PUNK POETICS AND WEST GERMAN LITERATURE OF THE EIGHTIES

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ABSTRACT

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Punk Poetics and West German Literature of the Eighties
(Under the direction of Dr. Richard Langston)

Punk Poetics and West German Literature of the Eighties investigates the literary

career of punk after the demise of punk subcultures. *Punk Poetics* reads punk as a

recycling of avant-garde aesthetics–détournement, collage and chaos–that politicized

affect, authenticity, consumption and narration in the conservative morass of 1980s West

Germany. *Punk Poetics* engages punk aesthetics using psychoanalysis, cultural studies,

media theory and literary theory. The three case studies in *Punk Poetics* on Rainald

Goetz, Thomas Meinecke and Joachim Lottmann are set up by first reading lived punk

subcultures from the late seventies, particularly those around Düsseldorf. Integrated into

these readings are intertextual links to music and visual arts of the period. By uncovering

the anarchic textual politics of punk literature, *Punk Poetics* seeks to fill a gap in the

literary understanding of the 1980s that is overshadowed by the traumatic decades of

protest and terrorism of the 1960s and 1970s and the so-called return to normalcy since

1989.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PUNK POETICS AND WEST GERMAN LITERATURE OF THE EIGHTIES

Not just London's Burning

Usually associated with the apex of German terrorism, the year 1977 witnessed

another cultural watershed, namely punk, that went on to influence Germany in the

1980s in profound and significant ways. Reading German terrorism–the Baader-Meinhof

gang and the Red Army Faction (RAF)–as the dominant cultural paradigm for youth

from the late seventies into the eighties misses the significance of the moments of punk

and its follower, New Wave. German terrorism was never interested in cultural

representation–art, literature, music–it was solely, and violently, interested in politics.

Punk was resolutely invested in the power of representation in politics and life. *Punk*

Poetics explores the effects of punk's investments in representation through its crises

and failures.

Punk came to Düsseldorf, West Germany–the epicenter of German punk–via the

Sex Pistols and the Clash. But for early punks such as Jäcki Eldorado, "es ging darum,

ein eigenes Ding zu finden […] nicht darum, irgendwelche englische Vorbilder

nachzuahmen" [*it was about finding your own thing […] not about imitating some*

English model] (fig. 1).[1] English punk emerged in and around London's East End in the

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[1] Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende deine Jugend* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2001) 65. Hereafter cited parenthetically in text.

wake of Britain's crumbling post-war "economic miracle" as one of a host of post-war

youth subcultures such as Teddy Boys, Mods, Skinheads, Hipsters, Beats and

Rastafarians that demonstrated youth's subtle and complex responses to economic and

cultural change.[2]

Fig. 1. Punk starts in Germany: Jäcki Eldorado licks Iggy Pop's leg (67).

Punk kids of the mid seventies, Jon Savage writes, "were caught in an impossible

double-bind: intelligent in a working class culture which did not value intelligence, yet

unable to leave that culture because of lack of opportunity. The result? An appalling

frustration."[3] This frustration echoes paradigmatically in songs by the Sex Pistols and the

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[2] For more on British subcultures, see for example: John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A theoretical overview," *Resistance Through Rituals*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1976) 9-79; Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979; London: Routledge, 2003); or Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002).

Clash. Sex Pistols' singer John Lydon screamed out his frustration in songs such as "Anarchy in the UK" when he declared himself an "antichrist" and "anarchist" who wanted "to destroy the passerby."[4] This destructive energy continued to tear at the UK in "God Save the Queen:" "God save the Queen / The fascist regime / […] She ain't no human being / There is no future / In England's dreaming."[5] Hostility dominated the Clash's self-titled first album with songs such as "White Riot," "I'm so bored with the USA" and "Hate & War."[6] In their song "London's Burning" this frustration turned to destruction in a London "burning with boredom."[7] Far from the melodies of the Beatles, "London's Burning" represented, as Savage reads it, a "hymn to the inner city, a trebly sound that nagged like an itch."[8] But even during its highpoint in 1977 punk did not seek to resolve Britain's post-war miasma. Rather, punk reproduced, says Dick Hebdige, "post-war working-class youth cultures in 'cut-up' form," anachronistically combining

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[3] Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming: Anarchy, Sex Pistols, Punk Rock and Beyond* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2002) 114.

[4] Sex Pistols, "Anarchy in the UK," Oct. 1977, *Never mind the Bullocks, here's the Sex Pistols*, Warner Brothers, 25 Oct 1990. Hereafter cited as *Never mind*.

[5] Sex Pistols, "God Save the Queen" *Never mind*. While the Sex Pistols were short-lived, frontman John Lydon's aggressiveness continued into the 1990s, singing "Anger is an energy" with Public Image Limited in the song "Rise" (rec. 1985, *Compact Disc*, Electra/Ada, 1990).

[6] See The Clash, 8 Apr. 1977, *The Clash*, Sony, 25 Jan. 2000.

[7] The Clash, "London's Burning" *The Clash*.

[8] Savage 220.

elements with their music and style.[9] What, then, did British punk do or want with its "cut-ups?" The Sex Pistols' Steve Jones supplied the answer: "Actually we're not into music, …We're into chaos."[10]

Unlike in England, punk in Germany consisted of mostly middle-class kids, some in art high schools, some, like Peter Hein, already working in the Xerox shop where he continued to work for twenty-five years.[11] There is no smoking gun why punk started in Düsseldorf, but most contemporary witnesses to 1977-German punk also locate its origin there without offering any reason why.[12] Perhaps punk started in this otherwise improbable city because of the presence of numerous art high schools in and around Düsseldorf. While in the fall of 1977 the Stranglers and the Clash played Hamburg's Winterhuder Fährhaus, Peter Hein, Germany's "first punk," did not leave any ambiguity about where and when German punk was.[13] The Düsseldorfer punk and member of Charley's Girls, Mittagspause, Fehlfarben and Family 5, located punk "Sommer 1977 bis Sommer 1978, in einer Stadt, auf einer Straße, in einer Kneipe" [*summer 1977 to*

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[9] Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979; London: Routledge, 2003) 26. Hereafter cited as *Subculture*.

[10] Savage 152.

[11] For Hein's account of his work at Xerox, see Teipel 367.

[12] For more on this see the contributions reflecting on punk and the year 1977 in *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-'82: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 7. Juli – 15. September 2002* (ed Ulrike Groos and Peter Gorschlüter [Köln: König, 2002]). Hereafter cited as *Zurück zum Beton*. Or consider that Düsseldorf was the chosen location for this punk retrospective.

[13] See Teipel 367.

summer 1978, in one city, on one street, in one bar].[14] The bar was Düsseldorf's

Ratinger Hof, and along with Berlin's SO36 and Hamburg's Markthalle and Krawall

2000, it built the geographical constellation of German punk. The brief period Hein

bracketed for punk did not impinge on the proliferation of bands touring the punk circuit,

a few notables: Male, Charley's Girls, S.Y.P.H., Mittagspause, Din-A-Testbild, PVC,

Stukka Pilots, Deutsch-Amerikanische Freundschaft (DAF), Weltaufstandsplan, Hans-a-

plast, Kriminalitätsförderungsclub (KFC), Buttocks, ZK, Materialschlacht and Minus

Delta t. But it was not just the bands that moved about from city to city. Band members

continuously changed too, and some, such as Chirslo Haas, Michael Kemner and Bettina

Köster, played in multiple bands simultaneously, while padeluun sporadically

contributed to Minus Delta t. These various locations, the creation and destruction of

countless bands and the instability of band's members capture perfectly the chaotic and

disruptive scramble of German punk.

This dynamic scramble was for Alfred Hilsberg "der Auslöser, selbst was zu

machen" [*the catalyst to do something yourself*] (28). Punk created for Franz Bielmeier

"eine Energie, die in Bewegung gesetzt wurde, um etwas auszulösen. Man hüpfte wie

ein Kolben in einem Motor" [*an energy, that was set in motion, in order to unleash*

something. One hopped like a piston in a motor] (102). This energy took advantage of

ruptures, "nichtreparierten Stellen," in Düsseldorfer society in order to fill a gap for

youth. Bielmeier continues: "Es gab damals in Deutschland keine Jugendkultur […]

nichts mehr, was noch irgendwas mit der Wirklichkeit von Jugendlichen zu tun hatte"

[*at that time in Germany, there was no youth culture […] nothing that had anything to*

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[14] Peter Hein, "Alles ganz Einfach" in *Zurück zum Beton* 131- 134, 131.

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do with the reality of youth] (39, 29). But punk was not the answer. Peter Hein declared

in 1979: "Ich war schon ziemlich von Punk genervt. Es gibt ja auf dieser Single

["Abenteuer & Freiheit" von Fehlfarben] die Zeile 'Es ist zu spät für die alten

Bewegungen'–das bezog sich nicht nur auf Hippies. Das bezog sich auch auf Punks. Das

bezog sich auf alle alten Bewegungen" [*I was already pretty irritated with punk. There is*

a line on this single ["Abenteuer & Freiheit" by Fehlfarben] 'It is too late for the old

movements' – that wasn't just about hippies. That had to do with punks as well. That had

to do with all old movements].[15] So spite of the gap that punk filled for youth in the late

seventies, the decade following the "German Autumn" cannot be read as the decade of

punk.

Düsseldorf punk died perhaps as early as 1978. To no one's surprise, its

followers such as Holger Czukay thought: "[Punk] fand ich toll. Gleichzeitig habe ich

aber gemerkt, wie kurzatmig das Ganze sein würde. Das war sofort klar. Mit der

Methode 'Leck mich am Arsch' kannst du nicht alt werden" [*Punk was great. At the*

same time I noticed how sort-lived the whole thing would be. That was immediately

clear. With the "Kiss my ass" method you can't grow old] (46). But was punk really

dead in 1978? On the contrary, punk aesthetic sensibilities after 1978, and even between

the years 1977-1978, survived in a chain of altered forms. If punk destabilized the

positions between RAF-sympathizer and upstanding citizens, then the artistic remnants

of this chaotic moment pushed this destabilization even further. By 1980, post-punk

bands such as Der Plan, Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle (FSK) and Palais Schaumburg

sought to create continuously shifting positions from which to critique what they saw as

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[15] See Peter Hein, liner notes, *Verschwende deine Jugend*, Hamburg: Universal Marketing, 2002.

failings in other social moments. FSK critiqued 1968, terrorism, and punk, according to band member Thomas Meinecke, in order "nicht mit einer Ideologie an[zu]kommen, sondern eher kybernetisch, mal hier, mal dort Stellung beziehen" [*not to arrive with an ideology, but rather cybernetically, take position sometimes here, sometimes there*].[16] German terrorism in the seventies had likewise sought to overcome the failings of the various social movements associated with the year 1968. But in stark contrast to the techniques used by punks, German terrorism exclusively used political violence in their attempt to achieve progress away from fascism. But does German punk warrant a comparison with the RAF?

      A brief comparison with the RAF makes clear how West German punk repeatedly misappropriated representations of the RAF. But punk moved past just anarchy via misused images of terrorists. They subverted representations of National Socialism too (fig. 2). Punks refused to align themselves with terrorist-sympathizers or their enemies, clandestine fascists. They chose both: "Entweder Hakenkreuz oder RAF-Maschinenpistole. Beides bot sich an. Draußen auf der Straße hat beides genau die gleiche Reaktion ausgelöst. Völlige Verstörung" [*either swastika or RAF-machine gun. Both were available. Outside on the street they both unleashed the same reaction. Complete disruption*] (51). Punks shuffled these cultural materials and said "das Gegenteil von dem […] was man meinte" [*the opposite from […] what one meant*] to optimize a chaoticness in their expressions (84).

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[16] Thomas Meinecke, cited in Diederich Diederichsen, "Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle," *Sounds* May 1982: 33-34, 34.

Fig. 2. Punks chose both terrorism and fascism. Here the 1981 advertisement for the record stores "Rip Off" and "Eigelstein" and the 1979 cover of the fanzine *Die Düsseldorfer Leere*. Images reproduced from *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-'82: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 7. Juli – 15. September 2002* (ed. Ulrike Groos and Peter Gorschlüter [Köln: König, 2002] 67, 28).

In spite of their desire to "find their own thing," punks ran around Düsseldorf with RAF-buttons because Clash frontman Joe Strummer wore them. Similarly, they wore swastikas because Siouxsie from Siouxsie and The Banshees wore a swastika armband.[17] Although this flirtation with terrorism and fascism was imitative, people thought that they were synonymous with the RAF.[18] Thereby punks themselves ensured that unlike terrorists Andreas Baader, Gudrun Ensslin, and Jan-Carl Raspe, German terrorism survived 1977 as the apparent axis of youth culture. But punk in West Germany was not

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[17] See Teipel 51.

[18] Ralf Dörper speaks directly to this. As a result of wearing the RAF-star, "Manche Rentner meinten schon alleine deswegen, man wäre einer der Terroirsten" [*some retirees thought that because of that alone, one was one of the terrorists*] (Teipel 51).

about carrying on the banner of terrorism unaltered or miming British punks. For Düsseldorfer punk Ralf Dörper, member of the punk bands S.Y.P.H. and Krupps, the difference turned on locations and time: "mitten im 'Deutschen Herbst' hatte so etwas halt einen ganz anderen Effekt [als in England]" [*in the middle of the 'German Autumn', such things had a completely different effect [than in England]*] (51). Punks in Düsseldorf such as Harry Rag spoke of textual similarities between what German terrorists and punks criticized, namely expanded police powers under the "state of emergency" declared by Helmut Schmidt's government as a result of terrorist attacks. But Rag considers punk and terrorism strictly temporal bedmates: "Die RAF hatte ja auch 77 ihren Höhepunkt–genau als hier Punk ausgebrochen ist" [*the RAF had in '77 its highpoint–exactly as punk erupted here*] (74). Punk may have been contemporary with terrorism, but crucial for German punk was that punks in Germany picked up foreign and domestic pieces of cultural representation–here the RAF-star–and placed them in alternative contexts. Punk envisioned and tested out different montages of cultural materials in the Federal Republic without becoming the terrorists' violent heir. Post-punk pushed this destabilization further.

So how does understanding German terrorism help frame German punk? Ultimately, looking at the RAF makes clear how different punk was. If the RAF was a violent assault on a segment of German and western politics and society deemed proto-fascist, then punk must be seen as another assault on this society, one that did not go down the deadly and violent route that the RAF took. The RAF was a last ditch attempt to assemble a bulwark against fascism after 1945. But ensuring the demise of the ghosts of fascism after 1945 was not a task exclusive of German terrorists. Terrorists

themselves had picked up the pieces of university students' failed actions associated with the year 1968. For students and other intellectuals, proto-fascism could be avoided by continuing with modernist projects that sought to re-establish boundaries that were disappearing between the past and present, between American capitalism and Europe. But these attempts by both terrorists and 68er-revolutionaries had little success. By 1977, the most violent year for German terrorism, the RAF's modus operandi had come under fire in the manifest "Buback–ein Nachruf" penned by a then-unknown Göttinger Mescalero.[19] Here the author accused the RAF and Baader-Meinhof of miming the state's "strategy of liquidation." The Buback manifesto did not demand an end to German terrorism, but rather a radical social strategy that would completely rethink everything. This hypothetical kinetic social resistance would reject balance, strict argumentation, and dialectics, and instead provide energy: "schnell, brutal, berechnend" [*fast, brutal, calculated*].[20] The Buback manifesto wanted a way out of the hermetically sealed mass media representations of terrorism. But it also wanted a new kind of opposition that was not "lediglich Nachahmung der militärischen, sondern solche, die sie uns nicht aus der Hand schießen können" [*simply an imitation of the military, but rather one that they cannot shoot out of our hands*].[21] So by the time punk appeared in 1977 it

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[19] Originally published in the *Göttinger Nachrichten* 25 Apr. 1977: 10-12. The obituary can also be found in Peter Brückner's *Die Mescalero-Affäre: Ein Lehrstück für Aufklärung und politische Kulutur* (Hannover: n.p., [1977/78]). For more on the "Buback Obituary" see Sabine von Dirke's *"All Power to the Imagination!": The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 96-103. Here the citations are from "Dokumentation des 'Buback-Nachrufs' von 1977" (*Dokumentation: 'Buback-Nachruf,'*" 30 Sept. 2007 <http://netzwerk-regenbogen.de/mescalero_doku.html>).

[20] <http://netzwerk-regenbogen.de/mescalero_doku.html>.

[21] <http://netzwerk-regenbogen.de/mescalero_doku.html>.

had become clear that not only had German terrorism failed to re-create boundaries and establish progress from a proto-fascist present, they themselves had fallen prey to their own proto-fascist tendencies, simultaneously encouraging and miming the tactics of the state that they despised so much.[22]

So what did German punk do that was different? Everything! Punk in Germany did not seek to re-establish modernity's boundaries, nor did it turn to the indiscriminate postmodern fluidity. Modernism represented progress, time marching forward into the future and away from fascism. Postmodern play and its aesthetic pastiche, conversely, meant that everything was possible, that progress was over and any barrier between fascism and the present disappeared. Punk wanted anarchy and "no future." Although punk did not seek to create a bulwark against fascism, it did not want any part of fascism either. Punk did not want to establish a new order to stave off chaos of the past. Punk wanted chaos. Punk did not want to erect barriers between fascism and the present. It wanted to tear down the present. It wanted its own chaos of the present. Punk did not want an anti-fascist position. It wanted positions that had nothing to do with fascism. Punk sought a fundamental rethinking of representation. If we look at punk not as a sociological or anthropological phenomenon, but rather as an aesthetic one, then it is arguable that punk was avant-garde. Punk picked up Guy Debord's notion of détournement, like the Situationist International that linked up (albeit blasphemously) to French Surrealism, whereby German punk reinvigorated the idea of montage. Not unlike the SI's own invocation of montage that Greil Marcus calls "noise, a cacophony ripping

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[22] Klaus Theweleit argues this point extensively in *Ghosts: Drei Leicht Inkorrekte Vorträge* (Frankfurt am Main: Stroemfeld/Roter Stern, 1998).

up the syntax of social life."[23] But instead of stealing objects from original contexts and giving them other uses, it made chaos out of its stolen objects. Punk was about representation, and it used surfaces to create chaos that punks themselves thought were like bombs. There is no better example of this than Peter Glaser's explosive exposé, his introduction to the 1983 literary-punk anthology *Rawums*: "Zur Lage der Detonation: Ein Explosé" [*On the Situation of the Detonation: An Explosé*].[24] But Glaser did not make a bomb, just a text. This difference is crucial. West German punk misappropriated cultural representations of terrorists and students in musical, artistic and literary collages. Punk injected aesthetic volatility, chaos, into the theoretical-political projects of students and the exclusively violent political project of German terrorism by continuously scrambling these bits of cultural representation. Punk aesthetics were avant-garde: revolutionary, counter-discursive and anti-institutional. But before we square punk and the avant-garde, we need to sort out what has been written about the subcultural moment.

Nailing Down Punk in England and Germany

Critical investigations into punk first emerged out of work done in the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham, England. The work done at the CCCS, Simon Frith writes, "pioneered a theoretical approach to the 'fragmented culture'

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[23] Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secrete History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989) 164.

[24] Peter Glaser, "Zur Lage der Detonation: Ein Explosé," *Rawums*, ed. Peter Glaser (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1984) 9. Hereafter cited as "Explosé."

that marked out social change in Britain at the end of the twentieth century."[25]

Ultimately, the researchers in Birmingham attempted to define and analyze the space in which British youth culture unfolded. John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts' theoretical introduction to *Resistance through Rituals* (1976) understood youth as a "concealed metaphor for social change."[26] They complicated the category of youth to be defined by the struggle between dominant and subordinate groups, a struggle between youth and parent cultures. Youth subcultures arose as part of this struggle from the historical reservoir of existing cultural patterns, the popular, that groups took up and transformed.[27] The field of the popular signaled for researchers at the CCCS a site of contestation in and over culture. This struggle, as Hall writes, "makes the field of culture into a battlefield on which there are no once-and-for-all victories, but there are always strategic positions to be won and lost."[28] Thus the popular changes, constantly being appropriated, ex-propriated, destroyed, or transformed into something else.[29]

On the tails of *Resistance Through Rituals*, Dick Hebdige published his seminal scholarly work on punk, the 1979 *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. Hebdige's

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[25] Simon Frith, afterword, *After Subculture*, ed. Andy Bennett and Kieth Kahn-Harris (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) 175.

[26] John Clarke, Stuart Hall, Tony Jefferson and Brian Roberts, "Subcultures, Cultures and Class: A theoretical overview," *Resistance Through Rituals*, ed. Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London: Hutchinson, 1976) 9-79, 9.

[27] Clarke, et.al., "Subcultures, Cultures and Class" 11.

[28] Stuart Hall "Notes on Deconstructing 'the Popular,'" *People's History and Socialist Theory*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London, 1981) 227-239, 233. Hereafter cited as "Notes."

[29] Hall, "Notes" 227ff.

methodology bridges semiotics, ethnography and sociology to investigate how punk style used "bricolage" to threaten the visual stability of an image. Hebdige casts punk style as "the sartorial equivalent of swearwords." This style, he continues, "produced Noise in the calmly orchestrated Crisis of everyday life in the 1970s."[30] With this style. Hebdige writes, subcultures expressed "in the last instance, a fundamental tension between those in power and those condemned to subordinate positions and second-class lives."[31] For Hebdige subcultural style was instable, it "represent[ed] a synthesis on the level of style of those 'forms of adaptation, negotiation and resistance elaborated by the parent culture' and others 'more immediate, conjunctural, specific to youth and its situation and activities.'"[32] Hebdige analyzes British punk in the seventies as a response to a broader rhetoric of economical and ideological crisis in the failure of social democratic consensus. He proposes his theory of subcultures as a corrective to "non-critical" postmodernism.[33] In non-critical postmodernism, Hebdige writes, the "gaps of perception, experience, articulation and the real opened up by the modernist master categories of ideology and alienation" are effaced, as such, "there is no space to struggle over, to struggle from […] or to struggle toward."[34] Subcultural style attempted to break

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[30] Hebdige, *Subculture* 114.

[31] Hebdige, *Subculture* 132.

[32] Hebdige, *Subculture* 56.

[33] Dick Hebdige, *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (London: Routledge, 1988) 181ff. Hereafter cited as *Hiding*.

[34] Hebdige, *Hiding* 193.

with the familiar to escape mainstream society, and took into account multiple

contradictions and sites of cultural struggle, within popular culture. This methodology is

not representative of contemporary subculture research in West Germany.

German scholarly investigations into punk and subcultures in the seventies were

dominated by Rolf Schwendter's 1971 *Theorie der Subkultur* [*Theory of Subculture*] and

Dieter Baacke's 1987 *Jugend und Jugendkulturen* [*Youth and Youth Cultures*].

Schwendter's sociological investigation sought to create structures into which all youth

subcultures could be placed. His top-down analysis stands in stark methodological

opposition to Hebdige and other CCCS researchers. Schwendter reads subcultures as

working in the service of mass culture, and as such he removes the resistance or refusal

of youth culture that was central to CCCS subculture theory. Furthermore, his analysis

reduces subcultures to a singular response to contradictions in which culture and

subcultures are constructed as a whole. In the mind of CCCS researchers, such a unity

neglects other multiple contradictions and struggles, which traverse aspects of cultural

struggle and mark the face of popular culture.[35] Following Schwendter, Baacke attempts

to reduce the tensions and conflicts between youth and mass-culture to a singular

contradiction between working-class and bourgeoisie: "die unterschiedlichen Antworten

unterschiedlicher Jugendkulturen sollen auf ihre gemeinsamen Bestimmungsmoments

befragt werden" [*the different answers of different youth-cultures should be investigated*

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[35] Tony Bennett, "The Politics of 'the Popular' and Popular Culture," *Rethinking Popular Culture: Contemporary Perspectives in Cultural Studies*, ed. Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudson (Berkeley: University of California Press: 1991) 15.

as to their collective determining moments].[36] Baacke locates youth as simultaneously

the victim of, and the trendsetter for, the older generations and a new cultural

constellation, respectively.[37] While Baacke admits that West German scholars largely

overlooked Birmingham scholars' focus on working-class culture, he insists that a caveat

is necessary when bringing a CCCS theoretical model to bear on West German

subcultures.[38] Baacke, in short, claims that if the working-class *ever* existed in any sort

of confined milieu, then it did not exist in this form in contemporary West Germany.[39]

Thus Baacke constructs youth not as a metaphor for change, but rather as a unified

"disposable-movement" on the cultural level that worked through new dimensions of

style, individuality, and identity *in the service of* culture.[40] Baacke's search for

continuities obscures salient discontinuities between mainstream and underground and

contradictions in class for which subcultures attempted to negotiate a solution.

Since the work done by Baacke and Schwendter, Peter Ulrich Hein has

repeatedly sought to pry apart "aesthetic opposition" in the Federal Republic. Hein's

Protestkultur und Jugend (1984, co-written with Maria Eva Jahn) uses a sociological

base to set up youth cultures as primarily a generation conflict that in the FRG resided

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[36] Dieter Baacke, *Jugend und Jugendkulturen: Darstellung und Deutung* (Weinheim and Munich: Juventa, 1987) 33.

[37] Baacke 6. This is also reproduced in Baacke's edited volume *Neue Widersprüche* (Weinheim and Munich: Juventa, 1985).

[38] Baacke 106.

[39] Baacke 106.

[40] Baacke 5.

specifically between fathers and children. In Hein's analyses, subcultures are destined to

be absorbed by the culture industry. Hein buttresses this pessimistic future for

subcultures by reading youth as a cultural trendsetter, but only because they search for

mainstream social identification.[41] Perhaps most important for this analysis, Hein does

not read West German subcultures as mere imitation of Anglo subcultures, but rather, as

youth moments that took advantage of gaps specific to the Federal Republic. In the

nineties, some German scholars began to approach German punk from a new theoretical

model. This new path reflects an indebtedness to work done at the CCCS. This less

prominent avenue of analysis, demonstrated most recently by Karl Hörning and Rainer

Winter's *Widerspenstige Kulturen* (1999), translates (at times literally) CCCS cultural

studies work into Germany in an effort to get away from the unity-seeking analytical and

explanatory Weberian tract of sociology.[42] While *Widerspenstige Kulturen* does not

directly address punk, it does read cultural forms and practices as dynamic, polyphonic

and always controversial, as complex processes about the construction of socio-cultural

meanings of identity.[43] This marks a significant theoretical departure for German social

scientific examinations of subcultures because Hörning and Winter read how subcultures

represented hybrid and shifting reactions to a host of cultural conditions. In 1992,

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[41] See Hein's *Protestkultur und Jugend* (with Maria Eva Jahn [Münster, Lit-Verlag, 1984]), particularly pages iii, 27, and 57-60. Hein reinforces his position in *Künstliche Paradiese der Jugend* (ed. Peter Ulrich Hein [Münster, Lit-Verlag, 1984]).

[42] The crucial point behind *Widerspenstige Kulturen* is its decisive move to a non-Kulturwissenschaft [*cultural sciences*] platform that does not seek totalizing markers for society in the tradition of the Frankfurt School. See Karl Hörning and Rainer Winter "Widerspenstige Kulturen: Cultural Studies als Herausforderung," *Widerspenstige Kulturen: Cultural Studies als Herausforderung*, ed. Karl Hörning and Rainer Winter (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1999) 7-12.

[43] See Hörning and Winter 10.

Thomas Lau reproduced a Hebdige-style reading of punk subcultures in West Germany, without any theoretical underpinnings. Lau's *Die heiligen Narren* details the permanent transformation of the cultural matrix within which punk operated.[44] Lau demonstrates how punk holds up a "multi-facetted mirror" for mainstream society to challenge canonical values and tradition.[45] In *Mainstream der Minderheiten* (1996) Mark Terkessidis and Tom Holert briefly look back at subcultures of the 1980s in order to work out the problems of 1990s subcultures. Terkessidis and Holert see a constant battle over representation in the popular as a potential site of social resistance within a cycle of dissidence and co-option. Christian Höller's contribution in particular turned to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's "pop-analysis" to articulate CCCS subculture theory into a German context whereby Höller complicates hegemony, subcultures and the mainstream as all operating in a multi-plateau field of possibilities devoid of steadfast oppositions.[46]

All of the above investigations into punk and subcultures represent a social and political history of punk. In contradistinction to these social scientific lines of inquiry, this examination queries German punk as a unique aesthetic moment. *Punk Poetics* focuses on punk aesthetics–montages–therefore political histories of punk do not tell the whole story. From this vantage point it becomes immediately clear that a disjunction

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[44] See Thomas Lau, *Die heiligen Narren: Punk 1976-1986* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1992) 123 and 134-135. In an afterword to *Schocker: Stile und Moden der Subkultur* (the German-language version of Hebdige's *Subculture*) Olaph-Dante Marx drafts a very quick story of West German subcultures since the fifties via music, drugs and styles. In Marx' essay all post-'45 youth groups are destined to fail, and working class and subculture are equated by referencing Schwendter (See Marx "Endstation Irgendwo: Ein Flug durch die Zeit" *Schocker: Stile und Moden der Subkultur* [Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1983] 122-164, 156.

[45] Lau 137.

[46] See Christian Höller "Widerstandsrituale und Pop-Plateaus," *Mainstream der Minderheiten: Pop in der Kontrollgesellschaft*, ed. Tom Holert and Mark Terkessidis (Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv, 1996) 59-60.

exists between subculture theory as conceived by the scholars in Birmingham and actual West German punk cultures. CCCS subculture theory is not directly applicable to the West German punk subcultures that surfaced around 1977. Punk in Britain was about the historical legacies of British class stratification. Punk in the Federal Republic was about historical legacies of German fascism, or rather, about wanting nothing to do with fascism. This historical refusal expressed itself preeminently through representation. *Punk Poetics* is not the fist study to look at the aesthetics of punk. Greil Marcus' 1989 *Lipstick Traces* moved past explicitly cultural studies investigations into punk and subcultures to draw a red thread between historical and contemporary avant-gardes. Marcus did this by unfolding an avant-garde labyrinth in the narrative starting point of the person of Malcom McLaren, member of the Situationist International and manager of the Sex Pistols. McLaren's doubleness was so significant because he purposefully and constantly fused historical avant-gardes and punk. In *Lipstick Traces*, Marcus understands punk as a "new set of visual and verbal signs, signs that were both opaque and revelatory […] that made] ordinary social life seem like a trick [… in which] the old critique of mass culture […] paraded as mass culture, at least as protean, would-be mass culture."[47] Using McLaren as an example, this trick emerged in the Sex Pistols' carefully orchestrated clothes, appearances, performances, interviews, lyrics and music. McLaren used a Sex Pistols montage to test out the spectrum of shock. Marcus also picked up Hebdige's sense of re-coding of signs via Debord's "détournement," the theft of aesthetic artifacts from their contexts and their diversion into contexts of one's own

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[47] Marcus 74.

devise.[48] Here the tie to historical avant-gardes was quite overt: McLaren made flyers for the Sex Psitols that mimed Situationist International flyers. Marcus thus sees in punk style a "politics of subversive quotations, of cutting the vocal cords of every empowered speaker, social symbols yanked through the looking glass, misappropriated words and pictures diverted into familiar scripts and blowing them up."[49] For Marcus the crucial thread between twentieth-century avant-garde art and subcultures was the juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated phenomena, so that "social barriers could be revealed as constructed illusions, and the world could be changed."[50] This was what the Sex Pistols were meant to do. They were meant to bring, once and for all, an end to rock-and-roll. But they did not.

Like Marcus, Neil Nehring's *Flowers in the Dustbin* details punk's investment in the uses of "high" and "low" cultural forms. Nehring drew this connection of high and low to illustrate punk's indebtedness to the avant-garde as it worked through and against culture. Nehring linked punk into a chain of historical avant-gardes and examined how British punk influenced literature and film. He thereby used a punk avant-garde to show how provocative moments such as punk mixed literary texts with popular cultural forms in everyday life.[51] The repercussions of this project are wide reaching. For Nehring, reading punk's adaptation of the vanguard of modernism, namely the avant-garde, is

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[48] Marcus 168.

[49] Marcus 179.

[50] Marcus 188.

[51] Neil Nehring, *Flowers in the Dustbin* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1993) 14.

crucial for "overthrowing the fragmentation of cultural experience, among institutions like academia and mass media, [that itself] is essential to a more widespread, lucid rejection of the authoritarian plutocracy that dominates the globe."[52] He positions British punk and avant-gardes outside elitist modernist or pessimistic postmodernist arguments, whereby punk becomes a salient example of "the possibilities of refusal and resistance in advanced capitalist society."[53] In turn, punk revealed a line of flight from the constricted realm of political possibilities in England. Punk music aided in this exposure, David Laing writes in *One Chord Wonders*, because it had the "ability to lay bare the operations of power in the leisure apparatus as it was thrown into confusion" by punk's do-it-yourself method of production.[54] This revelation and self-production represented a critical counter-discourse that exposed the ideological content of mass-produced music by revealing the extent to which the power bloc constructed and supported ideology. Through this criticism punk music engaged in what Laing calls "battles over meaning [that were] battles about which connotations [would] prevail in the popular consciousness."[55] This transformation drew not only on discourses which had been previously absent, but which had been excluded from the mainstream media discourse of society as a whole. So what discourses did German punk draw from?

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[52] Nehring 2.

[53] Nehring 327.

[54] David Laing, *One Chord Wonders: Power and Meaning in Punk Rock* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1985): xiii. For more on British DIY see Hebdige's *Subculture* 106-112. For West German DIY see Teipel's *Verschwende* 55ff.

[55] Laing x.

German Punk: Montage and Chaos

      Punk Poetics builds upon Marcus' *Lipstick Traces*, Nehring's *Flowers in the Dustbin* and Laing's *One Chord Wonders* to link West German punk with the avant-garde. Düsseldorfer punks drew upon and then transformed the materials from their British predecessors and previous moments of West German social unrest. In effect they operated on the same plane of transformation and montage analyzed in Nehring and Marcus' work. Therefore these aesthetic histories of the subcultural moment of punk provide part of the key for deciphering the effects of West German punk's chaotic aesthetic messages. Crucial for *Punk Poetics*, Nehring analyzes the significance of punk's social use of texts as a "linguistics of conflict" in moments of "irruption" in English culture.[56] In West Germany, punk sought the permanent preservation of these moments of irruption. Nehring details the collision of English punk and cultural representation while making clear that punk did not represent a blind communication of avant-gardes across time, but rather the connection of radical aesthetics to social practice.[57] *Punk Poetics* demonstrates how German punk also violated the boundaries of high and low culture through astute use of chaotic montage, particularly in literature.

      But Marcus, Nehring and Laing's aesthetic histories do not provide ciphers for German punk's joining of antagonistic elements such as the swastika and RAF-star. As discussed above, students and terrorists in Germany sought out the opposite as punks, namely the creation of divisions and the preservation of forward-marching modern time, and thereby order in German society. For these groups, divisions and order represented

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[56] Nehring 14.

[57] Nehring 24.

progress away from fascism, and as such represented modernist projects that stand in direct opposition to punks apocalyptic "no future" mantra.[58] Students and terrorists wanted progress and a new ordered society, punk wanted the flipside–anarchy–and sartorially demonstrated this desire with the anarchy "A." "No future" and anarchy clearly signaled punk's lack of interest in progress, but it cannot be placed in the camp of postmodernism; both Marcus and Nehring make clear that punk was on the side of the avant-garde and not modernism or postmodernism.[59] Punk's "no future" and anarchy can be better understood through the lens of what Walter Benjamin calls "der destruktive Charakter" [*the destructive character*]. The destructive character, the domain of passionate youth, knows only one activity: the erasure of all traces of our times. Punk's anarchistic and apocalyptic "no future," to take Benjamin's words, "vermeidet nur schöpferische" [*only avoids the creationary*].[60] In effect, Benjamin's essay provides a traditional definition of the avant-garde. His assessment of the destructive character helps to grasp the importance of the Clash's lyrics cited earlier, "London's burning with boredom," and simultaneously, Holger Czukay's prophecy of a quick death for the social moment of punk (p. 6). Destruction and preemptively prophesizing one's own self-destruction are avant-garde gestures. Thus punk carried with it techniques (music) and

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[58] For more on punk's apocalyptic "no future" mantra see for example Hebdige's *Subculture* p. 116-127. For the German manifestation of "no future" see Teipel's *Verschwende* p. 158ff or Peter Ulrich Hein's forward to *Protestkultur und Jugend* in which Hein turns "no future" into "the future belongs to youth," a paradox of avant-garde time that will be discussed here and in conclusion (ii).

[59] Andrew Hussey also argues that punk and the Situationist International were antithetical to pop and postmodernism in "Requiem pour un con: Subversive Pop and the Society of the Spectacle" (*Cercles* 3 [2001]: 49-59).

[60] Walter Benjamin, "Der destruktive Charakter," *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV.1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991) 396-398, 397.

strategies (Czuky's statement) that were aware of the implications of their aesthetics within a wider institutional network. Punk's strategy of fragmentation and apocalypse were thereby in step with Benjamin's concern about assimilation by the "institution of art" voiced in his "The Author as Producer" essay.[61] The Clash sung of a London set ablaze by boredom, in effect miming the task of the destructive character that for Benjamin "der Feind des Etui-Menschen [ist, … der] nichts Dauerndes [sieht]" [*is the enemy of the bored-person [...] who doesn't foresee duration*]. There is no path forward for this destructive character, just intersections of ruins.[62]

But whereas Benjamin saw the nightmarish chaos of modernity as something to wake up from, the band Fehlfarben sought to prolong the apocalyptic dream of "verbrannte erde [… als] normalzustand" [*scorched earth [... as] status quo*].[63] Fehlfarben wanted to freeze the Sex Pistols' "I wanna be anarchy."[64] The solution to punk's paradoxical position, antithetical to modernism and postmodernism, only calling for destruction, including its own, and a cessation of time moving forward lies in the third path punk took: the avant-garde. The relation between historical avant-gardes and punk's anarchistic vision of "no future" represented a way out of the Federal Republic's quagmire of rehashing modernism and either slipping into or avoiding postmodernism. Historical avant-garde moments such as Futurism, Richard Langston has argued,

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[61] Walter Benjamin, "Der Autor als Produzent," *Gesammelte Schriften*, II.2, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991) 683-701, 692.

[62] Benjamin 397-398.

[63] Fehlfarben, "apocalypse," *Monarchie und Alltag*, rec. 1980, Hamburg, EMI, 2000.

[64] Sex Pistols "Anarchy in the UK."

signaled not merely a "movement that began in 1909 but rather the inner logic of all avant-gardes, [futurism] describes the avant-garde's self-designated position outside and ahead of present time."[65] The avant-garde became, as such, a "harbinger of an immanent revolution" in an already apocalyptic landscape of time after 1945.[66] Punk's "no future" represented a continuation of Benjamin's past-present avant-garde history that "departed from modernity's axis of liner, irreversible time."[67] *Punk Poetics* argues how punk astutely used montage to combine antithetically time, image and space, to test out and freeze a chaotic avant-garde.

Marcus and Nehring's aesthetic histories of punk bind punk montages to the tradition of Dada and the Situationist International. But German punk did not represent merely the continuation of Dada. It did not seek the destruction of the bourgeois work of art. Punk used montage for the prolongation of chaos. This "no future" moment of punk separates it from Peter Bürger's classification of institutionalized neo-Dada, a Dada imitation that merely "negates genuinely avant-gardiste intentions."[68] Punk anarchy differentiates punk montage from Bürger's argument for montage paintings that he

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[65] Richard Langston, *Visions of Violence* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008) 26. See Langston's chapter "Deaths and Reconfigurations: Avant-garde Time after Fascism" for a thorough argument enlightening historical avant-gardes and time, particularly 42-50.

[66] Langston 26.

[67] Langston 23.

[68] Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-garde*, trans Michael Shaw (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 58. For Bürger neo-Dada represents the epitome of bourgeois affirmative art.

claims ultimately sought to create artistic balance.[69] For Bürger montage is designed as a

shock, "a stimulus to change one's conduct of life […] to usher in (initiate) a change in

the recipient's life praxis."[70] But early German punk songs, "Innenstadtfront,"

"Apoklaypse" and "Verschwende deine Jugend" sought the opposite, destruction not

improved life.[71] Montage, Bürger continues, "is still to be understood hermeneutically

(as a total meaning) except that the unity has integrated the contradiction within itself."[72]

But considering the constant shifting of bands and members, their constant misuse of

representation, their chaotic aesthetics, German punk denies any sense of integrated

unity. Punk's dystopic proclamations sought the prolongation of chaos, not recuperation

or stimulation for change. Norbert Bolz clarifies what was at stake for punk in the

prolongation of chaos. Bolz writes of social chaos as a "Rasuschen der Kanäle" [*noise of

channels*].[73] As will be discussed in detail later in this introduction, punk's various

misappropriations of representation created such distorted noise. Bolz' "noise" is in

Marcus' description of the Sex Pistols' music: a "cutting [of] vocal cords." Bolz reads

chaos as a natural facet of the ritual repetition of social cycles that ultimately serve in the

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[69] Bürger 73. Bürger continues to argue that montage does represent the destruction of "the representational system that had prevailed since the Renaissance," but ultimately replaces this system with a stable but "contradictory relationship of heterogeneous elements" (Bürger 73, 82).

[70] Bürger 80.

[71] Songs sung by the bands Mittagspause, Fehlfarben and DAF, respectively.

[72] Bürger 82.

[73] Norbert Bolz, *Die Welt als Chaos und Simulation* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992) 64.

"Gewinnung einer gemeinsamen Grenze" [*winning of a collective border*].[74] As part of the stabilizing force of chaos, Bolz names student protests and the "Greens," whose chaos is negated and turned socially supportive when they are accepted into mainstream politics and place "Ordnungsgrenzen" [*organizing borders*] upon themselves. Punk never did this. Punk's chaotic montages of RAF-star, swastika, passion, anarchy and "no future" explicitly avoided "die Einführung von Oppositionen überhaupt, d.h. Selektion im Chaos, d.h. Ausdifferenzierung von Medien vor einem Hintergrund von Rauschen – Buchstäblich die Differenz zwischen Buchstaben und dem Zwischen der Buchstaben" [*the introduction of oppositions whatsoever, i.e. selection in chaos, i.e. differentiation of media in a background of noise–literally the difference between the letters and the Between the letters*].[75] Punk montage refuses the difference of the space between the letters and the letters themselves. Punk turned representation into a "Reizquelle des objektiv Unkontrollierten, irregular Oberflächlichen" [*irritation of the objectively uncontrollable, irregular surface*].[76] Everything became a chaotic jumble in which a banal television test-screen became a classic punk rallying cry in Mittagpause's "Testbild."[77] In "Testbild," the montage of television image, the compression of days into minutes, and the acoustic cacophony of guitar, heavy drums, scratches and squeaks gives way to a distorted three-chord chorus and agonized refrain. The final cry

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[74] Bolz 15. Here Bolz is citing, fittingly for this project, Carl Schmitt ("Der Begriff des Politischen," [Berlin: n.p., 1963] 119).

[75] Bolz 12.

[76] Bolz 65.

[77] Mittagspause, "Testbild," *Verschwende deine Jugend*, rec. 1979, Hamburg, Universal, 2002.

"Testbild" echoes to the end of the track, suggesting an empty wasteland across which Mittagspause's montage continues endlessly. This chaotic space did not provide for recuperation.

Punk Poetics examines initially how this chaotic moment emerged aesthetically in literature. The first case study in *Punk Poetics* uncovers the aesthetic preservation of the chaotic montage in "Testbild." How did this moment stretch past the social death of punk in the seventies? The social moment of punk died in 1978, but it continued to resonate aesthetically in music, art and literature. Just as punks joined disparate materials to create a third avant-garde path away from violence and the divide between modernism and postmodernism, *Punk Poetics* examines other means of punk's avant-garde montage–music, images and independent magazines–to draw a more complete picture of the aesthetic chaos of the year 1977-1978. A conception of montage is crucial to prying apart the continuation of this aesthetic sensibility. Volker Hage's analyses of the various effects of collages in German literature are immensely helpful for understanding the various instances of punk collage.[78] Montage binds different stands together "ohne daß zwischen ihnen eine offensichtliche Verknüpfung […] gegeben ist" [*without giving an obvious connection between them*].[79] Although Hage analyzes collages in literature, this can still be seen in "Testbild," when television image and sound inexplicably merge not

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[78] Volker Hage, *Collagen in der deutschen Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984) 76-78. Hage has argued five forms of montage, three of which–parallel-montage, mosaic-montage and additive-montage–best represent various instances of punk montage. The other two categories, contrast-montage and commentary-montage, do not fit with punk montage. In contrast-montage two or more text parts work together "sich gegenseitig [zu] erhellen oder [zu] entlarven" [*to enlighten or unmask one another*] while commentary-montage explains the author's position (76-77). Punk's chaotic and anarchistic montages do not reveal, enlighten or comment on positions.

[79] Hage 77.

in a living room with a television, but on an echoing chaotic wasteland. Montage joins

disparate parts; here Mittagspause's produced an atmosphere with an overriding sense of

destruction, frustration, boredom and anarchy. Such a montage avoids reconciliation:

"ein gemeinsamer Nenner läßt sich nicht finden" [*there is no common denominator*].[80]

This absence of unity is also present, for example, Palais Schaumburg's "Telephon"

(1981). The band combined synthesizer-driven noise, crisp guitar and drums, with the

Dadaist text "ich glaub' ich bin ein Telephon" [*I think I am a telephone*].[81] Whereas

Bürger argued that montage presupposes and describes the fragmentation of reality,

"Telephon" sought to fragment reality.[82]

      This dissertation develops a punk poetics, a paradoxical task because of the

unifying gesture behind establishing a poetics and punk's vacillating use of montage.

However, the task at hand does not represent an all-encompassing attempt to bring 1980s

West German literature and music into line with something such as postmodernism or a

particular avant-garde. Hage's montage categories provide a key for understanding how

literary punk aesthetics refused to submit to programmatic and explanatory aesthetic

theories or schools, favoring instead motion. The position *Punk Poetics* develops in the

following chapters demonstrates why punk does not fit into postmodernism and

differentiates it from modernist aesthetic moments. This approach presents how punk

poetics cannot adequately function within Linda Hutcheon's poetics of postmodernism.

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[80] Hage 77.

[81] Palais Schaumburg, "Telephon," *Telephon,* Habmurg, ZickZack/ EMI, 1981.

[82] Bürger 73.

Hutcheon reads postmodernism as a complicitous critique of culture: it bought into culture while nevertheless critiquing it.[83] Punk did not do this at all. Punk did not buy into the amazing antidotal powers of the institution of art. Or rather, punk was not afraid of the institution of art. This later position also sets punk in opposition to Bürger's reckoning with what he has called the "historical avant-garde."[84] While art as institution, in Bürger's analysis, can undo anything revolutionary and make it into part of the "system," punk did not struggle to be un-assimilatable.[85] Punk did not care about assimilation because its members such as Peter Hein and Holger Czukay foreteold its demise. Whatever was assimilated was no longer punk.

Punk was particularly ambivalent about the trouble with the institution of art. They were not anxious with making stuff that might inevitably be assimilated by the system. Glaser's *Rawums* demonstrates this ambivalence. On the one side *Rawums* explicitly attacked mainstream avenues of artistic output and sought to blow up the deadly trinity of 1970s literature: "Langeweile, / Lahmarschigkeit und Literatur stünden / für so zirka dasselbe" [*boredom / damned lethargic and literature stood / for circa the same thing*].[86] But *Rawums* was also invested in curing academic complicity in this problem. Glaser chastised literary critics: "Die Literaturkritik ist orientierungslos / und wedelt mit ein paar verbliebenen / –keiten und –ismen nach allen Seiten" [*Literary*

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[83] See Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 1988).

[84] See Bürger 15-34 and 55-82.

[85] See Bürger particularly 20-27 and 55-59.

[86] Glaser, "Exposé" 9.

critism is directionless / and wags with a few remaining / –nesses and –isms this way and that].[87] Simultaneously, Kiepenheuer & Witsch, a mainstream publishing house, published the text. This adds up to a text that did not seek to avoid commercial reproduction or financial gain. Conversely, *Rawums* was invested in making literature and literary criticism into something different, into something not nailed down. But the shifting positions in the text vis-à-vis culture, such as Rolf Lobeck's "blablatext," whose title appears to dismiss literature but a fourteen-page narrative follows nevertheless, refused any once-and-for-all victory between high and low culture.[88] Glaser's seminal montage of punks' cultural misappropriation illustrates the breath of materials punks took advantage of and how these different cultural forms profited from one another. *Rawums* includes verse, essays, short fiction, and invented television dialogues that all fused image with text. In addition to punk musicians' lyrical and prose contributions, the anthology contains fifteen images by Martin Kippenberger and a text-image contribution from Georg Dokoupil, both Cologne artists. With these heterogeneous materials, *Rawums* played with a calculated superficiality of artistic language. This manifested itself aesthetically, as Glaser writes, in a "Neue Vorkriechzeit für Avantgardes, / die es ja bekanntlich auch nicht mehr gibt. / [durch] die Bemühungen und Vorstöße von Einzelnen / und kleinen Gruppen, / 'im Kampf gegen die herrschende Dummheit'" [*new period of emergence of avant-gardes, / that of course everyone knows don't exist anymore. / through the efforts and advancements of a few / and small groups, / 'in the*

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[87] Glaser, "Explosé" 15.

[88] Rolf Lobeck, "blablatext" *Rawums: Texte zum Thema*, ed. Peter Glaser (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1983) 62-77.

fight against the ruling stupidity'].[89] Here Glaser's "Vorkriechzeit" rejects the RAF and affirmative society. The remainder of *Rawums* demonstrates how art, essays, and texts work together in this rejection. Glaser's fight "against the ruling stupidity" did not just pick up these pieces and target bankrupt or worn-out oppositional moments. Glaser's "explosé," contrarily, set its sights on directionless literary critics and predictable literary style. Thus *Rawums* represents punk's aesthetic sensibility, montage and chaos, carried into the 1980s. Let us look at a brief catalog of the aesthetic playing field to read the effects of this sensibility.

Punk Poetics: An Inventory

Punk's investment in and use of literature, art and music demonstrates a difference from the approaches to social revolution exercised by the RAF. The RAF can be understood as an explicitly political organization whose members had zero use for cultural representation. Conversely, German punks were intensely interested in the aesthetics of motion and cybernetics. These interests define German punk and the decade after 1977. This post-RAF era was neither violent nor limited to binarisms. It was not anti-RAF either. Rather, punk's use of montage transformed the RAF's quest for a new non-fascist order into chaos and anarchy. This aesthetic quest for anarchy was conjured by ghosts of Germany's historical avant-garde. Gabi Delgado, member of the bands Mittagspause and DAF, spoke directly to the musical connection between Dada and West German punk:

> Einer meiner ersten Texte war dann direct "Kebapträume." Das war schon fast Richtung Dada. Wir haben uns bald mehr für Dadaismus

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[89] Glaser, "Explosé" 17.

interessiert als für Punk. Und haben seltsame Analogien entdeckt. Vor allem in den ganzen Manifesten. Dieses revoluntionäre Element: "Wir machen jetzt wirklich was anderes und sprengen damit die Gesellschaft. Oder schockieren die zumindest." Wir waren auch vom Futurismus beeinflusst.

[*One of my first texts was then immediately "Kebap dreams." That was already basically in the direction of Dada. Pretty soon we were more interested in Dada than punk. And we found interesting analogies. Above all in all the manifestos. That revolutionary element: "We are going to do something really different and blow up society with it. Or at least shock it." We were also influenced by Futurism*] (78-79).

Here Delgado echoed keywords from *Rawums*: avant-gardes, analogies, explosions. Crucially, Delgado, like Glaser, did not claim that punks simply picked up the pieces of Dada and Futurism and brought them unaltered into 1977. Rather, there were analogies between punk and avant-gardes of the past. Avatars, both the RAF and historical avant-gardes, were used, but punks "made something really different." Energy, passion and motion fed into subcultural montages that turned on what Bettina Clausen and Karsten Singelmann in their essay on avant-garde in contemporary German literature call an "aufbrechende Leistung" [*erupting effort*].[90] As previously mentioned, this eruption occurred in music, art and independent magazines, which function in *Punk Poetics* as a basis for analyzing punk literature.

Music

Punk's sonic representation was perhaps most conspicuous. The truncated list of punk bands mentioned at the start of this chapter only scratch the surface. Jürgen Teipel's *Verschwende deine Jugend* details the life cycle of many more bands in the

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[90] Bettina Clausen and Karsten Singelmann "Avantgarde heute?," *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Rolf Grimminger vol. 12 *Gegenswartsliteratur seit 1968*, ed. Klaus Briegleb and Sigrid Weigel (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992) 464.

Düsseldorf-Hamburg-Berlin punk loop, but this list is too extensive to reproduce here.[91]

Below a few bands are chosen because of how they particularly demonstrated punk's chaotic-anarchistic montages. What is crucial is that punk music culled from mass culture and from everyday life the profane materials necessary for its montage.[92] Early punk groups such as Einstürzende Neubauten and Palais Schaumburg found these materials when they pilfered construction sites for industrial debris to make instruments or simply smashed garbage cans and recorded groups of school kids passing by. While Blixa Bargeld recorded songs for Einstürtzende Neubauten underneath highway overpasses, the members of Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle incorporated instruments such as automobiles, cellos, a mandolin, yodeling, and German with fake American accents. Punk music represented a volatile aesthetic and affective flexibility. For Alex Hacke this chaos created "eine messbare Energie in der Stadt. Jeder war auf der Suche. Jeder hat was neues gemacht" [*a measurable energy in the city. Everyone was searching. Everyone was doing something new*] (155). Palais Schaumburg transformed this energy and desire for a new city in to an early rallying call for punks, the song "Wir bauen eine neue Stadt" [*we build a new city*]. But what was this city like? It was a chaotic city of paradoxes, in which the band synthesized opposites: stones and sand, water and mortar, while they used a minimalist yet unending array of sounds. Palais Schaumburg's new city was far from the ordered metropolis of contemporary West Germany. But punks did not just make a new city, they constantly re-used materials for their city, particularly their own. Because band members shifted freely, they began to transform their own

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[91] See Teipel 49ff.

[92] Jacques Attali discusses the socially radical potential in musical transformations in *Noise* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985). See for example pages 3-20 and 46-86.

songs, demonstrated most classically by Fehlfarben's "militürk," a détournement of DAFs "Kepabträume" [*Kepab dreams*] (both 1980). Aside from transforming the electronic original into ska-punk, Fehlfarben changed the line "hürriyet für die sowjetunion" [*freedom for the soviet union*] into "milliyet für die sowjetunion" [*nationality for the soviet union*]. This may, at first, appear as a play between freedom and nationality for the Soviet Union. But then why the Turkish vocabulary (hürriyet and milliyet)? By singing the words "hürriyet" and "milliyet" the bands do not just mine the language of a marginalized ethnicity in West Germany. *Hürriyet* and *Milliyet* are both Turkish national newspapers, akin to *Bild* in the Federal Republic. Thus the songs create a battle cry for transforming the Soviet Union by injecting Turkey and sensational yellow journalism into the equation. Social revolution, these bands posit, could be attained if one taps into various locations and high and low cultural representation. This energetic transformation challenged stable consumption of punk music. When they remixed the elements of their own songs, Fehlfarben and DAF questioned the stasis of their own positions. Aesthetic motion was their means to turn away from the failures of previous moments.

Art

Because of its origins in Düsseldorf, early punk circulated in an area rife with artists and art-schools. Some punk artists were Mattin Kippenberger, Gerog Dokoupil, Gottfried Distl, Blixa Bargeld, Wolfgang Müller, ar-gee Gleim, Mike Hentz, Isi, Muscha and Harry Rag. Text-print montages from Mattin Kippenberger and Georg Dokoupil

(guitarist of the bands Wirtschaftswunder and Silhouettes 61) in *Rawums* echo the cut-up

literary style of the punk-literati. Both were members of the Cologne art group "Die

neuen Wilden" [*The New Wilds*], and used montage to deceptively critique previous

youth moments.[93] Two Kippenberger prints in particular, "Arafat" and "Peurto

Escondido," play with two location of previous youth identification, namely Palestinian

and Central American revolutionaries and an exotic affection for Central America (fig.

3). "Arafat" dresses down the Palestinian sartorial and revolutionary trendsetter, with the

line "hat das Rasieren satt" [*is tired of shaving*].[94] This print equates would-be radical

beards (of hippies) with lazyness and ridicules the unchained affection of young

Germans for Arafat's scarf. The print also mocks the lazieness for which members of

Baader-Meinhof were kicked out of their terrorist training camp in Palestine.[95] "Puerto

Escondido" is much more overt. It chastises the would-be South American ex-patriot

romantic revolutionary who has diarrhea because of the food and really desires the

bourgeois comforts of home.[96] Kippenberger's collages reject balance of individual

elements through chaotic application of aesthetic and real elements (i.e., the photo in

"Puerto Escondido"). Simultaneously, the collage calls into question the representation

of such "radical" moments.

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[93] The New Wilds, young artists in Cologne, Berlin, and Düsseldorf, rejected programmatic and explanatory theories (i.e., of Futurists, Expressionists, etc.), in favor of a changing and fluid style.

[94] Martin Kippenberger, *Rawums: Texte zum Thema*, ed. Peter Glaser (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1983) 190.

[95] For a more complete account of the Baader-Meinhof training in Palestine, see Stefan Aust's *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex* (Hamburg: Hoffmann and Campe, 1985) 89-101.
[96] Kippenberger 192.

Fig. 3. Martin Kippenberger's images in "Kippenberger" (*Rawums,* 190-192).

Georg Dokoupil also used montage to combine seemingly unrelated text and images. In

Rawums, he combined redesigned images of sculptures in a museum catalog with verse

(fig. 4). The sculptures of men have all been amended with thick black marker. Dokoupil

created new, dystopic human forms out of presumably hard-cast classical shapes. These

augmented human shapes question the rigidity of form and difference, as Dokoupil calls

out in his verse line "Vorhänge, die unregelmäßige Falten haben, haben eine ähnliche

Funktion wie Vorhänge, die regelmäßige Falten haben" [*Curtains that have irregular

folds, have a similar function as curtains, that have regular folds*].[97]

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[97] Geroge Dokoupil, "Texte und Bilder," *Rawums: Texte zum Thema*, ed. Peter Glaser (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1983) 78-89, 82.
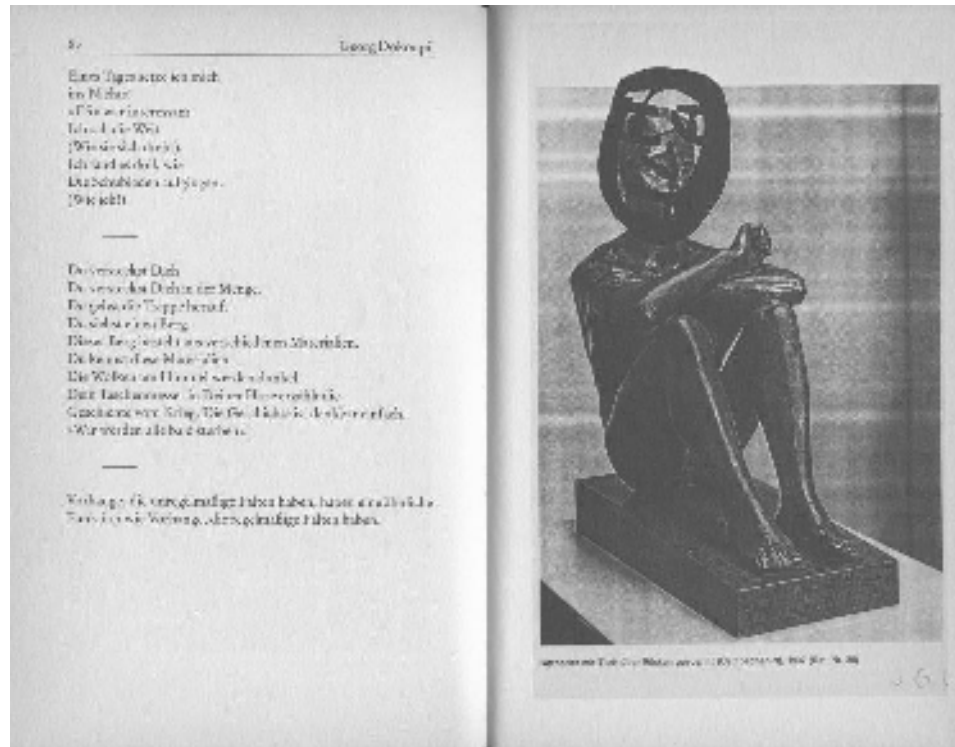
Fig. 4. Georg Dokoupil's verse and re-designed museum sculpture in "Texte und Bilder" (*Rawums,* 82-83).

The abstracted figures complicate representational stability, while the lines mock putative variance in bourgeois commodities. Because Dokoupil withholds any markers directly connecting image and text he presents aesthetic chaos that revels in its own artificial construction and juxtaposition. His ambiguous forms destabilize "realistic" representation. With his marker he distorts the organic form of the sculptures and his verse reconstitutes discourses of representation. He refuses to provide meanings and connections between image and text. Both Kippenberger and Dokoupil's contributions to *Rawums* critique the institution of art; their prints strive for a certain degree of incoherence that questioned assumptions about representation.

Fanzines

What is particularly interesting about punk fanzines is their chaos. Punk fanzines created chaotic relations of word and image and rhythm, a style that mirrors what Hubert Winkels argues for 1980s literature, "eine Literatur des Anfangs und des Endes […] und der Apoklapyse" [*a literature of the beginning and the end (...) and of the apocalypse*].[98] Punk's underground investment in print media simultaneously demonstrates its aversion to mainstream newspapers and a desire to have its own effects resonate via printed material. Punks produced fanzines–independent, low-budget, irregular magazines–that were not just information for fans by fans. The number of fanzines was as prolific as the number of bands. The titles inspired Peter Glaser to make a poem out of fanzine titles. An excerpt from Glaser's poem: "Ostrich / ungewollt / Alles Tot / Tiefschlag / Ramsch / Langweil / Schmier / Arschtritt / Blödsinn / Abschaum / Sonderangebot / No Fun."[99] For Martin Büsser such punk fanzines stand "in ganz dadaistischer Tradition" [*completely in Dadaist tradition*].[100] This Dadaist tradition manifested itself as collage (fig. 5).

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[98] Hubert Winkels, "Eine Einleitung," *Einschnitte: Zur Literatur der 80er Jahre* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1988) 11-24, 12.

[99] [*Ostrich / unwanted / everything dead / deep impact / junk / boredom / smear / ass-kick / stupidity / scum / deal / no fun*]. Peter Glaser, "Geschichte wird Gemacht," *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-'82: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 7. Juli – 15. September 2002*, ed. Ulrike Groos and Peter Gorschlüter (Köln: König, 2002) 121-128, 124.

[100] Martin Büsser, "Ich stehe auf Zerfall: Die Punk- und New-Wave-Rezeption in der deutschen Literatur" *Text + Kritik,* ed. Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Richard Boorberg Verlag, 2003) 152

Fig. 5. *Hamburger Abschaum*: A collage of text, image, safety pin and aluminum foil (*Zurück zum Beton,* 46).

The fanzine the *Ostrich* printed stories that were "einfach […] aus der Nase gezogen" [*simply [...] pulled out of the nose*] (32, fig. 6). This text fragmented reality and created what Richard Murphy reads as avant-garde literature, namely a text of "a constellation of personae, a series of mutually conflicting and contradictory roles."[101] This was exactly the nightmarish chaos of modernity that punk sought to prolong. Franz Bielmeier's collage for *The Ostrich* #3 showed the aesthetic tool, a straight razor, with which he violently created ruptures to misappropriate image and text. The images demonstrate perfectly punk's chaotic misuse of representation: the names of bands and images of musicians Johnny Rotten, Blondie's Debbie Harry, and Lou Reed surround an image of Adolf Hitler and the fascist-rallying cry "Deutschland erwache" [*Germany awake*].

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[101] Richard Murphy, *Theorizing the Avant-Garde: Modernism, Expressionsim, and the Problem of Postmodernity* (Cambridge: University Press, 1989) 18.

Fig. 6. *The Ostrich* #3 (*Zurück zum Beton,* 8).

The Ostrich cover demonstrates Bolz' "Rauschen der Kanäle" [*noise of channels*] that refused a common denominator.[102] *The Ostrich* used this noise to create disparate, and contradictory experiences of the text that were not interested in "organizing boundaries." The cut-up images highlight the artificially stable representations of mainstream discourses, even "oppositional" ones that *The Ostrich* sought to take up. There was no unifying code of interpretation for this collage. Rainer Rabowski's first edition of the fanzine *brauchbar / unbrauchbar* [*usable / unusable*] demonstrates fanzines' flexibility

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[102] This knack for aesthetic irritation eventually seeped into more mainstream print such as *Die Welt* and *Spex*, in which punk authors such as Joachim Lottmann and Diederich Diederichsen undermined "authorial fetishism" by penning stories under the others' name (Joachim Lottmann, "Ich wollte der neue Böll werden," *Der Tagesspiegel* 6 May 2003).

perhaps best of all. Volume number one of *brauchbar / unbrauchbar* delivers almost 100 pages of text in a plastic freezer bag. The individual reader completely determines the order, use, and significance of these pages. Rabowski abstains from any organizational markers and put the final product in the hands of the readers.[103] Bürger has argued, through examples of Dadaist poems, that texts such Rabowski's "should be read as guides to individual production. But such production is not to be understood as artistic production, but as part of a liberating life praxis."[104] However, Rabowski's fanzine was not interested in making one live a better life. His fanzine did not care about the use of his pages. It cared about the creation of chaos. *Brauchbar / unbrauchbar* demonstrated a crucial difference between punk and RAF terrorism, namely punk's complication of binaries. The RAF worked hard to create a sense of "us" versus "them." The title of Rabowski's fanzine, alternately, challenges binary construction of use: Who decides what is useful? The irony stems from the putative choice of "A" or "B" for the readers. Presenting the reader with a bag of material ultimately unleashes a host of choices, not just usable/ unusable, but order, orientation, connection, etc. Thus *brauchbar / unbrauchbar* encourages unforeseen uses of the bits of cultural representation that the bag contains. The bag encloses chaos, while encouraging, demanding, that the user unleash this chaos. Lastly, *brauchbar / unbrauchbar* transformed printed material from something static into something dynamic: the organization of the materials was continuous and shifting, each user spontaneously brought the anarchistic papers into motion again and again. But what about the larger corpus of literature?

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[103] This account comes from Peter Glaser's text "Geschichte wird Gemacht" p.124. Other volumes of *brauchbar / unbrauchbar* arrived wet, ripped into pieces, or previously wet and frozen together.

[104] Bürger 53.

The Punk Corpse

Punk Poetics is an urgent project. In the 1990s, Paul Michael Lützler declared that eighties literature resided in a "Zwischenzustand" [*interstage*], thereby recalling Glaser's directionlessness of literary criticism previously discussed (p. 28).[105] This interstage resulted from insufficient theoretical analyses of eighties literature that were stuck in a quagmire attempting to negotiate a literary divide between postmodernism and modernism. This condition continues. Investigations into the literary production of the 1980s have increased, and scholars such as Martin Büsser have begun to examine the inroads punk made into dominant culture.[106] However, research done up to this point is incomplete because it has been overwhelmingly oriented toward the success of authors of 1990s pop-literature such as Christian Kracht and Benjamin von Stuckrad-Barre.

Moritz Baßler's *Der deutsche Pop-Roman*, for example, does not represent an investigation into punk, or 1980s literature, but rather a meek gesture toward the eighties with an over-riding analysis under the vague umbrella of nineties "pop-literature."[107] Likewise, Johannes Ullmaier's *Von Acid nach Adlon und zurück* briefly discusses Rianald Goetz and Thomas Meinecke, two eighties authors, but focuses on their post-

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[105] Paul Micahel Lützler, "Einleitung: von der Spätmoderne zur Postmoderne. Die deutschsprachige Literatur der achtziger Jahre," *German Quarterly* 63, no. 3/4, Theme: Literature of the 1980s (Summer - Autumn, 1990): 350-358, 350.

[106] See the special issue on pop-literature from *Texte + Kritik* X/03 (Munich: Richard Boorberg Verlag, 2003).

[107] Moritz Baßler, *Der deutsche Pop-Roman* (Hamburg: Verlag C. H. Beck, 2002).

1990 production vis-à-vis "pop-literature."[108] Both Baßler and Ullmaier's texts are

highly problematic because they are upheld as interventions into contemporary literature

including the eighties (or so Ullmaier's title) but they simply collapse the eighties with

the nineties. These analyses thus put into action a form of pop culture that, as Hussey

defines it, functions as a means to separate spectator and spectacle, a pop culture

opposed to any avant-garde strive seeking to "transcend the relation between art and

revolution and blur the distinction between art and everyday life."[109] It is exactly

scholars attempting to divide high and low, postmodernism and modernism, radical and

affirmative culture, toward whom Glaser himself made an obscene gesture seven years

earlier in his "Explosé": "Er zwinkert den Wachposten zu / die den Zonenrand zwischen

hoher und trivaler / Literatur in Europa kontrollieren" [*he waves at the guardians / who

control the border between high and trivial / literature in Europe*].[110] Baßler and

Ullmaier remember literature and represent analyses that know nothing of the politics of

punk. They reflect the approaching anniversaries of the RAF, 1968 and 1989, and in this

wake eighties literature is being associated with decreasing possibilities of agency and

politics. *Punk Poetics* seeks to overcome this monochromatic image of eighties

literature.

   Hubert Winkels' *Einschnitte* stands alone as a non-pop oriented monograph

analyzing 1980s literature. While Winkels' incisions into this literary corpus do not

focus on punk, they use similar analysis-driving keywords as *Punk Poetics* uses for

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[108] Johannes Ullmaier, *Von Acid nach Adlon und zurück* (Mainz: Ventil, 2001).

[109] Hussey 53.

[110] Glaser, "Explosé" 16.

analysis of punk and its use of representation: Dadaist verve, subculture, avant-garde, mobile adaptation and readymades.[111] Despite Winkels' intervention, the beginnings of a literature within the subcultural context of German punk that developed in the 1980s are too often overlooked. Under-theorizing punk and punk literature becomes all the more problematic in light of punk's renaissance in Germany, evidenced by the 2004 publication of Rocko Schamoni's *Dorfpunks* and the filming of Teipel's *Verschwende deine Jugend* (2003, dir. Benjamin Quabeck). This renaissance represents a turn back to a moment of cultural and political opposition to the politics of '68, a politics that have moved, since the fall of the wall, from protest to mainstream and that affirmatively haunt contemporary politics. Although the resurfacing of punk represents the resurgence of an oppositional moment to sold-out 68ers' politics, there is a problem with this renaissance, namely that punk is being understood nostalgically: nostalgia for punk lacks a historical conception of the aesthetic and political project of the 1980s. This nostalgia blurs not only what punk was, but also collapses German punk with its British predecessors. There is thus a need to establish a corpus of punk literature. By considering the moment of punk and its resonance in literature, a more political picture of eighties literature can be constructed.

Punk Poetics seeks to reassert the prominence of punk in German literary and cultural history because it has gone lost between the giant events of '68 and '89. But the corpus of punk literature does not exist. Punk subcultures had to die before punk literature emerged. But if this corpus did exist, it could include works by authors such as Rainald Goetz, Joachim Lottmann, Thomas Meinecke, Peter Glaser, Kiev Stingel, Bodo

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[111] Winkels, "Eine Einführung" 132, 217, 206 and 226.

Morshäuser, Thomas Schwebel, Kerstin Eitner, Diederich Diederichsen, Hubert Winkels and pre-punk author Rolf Dieter Brinkmann. Though beyond the scope of this investigation, the total decomposition of the punk corpse occurs in 1988 with Thomas Meinecke's *Holz*, in which chaos becomes ordered simulation. However, it is not all about chaos.

Punk Poetics examines texts by three authors from the contemporary punk scene in 1980s West Germany: Rainald Goetz, Thomas Meinecke, and Joachim Lottmann. Goetz and Lottmann are tied to this punk scene through their writings in the music fanzines *Sounds* and *Spex*. Meinecke is doubly tied: through his band Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle (FSK) and his essays in *Mode & Verzweiflung*, the fanzine put together by members of FSK. Taking Goetz' second novel *Kontrolliert* (1987) as a post-punk example of these three authors' investment in reshaping the terrain of cultural representation, Goetz echoes Glaser's assessment of contemporary literature and literary criticism. Goetz rejects elitism and the limits of modernist literature, but also that readers are too dumb to use radical literature appropriately (i.e., postmodern pessimism). He writes: "die Medien müssen mehr sein, als Agenten der Macht der Herrschenden Klasse, mehr, als Instrumente zur Manipulation angeblich manipulierbarer Massen" [*media must be more than the agents the ruling classes' power, more than instruments for the manipulation of supposedly manipulatable masses*].[112] Punk literature celebrates anarchy, its own deconstruction and reuse, the expansive montages possible in media and style. Goetz' 1987 refusal to give up hope for subversive uses of literature

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[112] Rainald Goetz, *Kontrolliert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986) 251.

demonstrates that while punk died almost ten years earlier, its failures put punk's strategies into motion across time. These strategies resonated throughout the eighties.

The crucial strategy for literary punk aesthetics is motion, a flow of styles. Glaser writes of this need for energy: "Wichtig ist jetzt: / sich nicht festnageln zu lassen, / oder gar selbst festnageln" [*It's important now / not to be nailed down, / or to nail yourself down*].[113] Goetz does not leave room for ambiguity as to the importance of the motion for punk literature. He writes: "schnell und radikal reagieren; das Denken schnell und radikal vorantreiben; die Avantgarde sein im Kampf. Andernfalls hat man, und leider herrscht das vor und das wissen auch alle, das genaue superartige Gegenteil: Stillstand des Denkens, Ödnis, Muff, und die alte Trias: Fehler, Faulheit, Dummheit" [*react quickly and radically; drive thoughts forward radically and quickly; be the avant-garde in your fight. Otherwise you have, and unfortunately this is the dominant typos and everyone knows it, the complete opposite: cessation of thought, desolation, muff, and the old trinity: mistakes, laziness, and stupidity*].[114] But this dissertation is not about pulling punk as a common thread though eighties literature. *Punk Poetics* reads the tangible evidence of Goetz' call for aesthetic motion. Punk is its impetus. The literary texts examined in the following chapters do not represent examples of punk chaos put on hold. The texts included in the punk corpus are places for experiments in which the poetics of punk aesthetics becomes a poetics of failures and crises.

The three case studies in *Punk Poetics* represent a genealogy of punk, a genealogy of punk's crises and failures. Chapter 1 investigates the crisis of the avant-

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[113] Glaser, "Explosé" 16.

[114] Rainald Goetz, "Männer Fahrten Abenteuer," *Hirn* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986) 94.

garde, a crisis of space and power, via the punk-psychiatrist protagonist Raspe in Rainald Goetz' novel *Irre*. Just as punks in Düsseldorf wore the RAF-star and the swastika, Raspe conjoins putatively distinctly socially marked positions: doctor/punk, insane/sane, inside/outside. But the chapter is ultimately interested in the delusional nature of Raspe's self-inflicted violence and whether his blurring of social boundaries actually subverts the asylum's role in Munich. The next crisis is a crisis of the culture industry. Thomas Meinecke's short fiction and his band FSK envisioned subversive agency in media by revealing the transnational possibilities of popular culture within the Americanized domain of West Germany. The crisis in chapter 2 is a crisis of production and reception, a crisis of a progressive postmodern moment. Lastly, chapter 3 wrestles with a crisis of time and space, a crisis of narration, a crisis in which the failures of progressive postmodernism makes literature impossible. This crisis manifests in Joachim Lottmann's *Mai, Juni, Juli*, a novel that dismissed the relevance of writing a novel. It is in this final crisis that punk's necessary failure, its "no future," makes one last attempt to harness the radical potential in its cynicism and nihilism.

Punk Poetics tells a story that began around 1977 in Düsseldorf, West Germany. What follows recounts a decade of literature that existed in the aftereffects of punk's aesthetic chaos and anarchy. The story is about how, in turn, this moment died, it failed, only to stretch into the 1980s. Punk was wrong; it had a future. *Punk Poetics* turns to the subcultural moment of punk to examine how literary aesthetics in the 1980s mark a crucial, yet overlooked, intervention into the legacies of German history. Each case study signals transformation, a mutation of style that are not antagonistic moments, but rather a series of moments–aftershocks–that resonate in literature. A form of West

German punk died in 1979. But authors such as Rainald Goetz, Thomas Meinecke and Joachim Lottmann used the aesthetic instability incited by punk to push things further. Their aesthetic techniques rejected necessary relations. The necessity of relations, that Germans had, by 1980, necessarily exorcised the ghosts of the Nazi past, that subversive media was impossible under the permanent state of exception enacted in the wake of terrorist actions, that there was nothing after the failures of '68, the RAF or even punk, that the battle over a return to modernism or turn to postmodernism was the necessary battle, that failure and crises were necessarily bad, that just London was burning.

CHAPTER ONE

PSYCHO PUNK

Solingen–Berlin–Düsseldorf:

S.Y.P.H.

In 1978 the West German punk band S.Y.P.H. engaged in a dialogue with West Germany's Red Army Faction. Or was it a dialogue about terrorism? On their EP *Viel Feind, viel Ehr* they sang a song entitled "klammheimlich." It was, to use Peter Glaser's term again, an "explosé," an explosion and exposé all at once.[1] Their song destroyed the veil surrounding the truth, the truth surrounding West Germany in the age of homegrown terrorism. However, S.Y.P.H. became afraid of their bomb. Ultimately, S.Y.P.H. had to change the title to "Pure Freude." Its intertextual reference to the infamous Buback-Nachruf–wherein the Göttinger Mescalero declared his clandestine pleasure ["klammheimliche Freude"] at the news of the RAF's murder of attorney general Siegfried Buback in April 1977–was too hot, too controversial, too dangerous. German punk and German terrorism began to merge into one for a second.

S.Y.P.H. came from the Düsseldorf suburb of Solingen, and Solinger punks Thomas Schwebel, Uwe Jahnke and Harry Rag founded Syph in 1977. Shortly thereafter Ulli Putsch joined the trio, and in 1978 the band changed its name to S.Y.P.H. Thomas

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[1] Peter Glaser, "Zur Lage der Detonation – Ein Explosé," *Rawums: Texte zum Thema*, ed. Peter Glaser (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1984) 9.

Schwebel recalls the origin and evolution of the name: "Auf Syph kam ich weil es eben

dreckig war. Harry Rag hat dann nur noch Punkte hinter die Buchstaben gesetzt, damit

das immer großgeschrieben wird. Das war eine clevere Idee. Dadurch haben sich immer

alle Leute gefragt, wofür das steht" [*I came to Syph just because it was dirty. Harry Rag*

then just put the points behind the letters, so that it would always be capitalized. That

way everyone always asked himself/herself what it meant].[2] S.Y.P.H. consisted of a

steadily shifting constellation of local punks but Schwebel, Jahnke and Rag remained the

stable points of the combo as S.Y.P.H. played Berlin's SO36 and Düsseldorf's Ratinger

Hof, opened in 1980 for British avant-garde punks Gang of Four and ultimately became

less and less active after their 1985 album *Wieleicht* [*howeasy*].

In 1978 S.Y.P.H. took its album *Viel Feind, viel Ehr* and the song

"klammheimlich" on the road to the first punk festival in the SO36 and then back to the

Rattinger Hof.[3] Rag recalls that "Deutschland war ja […] sehr hysterisch" [*Germany was*

[…] quite hysterical] during the time S.Y.P.H. moved from Solingen to Berlin to

Düsseldorf.[4] The catalysts for this hysteria were the actions of second-generation RAF-

terrorist Christian Klar and the sensational accounts of Klar's actions by mainstream

media outlets. In this hysteria S.Y.P.H. unleashed *Viel Feind, viel Ehr*, with a cover

comprised of two seemingly banal images: a baby carriage and a young man wearing

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[2] Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende deine Jugend* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001) 47. Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's own.

[3] Harry Rag, "S.Y.P.H. 'eine kleine Biographie,'" *S.Y.P.H.* 7 Sept 200 <http://www.syph.de/olds.htm>.

[4] Teipel 189. All remaining German quotes in this paragraph, as well as the story about the S.Y.P.H.'s album are from Teipel's *Verschwende deine Jugend* pages 189-191.

sunglasses carrying a camera (fig. 7). Harry Rag recounts that "wegen der Bilder auf

dem Cover hatten wir prompt Ärger" [*because of the pictures on the cover we had

immediate trouble*]. But why?

Fig. 7. Album covers of S.Y.P.H.'s *Viel Feind, viel Ehr* (Solingen, Pure Freude, 1979) are here reproduced from *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-'82: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 7. Juli – 15. September 2002* (ed. Ulrike Groos and Peter Gorschlüter [Köln: König, 2002] 32-33).

The pictures were of the baby carriage used in the kidnapping of Hans-Martin Schleyer.

The young man was Christian Klar.[5] S.Y.P.H. had ripped both pictures out of the

mainstream weekly *Stern*. The images were accompanied by the tagline "Für Rudi

Dutschke," who had died while S.Y.P.H. recorded their EP. Thus the album fused punk

not just with terrorism, but with the student movement as well. S.Y.P.H. packed a

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[5] For details on the Schleyer kidnapping or Christian Klar's and the RAF's actions around 1978 see Stephan Aust's *The Baader-Meinhof Group* (trans. Anthea Bell 1985 [London: The Bodley Head, 1987]) particularly section five "Forty-four days in Autumn" (412-542).

decade of social resistance into on album cover. Rag remembers that printing presses

refused to help S.Y.P.H. produce its album cover montage of pirated images, "deswegen

mussten wir die Cover fotokopiemäßig machen" [*therefore we had to make the cover

with photocopiers*]. This reproduction of images, in the vein of punk's do-it-yourself

(DIY) mantra, altered Klar's face with a black marker. The album cover was a

continuation and simultaneously "eine andere Qualität an Öffentlichkeit als mit dem

Ostrich" [a different quality of publicity than with the *Ostrich*]. With this montage of

text and re-organized images S.Y.P.H. sought to break out of clear delineations of "us"

versus "them," of terrorist versus student, incited by media such as *Stern*: "damals wurde

alles in einen Topf geworfen" [*back then everything was thrown in one pot*]. This

breaking out of fixed positions was not programmatic for S.Y.P.H. but rather "sollte halt

eine Provokation sein. Typisch Punk. Direkt durch das Cover schon sagen: 'Wenn du

diese Platte kaufst, dann springt dich was an. Da ist was Gefährliches drin'" [*should be a

provocation. Typical punk. Directly with the cover say: 'If you buy this record, then you

are going to get it. There's something dangerous inside'*]. S.Y.P.H.'s misappropriated

images mined new frontiers for the production of shock.

For punk Carmen Knoebel, S.Y.P.H.'s DIY album cover was great because they

had begun "alles zu benutzen" [*to use everything*].[6] The two images on *Viel Feind, viel

Ehr* did not provide a map with which to orient oneself. S.Y.P.H. did not tell who the

enemy was or to whom the honor belonged. The misused images and text avoided

instructing how to avoid the one or gain the other. The song "klammheimlich" reshuffled

acoustically the reorganized images on the cover. The song is a chaotic acoustical

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[6] Teipel 190.

montage of sound bites from reports of RAF actions overlaid with S.Y.P.H.'s musical

and lyrical additions. The track consists of reports on the Schleyer kidnapping, RAF

demands for the release of RAF-terrorists jailed in Stuttgart's Stammheim prison,

accounts from the hijacking of Lufthansa's 'Landshut' and the deaths of Baader, Ensslin,

and Raspe in Stammheim, all sampled from evening newscasts. An unending array of

electronic distortions and synthesizer noise, "klammheimlich" accompanies these news

reports with cycles between loud and silent. The sonic chaos of the synthesizer and

electronic guitar feedback crests and falls only to rise again, as if echoing across a

wasteland of technology, with only the television voice as an anchor for the listener to

hang on to. Laid on top of this dystopic soundtrack drifts the lyrical montage "heldentum

/ eigentum / eigenheim / stammheim" [*heroism / possessions / home / Stammheim*].[7] The

words erupt out of the track at irregular intervals. S.Y.P.H. withholds any explanatory

key, rhythmic sense, or intention. Instead, the words that could be easily used to create

binaries of one's home (Eigenheim) versus the terrorists' home (Stammheim) are set into

motion across an apocalyptic soundscape. The song vacillates its acoustic distortions to

destabilize the media-driven keywords. These keywords are the sound collage that

produced S.Y.P.H.'s own punk sense of "no future;" an avant-garde dystopia put on

hold. The song uses lyrics and an atonal array as a scalpel in a punk vivisection of the

media broadcast. The operation here is not interested in finding other uses for mass

media. How did S.Y.P.H. intend to position itself vis-à-vis terrorism up by using

Christian Klar and news broadcasts? S.Y.P.H. made Klar into a better terrorist by fusing

him with punk collages. So did Klar become a better terrorist in S.Y.P.H.'s hands? In the

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[7] S.Y.P.H., "klammheimlich," *Viel Feind, viel Ehr*, Solingen, Pure Freude, 1979.

end, mining terrorism for a more radical form of punk music failed. Both options, terrorism and punk, created a punk "explosé" that was too hot to handle. The explosion backfired on S.Y.P.H.

S.Y.P.H. got too close to the Göttinger Mescalero. Fusing punk and Klar began to glorify terrorist violence. Spoofing media by reusing mass media images and broadcasts trapped them. S.Y.P.H. found itself too close to terrorism, too close to its sympathizers, too close to state surveillance. Uwe Jahnke was scared enough of impending damage of this "explosé" that he preemptively deleted his last name on the back of the EP. S.Y.P.H. feared and later experienced the destruction of their aesthetic bomb.[8] In spite of producing music that made Chrislo Hass feel "das erste Mal, dass Musik, von der Power und Haltung her, eine Regierung stürtzen könnte" [*the first time that music, because of its power and position, could crash a regime*], S.Y.P.H. seems to have decided that fusing terrorism and punk in "klammheimlich" did not have the agency they envisioned or wanted.[9] S.Y.P.H. mistakenly discovered that both options were a trap. The acoustic motion in "klammheimlich" became stasis. It was mired in concrete. This cessation of motion would eventually dominate their 1980 song "Zurück zum Beton" [*back to concrete*].[10] S.Y.P.H. sang of a dream where they see trees and open spaces, only quickly to return to their strictly organized concrete cities. Rag sang:

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[8] For more on Jahnke's editing and other band member's fears see Teipel 189 and martinf "S.Y.P.H. – Die Gevelsberg-Tapes (ergänzt)" (*brotbeutel*, 7 Sept 2007 <http://brotbeutel.blogspot.com/2006/06/syph-die-gevelsberg-tapes-ergnzt.html>).

[9] Teipel 48.

[10] S.Y.P.H., "Zurück zum Beton," *S.Y.P.H.*, Solingen, Pure Freude, 1980.

"Ekel, Ekel, Natur, Natur / ich will Beton pur / blauer Himmel, blauer See / hoch lebe die Betonfee / keine Vögel, Fische, Pflanzen / ich will im Beton tanzen" [*disgust, disgust, nature, nature / I want concrete pure / blue heaven, blue sea / long live the concrete-fairy / no birds, fish, plants / I want to dance in concrete*].[11] "Zurück zum Beton" embraced the concrete world of urban guerilla warfare. Here S.Y.P.H. denounced the natural world and the escape it represented by returning to the artificiality of concrete cities that caused pain and weakness.[12] S.Y.P.H. did not seek to restore natural processes but rather lamented society's oppressive bonds that withstood their joining of terrorism and punk. Why was S.Y.P.H.'s fusion of punk and terrorism doomed to failure? If punk and terrorism were both a dead end trap, then what alternatives were left? Was a third way possible? About the time S.Y.P.H. was recording the album *Wieleicht* a member of the contemporary punk scene in Munich published his fledgling novel *Irre* (1983). Punk life in *Irre* is located in the concrete environment of the Munich metropolis. Terrorists still exist. In *Irre* they find themselves in Munich's institutional spaces. There are still punks in the local punk scene. But three years after S.Y.P.H. and the RAF's failure, does this punk novel avoid the pitfalls of state-sponsored hysteria and constitutional treason? Or does *Irre* just make another punk return to the quagmire of concrete?

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[11] S.Y.P.H., "Zurück zum Beton."

[12] See Teipel 89.

Paris–Munich–Klagenfurt:

Rainald (Maria) Goetz

In 1978, a young medicine and history student published the essay "Der macht seinen Weg. Priviligen, Anpassung, Widerstand" [*He's Making His Way. Privileges, Adaptation, Resistance*] in *Kursbuch* under the name Rainald Maria Goetz. In 1981, an aspiring author published a review of Botho Strauß' novel *Paare, Passanten* in the magazine *Der Spiegel* under the name Rainald Goetz. The man who appears to have been modeling himself after Rainer Maria Rilke spent the intervening years studying in Paris and Munich, and he commuted frequently between Munich and Berlin. The early text in *Kursbuch* laments the "Gleichschaltung auf beiden Seiten" [*ideological conformity of both sides*] in the fight between the Schmidt government, RAF-terrorists and leftover 68ers.[13] As the student recounts his shifting locations–Paris, Munich, Berlin–he recognizes his privileged position as student and author, but simultaneously he seeks to get away from "der Statik der eigenen Positionen" [*the static of his own positions*].[14] To escape stasis he constantly shifted: "aus dem Medizinstudium […] in ein Geschichtsstudium […] von dort in die Literatur" [*from the medical studies […] to history studies […] from there into literature*]. But he returns to his previous loci. He creates new disruptions. He chastises his colleagues "vor dem psychologischen Institut: ihr Idoten, habt ihr eine Ahnung was ich wirklich mache?" [*in front of the psychiatric*

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[13] Rainald Maria Goetz "Der macht seinen Weg. Privilegen, Anpassung, Widerstand," *Kursbuch* 54 (1978): 31-43, 32-33.

[14] Goetz, "Der macht seinen Weg" 42.

institute: you idiots, do you have any idea what I am really doing].[15] This uprootedness

took the writer to Berlin where he published his affirmative review of *Paare, Passanten*.

Here, Rainald Goetz wrote a review that mimed Strauß' novel insofar as the review itself

also finally turned away from "den längst vertrauten kritischen Wegen" [*the long-since*

trusted critical paths].[16] Goetz used the review as an opportunity to reject the

"Orientierungslosigkeit" [*orientationlessness*] of those positions that functioned within

the Marxist dialectic, the "flotte Methode, mit Hilfe derer man Themen revisionssicher

erledigen kann" [*a rakish method, with whose help one can take care of topics without*

fear of revisions].[17] In both texts Goetz argues for taking up all available positions in the

good fight against the "Sog der Anpassung" [*pull of assimilation*] that dominated a life

in the wake of the German Autumn.

Most biographies of Goetz neglect or underemphasize these two early pieces, and

thus neglect how he moved about and bridged various locations and professions.[18] Most

biographies begin with the year 1983, when Goetz unleashed "Subito" as his first

installment of a theory of collage in fiction. At the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize

competition in Klagenfurt, Austria, Goetz sliced open his forehead with a straight razor.

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[15] Goetz, "Der macht seinen Weg" 34.

[16] Rainald Goetz, "Im Dichtigkeit des Lebendigen," *Der Spiegel* 43 19 Oct 1981: 232-239.

[17] Goetz, "Im Dichtigkeit des Lebendigen" 234-235.

[18] See for example *Autorenlexikon deutschsprachiger Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (ed. Manfred Brauneck [Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1991]), that begins Goetz' literary career in 1983 when he received the Literaturpreis des Deutschen Literaturfonds (236). The *Neues Handbuch der deutschen Literatur seit 1945* (ed. Dietz-Rüdiger Moser [Munich: Nymphenburger, 1990]) mentions his work for *Der Spiegel*, but focuses on his post-1983 publications in *Spex* (227).

He did this while reading "Subito," an excerpt from his forthcoming novel *Irre*. This self-inflicted wound mimed the excerpt from which he read: "mit meiner Rasierklinge enttarne ich die Lüge. Mit ruhiger Hand setze ich die Rasierklinge auf eine beliebige Stelle unversehrter Haut und schneide gut sichtbar und tief in die Epidermis ein. […] Das frische helle Blut sucht nun, der Schwerkraft gehorchend, seinen Weg nach unten und bildet so eigensinnige Ornamente auf der Haut" [*with my straight-razor I unmask the lie. With a clam hand I set the straight-razor on a particularly choice part of pristine skin and make a good, visible cut into the epidermis. […] The fresh bright blood, obeying gravity, seeks its way down and creates such unique ornaments on the skin*].[19] The cut and the gushing blood were the author's own textual performance of insanity. The razor: an artistic tool with which Goetz unleashed the interiority of his text on his audience. The liars were his judges, audience members and German literary figures. With his wound, Goetz created a rupture in the divisions of a literary world he dismissed as having the mental capacities of drunken Germans at Carnival. "[M]an wolle sich amüsieren, schließlich sei Fasching, und hier dieser bluttriefende Spinner" [*we just want to amuse ourselves, it is Carnival after all, and here is this nutcase dripping with blood*] (fig. 8).[20]

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[19] Rainald Goetz, "Subito," *Hirn* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1986) 16. *Subito* is Italian for immediately.

[20] This is the reaction as it continues in *Irre* (Rainald Goetz, *Irre* [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1983] 20). Hereafter cited in text.

Fig. 8. Rainald Goetz at Klagenfurt. The first picture shows Goetz cutting himself. The second, how he continued to read of blood dripping as he dripped blood. Images from the video "Blut Performance" (*Die Lust am Erzählen: 25 Jahre Ingeborg-Bachmann-Preis: 1983*, 2 March 2008 <http://bachmannpreis.orf.at/index25.htm>).

The problem, Goetz screamed at his audience in Klagenfurt, was that contemporary German literature, because it was dominated by the cemented styles of the "Peinsäcke" [*bastards*] Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass, authors later juxtaposed with spina bifida-ridden humans and atrophied brains, only exasperated the mainstream cultural conservatism of the 1980s.[21] However, as Goetz' blood began to cover the pages from which he read, he ceased to just read. Rather he transported the text into the lived presence of the Klagenfurt Prize. The cutting questioned borders; it ensured that the text was not simply inside the text. The insane performance from within the text used the body as a conduit for a textual instability to take place. Goetz' performance unleashed insanity as radical. With this combination Goetz sought to escape the ossified canon of German literature, the idiots and their trusted paths, worn-out and safe methods and the pull of assimilation.

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[21] These images are juxtaposed with *Irre*'s indictment of literary production (specifically that of Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll and Peter Handke) and its implicit role in the conditions of cultural hegemony (see *Irre*, 250-278).

There was no shortage of reactions to the "enfant terrible" of Klagenfurt.[22] In

2002 Eckhard Schumacher published "Klagenfurt, Schnitte," a text consisting entirely of

citations about Goetz' performance. The reactions are truly fantastic insofar as they

dismiss the action as a publicity stunt, place the cutting on par with Van Gogh slicing off

his ear, read the action as a reprise of Christian myths such as Christ offering his blood

at the Last Supper, or claim that Goetz just tried to irk Marcel Reich-Ranicki (who was

part of the jury).[23] Although these responses are quite off the mark because they read

Klagenfurt unto itself, even more analytical reactions to Klagenfurt miss the point too.[24]

The cut, the blood, the tirade, the performance of insanity, do not represent a

"Verachtung der Vernunft" [*contempt of reason*] or the search "nach dem faszinierenden

Grauen" [*for fascinating horror*] as Strasser reads it.[25] Waschescio and Noetzel correctly

identify Klagenfurt as some sort of punk action, but they paradoxically use Klagenfurt to

read in *Irre* a "*Versicherung* in einer Welt der zersplitterten Wirklichkeits- und

Sinnproduktion" [stabilization *in a world of splintered production of reality and*

reason].[26] Peter Gendolla looks beyond the sensation of Klagenfurt and reads the cutting

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[22] Petra Waschescio and Thomas Noetzel, "Die Ohnmacht der Rebellion" *L'80* 44 (1987): 27-40, 35.

[23] See Eckhard Schumacher, "Klagenfurt, Schnitte," *Anführen – Vorführen – Aufführen: Texte zum Zitieren* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag, 2002) 281-286.

[24] See for example Johanno Strasser "Über eine neue Lust an der Raserei" *L'80* 44 (1987): 9-23, Petra Waschescio and Thomas Noetzel, "Die Ohnmacht der Rebellion" *L'80* 44 (1987): 27-40, or Walter Delabar "Goetz, Sie reden ein wirres Zeug" *Juni* (1990): 68-78.

[25] Strasser, "Über eine neue Lust an der Raserei" 16-17.

[26] Waschescio and Noetzel, "Die Ohnmacht der Rebellion" 31, emphasis added.

and the blood as significant because of the self-infliction. Because Goetz cut himself, he

formulated "eine Dimension der Bedeutungsproduktion, die vor oder abseits etablierter

sozialer Mechanismen liegt, eine im ursprünglichen Sinn ästhetische […] Auf- oder

Einbrechen von Bedeutung in den tumben, bis dahin bewußtlosen Körper, [...] mit denen

er dann in der sozialen Funktion aufgeht" [*a dimension of meaning-production, that lies

before or aside from established social mechanisms, an originally aesthetic idea of the

breaking-up or breaking-in of meaning into the naïve, up to that point unconscious body,

with which he then enters into a social function*].[27] But just like S.Y.P.H. and others who

tapped into punk's chaotic montages, Goetz did not seek programmatic explanations.

Rather, as he dripped blood and read of blood dripping, he prolonged and doubled an

aesthetic moment, violently creating a montage of text and reality. This is what

Klagenfurt was all about: a montage that combined the performance of madness with the

intellectual-artist. Klagenfurt is a crucial springboard for understanding *Irre*.

The Asylum and Punk Scene:

The Two Spaces in Irre

   Irre is a mess of a text. It is at times unreadable. *Irre* tells the story of Dr. Raspe,

who shares his name with terrorist Jan-Carl Raspe of Baader-Meinhof fame. As a trained

doctor, he seeks to heal the sick citizens of the Federal Republic. The novel has a

triptych structure that in the first third is a series of aphoristic passages, random

dialogues and citations that follow Raspe, the budding psychiatrist who "die deutsche

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[27] Peter Gendolla, "Der übrige Körper ist für Verzierungen bestimmt" *Schönheit und Schrecken*, ed. Peter Gendolla and Carsten Zelle (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1990):145-166, 163-164.

Psychologie revolutionieren [wird]" [*will revolutionize German psychiatry*] (116). The second part, itself divided into three parts, is a stream of transcribed conversations between Raspe and a vast, random array of doctors, schizophrenics, punks, hippies, professors, students and himself. The final third fuses the previous two narrative strands in a chaotic–and psychotic–montage of fragments, sketches and images. *Irre* is a story about what Raspe does as both a doctor and a punk, about what the patients and doctors in the asylum do, and what Raspe's punk friends do. The narrative follows Raspe as he spends time in the hospital and the local Munich punk scene. Although Raspe is often in such an intoxicated state that the two milieus begin to blur, it is crucial to understand these distinct narrative spaces and exactly what people do in each of them.

The asylum is a series of hallways, lecture halls, meeting rooms, dining halls, common rooms, treatment rooms and patients' cells. Patients are brought into the asylum if they are deemed psychotic by the *Gesetz über die Unterbringung psychisch Kranker und deren Betreuung* [*Law on the Internment of and Care for the Psychically Sick*] cited early in the novel. In this legal paragraph the state's actions concerning the interment of psychotics are intended to create security and order: "Wer psychisch krank oder infolge Geistesschwäche oder Sucht psychisch gestört ist und dadurch in erheblichem Maße die öffentliche Sicherheit oder Ordnung gefährdet, kann gegen oder ohne seinen Willen in einem psychiatrischen Krankenhaus oder sonst in geeigneter Weise untergebracht werden" [*Whoever is psychically sick, or is psychically disturbed as a result of mental weakness or mania and thereby endangers public security and order, can, against or without his will, be brought into a psychiatric hospital or other such institution*] (17). Once patients enter the asylum, they are "augenblicklich in den Bann dieses Gesetzes

geschlagen" [*instantaneously trapped in the control of this law*] (37). Some patients struggle against this law with violent outbursts. In the asylum the patients smear themselves with feces and tear open old wounds. Doctors attempt to control the patients with drugs, straps and straight jackets.[28] Wards violently restrain Schneemann, one of the interred who resists being placed in a straightjacket, with "einen offenbar schmerzhaften Kiefergriff" [*an obviously painful grip on his jaw*]. Another ward "drückte mit der frei gewordenen Hand auf den Kehlkopf des Patienten" [*pressed with his freed hand onto the patient's larynx*] (191). Raspe witnesses all of this during his time in the asylum. He talks extensively with his patients and he learns from them: "durch sie wolle er verstehen lernen, wie wir neu, ohne Psychologie, von uns sprechen müßten" [*through them he wanted to learn how to understand, how we could, without psychology, learn to speak of ourselves anew*] (261). He talks for hours with the patient Kiener about "Aschenverbrennung" [*the burning of ashes*] but the conversation never comes to an end. Rather, their talks constantly take new, unexpected directions because of Kiener's random and interruptive questions (216-217).

Raspe also learns from his experiences with his friends while in the punk scene. The punk scene consists of bars, concert halls, Munich's streets, apartments and subway cars. These scenes are dominated by violence, drugs and alcohol. The names of the two punk pubs in *Irre*, "Damage" and "Größenwahn" [*meglomania*], are keywords for what happens inside them. While in "Größenwahn," Raspe's punk friend Neun-Finger-Joe approaches him looking rather bloody: "Das linke Auge ist Blutunterlaufen, die Lider zugeschwollen, Schultern und Arme sind verkratzt, das Unterhemd verdreckt muß zu

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[28] See *Irre* p.53 and 80 for the patient Adolf Straßmaier's cures of Hadol and Neurocil, p.182-184 for Schneemann smearing himself with feces and p.15 for Herr S. ripping off his fingernails.

Boden gegangen sein" [*the left eye is bloodshot, the lids swollen shut, shoulders and arms are scratched, the undershirt is dirty, he must have fallen down*] (92). This was not the result of some personal vendetta, but rather an attempt for Joe and another punk to find out "wer härter drauf ist" [*who's tougher*] (93). This is not Joe's first fight; he is already missing a finger from an earlier encounter. Raspe receives his own damage at an XTC concert: "ein Faustschlag in mein ungedecktes Gesicht, [...] nur Schmerz und Wut, unbeschreibliche Wut wahrnehmen, [...] eine tiefe Wunde und [ich] hoffte, daß mir das Blut nicht aus dem Mund liefe" [*a punch from a fist in my face [...] only felt pain and rage, indescribable rage, [...] a deep wound and [I] hope, that blood is not running out of my mouth*] (93-94). Punk violence occurs through either insanity (Größenwahn) or ecstasy (XTC). Punk music creates another experience. After drinking hash-laced tea Raspe goes to a concert with his friends. In his intoxicated state Raspe cowers in the corner of the punk concert hall:

> Ich ziehe mich in den hintersten Winkel des Saales zurück, kauere mich in eine Ecke, und während ich mein Denken zu steuern versuche, es richte gegen meine Angst wahnsinnig zu werden keine Angst das geht vorbei du kennst das keine Angst nur vorübergehend nur pharmakologisch induzierte psychotischer Zustand, falle ich in tiefen, gedanken- und bilderlosen Schlaf.

> [*I pull myself into a corner in the back of the hall, cower in a corner, and while I try to control my thoughts, they turn against my fear to go crazy no fear that will pass you know that no fear just passing just pharmacologically induced psychotic condition, I fall into a deep, thought- and picture-less sleep*] (64).

In his semi-conscious stream-of-consciousness condition Raspe works through his own psychotic moment. But whereas Schneemann was violently restrained, here the would-be schizophrenic–Raspe–is the doctor whom the state approves to stem the damage the schizophrenic can do to society. Raspe does to himself for pleasure what the doctors in the asylum do to the patients, namely medicating the patient into oblivion.

Raspe misappropriates the order of the asylum and the streets of Munich

explicitly through drugs and language. Because he misuses language, medical

knowledge and drugs throughout the novel, it is difficult to pin the punk-doctor Raspe

down. The psychiatrist Raspe interacts with doctors and patients. The punk Raspe sways

from intoxication to sobriety so often that already with the first line of the novel he

wonders where he momentarily finds himself: "ich erkannte nichts wieder" [*I didn't*

recognize anything] (11). In effect, Raspe's perception of the world is a jumbled

montage of physical violence, drugs, locations and knowledge. Raspe subverts for

pleasure the very techniques the state and mechanisms of discipline would have him use

to subdue himself and others. This confusion caused by Raspe's double and

contradictory locations makes him seem himself as schizophrenic as his patients. Raspe

argues with his personalities: "Ich tue meine Arbeit, und ich tue sie gut. – Das klingt so

zynisch. – Das verbitte ich mir! – Was?, was meinen Sie denn jetzt? Man redete in

Raspes Kopf, merkwürdige Streitgespräche waren das. Raspe hörte zu, hörte einen

Idealisten, hörte Desillusionierte, Trinker, Zyniker, Verzweifelte" [*I do my work and I*

do it well. – That sounds so cynical. – I forbid that! – What?, what do you mean now?

Someone spoke in Raspe's head, they were remarkable arguments. Raspe listened to the

idealist, a disillusioned one, a drinker, a cynic, a desperate one] (176). Raspe listens to

myriad voices in his head, but he resists harmonizing them. He wants chaotic discourse.

By listing to the noises in his head, Raspe avoids what Norbert Bolz has called the

"civilizing force" of chaos. Chaos can become progressive if one allows a "Selektion im

Chaos, d.h. Ausdifferenzierung von Medien vor einem Hintergrund von Rauschen –

Buchstäblich die Differenz zwischen Buchstaben und dem Zwischen der Buchstaben"

[*selection in chaos, i.e. differentiation of media in a background of noise–literally the difference between the letters and the Between the letters*].[29] By listening to the schizophrenic noise in the asylum and in his head, Raspe explicitly avoids "die Einführung von Oppositionen überhaupt" [*the introduction of oppositions whatsoever*].[30] The absence of any common denominator in *Irre*'s mental-montage is reflected in Raspe's searches for "Amnesie" [*amnesia*] (222). Raspe's search for amnesia makes it difficult to tell who is where and why: "wer bin ich, wo und warum" [*who am I, where and why*] (212). By tapping into schizophrenia, Raspe makes his presence in any location seem fleeting.

Ultimately, Raspe desires the deorganization of his mind and body such that "die Summe […] beliebig [wird]" [*the sum becomes random*].[31] He tells explicitly of his desired self-deorganization: "Das brutalste, ordinärste, grobste Gesicht wollte Raspe haben. Er wollte keine Sprache mehr kennen, außer Brocken von Dialekt. Er wollte eine Faust haben, die umstandslos zuschlägt" [*Raspe wanted the most brutal, ordinary, abrasive face. He didn't want to know any language any more, just bits of dialects. He wanted to have a fist that attacked unconditionally*] (222). Raspe uses his damaged body to create an anarchistic wasteland, an "ätzender Irrtum" [*acidic mistake/state of insanity*], that freezes an avant-garde moment in an "Mundhöhle voll von einem Schrei ohne Anfang und hörte die zeitlose Stille des Weltalls" [*oral cavity filled by a scream*

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[29] Norbert Bolz, *Die Welt als Chaos und Simulation* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1992) 12.

[30] Bolz 12.

[31] Bolz 78.

without a beginning and listens to the timeless still of the universe] (331, 18). Raspe's

chaotic scrambling of spaces, discourses, images and sounds creates in the narrative a

"rasendem Rhythmus [… der] krachte" [*a racing rhythm [...] that crashed*] (223). This

rhythm breaks barriers; it destroys or ignores boundaries of citation, image, song and

knowledge. This chaotic narrative in *Irre*, that in the third part of the novel fuses not

only schizophrenia and punk, but also image and text, is the literary manifestation of

Raspe's "Theorie der Selbstverletzung" [*theory of self-infliction*] (20). Raspe first

demonstrates his theory of self-infliction at a Carnival party where he turns up wearing

red shorts and shirt, "an Armen, Beinen und am Hals mit zahlreichen Schnittwunden

geschmückt, verziert von frischen Blutrinnsalen […] die Rasierklinge an einem

Lederriemen um den Hals gebunden" [*decorated on arms, legs and on the throat with

countless cuts, adorned by fresh lines of blood [...] the straight razor attached to the

throat with a leather strap*] (19). Whenever another party-guest asks how he made his

costume, Raspe responds by cutting himself anew: "Hat jemand lachend auf seine

Oberschenkel gewiesen und gesagt, perfekt täuschende Imitation super wahrscheinlich

Plastik sag mal wo hast du das her, hat er kommentarlos, jedoch freundlich […]

langsam, gut sichtbar und tief in die Haut eingeschnitten" [*if someone gestured

laughingly at his thigh and said, perfectly fooling imitation super realistic plastic say

where did you get that, he, without comment, but friendly enough [...] slowly, in plain

view, cut very deeply into the skin*] (19). Although Raspe talks of his wounds as

ornaments, the other guest, as a result of this ornamentation, "habe […] mit Befremdung

reagiert, von Geschmacklosigkeit sei gesprochen worden" [*people reacted with

alienation, they spoke of tastelessness] (20). In the novel the distinction between real

violence and fake violence vanishes.

The violence enacted by the asylum–here a metonym for Munich–as a means of

control, becomes, just as the guest remarks to seeing Raspe's wounds, "perfekt

täuschende" [*perfectly fooling*]. According to his theory of self-infliction, Raspe's

wounds become "Ornamenten" [*ornaments*] (20). This ornamentation transports ideas

and actions, insane ones normally contained within the asylum, outside into the streets of

Munich. Here, the violence of the asylum uses the body as a vehicle, a means with which

to break out of ordered boundaries. Raspe's self-inflicted violence ultimately damages

the final third of the novel *Irre*. An insane act such as slicing open one's body is crucial

for Raspe's montage because the "Stilisierung und Ästhetisierung des Wahnsinns […] ist

[…] die *eigentliche* Präfiguration künstlerischer Hervorbringung, […] daß der

Psychotiker anstrengungslos und jenseits von Kalkül eben dies erreichen worum der

Künstler, oft genug vergeblich, ringen müsse" [*stylization and aestheticization of*

insanity […] is the real pre-figuration of artistic production, […] that the psychotic

attains effortlessly and beyond calculation, while the artist, often enough, has to struggle

to no avail] (78). *Irre* thus presents an avant-garde theory of montage through Raspe's

body–an instance of body modification that the text represents as radical–that tweaks out

the hopelessness and negative utopia voiced four years earlier by S.Y.P.H.. *Irre* tests

how Raspe interfaces uncontrolled psychotic behavior with psychiatry to create a

subversive use of knowledge. But why is Raspe different than the punks of Munich or

the patients in the asylum?

Cell or Asylum:

Fottner and Hippius versus Raspe

      Irre repeatedly juxtaposes Raspe with schizophrenics and doctors, in particular Fottner, an interred schizophrenic, and Dr. Andreas Hippius. Through this juxtaposition of characters, *Irre* explores Raspe's medical knowledge as a form of control, and how he scrambles and misappropriates this knowledge as power. The prominent role that the asylum and medicine play in *Irre* necessitates a brief turn to Michel Foucault's investigations into the interrelatedness of capitalism and confinement of the "sick." In *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) Foucault locates the creation, the criminalization and the fear of psychotics in the eighteenth century. His archaeology of the prison examines the effects of a field of mechanisms, generally operating under the guise of modernization and control, as elements to be developed for the successful production of capital. He examines further how these effects have become intertwined with "mainstream" functions of state apparatuses of democratic societies. The intertwinement and entrenchment of the asylum and the state, of medical knowledge and power, makes institutionalization superfluous. *Irre* marks its entrance into the problem and limits of discourse (i.e., the problem of how cultural and linguistic practices have effects beyond producing meaning) with the citation of the German internment law (p. 63). In *Irre*, the asylum's modus operandi is to drug patients who then cower in some sort of fetal-like position, muttering incomprehensible fragments: "da wird gelabbert wie verrückt" [*there they babble like crazies*] (139). The patient Kiener, for example, "sagte den ganzen Tag nur einen, meist recht wirren Satz" [*says all day just one, pretty much confused sentence*] (217). However, these schizo-mutterings are deceptive. If one

actually listens, as Raspe does, then "eine erstaunliche Komplexität, zugleich logisch und verrückt, [kommt] zutage" [*an amazing complexity, at the same time logical and insane, appears*] (217). Raspe embraces this mode of psycho-discourse. He begins to mime the speech of the asylum: "die Patienten und sich zu noch kürzer gefaßtem Dialog" [*the patients and himself to an even more reduced dialogue*] (140). Such language creates one line of flight outside disciplined modes of communication and discipline. In *Irre*, schizophrenics lay bare the operations of the state within the asylum. They expose the asylum as a space of power.

During a presentation by Dr. Schlüsser, senior doctor in the asylum, Raspe realizes how the patient Fottner's sheer existence unmasks the lies of the clinic. Raspe is dumbfounded that the schizophrenic's "teilnahmslose Ruhe, ein Gebirge gegen das humpelnde abstruse Geschwätz, eine bewegungslose Weisheit der Verzweiflung [war]" [*apathetic silence was a bedrock against the hobbling, abstruse babble, a motionless knowledge of distress*] (207). This patient doesn't appear to pose a particularly grand threat because he is "bewegungslos" [*motionless*]: he cannot move or traverse any boundaries. Although the patient Fottner stands in the static state the asylum desires, he still "machte jedes noch so richtige Wort über das Wesen der Depression und Fottners Zustand augenblicklich zur Lüge" [*made each correct word concerning the character of depression and Fottner's condition instantaneously into a lie*] (207). The interred can be immobilized, but their existence lays bare the operations of the asylum. In this demonstration it becomes evident that it is impossible to read the repressed, as Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari argue, "through and in the repression, since the latter is

constantly inducing a false image of the thing it represses."[32] The patient Fottner does not present his schizophrenia or manic-depressiveness for analysis. Rather, he only exhibits what the repressive apparatus, the asylum, gives him to represent. By drugging Fottner into a catatonic state, the asylum, it seems, has destroyed the organism on which it bases its power. Interestingly, the excessive attempts to bind and limit Fottner have, quite oppositely, created new breaks that he can potentially manipulate. Here *Irre* uses Fottner to unmask how disciplinary institutions, such as the Munich asylum in which Raspe works, do not misdiagnose the cause of their patients' psychoses. Internment of citizens does not result from misunderstandings or faulty analysis. Quite contrarily, the state inters schizophrenics in an attempt to justify the effects, namely stability and stagnation, of its organization. In *Irre* schizophrenics such as Fottner lay bare these operations and the psychiatrists recognize the schizophrenics' clairvoyance. The doctors recognize that "[i]n der Psychose […] kämen die Grundwidersprüche unserer Gesellschaft unverstellt zum Vorschein" [*through psychoses our societies' fundamental contradictions appear to us unaltered*] (38). As such, the doctors' task in the asylum ceases to be one of healing. The task becomes, rather, one of using medicine to fight "die in der Psychose erkannte Wahrheit über unsere Wirklichkeit" [*the truth of our reality that is recognized in psychoses*] (38). However, Fottner remains bound in the asylum. He fails.

Whereas Fottner remains constrained, Raspe entangles his unorganized body and power to create frictions for which the normative modes of constraint (prisons, schools, work) cannot account. When Raspe struggles, in either the asylum or the city, he creates

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[32] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1977) 339.

an unorganized moment in the space he occupies. This moment is not easily subjected to

"mainstream" behavior. Raspe's movements begin to disturb others in his midst. The

disturbance, his rupture of the asylum's enclosure, emerges on the streets of Munich.

Raspe's erratic behavior in Munich disrupts and disturbs: "allen hoch geschätzten

redlichen Bürger haben sich später bei den Zeitungen beschwert, daß die bösen Panx an

einem langen, verkaufsoffenen Samstag einfach Unfug treiben dürfen, ohne daß die

Polizei eingreift, Personalien feststellt und so die ernstliche Belästigung des redlichen

Bürgers verhindert" [*all of the highly valued honest citizens later complained to the*

newspapers, that the big bad punks, on what should be a long Saturday of shopping,

were allowed to screw around without the police getting involved, identifying them, so

that the serious disturbance of the honest citizens could be prevented] (62). The

"Randale, Spaß und Krawall" [*rioting, fun, and ruckus-ness*] that takes places in the

"Fußgängerzone" [*pedestrian zone*] disturbs the organized and controlled society of

Munich in *Irre*. But this disrupts more than the citizens. This disruption uses psychotic

behavior to impede the functioning of capital: the shoppers cannot shop because of the

punks' disorderly behavior. The policing of such behavior makes possible "mainstream"

functions of the state. Raspe's "Aktionen" [*actions*] prevent smooth consumption, but

also subvert mainstream societies conception of riots, revolution, and resistance (60).

For instance, Raspe infuses the simplest of outings with chaos: riding in the subway to a

Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle concert results in stoppage of all subway traffic. Cops appear

everywhere and ultimately eject him from the train (61-62). These actions represent

Raspe's affective and physical performance of an individual straining against the

straightjacket placed on him as a citizen. This straightjacket is the German internment

law, the law of the asylum that governs daily life outside of the asylum. The actions and rioting carried out by Raspe and his punk cohorts contain multiple meanings that are indecipherable and unpredictable. Indeed, the most dangerous aspect of Raspe and the punks' actions in the streets and subways of Munich, for the state, is their unpredictability. The state is not in the capacity to predict where punks will go next. Even if they luck out, they are never prepared for what will happen (62). Contrarily, the punks' rampaging through the streets, according to Raspe, "läuft […] programmgemäß" [*runs according to plan*] (62). The disjunction between the clarity of the confusion for the punks and the pure confusion of the police highlights the successfulness of these affective riots and the politics of anti-civilizing chaos.

Raspe's aesthetic, medical, and political foil inside the asylum is Dr. Andreas Hippius. Dr. Hippius represents hippies, the sworn enemy of punk.[33] The novel dismisses this oppositional group from the early seventies that still tries to resist the state's dogmatic dictates "trotz vieler desillusionierender Erfahrungen" [*in spite of so many disillusioning experiences*] (40). More than keeping in line with traditional punk hatred of "HippiesMüslisFreaks" [*hippie-granola-freaks*], Raspe hates "die Peinlichkeit von alternden 68ern" [*the embarrassment of aging 68ers*] (167, 290). This hate is reserved for those who retain worn-out inflexible methods, dialectics, for example, that help one resolve issues "revisionssicher" [*without fear of revision*].[34] Here distancing oneself from a previous movement provides a means of not pigeonholing oneself.

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[33] Hippius is also a reference to the Hippocratic oath that all doctors take, in which they promise to protect the lives of their patients. Hippius is meant to protect these patients, but because he remains inside the institution he cannot adequately carry out his sworn oath.

[34] Goetz, "Im Dickicht des Lebendigen" 235.

Wedding oneself to any singular position makes it possible for "PunkHippie und ProfessorenHippie nebeneinander auf der Stelle [zu treten]" [*punk-hippies and professor-hippies to stand next to one another*] (320). Once punks and hippies stand they solidify their position they institutionalize themselves. They thereby cease to represent any potential hero: "Der Held ist der Stets Bewegte Mensch" [*the hero is the constantly moving person*] (321). The derogatory comment about hippie-professors culls another form of cultural resistance form the 1960s, namely the student movement. The student movement of 1968 was, in part, a reaction to the legacies of fascism in the Federal Republic. The students turned to Herbert Marcuse, for example, in their attempt to create a cultural revolution; the university system was in many respects their springboard. Raspe dismisses such narrow and contained moments because of their emphasis on theoretical discourse and the isolation of the students inside institutions (universities). Raspe tells exactly why Hippius' (i.e., hippies and students') behavior is a dead end. Within *Irre*, Hippius is another "dessen kritischer Idealismus unweigerlich in den Institutionen zermahlen wird" [*whose critical idealism will be ground up without fail in the institutions*] (42). It is impossible to alter the effects of discourse within the asylum or the university.

Hippius illustrates the limitations of '68 because he does not traverse the boundary between inside and outside, asylum and city. His fixed location limits his ability to protect patients. The change he can enact is bound within the asylum's borders. Within these borders Hippius' "Unkonventionalität [, …] hat […] einiges in Bewegung gebracht, eben, er hat hier eine nicht ganz unwichtige Funktion, man braucht sie ja nicht gleich politisch zu nennen, eine menschliche Funktion, eine Verunsicherung all der

übrigen überangepaßten Kollegen, […] eine Verunsicherung, die letztlich den Patienten dient" [*unconventionality, […] has gotten some things moving, yes, here he has a not entirely unimportant function, it doesn't have to be immediately called political, a humanizing function, a destabilization of all of the super-adjusted colleagues, […] a destabilization, that, in the last instance, serves the patients*] (42). Andreas incites this destabilization in the asylum by changing the comfortable conditions of sartorial discipline: he has a ponytail. The asylum has a system that Hippius disturbs "schon durch die Haare" [*already through his hair*] (42). Alone this ponytail represents "eine Aufweichung des engstirnigen Normalitätsbegriff" [*a diversion from the narrow-minded conception of normalcy*] (42). Hippius' disturbance challenges the doctors' sartorial narrow mindedness, a stylistic tradition homologous of the ossification of medical practice. Although this is a moment of change, Hippius' behavior becomes normal to the doctors in the asylum. This behavior becomes non-threatening because doctors stabilize it: these subtle changes are inscribed in the history of the asylum in the minutes from doctors' meetings.[35] Furthermore, Hippius' spontaneity, his putative radical position within the institution, is nothing of the sort. His potentially subversive diversions from the norm are quite literally a joke. Raspe recounts how the hippie "begrüßte […] die um ihn herum […] mit jener spontanen Scherze, die hier von ihm erwartet werden. Dann ißt er und schweigt" [*greeted those around him with one of the spontaneous jokes that are expected from him. Then he was quite and ate*] (40). Worse than his comedic role in the asylum, Hippius' behavior is predictable. Bögel, one of Raspe's colleagues, drives the last nail in the coffin of '68 when he talks about the "subkutane Modifikation des Codes

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[35] See *Irre* 40-42 and 122-124.

[…] in der Folge der Studentenbewegung" [*the subcutaneous modification of the codes […] in the wake of the student movements*] (123). What was this great modification of the codes of behavior? Through "eine feine Strategie der Subversion" [*through a fine strategy of subversion*] the doctors in the asylum could choose not to wear a necktie in the asylum (123). Bögel lays out the potential (resurrected) future of '68, namely that if Raspe tries hard, he may be able to make it such that doctors can wear their jackets open (123).

Anti-institutional discourse cannot change the effects of discourse in the domain of the asylum. Raspe concludes that those who try to use medical discourse in the asylum in a new way, "alle das gleiche erzählen, oft weiß man die Sätze schon im voraus, die dann prompt kommen" [*all say the same thing, one already knows the sentences, that then promptly come out*] (40-41). Here Raspe speaks explicitly to the ineffectiveness of anti-discourse without action for anything other than sustaining civilizing boundaries. The students and hippies of '68 recognize that "diese ganzen einzelnen nur ein riesiger Patient sind, der eben durchdreht, Medikamente kriegt, sich beunruhigt und wieder durchdreht, das läuft bei allen gleich ab, genauso wird es mit der Zeit ein einziger Angehöriger, der einem immer die gleichen leidvollen Familien- und Partnerstories erzählt, immer das gleiche" [*this whole thing is just one giant patient, that goes nuts, gets medication, gets disturbed and goes berserk again, its the same with all of them, and in that regard, as time passes, it becomes just a singular member, who always tells the same sorry family- and partner- stories, always the same*] (41). The hippie in the asylum represents a potentially radical moment in *Irre* because he recognizes medical discourse is the power exercised on the whole population. This is a

normalizing discourse of power. The medical oppression of the population and the

discourse of power are mutually reinforcing.[36] Hippius does not, however, get outside of

the institution and enact the change that the punk and doctor Raspe can.[37] Hippius

operates exclusively within the discourse of medicine. He does not, as Raspe does,

chaotically blur discourse, motion, noise, violence, inside and outside. Hippius does not

establish spaces where (medical) discourse can be turned on itself and be made into a

starting point for an oppositional strategy. This is what Raspe does: he subverts anti-

institutional discourse into action.

Medical knowledge provides the possibility of a radical moment in the novel. If

trapped inside the asylum, however, it can only be revised into something affirmative.

Raspe, the punk-psychiatrist, speaks directly to this when he thinks of his program

versus that of the hippie-stand-in, Hippius. Raspe thinks to himself: "Ich wundere mich,

daß Andreas offenbar bemüht war, nur definitive revisionssichere Aussagen zu machen,

so als könne jeder spekulative Satz sofort gegen ihn verwendet werden" [*I wonder why

Andreas was obviously so concerned with only saying definitively revision-proof

statements, as if any speculative sentence could be instantly used against him*] (44). The

other potentially radical doctor in the asylum has to be careful of what he says because it

can be revised, destroyed or just become a sartorial bagatelle. Raspe knows, "daß er in

der Klinik als einzelner nichts, überhaupt nichts verändern kann, so wenig wie jeder

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[36] For a discussion of discourse of normalization and German literature, including Rainald Goetz' literary production from the 1990s, see Jürgen Link *Versuch über den Normalismus: Wie Normalität produziert wird* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1999) 15-26 and 67-74.

[37] This is a problem that plagued social movements in the 1960s and 1970s, namely the accusation that the socially radical moments were confined to the institution (the universities) and was carried out by those who could afford (either with money or with their free time) to demonstrate.

andere einzelne sonst" [*that in the clinic he as an individual can't change a thing, just as every other individual*] (210). Raspe's schizophrenic movements take medical discourse outside the asylum and bring punk chaos inside the asylum. Raspe speaks of this back and forth: "Einmal war ich darin. Seither laufe ich in Panik davon weg. Deshalb muß ich immer wieder hinein" [*once I was inside. Since then I run in a panic away from it. That's why I always have to go back inside*] (240). Raspe does not allow himself to be limited or terminated by external boundaries between sanity and insanity. The punk in the asylum has more liberty because other doctors never understand what he is doing, but also because he harnesses what the patients know. He learns from them: "durch sie wolle er verstehen lernen, wie wir neu, ohne Psychologie, von uns sprechen müßten" [*through them he wanted to learn how to understand, how we could, without psychology, learn to speak of ourselves anew*] (261). He moves from location to location, and within each arena, he is twitching, muttering, running, and rioting like a madman. Raspe must harness schizophrenia because then the text has to deal with his actions: "meine Manie die Welt ertragen muß" [*the world has to deal with my mania*] (282). Additionally, insanity inspires unpredictability and indecipherability in his motion: "Gehen, Stehen, Gehen, alles eins, Weitergehen. Würde ich liegen, könnte ich nicht gehen. Da ich gehen muß, liege ich nicht. Da ich nicht liege, gehe ich" [*Going, Standing, Going, its all the same, keep going. If I were to lay down, I couldn't go. Because I have to go, I don't lie down. Because I don't lie down, I go*] (12). The "Gehen, Stehen, Gehen" [*Going, Standing, Going*] represents a moment of physical resistance to the narrative strictures (borders) placed upon Raspe and his body.

These metaphorical strictures are placed on bodies in the interests of discipline and control. These strictures have become, through the civilizing processes of modernity, metaphorical and naturalized as a part of citizens' identity. The schizophrenics are interred because their identity doesn't conform to the norm: they do not recognize these natural disciplinary codes. This lack of recognition creates innumerable, and unpredictable, points of confrontation and instability. Raspe's actions represent a struggle to break free from an organized and stabilized state Julia Bertschik writes, "mit Instabilität und Identitätswandel […], 'welche für das moderne Ich ein Problem darstellen, weil sie Angst mach[en] und eine Identitätskrise heraufbeschw[ören]'" [*with instability and identity-transformation [...] 'that poses a problem for the modern 'I', because they create fear and evoke an identity crisis'*].[38] Raspe magnifies these moments in both milieus. Each moment, taken outside its strategic and state-organized border into a third space, creates an in-between that produces at least temporary inversions of power relations. In the novel the doctors seem to control the patients and Raspe is denied a clear victory. Raspe even questions his own project in the last line of the novel: "Ist endlich alles eines, meine Arbeit?" [*Is it ultimately unified, my work*] (331).[39] However, this conception of "control" and the apparent pessimistic conclusion of the novel diminish the importance of Raspe's

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[38] Julia Bertschik. "Theatralitat und Irrsinn: Darstellungsformen 'multipler' Personlichkeitskonzepte in der Gegenwartsliteratur: zu Texten von Heinar Kipphardt, Unica Zurn, Rainald Goetz und Thomas Hettche," *Wirkendes Wort* 47.3 (1997): 398-423, 417.

[39] The answer to this question comes five years later in Goetz' second novel *Kontrolliert*: "Alles ist endlich nicht eines, sondern viel hoch vieles" [*everything is not a unity, rather exponentially everything*] (Rainald Goetz, *Kontrolliert*, [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988] 252).

moments of resistance. Indeed the impact of these localized moments are inscribed in

Irre itself by the effects that they induce on the entire network in which they are caught

up.[40] *Irre* is the history of these moments. It is in the history of the asylum, the written

narratives that Raspe creates after his fleeting bed-visits. It is also the chaos of Raspe's

doctor-punk "Aktionen" [*actions*] in Munich (60). Whereas Hippius represents

institutional discourse, Raspe uses the technique of montage to expose the insidious

nature of discourse by exploring the fluidity of inside and outside. Both Fottner and

Hippius are ineffective in *Irre* because they do not cull medically powerful discourse and

a liminal position between the asylum and the outside. This is what Rapse does. *Irre* thus

tests how Raspe interfaces psychotic behavior with psychiatry to create subversive use

of knowledge through motion. This is what makes Raspe so special. He uses his motion

to create a third space between the asylum and the punk scene.

Cells–Pubs–Studios:

Raspe's Motion; Other's Stasis

  Irre juxtaposes Raspe's movements and performances with artists, punks and

other schizophrenics who remain either inside or outside. *Irre* uses these other figures,

K., Wolfgang, and Bernd as foils for Raspe's anarchistic use of knowledge-power.

Raspe drinks a lot of beer with his friend K., a psychiatrist turned artist, who "halte […]

die sogenannten Verrückten imgrunde für die Normalen" [*considers […] the so-called

crazies the normal ones*] (38). K. does not seek to change the operations of the asylum,

and "komme […] mit dem Irrsinn der Normalität mühsam genug zurecht" [*comes well-*

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[40] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 27.

enough to terms with the insanity of normalcy] (38). As an artist, K. holds another

privileged position, one that can harness psychosis for productivity. K. seeks to mine this

relation. However, because K. maintains a position outside the asylum, his artistic

attempt to resist the institutionalization of psychotics fails. He cannot expose the

unchecked power of medical discourse. K.'s position is therefore only partially radical.

Raspe's punk friend Wolfgang recognizes, as K. does, the psychoses-inducing project of

society. Wolfgang notes that West Germany is a "Gesellschaft, die konsequent ihre

Mitglieder krank macht, vorallem psychisch krank, [und] hilft die Psychiatrie am

Überleben. Du [Raspe] heilst ja die Leute, die in ihrer Krankheit angemessen auf die

verkehrten Bedingungen ihres Lebens reagieren, zu keinem anderen Zweck, als das sie

erneut in ihren alten krankmachenden Bedingungen funktionieren" [*society, that*

consistently makes its members sick, above all psychotically sick, and helps psychiatry to

survive. You [Raspe] heal the people, who because of their sickness react correctly to

the inverted conditions of their lives, for no other reason, than so that they can once

again function in the conditions that made them sick] (154). Society makes its members'

psyches sick. Those who recognize this operation are destined for the asylum. Here the

Marxist spells out the dialectic of sanity in society: Wolfgang understands the role

medical discourse plays in society, but he is not a doctor. He is merely an intelligent

member of the Marxist student group at the university. Wolfgang does not occupy a

position from which he can negotiate the inside-outside divide between the mechanisms

of control and those subjected to this control. Wolfgang's isolated and permanent

position, his dialectics ("flotte Methode" [*rakish method*]) represent only part of his

limitation.[41] The more fundamental lack is that he has no access to medicine. Thus, despite his recognition of the function of the asylum, Wolfgang's "formulierenden Lippen berühren, […] und sonst nichts" [*formulating lips briefly effect [the situation ...] but nothing else*] (155). That Wolfgang recognizes the bankrupt nature of the asylum, but cannot do anything with this knowledge, underscores the importance of Rapse's and K.'s medical knowledge, and the uniqueness of Raspe's dual role as doctor and punk.

After a schizoid monolog between Raspe and himself on how one can sedate patients, the desired effects of such sedations, and the ultimate uselessness of these "treatments," the following discussion takes place between Raspe and K.:

> – Wahnsinn Wahnsinn Wahnsinn, Wahnsinn sag ich, das ist Revolte.
> – Quatsch.
> –Logisch, Wahnsinn ist Revolte, ist Kunst, Mann!
> –Ah ja.
> –Okay, ich übertreibe, aber wenn du die Sachen gerade gelesen hättest vom Laing und vom Cooper.
> –Alles Schrott.
> –Da hört die begrifflose Romantisierung des Wahnsinns auf, und was losgeht, ist seine notwendige Politisierung, und am Rande eben auch die Eröffnung der künstlerischen Dimension des Wahnsinns.
>
> [*Insanity Insanity Insanity, Insanity I say, that is revolt.*
>   *Bullshit.*
> *Logically, insanity is revolt, it's art, man!*
>   *Uh-huh.*
> *O.k., I am exaggerating, but if you had just read the things I did, from Laing and from Cooper.*
>   *It's all crap.*
> *That where the vague romantization of insanity ends, and what begins, is its necessary politicization, and on the edges even the opening of the artistic dimension of insanity*] (31).

Raspe realizes in his dialog with K. that insanity is a means to resist modern divisions of life. This resistance manifests itself through the aesthetic fusion–*Irre*'s use of montage–

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[41] Goetz, "Im Dichtigkeit des Lebendigen" 234-235.

of insanity and politics. The necessary politicization and the inevitable eruption of the artistic dimension of insanity both outside the clinic and inside the city hark back to the project of the avant-garde of the early twentieth century.[42] Raspe's attempt to revolutionize the clinic is not a pipe dream. His actions within the asylum may not *revolutionize* psychiatry as it is practiced, but it turns the novel into chaos. He does not resign himself to the falsity of the doctors of the asylum. He is not scared of mistakes and dangers: "das ist der Mut zur KONSEQUENZ DES PATHOS. Lieber täte ich mich jedenfalls als den peinlichsten PathetSepp anschimpfen lassen, als daß ich mich zu einem NieNixFalschSchreiber hochloben lassen möcherte, der immer recht schön recht hat […] weil ich was Schwereres mit der Arbeit herausarbeiten muß, nämlich die Wahrheit von allem" [*that is the courage to face the CONSEQUENCE OF PATHOS. I would rather be insulted as the most pitiful idiot before I would let myself become praised as a writer who never writes anything false, who was always right, […] because I have to work out something much more difficult with my work, namely the truth about everything*] (330). Within the novel, Raspe uses punk chaos in order to approach his patients and his cooption and misappropriation of the brutal practices that dominate in Munich. In so doing he opens up *Irre*'s aesthetic dimension of insanity.

In *Irre*, this aesthetic dimension is opposed by the law governing and determining illness, the "Gesetz der Krankheit, Gesetz der Medikation" [*law of sickness, law of medication*] (37). This is the law of the asylum that also exists outside the asylum. In and out does not exist for the asylum. The laws of insanity govern daily life. The law on internment governs daily life. Raspe exposes and subverts the insidious nature of this

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[42] See, for example, F.T. Marinetti's "Let's Murder the Moonshine" (*Selected Writings*, ed. R.W. Flint [1909; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972]).

differentiating discourse. The interred, however, are "in den Bann dieses Gesetzes geschlagen" [*trapped in the control of this law*] (37). The patients try to resist: "sich vorwärts kämpfen, aufwachen, aufwachen wollen aus diesem Alp, doch schon im Rufen wissen, daß dies kein Traum ist, sondern die Wirklichkeit, gehorchend einem fremden irren Gesetz" [*fighting forwards, wake up, wanting to wake up out of this nightmare, but already knowing with the first scream, that this is not a dream, but rather a reality following a foreign, insane law*] (37). Despite the best efforts of the doctors, despite the numbing effects of lithium or electro-shocks, the patients are still aware of the foreign, insane law that controls them. But this is not success. The conflict remains one of the schizophrenic motion "vorwärts kämpfen" [*fighting forwards*] and psychiatric ossification "in den Bann geschlagen" [*trapped in control*]. The medications and e-shocks are the doctors' only recourse to prevent the effectiveness of schizophrenics breaking of borders. In the end, the doctors succeed. But because the interred in the asylum do not recognize the systems of codes that would normally lead to a state of control over their bodies, the asylum's task becomes much more difficult. This was the case with Fottner. This is also evident when *Irre* juxtaposes the patient Bernd's voluntary "Heroinentziehungskur" [*heroin-withdrawal program*] and the patient Adolf Straßmair's regiment of psychotropic "cures" of Haldol and Neurocil (53, 80). The drug-addict's Bernd's voluntary withdrawal program subverts the asylum's goal of the "freiwillige Einnahme der Medikamente" [*voluntary taking of medications*] (85). While the doctors keep Straßmair subdued via a rollercoaster of Haldol and Neurocil, Bernd refuses all medication. The doctors have no means with which to control him. This is also why Raspe seeks to spend more time with Bernd. The time Raspe spends with

Bernd is important, and Raspe notes that "in fünf Tagen ist so viel passiert (in mir), wie sonst oft in Monaten nicht" [*in five days so much has happened (in me), as often it does not even in months*] (56). Raspe's time with Bernd is important because it fuses drug use with sobriety. Drug use allows Raspe to explore new relationships and positions, as was the case in the punk show cited earlier in this chapter (p. 65). Drugs provide motion and stillness, a cessation of time moving forward, a speed that continuously dismantles and creates movements and challenge strict demarcation of controlled spaces. Drugs are, in part, crucial for Raspe's chaotic misuse of the power that medical knowledge provides. Motion and drugs create conditions through which Raspe can perceive and break imperceptible barriers.

The interred of the asylum in *Irre* have the potential to subvert the asylums strategy for domination over the insane patient's body. The insane create a network of relations that the doctors in the asylum cannot decipher. Because of this, the relations between the control mechanisms and the schizoid are constantly in tension, active, rather than a stable one of discipline and control for mainstream society. This is why miming insanity is so crucial for Raspe. The asylum constructs a system of strategic positions, a condition whose effects, Foucault argues, are "manifested and sometimes extended by the position of those who are dominated."[43] Fottner must be constantly kept in a catatonic state to prevent him from becoming a *moving* danger. The dominated can exert power over their rulers. The schizophrenics struggle against the doctors, thereby forcing the doctors to take bizarre actions. Raspe speaks of these bizarre and violent actions and pointless "cures." He notes this particularly in relation to the "Folterkammer" [*torture*

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[43] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* 26-27.

chamber] in which doctors still subject patients to electro-shock therapy that, in the narrative, has long-been debunked as medically sound (97). Doctors grasp at electro-shocks and lithium in an attempt to decode the scrambled and seemingly meaningless systems of the insane. Raspe's brief exposure to the medical director of the asylum Meien "der Schocker" [*the shocker*] was base: "Entsetzen vor dieser gewalttätigen Therapie" [*horror from this violent therapy*] (187-189). The images that remain in Raspe's head are "Schreckensbildern, zu den unter dem Stromfluß in grausigen Grimassen sich verkrampfenden Gesichtern" [*terrifying images of the faces, subjected to the electric stream, that cramped into revolting grimaces*] (189).

Raspe's motion exposes the subversive potential in medical discourse by creating a chaotic space of violence and anti-discourse. Raspe gets outside of the confines of schizophrenic anti-discourse located within the asylum through revolutionary psychiatry. He parlays his brand of punk psychiatry with R. D. Laing's reading of schizophrenia. The doctors in the asylum dismiss Raspe's uptake of Laing's anti-psychiatry as "Durchblickerdummheiten" [*all-seeing stupidities*] (200). Laing is an uncontrollable freak in their eyes and Raspe is chastised by Dr. Beyerer for trying to bring Laing into the asylum's lecture hall:

> Deine Hirnwixerei, die kannst du an jemanden andern hinspritzen. Kannst andere belabern mit deinem Laingwixer […] und wenn du willst, dann kannst du mal mitkommen in die Klinik. Dann zeig ich dir n Irren […] Dann kannst du mal sehen. Die Irren sind nämlich irr […] Da kann mir kein Laing mit Hirngewixe kommen. Die Irren sind irr. Kannst du gerne besichtigen.
>
> [*Your mental masturbations, you can spout that off on someone else. You can babble at someone else with your mother fucking Laing […] and if you want, then you can come into the clinic for once. Then I'll show you a psychotic. […] Then you can see. The crazies are just crazy. Laing and his mental-jerk-off has nothing there. The insane are just crazy. You can see for yourself*] (32).

Ironically, the doctor seeking to debunk Laing works within the dyadic structure against which Laing explicitly argues.[44] The opposites and thresholds Raspe seeks to fuse and transverse are prominent in the above quote ("mitkommen in die Klinik" [*come with into the clinic*]). The quote features an outside and inside, a city diametrically opposed to the clinic, a boundary that one does not *normally* cross ("*mal* mitkommen" [*come with for once*]). Thus, the doctor calling Laing a fraud embodies one of those psychiatrists, to summarize Laing, who is not prepared to get to know what goes on outside the clinic.[45] Raspe taps into anti-psychiatry in the vein of Laing, but he harnesses motion to push beyond the familial structures lurking in Laing's own analyses. The state begins to control the power of schizophrenia in the moment it institutionalizes schizophrenia. The asylum can normalize even radical anti-psychiatry. Thus Raspe must get out of the clinic. His dynamic agency changes constantly. He changes his locations and influences: "Einerseits das gute Rauschgift, die Musikaktionen und die Anarchoszene, anderseits die Arbeit in der Klinik" [*on one side the good narcotics, the music-actions and the anarchy-scene, on the other side work in the clinic*] (60). This does not set up a dyad of inside and outside because Raspe continuously traverses and confuses the divide between asylum and pub; this is not something abnormal for him. Indeed, "[a]ls ein solcher Draußensteher gehe ich [Raspe] seither in der Szene herum, und bin so in ihr logisch drinner denn je" [*I [Raspe] go around in the scene since then as an outsider, and I am, logically, more of an insider than ever*] (235-36). Raspe must move back and forth

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[44] See R.D. Laing and A. Easterson, *Sanity, Madness and the Family* (Harmondsworth, Middelsex, England: Penguin, 1964).

[45] Laing, *Sanity, Madness and the Family* 13.

between the asylum and the punk scene because "schön auf der richtigen Seite stehen, das schafft ja noch der letzte rechte Handschuh" [*to stand nicely on the correct side, anyone can do that*] (330). His breaking borders and movements would be nothing if they did not return to reshuffle the asylum and develop "die nächste Strategie der Subversion" [*the next subversive strategy*] (331).[46]

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's writings on anti-psychiatry in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* (orig. 1972, 1980) are crucial for this analysis of *Irre* because they argue on behalf of new, dynamic representations to counter discourses and modern boundaries. Deleuze and Guattari theorize the creation of a new social order that turns on a postmodern subject. As argued in the introduction of this dissertation, punk positioned itself as antithetical to both modernism and postmodernism. *Irre* uses avant-garde motion that seeks chaos. Punk in *Irre* does not seek unity, balance, progress or pastiche. *Irre* prolongs punk's mantra "no future" with the apocalyptic chaos of Munich, medicine, violence, motion, text and image. *Irre* makes Raspe's dynamic subject avant-garde through montage. Deleuze and Guattari, argue that schizophrenics experience their bodies as a random jumble of fragmented parts as well as a solidified, unindividuated, mass. Thus understood, the schizoid body becomes, for Deleuze and Guattari, a "body without organs." Raspe uses motion and as such represents the possibility of making real Deleuze and Guattari's deterritorialization possible. Raspe scrambles all social codes that normally discipline individuals in society. Raspe's scrambling represents a shifting from one set of codes to another. His performance of schizophrenia, the chaotic montage of the third section of *Irre*, never gives the same explanation, it never reads the same

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[46] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) 216-217.

event in the same way.[47] Irre tests out Raspe's subject position outside the dialectic of "Hölle oder Erlösung" [*hell or salvation*] that pervades mainstream conceptions of mental health within the novel (12). Movement provides Raspe with the way out of this dead-end: "gehen, aus der Frage [Hölle oder Erlösung] hinaus. […] Gehen und Reden. Aus der Kopfenge ausbrechen, […] auf dem Platz hinausgehen, seine Grenzen abmessen" [*get out of the question [of hell or salvation …] go and speak. Break out of the narrow-mindedness, [...] go out to the square, measure [one's] borders*] (12-13). Raspe avoids structure. His movements tap into a manic pattern. Raspe, following his schizophrenic patients, invents his own chaotic movements that produce unforeseen breaches: "je besinnungsloser sich Raspe getanzt hatte, desto besser" [*the more senseless Raspe danced, the better*] (223). The asylum seeks to assign a causal process that produces anomalies and threats. If a causal process is assigned to a deviation from the mainstream, then chaos becomes a civilizing moment (Bolz). Raspe disrupts this as a self-medicating, self-inflicting doctor. The doctor and patient, the inside and outside, are scrambled into an anarchistic third space.

Asylum–Munich–Klagenfurt:

Herr S. versus Raspe versus Goetz

Raspe declares that the text has to deal with his actions: "[daß] meine Manie die Welt ertragen muß" [*that the world has to deal with my mania*] (282). If the world–*Irre*– deals with his mania, then *Irre* indicts itself as part of the problem it seeks to resist. Texts in this narrative are immediately dismissed as unbearable, and are lumped together

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[47] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 15.

with the rest of the garbage, stinking, rotting, piled up all over the narrator's room. On

the first page of the narrative the unnamed narrative "I" asks: "Hatte ich je ein Buch

geöffnet und etwas anderes gehört als dieses Dröhnen, unerträgliches Dröhnen in den

Ohren, lauter mit jedem Satz?" [*had I ever opened a book and heard something other*

than this droning, unbearable droning in the ears, louder with each sentence] (11).

Raspe creates an aesthetic, as Jürgen Oberschlep analyzes, of "Haß und Ekel angesichts

einer dummen, verlogenen und epigonalen Literatur, die als Produkt der Simulation –

und eben nicht als deren ästhetische Überbietung – obszön ist" [*hate and disgust toward*

a dumb, dishonest, and marginal literature, that as a product of simulation – and not as

its aesthetic re-working – is completely scurrilous].[48] Punks were bored. They saw the

Federal Republic returning to fascism, and their whipping boys were lazy hippies, sold-

out 68ers and stupid terrorists. The punk novel *Irre* ultimately turns to affect in the form

of anarchistic hate in order to harness the potential of schizophrenia in the aesthetic

realm of literary production. *Irre* juxtaposes asylum and punk violence. It ignores

divisions and sets its protagonist in chaotic motion. As such, it makes Raspe antithetical

to a unified modern(ist) subject. The asylum's patients in *Irre* are decentered

schizophrenics, capable of infusing chaos into Munich, capable of becoming instable

bodies and subjectivities. Within the novel, however, these new bodies and subjectivities

fail; the patients stay in the asylum. Raspe's is the lone moment of escape. *Irre* harnesses

the "anarchisch-kreativen Potential" [*anarchistic-creative potential*] of Raspe's chaotic-

psychotic movements in Munich for artistic production (46-47).

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[48] Jürgen Oberschlep, "Raserei: über Rainald Goetz, Hass und Literatur," *Merkur: deutsche Zeitschrift für Europäisches Denken* 41.2 (1987): 170-174, 171.

The novel develops its anarchistic montage by tracing Raspe's progress, his experimentation with ornamentation, with breaking borders, and with performing insanity. *Irre* represents the aesthetic output, the culmination and combination of Raspe's actions as "Beobachter und Sammler" [*observer and collector*] (260). Raspe rips at his organs of communication, in effect ripping at the novel's literary constraints, to prevent *Irre* from introducing meaning, order or binaries. He demonstrates the constraints exerted by (medical) discourse upon his body–here a metonym for *Irre*–while simultaneously using his medical knowledge to achieve damage: "sofort wollte er sich mit zwei Stricknadeln die Augen ausstechen und gleich weiter stechen in thalamische Regionen, […] und dann im Endhirn die Erinnerungen totstechen" [*he immediately wanted to poke out both his eyes with sewing needles and then immediately stab again in thalamic regions, [...] and then kill the memory in the back lobe*] (328- 329). Raspe attacks parts of his brain that are vital for deorganization: vision, the thalamic region (which ensures coordinated functioning of the brain) and memory. This produces fissures and gaps in cognition and thoughts. This damage creates chaos, an unorganized head. *Irre* uses Raspe's violence to his own body–his performance of insanity and his desire to damage his brain–to misappropriate images and texts. *Irre* thereby tests out the spectrum of shock and the effect of a chaotic breaking of borders within a body of literature, the novel. Ruptures in the neat divisions of this literary world create gaps, thresholds and conditions for movement. Movement is a sign of affect. Affect is a body in motion: "[I]m Denken sei auch etwas Energetisches das aus der *Affektivität* stamme: Ziele, Inhalte, Tempo, Flüssigkeit und Art des Denkens richteten sich nach den augenblicklichen Interessen, Bedürfnissen und Strebungen" [*In thinking there is*

something energetic that comes out of affect: goals, content, tempo, fluidity, and the

manner of thinking orient themselves to the momentary interests, needs, and goals]

(255). *Irre* does not use Raspe's motion for programmatic proclamations, but rather as a

means to fuse schizophrenia and literature into a third space, whereby schizophrenia

becomes "das Licht, […] das durch die Risse unserer allzu geschlossenen Gehirne

bricht" [*the light, […] that breaks through the cracks in our all too closed minds*].[49] *Irre*

ignores divisions between the asylum and Munich and the punk scene in order to create a

dynamic and entropic text, an avant-garde montage that prolongs a schizophrenic release

from stasis.

Punk in *Irre* set in motion the world that punk forefathers S.Y.P.H. experienced

in their moment of defeat as pure concrete. *Irre* is the recipe for making real the

impossible dream in S.Y.P.H.'s "Zurück zum Beton." *Irre* makes a better terrorist out of

Raspe than S.Y.P.H. did of Klar. The punk Raspe is not bound by binaries, such as state

surveillance, mass media, terrorists and sympathizers, as the punk Klar was. *Irre* undoes

the concrete dystopia, the place where terrorists and hippies were institutionalized and

ineffective. It all goes back to Klagenfurt: performing insanity, bridging this with

medically powerful discourse, wielding this aesthetically, making the text more than a

text, making the text a weapon, like a razor-blade. The self-inflicted damage, Raspe's

ornamentation, is precisely the conscious investment in something that *Irre*

acknowledges as corrupt, without purporting to be outside this corruption, that creates

the potential for subversive moments. This is what happened at Klagenfurt. The split

personality of the narrative in *Irre* makes it possible for the text to have effects outside

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[49] Norbert Bolz, *Stop Making Sense!* (Würzburg: Königshausen u. Neumann, 1989) 98.

of itself. *Irre* matches the schizophrenic confusion of location with damage inflicted to organs of communication and literary production; the final parts of the text to be consumed are not just texts, but images as well. The novel cuts the splintering story to insert images of Goetz and Goetz' artistically altered body (fig. 9).
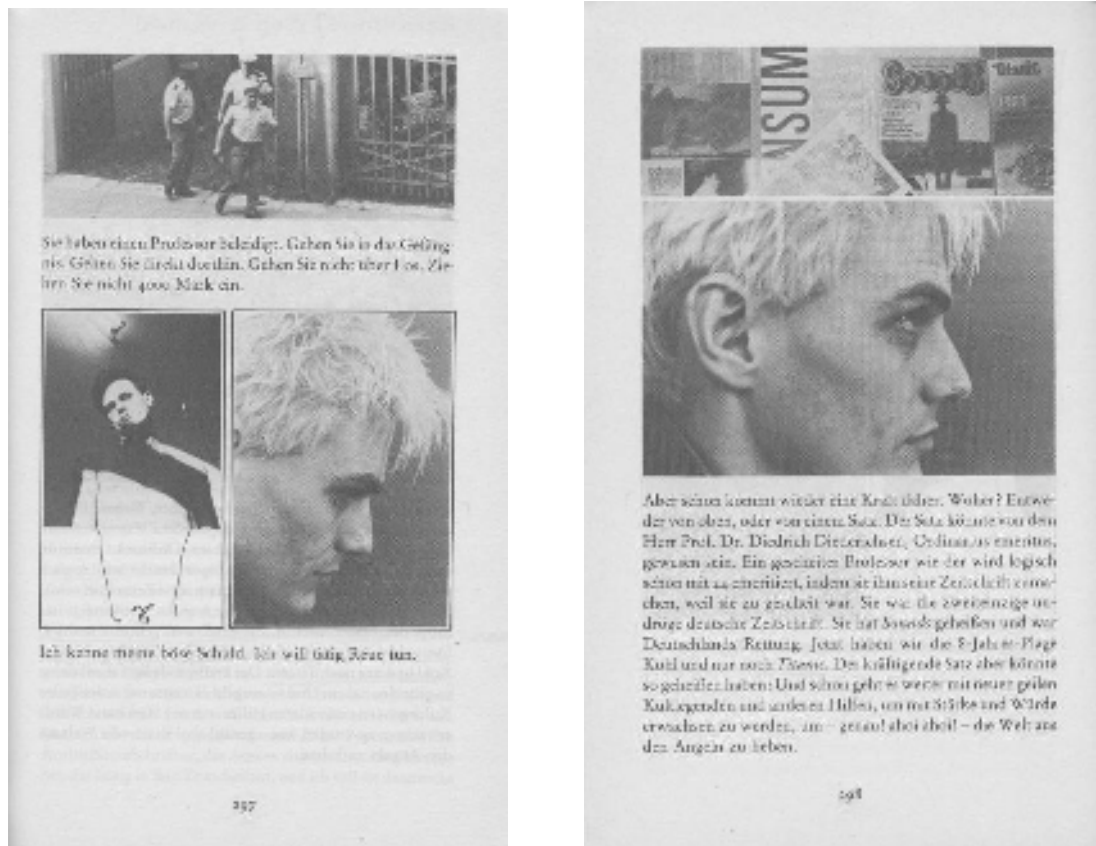
Fig. 9. Images of Goetz cut into *Irre* itself (images reproduced from *Irre* 297-298).

The text brings the outside into it. But a more literal assault on communication is underway in *Irre*. Ears, eyes, mouths, and fingers are bleeding and under attack in this novel. The first inmate presented in the novel is Herr S., whose "Fingerkuppen sind tief zerklüftet, narbig, blutig. Herr S. reißt an den Resten von Nagelhorn, reißt ein Stück aus dem Nagelbett. Es blutet" [*fingertips are deeply jagged, scarred, bloody. Herr S. rips at the remains of his fingernail, rips a piece out of the nail bed. It bleeds*] (15). This self-

destruction is not a random act. Quite oppositely, Herr S.' is an attempt to uncover

everything, "alles frei[zu]legen" (15). For *Irre*, this self-inflicted violence exerted by

Herr S. to his body does not constrain the state's capacity to negotiate this damage for

control. Any static resistant gesture is co-optable. This becomes evident after stacking up

Herr S.'s self-infliction against Raspe's self-infliction.

Self-infliction misuses the power-knowledge of medicine. Raspe damages his

own body in his own effort to free everything, "freigeben" (19). Raspe's damage uses

destruction to reach a state of "Selbstabschaffung" [*self-abolition*] (35). This self-

abolition removes Raspe from normative modes of constraint. The story of this process,

the novel *Irre*, represents Raspe's resulting aesthetic production. Raspe uses this

aesthetic to "spuk, […] rotz und kotz […] dem ganzen ernsthaft verlogenen Klinikscheiß

[…] ins Gesicht" [*spit, [...] snot, and vomit in the lying face of all that clinic shit*] (35-

36). Here the clinic must be expanded to include the literary audience Goetz attacked in

Klagenfurt. Herr S.'s "freilegen" and Raspe's "freigeben" are both acts that seek to

annihilate their unified existence. However, Herr S. is a failure. He "kehrt zurück in

seine zeit- und namenlose Welt" [*returns into his time- and nameless world*] (15).

Raspe's "Blutrinnsalen," the sinuous flows of blood subject only to laws of gravity,

move him, like "Subito," from sphere to sphere. Raspe's self-abolition

("Selbstabschaffung") is the creation of a desubjectified nomadic body. Raspe turns to

punks and schizophrenics to make clear, that "der einzige, der dieses irre Projekt

zusammenhalten kann, ist logisch ein gescheit irres und zugleich irr gescheites ICH" [*the*

only one, who can hold together this insane project, is logically a brightly insane and

simultaneously insanely bright I] (279). Raspe is clearly in a bind. While the insane in

the asylum represent a blueprint for his performance–ultimately his quest for a body without organs–his performance is not insanity, he isn't interned in the asylum. His self-mutilation is not heroic, it is mimetic of the violence in discourse that Foucault outlines. Rapse is not Deleuze and Guattari's organless body. He is an "ICH" [*I*] who seeks self-abolition but knows that his complete success will permanently leave him in the asylum (279). The last line of the novel leaves Raspe wondering himself how successful he was "ist endlich alles eines, meine Arbeit?" [*is it all unified, my* work] (331). Thus by cutting himself, the sign of the body without organs threatens to become a sign of his own immanent internment in the asylum. This is the reason why, or better, the internal logic why Goetz only won second prize in Klagenfurt. It is not the body, but *Irre*, that stands proxy, vial self-mutilation, performance of insanity, and motion, for a true herocism. It is just a performance in the end.

CHAPTER TWO

POST-PUNK POACHING, SUBVERSIVE CONSUMERISM AND READING FOR ANTI-RACISM

> "Ende 1980 waren die Musiker die besseren Dichter geworden.
> Das Buch des Jahres war eine LP:
> *Monarchie und Alltag* von Fehlfarben"
>
> [*By the end of 1980 the musicians had become the better writers.*
> *The book of the year was a LP:*
> *"Monarchie und Alltag" [Monarchy and Daily Life]*
> *by Fehlfarben*].[1]

Punk After 1979:

After 1979, punk–that spectacularly chaotic and antagonistic moment that

reveled in its own sense of "no future"–was no more. For Peter Hein and Fehlfarben it

was well past its prime. What happened to punk after they dismissed it?[2] If, as Peter

Glaser asserts above, musicians had become the better writers, who, then, were the better

musicians? Or did the music matter at all after punk died? By 1983, a year that signals

the end of punk in Jürgen Teipel's retrospective *Verschwende deine Jugend*, punk had

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[1] Peter Glaser "Geschichte wird gemacht," *Zurück Zum Beton: Die Anfänge Von Punk Und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-'82: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 7. Juli--15. September 2002*, ed. Ulrike Groos and Peter Gorschlüter (Köln: König, 2002) 127. Hereafter cited as *ZZB*.

[2] Peter Hein declared in 1979: "Ich war schon ziemlich von Punk genervt. Es gibt ja auf dieser Single ["Abenteuer & Freiheit" von Fehlfarben] die Zeile 'Es ist zu spät für die alten Bewegungen'–das bezog sich nicht nur auf Hippies. Das bezog sich auch auf Punks. Das bezog sich auf alle alten Bewegungen" [*I was already pretty irritated with punk. There is a line on this single ["Abenteuer & Freiheit" by Fehlfarben] 'It is too late for the old movements' – that wasn't just about hippies. That had to do with punks as well. That had to do with all old movements*] (See Peter Hein, liner notes, *Verschwende deine Jugend*, Hamburg, Universal Marketing, 2002).

fallen to affirmative bands such as Nena, Kraftwerk and Die toten Hosen.[3] These bands did not represent the original punk ethos; they had not perfected S.Y.P.H.'s apocalyptic wasteland from "klammheimlich." Bands that came to represent punk in the 1980s reestablished stable divisions between performer and audience, consumer and commodity and producer and distributor. Despite the chaos, the anarchy and self-destruction of its schizophrenic uses of representation, punk had become subsumed by the culture industry.

But did the loss of the original punk moment, which may or may not have lasted past 1978, signal the death of punk? Punk, after all, had declared its death with its first breath. Punk wanted to destroy. Why should its own moment have been given a sacred, timeless position? If punk was about the performance of insanity as was the case of *Irre*'s punk and doctor Raspe, then perhaps punk did not die insofar as it took on another life. But what did that life look like? What did the music sound like? Bands in the 1980s such as Palais Schaumburg, Andreas Dorau und die Marinas and Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle (FSK) did not fit neatly within the original nomenclature "punk." These bands were not invested in punk's original apocalypse. They were interested in shifting and transforming constellations of cultural representation. They represented an extension and transformation of punk. They used the same media–fanzines, art and music–but massaged these media so that the product came out differently. The band FSK holds the secrets to this transformation.

In 1980, Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle [*voluntary self-censorship*], the name for Germany's equivalent to North America's parental advisory system for cinematic

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[3] See Jürgen Teipel's epilogue "Damit alles kaputtgeht. 1983-2001" (*Verschwende deine Jugend* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhkamp, 2001] 335-362).

releases, performed its first concert in Hamburg's Markthalle.[4] The band's self-titled

first release followed the same year. Thomas Meinecke, one of the four founding

members of the band, recalled that during FSK's second performance in the Prunksall of

the Munich Art Academy "brach sofort eine Massenschlägerei im Publikum aus. Wegen

dem, was wir da repräsentierten. Die wussten nie: Ist das ne Sekte? Werden die von der

DDR bezahlt? Sind das Faschisten?" [*the audience erupted immediately into a massive*

fight. Because of what we were representing there. They didn't know: Is that a sect? Are

they being paid by the GDR? Are they fascists?].[5] The band's identity for its audience

was thus a paradox. FSK, Meinecke interprets above, complicated what their audience

expected. FSK ultimately sought to complicate general understandings of the consuming

life in late capitalism. But how did the band do this? The song that caused the fight was

"Moderne Welt" [*Modern World*], in which FSK affirms a West Germany consumed by

Americanized popular culture.[6] "Moderne Welt" was a moment in which the chorus "wir

sagen ja! zur modernen Welt" [*we say Yes! to the modern world*] represented for FSK

the greatest means for political dissidence.[7] In their song about the affirmation of capital,

"Moderne Welt," FSK transforms a choral ballad or folk song by using a violin to

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[4] The band took their name from the West German self-censorship institution: F.S.K. Wiesbadener Selbstzensuranstalt [*Wiesbaden self-censorship institution*]. At its inception, FSK was Justin Hoffmann, Thomas Meinecke, Michaela Melián and Wilfried Petzi.

[5] Thomas Meinecke, liner notes, *Verschwende deine Jugend*, Hamburg, Universal Marketing, 2002.

[6] Thomas Meinecke and Michaela Melián, personal interview with Cyrus Shahan, 27 March 2007. Herafter cited as *Interview*.

[7] Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle, "Moderne Welt," *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle*, Studio Justin's Room, Munich, 1980. Remaing lyrics are cited from this song.

simulate a speaker screaming with feedback that contrasts with the deadpan and listless cyclical repetition of lyrics. The chorus in "Moderne Welt," sung by Michaela Melián and Wilfried Petzi, is a call for passion and feeling in a world where people could really be "total verliebt in dieser Welt" [*totally in love with this world*] even though "manche bricht das Herz entzwei" [*it breaks some hearts*]. FSK sings of a modern world in which everything seems great: "es geht uns nirgendwo so gut wie hier" [*it doesn't get any better than right here*] and "wir sind O.K.!" [*we are o.k.!*]. This is clearly a completely un-punk song. Despite the flatly affirmative refrain, this song does not envision as complicitously dreary a situation as it must have sounded to the punks fighting in the audience. But what, then, did FSK do with "Moderne Welt" and punk?

The answer is simple. FSK went beyond punk. However, this simple answer masks a massively complex multi-national and multi-medial praxis. FSK took advantage of the detritus in an increasingly Americanized pop culture of consumption to confuse what punk was. FSK's song "Moderne Welt" demonstrates perfectly FSK's complex instance of post-punk. In contradistinction to fatalistic visions of a mindless consumer devoid of agency, the song "Moderne Welt" unmasks that Germany offered a huge number of available identities. "Moderne Welt" is a song about West Germans' dreams: of being Superman, a mandolin-player, of looking like a military officer, or of isolating themselves in a nice book.[8] While these dreams may at first seem delusional, this song actually points to them as representative of the everyday wealth of social identities, meanings and pleasures available. These identities, crucially, are not prescriptive, but rather available to Germans in "Moderne Welt" for transformation–misuse–as they see

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[8] Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle, "Moderne Welt."

fit. By affirming the conditions of consuming life in late capitalism, by saying yes to the

modern world, Thomas Meinecke's cybernetic manifesto "Neue Hinweise: Im

Westeuropa Dämmerlicht 1981" [*New Tips: Twilight in Western-Europe 1981*] declares:

> [FSK hat sich] unter kybernetischen Gesichtspunkten und aus dem
> Prinzip der Permanenten Revolte für das eingeutige Ja zur Modernen
> Welt entschieden, und so werden wir immer alles dransetzen […] wach
> zu bleiben, während der Nein-Sager […] immer blinder gegen diese Welt
> [wird] und also sein Nein zur bloßen Farce entartet.
>
> [*[FSK decided] under cybernetic points of view and from the principle of
> permanent revolution for the clear Yes to the modern world, and thus we
> will always lay everything on the line […] to stay awake, while the
> Nay-sayer […] becomes ever blinder to the world and thus degenerates
> his No into a farce*].[9]

This manifesto in FSK's fanzine *Mode & Verzweiflung* concludes that if the culture

industry is subsuming and transmitting its own commercially viable versions of punk,

then punk's apocalyptic chaos must transform. Punk's insanity only produced stasis.

This stasis can be seen, above all, in punk's problem of the immanent internment of

Irre's Raspe.

The threat of internment was not a problem for FSK because it was not punk.

FSK was post-punk. Post as in after punk but still *of* punk. Punk was no longer the

answer in part because FSK reacted to a different historical context such as the rise of

conservative politics with Helmut Kohl and Ronald Reagan, the "Bitburg Incident," new

tensions between American military presence and West Germany's pacifist citizenry,

and the demise of the first generation of German terrorists and the ascension of the

second. But punk in the eighties had also shifted: it was no longer interested in the sign,

in scrambling space to highlight the insanity of sanity as was the case with *Irre*, but in

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[9] Thomas Meinecke, *Mode & Verzweiflung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1998) 33. Hereafter cited
parenthetically in text as *MV*.

representation and consumption. Opposed to affirmative instances of punk such as Nena, post-punk in FSK's hands represented what Lawrence Grossberg has defined as a mattering machine that "contradicted the consumer economy's attempt to regulate the structures and rhythms of daily life."[10] Within the hegemonic context of a version of punk produced by the culture industry, FSK's shift from *Irre*'s insanity to voluntary and pleasure-oriented consumerism attacked the thing that had attacked, and consumed, punk. FSK did this by poaching media. They constructed a constantly shifting constellation of news reports, voices, sounds and images by consuming and using these materials in unintended ways. The paradoxical reaction to FSK's show reflected this complex and contradictory mix: punk, electronica, and American and German country. FSK combined these musical genres with political, revolutionary, violent, and banal lyrics. This chapter examines how FSK's songs and Meinecke's prose used this complex matrix. In their hands this matrix revealed that despite the hegemonic context of West Germany in the eighties, this condition did not, as Grossberg continues on rock music, "incorporate resistance but construct[ed] positions of subordination which enabl[ed] active, real and effective resistance."[11] This resistance emerges in FSK and Meinecke's subversive consumerism and their misappropriation of and unanticipated participation in German popular culture. One cannot put too fine a point on FSK's counter-hegemonic

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[10] Lawrence Grossberg, "Is there Rock after Punk?," *On Record*, ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Pantheon, 1990): 111-123, 114. Hereafter cited as "Rock."

[11] Lawrence Grossberg, *We gotta get outta this place: popular conservativism and postmodern culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 246. Hereafter cited as *We gotta*.

media consumption–fighting that which ate punk–the target of which being that which Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge call the public sphere of production.[12]

Negt and Kluge's early eighties Marxist text, *Public Sphere and Experience*, is crucial for reading FSK and Meinecke's prose because Negt and Kluge insist that poaching is relevant for creating a counter-public sphere. Despite what Negt and Kluge call the "decaying forms of the bourgeois public sphere" under capitalism they theorize the possibility of subversive products.[13] FSK and Meinecke were poachers who misused what Negt and Kluge called "traditional media […] (for instance, press, publishing, cinema, adult education, radio, television, etc.)" to create "**counter-products of a proletarian public sphere: idea against idea, product against product, production sector against production sector**."[14] But there is a tension between what FSK and Meinecke did to media and what forms Negt and Kluge insist aid the creation of a counter public sphere. Negt and Kluge argue that most television does not provide the raw materials that viewers can use to create a counter-public sphere.[15] They argue that network television is antithetical to the creation of a counter-public sphere. "Classical

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[12] Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993). Hereafter cited as *PS*.

[13] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 3, see also *PS* 12-18. In their monumental work *Geschichte und Eigensinn* (Frankfurt am Mein: Zweitausendeins, 1981), Negt and Kluge downplay the subversiveness available. They argue that a "circulation system" controls the number of variable representations. There is thus an "oscillation" that gives only the appearance (*Schein*) of transformative work and counter-products (222-229).

[14] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 149 and 79-80.

[15] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 149 and 154-159.

media," such as radio, newspapers, and movies, however, are exactly that which should be mined.[16] What separates Negt and Kluge's critique of the fate of the bourgeois public sphere under late capitalism from FSK is the band's investment in subversive agency of reading. In this respect FSK follows John Fiske, who, himself following Michel de Certeau, argues that any television show, any media broadcast, represents something that the viewer can subvert for his or her own oppositional sphere.[17] Negt and Kluge argue explicitly for a counter public sphere, which is exactly what FSK and Meinecke did and for which they created space. They did this, though, by using what Fiske calls "excorporation," in which elements of dominant culture are stolen and used for private, "often oppositional or subversive interests."[18] While there is a discrepancy between Negt and Kluge and Fiske and de Certeau about the different location of agency, in the medium or in its reception, the importance lies in the agreement that media–television, photographs, radio and film–presented FSK with opportunities to subvert media hegemony and the deterritorialization of the public sphere.[19]

This chapter analyzes FSK as representative of a post-punk allegiance to counter-hegemonic media consumption. "Moderne Welt" and the cybernetic manifesto

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[16] See Negt and Kluge, *PS* 96-129, 149-159. See also Alexander Kluge's *In Gefahr und größter Not bringt der Mittelweg den Tod* (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 1999) 66-69 and 143-148.

[17] See John Fiske, *Television Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1989) or Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

[18] Fiske 315.

[19] The tension between Negt and Kluge and Fiske could also be cast as positions within the camp of modernism (Negt and Kluge) and postmodernism (Fiske). Negt and Kluge seek to re-think history to create subversive agency within modernity, whereas Fiske's unorthodox consumer finds agency in a postmodern pastiche of meaning on the television screen (See Negt and Kluge, *PS* 12-18; Fiske 224-264).

demonstrate that there is never just one thing to talk about in FSK or Meinecke's texts. A problem of complexity and a lack of cohesiveness dominate these texts. This failure to congeal multiplies the field of analysis and makes reading FSK and Meinecke extremely difficult. Only by reading FSK's songs and Meinecke's short fiction in tandem, does it become possible to begin to understand the manifold ways post-punk resignified media to subvert hegemony. To understand the situation that FSK and Meinecke engaged we must look at the problems and sources of media in Germany and at German media. In the eighties, no other media conglomerate affected West Germany more than America's. But why is this important? The importation of this non-indigenous culture obscured the historical precedence and contemporary persistence of German racism. FSK and Meinecke's media poaching, specifically of media that migrated in a loop between the US and Germany, created the counter-products that enabled the creation of an anti-racist politics, one that ran to the core of FSK's project. The praxis of this project, and simultaneously evidence of media poaching and German problems with Americanism, is demonstrated perfectly by FSK's song "I wish I could 'Sprechen Sie Deutsch?.'"

FSK's Poaching of American Culture:

For FSK, it was impossible to reflect on being West German in the eighties without talking about America, American consumerism and American pop culture. What was American culture? What was West German culture? What was foreign culture in West Germany? Why was non-indigenous culture, the United States, so crucial for understanding the space of the Federal Republic? For FSK, differences between America and a Germany occupied by American soldiers since 1945 were anything but clear. The

German-American matrix is front and center on FSK's album titles between 1984 and

1989: *Goes Underground*, *American Sector*, *In Dixieland* and *Original Gasman Band*. If

only by virtue of the English language, these album titles demonstrate how for FSK the

foundation of popular culture in 1980s West Germany had its historical counterpart in

the United States. But was it about American GIs who eventually transformed the

American Sector of Germany into Dixieland, or a Dixieland inhabited by Gasmen?[20]

What they really did was blur dominant divisions between, and stable representations of,

America and Germany. But why did this blurring matter? For one, in the eighties, and

for that matter since the student protests of the sixties, many Germans despised the US

and the ubiquitous presence of US-military personnel in the Federal Republic.[21] Ralph

Willet argues that while "GIs were both welcome and reviled […], evidence of their

culture [since 1945 …] became increasingly inescapable."[22] So FSK's blurring of

putatively rigid boundaries, poaching from both America and Germany for their own

means, created antagonisms that challenged not just failures in previous social moments,

but the larger transnational public sphere as well. This blurring turned on its head the

moment of "no future" that celebrated Walter Benjamin's "destructive character" to seek

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[20] The title *Original Gasman Band* was a typographical error on a news report on FSK that was to have
carried the title "One of the Most Original German Bands." It instead carried the title "One of the Most
Original Gasman Bands." The misprinted mistake pleased FSK so much that they kept what the media had
unintentionally produced (Meinecke and Melián, *Interview*).

[21] Ralph Willet, *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949* (New York: Routledge, 1989) pages 1-15.

[22] Willet ix.

out new coordinates for new constellations.[23] While punk sought the prolongation of chaos to revel in Benjamin's intersections of ruins, FSK's post-punk moment sought to awaken out of this nightmarish moment.[24] FSK's deceptively playful hit "I Wish I could 'Sprechen Sie Deutsch,'" from their 1987 album *American Sector*, simultaneously demonstrates this awakening, blurring and FSK's media poaching.

In this song, FSK turns to polka-country sounds and deadpan, Velvet-Underground vocals with fake-English accented German. The song, sung by Michaela Melián, tells the story of an American GI in Frankfurt hanging out in bars. He "must have said something that meant something else" because the American winds up in jail.[25] Alas, the poor American never finds out the cause of the incarceration, whatever he has been told as a reason remains a mystery: "I nix verstehen" [*I not understand*]. The remaining lyrics are guidebook phrases: "Noch ein Bier […] ein Großes" [*another beer […] a big one*]. This suggests a vacuous exchange of stereotypes between Americans and Germans. Yet the line "I must have said something that meant something else," conversely, gestures to the cross-cultural misunderstandings in what could mistakenly be ignored as banal in the German-American lyrics. FSK poaches these seemingly banal elements and uses them for transforming the song itself. FSK's deliberate poaching creates misunderstandings of the German-American fusion that become productive. In

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[23] See Walter Benjamin, "Der destruktive Charakter," *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV.1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991) 396-398. See also pages 23-25 of this dissertation.

[24] Benjamin 398.

[25] Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle, "I wish I could 'Sprechen Sie Deutsch?,'" *American Sector*, EP, Estudio Offbeat, 1987. The text is in English in the song.

this song it is exactly the infusion of GI discourse into the Federal Republic that allows

for unpredictable results and productive misunderstandings of which Melián sings: "I nix

verstehen" [*I not understand*]. But it is not just the lyrics that toy with the musical

medium. The song's undulating guitar produces distorted tones, as if the track is playing

off speed. This interrupted acoustic track, as if FSK slowed a spinning record,

transforms the medium of the message. The temporality of the sound expands and

lengthens into an irregular sonic moment. FSK's soundscape moves forward as it is

constantly halted and slowed. Melián's throaty vocals match the other instruments as the

lyrics become momentarily trapped by her vocal cords. Thus voice and mechanical

instruments combine to abstain from linear rhythmic sense and narrative flow in the

song. Remixing tempo and language make possible what Volker Hage reads for literary

collages, namely "Quer und Parallellesen" [*askew and parallel reading*] of the GI-

German linguistic combination.[26] This song demonstrates the presence of cultural flows,

not dominance, and the bilateral nature of American-West German culture. FSK's trans-

national fusion uses a multidirectional flow of cultural materials that misuses through

resignification the linguistic and acoustic hegemony brought by American GIs. FSK's

skewed reading of a pop-culture collage in 1987 is itself a transformation of earlier sonic

and lyrical techniques of representation.

FSK pirated the song from an American country-music single, "Danke Schön-

Bitte Schön-Widersehen," recorded in Nashville, Tennessee by Saturday Records in

1961. The singer, Eddie Wilson, had big dreams of becoming a country music star. But

instead of releasing the single in the US, Saturday Records released it in Germany to test

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[26] Volker Hage, *Collagen in der deutschen Literatur* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984) 126.

its appeal to the GIs. Eddie Wilson's single topped out at number 17 on the German

radio hit parade. Once the B-side only made it to number 25, it seemed as if Eddie's

career was over.[27] Did FSK seek to resurrect Eddie's career? If so, then what did a failed

country music singer have to do with FSK's commitment to post-punk in 1987? Eddie

Wilson was the American-country music name of Stuttgart native and German emigrant

Armin Edgar Schaible. Schaible's dream was indeed to become a country music star in

the USA. He had been inspired by GIs and Swiss folk music.[28] This information in hand,

mapping FSK's song becomes a difficult task. A German native, inspired by the music

American GIs listened to, dreamed of making this music himself under the guise of an

American-sounding moniker. He immigrated to Tennessee, assumed an American name,

and sang a song rife with stereotypes of American behavior in Germany. But whose

stereotypes and of whom? Were these German (i.e., Schaible's) stereotypes of GI

behavior he saw in Stuttgart or American (i.e., Wilson's) stereotypes of what Americans

saw as typical German behavior? Or was it even more complex? Were they a German's

Americanized stereotypes of the sounds and images he consumed in the American

Sector of Germany, transported across the Atlantic into America for consumption there

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[27] Walter Fuchs, "Armin Edgar Schaible & Martin Haerle: eine schwierge Beziehung,"
<http://www.bluegrass-buehl.de/country-informationen/Armin-Edgar-Schaible--Martin-Haerle.html>
(5 Nov 2007). Hereafter cited as *AES*.

[28] Fuchs, *AES*. See also Ralph Willett *The Americanization of Germany, 1945-1949* (New York:
Routledge, 1989), particularly pages 86-98, where Willett discusses the musical sea-saw between jazz and
"'hillbilly' or 'cowboy'" music for the GIs (91).

only to be brought back?[29] Did Schaible learn the workings of American consumption

better than the Americans? Or did FSK?

The complex, bi-directional and dynamic network of consumption and

misrepresentation muddies the waters if we try to discern the impact of the GI-linguistic

infusion into the song. Is it still GI language if consumed and then regurgitated by a

German trying to mime GIs? What is it if, then, another German consumes the German's

consumption? This song reveals that the effects of and participation in the bogeyman of

American consumerism and the culture industry in the Federal Republic did not have to

be passive. Within the context of West Germany, FSK's participation in the cultural loop

of Wilson's song and Schaible's description of GI behavior in Stuttgart through

subversive consumption of American products unmasks what Gerd Gemünden argues is

a misconception of Americanization.[30] "Americanization (or American cultural

imperialism)," Gemünden writes, was "far from […] a unified or unifying process [but

rather one that …] triggered a wide variety of responses." FSK used American

consumerism to remix Wilson's song. They thus demonstrate what Gemünden calls "the

creativity of reception [that] deflects monolithic accounts of one culture imposing on

another."[31] The second-order referent becomes self-reflexive: through migrating media

the referent became the referent again. In FSK's hands, American consumerism is

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[29] FSK expanded this network beyond the song by recording the album *American Sector* in Leeds,
England. They added another source of cultural input to somehow complete their American Sector of West
Germany.

[30] Gerd Gemünden, *Framed Visions: Popular Culture, Americanization, and the Contemporary German
and Austrian Imagination* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1998).

[31] Gemünden 17.

resignified into what Gemünden terms "a playground for the imagination and a site where the subject [came] to understand itself through constant play and identifications with reflections of itself as an other."[32] So the bogeyman of a hegemonic American culture industry, FSK reveals, actually presented a complex network of appropriated representations that could be tested and (re)combined in what Negt and Kluge call a "lengthy dispute" between social interests and media.[33]

FSK's collage rejected mainstream attempts to obscure as homogenous linguistically and culturally heterogeneous communicative possibilities. With the album name and the song FSK made a double move of indictment and appropriation, they created discord for clear delineations of the problem and solution, location and context and message and media. FSK took matters into their own hands; they remade and envisioned different modes of consumption as part of what Thomas Meinecke deems "den taktisch affirmativen Strategien der frühen Achtziger" [*the tactically affirmative strategies of the early eighties*] (*MV*, 8). This strategy exposed gaps in representation with which they could test a third path away from West Germany and Americanism. But how did this third path work? For the song "Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" this worked by tapping into aesthetic volatility, a shifting manipulation of media (volume, nomenclature). FSK poached their convoluted productions from the discourses in West German popular culture from the USA. Their songs were about German fantasies of American consumerism that got fantasized into a commodity for Germans. FSK's songs reveal that these fantasies about the USA were always about Germans' own projections

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[32] Gemünden 19.

[33] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 149.

and fears. They resignified and tested what could be done with this material for subversive pleasures (instead of fear and loathing, enjoy it!), but they wanted to show their poaching as well. This was not an affirmative task, as FSK sings it: "Wenn man ganz genau hinsieht, dann spürt man eine Hauch von Revolution" [*if you look carefully, then you can sense a breath of revolution*].[34] The album *American Sector* makes clear that this revolution was anything but one-dimenstional. So did their revolution ever become more concrete? No. FSK's revolution did not succumb to the concrete failure of S.Y.P.H. because this was not the revolution they sought. FSK was not about celebrating or resurrecting some monolithic and original punk moment. It was not even really about revolution; that is why there is just a hint of it. Post-punk was about the possibility of a subversive space in media.

FSK's songs transform the representation of culture in media into something else. They did not attack imaginary identities as a problem in contemporary West Germany, but rather saw the ability to bring Superman out of the cinema and onto the streets (in the song "Moderne Welt") as crucial prerequisite for imagining a new kind of affective identification for West Germans. FSK stole objects from their context and gave them other uses but did not seek a unified work of art. Instead, FSK's cut-ups sought what Hage calls literary montage's "Entblösung des Konstruktionsprinzip" [*divestiture of the construction principles*].[35] This revelation laid at the heart of Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle. Band members spelled it out in their cybernetic manifest "Neue

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[34] Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle, "Frau mit Stiel," *Goes Underground*, LP, Studio Hardeberg, Georgsmarienhütte, 1984.

[35] Hage 66.

Hinweise:" "so müssen wir unsere Wachsamkeit in Spiel und Revolte der ständig

veränderten Situation anpassen: Heute Disco, morgen Umsturtz, übermorgen Landpartie.

Dies nennen wir Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle" [*we have to adapt our vigilance to the*

games and revolutions of the constantly changing situation: today disco, tomorrow

revolution, the day after tomorrow an outing to the country. This is what we call

voluntary self-censorship] (*MV*, 36). Voluntary self-censorship–a mix of dancing,

revolution, feigned-fascism, Americanism and German nationalism–was a call for a kind

of flexibility, an ability to transform media in the right way at the right moment. But this

was decidedly not a turn to punk chaos. FSK carefully complicated consumption and

misappropriated and destabilized stable performer and audience, as well as producer and

consumer, relations. This brought punk's ethos back into motion. This complication of

consumption used information management and juxtaposition to exploit the ignored gaps

in mainstream media.

FSK found such gaps in sensational media clichés. Their song "Ein Kind für

Helmut" [*A kid for Helmut*], from the album *Stürmer*, for example, re-signifies then-

chancellor Helmut Kohl's complaint that Germans were dying out as Adolf Hitler's call

for Germany babies.[36] "Babies for Hitler" becomes "Babies for Kohl." Furthermore, the

song uses Americanisms such as "Komm, wir machen Liebe" [*come on, let's make love*]

on the *Stürmer* album to parlay their American solution to make love with the legacies of

fascist propaganda. "Ein Kind für Helmut" demonstrates FSK's attack on simplistic and

passive uptake of socially stabilizing media narratives that circulated in the Federal

Republic. FSK's misuse of dominant ideologies in songs demonstrates, as Fiske,

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[36] Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle, "Ein Kind für Helmut," *Stürmer*, Munich, 1981.

following Stuart Hall, argues, that any "understanding of ideology [must not be limited] to an analysis of how it works in the service of the dominant."[37] FSK's songs demonstrate how unruly consumption was possible under the specter of mass media outlets in the eighties. FSK's misuse of media reports were part of, to cite Fiske again, the "resistive, alternative ideologies that [… derived] from and [maintained] those social groups who [were] not accommodated comfortably into the existing power relations."[38] These power relations are, as Michel Foucault outlines, also determined from "below." FSK's misappropriated mass-media demonstrates, how, Foucault argues, "power […] lets itself be invaded by the pleasure it is pursuing: and opposite it, power asserting itself in the pleasure of showing off, scandalizing, resisting."[39] FSK did not just address problematic representation and consumption of printed media and television in their music. They did not just reshuffle their own acoustic positions, but their literary ones as well. In 1980 FSK created the Munich-based underground magazine *Mode & Verzweiflung* [*Fashion & Despair*] in which Thomas Meinecke published short fiction that poached news from mainstream presses. FSK poached mainstream news just as they poached Schaible's song. Stories in *Mode & Verzweiflung* rearticulated images and ideas offered up for consumption by West German commercial media outlets. Schaible's song and, as will be discussed below, Meinecke's prose, were both intensely interested in remixing foreign material. However, if FSK and Meinecke were interested in anything

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[37] Fiske 314. Here Fiske bases his argument on Stuart Hall's "On Postmodernism and Articulation: An Interview with Stuart Hall" (*Journal of Communication Inquiry* 10.2, ed. Lawrence Grossberg [45-60]).

[38] Fiske 314.

[39] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (1978; New York: Vintage, 1990) 45.

indigenous, then it was above all German history. But how does this interest in German

history link with the creation of counter-publicities through media poaching?

For Negt and Kluge, the link between history and counter-publicities is about the

necessity of historical awareness–mourning–for the public sphere.[40] What must be

mourned is that the public sphere has become:

> **the organizational form of the 'dictatorship of the bourgeoisie'** […] that
> network or norms, legitimations, delimitations, procedural rules, and separation
> of powers that prevents the political public sphere […] from making decisions
> that disturb or nullify the order of bourgeois production. It is the organized
> obstacle to the material public sphere and politics – **the opposite of the
> constitutive public sphere** (*PS*, 55).

Simultaneously, Negt and Kluge argue, there are "**contradictions emerging within

advanced capitalist societies** [that possess] **potential for a counterpublic sphere**."[41]

The point becomes treating history as narrative because, as Richard Langston reads Negt

and Kluge on this point, "reality is nothing other than a fiction, for the history that

constitutes it, unbeknownst to the subjects of that reality, is in truth as fragmentary as it

is self-perpetuating."[42] With this in mind, Meinecke's poaching of media for history is a

constitutive facet of FSK's interests in acquiring materials necessary for the creation of a

counter-public sphere. Counter-products became a question of reading, a question of

misappropriation. FSK poached the song "Sprechen Sie Deutsch" and thereby took

control of what Negt and Kluge call "**the permanently changing forms that social

power takes on in its fluctuations between capitalist production, illusory public

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[40] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 1-53.

[41] Negt and Kluge, *PS* xliii.

[42] Richard Langston, *Visions of Violence* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008) 61.

sphere, and public power monopoly." By taking control of the signs of American cultural hegemony in West Germany FSK demonstrated that Negt and Kluge's theoretical counter-products of a proletarian public sphere were indeed possible in the eighties.[43] As such the investigation here differs from Negt and Kluge because they are interested in processes, not products. But this chapter investigates both. The next three sections examine the method, effects and limits of poaching for counter-products.

Methodology from the Manifesto: Media-Poaching for Literature:

FSK's song "Sprechen Sie Deutsch?" constructed something new out of a transnational information exchange. This song delinks national representation from mainstream binaries. Meinecke's literary tracks also examine the transmission and reassembledge of American culture in Germany, or perhaps, the reassemblage of German culture via America. His fanzine essays use radio and newspaper reports as raw materials for *Mode & Verzweiflung*'s "lengthy dispute" (Negt and Kluge) with social interests and media.[44] The stories draw upon the intersection of German and American history, information from fundamentally different spheres, such that questions arise, connections emerge or disappear, the important becomes banal and the banal becomes informative. Meinecke pushed the confusion and manipulation of the medium further with his re-mixing of his already resignified stories in his collection *Mit der Kirche ums*

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[43] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 79-80.

[44] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 149.

Dorf.[45] But more than simply a re-shuffling, *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf* represents the literary maturation of the *Mode & Verzweiflung* project.

By reading these two disjointed texts in tandem, it becomes possible to understand the complex matrix of resignification in both texts. Ultimately, though, a parallel reading makes clear how *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf* put into action the cybernetic manifesto "Neue Hinweise" [*New Tips*] from *Mode & Verzweiflung*. "Neue Hinweise" declares that "während [die] dümmsten und dennoch bemerkenswerten Generationsgenossen ihr endgültiges Weltbild schnell erreicht haben, überprüfen wir Kybernetiker unsere Denk- und Handelsweisen durch ihre Anwendbarkeit auf die Moderne Welt, welche ja ihreseits in permanentem Wandel ist" [*while the dumbest and nevertheless most noteworthy generation-comrades have quickly reached their final conception of the world, we cyberneticians reexamine our methods of thought- and action through their adaptability for the modern world, which is constantly transforming*] (*MV*, 36). Meinecke's essays in *Mode & Verzweiflung* represent counter-products because they do not tell history but produce histories based upon poaching. The fanzine created a cybernetic montage of subversive consumption that created a literary battleground on the field of Germany's American pop-cultural hegemony. The narratives in this fanzine inspect German-American cultural transfer as a never-ending vertiginous feedback loop that imagines new kinds of transitory identities. This was FSK's project. This is what the manifesto "Neue Hinweise" calls for. This is why FSK called themselves cyberneticians. And this is what Meinecke calls the "lustbetonten Praxis" [*passionate praxis*] that he put into action in his 1986 collection of short fiction *Mit der*

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[45] Thomas Meinecke, *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986). Hereafter cited parenthetically in text as *MdK*.

Kirche ums Dorf (*MV*, 117). But how did this representation work and how was it

transmitted? Meinecke's stories focused on two modes of cultural transmission,

migration and media. The stories tell about Germans and Americans moving from or to

America and Germany and around Germany. Media migrate in Meinecke's texts as well:

pictures and postcards are imported into Germany and American television shows

occupy Germans' time. These migrants and their use of media, Meinecke's case studies

reveal, possess neither singular use or only their intended meanings, but rather an

exponential number of effects and roles in alternative contexts.

     Mode & Verzweiflung reorganizes history at an individual level of experience,

and in turn it turns Negt and Kluge's call for historical awareness–mourning–of the

decomposition of bourgeois public sphere into fun ("passionate praxis").[46] The stories in

Mode & Verzweiflung do not create a clear teleology, in fact just the opposite. The texts

seem at times completely out of synch with one another. However, this confused

collection demonstrates the ability to be a "sensual" (Negt and Kluge) user of media.

Sensualness in classical media, Negt and Kluge argue, "incorporated [people…] as

autonomous beings." Conversely, new mass-media "dispense with pluralism."[47] *Mode &*

Verzweiflung sensually reshuffles history and media to create what Meinecke calls a

"Liaison dangereuse zwischen Intuition und Intellekt" [*dangerous liaison between*

intuition and intellect] (*MV*, 117). This dangerous liaison brought, Meinecke continues,

"auf die alte Frage Kopf-oder-Zahl eine ganz neue Antwort hervor, nämlich Kopf-und-

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[46] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 149-159. For an extensive discussion on the importance of mourning history in
Negt and Kluge's works see Langston's section "Benjamin's Message in a Bottle," pages 42-50.

[47] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 151-155.

Zahl" [*a completely new answer to the question of heads or tails, namely head and tail*] (*MV*, 117). Thus the stories in *Mode & Verzweiflung* engender pluralism to escape the binary oscillation between unproductive hegemonic positions. Or rather, they sought a new kind of circulation that would subversively link the gaps in such binaries by stealing from both sides and resignifying them. A crucial facet of this reexamination and adaptation in *Mit der Kirche* is the insertion of photographs. Specific pictures and their effects will be discussed in depth later. For now it is important to understand that pictures represent another media element that *Mit der Kirch* poaches to produce a new kind of social-historical constellation. The pictures distort the space of the narrative by interrupting the consumption of the text, but more importantly they question the organization and teleology of the narrative and history in the narrative.

Mit der Kirche* wrested control from mainstream media by using pirated pictures to make text-image collages. Because there was not a prescriptive use for the photos or for the narratives, the hijacked images engender a multiplicity of reading practices. If representation, as Fiske argues, is a means of exercising power in which one can act upon the world in a way that serves one's own interests and "the construction of subjectivity is political," then these texts demonstrated "the power of the subordinate to exert some control over representation."[48] *Mit der Kirche* thus subverts mainstream attempts to use media (television, film, newspapers) as agents of homogenization. But while *Mit der Kirche* poached mainstream media, this is not the case for everyone in its stories. Some West Germans in these texts have failed social strategies built upon fraudulent images and discourses. This error, *Mode & Verzweiflung* declares, is a

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[48] Fiske 317-318.

problem in the whole of the Federal Republic: "in der ganzen BRD stoßen wir […] auf

Fälle sowohl individuellen als auch kollektiven Verhaltens, in denen eindeutig der Typus

des Idioten als Vorbild […] herangezogen wurde" [*in the entirety of the FRG we come*

across […] cases of individual as well as collective behavior, in which the role model is

drawn from an image of an idiot] (*MV*, 38). However, West Germany's American-

German cultural content, with the unique juxtaposition of individual, epistolary and

media migration, provides a way not to be an idiot: reexamine representations of

nationality, location, identity and history. Thus the source of these images is also crucial.

The pictures are from various sources: newspapers, magazines, postcards,

encyclopedias, and movie stills. Specifically, in the age of television, what Negt and

Kluge call the age of "new media," Meinecke picked up the pieces of "old," classical

media. This is crucial because "new media," Negt and Kluge write, "are in a position to

dispense with pluralism and to deliver their output directly to individuals." Such

programs, to continue with Negt and Kluge, "**do not merely comprise an abstract all-**

purpose package ('to whom it may concern') […but represent] a focused

opportunity for exploitation."[49] Television represents a potential site of exploitation

because it can be produced with the individual's position in mind, rather than

fragmenting reality as they argue on behalf of classical media.[50] The images in *Mit der*

Kirche fragment the text. These images, as Miriam Hansen argues for Negt and Kluge's

footnotes, "respond to the text from various speaking positions, multiplying perspectives

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[49] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 154-155.

[50] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 152.

on the argument at hand."[51] Here Hansen reads Negt and Kluge's own use of montage in their theory in order to maximize the potential for readerly imagination that is inscribed in the text. Similarly, *Mit der Kirche* exposes an "openness" of supposedly hermetically sealed narratives from films, magazines and postcards. Media become thereby what Fiske calls "producerly" texts. These texts provide, following Fiske, a "'menu' from which the viewers chose," i.e., a diversification that could be audience produced.[52] The stories in *Mit der Kirche* move beyond the reflexive taking of sides, past self-protective neutrality, to consider the internal inconsistencies of all available positions. These stories violate the assumption that there should be one dominant sense of the represented reality.

A narrative strategy built upon poaching, particularly self-poaching, makes it possible to escape a culture, "Neue Hinweise" declares, that had degenerated to stupidity because of its historically fixed oppositions of "Kommunisten oder Faschisten" [*communists or fascists*] (*MV*, 36). Conversely, the constantly changing environment in the stories, disco, revolution, and parties into the countryside reject the idea that anything could be presented as an unbiased description of the situation. The "truth" of these stories was in a verisimilitude that indicted their own construction while celebrating the possibility of their re-construction. Reading media was crucial for history and popular culture in the eighties. Meinecke's collages are explosive because they challenged the persistence of German racism that lived off projecting racism as a US

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[51] Miriam Hansen, "Foreword" in Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) ix-xli, xxvi.

[52] Fiske 319-321.

problem. *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf* deploys cybernetic textual practices to make clear how re-signification creates anti-racist identities. FSK and Meinecke's methodology–poaching–is ultimately invested in the creation of anti-racist politics from mainstream racist content.

Effects of Poaching: Subversive Consumerism and Anti-Racism

Narratives and affect in West German media poached by *Mit der Kirche* are intrinsically tied to questions of blackness and its ideological representation. *Mit der Kirche* tests the viability of the unorthodox consumer for which Fiske argues and thereby facilitates anti-ideological discourses to media constructions of identity. Mainstream media representations of skin and nationality constructed images of Germans in popular discourse that created a divide between the histories of racism in the United States and Germany. Such a putatively unbridgeable division, as the reading of songs and the fanzine manifesto showed above, was exactly the target of FSK and Meinecke's media poaching. Meinecke's stories engage West German discourses on skin, color and identity by exposing their potential for deceit. This potential for deceit, for *Mode & Verzweiflung*, was part of the "modern[er] Traum von der Subversion" [*modern dream of subversion*] (*MV*, 117). The "taktischer Stilübung" [*tactical study of style*] outlined in the fanzine brought to bear on the stories in *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf*, disrupted the process through which representation was habitually achieved (*MV*, 117).

Three stories in *Mit der Kirche*, "Drei Todesanekdoten," "Ein versauter Tag" and "Pilot stirbt im Cockpit Passagier landet Flugzeug sicher," exemplify the mainstream repercussions that the legacies of racist words and images, notions of primitive and

civilized and racially motivated violence had for West German identity. These racially

structured discourses generated subject positions that, as Paul Gilroy claims in *The Black*

Atlantic, "finally give way to the dislocating dazzle of 'whiteness.'"[53] The "dazzle" of

whiteness blinds the West Germans in Meinecke's stories to the naturalization of

violence against blacks. The stories in *Mit der Kirche* recreate this violence narratively,

linguistically and pictorially to demonstrate how violence was dislocated from racist

origins to be rearticulated into popular discourse. This dislocation and rearticulation,

Meinecke's stories demonstrate, had deadly repercussions. These texts juxtapose

mainstream jargon, referring to pastries as "Negerküsse" [*nigger kisses*] or to a

"lachende Negerregent […] der Mohrenkönig" [*laughing nigger regent […] the king of*

the moors], with Josephine Baker's banana dance and blues guitarist Blind Willie

Johnson (figures 10 and 11).[54] A problem of linguistic signification emerges

immediately. Germans have vocabulary to describe blackness, but they do not have the

ability to distinguish that which they signify as blackness from that which is actually

black. The images mark a problem in West German identity politics with blackness and

blackface. Josephine Baker's "banana dance" is not Baker herself. The image is of a

reenactment taken from the cover of the magazine *Quick*.[55] This is a white woman

playing a blackface role of Baker. *Quick* was an illustrated magazine issued weekly that

in its heyday had a circulation of over 1.5 million.

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[53] Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1993): 9.

[54] Meinecke, *MdK* 108, 14-15.

[55] Meinecke and Melián, *Interview*.

Fig. 10. Blackface: A fake Josephine Baker on a cover of *Quick* (*MdK*, 13).

Fig. 11. Blackness: Blind Willie Johnson in West Germany (*MdK*, 103).

The wide circulation of the *Quick* image, thus, represents pictorially quotidian racialized

discourses in West Germany, signifying pastries as "nigger-kisses," that are the target of

re-signification in *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf*. The image of Blind Willie Johnson is an

image imported into West Germany from unknown sources.[56] Such an image shows the

exotic presence and circulation of images of blackness in West Germany. Johnson is

authentically black and thus clearly American. So what is the difference between

blackface and blackness? How does inserting these images engender anti-racism?

Close readings of these texts reveals that there is a putatively "forgotten,"

perhaps even "reconciled" racist element circulating in German discourse. Germans play

their own kind of blackface role that simulates social content and a reconciled past. The

image from *Quick* and of Johnson, when juxtaposed with the use of the adjective

"sogenannten" [*so-called*] in the stories, expose how African-Americans were used to

project any and all German problems with racism and identity as an effect of American

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[56] Meinecke and Melián, *Interview*.

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cultural flows (*MdK*, 12). US-racism–the blackface role of Josephine Baker–gets

confused with blackness from the US–Blind Willie Johnson–and circulates in the

Federal Republic. These images appear in the context of racialized stories, "Ein

versauter Tag" [*A ruined day*], and in stories that have, superficially, little to do with

race, such as "Pilot stirbt im Cockpit: Passagier landet Flugzeug sicher" [*Pilot dies in

cockpit: Passenger safely lands plane*]. Using these images to deal with race in the

media cited African-Americans as fantasies for German racism. The stories re-

functionalize media representations through dynamic appropriation and reappropriation

that took advantage of, as Hansen claims for the refunctioning media, "democratic

formations of publicity that emerged in the very media of consumption."[57] These stories

poach media to demonstrate how the "dazzle" of whiteness does not just naturalize

violence against blacks. The "dazzle" of whiteness also masked the history of German

racism toward people of color.

The story "Drei Todesanekdoten" [*Three Death-Anecdotes*] demonstrates

problems because of misunderstanding blackface roles. When a German in this story

plays black, other Germans take what they see as real. In this story black is something

"shit-colored," something to shoot and kill, like a wild boar. In one death-anecdote a

young German sleeping in a "kackfarbenen Schlafsack" [*shit-colored sleeping bag*] is

shot by a farmer (*MdK*, 88). This death, according to the slain boy's mother was all

because of skin color: "Hätte aber auch nur einer auf das Verhängnisvolle an der

sogenannten Kackfarbe hingewiesen […] hätte sie den Schlafsack doch ohne weiters

umfärben können, fleischfarbe zum Beispiel" [*If anyone had pointed out the fatal*

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[57] Hansen xxii. See Also Fiske p. 314ff.

implication of the so-called shit-color [...] then she could have easily enough changed its color, to flesh color, for example] (*MdK*, 88-89). Black is, thus, not something to misuse. The characters in this story naturalize white as "skin-colored." This naturalization leads, in turn, to the natural occurrence of shooting something brown in West Germany. This undercurrent of racial violence built upon white-black binaries in Meinecke's stories reveals, when read in tandem with the *Quick* image, that within West German popular media there are what Gilroy calls "conceptions of culture which present[ed] immutable, ethnic differences as an absolute break in the histories and experiences of 'black' and 'white' people."[58] In this anecdote there are deadly repercussions of blackface because other Germans misconceive of the young boy's re-signified skin color. The boy resignifies his skin, but the German farmer does not realize this is the case because he is not a poacher. He takes everything at face value, or better, at the value of skin. Conversely, the boy's mother realizes the power of re-signification because she knows that had she transformed the color of the sleeping bag from its commercial color, her son would still be alive. Had the mother poached–re-colored the skin of the sleeping bag–she would have prevented her son's blackface role and ensured his survival because everything would have been all white.

Another story embedded in "Drei Todesanekdoten" criticizes West German fetishization of blackness. The Germans in this story lament: "immer wieder mußten wir Mitteleuropäer hierin zu einem Vergleich mit den Negern herhalten" [*again and again*

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[58] Gilroy 2.

we Central-Europeans were forced into comparison with niggers] (*MdK*, 83).[59] Here the

characters equate blackness with nationality. The blacks come out better because of an

essentialist disposition: "auf Negerbegräbnissen werde getanzt, auf

Mitteleuropäerbegräbnissen herrsche jedoch ein eher bedrückende Atmosphäre" [*at

nigger-funerals they dance, at Central-European funerals however, an oppressed

atmosphere rules*] (*MdK*, 83). By essentializing affect as black, Germans in this story try

to seek out justifications to their inability to mourn the past. This oppressed atmosphere

is not just about funerals, but about mourning the tragedies of mass-murder, specifically

German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [reckoning with the past]. It is precisely the

replacement of non-reconciled fascism with "foreign" racism that inhibits Germans

ability to mourn their past. West Germans are thus ruled by foreign blackness–such as

Johnson–that has been imported into Germany and which they use for identity politics.

As the example of the slain boy demonstrates, misunderstanding blackness leads to

Germans playing blackface, a strategy with a deadly outcome. The mass distributed

Quick image and foreign (because of race) personae of Johnson support the immutable

break between blackness and whiteness. This is the dazzle of whiteness that blinds the

consumers of national culture in the story "Ein versauter Tag" [*A ruined day*]. This story

reveals that racism as popular discourse and race as national identity mask a fascist

present.

     "Ein versauter Tag" is a story about the state-visit of a regent "aus der

sogenannten Dritten Welt" [*from the so-called third world*] (*MdK*, 12). This story tells

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[59] The German word "Neger" can be translated either as *nigger* or *negro*. Using the word in German is
slippery because the pejorative connotations of nigger versus negro cannot be separated out. Nor can the
mainstream assumptions in the United States of the connotation nigger versus negro be justly applied here.

about a day ruined by the regent's inattentiveness to the "Tarzan Bildern" [*Tarzan pictures*] and the fright his companions "umfangreichen Tellerlippen" [*massive plate-lips*] gave German children (*MdK*, 15). The story deconstructs binary oppositions of race in the Federal Republic by stacking up racism and the arbitrary constructions of West German whiteness. In preparation for the visit of the "Mohren aus dem Morgenland" [*moors from the Orient*], the Bonn government decides to hold a contest seeking the perfect West German family. Once chosen, this was the family "die man dem schokoladenbraunen König zu präsientieren beabsichtigte" [*that was to be presented to the chocolate-brown king*] (*MdK*, 12). The chosen family, the Renzels, is meant to present how (well) a West German family lives in the social market economy: "man hatte den Renzels entsprechende Broschüren zukommen lassen" [*the Renzels were sent the appropriate brochures*] (*MdK*, 12). That the paradigmatic West German family has to be sent brochures on its existence speaks to the ideological fantasy that this family represents. These brochures unmask a construction of content in the morass of 1980s West Germany: "Wohlstand für alle, Wegfallen der Klassenschranken, die soziale Frage restlos gelöst, allgemeine Zufriedenheit im Lande gepaart mit einer ordentlichen Portion Problembewußtsein" [*affluence for all, dissolution of class-based constraints, the social question completely resolved, general contentedness in the country paired with a sensible portion of problem-consciousness*] (*MdK*, 12). But it is not just the Renzels who are media projections of ideology. The repetition and interchangability of the words "moor" and "nigger" in this tale make clear the predominance of racial slurs in West Germany. The use of "so-called" calls out the constructedness of the racist discourses under investigation here. This construction is twofold: the idea of the West German is as

constructed as the racial identity of the visiting dignitary. The story reveals the concerted construction of an "ideal" German identity and shows the prevalence of a violent and racist political and social lingua franca vis-à-vis an imaginary black identity.

"Ein versauter Tag" thus examines the legacies of American racist discourse in West Germany and the fanatical, ideological construction of mainstream cultural content: "affluence for all." The Renzels present and allow a phantasmagoric and unified image to be constructed of them. They passively take up the elements offered, rather than using Meinecke's cybernetic feedback-loop of subversive consumption that replayed information onto and into itself. But as demonstrated below, it is not just the Renzels who do not poach, but also all of those citizens who compete to represent the perfect German family. The Renzels are constructed as a paradigmatic West German family surrounded by hegemonic popular culture in the crumbling wake of West Germany's "Economic Miracle." "Ein versauter Tag" demonstrates the continuation of such discourses that were encouraged by the rhetoric of conservative politics and a head-on drive toward a market economy in the Federal Republic (*MdK*, 12-14). But more problematically, the story exposes the slippage of the mainstream language that constructs a fake image of Germany and that continuously re-signifies the African statesman as a moor, chocolate-brown, or nigger into fascist war-syntax. The final decision in the contest to be the West German family par excellence is spoken of as an "Endausscheidung" [*final shitting*] (*MdK*, 12). Here the "final decision" [*die Endlösung*] is re-signified and made into a "final shitting." The story has poached the Renzels' misunderstanding of the monumental tragedy of German history. "Ein versauter Tag" does not poach the Holocaust, but rather the feigned reconciliation with German history

that allows these figures to use fascist language to create a national identity. Constructing national identity in this manner ignores the racism of nationality demonstrated above and also calls back into action fascist affect.

Here the "final decision" does not signify the elimination of Jews in concentration camps, but rather of shit, the abject, waste. Namely, the abject for *Mit der Kirche* signifies the elimination of those in whom the fascist fantasies of the German race live on. This story reveals the truth of the "final decision," namely that Germans should consider themselves the abject because national popular identity is constructed vis-à-vis a blackness that becomes, for Germans with this constructed nationality, the abject. They must treat as abject the black within themselves, regardless whether it comes from affect, from essentialist dispositions, blackface roles, racism or fascism. In "Drei Todesanekdoten" Germans as abject manifest in the death of the German boy in the "kackfarbenen Schlafsack" [*shit-colored sleeping bag*] (*MV*, 80). In "Ein versauter Tag" the Renzels make other Germans the abject. The Renzels only won once this abject had been dealt with, once the other would-be examples had been annihilated: "vernichtend geschlagen" (*MdK*, 12). But it is not only the Renzels who do this. Once caught up in the contest to be the family presented before the "nigger regent," the citizens of the Federal Republic feel "einen alten Kampfgeist in sich aufleben […] den [man] seit vierzig Jahren bereits totgeglaubt hatte" [*an old fighting spirit coming alive […] one that was thought to have been dead for forty years*] (12). Counter-hegemonic media consumption reveals that time passing has only painted over the legacies of fascism with racism. This represents swapping one deadly identity for another.

The highest levels of government contribute to the cultural capital buttressing such media projections of West German identity. This is reinforced by the mass-media distribution via *Quick* of the Josephine Baker image. The picture of Johnson, as argued above, constructs racism as an American export, not an aspect of German identity. The Renzels and *Quick* demonstrate that German racism is indeed widespread and current. The story tells how the Renzels "eroberte sich bald in einem geradezu triumphalen Siegeszug einen festen Platz in der Endaussscheidung" [*soon conquered, virtually in a triumphal victory procession, a secure place in the final shitting*] (12). West Germans are competing for their place in the final decision. This drive to be fascist is encouraged by fantasies of a reconciled past in spite of an "old fighting spirit" of fascism, of a present of content, and of racism as problem located elsewhere. The error in the assertion of these socio-historical conditions lies in German's violent positions vis-à-vis blacks and history. They are reproducing discourses that kill, but this time it will be them. This is exactly what these racist and violent discourses do in the next story in the collection, "Pilot stirbt im Cockpit: Passagier landet Flugzeug sicher" [*Pilot dies in cockpit: Passenger safely lands plane*]. The story is of American Fred Gant's miraculous survival and landing after the pilot of a small plane he was flying has a heart attack. The tale of Fred's survival is in Germany because Fred carried the newspaper account as a clipping in his wallet. In the story, Fred's friends bemoan his constant re-telling his survival of this catastrophe. The problem for the friends is not that Fred retells his story, but rather that Fred always tells the story the exact same way.

The nameless narrator-friend tells the reader "dadurch, daß Fred Grant eigentlich immer nur diese eine Geschichte erzählt, und diese eine Geschichte auch immer wieder

mit genau denselben Worten erzählt, können wir alle diese Geschichte inzwischen längst in- und auswendig" [*because Fred Grant really only tells this one story, and tells this one story always in exactly the same words, we can do [know, CS] this story inside and out*] (*MdK*, 18). Fred's friends ultimately wish that because of this uncreative repetition, that it would have been better had Fred been the one who had died in the plane. Fred does not use his narrative well. While the migration of this media-narrative, from Davenport, Iowa (where the story originated) to Germany, seems interesting, Fred's friends reveal that this is not the most important part. The most important part of Fred's story, that he ignores of course, is that it is a narrative at all. Narrative is the useful part of the story because it is poachable. *Mit der Kirche* poached Fred's narrative. The poached version has an image of a black man being lynched by the Klu Klux Klan (fig. 12).

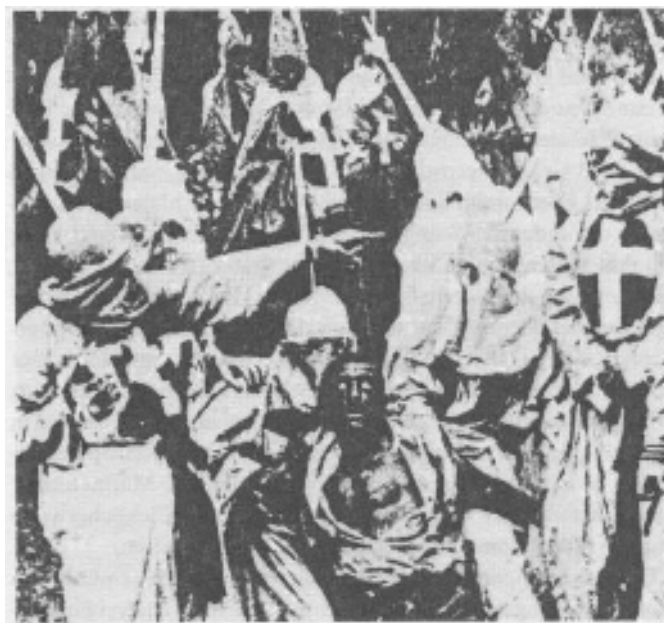**Fig. 12**. A lynching in "Pilot stirbt im Cockpit" (*MdK*, 19).

The story about Fred put the manifesto from *Mode & Verzweiflung* into action because it poached an earlier version of a poached text. *Mit der Kirche*'s poached version of the

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newspaper article represents a product of Negt and Kluge's proletarian public sphere because it positions, as they write, "**idea against idea, product against product**," through the collage of the KKK and text.[60]

Mit der Kirche appropriated the image from *Birth of a Nation* (D.W. Griffith, 1915). This is not an image of white men lynching a black man, but rather of white men lynching a white man in blackface. This is a fantasy of racism. This is white men lynching a white man. This is an image of white people performing their own fears and of the ways such fantasies lead to nation building. The discourses that led to the lynching of this man have not been examined, but they have found their way into the vocabulary of the figures. Who were the German's consuming when they sought to reenact a lynching offered up for consumption? What was the German equivalent of blackface? Was it the racist-fascist language above? In part, but more importantly it is the son covering himself with a "shit-colored sleeping bag," the "nigger-kisses," the "nigger-reagent" and a fake Josephine Baker. The deadly repercussions of blackface roles such as those in *Birth of a Nation* surface when the Germans think that the son covered in brown is brown and when the Renzels act out their fascist fantasies and annihilate other Germans. But the there were more fundamental implications for German popular culture and American consumerism. The lynching scene from *Birth of a Nation*, a movie about the foundation of American resting upon violent, racist origins, is not a solution to Nazism. The "oppressive atmosphere" stagnating over Germany is, these stories propose, in part caused by attempts to tag any presence of racism in West Germany after the Holocaust as American problems.

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[60] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 80.

The Germans in "Pilot stirbt im Cockpit: Passagier landet Flugzeug sicher" create an unbridgeable divide between Germany and America. They do not consider anything about the newspaper clipping that has migrated across the Atlantic with Fred (bringing racial violence back across the Atlantic along with it) because this violence would be American. This demonstrates that Germans miss the point: it is precisely the endless repetition of this narrative that creates the problem of recurrent violent histories that are built upon fascism and racism. This repetition is not just of Fred's story, but indicative of the socio-historical feedback loop between the US and Germany. The effects of this loop emerge when the image of the lynching gets into the text and transforms the narrative and Fred's history. Subversive consumption of Fred Grant's story makes a violent, oppressed past audible in the present. Uncovering the "hidden" racism lurking in this story is crucial for envisioning and constituting a counter-public because racism, Gilroy argues, can provide a stabilizing force to secure a precarious position.[61] The racist ideologies imported into West Germany alongside colportage, as argued above, reveal what Gilroy analyzes as "the importance of ritual brutality in structuring modern, civilised [*sic*] life."[62] Brutality from American culture and politics has found its way into West German culture. But that American racism seeps into German popular culture through media does not indicate something new in Germany. Americanized popular media did not import racism into Germany. Germans always had their own instances of racism. Anti-racist positions were only possible by not blindly following, or adopting, narratives circulating in media. But unfortunately, the solution is

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[61] See for example Gilroy, 163.

[62] Gilroy 119.

not unbridled media poaching as the means to create counter-products that solve the problems of racism and fascism.

"Dallas," History and the Limits of Poaching

The feedback-loop between the USA and Germany that *Mit der Kirche* uncovered and poached contains circuits of US popular culture that were saturated by a racialized discourse. Poached media demonstrate how this racial discourse uncovered Germany's own "forgotten" history of race problems in the age of late capitalism. As the phrase "Endausscheidung" [*final shitting*] made clear, these effects of German racism were intrinsically tied to the history of suffering–fascism and the Holocaust–in Germany. The tragic effects of persistent racism resulted in the young boy's death. In order to understand the possibility of the formation of counter-publicities in the eighties, we need to turn from the present to the history of Germany. We need to examine how German history is remembered. We need to look at the history of capitalism–that system of modernity that made Nazi killing factories and their Taylorian-efficiency possible– and suffering in contemporary media. For *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf* there is no better example in media of capitalism and suffering than the television show "Dallas." The stories dealing with "Dallas" in *Mit der Kirche* demonstrate the need for an ethical position vis-à-vis history and the limits of poaching.

"Boston Tea Party" is the first instance of "Dallas" in the collection and it demonstrates two opposing uses of migrating media and migrating narratives. "Boston Tea Party" reports on letters sent from America by Werner Feldhagen to a group of friends in Germany. The Germans are skeptical of the trans-Atlantic "Mitteilungen über

angeblich nur in den USA machbare Erkenntnisse" [*information about discoveries that are apparently only able to be made in the USA*] (*MdK*, 22). The German emigrant Feldhagen, after months in America, writes about the television show "Dallas." Feldhagen decides that, in light of the tragedy surrounding the potentially irreversible death of Bobby Ewing, "die Fernsehwirklichkeit […] ist also, verglichen mit der sozialen Wirklichkeit, die höhere" [*television-reality is, when compared with social reality, the higher of the two*] (*MdK*, 25). Feldhagen's friends do not buy into his example post-punk poaching. They respond in another postcard that this socio-cultural evaluation is "hübsch angesiedelt" [*nicely settled*] (*MdK*, 25). However, they reject his "Aufteilung des sozio-medialen Feldes in mehrere Wirklichkeiten" [*segmenting of the socio-media field into multiple realities*] (*MdK*, 25). Instead, his friends argue that this theory of multiple realities is a dead end, "gerade in der Emigration" [*particularly with emigration*] (*MdK*, 25). Feldhagen's friends in West Germany thus argue for a unified individual and singular reality in spite of the inter- and trans-national opportunities demonstrated by Feldhagen. This story starts as a dialogue about the modern phenomena of "Ideologische Kulturversumpfung" [*ideological stagnation*] due to infatuation with "Dallas" (*MdK*, 22). However, it turns out to demonstrate two divergent uses of the show "Dallas." "Kulturversumpfung" in the hands of the poacher Feldhagen, becomes *Kulturverpflanzung* or *–vermehrung* [cultural transplantation or multiplication]. By extension, it critiques his West Germans friends' inability to successfully incorporate the socially subversive possibilities offered by history, migration and media.

What did it mean to watch "Dallas" in Germany or America? Fiske has examined

how "Dallas" specifically has been misused by audiences in North America.[63]

Negotiating the meaning of "Dallas" was for Fiske a "social process, and not an

individualistic one, but it still allow[ed] the socially situated viewer an active, semi-

controlling role in it […] to produce meanings that span[ned] the whole range from the

dominant to the oppositional."[64] For Feldhagen, the German academic watching

"Dallas," the actor playing Bobby Ewing is expendable. Were Bobby Ewing to die,

however, that is "irreversibel" [*irreversible*] (*MdK*, 25). Whether the actor playing

Ewing dies is irrelevant because it is specifically the use that audiences can make of the

role of Ewing that holds subversive potential. In other words, it is not the trajectory of

the narrative, but the fact that it is a narrative at all that can be used. Thus Feldhagen in

this story is like Fiske: both see in the narrative of "Dallas" consequent and diverse

identities that can ultimately be used for social change. Feldhagen demonstrates how, if

one is on top of his or her television watching, he or she can outdo the culture industry.

Here the ideological stagnation ("Kulturversumpfung") is caused by the potential

reduction of the "menu" (Fiske) from which viewers can choose. This stagnation cannot

be turned into cultural multiplication (*Kulturvermehrung*) by Feldhagen's friends

because they passively upload or completely ignore the useability of the images they

have before them.

This story is thus about the failure of transnational media (the migration of media

over national boundaries) in West Germany. In "Boston Tea Party," the characters in

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[63] See Fiske's *Television Culture*, particularly pages 309ff.

[64] Fiske 82.

West Germany do not reexamine problems of nationality and identity. That the observations vis-à-vis media realities can apparently ("angeblich") only be made in America signals a resignation on the part of Feldhagen's friends to what they erroneously perceive to be American cultural hegemonic domination. Contrary to this myth of "American cultural imperialism" bemoaned by Feldhagen's friends and signified by *Dallas*, Feldhagen, like Ien Ang, shows how "Dallas" actually contains "mutual relations [that] are extremely complicated."[65] Feldhagen's own phenomenological migration brings national discourses on media and culture into motion. The ability to misuse media was already in West Germany, evidenced in the story by the last postcard from West Germany that features an etching of the Boston Tea Party. Alas, Feldhagen's friends fail to consider why Germans have a postcard with an etching of the Boston Tea Party to send. Instead, they argue whether this really was the image on the reverse of their epistolary dismissal of perspectives and positions made possible by migration. Edgar, one of Feldhagen's friends back in Germany, is the only figure who thinks that the image on the postcard was indeed an etching of the Boston Tea Party. The other two friends, Ludger and Arno, think that the image was of cats in front of Brussels' "Atomium."[66] Edgar suggests, however, that the Boston Tea Party image was chosen "nicht ohne Absicht" [*purposefully*] (*MdK*, 25). In other words, images have consequences.

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[65] Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas* trans. Della Couling (London: Methuen, 1985) 7.

[66] The "Atomium" is a monument of an iron crystal built by André Waterkeyn for the 1958 Brussels World's Fair.

Is the purpose only that Feldhagen lives in Boston? Or is it that the rejection of trans-Atlantic material is revolutionary, a position embodied by Feldhagen's friends' rejection of "Dallas"? This is a final moment of failure for Feldhagen's friends in the complex network of image and text and history. If carefully read (what Feldhagen's friends do not do), then this story lays the foundation for caring about the transnational multiplicity of meanings opened up by migration. There are multiple, contingent symbolic possibilities in the appropriation of media to which some of the Germans in the text remain oblivious. This obliviousness is indicated three times: when the characters ignore the cultural capital from America; when they pay so little attention to the postcard image that they cannot decide what it was; and when they ignore the picture of a man standing by a piano that makes the text into a collage (fig. 13).

Fig. 13. Blackface or drag?: A German playing an Italian impersonator of a Romanian-born Hungarian composer (*MdK*, 23).

The image is from the film *Der Italiener* (Ferry Radax, 1971) based on a fragment and screenplay by Austrian author Thomas Bernhard. The image holds exactly the manifold meanings that Feldhagen, Fiske and Ang cull from "Dallas." The cryptic-experimental film, written by Bernhard and filmed by Radax, is about a young Italian man who listens incessantly to Béla Bártok records while the residents of the house in which he is lodging mourn the death (possibly suicide) of the family patriarch. The Italian begins to play Bártok's music, poaching the Romanian-born Hungarian composer's music for himself. Furthermore, Bernhard's literary text changed its nomenclature with the subtitle "Ein Film" [*A Film*]. Thus the still image from Radax's movie, poached once by Bernhard and then by Meinecke, represents an attempt by *Mit der Kirche*, to expand its own literary moniker.

This film and the still appear to have, superficially, little to do with this narrative. However, the point here is to demonstrate how Fiske's "menu" multiplies representation. Bernhard has summarized the project of his film-fragment similarly, as a textual instance of "*Arbeit als Experiment*" [*work as experiment*].[67] Feldhagen's friends ignore the diverse meanings possible because they do not experiment. Those meanings are ignored. Ignoring the image in the collage is a paradigmatic failure for Feldhagen's friends because a collage does not allow synthesis of a unified meaning. Thus what Edgar's "Boston Tea Party" threw overboard was what the "Atomium" signaled: the complex, trans-national network (via capitalism and tea-trade or a World's Fair) for the multiplication of meaning. Fragments such as *Der Italiener* fundamentally transform the text, but the friends miss the subversive moment because they do not read nor do they

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[67] Thomas Bernhard, "Notiz," *Der Italiener* (Salzburg, Austria: Residenz Verlag, 1971) 163.

connect them. Feldhagen's friends are oblivious to what has accompanied his postcards

from the USA. They ignore the potential for transforming German-American cultural

exchange into a gateway to pluralism.[68] Here Feldhagen's friends do not demonstrate

proof of an individual's inability to create their own uses for media, only their failure to

do so. His friends are the idiots that *Mode & Verzweiflung* bemoans serve as inspiration

for mainstream German citizens. While Feldhagen can poach "Dallas," characters who

poach do not always have appropriate materials at their disposal. They sometimes come

up against the limits of poaching.

American pop culture ("Dallas") and German history (the Holocaust) meet up in

the story "Der Abend im Eimer" [*A waste of an evening*]. In this story, the evening is a

waste because "Dallas [ist], wie wir alle wissen, wegen Holocaust ausgefallen" [*Dallas,

as we all know, was canceled because of Holocaust*] (*MdK*, 41). "Holocaust" was an

American TV series that followed the Weiss family as they tried to survive their

deportation to various concentration camps. "Holocaust" was produced for a US

audience, and, as Andreas Hyussen argues, it "had a totally unanticipated and unintended

impact in West Germany."[69] As Huyssen explains, many critics spoke of a "national or

collective catharsis" that unfolded in Germany because of the American television series

"Holocaust," which enhanced "identification with the Weiss family," a Jewish family

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[68] Meinecke spoke directly to this collective experience and potential in an interview in *die tageszeitung* in October 1997. Meinecke spoke of the attempt "das Deutsche als Politisches über den Umweg Amerika zu formulieren" [*to formulate the German as political by using an American detour*] ("Originalität ist ein Ablenkungsmanöver," *die tageszeitung* 15, Oct. 1997).

[69] Andreas Huyssen, "The Politics of Identification: 'Holocaust' and West German Drama," *After the Great Divide* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986) 94-114, 94.

trying to survive the Holocaust.[70] "'Holocaust' was condemned by critics," he also

explains, "as a cheap popularization of complex historical processes which could not

help the Germans come to terms with their recent past."[71] Not all Germans embraced this

American-imported *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [reckoning with the past]. While

Huyssen is interested in the compatibility of emotional representations of history for

Germans reconciling the "Final Solution," Meinecke's two stories about "Dallas" lay out

why the psychosocial relevance of "Holocaust" misses the point. Dismissing "Dallas" or

"Holocaust" as trivial, dangerous or ahistorical assumes that these programs had but only

one use. Conversely, as Feldhagen shows above, there are multiple interpretations

possible for audiences. That "Dallas" was canceled does not please the German viewers

in the story because "Holocaust," after all, "haben wir doch vor drei Jahren gesehen" [*we*

saw that three years ago] (*MdK*, 41). The intrusion to "Dallas" means that the ongoing

tragedies of capitalism lose out over the historical tragedies of genocide. This may at

first appear as a reduction of the Holocaust to just another media event, but one much

less popular and current than "Dallas." However, the juxtaposition of this story with

Feldhagen's poaching of "Dallas" creates an intertextual dialog between pessimistic and

positive views toward the value of television. The parallel between "Dallas" and

"Holocaust" cannot be reduced to popularity in America, as is the case with the former,

and Germany, as is the case with both.

       The debate around "Holocaust" is crucial in this argument because, as Huyssen

points out, "'Holocaust' betrays very clearly and often unnervingly" the often-criticized

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[70] Huyssen 113.

[71] Huyssen 94.

elements of the culture industry.[72] But what exactly is it about "Holocaust" that makes it

so crucial here? As the nameless narrative "we" in the story "Der Abend im Eimer"

points out, it is not poachable. This is why the evening is a waste. "Holocaust" addresses

German history as fixed history. Just as Fred Grant retells his story of survival over and

over with the exact same words, the "we" in "Der Abend im Eimer" know exactly what

will happed to the various members of the Weiss family (*MdK*, 41). This does not

suggest that "Dallas" is better than "Holocaust" simply because it is newer, although that

is also crucial, but rather it demonstrates that there are some things that could not be re-

signified, namely the Holocaust. This story is not Holocaust denial, but rather a quest for

programming suitable for poaching. "Dallas" is better for talking about the Holocaust

precisely because it is about capitalism and suffering (of the Ewing family). The

Holocaust and the elimination of Jews are not to be poached. Poaching such historical

moments along with "Dallas" would imply equivalency in these tragedies. The affective

reaction to "Dallas" and "Holocaust" shows this is not the case. The potential death of

Bobby Ewing, Feldhagen reports, unleashes "hellem Aufruhr" [*clear turmoil*] in

America (*MdK*, 25). In contradistinction to the newness of death in "Dallas," the fate of

the Weiss family in the Warsaw ghetto and in concentration camps is well known: "was

interessiert uns das heute?" [*how does that interest us today?*] (*MdK*, 41). The shocking

death in "Dallas" engenders a new moment of mourning, while the death of Weiss

family members cannot do this again. However, the public must not forget the barbarism

of capitalism and modernity. This is why they need to watch "Dallas." Thus Horkheimer

and Adorno's condemnation of mass culture as something that primarily manipulates the

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[72] Huyssen 96.

masses does not fit here because the friends seek out an active participation in television and reject any passive and false sense of pleasure of television. The problem was not that the Germans in Meinecke's text tired of "Holocaust," but rather that the show itself did not offer the diverse possibilities for transforming social reality that "Dallas" had.

So here it seems that the Germans in "Der Abend im Eimer" are somewhere between Feldhagen's friends and Feldhagen. While they know they cannot resignify some history, we still do not see to what use they put the Ewing family. This hopeful moment stands nevertheless in opposition to the West Germans in these texts who fail to develop successful strategies for tapping into the hybrid geographical and historical positions that media and travel create. This suggests that there are radical possibilities in being an unorthodox West German consumer of popular culture that can push at the limits of what American popular culture has constructed as the space for politics and history. This was, after all, what the manifesto in *Mode & Verzweiflung* really calls for. The inability to consider these possibilities makes characters such as Feldhagen's friends those who the manifesto declares the "Verkörperung des rückwärtsgewandten und unklaren Denkens schlechthin" [*embodiment of turned-around and muddled thinking par excellence*] (*MV*, 34). The audiences of trans-national media exchange have at their disposal the means of becoming a creative, participating force. Meinecke's stories in *Mit der Kirche* show that readers, like texts, can take advantage of media by resignifying the culture industry's ideological intentions. This feedback loop, which replays information onto and into itself, is what *Mode & Verzweiflung*'s manifesto declares a "Handlungsanweisung" [*strategy*] for cyberneticians (*MV*, 33). Feldhagen, like the

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stories in *Mit der Kirche*, considers not only the content, but also the medium and the geographical-cultural matrix.

Within this matrix, the fragmented messages and hybrid content represent a moment in the eighties, Meinecke writes, of "dem modernen Traum von der Subversion […] mit der lustbetonten Praxis […] sorgfältig kybernetisch abgeleiteter, vor allem taktischer Stilübungen" [*the modern dream of subversion [...] with passionately driven praxis [...] cybernetically derived, and above all tactical exercise in style*] (*MV*, 117). Docile and oblivious acceptance of this information imposes the foreign onto conceptions of the national whereby West German identity ignores its partial constitution by The United States of America. But more so, US images are used to mask the historical precedence and contemporary persistence of German racism. Feldhagen's friends and the collective "we" passively take up the information in these images and texts: West German society does not consider the change that this reading and signifying strategy injects into their daily affairs. The two stories above focused on the US-culture industry versus collages of image and text, of poached media. But *Mit der Kirche*'s also brought the praxis of the theory laid out in *Mode & Verzweiflung* to bear on "higher" forms of cultural consumption. The previous sections made clear that Feldhagen was an academic who thought like Fiske, but that academic was operating in the sphere of popular culture. The story "Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" explicitly examines academic consumption of socio-critical texts and theories within an academic sphere.

Everyone Can Poach!

The text "Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" is a story about the "Konzentrationsschwäche" [*weakness of concentration*] of literati and the sinking value

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of "sogenannte Literatur" [*so-called literature*] (*MdK*, 70). The academic scene is a reading circle where authors read their latest cultural criticisms and forays into literature. The pivotal figure is Ulli, a new member who seems to have some trouble being accepted by the more seasoned members. More than telling of Ulli's attempts at academic integration, "Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" juxtaposes the derangement ("Umnachtung") of hippie-literary reading circles with a picture of what appears at first glance as a 1970s sex-bomb (fig. 14).

Fig. 14. Drag: A question of reading. (*MdK*, 73)

The woman in the image stares with a frozen, detached gaze off camera. This blank stare suggests an image of the circle's participants, unable to concentrate and fazed by Ulli's cultural criticism that links soccer, love affairs, and pop music's inheritance of Marxism (*MdK*, 72). Or does she represent the narrative "we," the "Nicht-Literaten" [*non-literati*] (*MdK*, 72)? It is they, after all, who, after hearing the participant Ulli's cultural criticism, are followed by a "merkwürdiges Gefühl: Wir heben den Fuß, erst rechts, dann links, und schauen vorsichtig unter die Sohlen unseres Schuhwerks" [*curious feeling: We lift*

the foot, first the left, then the right, and carefully look at the soles of our shoes] (*MdK*, 72). The use of "us" and "we" makes the non-literati narrative voice a collective, one responsible for a complete turn away from sheltered intellectual engagement in the Federal Republic. And this is not a bad thing. The text reveals that it was precisely the non-literati who in the last six years (since 1978) had regained "die verlorene Konzentration mittels der mobilen Anpassung" [*the lost concentration through the means of mobile adaptation*] (*MdK*, 70). This mobile adaptation–adapting to divergent and unexpected uses of media, images, and texts–makes the non-literati far more intellectual and critical than intellectuals.

The literary circle, conversely, is a collection site of that "was wir bald Neue Primitivität nannten" [*what we soon began to call New Primitivism*] (*MdK*, 70). The narrative voice chastises the participants, isolated from society, as misdirected students who do not personify the postmodern theories they espouse. Rather, the circle's participants reproduce the same errors as 1968: they "befinde[n] sich […] auf demselben Niveau wie der Student, der dem Proleten, wir erinnern uns, den Fernseher wegnehmen wollte" [*find themselves […] on the same level as the student, who, we remember, wanted to take the television away from the proletariat*] (*MdK*, 70-71). Thus the circle represents an attempt to isolate and control who was allowed to participate in intellectual consumption of (television) culture. From their sequestered position, the literary circle simply mimes the "Gruppe 47." They even have their own Günter Grass: "Gunter ist dran, der zweiunddreißigjährige Drucker. Seine mitreißende Reportage von einem gewöhnlichen Arbeitskampf, […] wird sofort begeistert angenommen" [*it's Gunter's turn, the thirty-two-year-old printer. His stirring report of a quotidian workers-struggle,*

[...] is immediately and enthusiastically taken up] (*MdK*, 71). This is exactly the type of mistaken affective investment that the manifest "Neue Hinweise" in *Mode & Verzweiflung* rails against, namely a discussion of "tiefe Weinerlichkeit [die] in sentimentale Sozialkritik verfällt" [*deep whiney-ness that degenerates into sentimental social criticism*] (*MV*, 34). "Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" blew open such hermetically sealed space, the rightful ownership of "critical reading" and democratized the participants in such criticism.

The space of the reading circle is not subversive but a part of the bourgeois public sphere. It is precisely the isolation of this reading circle, a throwback to eighteenth-century salons, that the narrative "we" of "Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" claims "[bringt] die nahezu vollendete Umnachtung des Literaten zum Ausdruck" [*expresses the almost complete derangement of the literati*] (*MdK*, 71). *Mit der Kirche* sought a solution to such antiquated critical forums that, Hansen argues, stand in opposition to the space of Negt and Kluge's counter-public and "absolved leftist intellectuals from having to engage in forms of organization [here the reading circle, CS] that amounted to self-denial and nostalgic misreadings of contemporary social and cultural realities."[73] The reading circle in "Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" cannot be any sort of oppositional public sphere because it is devoid of discursive contestation or potentially unpredictable processes. The concrete problem with literature in the text is exactly concrete: the circle's members, with the sole exception of Ulli, rely on literature alone: they are disciplinarians. But even though the interdisciplinarian Ulli draws together sport, music, and Marxism, and as such represents a potentially anti-discursive

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[73] Hansen xv.

moment in the circle, he does so in a predictable manner with a cemented style: "die

Runde hat sich […] an Ulli gewöhnt" [*the circle had become used to Ulli*] (*MdK*, 72).

Again, the isolation of the circle is its most tragic moment because what was at stake

with Ulli's text was, to continue with Hansen, the "very possibility of making

connections–between traditionally segregated domains of public and private, politics and

everyday life." This is such a crucial moment because a collage of image and text is for

Hansen a crucial "morphology of relations" that encouraged the reader to "draw his or

her own connections across generic divisions of fiction and documentary [here the

image, CS] of disparate realms and registers of experience."[74] The text itself used the

inserted picture to present itself as an alternative to orthodox literary production,

reception and use. But how did the picture do this?

The woman in the picture is a transvestite competing for the Miss All'America

contest in the film *The Queen* (Frank Simon, 1968). Coincidently, the image also

appears in Parker Tyler's essay contribution to *Acid*.[75] Fittingly for *Mit der Kirche*'s

project of linking putatively disparate elements, Tyler's essay provides serendipitous

analytical insight to Meinecke's story. Tyler's essay exposes limitless gender and sexual

possibilities: hetero-, homo-, and bi-sexualities must be expanded. But it is not expansive

sexuality that ties Tyler and Meinecke's story together, but rather that not all is what you

first think it is. Everything is a question of reading. Ulli's project is potentially

subversive because it draws lines between points and practices (sports, sex, and music).

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[74] Hansen xxxiv.

[75] See Parker Tyler "Männer, Frauen und die übrigen Geschlechter *oder:* Wie es euch gefällt, so könnt ihr es haben" in *Acid: Neue amerikanische Szene* ed. Rolf Dieter Brinkmann and Ralf-Rainer Rygulla (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1969) 264.

Ulli's text, like Tyler's, seeks to constantly blow up the limits of discourse. Tyler argued

for an endless array of genders and sexualities, to explode social constructions. What

non-academics find offensive and cause for checking their shoes for feces is the literati's

lukewarm take on engaged cultural criticism. The academics grant "Literatur-Status"

[*literary-status*] to Ulli's texts in spite of skepticism to the value of his ideas (*MdK*, 71).

This non-critical uptake places the literary group's members in the circle of "grenzenlos

bejahende Humanisten" [*boundless affirming humanists*] lamented in *Mode &*

Verzweiflung's manifesto (*MV*, 32). Rather than passionately engaging Ulli's work, the

circle has become accustomed to him. More disparaging is that the critical text has been

subsumed into a canon of literature that is isolated from a sphere where it could have

real effects. Shaving beards and moving on from Herbert Marcuse does not signal a new

radicalness in the tropes of '68, rather the continuation of the same. "Ein Blick unter die

Schuhsole," conversely, fused media and text to create a feedback-loop between various

levels and thereby a counter-product that re-reflects and re-represents identity. The text

thus becomes a kind of hyper-media that debunks the academic lingua franca of stable

representation and knowledge. The integration of heterogeneous materials–detritus–

encourages problematic, parallel processes that represented a series of momentary sparks

that overlapped analyses and formed alliances. The story further fragments the

experience of "old media" (Negt and Kluge) through forms of "organization that [were]

not originally created by the media."[76] Forms of organization become, in effect, forms of

disorganization, and thereby create lines of flight outside isolated pockets of intellectual

consumption of culture.

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[76] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 153.

"Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" calls for an explosion of literature's ossified social uses. To this end, the story is a metaphor for all of Meinecke's texts. His stories, because they contain various bits of other texts and because they reshuffle their own materials and positions, resist being pigeonholed as literature.[77] This is the role of the poacher that is missed by paradigmatic examples of mainstream literature in Meinecke's collection (here Günter Grass). This constellation in Ulli's instance links one investment with another, say Marxism and music, but even better, film, drag queens and prose. This connection, that links interests and passions, enables the continued subversion of images offered for consumption. In the last instance, what the reading circle demonstrates is what Hansen argues the transformation of media dissolves: the "mutually paralyzing cohabitation of bourgeois and industrial forms of publicity."[78] "Ein Blick unter die Schuhsole" makes clear that counter products must exist in an open, accessible sphere.

Politics of Poaching

Mit der Kirche holds up poaching as an intervention into the socio-political history of West Germany. The text creates anti-racist, historically aware politics in which nothing is original, or better, in which everything is original. Everything becomes original because everything is a question of re-reading and re-signification. The stories in *Mit der Kirche* uncover the structuring role of racism and the subversively active role possible for mass-media consumers of West German identity. Re-reading German

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[77] Although *Mit der Kirche* was published by a mainstream publishing house it continued to represent an alternative kind of production because of the recycled textual materials and the photos which were reproduced, unbeknownst to Suhrkamp, without copyright (Meinecke and Melián, *Interview*).

[78] Hansen xxii.

popular culture and history for anti-racism imagines another kind of German history and identity that is not structured by violence. Fascism and racism make West German identity deadly, but ignoring either is not the solution. The politics of poaching reveal the complex matrix of circumstances of which *Mit der Kirch ums Dorf* took advantage. For Meineck and FSK poaching transformed the hopeless condition of mass culture under late capitalism into a dynamic site. Poaching makes representation dynamic and experimental, it reconceptualizes the public from the perspective of unpredictability, conflict, contradiction, and difference. FSK and Meinecke used discontinuity and to get out of what FSK called a "Sackgasse der Evolution" [*evolutionary dead-end*], by displacing affective identities onto other areas.[79]

Meinecke and FSK sought to envision postwar German modernity free of fascism. They interrogated the specter of a supplanted American history for West Germany, whereby they discovered American racism and "forgotten" West German racism. The use of media for a realigned modernity turned not on the proliferation of transmitted images, but on the continuous resignification of this media. But it cannot be stressed enough: this was not some libertarian push to solve the problems of American-German modernity. Meinecke and FSK tested choices that were the starting point for the creation of an oppositional public sphere. This counter-public sphere comes about from a kind of semiotics from subversive consumption. This was a political project, not one that encourages the endless proliferation of identities. The cultural anthropology in *Mit der Kirche ums Dorf* and *Mode & Verzweiflung* re-signified mass media images such as the *Quick* cover (fig. 10), the "Negerküsse" [*nigger-kisses*], and the fascist war-syntax, the

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[79] From the song "Kleiner Polizist" [little cop] from the album "Stürmer".

"Final Decision," "final shitting" and "vernichtend geschlagen" [*annihilated*]. *Mit der Kirche*'s recombination unmasked the destructive nature of the unproblematic uptake of discourses and their historical legacies.

Rather than offering a clear answer, the images in Meinecke's stories represented an "intelligentes Spiel mit Stilen, welches stets Rechenschaft vor seinem historischen Kontext abzulegen vermochte" [*an intelligent play with styles, that constantly tries to determine their historical context*] (*MV*, 118). The cybernetic strategy was all about semiotics and meaning and poaching and context. The project was about poaching German history, about determining the historical conditions of images, and how these images and histories could be resignified at what Negt and Kluge call "a higher historical level of individuality" such that experience could be disorganized from above or below in the service of dismembering media.[80] This play made the dominant media–*Birth of a Nation*, *Quick*, "Dallas"–look incoherent and arbitrary and thereby unmasked the politics of uncertainty. The pictures exposed what Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, while arguing for transnational practices, call a "multidirectional flow of culture that provides both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic possibilities."[81] However, blackface and drag ensure that things are never what they seem. Collage in Meinecke's texts signals a crucial circulation–a feedback loop that mutated relations–that encouraged subversive consumption. The texts represent a catalyst for an oppositional

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[80] Negt and Kluge, *PS* 154.

[81] Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, "Introduction: Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity" in *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*, ed. Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) 8.

public sphere that could escape the deadly consequences of feigned reconciliation with racism, fascism and history.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AESTHETICS OF HATE AND THE END OF LITERATURE:
    JOACHIM LOTTMANN'S *MAI, JUNI, JULI*

> "das sind geschichten in büchern gelesen. geschichten aus dem
> täglichen leben. […] geschichten und ich habe sie geklaut.
> nachher fiel mir ein man kann es besser sagen. […]
> es gibt so viel und gar nichts was ich dir sagen will"
>
> [*those are stories read in books. stories from daily life.
> […] stories and i stole them. it occurred to me later
> that it can be better said. […] there is so much
> and nothing that i want to tell you*].[1]

The Quest for New Post-Punk Spaces:

The punk fanzines discussed in the introduction of this dissertation such as

Ostrich, brauchbar / unbrauchbar and *Hamburger Abschaum* were never meant to last.

Their chaotic layouts and instable materials demonstrate their lack of interest in

preservation. The materiality of the fanzines sought to alter radically the form and

content of literature but also to ensure that this rupture had no future. The fanzines

failed. In the early eighties, the German music *Spex* represented the mainstream

outgrowth of these fanzines. *Spex* envisioned itself as a venue for the intersection of

music and pop-culture journalism, of Marxist theory and emergent German authors. To

this end, it published, for example, fiction and theory by Rainald Goetz and Diederich

Diederichsen alongside articles on the work of avant-garde artist Martin Kippenberger

and stories about the suicide of Joy Division's Ian Curtis. This constellation of writers in

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[1] Fehlfarben, "das sind geschichten" *Monarchie und Alltag* (Cologne: EMI, 1980).

Spex, in effect, was very close to Rainald Goetz' *Irre*. *Irre*, like *Spex,* was a project that represented punk's lingering attempt to marginalize itself and to blur the margins and center of society. Goetz' hero, Raspe, sought a way out of the binaries of discourse and daily life. Goetz' Raspe failed. But *Spex* also sought to resignify the popular by poaching media to create subversive collages of choice material. As such, *Spex* also shares the post-punk sensibility analyzed in FSK's music and Thomas Meinecke's short fiction. And yet Meinecke's attempt to use a post-punk sensibility to apply punk reading practices to mainstream culture ended in 1987: "Letzter Beitrag: Quarantäne" [*Last Contribution: Quarantine*]. Meinecke's last essay for *Mode & Verzweiflung* concluded that "der finstere Glaube an das Gute in der Politik werde früher oder später durch einen strahlenden Glauben an deren Korrumpierbarkeit ersetzt werden müssen" [*the dark belief in the good in politics will have to be, sooner or later, replaced with the shining belief in its corruptibility*].[2] *Spex* consumed both punk and post-punk. It represented a testing ground for the creation of new post-punk spaces, spaces that could perhaps still be subversive despite their location in the mainstream. Joachim Lottmann, an emergent author who published in *Spex* throughout the eighties, wrote articles that demonstrate the limits of this testing ground. *Spex* was not Lottmann's only venue. He used a spectrum of literary forums as a staging area for unfurling punk and post-punk's failures.

The title of Lottmann's 1985 article in *Spex* called for Carthage, the recycled city of ancient history, to be destroyed because of Ronald Reagan. The article bemoans the end of politics: "weil nichts mehr läuft mit Politik, also mit dieser 'Fake'-Politik–und die andere, die echte, ist sanft entschlafen, wie es scheint" [*because nothing works through*

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[2] Thomas Meinecke, *Mode & Verzweiflung* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998) 123.

politics anymore, with this 'fake'-politics–and the other, the real, has gently slipped away, it seems]. The binary of real versus fake politics, boring talk or violent action, created a social stalemate. Lottmann argues with his television, pleading with it to show him something political that matters. He rejects what it offers him: "Das sollte Politik sein? Dieses Gesülze? Gab es nichts anderes? Eine Straßenschlacht meinetwegen, ein Buschkrieg, meuternde Soldaten, eine Autobombe" [*That is supposed to be politics? This blather? Is there nothing else? A street-fight for all I care, a bush war, mutinying soldiers, a car bomb*]. The television tries again and again to show the narrator real, politics that matter, but nothing works. At last, "Da gab er mir endlich recht, mein kleiner Fernsehapparat. Die Politik–sie ist am Ende" [*Then he finally admitted to me, my little television. Politics–that's over*].[3] Television only reproduces failed political moments. In light of the union of actors and conservative politics under the sign of Reagan, Lottmann concludes that subversive attempts to misuse the media are outdone by the mainstream. This crisis in television in 1985 is also a crisis in a location of subversive materials for Meinecke's post-punk poaching because Meinecke used just such media to re-read German history and create anti-racist identities. Lottmann's television crisis continued on into another *Spex* issue in 1986.

The problem with television in Lottmann's "Der politische Fernsehapparat" [*The political Television*] is its omnipotence. In 1986, it was clear that television structured society with complete autonomy: "der Ordnungsfaktor Nr. 1 unserer Gesellschaft, das Fernsehen, die Welt ordnet" [*the organizing factor Nr. 1 of our society, television,*

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[3] Joachim Lottmann, "Ceterum censeo Catharginem delendam esse…" *Spex* 59 (Oct 1985): 27.

orders the world].[4] Post-punk had envisioned a subversive space in media. This was a

moment that marks what Hal Foster, while writing on cultural politics and

postmodernism, calls a "postmodernism of resistance." If post-punk was a

postmodernism of resistance that sought to change the object and its social context to

resist the status quo, then in light of television's capacity to (re)organize completely

post-punk's counter-products, this space failed.[5] Lottmann makes clear that television is

what matters, not people's use of it or their action independent or outside of it:

"Schmeißt die Knarre weg, RAF-Leute! Solange mein kleiner 'National Color TV'

allabendlich die Ordnung der Dinge festlegt, habt ihr keine Chance" [*Throw away your*

guns RAF-people! As long as I have my little 'National Color TV' sets the order of

things every night, you guys have no chance].[6] Even the spectacular actions of terrorism

are no match for the absorbent and normalizing power of network television. The

subcultural flight of the popular to the fringes–its attempt to define itself through and

take advantage of a margin–became the location of everything. Punk and post-punk had

fled to the margins of society in an attempt to destabilize the grip of ideology in

everyday life. This margin soon became, however, the new mainstream. In the wake of

these failures, the only space left for any attempt at another punk or post-punk ethos

would, then, have been in the space vacated in the center. If it was affective politics that

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[4] Joachim Lottmann, "Der politische Fernsehapparat" *Spex* 69 (August 1986): 55.

[5] Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface" *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, Washington, Bay Press, 1983) ix-xvi, xii.

[6] Lottmann, "Der politische Fernsehapparat" 55.

Lottmann sought after punk, then he had to go back inside the institution that everyone had once tried to escape.

Lottmann did not contain his engagement with politics, pop culture, and media to *Spex*. He began to write for the national newspaper *Die Zeit* in 1986. But despite his move into what can justly be called the institution of journalism, Lottmann continued to test and theorize the spaces and possibilities in media and the popular. In April of 1986, he dismissed pop coolness and punk because it had been coopted by mainstream French cinema: "Die angestrebte Adaption britischer Pop-Coolness hat nur dazu geführt, daß man bei jedem Darsteller denkt: So schön das Punk-Outfit auch ist, lieber würde dieser Herr im Bistro sitzen, rotwein trinken, Käse essen und wild gestikulierend sabbeln." [*the sought-after adaptation of British pop-coolness only lead to fact that with every actor one thinks: As nice as the punk-outfit is, this guy would rather sit in a bistro, drink red wine, eat cheese and babble while gesticulating wildly*].[7] Here the problem is that the adaptive potential of pop-culture only provides a façade for people who would rather be doing something else. People did not care about the political potential in the popular. They did not care about what mattered to punk or post-punk. In August, Lottmann's review of *The Karate Kid II* cast a hopeless situation under an American pop-cultural hegemony that seemed destined to dominate the globe and make nothing matter, not even Hiroshima. But the worst for Lottmann was that: "93 Prozent aller US-Jugendlichen so werden wollen wie ihre Eltern" [*93 percent of US-youths want to be like their parents*].[8] The popular, media and the margin had failed. The culture industry

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[7] Joachim Lottmann, "Voilá, un Punk" *Die Zeit* 4 April 1986.

denigrated Foster's postmodernism of resistance to what he calls a "postmodernism of reaction," which repudiated modernism and celebrated the status quo.[9] Youth no longer felt any contradiction between their generation and their parents. Youth culture was present but defunct, Lottmann argues, because it no longer cared about differentiating itself from an older generation. But did Lottmann himself encourage this conjecture? Did he not obliterate any difference between the mainstream and the margin by writing articles for *Die Zeit* and *Spex* at the same time? The failure in *Irre* proved that there was no outside to discourse. Lottmann's double position on the margins and in the center represents an attempt to willingly take up a position that was in the center, yet still sensitive to the margins, or rather to the lost potential of the margins. After Meinecke's subversive poaching of mainstream media proved bankrupt and was quarantined, Lottmann's double position suggests that he had learned from this failure as well. Lottmann's newspaper and fanzine articles demonstrate adaptation from the failure to make an outside, and an adaptation of the failure to resignify popular media. A steady diet of newspaper articles may lead one to tap Lottmann with a modicum of success in the mid-eighties. But Lottmann did not study the failures of punk and post-punk to achieve success. Lottmann was not interested in success. Lottmann wanted failure.

The few articles discussed above pale in comparison to Lottmann's literary production of the period. By 1987, Lottmann had written between forty and fifty novels, thousands of pages, bound by the author himself.[10] What happened to this massive

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[8] Joachim Lottmann, "Ist Japan besser?" *Die Zeit* 29 August 1986.

[9] Foster xii.

literary oeuvre? Ninety-eight percent of it remained on Lottmann's private bookshelf.

The hyper-productive author was a literary factory: he began to personify the failures of

which he wrote in the articles discussed above. But what was his private archive of

withheld novels? It could be an archive of failure if success is based on commercial

proliferation. It could be an archive of history that has never been told. It is perhaps best

understood as an archive of failure of literature in the late eighties. In other words,

Lottmann's archive can be read as one of deep literary pessimism that verges on

cynicism. The pessimist, after all, would write not expecting to publish, whereas the

cynic would only publish if publishing could be a gesture of contempt, a gesture of

hatred. In this respect, Lottmann was a literary punk who reclaimed for himself punk's

"no future" for literature in an age after punk and post-punk's failures. His monumental

literary failures, the unpublished novels on his bookshelf, signify not a punk project of

destruction, for there is clearly production here, but rather a project of negation. The

bookshelf is an archive to the end of the line: there was no public future for these texts.

If we use his articles as evidence, we see how Lottmann enumerates recurrent failures in

society, in popular culture and in popular media. It is precisely the recurrent aspect of

these failures that Lottmann's project sought to end. The endless circulation within a

culture industry that had outwitted punk and post-punk had to be stopped. This recycling

in popular culture is what the author of the articles above hated. He hated Reagan as the

final instance of media poaching, he hated French cinema as the final instance of punk's

scrambling of signs, and he hated that kids wanted to be like their parents. But how is

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[10] See Helge Malchow, "Nachwort" in *Mai, Juni, Juli: Ein Roman* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2003) 250.

one to negotiate the coordinates of hate, the active form of which would be rage, and

cynicism?

In *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*, Peter Sloterdijk reads dynamic cynicism–

kynicism–as an affective position that "einen geistigen, einen moralischen Skandal der

Kritik ausset[zt]; im Anschluß daran werden die Bedingungen der Möglichkeiten des

Skandalösen entrollt" [*releases a spiritual, a moral scandal of criticism; after which the*

conditions of possibility of the scandalous unroll].[11] Dynamic cynicism for Sloterdijk is

a physical gesture, a urinating into the wind for example, that echoes in Lottmann's

rejection of German literary and social cultures, notions of success and postmodernism

of reaction. This kynicism stands opposed to withdrawn, isolated cynicism of the jaded

activist, here those hanging on to and recycling failed subversive strategies. Why did

Lottmann hate what he did? Why did he recycle while despising recycling? Sloterdijk

argues that putting hate into action–rage–makes clear that "eine Rückkehr zu den

Fehlern der Vergangenheit nicht deren Lösung bringen wird" [*a return to the mistakes of*

the past will not bring their resolution].[12] Recycling failed moments from the past is no

means to cure the present, but recycling to engender kynicism and hate is a means to end

recycling. Rage has better effects than recycling, to continue Sloterdijk's appraisal,

because rage carries out "die Vernichtung […] bis ans allerletzte Ende […] Nur wenn

das Alte restlos ausgelöscht wäre, könnte auf einem leer gefegten Baugrund die

Rekonstruktion der richtigen Verhältnisse beginnen" [*the annihilation [...] up to the very*

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[11] Peter Sloterdijk, *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983) 17. Hereafter cited as *Kritik*.

[12] Peter Sloterdijk, *Zorn und Zeit* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2006) 70, see also 352-356. Hereafter cited as *Zorn*.

end. Only if the old could be completely erased could the reconstruction of the correct

relations begin on an empty swept construction site].[13] For Lottmann, cynicism and hate

are part of a reconstruction of modernity that cannot return or reuse the past to celebrate

the present. An antipode to a postmodernism of reaction and a postmodernism of

resistance, kynicism represents "eine unwillkommene Entblößung […] die den Schleier

der Konventionen, Lügen, Abstraktionen und Diskretionen zerreißen will, um *zur Sache*

zu kommen" [*an unwelcome revelation […] that rips down the veil of conventions, lies,*

abstractions and discretions, in order to get to the point].[14] The kynicism in Lottmann's

texts put hate into action. Kynicism signals not resignation or pessimism, but an

affective position. Hate becomes the only affect that can cut through the haze of an

affirmative postmodernism stuck between the poles of reaction and resistance.

Lottmann's essays hated the recycling–ultimately simulation that makes agency

impossible–typical of Foster's postmodernism of reaction. Why the lack of agency?

Because the very structures and strategies that punk and post-punk deployed to activate

agency had been subsumed into the hegemonic mainstream. To escape such a

postmodern malaise Lottmann's texts in *Spex* and *Die Zeit* turned to hate as a kind of

negativity. Negativity as a bridge to negation is, as Lawrence Grossberg says about the

role of rock and roll, postmodernity and authenticity, a "structure of feeling."[15] Lottmann

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[13] Sloterdijk, *Zorn* 103.

[14] Sloterdijk, *Kritik* 27-28.

[15] See Lawrence Grossberg, "Is there Rock after Punk?," *On Record*, ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Pantheon, 1990): 111-123, or "Rock Postmodernity and Authenticity" *We gotta get out of this place: popular conservatism and postmodern culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 201-239.

foregrounds the artificiality of any attitude, turns to failure and insists on a punk instance

of the moniker "no future." This signals, to quote Grossberg again, "a new cynical

relationship to the ideological."[16] What is the ideological in Lottmann's texts? Ideology

is TV, politics, history, violence, terrorism, simulation, youth culture, generations and, of

course, punk. This is really what Lottmann's articles and archive are all about: the

attempt to makes something matter in the wake of so many failures in mattering. It made

these failures matter. Failures began to matter because Lottmann attacked, in

Grossberg's words, "the last vestiges of meaning and pleasure so that nothing but the

sheer spectacle of a negative affect remain[ed]."[17] The narrator in the articles is

misanthropic because he seeks to rearticulate punk within pure negativity. This is why

he rejects everything in the mainstream and the margins. Free time, pop culture and

literature had all failed and thus had to become the object of his destructive hate. This

hate brought forth the carnage from the failures and attempts to resurrect the past

moment of "no future." Grossberg uses horror movies to speak of how "gore" became

the most important moment of a text within a structure of "grotesque inauthenticity."

Grotesque inauthenticity for Grossberg is a "sensibility of postmodernity [defined by] a

logic of 'ironic nihilism' […it is] the need to make, something, anything, matter; […]

outside the social systems of difference through an affective indifference."[18] "No

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[16] Lawrence Grossberg, *We gotta get out of this place: popular conservatism and postmodern culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992) 222. Hereafter cited as *we gotta*.

[17] Grossberg, *we gotta* 232.

[18] Grossberg, *we gotta* 224

future"–punk nihilism–turned hate into feeling, harnessed rage for negation, and

mobilized these in an attempt to differentiate the ideological boundaries of everyday life.

Here the ideological signals a common thread, albeit severely frayed by 1987,

from Goetz' *Irre* through Meinecke's *Mit der Kirch ums Dorf* into a final moment of this

literary-punk genealogy. The ideological in the eighties, closer analysis of Lottmann's

literary production shows, was synonymous with the catastrophes of German history, of

an unreconciled past, of the specter of American consumerism and of fears of an

ushering back of fascism with postmodernism.[19] If 1968, terrorism and punk shared a

common goal it was preventing the return of fascism in politics, institutions, media and

daily life. In Lottmann's articles the ideological represents exactly the threat of a return

of fascism. In 1987 the fight against this return is the spectacle of second-generation

terrorists on the television. But they are failures; there is no hope of an affective relation

to such mediated existence and recycled history. Fusing punk and terrorists failed in *Irre*,

now the fusion of terrorists and media fails, too. Meinecke and FSK's project to create

anti-racist counter-publicities failed. Mainstream media still had racist fantasies that

located racist violence elsewhere while constructing German identity vis-à-vis

essentialist racist dispositions. Thus the ideological is a continued unbridgeable divide

between experiences of black and white people, between first world and third, as the

rhetorical subtitle to Lottmann's article on political television indicates: "Warum tanzen

alle Neger?" [*why do all niggers dance?*].[20] All attempts to rid mainstream culture of

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[19] This fear of postmodernism ushering back fascism was discussed in the introduction of this dissertation, see 10-11 and 20-23.

[20] Lottmann, "Der politische Fernsehapparat" 55.

these tendencies failed. But failure as a new relation to the ideological seeks to create a new relationship to history, to society and to the public sphere. Failure signals the lack of affect for a new relationship, or rather a desire for no relationship. By hating the indifference of failed relationships hate becomes a kind of negativity that can end it all.

Lottmann's texts thus represent an instance after the failures of punk and post-punk that seeks to fulfill punk's ultimate apocalyptic prophecy. End it all by stopping the endless recycling of narratives and strategies. End it all by choosing neither of the options Foster lays out: neither a critical deconstruction of tradition nor a pastiche of pop-historical forms.[21] Lottmann's literary production stops the endless postmodern recycling because it seeks out failure. Lottmann's entire project, a turn to hate to ensure "no future" for recycling or returns, is in one novel, a novel that failed.

Lottmann's Novel(s): An Inventory of Crises and Failures

Lottmann published his first novel in 1987. *Mai, Juni, Juli: Ein Roman* [*May, June, July: A Novel*] represents a literary attempt to rejuvenate a punk spirit of "no future." The novel revives punk hate in another form, as part of the cynical relation to the ideological cited from Grossberg above, as the polemical continuation of punk's apocalyptic vision. The novel was not about a narrative or being "A Novel" as the subtitle suggests. Rather, Lottmann's lone published manuscript from the eighties uses cynicism–an affective strategy that sought to end the stagnation masked as productive recycling–as a logic whose ultimate success will lead to its own cessation. "No future"

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[21] Foster xii.

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was no longer a failed mantra, but an articulation of feeling based on failure. A novel predicated on failure in turn represented an attempt to get outside ideological abstractions, in order unmask failure as the necessary logic for historical progress. Only by literally stopping the repetition of historical narratives, by opening a gap between the past and present, *Mai, Juni, Juli* ultimately concludes, could contemporary German society move forward into any future. The recycled stories in the novel are an inventory of crises. The crises *Mai, Juni, Juli* recounts are crises of time, of the public sphere, of narration, of mass media, of postmodern pastiche, of punk and post-punk.

This list of crises is reflective of the various literary forms the novel manipulates that encompass, Hubert Winkels describes, "der sozialkritische Roman, der Liebesroman, der politische und pornographische Roman, der Roman mit dadaistischer Verve, der engagierte und der autobiographische Roman, der populäre und der Intellektuellenroman, der Geschichtsroman und der Roman unserer Zeit" [*the social-critical novel, the romance novel, the political and pornographic novel, the novel with Dadaist verve, the committed and autobiographical novel, the popular and intellectual novel, the historical novel and the novel of our times*].[22] Through this laundry list of narratives, then, Lottmann's novel creates a cynical aesthetic of difference against previous failures to transform relations between subordinate and dominant literary and social cultures. *Mai, Juni, Juli* is not about the quest for a novel, but rather the exposure of the failure in trying to write a new one. It is about its potential effects through negation, it is, the nameless protagonist claims on the first page, "der Roman, der alles

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[22] Hubert Winkels, *Einschnitte: zur Literatur der 80er Jahre* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1988) 132.

veränderte" [*the novel that changed everything*].[23] Exposing the novel's failure in spite

of the litany of literary trends it mimes proves that a recycled text could not be a site of

affective investment because there was nothing that mattered, nothing new and nothing

that made a text different. The novel that would change everything had to have a theme,

after all, "das im Trend lag" [*that was fashionable*] (27). Literature had no future,

because, as *Mai, Juni, Juli* lays it out, a text was nothing other than the ever-new return

of the old. Theodor Adorno argues exactly this point for cultural criticism in

"Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft." Adorno's lack of faith in cultural criticism will be

discussed in depth later. For the proceeding it is important to keep in mind that the

rational behind *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s project of negation mirrors Adorno's insistence that the

conditions that enabled modernity's heinous barbarism–Auschwitz–still existed.[24] *Mai,*

Juni, Juli enumerates crises to show precisely what effects these conditions had and how

they manifested themselves in mass culture.

Lottmann wrote *Mai, Juni, Juli* after he received an advance and three months

housing from Helge Malchow, editor at Kiepenheuer & Witsch publishing house. The

fledgling writer spent May, June and July of 1986 in Cologne, Germany. In 1987

Kiepenheuer & Witsch published the self-referential novel that purported to change

everything. However, with its publication the novel has its first crises: the press rejected

the novel's sentiment. For the most part, it panned the novel as the "belangsloseste[]

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[23] Joachim Lottmann, *Mai, Juni, Juli* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1987) 7. Hereafter cited
parenthetically in text.

[24] Theodor Adorno, "Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft" *Prismen* in *Gesammelte Schriften* ed. Rolf Tiedemann
(Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998) 11-30. Adorno also worked through this argument
in *Dialektik der Aufklärung* and "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit" (*Gesammelte Schriften*
ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1998).

Phänomen, das die 80er Jahre je hervorgebracht haben" [*most trivial phenomena that the 80s have ever produced*].[25] This first crisis was a crisis of reception and form. Some used their disdain for *Mai, Juni, Juli* to dismiss Peter Glaser's 1984 punk-anthology *Rawums* and its announcement of a new German literature turning on music and the aesthetics of the "Neuen Wilden" [*"New Wilds"*].[26] Both *Rawums* and *Mai, Juni, Juli* tried to make literature matter, to make it affectively and thus socially relevant. But Glaser's anthology is open-ended, his explosive exposé introducing the collection has, in stark contrast to Lottmann's novel, a narrative intensity that sees speed and energy as solutions to the redundant "Lahmarschigkeit" [*lethargic-ness*] of contemporary literature.[27] Lottmann's novel, conversely, runs amok recycling literature in order to smash it to bits. Fittingly, those who made broadly dismissive gestures of both texts were exactly the targets of both Glaser's collection and Lottmann's novel. Glaser's collection dismissed literary criticism that once again bemoaned the death of literature.[28] Lottmann's narrative preemptively called forth this crisis by directly attacking the "Autorenfetischmus"

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[25] Bettina Wündrich, *Szene Hamburg* 14.3 (May 1987).

[26] The "Neuen Wilden" or "Jungen Wilden" [*new or young wilds*] were young artists, in Cologne, Berlin and Düsseldorf who rejected established artistic style in favor of a fluid style. The Neuen Wilden rejected programmatic and explanatory theories, of, for example, the Futurists or Expressionists, and instead changed their style as they saw fit. For connection between *Rawums* and the "young wilds," see Peter Glaser, *Rawums: Texte zum Thema* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1984). For the review dismissing *Mai, Juni, Juli* and *Rawums*, see *Salzburg Impuls* 2.4 (April 1987).

[27] Peter Glaser, "Zur Lage der Detonation: Ein Explosé," *Rawums*, ed. Peter Glaser (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1984) 9. Hereafter cited as "Explosé."

[28] Glaser, "Explosé" 15.

[*authorial fetishism*][29] of "verschnarchte Feuilletonisten von vorgestern" [*boring old feuilletonists of yesterday*] (29). The willed crisis of reception for *Mai, Juni, Juli* sought to incite aftershocks of literary failure, namely the rejection of the novel. While *Rawums* and *Mai, Juni, Juli* have divergent visions for the future of literature, they are sartorial bedmates. *Rawums* represents a punk "cut-up" aesthetic in that it fuses images, songs and text by musicians, artists and emerging punk authors. This "cut-up" style in *Mai, Juni, Juli* comes in intertextuality. Intertextuality signals the lynchpin in *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s project of negation.

  Mai, Juni, Juli's used intertextuality to incite the ire of the feuilleton and unmask all literature as guilty of the same crime. But in spite of successfully being hated by the press, the target of its attack was not affected, at least not in its intended manner. The feuilleton demonstrates its omnipotence in spite of Lottmann's attack. Most critics blasted Lottmann for sampling Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* and for reprinting part of his *Spex* article on Münster in the novel.[30] It is quite ironic that the feuilleton dismissed the novel as "krudes Gestammel als Parodie verkauft" [*crude babble sold as parody*] because of Lottmann's poaching of Hamsun.[31] *Mai, Juni, Juli* poached not just Hamsun, but also the narratives of a vast array of German and foreign authors and philosophers: Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Heinrich Mann, Karl May, Friedrich Hegel, Wolfgang Borchert, Friedrich Schiller, Karl Marx, Theodor Adorno, Klaus Theweleit, Rainald

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[29] See "Ich wollte der neue Böll werden" in *Der Tagesspiegel* 6 May 2003.

[30] See for example, Thomas Friedrich, "Lall-Laute" *Ultimo* 6 (March 1987); n.a., *Salzburger Impuls* 2.4 (April 1987); or ABL, "Lottmanns Leben" *Statblatt* (Osnabrück) 102 (July 1987).

[31] Thomas Friedrich, "Lall-Laute" *Ultimo* 6 (March 1987).

Goetz, Rolf-Dieter Brinkmann, Günter Grass, J.D. Salinger, William Shakespeare, J.R.R. Tolkien and Tony Parson. Lottmann's pastiche of literature was meant to change everything, but it appears the novel's literary simulation mimed the failed literary "Simulanten" [*simulators*] in the novel itself (15). What this crisis revealed, however, was that while Lottmann was chastised for one intertextual reference, the novel forced the feuilleton to reveal its own intertextuality. The reviews follow what seems to be an obligatory script in rejecting the novel: Lottmann was published because he was an insider, he sampled Hamsun and he reprinted a *Spex* article. We have seen this before, the feuilleton argues, and therefore *Mai, Juni, Juli* did not need to be read. As a result *Mai, Juni, Juli* soon went out of print.

The crisis of reception for *Mai, Juni, Juli* simultaneously signals a crisis for recasting old narratives as new. *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s crisis and failure forced the feuilleton to bring recycling, if for only one text, to an end. Lottmann's entrance into the literary center–the vacated locus of literature that punk and post-punk fanzines fled–failed because it tried to take up not just a central position, but also a canonical one. *Mai, Juni, Juli* induced an unwelcome moment of divestiture of mainstream literature because *Mai, Juni, Juli* did not incite rejection because it recycled. Novels that recycled the texts of antiquity, think of Christoph Ransmayr's *Die letzte Welt*, Patrick Süskind's *Das Parfum* and Hanns-Josef Ortheil's *Fermer*, for example, were held up as literary masterpieces.[32] *Mai, Juni, Juli* earned the ire of the critical press because the novel debunked antiquity as worthy of recycling. But it simultaneously forced the feuilleton to reveal its

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[32] Judith Ryan has argued that Süskind's *Das Parfum* is "the ultimate exemplification of the particular postmodern process" of recycling (see "The Problem of Pastiche: Patrick Süskind's *Das Parfum*" *German Quarterly* vol 63 no. 3/4 Theme: Literature of the 1980s [Summer, 1990] 396-403, 396).

hypocrisy. Thus the feuilleton rejected *Mai, Juni, Juli* because the novel's crises were the feuilletons own crises, but also because the novel recycled in the name of failure. Forcing the feuilleton's hand, however, was a failure for *Mai, Juni, Juli* because it went out of print. This is exactly what the feuilleton wanted. This crisis in reception and in intertextuality makes clear that divestiture is ineffective. This failure is part of the novelist's crisis of existence.

Mai, Juni, Juli follows a nameless narrator on his path "ein großer Schriftsteller zu sein, wenn er nur anfing" [*to being a great author, if he only started*] (7). In the novel's first paragraph, the nameless protagonist describes the impossibility of his existence: "Morgens kam ich nicht aus dem Bett, und abends hatte ich Depressionen. Dazwischen zersprang mir der Kopf. Oft saß ich einen halben Tag lang vor einer Mauer von Nichts, einem zugehängten Fenster, vor meinem Schreibtisch und dachte: Ich bin ein Schriftsteller" [*mornings I couldn't get out of bed and evenings I had depressions. In between my head exploded. I often sat for half a day in front of a wall of nothing, a draped window, in front of my desk and thought: I am an author*] (7). The narrator in *Mai, Juni, Juli* has time and a little bit of money. Despite his best efforts "am Schreibtisch aus[zu]harren und nach[zu]denken […] natürlich […] direct vor dem Fenster" [*to persevere at his desk and to think, […] in front of the widow naturally*], he flees his apartment in Hamburg for a stay in Cologne (12). He travels from Hamburg to Cologne and back, makes an excursion into the countryside, spends hours in cafés and bars, and actually writes a bit. The narrator's transcription of this "astreine Wirklichkeit" [*genuine reality*] reveals social stagnation and an overwhelming lack of creativity and inspiration dominating West Germany (88). He wants to manipulate popular culture in

literature, to get outside of the contradictions of optimism and cynicism in the wake of punk and post-punk's failures. But his attempt to use popular culture subversively meets defeat at the hands of uninspiring pedestrian life in the Federal Republic. He observes from a window in a café as "die Frühlingsmenschen über die Fußgängerübergänge schlenderten, wenn Grün war, und sich aufreihten und warteten, wenn Rot war" [*the spring-people strolled across the pedestrian crossing zones when it was green, and got in line and waited when it was red*] (41). This is a crisis of the public sphere, a failure to find inspiration in daily life. Because he cannot find something that matters, he has to write about "genuine reality." Thus he fails to stick to his dictate that "Es konnte nicht die Aufgabe eines Schriftstellers sein, das zu bestätigen, was ohnehin in der Welt war" [*It couldn't be the writers task to confirm that which was already in the world*] (152). Lottmann's nameless narrator fails to achieve his narrative intentions because he confirms exactly what was in the world, namely people crossing the street in accordance with crossing signals. The narrator fails at a seemingly endless array of attempted narratives.

He begins and abruptly cuts off a porno-novel, a GDR-novel, a bio-novel, an anti-intellectual-novel and a novel "with bite." The only novel that he refuses to start is a hippie-novel: "Ein Öko-Roman, nein danke" [*an eco-novel, no thanks*] (24). These novels that fail signal a crisis of affect, a crisis of mattering. *Mai, Juni, Juli* ends without a completed novel, and the nameless protagonist signs up as a mate on the same boat as in *Hunger*: "Über dem offensichtlich neuen Namen war noch ein alter, ehemaliger Schiffsname zu entziffern, da die Übermalfarbe abblätterte, 'Copégoro'" [*on top of the obviously new name an older, previous ship's name was decipherable, because the*

covering paint was flaking off, 'Copégoro'] (248). That the feuilleton identified this

intertextual reference and used it to dismiss the value of the book was nothing new.

Lottmann had already done this himself: "der wirkte ausgesprochen alt, wurde aber

gerade frisch gestrichen" [*it came across completely dated, but was being newly*

repainted] (248). Because Lottmann indicted his own retooling of *Hunger* as a bad

knock-off–one clearly masquerading as new but ostentatiously and poorly re-done–he

robbed himself of any authorial legitimacy. The demise of punk and post-punk became,

in Lottmann's text though its ostentatious remaking of *Hunger*, kitsch. Kitsch in *Mai,*

Juni, Juli mirrors Matei Cálinescu's definition as an "abandonment of an aesthetics

based on 'appearances,' which [in an age of simulation], are so easily falsified."[33]

Moreover, the simultaneous presence of postmodernisms of resistance and reaction,

given the presence of kitsch on one side and academe on the other, highlights the hugely

problematic nature of literature in the late eighties. *Mai, Juni, Juli* unmasked a historical

and social conjuncture, a context in which literary experience and affect had solidified

into a recycled mass of automatisms. Authors reliant on the canon (e.g., Ransmayr,

Süskind) signal this tendency. This conjuncture is a crisis, one in which contemporary

politics, as *Mai, Juni, Juli* lays them out, has clandestine fascists parading as social

democrats (174). These are the ever-present conditions in the public sphere that ensure

the continuation of modernity's barbarism. The absence of meaning, mattering and non-

fascist affective investment came from the failure to alter culturally "high" and "low"

habits and automatisms: modernist literary tropes and pop-cultural pedestrians obeying

crossing signals. But the collapse of difference and the absence of affect that ultimately

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[33] Matei Cálinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987) 252.

ensure failure and force the narrator to leave West Germany do not necessarily signal a hopeless condition.

There is a crucial point to be made in relation to the historical avant-garde and *Mai, Juni, Juli*. Punk and post-punk were, like the avant-garde, moments that failed. Indeed, the historical avant-gardes all failed. These failures, however, did not signal hopelessness. Failure does not mean that they did not continue to have resonance in contemporary culture. Punk and post-punk fanzines and music had been subsumed into the mainstream. But in the act of subsuming them, of mainstreaming them, the mainstream had been forced to change. Punk fled to the margins to take up a subversive position. The margins became the mainstream.[34] After these failures the only strategy left for literature in a time when difference had ceased to matter was nihilistic indifference: aesthetic deception and self-deception. This indifference emerges in Lottmann's stop/start narration. With every narrative interruption, beginning and ending an array of novels, the novel reclaims literature for life by examining its death.[35] As the narrator starts and stops the twenty-three-plus narratives afoot in *Mai, Juni, Juli*, reveals the absence of any social relevance of contemporary literature.[36] The mainstream

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[34] See Mark Terkessidis and Tom Holert, eds. *Mainstream der Minderheiten: Pop in der Kontrollgesellschaft* (Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv, 1996).

[35] Hans Magnus Enzensberger declared the death of socially relevant literature in "Gemeinplätze, die Neueste Literatur betreffend" [*Kursbuch* 15 (1968)]. For more on the debate unleashed by *Kursbuch* 15 see for example Kieth Bullivant and Klaus Briegleb "Die Krise des Erzählens – '1968' und dannach" in *Hansers Sozialgeschichte der deutschen Literatur* ed. Rolf Grimminger vol. 12 *Gegenswartsliteratur seit 1968* ed. Klaus Briegleb and Sigrid Weigel (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992): 302-339. Recall Glaser's punk explosé from *Rawums* that also rejected the literary sentiment of academics such as Hans Magnus Enzensberger: "Akademiker basteln sich ihre eigene / Untergangsstimmung, / sie erörtern wieder einmal / 'Das Ende der Literatur'" [*academics build their own / mood of downfall, / they discuss yet again / 'The end of literature'*] (See Peter Glaser, "Zur Lage der Detonation – Ein Explosé" in *Rawums* ed. Peter Glaser [Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1984] 15).

feuilleton was not outraged by *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s violence or aggression (as was the case with Goetz) or by its feigned fascism (as was the case with Meinecke), but by its feigned normalcy: the book was, its subtitle reads, *Ein Roman* [*A Novel*].

Perhaps more than its feigned aspirations to the literary institution, the feuilleton rejected the novel because *Mai, Juni, Juli* rejected mainstream ethics of progress, of recycling, of work and play and of leisure. It is arguable then that deep down the mainstream was outraged by the novel's project of negation. *Mai, Juni, Juli* was a finished novel that was unfinished. A completed novel that was incomplete turned to hate and negation not to resurrect a past punk moment. The turn to "no future" sought to reinvigorate a structure of feeling that could break out of, to continue with Grossberg on rock, the hegemonic "structures of everyday life that it once sought to transcend." Of course success signals failure, but this paradox still promises, briefly and weakly as the narrator boards the freighter, that, for him, there is something beyond the crises.[37] A turn to punk affect was the only recourse left. But as discussed in the conclusion of this chapter, such a turn back to punk was only to pick up the ammunition necessary to destroy literature. The final destructive gesture, fittingly, turns on itself. The novelist in *Mai, Juni, Juli* seeks to end punk before it could have "no future," so that it could not be recycled into affirmative French cinema. Or perhaps, his departure signals his refusal to let this theoretically final instance of "no future" to be just theoretical. Therein would lay, after all, the subversive potential of *Mai, Juni, Juli*, namely the potential to negate

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[36] The intertextuality of the text, of a failed novel, of twenty-three failed novels, harks back to the modernist moments of literary failure such as Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* or Franz Kafka's *In der Strafkolonie*.

[37] Grossberg argues this point for rock (*we gotta* 238).

the possibility of its own existence. The novel used failures to enumerate the crises as impetus to enact the lost potential of punk's apocalypse. The end of literature that the novel seeks can only be understood by first examining closely failures of novels and the popular in *Mai, Juni, Juli*.

Literary Failure and Failure of the Popular's Literature

The narrator in *Mai, Juni, Juli* embraces the idea of becoming a writer only as a strategy for hating everything. Trapped in the postmodern dilemma of endless simulation and recycling, he seeks to make something matter. Ending literature to escape was a necessary project after, as Christian Jäger writes on eighties literature, "die vorhergehende Generation durch Vertreter wie Peter Handke oder Botho Strauß die üblichen literarischen Kanäle verstopft hatten" [*after the previous generation, through purveyors such as Peter Handke or Botho Strauß, had clogged the prevailing literary channels*].[38] *Mai, Juni, Juli* did not just move on from or against the "New Subjectivity" of the 1970s.[39] It turned vehemently on this literature. *Mai, Juni, Juli* picked up the discarded pieces of print and combined them in such way that refused to make difference irrelevant.

The narrator's loft, "in dem sich seit 1795 nichts verändert hatte" [*in which nothing has changed since 1795*], indicates why canonical literature is uninspiring (9).

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[38] Christian Jäger, "Wörterflucht oder: Die kategoriale Not der Literaturwissenschaft angesichts der Literatur der achtziger Jahre" 96.

[39] The term 'New Subjectivity' refers to, Richard McCormick writes, literature that "rejected rationalistic objectivity—a 'politics of the self' that gloried in personal expression and anarchistic spontaneity—and influenced West German literary and cinematic output of the 1970s" (see Richard McCormick, *Politics of the Self: Feminism and the Postmodern in West German Literature and Film* [Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991] 8).

Literature and authors have not changed since the age of German classicism. It is in such

isolated lofts that even contemporary writers must work in secret. The author "musste

die nichts-ahnende Welt bestehlen. Niemals durfte er im Vorwege preisgeben, was er auf

der Pfanne hatte. Scheinbar arglos lebte er unter den Menschen, gleichgültig fast, um

dann zu Hause, hinter dem Fenstervorhang, loszuschlagen" [*had to steal from the*

oblivious world. He could never give an advance hint about what he had cooking. He

lived apparently without concern amongst people, apathetically almost, then, at home

and behind the curtain, to let lose] (8). Authors separated artistic production from daily

life, and they had turned literature into a collection site of recycled banality. For the

narrator, there is no room for politically effective literature in this affirmative vacuum:

"Dissidenten gebe es gar nicht, nur Simulanten" [*dissidents don't exist anymore, just*

simulators] (15). The narrator does not care which novel he writes, he does not care

about recycling the canon for success. He wants his texts to have effects.

His desire for effects is why he decides that action is better than the specifics of

production: "wichtig war nur, daß er gemacht wurde" [*it was only important that it was*

done!] (79). So what does he do? The narrator uses literature and various literary forums

as testing grounds and inspiration for failure. His literary production, the budding author

concludes late in the novel, is meant to incite its own failure: "Wozu war ein Buch da,

wenn man nicht nach der ersten halben Seite Lust bekam, nach draußen zu rennen und es

dem Buch gleichzutun? Wenn mann nicht beim ersten guten Satz auf eine Idee kam, die

man auf der Stelle ausführen wollte? Wenn mich ein Buch anregte, regte es immer mein

Leben an" [*Why was a book there, if after the first half-page, you didn't have the urge to*

run outside and imitate the book? If you didn't have the idea after the first good sentence

that you wanted to carry out? When a book inspired me, it always inspired my life]

(244). This dictate in mind, *Mai, Juni, Juli* is meant to inspire the novelist's colleagues

to stop writing and leave Germany. The author's literary experience was the opposite.

His youth was dominated by authors whose literature did not inspire him: Friedrich

Schiller, Karl May and Thomas Mann. Because of his older brother's passion for Karl

May the author had read some May, "tatsächlich, bis Seite sieben" [*really, up to page*

seven] (64). This problem of boring literature is also a problem of popular culture.

What the narrator does and what he writes about in the course of the novel

differentiates him from the West German citizens he encounters and the literature he

pirates. The narrator turns to popular fashion for inspiration, but instead he finds the

boring citizens of Cologne: "Langweilig gekleidet kamen sie daher, mit der Mode von

vor fünf Jahren am uncharmanten Körper" [*they came over, dressed boringly, with five-*

year old fashion hanging on an un-charming body] (42). This is not just about

uninteresting clothes. Bad style indicates a lack of creativity and passion. The poorly

dressed people have uninspiring lives with uninteresting stories: "Ein Job, ein Freund,

die Gespräche im Bett, die Konflikte 'mehr Freiheit für sie/ihn' […] Beide liegen nakt

im Bett, beide schweigen lange zwischen den erbärmlichen Standard-Sätzen" [*a job, a*

boyfriend, the bed-conversations, the conflicts 'more freedom for her/him' […] Both lay

naked in bed, both are quiet between the pathetic standard-sentences] (42). Bad

narrative or style cannot inspire. Oppositely, the narrator comments, "sie lösten in mir

die alte Zwangsvorstellung vom ANDEREN, vom LANGWEILIGEN Leben aus" [*they*

unleashed the old obsession of ANOTHER, of a BORING life] (42). Sartorial stagnation,

fashion as the ever-new return of the same, is just like reading Karl May. The narrator

makes a disingenuous attempt to go along with these mainstream demands. He tries to

narrate slowly and in typical fashion "nachdenklich, um den vielen Einwohneren […]

gerecht zu werden. Als daraus nichts wurde, schrieb ich einfach drauflos und hackte in

der Rekord zeit von nur dreißig Minuten meine Report in die quietschende Maschine"

[*thoughtfully, in order to do justice to the many residents. When nothing came of that, I*

just started writing and hacked my report into the squeaking machine in the record-time

of thirty minutes] (107-108). In the end he resorts to writing with a vehemence that

pushes his typewriter to its limits. This vehemence takes advantage of speed,

unpredictability and refusing expectations. He writes faster than he can think, he writes

to expel the text. But more importantly, this method is meant to inspire hateful literary

production and end literary consumption. The narrator invests passion–a hateful rage–

that is meant to make reading literature awful.

The narrator does not want to know what Hegel, Freud, Marx or Adorno mean,

he wants to enjoy his affective reaction to their texts. He has always treated literature

this way:

> Letzten Endes ist alles Poesie, gute und schlechte; wobei gute Poesie
> langfristig zum Verständnis der Welt beiträgt. Ich las das Zeug zum
> Glück schon damals wie Gedichte, ich wollte die Begriffe nie
> rückübersetzten, sondern mich an der Wucht der Syntax ergötzen, und
> lieber nicht wissen, was Expropriation der Expropriateure bedeutete, was
> es GENAU bedeutete.
>
> [*It's all poetry, after all, good and bad, whereby good poetry contributes*
> *to the good of the world for a long time. Luckily I read that stuff back*
> *then as poetry, I never wanted to re-translate, just enjoy the vehemence of*
> *the syntax, and preferably not know what expropriation of the*
> *expropriature meant, not what it REALLY means*] (157).

This is why he cannot write "thoughtfully" ("nachdenklich"). The writer must write

energetically to inspire energetic consumption, to infuse energy into literature that will

finally bring it to an end. Glaser tried to do this earlier with punk: "Adrenalintreibend, / störend und ungehalten. / Schnittig, / schräg, / witzig. / Treffend. / Strategien zwischen rabiater Ablehnung und offensiver Affirmation werden erprobt" [*adrenaline infusing / disruptive and aggressive. / Cutting, / offbeat, / funny. / Appropriate. / Strategies between violent dismissal and offensive affirmation are tested*].[40] The narrator in *Mai, Juni, Juli* tries to revive this in the center, with a novel that purports to recycle literature just like the popular novels of the eighties. But Lottmann's narrator refuses to seclude himself in his canonical loft. Instead the author dives into pop culture, punk music, and the *Bild*-newspaper in order to fuse the canon with the margins. But he hates all of this. He wants to relish in the vehement syntax of daily life. He wants to turn the destructive violence of literature against daily life itself. He wants to end the possibility of text doing anything but self-destructing or destroying. He wants to leave behind a macabre wasteland of literature. He does not care what something means; he wants it to end. This is punk affect. This is the literary manifestation of what Grossberg calls "grotesque inauthenticity" that harnesses the pure spectacle of negative affect.

The novelist seeks narrative energy and passion in the "Ort der lokalen Pop-Kultur" [*location of the local pop-culture*] (48). The pop-culture scene is, after all, the place where people "ihr Leben in die Tat umsetzten" [*transformed their life into deed*] (48). But this pop-culture is a farce. There is no difference here: "hier war jeder Kumpel, hatter jeder den rotgeäderten Schiemelblick des Dauerbierkonsums. Und obwohl ich womöglich wie Graf Bobby unter den Papua-Indianern aussah, ruhten die müden Schiemelblicke gutmütig auf mir" [*here everybody was friends, everyone had the*

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[40] Glaser, *Rawums* 15-16.

bloodshot gaze from constant beer consumption. And even though I probably looked like Count Bobby amongst the Papa-Indians, they gazed good-naturedly at me] (48). This is why all the author gets from his time in pop-culture is a headache. When the young writer tries to find "das RICHTIGE Thema […] mußte [er] auf die Plätze und die Menschen am Kragen packen und sie anbrüllen: Was ineressiert Sie? […] Reden Sie, Sie Null!" [*the CORRECT theme […] he had to go onto the square and grab people by their collars and scream at them: What interests you? […] Speak, you zero!*] (34). The attempt to connect to the reading public is a dead end. The social function of literature is dead. But in actuality the young author never really desires this contact with the popular. What interests the public is as uninteresting as the author's existence: "'Als Schriftsteller ist es ja so eine Sache, wenn man den Kontakt zu den Menschen…' blabla und so weiter" ['*As a writer it is one of those things, when ones contact to the people…' blabla, and so on*] (100). He hates his public and his role as literary arbitrator. Even less interesting to the narrator than his own story is whether readers understand: "Wenn der Leser nichts mehr verstand – was kümmerte es mich? War ich meines Lesers Hüter?" [*If the reader didn't understand anything more – why should I care? Was I my reader's keeper?*] (112). The novelist in *Mai, Juni, Juli* assumes every reader is an idiot who cannot understand a sentence.

He constantly tells his reader when a bit of a story begins or ends because they are surely so stupid they cannot understand: "Ich began […] Ich unterbrach meine Berichterstattung […] Ich stoppte" [*I started […] I interrupted my report […] I stopped*] (88, 112, 137). *Mai, Juni, Juli* simultaneously indicts culture as inept and uses this ineptitude as a means destroy it. Other authors do not recognize the worthlessness of

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popular culture for literature. Because only he recognizes this, the narrator concludes that "es RICHTIGE Schriftsteller gar nicht mehr gab, daß ich der letzte war oder, wenn man so will, der erste" [*there are no REAL writers anymore, that I was the last, or if you will, the first*] (9). The novelist is, he hopes, the last ever. He is the first to quit. Quitting is what a real author would do. He hopes that he can incite literary failure in others: "nach meinem riesigen Erfolg, würden es mir Hunderte und Tausende nachmachen" [*after my huge success hundreds and thousands would imitate me*] (9-10). But mainstream literary avenues, for example the feuilleton and its aspiring authors, do not take notice of this project of negation: "Die Feuilletonisten würden derlei nicht zur Kenntnis nehmen" [*the feuilletonists would never recognize such things*] (13). Here the novelist foretells the actual reaction journalists would have to *Mai, Juni, Juli*. The feuilleton did hate his text and ended its existence, but it did not follow this example. This lack of faith in dominant literary avenues lies at the core of why *Mai, Juni, Juli* used disparate literary genres. All literary forums had failed as subversive social mediums, but they continued to print and recycle stories to simulate social relevance. In the moment in which the author introduces a narrative string, it no longer belongs to him. His text must lead therefore to negation. Negation and failure are crucial for two specific instances of canonical poaching in *Mai, Juni, Juli*: *Struwwelpeter* and Thomas Mann.

Canonical Failure:

Mai, Juni, Juli recycles the West German literary canon, but this recycling shows how the canon lost its cultural relevance. The canon thus made it impossible to care whether and, if so, how and why literature matters. The first intra-novel with a title,

"Quellkopf" [*Swollen-head*], represents an escape, as in Glaser's *Rawums*, from the angst-ridden search for inner-subjectivity from the late seventies. "Quellkopf" is recycled from Edward Verrall Lucas' "Swollen-Headed-William" (1914), a World War I-era anti-German parody of a *Struwwelpeter* story.[41] *Struwwelpeter* stories are highly didactic, generally designed to illustrate to children the consequences of misbehaving. In an anti-German version poached by *Mai, Juni, Juli*, "Swollen-Headed-William," Emperor Wilhelm II, kills innocent doves. Lucas' political satire was relevant in its time because of the contemporary popularity of *Struwwelpeter* stories and the Kaiser's military aggression. The novelist's text is irreverent vis-à-vis this forerunner not just because the context is completely irrelevant within *Mai, Juni, Juli*, but also because of the feigned importance of kids stories for mainstream novels. This revamped story is not about criticizing the saber rattling of the German Emperor. "Quellkopf" follows a young protagonist as he spends a night in bars. His head literally swells to explosive dimensions as the result of too much drink. Only a leather belt, cold water and six aspirin keep his head from blowing up. As the narrator drifts off to sleep to the sounds of punk music, the story concludes without any conclusion.

The second intra-novel with a title, "Pixie," is the porno novel that is a punk adaptation of Heinrich Mann's *Professor Unrat*. Here a 17-year old punk girl replaces Mann's dancer and an unlucky forty-two year old radio-editor "Daddy" replaces the professor. During the course of the fragment Pixie has plenty of sex with "Daddy," her punk friends, an artist, and a New York musician. "Daddy" becomes addicted to Pixie's body. At the end of the fragment Pixie is gone and "Daddy" winds up broke, divorced,

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[41] Edward Verrall Lucas, *Swollen-Headed-William: Painful Stories and Funny Pictures* (London: Methune, 1914).

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re-married to a Japanese woman, presumably in California. These texts were on the one side, entertainment; on the other, textual fragments that celebrated silly intertextuality. But the novelist never gets to that point because they also celebrate abrupt cessation: both of these novels remain incomplete. The reader never finds out what happens to "Quellkopf." Before the writer finishes "Pixie" "mußte [er sich] erstmal besaufen" [*first he had to get himself drunk*] (146). The novelist fails in both instances to complete his contributions to a new canon and instead turns the canon into a porno. But he must get drunk before writing further. As such, *Mai, Juni, Juli* uses the figure of the novelist as a sign of contempt of literature. This polemic, for Clause and Singelmann, is an obscene gesture "gegen Kulturträger aller Art und aus emphatischen Huldigungen der Pop-Szene [durch …] die paradoxe Anstrengungen des Ich-Erzählers, mit literarischen Mitteln die Literatur (als bedeutungsvolle Kunst) zu zerstören" [*against all representatives of culture and with emphatic cherishment of the pop-scene [through] the paradoxical efforts of the narrative-I to destroy literature (as meaningful art) with literary means*].[42] The young writer calls his own literary credibility into question by re-inscribing his narrative into those classical tales he laments as so banal. But he cannot even do this successfully: all his attempts fail. *Mai, Juni, Juli* relishes this failure.

Though this failure the novel mocks literature and the life of any author. Literature is worthless. It does not matter if the narrator, or any author, actually writes anything, because "die bloße Existenz der Möglichkeit des Schriftstellerseins schien [ihm] jeder anderen Existenz überlegen zu sein" [*the sheer possibility of being an author appeared [to him] to be superior to any other existence*] (7). However, the superiority of

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[42] Clause and Singelmann 487.

this existence is moot. Publishers outdo the author's expertise and undermine his capability to write relevant literature as well as his ability to end literature. The narrator's novel "with bite" is derailed in this manner. To write such a novel, he would have to tap his strengths which "lägen in der ernsthaften Avantgarde" [*lay in the serious avant-garde*] (105). But he cannot tap this potential because, as his editor informs him, "den Kollegen gefiele etwas Einfaches von [ihm] besser" [*the colleagues would prefer something simpler from him*] (105). Authors do not have control of the means of production. Contrarily, the industry of literature has achieved its own self-sustaining efficiency that voids the relevance of creativity. Only counter-products are impossible under these conditions. Because of this problem, the narrator ends the narrative strand as soon as he writes it. The narrative constantly seeks to call itself off, demonstrated by the writer's constant interruption of his own tales. But this is only relevant insofar as the novelist can use his novel to "change everything." To change everything, the novelist rejects the world outside the novel as well.

Popular Failure:

In the novel popular culture is in city bars, cafés, clubs, and in the ostensibly scenic West German countryside. These spheres collide in the national *Bild*-newspaper: "Das Volk […] liebte und 'verstand' seine 'Bild'-Zeitung" [*the people loved and 'understood' its 'Bild'-newspaper*] (149). Crucially, the narrator does not rehash highbrow disdain for *Bild*. The author is not fazed by *Bild*'s reputation as a gigantic "Lügen- und Repressionsmaschinerie" [*lie- and repression machine*] (148). Oppositely, the *Bild*-aesthetic represents for him, "indem sie Nachrichtenelemente, graphische Elemente, Gefühle und andere Affekte so mischten, daß etwas ANDERES als die

Wirklichkeit dabei entstand, ein ZWEITE Wirklichkeit sozusagen oder auch

Gegenwirklichkeit" [*in that it mixed news elements, graphic elements, feelings and other*

affects, such that something OTHER than reality arose, a SECOND reality, so to say, or

even an oppositional reality] (148). Because the narrator does not refuse any aesthetic

influence, the novel opens itself to all styles, particularly the trivial and banal.

Unfortunately, whether the pulp news the *Bild* produces present the material constitutive

of an oppositional public sphere becomes moot. It does not matter if the author is not in

the repressive publishing machine because Germans make poor use of this potentially

subversive material (227). Furthermore, the manner in which the novelist describes *Bild*

signals that this boulevard-press is the contemporary instance of post-punk poaching

analyzed in the previous chapter. *Mode & Verzweiflung* may have been quarantined, but

its aesthetic lives on, in affirmative form, in *Bild*. In other words, the Germans in *Mai,*

Juni, Juli seem completely dominated by what Oskar Kluge and Alexander Kluge call

the "decaying forms of the bourgeois public sphere" under capitalism.[43] While Negt and

Kluge theorize the possibility of counter-products, this theory is an utter failure in *Mai,*

Juni, Juli.[44] In this regard, the feuilleton, a critical voice of the people, is public enemy

number one for the author.

This once critical organ, now dominated by "verschnarchte Feuilletonisten von

vorgestern" [*snoring feuilletonists of yesterday*], creates artificial opinions for the masses

(29). That *Bild* is a gigantic lie- and repressions-machine recalls clearly Adorno's

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[43] Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience: Toward an Analysis of the Bourgeois and Proletarian Public Sphere* trans. Peter Labanyi, Jamie Owen Daniel and Assenka Oksiloff (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1993) 3, 12-18. Hereafter cited as *PS*.

[44] Subversive poaching of media was discussed in depth in the previous chapter. See pages 105-135.

indictment of cultural criticism. Years earlier Adorno wrote that "Wenn die Kritiker auf

ihrem Tummelplatz, der Kunst, am Ende nicht mehr verstehen, was sie beurteilen, und

mit Gusto zu Propagandisten oder Zensoren sich erniedrigen lassen, so erfüllt sich an

ihnen die alte Unehrlichkeit des Gewerbes" [*when critics on their romping place, art,*

ultimately do not understand what they are judging, and with gusto allow themselves to

be demeaned to propagandists or censors, then the old dishonesty of the business fulfills

itself through them].[45] The potential of criticism in the public sphere has become

synonymous with propaganda. In an exceptional instance of colliding worlds, the editors

at *Bild* ask the young novelist to create a "Meinungsartikel" [*opinion piece*] (29). The

writer hates producing opinions "denn als Schriftsteller mochte ich stets erzählen, anstatt

zu räsonieren. Meiner Ansicht nach war eine Schilderung jeder Meinung überlegen.

Meinungen [sind] etwas für unsichere Leute mit einem Minderwertigkeits- oder

Bildungskomplex. Klar" [*because as a writer I wanted to narrate, instead of reasoning.*

In my view a description was far superior to an opinion. Opinions are something for

insecure people with a minority- or educational-complex. It's obvious] (29). That the

masses are unable to form their own opinions recalls Germans' inability to think or act

individually, as evidenced above the scene of frozen pedestrians at crossing lights.

Pedestrians frozen at crossing lights are the consumers of the feuilleton and *Bild*.

These are the citizens of Cologne who "understand" *Bild*, but who cannot take advantage

if the "oppositional reality" produced by its manipulation of disparate elements.

Narration, as detailed in the previous chapter, makes it possible to poach and create

counter-products. But what *Bild* does with its "oppositional reality" is create opinions.

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[45] Adorno, "Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft" 13.

Opinion creating, in contradistinction to the products of poaching, is pedantic and historical; it is not available for transformation. Opinions pieces are, in the narrator's mind, so dangerous because literature and politics represent "die Erfassungsstelle für Wiederholungstäter gesamtdeutscher Verbrechen" [*survey site for repeat offenders of Germans' collective crimes*] (28). These destructive opinions ensured the continuation of fascist ideologies and an unreconciled German past. Their mass-distribution transformed the German countryside into "der unerschöpflichen Reservoir" [*the inexhaustible reservoir*] that breeds ("brütet") German fascism (226). Correspondingly, *Bild*'s boulevard propaganda, its opinion pieces, help sustain a West German mass-psychology "das im deutschen Volkskörper seit den Zeiten des 'Stürmer' noch schlummerte, und das war nicht attraktiv" [*that has been sleeping in the body of the German folk since the times of the 'Stürmer,' and that was not pretty*] (31). This cynical indictment of the German press, equating popular print and fascist propaganda (i.e., *Stürmer*), rejects both the literary and popular the world outside the novel.

The narrator wants to end literature, and to this end he runs amok with cultural taboos, writes whatever he wants, he tells of his interruptions, he pirates the canon and he writes about those points he knows they do not want to hear: "Wen interessierten schon meine ehemaligen Freunde" [*who would be interested in my old friends*] (28). While here the author who cannot understand what the public wants seems to have a moment of clairvoyance, this does not deter him from recounting exactly what the public does not want as he tracks down myriad old friends, particularly Stephan T. Ohrt. But his time with Ohrt is not just an instance of trying to do the opposite of what the public wants. With Ohrt, the narrator enters spaces devoid of literature to expose the need to

end literary production. The failure of literature stands proxy for the failures of the public sphere.

Fascist Spaces in the Public Sphere

The narrator makes a trip to the countryside with his school friend Ohrt. The only strip of life the narrator claims he discovers in the countryside that is not clearly fascist is a trail of ants. After this sarcastic remark the author studies the ants' fascist organization, their well-ordered discipline and marching in step, as he previously studied the pedestrians waiting for the crossing signal. Then he moves into a different arena for free time and fascism. After their sojourn to the countryside, the narrator and Ohrt sneak onto a tennis court of the "Der Club An Der Alster" [The Club On The Alster] (233). The two are not members for many reasons, particularly because "seit 1945 ein Mitgliederaufnahmestopp in Kraft [ist]" [*since 1945 a block on the admittance of new members is in effect*] (233). This does not stop the determined friends. While the narrator and Ohrt try to play a few sets of tennis, there is a bit of confusion. Real members are perplexed that they are on the wrong court at the wrong time. The real members, unaware that the two youths are interlopers, are exasperated: "Dies ist … unsere Stunde … Wir spielen seit zwanzig Jahren hier um diese Zeit … wir verstehen nicht …?" [*This is ... our hour ... We've been playing here at this time for twenty years ... we don't understand...?*] (233). The narrator and Ohrt elude detection time and again until they encounter a fifty-five year old "hochherrschaftliche Dame" [*grand lady*] (237). While Ohrt had weaseled out from the previous three encounters with members who wanted to play during their hour, he is no match for the lady. Her kind demeanor makes an about

face once she finds out that the boys are not members. The narrator, speeding away in a car with Ohrt, recalls that the lady's "Übergang von 'liebenswürdig' zu 'eiskaltbrutal' […] zu schnell und, dennoch, zu glatt, stimmig, echt [war]" [*transition from 'charming' to 'chillingly brutal' was too fast and yet, smooth, fitting, real*] (239). The lady's chilling brutal nature and the presence of only pre-1945 members doesn't leave much to the imagination: the tennis club is a fascist bastion. The lady's brutal reaction to their illegal presence on the tennis courts, the narrator concludes, "war SS-Mentalität" [*was SS-mentality*] (239). Leisure activities, in clubs or in the woods, preserve or breed fascism. The outing with Ohrt is not just a reason for the novelist to confirm the world at large is fascist. It is also an exercise for exploring how fascism can be ended through aesthetics.

Ohrt is also an artist. In Ohrt's house, "die Wände lebten, wie Bilder, von Millionen farbspritzern und wirren Stukturen" [*the walls lived, like pictures, from millions of paint-splats and obscure structures*] (217). Ironically, Ohrt hates "Wilde Malerei" [*wild painting*] and his paintings reflect the opposite, namely "Formstrenge" [*controlled form*] (218, 217). However, this painter uses maximum flexibility within his controlled form "mit zwanzigtausend verschiedenen Pinseln und Pinselspinsels" [*with twenty-thousand different brushes and brushbrushes*] (217). As such, the artist's style reflects a certain kind of stability, just as *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s title made a disingenuous gesture by calling itself "a novel." The novel was not the faithful miming of a modernist novel, but "völlig instabil das Ganze" [*completely instable, all of it*] (226). Ohrt's dismissal of the "wild" painting typical of the eighties and the dubious title "novel" of Lottmann's book represent a certain kind of authentic in-authenticity, a nihilistic indifference, that reconstructs forms in order to make a difference when nothing makes a

difference anymore. Just as Dick Hebdige argued for punk style, narration in *Mai, Juni,*

Juli seeks, with "grim determination […] to detach itself from the taken-for-granted

landscape of normalized forms, [and] to bring down upon itself such vehement

disapproval."[46] The narrative aggression in Lottmann's novel reveals that, as Diederich

Diederichsen has argued for pop music:

> Hoffnung [kommt…] nur von ästhetischen Fortschritte, die in
> Verbindung mit […] politischem oder ästhetischem oder kriminellen
> Anarchismus gemacht werden [können]. Erst dann ensteht bei dem
> Programm Mikropolitik eine Wirkung, die sich von den Pyrrhus-Siegen
> früherer Kulturrevolutionen unterscheidet.
>
> [*hope only comes from aesthetic advances, that are made in connection
> with political or aesthetic or criminal anarchism. The program of micro-
> politics only has effects that differentiate themselves from the pyrrhic-
> victories of previous cultural revolutions*].[47]

The myriad text fragments have no genuine connection to one another. The copious

intertextual flecks in *Mai, Juni, Juli*, like the millions of paint flecks on Ohrt's walls,

question why these narratives can be put together in the first place. The "Formstrenge"

[*controlled form*] the novelist reads in Ohrt's art is actually a devotion to dilettantism.

Ohrt and the novelist both exhibit dilettantism that emerges in a provocative form that

releases a shock, an attack on so-called progress that is in its basic idea is completely

out-of-date. In *Mai, Juni, Juli*, the narrator's dilettantism demonstrates, to continue with

Diederichsen, "daß im Fehlermachen noch genauer *gespielt* und Mechanik überschritten

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[46] Dick Hebdige *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London: Methune, 1979) 19.

[47] Diedrich Diederichsen, *1.500 Schallplatten: 1979-1989* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1989) 18.

wird" [*that in making mistakes one can* play *more exactly and transgress mechanics*].[48]

There exists in *Mai, Juni, Juli* a constant play between new and old.

The novel seeks to use this play to end literature. To tap into this "no future" aesthetic, the narrative has to return to the moment of punk. But this does not contradict its project of negation. This return is not the punk instance of Ransmayr's recycling. *Mai, Juni, Juli* returns to two moments of punk to clearly demonstrate that the only leftover relevance for punk was its not-yet fulfilled promise of "no future." By examining one last moment that *Mai, Juni, Juli* debunks, the matrix for success emerges from all of punk and post-punk's failures.

The Matrix for Hate

Mai, Juni, Juli made literature the matrix for punk affect: hate. But this was not the hate we saw with the reception of the novel; that was hate because of facile claims of its deficient intertextuality. This new matrix emerged because of the stagnant history of German literature. *Mai, Juni, Juli* differentiated itself from previous literary moments because it did not want to change the object of critique. Instead, *Mai, Juni, Juli* wanted to end all critique. The previous sections demonstrated how canonical literature could be recycled but that there was no social relevance for such remade narratives as "Quellkopf" and "Pixie." Trivial literature such as *Bild* was likewise not worthy of recycling because the merely ensured the continued circulation of narratives haunted by the ghosts of fascism. The genealogy of punk under investigation in the previous chapters make clear that Lottmann's attempt to locate a subversive literature elsewhere

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[48] Diederichsen, *1.500 Schallplatten* 19.

was not the first. As such, the project in *Mai, Juni, Juli* cannot be understood as the ultimate literary attempt at "no future" without considering how it positions itself vis-à-vis what it considers its kindred projects of negation.

The novelist's critique of authors such as Rainald Goetz and Rolf Dieter Brinkmann is rather subtle: he misspells Goetz and Brinkmann's names (Götz and Brinckmann) (50, 201). There is a bit of a pun here on Goetz' name. By 1987, Goetz' performance at Klagenfurt had rocketed him to a high perch in the Suhrkamp publishing house and amongst the very literary opinion-makers of the feuilleton that *Mai, Juni, Juli* bashes. By changing Goetz' name to Götz, the novelist makes Goetz into a Tin God, the English-language equivalent of the misspelled German word *Götze*. Thus in this seemingly innocuous misspelling, there is an intertextual rejection of a repetition of the punk rupture Goetz made into literature. Goetz may have wanted to create an anarchistic third space, and *Irre*'s Raspe may have wanted to scramble all social codes and murder the moonshine in Futurist fashion, but these attempts failed. *Mai, Juni, Juli* sought to prevent a return to this quintessential moment of literary punk. This is the moment where *Mai, Juni, Juli* ultimately declares "no future" for the original moment of punk. But it is not just the moment of late seventies punk that must be negated.

At another point the narrator plays dumb as to who Brinkmann is: "da gab es diesen deutschen Autor, der einmal in Italien ein Buch geschrieben hatte, das angeblich kraftvoll war, 'Rom, Blicke'" [*there was one German author, who once wrote a book in Italy, that was supposedly powerful, 'Rom, Blicke'*] (30). *Rom, Blicke* refers to Brinkmann's posthumous "text" from 1979.[49] Brinkamnn, early proponent of new

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[49] See Rolf Dieter Brinkamnn, *Rom, Blicke* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1979).

realism and eventually beat and avant-garde literary trends from the US, did not write

Rom, Blicke. Rather, the bound version of some of his collected materials, letters, notes,

pictures and newspaper clippings, appeared fours years after his death. Beyond this,

though, Rome and Italy are paradigmatic locations for traveling to and writing in for

German authors since Goethe, a paradigm that, to the narrator's despair, continued to

dominate literature in the late eighties. But here the novelist conjoins the place of

inspiration for canonical literature (Goethe) and a representative of avant-garde literature

of the seventies (Brinkmann).[50] He rejects the possibility of continuing Brinkmann's

scathing attack on German literature, an attack the novelist assesses above as "angeblich

kraftvoll" [*apparently powerful*] and ultimately reads Brinkmann's project as a

delusional continuation of the same. Negating Brinkmann is crucial for *Mai, Juni, Juli* in

order to ensure "no future" for literature because so much of Brinkmann's work was

published after his death and also because it was made into literature. The death of the

author, this attack reveals, is not sufficient to negate literary production. While the

novelist's misanthropy could be easily read as a continuation of Brinkmann's literary

rage, this is not the case. There are, however, numerous parallels between the two texts.

These parallels are crucial, for if Brinkmann can be understood as an instance of pre-

punk, then *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s return to what could be called the seed that sowed the works

under investigation here represents a moment to ensure that there would be no incentive

to return to the punk predecessor and try again at subversively chaotic literature.

Brinkmann's prose, verse and collages of the seventies represent an attempt to

break the very same cultural monopoly of feuilleton and canonical literature that

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[50] For an analysis of Brinkmann's literary avant-garde see Langston's chapter "Technologies of Fascism and the Poetics of Silence and Light," particularly 163-168 and 173-194.

Lottmann's novelist rails against. Brinkmann did this while testing the possibilities of exorcising fascism from West German narratives. *Mai, Juni, Juli* fused pinnacles of modernist literature with the boulevard press tactics of *Bild*. Almost twenty years earlier Brinkmann had lashed out at the German fear of Leslie Fiedler's call for a new affective literature that made just such connections between the canon and pornos, between sci-fi and non-fiction.[51] For Brinkmann, German writers were lazy sluts ("Schlampen") who rejected Fiedler's argument "weil es schwer ist und konkrete Anstrengungen erfordert, einmal in Besitz genommene […] Positionen wieder aufzugeben und den Versuch zu wagen, neu mit dem eigenen Schreiben anzufangen" [*because it is difficult and demands concrete effort, to give up treasured positions and to dare the attempt, to begin anew with one's own writing*].[52] In a sense, *Mai, Juni, Juli* continues this project, for beginning anew is exactly what the novelist does. This novelist's disgust with German literature and the reading public seems to recall Brinkmann's rhetorical question "Sollte ich mich in diese traurige und nur noch langweilige Litanei einreihen?" [*Should I involve myself in this sad and boring litany?*].[53] Brinkmann's attempt to find a solution in language and literature ultimately leads him to give up literature for image-text collages, eventually commanding "Deutschland verrecke" [*die a miserable death Germany*].[54] These last two

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[51] For Leslie Fiedler's plea for a new kind of literature, see his talk "Cross the Border-Close the Gap," *Collected Essays*, vol. 2 (New York: Stein and Day, 1971) 461-485.

[52] Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, "Angriff aufs Monopol: Ich hasse alte Dichter" in *Roman oder Leben: Postmoderne in der deutschen Literatur*, ed. Uwe Wittstock (Leipzig: Reclam, 1994) 65.

[53] Brinkmann, "Angriff aufs Monopol" 66.

points bind the novelist in *Mai, Juni, Juli* with Brinkmann's own project of negation. Brinkmann called Germans "lazy sluts" who do not what to try something new in an effort to purge fascism. The novelist in *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s meets these Germans. One Cologne native tells the protagonist in *Mai, Juni, Juli* that "Brinckmann…ich habe gefleht, daß er nie, nie, nie wiederkommt…daß er weit, weit weg fährt" [*Brinckmann… I pleaded, that he never, never, never came back… that he went far, far away*] (201). The novelist in *Mai, Juni, Juli* lives in the aftermath of Brinkmann's wished-for miserable death of Germany. His only solution to prevent everything from starting anew is to kill off Brinkmann and leave.

Departure

The novel's novelist concludes that Germany was hell, "die Heimat Deutschlands, hier wuchs der Schrecken, den wir in die Welt tragen, hier gab es keine Liebe" [*the homeland of Germany, this is where the horror grows, that we carry in the world, there was no love here*] (228). The novelist's departure from Germany represents a destructive gesture. The artistic subject declares himself an outsider, such that the body of his work no longer flows toward a conclusion. Rather, it drives internal elements into disarray and destruction. The author's trip to Madagascar points not toward resignation; this is a last, subtly scathing gesture toward mainstream West Germany. His inscription as a mate leaving behind the hell of eighties West Germany represents a disingenuous gesture calling out his own crime: "War es nicht das größte Verbrechen, massenfeindlich zu sein?" [*was is not the graves of crimes to be misanthropic?*](24). This gesture is

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54 Rolf Dieter Brinkmann, *Keiner weiß mehr* (1968; Reinbeck bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1993), 132.

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disingenuous because the novel is predicated on misanthropy. His departure putatively signals failure. However, the apparently pessimistic end to the text offers a what Eric Santner, while considering ways for a reconciliation of Germany's fascist past, calls a "radical rethinking and reformation of the very notions of boundaries and borderlines, of that 'protective shield' regulating exchange between the inside and the outside of individual and groups."[55] The novelist ends literature his appeal to literature because he discovers during the course of trying to write a novel that literature itself has become such a "protective shield." This shield is in literature that "schilderten das, was es sowieso schon gab, noch einmal ab" [*described, once more, that which there already was*] and circulated the spirit of the *Stürmer* (148). The simulators the narrator deems failures are those who construct this shield, ensuring the recycling of narratives that because they do not deal with fascism, and thereby insinuating that fascism is no longer a problem. Literary cessation is crucial for the author because the modernist and pop cultural stories, the Tin God Goetz for example, take on, "von selbst die Form der gemächlichen, zeitlosen, kreisrungen Geschichte" [*on their own, the form of a leisurely, timeless, circular story*] (209). This stunted narrative circularity haunts everyday life in the novel.

This specter resides in the tennis club where the members do the exact same thing for forty years. But the novelist compresses time. While the fascists in the tennis club have been doing the same thing for years, by discounting Goetz' impact in German literature, the novelist rejects what authors have been doing for four years (since Goetz'

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[55] Eric L. Santner "History beyond the Pleasure Principle: Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma" in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the "Final Solution"* ed. Saul Friedländer (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard UP, 1992) 152-153.

1983 novel *Irre*). As a structure of feeling, hate to end these cycles is crucial, the narrator argues, because fascism has continued as the foundation of all German affect. In *Mai, Juni, Juli*, this affect has been transposed into popular culture, such as sports. The novelist observes that "bei den Deutschen gäbe es bestimmte Gefühle, die immer, zu allen Zeiten gäbe, […] die sich der Nationalsozialismus zunutze gemacht hätte: Und diese Gefühle könnten sich auch ein neuer Nationalsozialismus im neuen Gewand wieder zunutze machen. Man müsse das so sehen, beim Fußball. Wenn ein Tor falle und so" [*with Germans there are certain feelings, that have always existed, […] that National Socialism took advantage of: And these feelings could also be taken advantage of by a new National Socialism in new dressing. One had to see this, in soccer for example. When a goal is scored and so on*] (91). Here the novelist makes the importance of cessation most clearly. Recycling modernist narratives recycles the very conditions that engendered and prolonged fascist structures of feeling. The young author sees the effects of these conditions in an omnipresent fascist specter: "Das ausgehende Jahrhundert in seiner scheußlichsten Form dampfte vor meinen kranken Augen vorbei […] ich konnte gar nicht anderes mehr sehen" [*the passing century in its most ghastly form plods by in front of my eyes […] I couldn't see anything else anymore*] (22). This utter disgust at contemporary West German society provides a clue as to why the author refuses any sort of hippie novel ("Ein Öko-Roman, nein danke"). Hippies wanted to save the world, punks mockingly wanted to see it paved over.[56] Paving over the world,

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[56] This sentiment is echoed in, for example, the West German punk band S.Y.P.H.'s song "Zurück zum Beton" [*back to concrete*] (1980). S.Y.P.H. member Thomas Schwebel comments on the idea behind the song: "'Zurück zum Beton' war die Antwort auf das 'Zurück zur Natur' dieser Grünen-Bewegung, die ja zur gleichen Zeit entstand. Diese Landkommunene und wallenden Tücher waren für und das Letzte. […] Leckt mich am Arsch mit eurer blöden Natur! Wir leben hier in Städten" [*'Back to Concrete' was the answer to the 'Back to Nature' of the Greens-movement, that was founded at the same time. These land-*

ensuring "no future," was the only solution the novelist finds to prevent the recycling of the markers of the National Socialist past. The novelist declares "no future" for West German narratives because of the simulation of reconciliation and refusal to mourn traumatic pasts. But he himself does not care about mourning and making right past injustices.

Oppositely, the author debunks simulated intactness and consent by continuously running amok with all cultural taboos: "Um die Konversation nicht Abreißen zu lassen, sagte ich, der Führer habe die die falschen Berater gehabt und von vielem nichts gewußt" [*in order to prevent the conversation from breaking off, I said that the Führer had the wrong advisors and didn't know about a lot*] (174). There is no love left, so the thumbing of the nose–*Mai, Juni, Juli*'s narrative kynicism–creates the conditions of possibility for hate. Hate is the solution because the crises of politics, the public sphere and literature ensure failure, but failure in the mainstream only ensures a return, a recycling of the same events in new dressings. In such a morass, politics becomes defunct and fascist desires and the mask of adaptation haunt even putatively socially progressive political parties, such as the SPD. The narrator, when asked about his favorite fascist, insists: "'Lieblingsfaschisten' könne es für ein klammheimliches SPD-Mitglied gründsätzlich nicht geben […] Ich würde eher in den Tod gehen, als so eine Frage zu beantworten" [*it is fundamentally impossible for a clandestine SPD-member to have a 'favorite fascist'. I would rather die than answer such a question*] (174). However this refusal is short lived. Pressed once more, he contradicts and indicts himself as paradigmatic of SPD-members: "Na, Adolf selbst, ist doch klar" [*Well, Adolf himself,*

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commenes and flowing towels were for us the absolute worse thing [...] Kiss my ass with your stupid nature! We live here in cities] (cited from *Verschwende deine Jugend*, CD-inlay, Hamburg, Universal Marketing, 2002, 5).

clearly] (175). The novelist's editor creates a phantasmagoric image of wholeness and introspection of "New Subjectivity" that *Mai, Juni, Juli* sought to escape.

The ostensible inward turn of 1970s literature represented what Santner has analyzed for representations of trauma, namely "efforts to differentiate and distance one's own moral, political, and psychological dispositions from those associated with the traumatic event [of the 'Final Solution']."[57] Because he rejects this literary-social trend, the novelist comes into difficulties with his publisher. The publisher insists "Keine Problemliteratur mehr in den 80ern!" [*no more problem-literature in the 80s!*] (31). But this is exactly what the author "wollte so gern" [*wanted so badly*] (31). His publishing house's wishes for a simpler literature recalls Fredric Jameson's assessment of pastiche, the celebrated literary form of eighties German literature, as a mode to recall a time far less problematic than the present.[58] Literature, publishing houses and the novelist's editor ensure, to turn to Adorno, "indem sie das Ganze wie mit einem Schwamm wegwischen wollen [ist ihre eigene] Affinität zur Barbarei" [*in that the want to wipe everything away with a sponge, their own affinity to barbarism*].[59] Because literature in *Mai, Juni, Juli* ensures the continuation of the barbarism of modernity, it must be stopped. It is not just barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz, as Adorno famously

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[57] Santner 145.

[58] See for example, Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society," *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle, Washington, Bay Press, 1983) 111-125.

[59] Adorno, "Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft" 26.

claims.[60] The novelist pushes *Mai, Juni, Juli* to Adorno's endpoint: literature is barbaric after Auschwitz.

The barbarism of literature is the rationale behind the Fehlfarben citation at the start of this chapter. Lottmann's narrator steals stories and tries to find a better way to tell them. He realizes, however, that as much as he seeks a meaningful (his)story, he has nothing to say. He wants to end the possibility of narration, but he can only end his own. *Mai, Juni, Juli*'s motley narrative seeks to create conditions for opening up new discursive spaces and subject positions outside what Hebdige, while reflecting on punk subcultures, calls a "petrified hegemony of an earlier corpus of 'radical aesthetics.'"[61] This search fails. Bad style and lack of passion calls forth the need for Sloterdijk's kynicism because "die Mechanismen, deren relative brutale Offenheit den faschistischen Stil charakterisiert hatte, sind unter Masken der Anpassung, des guten Willens und der bemühten Gesinnung ins Unterschwellige und Atmosphärische versunken" [*the mechanisms, whose relative brutal open-ness characterized fascist style, have sunken into the subliminal and atmospheric masks of adaptation, good will, and forced convictions*].[62] The lived moment of punk represented an attempt to solve the failures of previous moments. In the wake of punk's failures, *Mai, Juni, Juli* marks a moment in literature that Grossberg has argued for punk rock.

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[60] Adorno, "Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft" 30.

[61] Dick Hebdige *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (London: Routledge, 1988) 185.

[62] Sloterdijk, *Kritik* 242.

Punk was the last gasp attempt to create "mattering maps" (i.e., a constellation of

cultural materials that mattered and could be used to shape identity) before difference

ceased to matter.[63] Postmodernity, Grossberg argues, "is a story about the historical

collapse of specific relations within everyday life, about the 'fact' that certain

differences no longer matter. It is not that everything has been reduced to a single plane,

but that the articulations between the planes are beginning to disintegrate."[64] Debunking

the recyclable as worthy of recycling calls out what Santner identifies as West Germans

simulating "a strategy of undoing […] the need for mourning by simulating a condition

of intactness, typically by situating the site of loss elsewhere."[65] The author inverts this

strategy: he debunks intactness and locates loss within West Germany. His target is

radical and critical introspection, an indictment of oneself as a foil for indicting society.

He engages through the course of the novel the disillusionment of his generation, the end

of enlightenment thought, and the collapse of progressive thought. This is Adorno's

argument, that "Kulturkritik findet sich der letzen Stufe der Dialektik von Kultur und

Barbarei gegenüber" [*cultural criticism finds itself positioned in the last stages of the*

dialectic of culture and barbarism].[66] Fascism continues to exist because, Adorno argues

on the myth of German *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* [coming to terms with the past],

"die objektiven gesellschaftlichen Voraussetzungen fortbestehen, die den Faschismus

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[63] See Grossberg, "Rock" 111-123 or w*e gotta* 201ff.

[64] Grossberg, w*e gotta* 221.

[65] Santner 144.

[66] Adorno, "Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft" 30.

zeitigten" [*the objective conditions of society that engendered fascism continue to exist*].[67] This is what the "novel" *Mai, Juni, Juli* is all about. The monuments of German literature must be stopped from ensuring the continued risk of barbarism. The novelist tries to stop as many narratives as he can. He tries to unmask these stories as nothing worthwhile. More than the story, the novelist wants to convey his hate and kynicism as a strategy for marking as nothing–for negating–the oppressive canon that only ensures the recycling of the failures of modernity. The repetition must be brought to an end. The novelist had nothing to do but fail. He had nothing left to do but leave.

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[67] Adorno, "Was heißt Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit?" 566.

CONCLUSION

WASTED YOUTH, PUNK WASTED?

> "wir tanzten bis zum ende zum herzschlag der besten musik.
> jeden abend jeden tag. wir dachten fast es wär ein sieg."
>
> [*we danced until the end to the heartbeat of the best music.
> every evening every day. we almost thought that would have been a victory.*][1]

Punk Heritage:

The 2003 film *Verschwende deine Jugend* (dir. Benjamin Quaback) starts with

salvation. As the screen fills silently with a montage of a band playing and audience

members dancing, a disembodied voice announces: "Als ich das erste Mal DAF gesehen

hab,' war es wie die Erlösung aus der langen bösen Alptraum der 70er" [*The first time I*

saw DAF, it was like the deliverance out of the long, horrible nightmare of the

seventies]. In 1980s Munich, Harry the narrator of the previous line, explains, "die Welt

war am Arsch" [*the world was totally fucked up*] because of oppressive hippie music and

boring tunes from parents. Harry recognizes the only solution: New Wave heroes. He

can save the world–Munich as well as Germany–if he can somehow get his friends' band

Apollo Schwabing to open for Deutsch Amerikanische Freundschaft (DAF). Aside from

the fact that there was a band DAF, and the location of New Wave scenes in Düsseldorf

and Berlin, the filming of Jürgen Teipel's documentary novel *Verschwende deine*

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[1] Fehlfarben "das war vor jahren" *Monarchie und Alltag*, orig 1980, Cologne, EMI, 2000.

Jugend has scant relation to the book. The plot of the film revolves around the mantra on the back cover of the DVD: "Der große Traum vom Ruhm" [*The great dream of fame*]. Nowhere is "no future" to be found. Oppositely, the viewer is immersed in the quest for money and record deals while Harry tries to make contact with DAF, who in the movie live in luxury hotels with–literally–bags of cash lying about. After a few lines of cocaine and a few autographs, DAF and their manager finally acquiesce to Apollo Schwabing opening for them. In return, Harry promises them a handsome compensation of 10,000 Marks. But Harry cannot manage to raise such a sum of cash from ticket sales because every opening act demands too many free tickets for the concert and merchandizing and advertising costs are astronomical. In the end, despite receiving a meager 4,000 Marks, DAF agrees to perform.

The movie is a waste of punk. In obscene contradistinction to the images of DAF concerts from the movie's timeframe, circa 1980, DAF played no part in a star cult of adoring fans under the DVD-cover's secondary mantra: "Die absolut geilste Zeit!" [*the absolute awesomest time!*]. Photographic evidence, such as the picture from DAF's concert in Düsseldorf's Philipshalle, debunks the movie's characterization of DAF (fig. 15). The film constructs punks as capitalists interested in financial success. But perhaps even more tragic than this, the film absolves the moments of punk and post-punk of any meaningful effects. The unspoken legacy of punk in the film–the word punk is never spoken–is a youth culture as a moment of fun surrounded by a love story. Thus fittingly absent from this memorialization of punk is any sense of the chaotic and antagonistic moment briefly sketched at the start of this dissertation or transcribed in interviews in

Teipel's book. Even the dominant historical marker of the late seventies, the German

Autumn, has been erased from this snapshot of history.

Fig. 15. Wasted Youth: No boundaries, no star cult, audience and band become one. DAF concert in Düsseldorf 17 June 1981.[1]

While parents' boring "Schlager" [*hits*] and hippie's passivity are positioned as

antipodes to Harry's musical ambitions, this hardly encompasses the host of

contradictions out of which punk emerged. Instead of chaos, anarchy and "no future"–or

even the subversive aftershocks of these keywords–the film constructs love in the time

of post-punk. After all, once Harry secures DAF for a concert in Munich, he also secures

the love of both Melitta, bassist in Apollo Schwabing, and of Lena, a fan. Love as the

structure of feeling in the cinematic *Verschwende deine Jugend* heightens the nostalgic

aura conveyed through montages of sartorial history: hair, dress, songs and even the D-

Mark. In monumental contradistinction to the genealogy in *Punk Poetics* and even in

Teipel's documentary novel, the film celebrates a triumphant moment in the eighties.

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[1] Image reproduced from *Zurück zum Beton: Die Anfänge von Punk und New Wave in Deutschland 1977-'82: Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 7. Juli – 15. September 2002*, ed. Ulrike Groos and Peter Gorschlüter (Köln: König, 2002) 64.

The movie seeks to establish under the guise of punk a German national pop-culture in German history.

In this regard, the movie becomes a kind of heritage film for the eighties, following Lutz Koepnick's parameters of "not simply conjur[ing] the historical as an atmospheric background for tales of adventure and melodramatic stories [but] instead […] present[ing] the texture of the past as a source of visual attractions and aural pleasures." The problem with the musealization of punk in the movie is that it transforms the past, as Koepnick argues, into "an object of consumption" that does not challenge postmodern nostalgia for times less complicated.[2] This less complicated time provides access for a younger generation, and a safe, unproblematic return for an older generation, to a highly volatile decade. Instead of traumas of protest and terrorism, and in the wake of the so-called (re)turn to normalcy since 1989, the film turns the dawn of the eighties into something comfortable and for (pop) consumption. This whitewashing of history, punk, post-punk, terrorism, 1968 and the German Autumn, creates a phantasmagoria of harmony. In that such returns and archives mask historical traumas, they reveal the highly problematic nature of remembering such periods and indicate a mass media attempt to construct consent and harmony in a still-newly united Germany. In 2003, this film appears to reveal the desire to mask any apprehensions about history by making history simply happen as Koepnick phrases it. By making history happen, cinematic archives such as *Verschwende deine Jugend* place history "in apolitical

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[2] Lutz Koepnick, "Reframing the Past: Heritage Cinema and Holocaust in the 1990s" *New German Critique*, No. 87, Special Issue on Postwall Cinema (Autumn, 2002), 47-82, 50. Fredric Jameson calls such a film a "postmodern nostalgia film […that] is a consumable set of images, marked very often by music, fashion, hairstyle and vehicles or motorcars" (see "Transformations of the Image in Postmodernity," *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern, 1983-1998* [London: Verso, 1998] 129).

pockets untouched by or sealed off from the absolute negativity of the historical."[3] It is

precisely the film's drive to create a sensuous, inevitable, comforting past for the viewer

that secures its place in affirmative histories. This is not the correct mode of

remembering punk.

Punk Memories:

What does it mean to remember punk? How can we salvage moments from the

maelstrom of punk's history? Can we read punk–that fleeting, mythically violent and

destructive moment–without doing it a disservice by slipping into a mode of looking

back and remembering that constructs a monument to punk? But if we could, then what

purpose would that serve? If punk was avant-garde, would this, then, be an avant-garde

invigoration of culture? If punk was a subcultural moment, then could a punk history

present an alternative to legitimizing and dominant histories and discourses of the past?

What alternative could a punk history incite during what Andreas Huyssen has called our

paradoxical age of amnesia and nostalgia?[4]

Punk was, ideally, highly contradictory and thereby resistive to neat archival

organization. If only by merit of their fanzines, as the few examples at the start of *Punk*

Poetics demonstrated, that which could have been synchronously archived for punk was

already wet, ripped, frozen, without order and all together instable, slap shot

assemblages. The materiality of punk appears incommensurable with an archive. It is a

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[3] Koepnick 75.

[4] Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

daunting task to create an archive out of punk, a moment whose apocalyptic "no future"

seems to want to enact what Jacques Derrida calls an "anarchivic" drive, an archive-

destroying drive.[5] Perhaps the ideal configuration, then, is precisely an archive of

intangible memories such those in Teipel's book. After all, Huyssen's twilight memories

lie at the turn of a century, a time when the spectacles of the twentieth century represent

that "moment of the day that foreshadows the night of forgetting, but that seems to slow

time itself, an in-between state in which the last light of day may still play out its

ultimate marvels."[6] Perhaps this is the gloaming in *Verschwende deine Jugend*. But if it

is, its resurrected present, evidenced by Teipel's literary retrospective, is pervaded by

Teipel's selectivity as well as a sense of nostalgia that must be interrogated. Close

readings of these memories reveal that *Verschwende deine Jugend* intentionally

remembers aspects of punk while it simultaneously forgets to remember other memories.

It forgets those outside the Düsseldorf-Berlin-Hamburg triad, those punk memories from

Munich for example, Thomas Meinecke's memories. Teipel interviewed Meinecke for

six hours while preparing his documentary-novel.[7] However, Teipel's transcription of

Meinecke's punk memories takes up but a short paragraph in the last third of the novel.

The rest of the band Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle, Wilfried Petzi, Michaela Melián and

Justin Hoffmann, are completely absent. But even including every minute of every

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[5] Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995) 10.

[6] Huyssen 3.

[7] Thomas Meinecke and Michaela Melián, personal interview with Cyrus Shahan, 27 March 2007.

interview would not be enough. As the case studies in *Punk Poetics* demonstrate, the lived moments of punk and post-punk are not enough.

Teipel's book is not the answer. The book ultimately constructs *a* moment of punk, one that started in Düsseldorf, and cycled between Düsseldorf, Hamburg and Berlin. Teipel has a cast of seventy-eight punks, a three-page timeline of punk, eleven pictures and a 48-song soundtrack. This is an attempt to include everything. While Teipel pulled together various media for this history of West German punk, this constellation of evidence constructs in its simulated intactness, its assumed documentary accuracy and its neat package and coordinates, what Huyssen, while writing on technology and memory at the turn of the most recent century, has called a media-historical "delusion of pure presence."[8] As insightful as Teipel's transcribed punk memories may be, they only tell part of the story, the part Teipel chose to tell. What of the remainder? Teipel's gathering together of signs of punk represents what Derrida calls "cosignation." This gathering together "aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unitary of an ideal configuration."[9] However, because the corpus of punk exists only as a corpse of punk, then any ideal configuration becomes one of decayed materials that only represent a version of the phenomena of punk.

While Teipel's text spurns dominate histories of the eighties, it nevertheless aesthetisizes a punk past, and thus creates an image of intuitive understanding. *Verschwende deine Jugend* transformed punk into something usable and consumable.

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[8] Huyssen 2.

[9] Derrida 3.

Verschwende deine Jugend creates a fantasy of a German past that uncovers other

fantasies of German history that punk itself sought to uncover in the wake of the traumas

of the sixties and seventies. *Punk Poetics* has repeatedly held up the memories in

Verschwende deine Jugend as accurate memories of the lived moments of punk in West

Germany. However, we know that these are censored and directed memories crafted

with a teleology in mind. The problem becomes one where the historical referent is

gone. *Verschwende deine Jugend* engenders the ultimate confused moment of punk, in

which the simulation of punk is stacked up with the musealiation of punk. The simulated

scrambling of codes becomes a simulation of scrambled codes.

  Punk Poetics' genealogy of punk is about what Huyssen, while considering

remembrance and utopian imagination, calls "a new confrontation of history and fiction,

history and representation, history and myth." For Huyssen the crises of utopian

imagination at the dawn of the year 2000 inspired "the exploration of the no-places […]

the blind spots on the maps of the past."[10] Suhrkamp published *Verschwende deine*

Jugend in 2001, thus Huyssen's interrogation of memory circa 2000 can help us

understand that in spite of the nostalgia that purveys Teipel's mediated reconstruction, it

nevertheless presents an untold history, a secret history as Greil Marcus might call it, of

West Germany in the eighties. *Punk Poetics* has endeavored to relieve the nostalgic and

affirmative tension in Teipel's reconstruction through the selection of three authors who

are paradigmatic of punk's crises and failures. It is only through the close reading of

Goetz, Meinecke and Lottmann in conjunction with the book *Verschwende deine Jugend*

that Teipel's filtered history gains any legitimacy because the literary text are relics of

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[10] Huyssen 88.

their cultural conditions, of the time of punk and post-punk, not Teipel's. After reading Teipel's filtered history of punk through Goetz, Meinecke and Lottmann we can literally read the *Nachträglichkeit* [*belatedness*] of the year 1977-1978. These texts make clear that punk was much more than Teipel's presentation. By examining the decade of punk and post-punk through the lens of failure, *Punk Poetics* sought neither to create a utopian epiphany, nor a dystopian moment of terror and violence but rather to reveal a complex subcultural cultural field of 1980s West Germany. But the question remains: What is to be gained through an investigation that turns to literature to understand more immediate markers of the ghostly moment of punk?

A literary genealogy of punk is an archive of the aftershocks of punk. If one seeks the self-destructive gesture and anarchy as the cure to cities burning with boredom, then Goetz' performance in Klagenfurt and Raspe's scrambling of social codes harnesses, without our mediation, both. If one considers the lived moment of punk, then Meinecke in particular synthesizes the disparate means that punk envisioned itself subverting without us having to bracket out any unwanted (hi)story. If one considers the ultimate apocalyptic whishes of punk–"no future"–then Lottmann's novel harness this exclusively through literature, in a novel that cut up other narratives to make its own motley excess something to hate. Turning to the literary spaces of punk and post-punk reveals and helps us come to terms with the interdisciplinary challenges in reading punk music, art, fanzines, culture, politics and history.

In spite of "no future," punk had a future. This future is in other spaces that are distinctly literary. The lived moment of punk, the preceding chapters detail, seeped into literary aesthetics of contemporary authors. *Punk Poetics* has used three case studies to

address a genealogy of punk knowledges, experiences, positions, contradictions, enemies and histories all swirling around in the decade following a dominant historical marker, the apex of German terrorism. Texts, photographs, sounds, paintings and printed memories comprised the coordinates of the punk constellation reconstructed here. But not only *is* this historical constellation gone, this constellation *was* gone. Its light faded as early as 1978, before the first text in *Punk Poetics,* Rainald Goetz' *Irre*, was even published. Examining the aftershocks calls into question the coming of the future, a future whose possibility punk foreclosed with its mantra "no future." The introduction of this dissertation juxtaposed punk's "no future" with Walter Benjamin's "destructive character" to begin to understand punk's prophesized self-destruction.[11] Punk's apocalyptic dreams called forth its own immanent demise, but they were also immediately invested in punk's future. Why else have a mantra "no future" if punk was not preeminently concerned with the effects of its aftershocks? As the case studies in *Punk Poetics* demonstrate, the moment of punk failed; it had no future. However, everything after the watershed moment of punk must be called post-punk because, as Lawrence Grossberg has argued for punk rock, the texts existed on the still shaking ground that punk had cleared: punk engendered an explosion of styles.[12] Punk's failures resonated well beyond its year of existence.

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[11] Walter Benjamin, "Der destruktive Charakter," *Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991) 396-398. See pages 21-23 for this discussion.

[12] Lawrence Grossberg, "Is there Rock after Punk?," *On Record*, ed. Simon Frith and Andrew Goodwin (New York: Pantheon, 1990): 111-123, 117.

After Punk

  It seems almost crucial that punk ended as early as it did so that the aftereffects, the afterglow of destruction, could be transmitted into the future that punk did not want for itself. Post-punk's return represents attempts to stop the problematic of time and space and cycle of modern myths once and for all. Richard Langston, on the avant-garde's inner logic of futurity, argues that "although the avant-garde construes itself as being of the future, the avant-garde's temporal translation of the spatial metaphor *en avant* can, ironically enough, only be confirmed a posteriori."[13] Brought to bear on punk, confirming the temporal evidence of punk's paradoxical futurity lies exactly in those texts that exhibit and emerged from punk's crises and failures. Punk studied the failures of previous moments–terrorism and student protests but also previous avant-garde moments–thus it turned to the past to ensure its lack of future.[14] *Punk Poetics*, then, constructs an archive of the past in a future that did not exist for punk. Thus it is really only after the chaotic moment of punk had given way to the scramblings of post-punk, that we can begin to read the appropriate constellation of punk.

  Punk Poetics read the aesthetic traces of failed chances. The subcultural moment of punk sought out the detritus of mainstream culture to imagine a new relation to the popular, history, terrorism, protest and progress. It is only fitting, thus, that any attempt to read this moment as well as those churning in the flotsam of its wake, represents a collection of elements that do not necessarily clarify what punk was. Rather, the markers of the phenomena punk and post-punk simply conjure questions and historical referents

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[13] Richard Langston, *Visions of Violence: German Avant-gardes after Fascism* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2008) 26.

[14] See Langston 30-33.

that are normally not read. *Punk Poetics* turned one year to read a decade overshadowed, and over-remembered, by German terrorism. Instead, *Punk Poetics* mobilized punk's misunderstood constellation to unlock knowledge of the past that only fulfilled its prophecy in the future. The texts, songs and images interrogated in *Punk Poetics* tell a history that did not resign to its apocalyptic nihilism as it purported to. Punk did not want "no future," it wanted a future that was not the one promised in 1977. The future punk did not want is the past that is predominately told, a past of consent and a march toward unification and normalization. Conversely, punk's post-punk future was one that turned to crises to complicate the illusions of this history. Punk's future crises of space and power, of production and reception, of progressive postmodernism played out in the preceding chapters. *Punk Poetics* looked back at that future.

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