051. Aua. 1149. Die dritte Aspirin, aua” [“1051. Ouch. My third Aspirin, ouch”] (Abfall 639). The actual intoxication is present only through its after-effects, a void that can be filled in with the vignettes from *Rave* but that cannot be included in the *Abfall für alle* project. The aforementioned black pages that cut *Abfall für alle* into

seven sections thus become placeholders, absences that suggest that there are indeed some things we are unable to “see” in the diary.

While the intoxication of the subterranean capital is swallowed by the visual “black-outs,” Berlin’s diurnal surface neither creates moments of excitement nor does it offer spaces devoid of the inconsiderate masses that populate public spaces. The cool (in McLuhan’s sense) *Abfall für alle* references intoxicated experiences only indirectly (as is the case with the aspirin mentioned above). The chronicler seeks to enter the “secret” underground of Berlin in order to get away from prescribed rules and regulations that he can no longer endure. While in *Abfall für alle* the city emerges in all its mediated glory, *Rave* depicts “fictionalized” tales from the techno clubs, stories that disintegrate in the light of day. Goetz sets up parallel realms of the city, exclusive hideouts, counter-spaces that oppose the obstacles that clog Berlin proper. The fact that these two parallel worlds are not easily compatible becomes very pronounced with regard to the 1998 Love Parade. As soon as the diary’s protagonist actually manages to tap into Berlin’s intoxications he vanishes from the text: the corresponding entry “PARADE IV 2.6. Samstag, 11.7.98, Berlin” [“PARADE IV 2.6. Saturday, July, 11th, 1998”] just reads “unterwegs” [“out and about”] (*Abfall*, 459). Goetz’s experience remains hidden behind a “timeless” signifier, an adverb that denotes movement and not temporality. The following entry states “noch später, an der Säule, habe ich – hm. Naja, der Tag danach, ganz oft so bißchen auch ein Tag der Scham” [“even later, at the column, I, hm. Nevermind, the day after is often also a little walk of shame”] (*Abfall* 459). In a Kleistian move, the concrete moment of the party is concealed by a hyphen. Within the trajectory of *Heute Morgen*, the diurnal city, the mapped-out and well-ordered

system, marks the end point. Goetz suggests that “secret Berlin” has been absorbed into the media ecology and is thus nothing more than another fleeting fairy-tale.

Conclusion

Rainald Goetz sets up post-Wall Berlin as a space of clashing narratives, two sides of the same coin that deserve exploration in his rendition of *Metropolenliteratur*. By analyzing the trajectories and links between two intimately connected texts from his massive project *Heute Morgen*, we see three distinct observations Goetz makes about urban life and media ecologies in reunified Germany. Distancing himself from the conformism and contrived euphoria associated with the fall of the Berlin Wall, he heralds the urban landscapes of Berlin as a topography that a) is honeycombed by hidden underground spaces where Germany’s historical trajectory is suspended and subcultural elites meet; b) is permeated by an abundance of media signals, that allow for the reevaluation of the importance of a periphery vis-à-vis master narratives of normalcy; and c) triggers an urge among urban dwellers to float within these spaces without paying attention to its regulations. In all his texts, Goetz champions culturally determined groups, detached from the national narratives of post-reunification Germany. Traversing Berlin with such preconceptions produces new modes of experience, experiences rooted in intoxication that Goetz uses as a blueprint for his literature. In *Rave*, Goetz focuses on strobe lights, bass lines, and techno beats, turning a visceral aural, visual, and haptic immersion into text while locating places that stand out from the grey matter that is the city surface. He thus suggests that the Dionysian has become part of the framework of the 1990s and survives – if it survives at all – in the sub-cultural underground and in literature.

While *Rave* suggests that night life – the “true” non-national community – is essentially a necessary fiction, a fairy-tale best reproduced as a “narration,” *Abfall für alle* chooses the form of the Internet diary to map out the minute diurnal spaces (including their fringes and margins) as well as the trash that no one else pays attention to. With regard to the media ecology, the Internet allows Goetz to experiment with the means of publication, shortening the time span that passes between experience and representation and also affecting the language used for autobiography. Goetz’s quest for a literary vernacular is furthered by a more casual approach to the written word endemic to the orality of the blogger-sphere. However, once *Abfall für alle* transforms itself into a book, it “slows down” enough to define an urban ethics of mobility in which the inconsiderate masses obstruct open-minded unimpeded exploration. Goetz promotes new techniques of navigation and mobility through the city that to a certain extent mirror the boundlessness of the Internet and secure a new place for literature. Only by making full use of the ecologies at its disposal, he claims, can literature capture the vicissitudes of modern life. Nonetheless, this narration strives toward the literary and treats the virtual as a evolutionary form to be left behind. Interestingly, the years following the project of *Heute Morgen* witness the inauguration of virtual layers and preprogrammed mobility superimposed on the metropolis, for example in the form of GPS technologies. Goetz’s call for an permeable ecology thus clashes with a media historical and cultural development in which digital gadgets more and more become the dominant signposts and guides of modernity. It would thus seem that the former *terra incognita* has been extensively explored and mapped out and that literature needs to find its place in the new ecology again.

Conclusion: German Media Ecologies in the 21st Century

*[hoot hoot hoot] Geht ihm aus der Flugbahn,
er schwingt um [de]n Block, muss Platz genug haben,
er klaut den Shops die Neonbuchstaben,
schreibt in die Nacht seinen Vor- und Zunamen.*

[Get out of his way, while he is swinging around the block, give him some room, he steals neon-letters from the shops and uses them to write his first and last name into the night]

Peter Fox²¹³

When the Berlin-based rap artist Peter Fox called the new champion of the 21st-century media ecology a *Stadtaffe* [*city-monkey*] on his 2008 studio album of the same name, he evoked an urban type whose movement is unhinged, fluid, and intuitive, located between the physically possible and the virtually impossible. Not unlike Dziga Vertov's cine-eye and the "unchained" camera of Weimar cinema, the eponymous primate swings from block to block above the roof tops, enjoying a perspective on the city-jungle (and its ecologies) that evokes super-human abilities. This gravity defying Son of Kong steals the neon-letters of the shops and gleefully misappropriates his loot to write his name all over the urban landscape, leaving a trace before "disappearing" either in the dance clubs or the World Wide Web.²¹⁴

²¹³Taken from Peter Fox, "Stadtaffe," a track from his 2008 album of the same title.

²¹⁴As Marie-Luise Angerer puts it, "der oft zitierte Benjaminsche Flaneur, der einst die Stadt als distanzierter Beobachter und als begehbare Diorama erlebte, [ist] nun [...] zu einem Bewohner interaktiver Medienwelten geworden" ["the often cited Benjaminian flaneur, who in the past experienced the city as distant observer and a walk-in diorama, has become an inhabitant of interactive media worlds"] (165).

With the necessary technology being readily available in the first decade of the new millennium, his exploits and encounters always possess the potential of being uploaded to the internet, shared on platforms such as *YouTube* for millions to watch, and thus perpetuated virtually even while the actual artifacts might have disappeared from the streets.²¹⁵ This, I suggest, is the most formative development with regard to Germany's media ecology. This assumption then raises questions of the role of aura in the 21st century, a concept that brings us to Walter Benjamin's concept of aura.²¹⁶

With the current explosion of information-sharing technologies approaching critical mass in the interconnection of cameras, cell phones, and social Web sites (and their down- and uploadable content), the concepts of original and copy are significantly renegotiated in the age of digital reproduction. Recent scholarship on new media and its influence on aesthetic practices suggests a new emergent climate of digital *laissez-faire* in the media ecology, a climate that also challenges the understanding of copyrights. In the introduction to their collection of essays on the state of new media, Lutz Koepnick and Erin McGlothlin claim that from a historical standpoint we have crossed *the Digital Divide*, promising "a healthy distance from the hyped-up conceptual atmosphere of the 1990s and its frenzied admiration of cyborgs, cyberpunk, cyberspace, cyber capitalism, and cyber studies" (1). Peter Gondolla et al make a similar claim for a less "frenzied" tug-of-war between man and machine in the foreword to their volume *Formen interaktiver Medienkunst: Geschichte, Tendenzen, Utopien*. They observe that "man könne die ganze Medieneuphorie als modischen Diskursparameter

²¹⁵Paul Levinson argues that "instant publication – whether of text, images, and sounds or videos – is one of the hallmarks" of the media ecology of the 21st century (134).

²¹⁶In the artwork essay, Benjamin defines aura via its negative, the thing that is "lacking: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in a particular place" (2008; 21).

der achtziger und neunziger Jahre *ad acta* legen” [“one should really put the media-euphoria as the discursive parameter of the 80s and 90s to rest”] (7). Identifying a more “natural” engagement with new media art, they conclude, “die Medienkunst ist jedenfalls mittlerweile fester Bestandteil des Kunstbetriebes” [“the media art is by now an established element of the art scene”] (ibid). In other words, the consensus appears to be that people have supposedly got used to the “new-ness” of new media and are no longer unnecessarily sidetracked by its techniques and form. This raises the question in what ways, if any at all, aura might – and should – be able to make a comeback.

After the assumed excitement over new media art and its critical potentials arguably receded, media theorists suggest a *détente* in the relations between emerging technologies and their users and thus a more comfortable engagement with the media ecology writ large – it becomes, some would say, a global candy store. However, this familiarity with new media ostensibly also reduced new media’s potential to shock and perturb. The various “city-monkeys” that roam both the streets of the metropolis and the jungles of the World Wide Web, it seems, dwell with equal ease in both environs, displaying a greater confidence in mastering these surroundings than earlier generations but also take these services for granted. Even though this new breed apparently has ventured well beyond the digital divide – arguably losing sight of the other side – we should be careful not to (again) dismiss the challenges that the metropolis and its media ecologies still hold with regard to the production of critical texts. As my project has shown, the city is a space in which art clashes with the socio-political and the literary. Not only has the aesthetic realm continuously reflected these configurations of German city life throughout, but also actively interceded in its protocols, defined here as “any type of correct or proper behavior within a specific system of

conventions” (Galloway, 2004, 7). It might very well be that the “specific system” Germany and its urban texts are currently witnessing a shift toward a more European or even global perspective, but it is problematic to assume that there are no particular German narratives left to be investigated. I would like to take a little detour to illustrate what I mean.

While watching Werner Herzog’s 2010 documentary *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* on the big screen, for example, it is hard to overlook the dialectic relationship between the oldest preserved cave paintings known to man (which are at the center of the film’s narrative) and their cinematic representation in 3D. These sets of images, located at different ends of the visual-arts spectrum, are indeed a “strange tissue of space and time,” to use Benjamin’s definition of aura, that unfold right in front of our eyes (2008, 23). There is a scene in *Cave of Forgotten Dreams* in which the camera-crew comes across a large painting in the Chauvet caves that is partly concealed by a stalagmite (see Fig. 4.1.). Since the French government does not allow the film-makers to approach the cave painting, a part of it remains concealed regardless of the chosen camera angle. This “unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be,” is probably not what Benjamin had in mind when he defined aura, but the solution to this “visual” problem is nonetheless striking (2008; 23). When Herzog finally decides to mount the 3D-camera on a stick, he literally “intrudes” into (cinematic and physical) space with the technological apparatus without “violating” the ground between him and the art work. To his surprise, this technological intervention reveals that there is a drawing on the far side of the stalagmite, a drawing that corresponds to and “completes” the one on the wall in the background. This exciting visual experiment suggests a multi-layered and -leveled structure of the art work on the spatial level. This instance of truly three-dimensional art is challenged by the medium of 3D-cinema, which, despite its optical effects, remains

ultimately flat. Not only are film's usual temporal and spatial ramifications at work here (editing, for example, among other unique characteristics), but the "three-dimensionality" of the images complicates the viewer's relation to this "instrument of [Stone Age] magic" with regard to questions of "cult value," referring to a fetish that needs to be kept "out of sight," only for the spirits to see – that is, Herzog's camera on a stick (Benjamin, 2008; 25).



Fig. 4.1. The far side of a stalagmite that complements the drawing in the background, still from *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*. Copyright by © Creative Differences et al.

This debate on aura, however, is not limited to cave systems in Southern France; similar observations can be made in the modern Western city, a move that takes us back to the media ecologies that inform this dissertation. Unfortunately, a large portion of these interrogations still remains below the cultural and scholarly radar. Only a project like the dissertation before you is able to show what the second millennium has in store in terms of literary interrogations of new German media ecologies. How this dissertation's narrative might continue into the 21st century can be imagined using the following vignette: In 2011, a

graffiti mural by Banksy was “rediscovered” in Berlin.²¹⁷ The piece “Every Picture Tells a Lie” had been part of a 2003 exhibition in the German capital and was subsequently layered in paint by the gallery to make space for new artworks (see Fig. 4.2.). This act of urban “excavation” illustrates several developments in the relation between the metropolis and art as it implicitly asks questions about the aura of the original work of art. First, the means of “mechanical” reproducibility have evolved significantly. Secondly, the time span that passed between the creation of the “cave painting” and its “rediscovery” was reduced: even in the controlled environment of the exhibition, the graffiti vanished quickly, speeding up the half-life of an already inherently temporary but highly “auratic” sign. Finally, the fact that the work of the Brit Banksy was excavated in Berlin suggests that national boundaries become increasingly leaky and blurred. Where did he actually produce that piece? Where does it exist now? And, as it might eventually only survive on the Internet, where will it go from there?



**Fig. 4.2. “Rediscovered” graffiti mural “Every Picture tells a Lie” by Banksy.
Photograph courtesy of Katharina Adamietz.**

Today, the World Wide Web has become the platform for the immediate dissemination, mediation, and conservation of urban art all over the world, while the geo-

²¹⁷See <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/09/14/us-art-germany-banksy-idUSTRE78C4M020110914>

political specifics seem to become increasingly neglected.²¹⁸ Although Banksy's "lost-and-found" mural is a physical reality of Berlin's urban landscape (for the time being, at least), it is also part of a virtual exhibit in the Internet. When Steven Shaviro argues exaggeratedly that "in the network society, experience will be digital or not at all," pieces such as Banksy's remind us that, while the "network" indeed changes our aesthetic perception, the question becomes whether "Every picture tells a Lie" still represents a specific German perspective detached from its "space-less" online shelf-life (249). In other words, does street-art retain traces of the physical place which it inhabits or do the involved social media – *facebook*, *Twitter* – and the supplementary electronic gadgets – smartphones, light high-definition digital cameras – pry these artworks loose from any national framework.²¹⁹ The new freedom of nearly unbound documentation and ad-hoc publication of urban texts also recalibrates the parameters of spatiality and the physical techniques of urban experience and exploration, associated for example with movements such as graffiti artists illegally "chrome bombing" trains at night with spray cans, surveillance theatre performed in front of CCTV cameras, or *parcours*, the highly athletic traversal of urban space off the beaten paths.

As "From Rubble to Revolutions and Raves" has revolved primarily around the role of literature within media ecologies, the discussion has to continue along these lines.

However, the very nature of the objects under consideration – the "new" new media

²¹⁸Some media scholars, such as Alexander Galloway, have argued that the Internet is not the embodiment of unrestricted communication and freedom but rather based on principles of control and highly structured bureaucracies. See Galloway's book *Protocol: How Control Exists after Decentralization*.

²¹⁹Lutz Koepnick and Erin McGlothlin associate the media landscape of the first decade of the new millennium with "real-time interactivity, [...] favoring of simultaneity over sequentiality, and [...] point-to-point modes of access and connectivity" (4).

artworks²²⁰ – highlights a shift toward visual arts. Online graffiti blogs and 3D-street chalk paintings, however, refuse to be pinned down easily, an evasiveness that also complicates their representation in and relation to literary projects.²²¹ Edgar Müller’s optical illusions, for example, belong to a form of visual street-art that literally provides a new perspective on urban space, a perspective, however, that comes with its expiration date already stamped on its surfaces (see Fig. 4.3). The elaborate chalk drawing tears up the asphalt and grants insights into the “underground” of the German town, but will eventually be washed away by the rain. As the viewer looks “into” a kitschy cavern illuminated by phosphorescent light, the person “holding on” to the street sign on the right links the ultimately two-dimensional image to the corporeal world, encouraging viewers to playfully rethink urban spatiality and modes of perception associated with it. The painting also insinuates that we are looking directly at the breaking away of media ecologies. In any case, Müller’s piece is not directly a result of new media techniques, but in its query of three-dimensionality and transience – its desire to peer into hidden underworlds and virtual layers – it responds to significant recent shifts in visual experience, materialized, for example, by filmic influences on the media ecology such as James Cameron’s 2009 global blockbuster *Avatar*.

²²⁰I borrow this term from Paul Levinson who termed technologies such as wikis, podcasts, or the social network *facebook* “new new media” in his book of the same name (1). He claims that new new media are “as different from the classic new media of email and Web sites as those new media are different from old media such as newspapers and television” (ibid).

²²¹Challenging the concept of the Web as the eternal storage-space, Ken Hillis argues that it also “accelerates the ephemeral logic of the commodity fetish” (36).



Fig. 4.3. 3D sidewalk chalk-drawing in the German city of Geldern by Edgar Müller; photograph, copyright © by worldphotocollections.blogspot.com.

As has become clear, visual engagements with the German city of the 21st century do materialize in various guises and often include physical acts of urban exploration. The question now is where literature fits into the new ecology, which is why I turn to a hybrid of visual and written art next. If we fast-forward to the arrival of graffiti in Germany in the 1980s, the image of the static ruin is replaced by an emblematic artwork that is, in principle, always already mobile. The resulting piece – located at the border of text and image – has a certain stationary “cult value” – to stay with Benjamin – but it is at the same time meant to be seen moving through the city. Florian Gaag’s 2006 film *WHOLETRAIN*, to name a recent multi-media project, chronicles the trials and tribulations of a group of four graffiti artists who set out night after night with the intent of leaving their tags on Munich’s (subway) trains, an illegal form of street-art they call “chrome-bombing” (see Fig. 4.4.). Set in a sub-culture guided by a complex set of rules and hierarchies (and supplemented by an international rap soundtrack and Web site), *WHOLETRAIN*’s imagery presents the graffiti tag

as “archaic images” latched onto trains. Underscored by pounding hip-hop beats, the film depicts the mobile and highly stylized pieces cutting through the city – at least until they are removed by the cleaning crews – for everyone to see; anonymous signatures that turn urban space into a canvas but at the same time usually hide the artist behind a pseudonym.



Fig. 4.4. Sprayer admiring graffiti on a subway train; still from *WHOLETRAIN*. Copyright © by Aerodynamic Films.

While graffiti is, of course, not an invention of the 21st century, the technological developments of the recent years have altered the rules of the art-form at the boundary between visual and textual art. With the arrival of the “death of privacy”²²² – the idea that in the age of cell phone cameras and *YouTube* apps (allowing us to upload recorded material at the push of a button) every moment has the potential to become public in the blink of an eye – the “anonymous” and fleeting medium graffiti enters a new stage of representation. The available options of mediating the “whole train” have multiplied: the spreading logic of new media now matches the mobility of a sign that travels on its own, attached to the original ground on which it was created but moving away from the space in which it came into being. The digital technology that Goetz affirmatively incorporated into his aesthetic project in 1999

²²²This concept could also be understood differently. The “death of privacy” might very well turn out to be “the reign of privacy” since it can be argued that the social networks produce only a fake-public.

thus appears almost archaic by today's standards. To be sure, the immediacy that Goetz was after has reached new heights over the last couple of years. In any case, his remapping of urban space – its clubs and streets – would already look very different today. If this is true, scholars need to get out there and figure out how such a remapping looks like, not only for the visual arts but also for literature as it defends its place in the current media ecology.

How exactly literature reacts to the emerging ecology, between hypertexts and e-readers, is still difficult to discern. As Katherine N. Hayles points out with regard to the turmoil caused by “digital born” objects, “electronic literature can be understood as both partaking of literary tradition and introducing crucial transformations that redefine what literature is” – but it needs to be defined first (3). An interesting but also rather idiosyncratic example is the Twitter haiku, a rather current form of microblogging. This recent emergent art form turns experience into literature as quickly as possible, while at the same time being subject to the technical specs of their carrier medium. Said haiku – a short Japanese poem usually consisting of seventeen syllables – reappropriates the 140 characters that the online service Twitter allows its customers per tweet. New media's appropriation of a traditional Asian literary form raises several interesting points. First, we see the transformation of something read by a Western minority into a mass phenomenon. Second, we witness a new media ecology coming and its assumed conflation of older forms and genres coming into being. And lastly, between the implementation of cutting-edge technology in the production of art and the media archaeology put forth by Siegfried Zielinski as the “deep time of the media,” in his book of the same name decidedly German approaches to new literature remain rare.²²³ Whereas new media art has established itself as a hot topic in academia, its

²²³See Zielinski's book on media archaeology, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing through Technical Means*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2008.

intersections with national literature remain elusive. While scholars such as Mark Hansen, Michael Rush, and Bryan Alexander have extensively analyzed the impact of the technological development on the international art scene, German Studies has been hesitant to pick up on this discussion in a German literary context.²²⁴ In general, appropriating the technique of microblogging (the simultaneous shortening and multiplication of messages, for example via *twitter*) as the next big venue for postmodern literature might not be the (only) way to go.

All three chapters in this dissertation display a striving back of newer media toward literary forms. Böll converted filmic techniques back into a literary text; Brinkmann's multi-media art surged toward the poetic forms; and for Goetz ultimately ossified the Internet diary into a novel. This is not to say that the multi-media aspects of these artifacts are irrelevant, but it suggests that the ecology of the 21st century predicates a literary work that reflects and not necessarily imitates medial developments. So far, scholarship in the field of *Germanistik* has only tentatively looked in this direction. Stuart Taberner's *German Literature in the Age of Globalization* and Paul A. Youngman's *We are the Machine: The Computer, the Internet, and Information in Contemporary German Literature* are two recent examples. However, these books deal largely either with the representation of technology in literature (Youngman) or focus on literature's emulation of Internet characteristics, such as the hypertext (Taberner). Of course, literature can try and mimic the hypertext on the level of layout, but this mimetic element is not sufficient as the sole focus of textual analysis. Rather, as this dissertation has repeatedly shown, the exchange occurs in two ways: Literature has to be seen as an emancipated constituent and not only a copycat of new developments. Both

²²⁴See Hansen's *Bodies in Code*, Rush's revised version of *New Media in Art*, and Alexander's *The New Digital Storytelling: Creating Narratives with New Media*.

German literature and German studies need to gradually move away from a fascination for mere depictions of the computer in literature, the transference of already existing texts into electronic books, and the technology of the hyperlink in itself. Instead they must seek to understand literature's own mechanisms of dealing with medial others in complex ecologies. In creating and identifying these points of contacts on the level of form and content, acute observations can be made about the vitality of German art in the new millennium.

Bibliography

Introduction

- Adorno, Theodor W. et al. Aesthetics and Politics. Transl. Rodney Livingstone et al. London; New York: Verso, 2007.
- , "Kulturindustrie. Fernsehen als Ideologie. Texte zur Medientheorie. Eds. Günter Helmes; Werner Köster. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002. 199-203.
- Anderson, Benedict. Imagined Communities. New Edition. London and New York: Verso, 2006.
- Angerer, Marie-Luise. "I am suffering from a spatial hangover. Körper-Erfahrung im NeuenMedienKunst-Kontext." Formen interaktiver Medienkunst: Geschichte, Tendenzen, Utopien. Eds. Peter Gendolla et al. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2001. 166-182.
- Baudelaire, Charles. The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays. London: Phaidon Press, 1995.
- Borchert, Wolfgang. The Man Outside. Transl. David Porter. New York: New Direction Books, 1971.
- Corbineau-Hoffmann, Angelika. Eine Kleine Literaturgeschichte der Großstadt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003.
- Corngold, Stanley. "Ecstatic Release from Personality." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 703-708.
- Debord, Guy. The Society of the Spectacle. Transl. Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books, 1994.
- DeKoven, Marianne. Utopia Limited. The Sixties and the Emergence of the Postmodern. Durham: Duke UP, 2004.
- Dimendberg, Edward. "A Republic of Voids." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 952-959.

- Dollenmayer, David. "Narration and the City." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 764-770
- Döblin, Alfred. Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte von Franz Biberkopf. München: D DTV, 2007.
- Dückers, Tanja. Spielzone. Berlin: Aufbau TV, 2007.
- Fisher, Jaimey; Barbara Mennel. Introduction. Spatial Turns: Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture. Eds. Jaimey Fisher; Barbara Mennel. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2010. 9-23.
- Ford, Simon. Die Situationistische Internationale: Eine Gebrauchsanweisung. Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2006.
- Foucault, Michel. The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Power of Language. London: Vintage, 1982.
- Fritz, Regina et al. Eds. Nationen und ihre Selbstbilder: postdiktatorische Gesellschaften in Europa. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2008.
- Fritzsche, Peter. "Germans Reading Hitler." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 795-800.
- Furst, Lilian. "Parallels and Disparities: German Literature in the Context of European Culture." German Literature of the Nineteenth Century, 1832-1899. Eds. Clayton Koelb, Eric Downing. New York: Camden House, 2005. 45-62.
- Gerstenberger, Katharina. Writing the New Berlin: The German Capital in Post-Wall Literature. New York: Camden House, 2008.
- Glaser, Hermann. Deutsche Kultur von 1945-2000. München: C. Hanser, 1997.
- , Kleine deutsche Kulturgeschichte von 1945 bis heute. Frankfurt: Fischer, 1991.
- , The Rubble Years: the Cultural Roots of Postwar Germany. New York: Paragon House, 1986.
- Gleber, Anke. The Art of Taking a Walk: Flanerie, Literature, and Film in Weimar Culture. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1999.
- Göktürk, Deniz. "Spectacles of Multiculturalism." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 965-970.

- Grabovszki, Ernst. "Literary Movements of the 1880s: Impressionism, Symbolism, and fin-de-siècle Austria." German Literature of the Nineteenth Century, 1832-1899. Eds. Clayton Koelb, Eric Downing. New York: Camden House, 2005. 139-156.
- Greenblatt, Stephen. Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare. Chicago: University of Chicago P, 2005.
- Grillparzer, Franz. Der arme Spielmann. München: DTV, 1997.
- Handke, Peter. Die Angst des Tormanns beim Elfmeter. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1972.
- Harris, Stefanie. Mediating Modernity: German Literature and New Media, 1859-1930. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2009.
- Hayles, Katherine N. Electronic Literature: New Horizons for the Literary. Notre Dame: U Notre Dame P, 2008.
- Hermant, Jost. Deutsche Kulturgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts. Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2006.
- , Kultur im Wiederaufbau: Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1945-1965. München: Nymphenburger, 1986.
- Hessel, Franz. Heimliches Berlin. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1987.
- Hettche, Thomas. Nox. Berlin: List Verlag, 2004.
- Heym, Georg. "Die Dämonen der Städte." Deutsche Großstadtlyrik vom Naturalismus bis zur Gegenwart. Ed. Wolfgang Rothe. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1973. 111-112.
- Hilbig, Wolfgang. „Ich“. München: Süddeutsche Zeitung Bibliothek, 2008.
- Hoffmann, E.T.A. Das Fräulein von Scuderi. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1988.
- Jameson, Fredric. Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. London: Verso, 1991.
- Jarusch, Konrad. After Hitler: Recivilizing Germans, 1945-1995. Oxford, New York: Oxford UP, 2006.
- Jarusch, Konrad; Michael Geyer. Shattered Pasts: Reconstructing German Histories. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003.
- Kafka, Franz. Der Proceß. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2006.
- Klimke, Martin; Joachim Scharloth. Eds. 1968. Handbuch zur Kultur- und Mediengeschichte der Studentenbewegung. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 2007.

- Koeppen, Wolfgang. Tauben im Gras. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1980.
- Livingstone, Rodney et al. "Presentation I." Aesthetics and Politics. Theodor W. Adorno et al. Transl. Rodney Livingstone et al. London; New York: Verso, 2007. 9-15.
- Lyotard, Jean-François. The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. Transl. Geoff Bannington and Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1984.
- Maguire, Eleanor A. "Spatial Navigation." Neuroergonomics: The Brain at Work. Eds. Raja Parasuraman, Matthew Rizzo. New York: Oxford UP, 2007. 131-145.
- Mann, Thomas. Der Tod in Venedig. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer TV, 1995.
- Marcuse, Herbert. Eros and Civilization. Paperback. Boston: Beacon Press, 1974.
- Marx, Leo. The Machine in the Garden. Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America. Thirty-fifth Anniversary Edition. New York: Oxford UP, 2000.
- McGann, Jerome. Radiant Textuality: Literature After the World Wide Web. New York: Palgrave, 2001.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Phenomenology of Perception. Transl. by Colin Smith. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Moran, Joe. Reading the Everyday. London and New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Morris, Adelaide; Thomas Swiss. Eds. New Media Poetics. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009.
- Münkler, Herfried. Die Deutschen und ihre Mythen. Berlin: Rowohlt, 2009.
- Murfin, Ross; Supryia M. Ray. The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms. Third Edition. Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2009.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik. Frankfurt: Insel Verlag, 2009.
- Nossack, Hans Erich. Der Untergang. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1976.
- Pike, Burton. "Images of the City." The Cambridge Companion to the Modern German Novel. Ed. Graham Bartram. Cambridge et al: Cambridge UP, 2004. 110-122.
- , The Image of the City in Modern Literature. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

- Raabe, Wilhelm. Die Chronik der Sperlingsgasse. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2009.
- Schneider, Peter. Der Mauerspringer. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt TV, 1995.
- Schnitzler, Arthur. Lieutenant Gustl. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002.
- Sennett, Richard. Flesh and Stone: The Body and the City in Western Civilization. New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994.
- Stoehr, Ingo. German Literature of the Twentieth Century: From Aestheticism to Postmodernism. New York: Camden House , 2001.
- Strate, Lance. Echoes and Reflections: On Media Ecology as a Field of Study. New Jersey: Hampton Press, 2006.
- Taberner, Stuart. German Literature in the Age of Globalization. New York et al: Continuum, 2004.
- Waters, Lindsay. „The Machine Takes Control.“ A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 790-795.
- Wellershoff, Dieter. Die Schönheit des Schimpansen. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2000.
- Werning Stefan. “Some Ontological Considerations on the Destruction of Cities in Interactive Media and its Discursive Repercussions.” Die zerstörte Stadt: mediale Repräsentationen urbaner Räume von Troja bis SimCity. Eds. Andreas Bohn; Christine Mielke. Bielefeld: transcript, 2007. 311-338.
- Williams, Raymond. “The Analysis of Culture.” Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader. Third Edition. Ed. John Storey. Essex: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006. 32-40.
- Wirth-Nesher, Hana. City Codes: Reading the Modern Urban Novel. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Wolfrum, Edgar. Die geglückte Demokratie: Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2006.
- Wutz, Michael. Enduring Words: Literary Narrative in a Changing Media Ecology. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama P, 2009.
- Youngman, Paul A. We are the Machine: The Computer, the Internet, and Information in Contemporary German Literature. Rochester: Camden House, 2009.

Chapter 1

- Arnold-De Simine, Silke. "Die Konstanz der Ruine. Zur Rezeption traditioneller ästhetischer Funktionen der Ruine in städtischer Baugeschichte und im Trümmerfilm nach 1945." Die zerstörte Stadt: mediale Repräsentationen urbaner Räume von Troja bis SimCity. Eds. A. Andreas Bohn; Christine Mielke. Bielefeld: transcript, 2007. 251-272.
- Balzer, Bernd. "Haus ohne Hüter." Heinrich Böll: Romane und Erzählungen. Interpretationen. Ed. Werner Bellmann. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000. 119-136.
- Barnouw, Dagmar. "A Time for Ruins." German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins. Eds. Wilfried Wilms; William Rasch. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 45-60.
- , "History, Memory, Fiction after the Second World War." The Cambridge Companion to the Modern German Novel. Ed. Graham Bartram. Cambridge et al: Cambridge UP, 2004. 167-186.
- Barthel, Manfred. So war es wirklich: Der deutsche Nachkriegsfilm. München, Berlin: Herbig, 1986.
- Bellmann, Hubert. Ed. Das Werk Heinrich Bölls. Biographie mit Studien zum Frühwerk. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1995.
- , Nachwort. Der Engel schwieg. Heinrich Böll München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009. 193-211.
- , "Von *Der Engel schwieg* zu *Und sagte kein einziges Wort*." Heinrich Böll: Romane und Erzählungen. Interpretationen. Ed. Werner Bellmann Stuttgart: Reclam, 2000. 82-108.
- Biess, Frank. Homecomings: Returning POWs and the Legacy of Defeat in Postwar Germany. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006.
- Böll, Heinrich. "In Defense of 'Rubble Literature.'" Stories, Political Writings, and Autobiographical Works. Ed. Martin Black. Transl. Leila Vennewitz. New York, London: continuum, 2006. 269-273.
- , Der Engel schwieg. München: DTV, 1997.
- Böll, Heinrich; Heinrich Vormweg. "Weil die Stadt so fremd geworden ist..." Weil die Stadt so fremd geworden ist: Gespräche. Bornheim-Merten: Lamuv Verlag, 1985. 73-87.
- Böll, Viktor et al. Heinrich Böll. München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 2002.

- Brockmann, Stephen. A Critical History of German Film. Rochester: Camden House, 2010.
- , Literature and German Reunification. Rochester: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
- Eisner, Lotte. The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt. Transl. Roger Greaves. Berkeley; Los Angeles: U of California P, 1969.
- Eshel, Amir. "Layered Time: Ruins as Shattered Past, Ruins as Hope in Israeli and German Landscapes and Literature." Ruins of Modernity. Eds. Julia Hell; Andreas Schönle. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2010. 133-150.
- Feinstein, Joshua. The Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of the Daily Life in the East German Cinema, 1949-1989. Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina P, 2001.
- Fisher, Jaimey. "Planes, Trains, and the Occasional Car: The Rubble Film as Demobilization Film." German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins. Eds. Wilfried Wilms; William Rasch. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 175-192.
- , "Wandering in/to the Rubble-Film: Filmic Flânerie and the Exploded Panorama after 1945." German Quarterly. Vol. 78.4. 2005. 461-480.
- Greffrath, Bettina. Gesellschaftsbilder der Nachkriegszeit: Deutsche Spielfilme 1945–1949. Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1995.
- Großklaus, Götz. "Das zerstörte Gesicht der Städte. ‚Konkurrierende Gedächtnisse‘ im Nachkriegsdeutschland (West) 1945-1960." Die zerstörte Stadt: mediale Repräsentationen urbaner Räume von Troja bis SimCity. Eds. Andreas Bohn; Christine Mielke. Bielefeld: transcript, 2007. 101-124.
- Hage, Volker. Zeugen der Zerstörung: die Literaten und der Luftkrieg. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer TB, 2008.
- Heinzlmeier, Adolf. Nachkriegsfilm und Nazifilm: Anmerkungen zu einem deutschen Thema. Frankfurt a. M.: Frankfurter Bund für Volksbildung, 1988.
- Hell, Julia. "Imperial Ruin Gazers, or Why Did Scipio Weep?" Ruins of Modernity. Eds. Julia Hell; Andreas Schönle. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2010. 169-192.
- Hell, Julia; Andreas Schönle. Introduction. Ruins of Modernity. Eds. Julia Hell; Andreas Schönle. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2010. 1-16.
- Herlyn, Heinrich. Heinrich Böll als utopischer Schriftsteller. Bern: Peter Land, 1996.
- Hoffgen, Maggie. Studying German Cinema. Leighton Buzzard: Auteur Publishing, 2009.

- Hummel, Christine. Intertextualität im Werk Heinrich Bölls. Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2002.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "Authentic Ruins: Products of Modernity." Ruins of Modernity. Eds. Julia Hell; Andreas Schönle. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2010. 17-28.
- Kapczynski, Jennifer M. "Making History Visible." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 851-856.
- Kirchmann, Kay. "Blicke auf Trümmer. Anmerkungen zur filmischen Wahrnehmungsorganisation der Ruinenlandschaft nach 1945." Die zerstörte Stadt: mediale Repräsentationen urbaner Räume von Troja bis SimCity. Eds. Andreas Bohn; Christine Mielke. Bielefeld: transcript, 2007. 273-288.
- Koepnick Lutz. "The Sound of Ruins." German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins. Eds. Wilfried Wilms; William Rasch. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 193-208.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. Von Caligari zu Hitler: eine psychologische Geschichte des deutschen Films. Transl. Ruth Baumgarten und Karsten Witte. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1979.
- Kutsch, Arnulf. "Rundfunk unter alliierter Besatzung." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 59-90.
- Ludin, Malte. Wolfgang Staudte. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1996.
- Manvell, Roger; Heinrich Fraenkel. The German Cinema. New York, Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1971.
- Mc Gowan, Moray. "German Writing in the West (1945-1990)." The Cambridge History of German Literature. Ed. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly. Cambridge et al: Cambridge UP, 1997. 440-506.
- Mielke, Christine. "Geisterstädte. Literarische Texte und Bilddokumentationen zur Städtebombardierung des Zweiten Weltkriegs und die Personifizierung des Urbanen." Die zerstörte Stadt: mediale Repräsentationen urbaner Räume von Troja bis SimCity. Eds. Andreas Bohn; Christine Mielke. Bielefeld: transcript, 2007. 125-180.
- Nägele, Rainer. "History, Evidence, Gesture." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 841-846.
- Peitsch, Helmut et al. Eds. European Memories of the Second World War: New Perspectives on Postwar Literature. New York et al: Berghahn Books, 1999.

- Pinkert, Anke. "Rubble Film as Archive of Trauma and Grief." German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins. Eds. Wilfried Wilms; William Rasch. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 61-76.
- Rasch, William. Introduction. German Postwar Films: Life and Love in the Ruins. Eds. Wilfried Wilms; William Rasch. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. 1-5.
- Reid, J.H. "Aesthetics and Resistance." Graham Bartram. Ed. The Cambridge Companion to the Modern German Novel. Cambridge et al: Cambridge UP, 2004. 187-201.
- Rentschler, Eric. Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife. Cambridge: Harvard U UP, 1996.
- , "The Place of Rubble in the *Trümmerfilm*." Ruins of Modernity. Eds. Julia Hell; Andreas Schönle. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2010. 418-438.
- Schlant, Ernestine. The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Schnell, Ralf. Geschichte der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1945. Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003.
- Sebald, W.G. Luftkrieg und Literatur. Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer TB, 2002.
- Shandley, Robert R. Rubble Films: German Cinema in the Shadow of the Third Reich. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2001.
- Snyder Hook, Elizabeth. "Awakening from War: History, Trauma, and Testimony in Heinrich Böll." The Work of Memory. Eds. Alon Confino and Peter Fritzsche. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002. 136-153.
- Von Moltke, Johannes. "Ruin Cinema." Ruins of Modernity. Eds. Julia Hell; Andreas Schönle. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2010. 395-417.
- Wilke, Jürgen. "Überblick und Phasengliederung." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 15-30.

Chapter 2

- Adler, Hans. "Mediating the mediation. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's Concept of the Aesthetic Subject." High and Low Cultures. Eds. Reinhold Grimm; Jost Hermand. Madison: U Wisconsin P, 1994. 95-105.

- Anders, Günther. "Charakter des Fernsehens." Texte zur Medientheorie. Eds. Günter Helmes; Werner Köster. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002. 207-221.
- Attali, Jacques. Noise: The Political Economy of Music. Transl. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 1985.
- Berr, Christine. "Flanierende Rebellen." Süddeutsche Zeitung. 8. März, 2006.
- Bock, Hans-Bertram. "Der Tod in Londons City." Nürnberger Nachrichten. Nürnberg: 26./27. April, 1975.
- Brinkmann, Rolf Dieter. Der Film in Worten. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982.
- . Erkundungen für die Präzisierung des Gefühls für einen Aufstand: Reise, Zeit, Magazin. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987.
- . Keiner weiß mehr. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt TV, 2005.
- . "Ein unkontrolliertes Nachwort zu meinen Gedichten." *Literaturmagazin 5: Das Vergehen von Hören und Sehen – Aspekte der Kulturvernichtung*. Eds. Hermann Peter Piwitt, Peter Rühmkopf. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976. 228-250.
- . Rom, Blicke. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1979.
- . Schnitte. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988.
- . Westwärts 1 & 2; Gedichte. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2005.
- Buch, Christoph. "Westwärts 1 & 2." Süddeutsche Zeitung. 14. May 1975.
- Enzensberger, Hans Magnus. "Sozialistische Medientheorie, emanzipatorischer Mediengebrauch, Kritik der Kulturkritik." Texte zur Medientheorie. Eds. Günter Helmes; Werner Köster. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002. 254-275.
- Grzimek, Martin. "'Bild' und 'Gegenwart' im Werk Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns." Text + kritik. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. 1981. 24-36.
- Groß, Thomas. Alltagserkundungen. Empirisches Schreiben in der Ästhetik und in den späten Materialbänden Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns. Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993.
- Großklaus, Götz. "Nähe und Ferne. Wahrnehmungswandel im Übergang zum elektronischen Zeitalter." Literatur in einer industriellen Kultur. Eds. Joachim Kuropka et al. Stuttgart: Cotta, 1989. 489-520.
- Halefeldt, Horst O. "Programmgeschichte des Hörfunks." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 211-230.

- Kiefer, Marie-Luise. "Hörfunk- und Fernsehnutzung." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 426-448.
- Krüger, Antje. "Komplizierte Einfachheit – Die Konzeption der Oberfläche bei Rolf Dieter Brinkmann." Rolf Dieter Brinkmann: Blicke ostwärts – westwärts. Eds. Gudrun Schulz; Martin Kagel. Vechta: Eiswasser Verlag, 2001. 285-292.
- Lampe, Gerhard W. Ohne Subjektivität. Interpretationen zur Lyrik Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns vor dem Hintergrund der Studentenbewegung. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1983.
- Lange, Carsten. "'Walk', 'Don't Walk'. Dynamische und statische Raumbilder in Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns *Westwärts 1&2*." Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Neue Perspektiven: Orte – Helden – Körper. Eds. Thomas Boyken et al. München: Wilhelm Fink, 2010. 47-62.
- Langston, Richard. Visions of Violence: German Avant-Gardes after Fascism. Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2008.
- Ludes, Peter. "Programmggeschichte des Fernsehens." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 255-276.
- Mattenklott, Gert. "Versuch eines Porträts." Rolf Dieter Brinkmann: Blicke ostwärts – westwärts. Eds. Gudrun Schulz; Martin Kagel. Vechta: Eiswasser Verlag, 2001. 13-28.
- Moll, Andreas. "Emblematische und intermediale Strukturen in der Lyrik und den Materialbänden Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns." Rolf Dieter Brinkmann: Blicke ostwärts – westwärts. Eds. Gudrun Schulz; Martin Kagel. Vechta: Eiswasser Verlag, 2001. 304-310.
- Okun, Kirsten. Unbegrenzte Möglichkeiten: Brinkmann – Burroughs – Kerouac. Bielefeld: Aisthesis, 2005.
- Piwitt, Hermann Peter. "Rauschhafte Augenblicke." Der Spiegel. 17. September, 1979.
- Rasche, Hermann. "Text und Images in Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns ‚Schnitte.‘" Text into Image: Image into Text. Eds. Jeffrey Morrison; Florian Krobb. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997. 141-159.
- Renner, Rolf-Günter. Die postmoderne Konstellation. Theorie, Text und Kunst im Ausgang der Moderne. Freiburg: Rombach Verlag KG, 1998.
- Richter, Hansjürgen. Ästhetik der Ambivalenz. Studien zur Struktur „postmoderner“ Lyrik – exemplarisch dargestellt am Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns Poetik und dem Gedichtband „Westwärts 1 & 2“. Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 1983.

- Riewoldt, Otto F.; Michael Töteberg. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold.
Kritisches Lexikon zur deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur: Band II. Edition text
+ kritik. 6/2009.
- Roberts, David. "Transformations of the Literary Institution." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 959-964.
- Rohde, Carsten. "German Pop-Literature: Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and what came after." German-Language Literature Today: International and Popular? Eds. Arthur Williams et al. Oxford et al: Lang, 2000. 295-308.
- Röhnert, Jan. Springende Gedanken und flackernde Bilder. Lyrik im Zeitalter der Kinematographie. Blaise Cendrars, John Ashberry, Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007.
- Ruger, Wolfgang. Brinkmann. Der Dichter im elektrischen Versuchslabyrinth der Städte. Frankfurt a. M.: Paria, 1990.
- Ryan, Judith. "The Skull beneath the Skin." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 959-964.
- Schäfer, Frank. "Noch viel Betrieb in dieser Spielhalle." die tageszeitung. 23./24. April 2005.
- Schmidt, Siegfried J. "Werbung." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 518-536.
- Schulz, Gudrun; Martin Kagel. Eds. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann: Blicke ostwärts – westwärts. Vechta: Eiswasser Verlag, 2001.
- Schwalfenberg, Claudia. Die andere Modernität. Strukturen des Ich-Sagens bei Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Münster: Agenda, 1997.
- Selg, Olaf. "Kein Wort stimmt mit dem überein, was tatsächlich passiert." Weimarer Beiträge. H. 1. 2007. 47-66.
- Siegert, Bernhard. "Coming to Terms with the Past." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 861-866.
- Sorg, Bernard. "'Die Stadt – ein Slum von tausend Wüsten, stumm und kalt'. Rolf Dieter Brinkmanns Rom-Erfahrung." Die verewigte Stadt. Eds. Ralf Georg Czapla et al. Bern et al: Lang, 2008. 237-255.

- Sösemann, Bernd. "Die 68er Bewegung und die Massenmedien." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 59-90.
- Späth, Sibylle. "Die Entmythologisierung des Alltags." Text + kritik. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. Ed. 1981. 24-36
- , Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Stuttgart: JB Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1989.
- Steinmetz, Rüdiger. "Initiativen und Durchsetzung privat-kommerziellen Rundfunks." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 167-191.
- Stiegler, Bernd. "Das zerstörende Bild. Versuch über eine poetologische Figur Rolf Dieter Brinkmann." Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Neue Perspektiven: Orte – Helden – Körper. Eds. Thomas Boyken et al. München: Wilhelm Fink, 2010. 23-36.
- Strauch, Michael. Anmerkungen zur Text-Bild-Montagetechnik. Tübingen: Stauffenburg, 1998
- Ueding, Gert. "Abziehbilder aus der Vorstadt." FAZ. Frankfurt: 8. November, 1980.
- Wellershoff, Dieter. "Destruktion als Befreiungsversuch: Über Rolf-Dieter Brinkmann." Akzente. 1976. 277-286.
- , In der Arena der Literatur. Über Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2008.
- Woolley, Jonathan. The Ethical Project in Rolf Dieter Brinkmann's Westwärts 1&2. Berlin: Weidler, 2005.

Chapter 3

- Ascher, Maria Louise. "The Homecoming of a Good European." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 921-926.
- Assheuer, Thomas. "Die Spiritualität der Postmoderne." Die Zeit. 23. April, 1998.

- Baisch, Martin; Roger Lüdecke. "Was kommt? Was geschieht? Was ergibt sich gleich? Textgenese in Rainald Goetz' Frankfurter Poetikvorlesung ,Praxis.'" Textgenese und Interpretation. Ed. Adolf Haslinger. Stuttgart: Heinz, 2000. 139-173.
- Baßler, Moritz. Der deutsche Pop-Roman: Die neuen Archivisten. 2. Auflage. München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2005.
- Binczek, Natalie. "'Wo also ist der Ort des Textes?' – Rainald Goetz' *Abfall für alle*." Formen interaktiver Medienkunst: Geschichte, Tendenzen, Utopien. Eds. Peter Gendolla et al. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2001. 291-318.
- Block, Bazon. "Uchronische Zeitform der Dauer." Formen interaktiver Medienkunst: Geschichte, Tendenzen, Utopien. Eds. Peter Gendolla et al. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2001. 205-217.
- Bonz, Jochen. Der Weltautomat von Malcolm McLaren. Essays zu Pop, Skateboardfahren und Rainald Goetz. Wien: Turia und Kant, 2002.
- Bunia, Remigius. "Realismus und Fiktion. Überlegungen zum Begriff des Realismus: Am Beispiel von Uwe Johnsons *Jahrestage* und Rainald Goetz' *Abfall für alle*." Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik. 139. 2005. 134-152.
- Canetti, Elias. Masse und Macht. München & Wien: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1993.
- Drees, Jan. Rainald Goetz – Irre als System. Wuppertal: Arco Verlag, 2010.
- Erb, Andreas. "Baustelle – Zirkuskuppel: Zu diesem Buch." Baustelle Gegenwartsliteratur: Die neunziger Jahre. Ed. Andreas Erb. Opladen & Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998. 7-8.
- Fetscher, Caroline. "Der Messias ist die Masse." Handelsblatt/ Der Tagesspiegel. 24. März, 1999.
- Freud, Sigmund. Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse. Leipzig et al: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1921.
- Fricke, Harald. "Im Club der dichten Dichter." die tageszeitung. 2./3. Mai, 1998.
- Giddens, Anthony. The Consequences of Modernity. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1991.
- Goetz, Rainald. Abfall für alle: Roman eines Jahres. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1999.
- , Celebration. Texte und Bilder zur Nacht. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999.
- , Dekonspiratione. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2000.

- , Jeff Koons. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1999.
- , Klage. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 2008.
- , Loslabern. Frankfurt a. M. :Suhrkamp, 2009.
- , Rave. Erzählung. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1998.
- Goody, Jack; Ian Watt. "Konsequenzen der Literalität." Texte zur Medientheorie. Eds. Günter Helmes; Werner Köster. Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002. 242-252.
- Göttler, Fritz. "Nukleus der Nacht." Süddeutsche Zeitung. 25./26. April, 1998.
- Hagedstedt, Lutz. "Der Hauptkick kam durchs Internet." Sprache im technischen Zeitalter. H. 155. 2000. 325-339.
- , "Richtig hart Formuliertes. Rainald Goetz über die Steinzeit der elektronischen Welt." Sprache im technischen Zeitalter. H. 145. 1998. 4-17.
- Halter, Martin. "Einzug in die Spaßhöhle." FAZ. 22. Januar, 2001.
- Haxthausen, Charles W. "An Optics of Fragmentation." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 688-693.
- Hettche, Thomas; Jana Hensel. Null: Literatur im Netz. Ostfildern: DuMont Reiseverlag, 2000.
- Hoffmann, Jochen; Ulrich Sarcinelli. "Politische Wirkungen der Medien." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 720-748.
- Hörisch, Jochen. "Anniversaries and the Revival of Storytelling." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 932-936
- Jordan, Ken; Paul D. Miller. "Freeze Frame: Audio, Aesthetics, Sampling and Contemporary Multimedia." Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture. Ed. Paul D. Miller. Cambridge et al: The MIT Press, 2008. 97-108.
- Kämmerling, Richard. "Der Morgen danach." FAZ. 23. Juni, 2001.
- Koepnick, Lutz. Walter Benjamin and the Aesthetics of Power. Lincoln & London: U Nebraska P, 1999.
- Kron, Norbert. "Apollo meets Dionysos." Konzepte. H. 16. 1994. 59-65.

- Kronsbein, Joachim. "Requiem auf die große Party." Der Spiegel. 22. Januar, 2001.
- Kuhlboldt, Detlev. "Schreiben wie ein Videorekorder." Freitag. 9. Juli, 1993.
- Kühn, Rainer. "Rainald Goetz." Ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold. Kritisches Lexikon zur deutschsprachigen Gegenwartsliteratur: Band 4. Edition text + kritik. 10/2004.
- Lager, Sven; Elke Naters. Eds. The Buch: Leben am pool. Köln: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001.
- Lützeler, Paul Michael. "The Postmodern German Novel." The Cambridge Companion to the Modern German Novel. Ed. Graham Bartram. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004. 266-279.
- Miller, Paul D. "In Through the Out Door: Sampling and the Creative Act." Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture. Ed. Paul D. Miller. Cambridge et al: The MIT Press, 2008. 5-20.
- Morris, Christopher. "Richard Wagner: Opera and Music Drama." German Literature of the Nineteenth Century, 1832-1899. Eds. Clayton Koelb, Eric Downing. New York: Camden House, 2005. 251-280.
- Papier, Hans-Jürgen; Johannes Möller. "Presse- und Rundfunkrecht." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 449-468.
- Poschardt, Ulf. DJ-Culture. Hamburg: Rogner und Bernard, 1995.
- Presner, Todd. "Digital Geographies: Berlin in the Ages of New Media." Spatial Turns: Space, Place, and Mobility in German Literary and Visual Culture. Eds. Jaimey Fisher; Barbara Mennel. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2010. 447-469.
- Rimbaud, Robin. "The Ghost Outside the Machine." Sound Unbound: Sampling Digital Music and Culture. Ed. Paul D. Miller. Cambridge et al: The MIT Press, 2008. 131-134.
- Roth, Jürgen. "Rainald Goetz: 'Abfall.'" Griffel. H. 9. 2000, 36-40.
- Rudolph, Thorsten. Irre/Wirr: Goetz. München: Wilhelm Fink: 2007.
- Schalk, Axel. "Trinken Trinken Trinken. Die Welt in Ordnung Trinken. The Language Fortification of Rainald Goetz." Contemporary German Writers, Their Aesthetics and Their Language. Eds. Arthur Williams et al. Bern: Lang, 1996. 283-296.
- Schuhmacher, Eckhard. "From the garbage, into The Book: Medien, Abfall, Literatur." Sound Signatures. Pop-Splitter. Ed. Jochen Bonz Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2001. 190-213.

- , Gerade Eben Jetzt; Schreibweisen der Gegenwart. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2003.
- Schütz, Erhard. "Journalliteraten: Autoren zwischen Journalismus und Belletristik." Baustelle Gegenwartsliteratur: Die neunziger Jahre. Ed. Andreas Erb. Opladen & Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1998. 97-106.
- Seiler, Sascha. Das einfache wahre Abschreiben der Welt' - Pop-Diskurse in der deutschsprachigen Literatur nach 1960. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006.
- Siegel, Elke. "Remains of the Day: Rainald Goetz's Internet Diary *Abfall für alle*." The Germanic Review. 81:3. 2006. 235-254.
- Taberner, Stuart. German Literature of the 1990s and Beyond: Normalization and the Berlin Republic. New York: Camden House, 2005.
- Theisen, Bianca. "Remembrance as Provocation." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery et al. Cambridge & London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 947-952.
- Voegelin, Salomé. Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art. New York; London: Continuum, 2010.
- Von Moltke, Johannes. No Place Like Home: Locations of Heimat in German Cinema. Berkeley et al: U California P, 2005.
- Westbam; Rainald Goetz. Mix, Cuts & Scratches. Berlin: Merve, 1997.
- Wicke, Andreas. "Nacht und Diskurs. Novalis' ‚Hymnen an die Nacht‘ (1800) und Rainald Goetz' Nachtlebenerzählung ‚Rave‘ (1989). Versuch eines Vergleichs." Der Deutschunterricht. H. 5. 2002. 75-79.
- Wilke, Jürgen. "Zukunft Multimedia." Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Ed. Jürgen Wilke. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999. 751-774.
- Winkels, Hubert. Einschnitte: Zur Literatur der 80er Jahre. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1988.
- , "Ohrschaden. Zu Rainald Goetz und Texten." Imagination-Krankheit-Demut. Eds. Martin Lüdke; Delf Schmidt. Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1987. 68-82.
- Zeese, Volker. "Wie findet man bloß die Heilsbotschaft im Techno-Beat." Die Welt. 19. Mai, 1997.

Walter Benjamin

- Benjamin, Walter. Berliner Chronik. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1970.
- . Berliner Kindheit um neunzehnhundert. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2006.
- . "Der Surrealismus." Aufsätze, Essays, Vorträge: Gesammelte Schriften, Band II-I. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977. 295-310.
- . "Einbahnstraße." Kleine Prosa, Baudelaire Übertragungen: Gesammelte Schriften, Band IV-I. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1972. 83-148.
- . "Paris, the Capital of the Nineteenth Century." The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility And Other Writings on Media. Eds. Michael W. Jennings et al. Cambridge et al: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2008, pp. 96-115.
- . The Arcades Project. Transl. Howard Eiland; Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999.
- . "The Work of Art in the Age of its Technological Reproducibility." The Work of Art in the Age of Its Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media. Eds. Michael W. Jennings et al. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008. 19-55.
- Bowlby, Rachel. Still Crazy After All These Years. London et al: Routledge, 1992.
- Bronfen, Elisabeth. Tiefer als der Tag gedacht: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Nacht. München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2008.
- Buck-Morss, Susan. The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1989.
- Buse, Peter et al. Benjamin's Arcades: An UnGuided Tour. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2005.
- Friedberg, Anne. "Les Flâneurs du Mal(l): Cinema and the Postmodern Condition." PLMA. Vol. 106. No. 3. 1991. 419-431.
- Gasemi, Parvin. "Holden in Search of Identity: Recreating the Picture of the Flâneur." English Studies. Vol. 91. February 2010. 74-88.
- Gilloch, Graeme. Myth and Metropolis. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996.
- Hamilton, John T. "The Task of the Flâneur." A New History of German Literature. Ed. David E. Wellbery. Cambridge and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2004. 748-753.

- Hansen, Miriam. "Benjamin, Cinema, and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology.'" New German Critique. No. 40. Winter 1987. 179-224.
- Hanssen, Beatrice. Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project. London and New York: Continuum, 2006.
- Hessel, Franz. "Spazieren in Berlin." Sämtliche Werke, Band III: Städte und Porträts. Ed. Bernhard Echte. Oldenburg: Igel Verlag, 1999. 7-192.
- , "Von der schwierigen Kunst spazieren zu gehen." Sämtliche Werke, Band V. Ed. Bernhard Echte. Oldenburg: Igel Verlag, 1999.
- Jennings, Michael W. et al. Editor's Introduction. The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media. Walter Benjamin. Eds. Michael W. Jennings et al. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008. 1-8.
- , "Photography." The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media. Walter Benjamin. Eds. Michael W. Jennings et al. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008. 263-269.
- , "The Production, Reproduction, and Reception of the Work of Art." The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media. Walter Benjamin. Eds. Michael W. Jennings et al. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008. 9-18.
- Keidel, Matthias. Die Wiederkehr der Flaneure. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2006.
- Koepnick, Lutz. "Abenteuerliche Reisen? Walter Benjamin im Zeitalter neuer Medien." Text & Kritik. Heft 31/32: Walter Benjamin, February 2009. 120-133.
- , "Benjamin in the Age of New Media." A Companion to the Works of Walter Benjamin. Ed. Rolf Goebel. Rochester: Camden House, 2009. 112-129.
- Kramer, Sven. Walter Benjamin zur Einführung. Hamburg: Junius, 2003.
- Lindner, Burkhardt. "Von Menschen, Mondwesen und Wahrnehmungen." Walter Benjamins Medientheorie. Ed. Christian Schulte. Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005. 9-38.
- Neumeyer, Harald. Der Flâneur: Konzeptionen der Moderne. Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1999.
- Richter, Gerhard. Benjamin's Ghosts: Intervention in Contemporary Literary and Cultural History. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002.
- Schulte, Christian. Ed. Walter Benjamins Medientheorie. Konstanz: UVK, 2005.

Szondi, Peter. "Walter Benjamin's City Portraits." On Walter Benjamin: Critical Essays and Recollections. Ed. Gary Smith. Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1988.

Tester, Keith. Introduction. The Flâneur. Ed. Keith Tester. New York: Routledge, 1994. 1-21.

Weber, Samuel. Benjamin's –abilities. Cambridge and London: Harvard UP, 2008.

Witte, Bernd. Walter Benjamin: An Intellectual Biography. Transl. James Rolleston. Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1991.

Wood, Andrew F. "What Happens [in Vegas]: Performing the Post-Tourist Flâneur in 'New York' and 'Paris.'" Text and Performance Quarterly. Vol. 24. No 4. 2005. 315-333.

(New) Media Theory

Alexander, Bryan. The New Digital Storytelling: Creating Narratives with New Media. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2011.

Barthes, Roland. Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography. Transl. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.

Baudrillard, Jean. Simulacra & Simulation. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1994.

Badenoch, Alexander. Voices in Ruins: West German Radio across the 1945 Divide. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Bolter, Jay David; Richard Grusin. Remediation: Understanding New Media. First MIT Press Paperback Edition. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000.

Briel, Holger. "The Media of Mass Communication." The Cambridge Companion to Modern German Culture. Eds. Eva Kolinski and Wilfried van der Will. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. 322-337.

Bull, Michael. Sounding out the City: Personal Stereos and the Management of Everyday Life. Oxford & New York: Berg, 2000.

Deleuze, Gilles. Cinema 1: The Movement Image. Transl. Hugh Tomlinson; Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2006.

-----, Cinema 2: The Time Image. Transl. Hugh Tomlinson; Barbara Habberjam. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2006.

- Galloway, Alexander R. Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture. Minneapolis: U Minnesota P, 2006.
- Hansen, Mark. Bodies in Code: Interfaces with Digital Media. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- New Philosophy for New Media. Cambridge: The MIT Press; New Edition, 2006.
- Hayles, Katherine N. How We Became Posthuman. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1999.
- Hillis, Ken. Online a Lot of the Time: Ritual, Fetish, Sign. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2009.
- Honold, Alexander. "Text auf der Tonspur." Walter Benjamins Medientheorie. Ed. Christian Schulte. Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2005. 49-70.
- Johnson, John. "Friedrich Kittler: Media Theory After Poststructuralism." Literature, Media, Information Systems. Ed. John Johnston. Amsterdam: OPA, 1997. 1-26.
- Kaes, Anton. Deutschlandbilder: Die Wiederkehr der Geschichte als Film. München: edition text + kritik, 1997.
- Kahn, Douglas. Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts. Cambridge & London: The MIT Press, 1999.
- Kent, Steven L. The Ultimate History of Video Games. New York: Three Rivers, 2001.
- Kittler, Friedrich. Discourse Networks 1800/1900. Transl. Michael Metteer with Chris Cullens. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1990.
- Gramophone, Film, Typewriter. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1999.
- Kniep, Jürgen: „Keine Jugendfreigabe!“ Filmzensur in Westdeutschland 1949–1990. Wallstein-Verlag, Göttingen 2010
- Koepnick, Lutz; Erin McGlothlin. Eds. After the Digital Divide? German Aesthetic Theory in the Age of New Media. Rochester: Camden House, 2009.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. Das Ornament der Masse. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 2009.
- Theory of Film: the Redemption of Physical Reality. London & New York: Oxford UP, 1965.
- Levin, Thomas Y. "Film." The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility and Other Writings on Media. Walter Benjamin. Eds. Michael W. Jennings et al. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2008. 315-322.
- Levinson, Paul. New New Media. Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2009.

- Manovich, Lev. The Language of New Media. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.
- McLuhan, Marshall & Lapham, Lewis. Understanding Media: The Extension of Man. Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1994.
- McQuire, Scott. Media, Architecture and Urban Space. Los Angeles et al: SAGE, 2008.
- Müller, Daniel et al. Eds. Leitmedien - Band 1: Konzepte – Relevanz – Geschichte. Bielefeld: transcript, 2009.
- , Leitmedien - Band 2: Konzepte – Relevanz – Geschichte. Bielefeld: transcript, 2009.
- Nancy, Jean-Luc. The Ground of the Image. Transl. Jeff Fort. New York: Fordham UP, 2005.
- Neumark, Norie. "Interactive Journeys: Making Room to Move in the Cultural Territories of Interactivity." Leonardo. Vol. 28, No. 4. (1995). 301-306.
- Ranciere, Jacques. Film Fables. Oxford et al: Berg, 2006.
- Ross, Corey. Media and the Making of Modern Germany: Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008.
- Rush, Michael. New Media in Art (World of Art). London: Thames & Hudson, 2005.
- Shaviro, Steven. Connected, or What It Means to Live in the Network Society. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2003.
- Sontag, Susan. On Photography. New York: Picador, 1977.
- Sterne, Jonathan. The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction. Durham & London: Duke UP, 2003.
- Virilio, Paul. The Lost Dimension. New York: Semiotext(e), 1991.
- Wilke, Jürgen. Ed. Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Wien et al: Böhlau, 1999.
- Wolf, Mark J.P.; Bernard Perron. Introduction. The Video Game Theory Reader. Eds. Mark J.P. Wolf., Bernard Perron. New York: Routledge, 2003. 1-24.

Urban Theory

- Balshaw, Maria, Liam Kennedy. "Introduction: Urban Space and Representation." Urban Space and Representation. Eds. Maria Balshaw and Liam Kennedy. London: Pluto Press, 2000. 1-24.
- Boym, Svetlana. The Future of Nostalgia. New York: Basic Books, 2001.
- Buruma, Ian and Vishay Margalit. "The Occidental City." The City Reader. Fourth Edition Eds. Richard T. LeGates et al. London et al: Routledge, 2007. 137-140.
- Childe, V. Gordon. "The Urban Revolution." The City Reader. Fourth Edition. Eds. Richard T. LeGates et al. London et al: Routledge, 2007. 28-34.
- Clark, David B. "Introduction: Previewing the Cinematic City." The Cinematic City. Ed. David B. Clark. New York: Routledge, 1997. 1-18.
- Davis, Mike. "Fortress L.A." The City Reader. Fourth Edition. Eds. Richard T. LeGates et al. London et al: Routledge, 2007. 178-183.
- Debord, Guy. "Theorie des Umherschweifens." Situationistische Internationale: Der Beginn einer Epoche. Eds. & Transl. Roberto Ohrt et al. Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2008. 64-67.
- De Certeau, Michel. The Practice of Everyday Life. Transl. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley et al: U of California P, 1984.
- De Meyer, Dirk et al. Eds. The Urban Condition: Space, Community, and Self in the Contemporary Metropolis. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 1999.
- Engels, Friedrich. "The Great Towns." The City Reader. Fourth Edition. Eds. Richard T. LeGates et al. Excerpt from *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844*. London et al: Routledge, 2007. 51-58
- Frisby, David. Cityscapes of Modernity. Cambridge et al: Polity, 2001.
- Fuller, R. Buckminster. Operating Manual for Spaceship Earth. Ed. Jaime Snyder. Baden: Lars Müller Publishers, 2008.
- Grosz, Elizabeth. "Bodies-Cities." Sexuality and Space. Ed. Beatriz Colomina. New York: Princeton Architectural P, 1992. 241-254.
- Heidegger, Martin. "Building Dwelling Thinking." Basic Writings. Ed. David Farrell Krell. New York et al: Harper, 1977. 323-339.
- Ivain, Gilles. "Formular für einen neuen Urbanismus." Situationistische Internationale: Der Beginn einer Epoche. Eds. & Transl. Roberto Ohrt et al. Hamburg: Edition Nautilus, 2008. 64-67.

- Kingwell, Mark. Concrete Reveries: Consciousness and the City. Toronto: Viking, 2008.
- Koepnick, Lutz. "Forget Berlin." The German Quarterly. Vol. 74. No. 4. 2001. 343-354.
- , Framing Attention: Windows on Modern German Culture. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins UP, 2007.
- Kotkin, Joel. The City: A Global History. Paperback Edition. New York: Modern Library, 2006.
- Lapsley, Rob. "Mainly in Cities and at Night: Some Notes on Cities and Film." The Cinematic City. Ed. David B. Clark. New York: Routledge, 1997. 186-208.
- Le Corbusier. "A Contemporary City." The City Reader. Fourth Edition. Eds. Richard T. LeGates et al. London et al: Routledge, 2007. 322-330.
- Lefebvre, Henri. Key Writings. Eds. Stuart Elden et al. New York et al: Continuum, 2003.
- Lynch, Kevin. The Image of the City. Cambridge: The Technology P & Harvard UP, 1960.
- Mitchell, William J. City of Bits: Space, Place, and the Infobahn. Paperback Edition. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996.
- Mitscherlich, Alexander. Die Unwirtlichkeit unserer Städte: Anstiftung zum Unfrieden. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966.
- Mumford, Lewis. The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects. San Diego et al: Harvest, 1989.
- Rothman, Hal. Neon Metropolis. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Schlör, Joachim. Nights in the Big City. Transl. Pierre Gottfried Imhof and Dafydd Rees Roberts. London: Reaktion Books, 1998.
- Schwartz, Davis G. Suburban Xanadu. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." Philosophy and the City. Classic to Contemporary Writings. Ed. Sharon M. Meagher. Albany: State U of New York P, 2008. 96-101.
- Soja, Edward W. Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory. London & New York: Verso, 1989.
- Venturi, Robert et al. Learning from Las Vegas. Revised. Boston: The MIT Press, 1977.

Vidler, Anthony. The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely. Cambridge et al: The MIT Press, 1992.

Virilio, Paul. Open Sky. Critical Thinkers Edition. Transl. Julie Rose. New York: Verso, 2008.

Weber, Max. "Concepts and Categories of the City." Philosophy and the City. Classic to Contemporary Writings. Ed. Sharon M. Meagher. Albany: State U of New York P, 2008. 102-109.

Wirth, Louis. "Urbanism as a Way of Life." The City Reader. Fourth Edition. Eds. Richard T. LeGates et al. London et al: Routledge, 2007. 90-97.

Film

Bergmann, Harald. Brinkmanns Zorn. Germany: Harald Bergmann Filmproduktion, 2006.

Braun, Harald. Zwischen Gestern und Morgen. Germany: NDF, 1947.

Gaag, Florian. Wholetrain. Germany: Aerodynamics Films et al, 2006.

Herzog, Werner. Cave of Forgotten Dreams. Germany et al: Creative Differences et al, 2010.

Käutner, Helmut. In jenen Tagen. Germany: Camera-Filmproduktion, 1947.

Lamprecht, Gerhard. Irgendwo in Berlin. Germany: DEFA, 1946.

Lang, Fritz. Metropolis. Germany: UFA, 1927.

Ruttman, Walter. Berlin: Sinfonie einer Großstadt. Germany: Deutsche Vereinsfilm, 1927.

Staudte, Wolfgang. Die Mörder sind unter uns. Germany: DEFA, 1946.

Vertov, Dziga. Man with a Movie Camera. Russia: VUVKU, 1929.

Audio Material

Brinkmann, Rolf Dieter. Wörter Sex Schnitt: Originaltonaufnahmen 1973. Herbert Kapfer; Katharina Agathos. Eds. Intermedium Records: 2005.

Fox, Peter. Stadtaffe. Germany: Downbeat Records, 2008.

Online and Digital Sources

Drozdiak, Natalia. "Lost Banksy Mural uncovered on Berlin Gallery Wall." reuters.com/article/2011/09/14/us-art-germany-banksy-idUSTRE78C4M020110914. Accessed February 2012.

Heipcke, Corinna J. "The *new* Berlin-Roman as Paradoxical Genre: Tim Staffel's *Terrordrom* and Tanja Dücker's *Spielzone*." <http://www.gfl-journal.de>. 1/2003. 45-61. Accessed April, 2008.

Kurtz, Mascha. "Ein Sack voll rasender Moleküle: Die Stadt in der jungen deutschen Literatur." <http://www.kritische-ausgabe.de/hefte/stadt/stadtkurtz.pdf>. 48-50. Accessed March, 2008

Lit-eX: Literaturmagazin für Verrisse aller Art. www.lit-ex.de

Selg, Olaf. "'Frieden ist der Kiff der Seele' – Rolf Dieter Brinkmann im O-Ton." <http://www.titel-magazin.de/artikel/2160.html>. Accessed May, 2010.

tage-bau. <http://www.tagebau.tyrakel.de/wordpress/>

"3D Street Art by Edgar Müller." worldphotocollections.blogspot.com. Accessed January 2012.

Wright, Wil. SimCity. USA: Maxis, 1989 (various platforms)