

WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS, MASS CULTURE AND *NEUE SACHLICHKEIT*  
IN WEIMAR BERLIN

A reading of Hans Fallada's Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?,  
Erich Kästner's Fabian and Irmgard Keun's Das Kunstseidene Mädchen.

by

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## ABSTRACT

The novels explored in this thesis depict the trials and tribulations of three white-collar workers in Weimar Berlin. I argue that much of the everyday experience of the protagonists is shaped by commercial influences. These influences penetrate their jobs, their places of entertainment and their private and public relationships in very subtle, but nonetheless powerful and often damaging ways.

The protagonists adopt various strategies through which they attempt to establish an identity for themselves away from the ones they are offered by their work environments and places of entertainment. While they may be partially successful in maintaining a private sphere which is not touched by commercial forces, this can only be achieved at the expense of any real engagement or involvement with society. Forced to retire to the margins of society, they have no choice but to become passive spectators of the world around them.

The thesis opens with a historical overview of the rise of the white-collar workers and mass culture in Weimar Berlin. Subsequent chapters focus on the depiction of the work spheres of the protagonists, their places of entertainment and their private and public lives. After a chapter on Curt Moreck's Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin, which offers an illuminating picture of Weimar Berlin night life, the thesis ends with a discussion of the connection between the concept of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and commercialization. Here it is argued that many of the commercial factors shaping the experience of the protagonists can be traced to social changes in Weimar Berlin and may profitably be understood as part of the broad, but ambiguous concept of *Neue Sachlichkeit*.

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## INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is three novels; Hans Fallada's Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, Erich Kästner's Fabian and Irmgard Keun's Das Kunstseidene Mädchen.<sup>1</sup> All three novels were written and published in Berlin between 1931 and 1932. They all depict the trials and tribulations of a young *Angestellter* in the city at that time who, in the course of the novel, is made unemployed and, by the end of the novel, has become socially marginalized.

Hans Fallada's Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, written in the third person, is the tale of the young salesman, Pinneberg, and his wife, Lämmchen. After a spontaneous decision to marry upon learning of Lämmchen's pregnancy, Pinneberg takes Lämmchen to the small town of Ducherow in which he works. When he loses his job, the couple decide to go to Berlin where Pinneberg works as a salesman in a department store. The store is undergoing rationalization, and the managers introduce a quota system whereby the employees have to sell twenty times their monthly income in order to guarantee further employment. In the meantime, the 'Murkel', the Pinnebergs' child, is born and Lämmchen and Pinneberg struggle with the problems of family life. Pinneberg eventually loses his job and the novel ends with the Pinnebergs living in a 'Laubenkolonie' to the east of the city.

Erich Kästner's Fabian, written in the third person, recounts the tale of the young man, Jakob Fabian, who lives in a rented room in a large flat and works in the advertising business. His days pass aimlessly until he meets and falls in love with the young 'Doktorandin', Cornelia. After a string of bad luck, (he loses his job, Cornelia leaves him and his best friend commits suicide), he leaves Berlin returning to his home town where he drowns in a river while trying to save a boy he thinks cannot swim. In the course of the novel, Fabian has numerous

affairs, frequents various bars and night clubs and has many conversations on the state of the country with Cornelia, his best friend, Labude, and various other characters, most of whom work in the media, particularly newspapers.

At the beginning of Irmgard Keun's Das Kunstseidene Mädchen, written in the first person, the protagonist, Doris, lives with her parents and works as a typist in a lawyer's office. She loses her job, works briefly in a theatre company, steals a fur coat and flees to Berlin. Here her adventures begin. Trying to achieve the status of a 'Glanz', she frequents bars and night clubs, and has numerous affairs with men. Determined not to go back to work as a typist, but on the point of destitution, she meets Ernst, a draughtsman in an advertising agency. Ernst is lonely since his wife has left him, and he invites Doris to live with him for as long as she wants. The two of them slowly form a strong rapport, but at a passionate moment he calls out his wife's name. Doris promptly leaves him and returns to the streets. The novel ends with Doris in a train station, wondering what to do.

There are three main thrusts to this thesis: the first concerns the literary analysis of the texts, the second the historicity of their subject matter and the third the concept of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Concerning the first issue, this study asks how and why it is that the novels end with their protagonists, in one way or another, outsiders in society. What are the circumstances which force them into this position? How do they experience and react to their everyday world? Does their perception of their urban environment change over time, and if so, why? Suggesting answers to these questions will involve the analysis of the private and public spheres of the protagonists; the places they work, where they go in their free time and the kinds of relationships they have with their fellows.

In respect of the second concern, my argument will address issues which go beyond a purely literary analysis of the novels. Any reader will be immediately struck by the extent to which their temporal and spatial setting invokes the actual time and space of Berlin at the end of the Weimar Republic. Specific dates are given in Irmgard Keun's Das Kunstseidene Mädchen and many of the places named (from street names to bars and cinemas) in all of the novels really existed. Furthermore, as white-collar workers, the protagonists belong to a social group whose numbers had risen dramatically during the economic transformations of the 1920s. Historians and sociologists generally agree that among social groups at that time none was as affected by 'rationalization', the term most often associated with social and economic change after 1924, and the emergence of mass culture as the *Angestellten*.<sup>2</sup> They were faced by rapid changes to the structure of their lives not only in the workplace, but also at home and in new mass leisure industries. However, there seems to be less agreement among scholars concerning the extent to which these developments should be considered as 'progressive' and 'emancipatory', for there were also many signs of a growing social unrest, of an emergent social class uneasily uncertain as to how to situate itself within this 'new' culture.

As we shall see, these developments and this element of confusion profoundly affect the protagonists in all three novels, and it seems crucial to me to consider the significance of these historical-literary overlaps closely. I will therefore preface the literary analysis with a brief overview of two historical phenomena which play particularly significant roles in the novels: first, the rise of the white-collar workers as a social group and secondly, the advent of mass culture in the city. After analysing the three novels I will then move on to the text and illustrations of a 1931 guidebook titled Führer durch

das "lasterhafte" Berlin<sup>3</sup> by Curt Moreck, a book which vividly captures many of the same tensions and confusions that plague the protagonists of the novels.

Aside from the literary analysis of the novels and the historicity of their subject matter, a further central concern of this thesis is their relationship to the concept of *Neue Sachlichkeit*.<sup>4</sup> In cultural and literary histories of Weimar Berlin, the three novels I am dealing with here have often been seen as literary representatives of the so-called *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement. In art and literature, *Neue Sachlichkeit* is generally used to refer to a movement which rejected Expressionism in favour of a return to a more sober and dispassionate approach to social reality on the part of artists and writers. Beyond the arts, however, the term has been more widely applied to social and economic developments of the day: rationalization, new methods of house-keeping and hygiene, mass sport etc.. Although *Neue Sachlichkeit* can be taken as the dominant cultural category of the day, it is, because of its numerous meanings and usages, an elusive and vague label. In view of this, I think it is necessary to consider more closely the ways in which the three so-called '*Neue Sachlichkeit*' novels and the issues arising out of them could be said to be illustrative of the concept.

An area of research which, I believe, is somewhat neglected with regard to these novels and one which I hope to redress throughout the thesis, concerns the depiction of Berlin as a physical environment. While there have been a number of studies concerned with the literary representation of Berlin in the inter-war years, they have tended to concentrate on the portrayal of the infamous *Berliner Tempo*, on the city as a literary metaphor, the 'imagined' city or, as Klaus Scherpe has phrased it, the 'Unwirklichkeit der Städte'.<sup>5</sup> In all of these studies, the actual specificity and physicality of the streets and buildings as

they are described in literary texts is rarely a central concern.

I will be paying a great deal of attention to the portrayal of the urban environment in the novels. It should, after all, not be forgotten that the spaces of the city constitute the areas in which social relations - whether they be at work, in private, between the sexes, or in the public realm at large - are played out. The importance of the spaces themselves should be acknowledged and the way in which they influence the behaviour of the protagonists analysed. Furthermore, architecture and the urban physical environment serve as links between the three main elements of this thesis (the literary analysis, the historicity of the subject matter and *Neue Sachlichkeit*). As mentioned above, the physicality of Berlin in the novels is inseparable from the actual physicality of Berlin in the late 1920s and early 1930s; mass cultural venues, shops, streets, train stations etc. are all accurately described, often in great detail, by and large even using their real names. Moreover, architecture constitutes the point of intersection where *Neue Sachlichkeit* as an artistic style and *Neue Sachlichkeit* as a social and economic ideology overlap. Here, notions of aesthetics and design found their expression not only in the actual concrete and stone to which thousands of *Angestellten* in Weimar Berlin were exposed, but also in the description of the physical environment in which the protagonists of the novels move. In other words, one of the more useful ways that we can attempt to make the broader connections between literature, history and culture is via the analysis of the urban environment, and architecture in particular.

This has, of course, been an avenue of enquiry more associated with 19th century literature, particularly with Baudelaire's Paris, when the progressive yet destructive forces of modern society were making themselves so apparent for the first time. Berlin in the

1920s was itself being radically recast by these forces (see chapter one) and it therefore seems legitimate to pursue this line of enquiry. (It is probably no coincidence that Walter Benjamin, the first to explore the urbanism of Baudelaire's poetry, was a product of 1920s Berlin.)

The thesis is therefore by no means exclusively literary in its aims. It claims to be neither a general survey of Weimar literature, nor an exhaustive, detailed literary analysis of Fallada's, Kästner's and Keun's novels. Rather it seeks to address the relationship between the novels and the society and culture of Weimar Berlin. More specifically, the thesis asks a) how and why the protagonists of the novels experience their everyday world as they do, as based on a textual analysis, b) how and why their experiences may be seen to be representative of *Angestellten* groups in Weimar Berlin and c) how and why we can justify the linking of these novels and the issues which they raise to that whole socio-cultural complex known as *Neue Sachlichkeit*.

Of course, there are a whole number of novels of the day which are set in Berlin and which are concerned with changes in the *Angestellten* work environment and with the corresponding advent of mass culture in the city of Berlin.<sup>6</sup> I have chosen to discuss only Fallada's, Kästner's and Keun's novels for a number of reasons. First, both Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? and Fabian are relatively well-known in the English speaking world and widely accessible.<sup>7</sup> While Irmgard Keun's novel is less well-known, it has often been discussed in connection with Fallada's and Kästner's novels in secondary literature in German, linked either by the notion of *Neue Sachlichkeit Romane* or *Angestelltenromane* (see chapter two). Secondly, the three novels provide a salutary balance in their depiction of male and female responses to the everyday world of the commercial *Angestellte*. However, I should perhaps point out that although gender distinctions in response to the everyday world of work

and leisure will be a recurring theme in the thesis, I will not be concentrating on one gender at the expense of the other. Nor do I wish to address solely gender issues. Rather gender distinctions will be simply elucidated and commented upon as they arise in the study; gender alone does not constitute one of my central concerns.

A third reason for choosing these novels concerns their literary status. As novels all three resist easy classification; they possess a rather ambiguous status somewhere between popular literature and reflective, critical literature. As texts, they are both close to, yet interrogative of, popular forms; they may at times sink to the level of an 'easy-reading' bestseller (indeed upon publication all three were immediate bestsellers), but they also engage in and construct a thoughtful, complex portrait of the times. They are clearly not on a par with the high modernism of the great Weimar novels such as Alfred Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz or Thomas Mann's Der Zauberberg, but they can nevertheless claim to be powerful portrayals of the tensions of modernity in Weimar Berlin.

The novels, then, deal with the grim world of the everyday, an everyday which thousands of people had to cope with in Berlin at the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s. An analysis of these novels, of the institutions which feature in them and of the plight of the protagonists in the face of the practical everyday world, reveals a nexus of social and economic phenomena which can be traced in and to historical developments of the day. Taken together, these three novels are worthy of investigation not only because of their literary quality, but also for their valuable insight into the historical circumstances of young white-collar workers in a major city during a turbulent time. They provide a literary portrayal of a specific time and place which are of deep historical, sociological and cultural interest.



The thesis opens with a historical overview of the rise of the white-collar workers and mass culture in Weimar Berlin. Chapters two, three and four focus on the novels themselves: on the thematic, linguistic and spatial depiction of the work spheres of the protagonists, their places of entertainment and their private and public lives. In the penultimate and final chapters, I return to the wider social and cultural context of the novels. Chapter five focuses on Curt Moreck's Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin, the contemporary guidebook which offers an illuminating picture of Weimar Berlin night life, the places to go and the kind of people to be found there. And chapter six focuses on the multi-faceted concept of *Neue Sachlichkeit*, the dominant cultural category of the time, and the extent to which the term can be used to describe the processes identified in the analysis of the novels and Curt Moreck's Führer.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BERLIN DURING THE WEIMAR REPUBLIC

#### THE RISE OF MASS CULTURE AND THE WHITE-COLLAR WORKERS

This chapter sketches some features of the socio-economic and cultural background which are essential to an understanding of the literary texts to be explored in the chapters which follow. Two areas in particular will be concentrated upon: the first involves changes and developments in the layout of the city of Berlin during the Weimar Republic. It will be seen that while new housing projects and industry moved to the outskirts of the city, the centre and the area around the Kurfürstendamm saw an increasing concentration of commercial enterprises, many of which were controlled by a small number of financial interests. The second topic of inquiry will be the rise of the *Angestellten* and their involvement with mass culture. As a group which saw both its numbers increase dramatically in the Weimar Republic and the structure of its employment change radically, it became particularly receptive to the advances of the new mass media. In respect of Fallada's, Kästner's and Keun's novels, these two areas, developments in the city and the rise of the *Angestellten*, provide useful contexts for understanding the circumstances of the fictional protagonists, Fabian, Pinneberg and Doris who will feature extensively in the chapters which follow. Like the characters of the novels, the (real) *Angestellten* of Weimar Berlin found themselves in radically modernized work environments in a city fascinated with mass culture.

It is easy to forget that greater Berlin was only created in April, 1920 when the *preussische Landtag* passed the *Gesetz über die Bildung der neuen Stadtgemeinde Berlin*.<sup>1</sup> What had up until then been eight towns, 59 village communities (*Landgemeinden*) and 27 estates

(*Gutsbezirke*) became one city with 20 boroughs (*Bezirke*) which continue to exist today. The new Gross-Berlin covered an area of 880 km<sup>2</sup> and brought together a population of nearly 3,9 million people making Berlin, literally overnight, the third most populated city in the world after New York and London. Elections to the first *Stadtverordnetenversammlung* were held in 1920 and 1921 which gave parties of the left a majority. Adolf Wermuth, who had been mayor of Berlin since 1912, became the first mayor of Greater Berlin, only to resign a few months later. In January 1921 he was replaced by Gustav Böss, who remained mayor until 1929 when he was forced to resign in the wake of financial scandals.

With thousands of people living in overcrowded and squalid tenement blocks after the war, and thousands more registered homeless, one of the most pressing and persistent problems for the new mayor and the new city was to introduce a comprehensive housing programme.

Berlin was notorious for its *Mietskasernen*, large rectangular blocks of housing built around a court yard with up to four *Hinterhöfe* (see fig. 1). These blocks had been built towards the end of the 19th century to accommodate Berlin's rapidly growing industrial population and the influx of people coming to the city from the country. In his study, Das steinerne Berlin, published in 1930, Werner Hegemann called the *Kaserne* a 'steinerne(r) Sarg' and noted:

[G]leichviel, ob die fehlenden Wohnungen gebaut werden oder nicht, die riesige Berliner Mietskaserne, welche uns Wille, Unwille oder Willenlosigkeit der preußischen Machthaber und ihrer Bürokratie hinterließen, wird auf fast unabsehbare Zeiten die Wohnform bleiben, der sich die Masse des deutschen Volkes und Geisteslebens unweigerlich unterwerfen muß und von der uns nur lange Kämpfe frei machen können.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, by the end of the Twenties, thousands of people still lived in

the *Mietskasernen*, but a total of 100 000 new homes had been built in the city. Much of the building of Berlin's new *Siedlungen* was carried out by co-operatives and other non-profit-making organizations who received their money mainly from a 15% rent tax (*Hauszinssteuer*) introduced in 1924 across Germany.<sup>3</sup> One such organization was the GEHAG (*Gemeinnützige Heimstätten-Spar-und-Bau A.G.*) established in 1924 under Martin Wagner with Bruno Taut as the chief architect and financed by the trade unions. One of the largest developments undertaken by Wagner and Taut at this time was the Britz estate to the south east of Berlin. The project was one of the first in Germany to use lifting machines, earth-moving equipment and a rationalized division of labour, methods which Wagner had studied on a trip to America before the project was started. The estate consisted of 1480 GEHAG dwellings, with a further 1329 built by other societies, and came to be known as the *Hufeisensiedlung* after its shape (see fig. 2).

Three other large housing developments were built in Weimar Berlin; Onkel-Toms-Hütte in Zehlendorf consisting of 1601 dwellings, the Weiße Stadt in Reinickendorf and Siemensstadt to the north west of the city. Many of the Berlin avant-garde architects worked on the latter including Hans Scharoun, Walter Gropius, Hugo Häring, Fred Forbat, Otto Bartning and Paul Rudolf Henning.<sup>4</sup> The majority of the *Siedlungen* were built in open green spaces towards the outskirts of the city:

Nearly all these buildings had the flat roofs that in those days were considered (quite *unfunctionally*) as a necessary gesture against the more reactionary architects, but they were characterized above all by their social aspects. The first was low rents, entailing a continual concern with economy both of plan and of building methods. Light, air and open space came next, with big inner gardens and generous provision of balconies. Finally there were the communal washhouses and other shared services.<sup>5</sup>

While much importance has been accorded in Weimar history to the social visions and stylistic innovations which informed the designs of the architects for these buildings, it should not be forgotten that the shortage in housing remained a constant problem throughout the Twenties. In 1929 Martin Wagner still lamented:

Die Stadt Berlin ist bis heute über eine Jahresproduktion von rund 20000 Wohnungen noch nicht hinausgekommen. [...] Den objektiven Fehlbedarf schätze ich zur Zeit in Berlin auf rund 200 000 Wohnungen. Wenn wir diesen Fehlbedarf und den jährlich neu hinzutretenden Bedarf ausgleichen wollen, dann müßten wir innerhin noch 70 000 Wohnungen jährlich bauen, um in zehn Jahren die Wohnungsnot in Berlin zu beseitigen.<sup>6</sup>

Siemensstadt was built for the employees of the Siemens electrical firm by the company's own building society. Siemens was one of Berlin's flagship industries. Situated to the north west of Berlin, the company employed approximately 100 000 workers. The two other flagship industries were AEG, another large electrical firm mainly concentrated in Wedding in the north of the city, and OSRAM, one of the world's leading light bulb producers. But it was not only in the electrical industry that Berlin could claim importance. In a 1928 guide to Berlin it was noted:

Auch die deutsche Maschinenindustrie hat eines ihrer Haupt-Zentren in Berlin. Namen wie Schwartzkopff, Barmag, Borsig, Putsch, Orenstein, and Koppel, um nur die ganz Großen zu nennen, beweisen dies. Dazu kommen große Unternehmungen der chemischen Industrie, der optischen Industrie, der Automobilfabrikation, der Metallverarbeitung, der Textil und Lederverarbeitung, der Brauindustrie und vieler anderen Gewerbe.<sup>7</sup>

By the 1920s production processes in German industry had become heavily influenced by rationalization, and Berlin was considered to be the city in which those processes were the most developed,

particularly in its electrical industry.<sup>69</sup> Rationalization as a concept appears time and time again in studies of the history of the Weimar Republic (and, as we shall see in the second section of this chapter, it was also important in shaping the structure of *Angestellten* employment). As a broad and rather elusive term, rationalization was invoked in the context of industry, the economy, the media, art and design, gender relations and sexuality, housing and house-keeping.<sup>70</sup> It would perhaps be wise here briefly to outline what rationalization actually entailed, both the visions it inspired in various groups involved in industry and the consequences of its implementation on parts of the workforce.

The term 'rationalization' was a vague one, describing a vast range of work processes, but its roots were clearly to be located in America.<sup>71</sup> America was, of course, the economic success story of the 1920s with its booming economy and seemingly harmonious workforce. German industrialists, entrepreneurs, Social Democratic trade unionists, engineers, and workers all analysed the successes of the American economy in an effort to find a model for creating their own visions of Germany:

German admiration was not for America's attainment of success per se. Rather it was for success attained by means of rationalization, to use the German term, or efficiency, to employ the American one. As one perceptive Weimar commentator noted,

It is no accident that the word rationalization is without exception linked to the expression "Americanization" in the European literature. The United States of North America is without doubt the basic "ideal" of the rationalization of production, its exemplary embodiment, even if this "ideal" is unattainable for Europe.<sup>72</sup>

There was, it seems, general agreement among the German groups as to what rationalization entailed. At the factory level, it meant changes to work processes which would bring about an increase in productivity and a reduction in costs. It entailed the adoption of the time and motion work methods which had first been developed by the American, Frederick Taylor and which Detlev Peukert nicely summarizes as follows:

Working processes were analysed scientifically, subdivided into separate operations and subjected to time checks, so that wages could be calculated by reference to the most efficient performance of standardized tasks.

Peukert continues his argument by invoking new labour- and time-saving forms of investment which had been developed by the American, Henry Ford:

the introduction of new manufacturing methods based on high technology, as in the chemical industry; the replacement of manual operations by machine tools; and assembly-line mass production, in which work processes were subdivided into separate tasks performed at a determined speed.<sup>12</sup>

The benefits of rationalization were, however, perceived very differently from group to group. Industrialists recognized the possibility of increasing their profits through more efficient production, but they were not interested in adopting American work methods, such as Fordism, wholesale; higher wages for workers were neither desirable nor feasible.<sup>13</sup>

While industrialists seemed most concerned with their profits, the entrepreneurs of the new chemical and electrical industries concentrated on integrating workers economically and securing the co-operation of the workers' organizations in such a way that production

could be carried out in a conflict-free environment. The entrepreneurs associated rationalization with social engineering; a process through which 'pragmatic supervision by social engineers would reconcile competing special interests'.<sup>14</sup>

It was the Social Democrats who saw in processes of rationalization the greatest promise for the future. They saw it as the motive force which would inspire a new society in which technological progress would become a vehicle for social reform.<sup>15</sup> It was hoped rationalization would bring about a society in which the worker embraced the idea of productivity and restructured his or her life beyond the workplace in a disciplined, ordered and efficient way, thus creating a society in which social peace prevailed. Fordism was seen as the best way to create the conditions for such a society. The Social Democrats hoped to be able to increase wages and lower costs through the reorganization of production, which would stimulate demand for consumer products producing high profits and generating more capital for restructuring, which, in turn, would lower costs and increase real wages still further.

Rationalization had, then, no clear cut political boundaries. It was not the case that it was embraced by some (political) groups and rejected by others. All sides envisaged that they and their interests would, in some way, benefit from rationalization. As Detlev Peukert has noted:

This utilitarian faith in the power of science to solve social problems was evident in all areas of society. At one extreme was the pro-business propaganda put out by the German Institute for Technical Work Training; at another was Ernst Jünger's literary invocation of the dawning technological world of "the worker", or the vision of the unification of heart, brain and hand within the "great machine" in Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis*. But these fantasies of socio-technological omnipotence were dispelled even before the onset of the



great world depression. The divisions within social reality saw to that; persisting conflicts of interest could not be simply wished away.<sup>16</sup>

The reality of rationalization for members of the workforce was a far cry from these utopian visions. Although the extent to which industry and the economy were rationalized varied from sector to sector, rationalization did change the structure of many jobs and hence also many workers' experience and perception of them. Peukert argues that the increasing division of labour created a severely segmented labour force in which solidarity between members (skilled - unskilled, casually employed - regularly employed, old - young, even male - female) became increasingly difficult to establish. He mentions the marginalization of a section of the German working class caused by a growing pool of structural unemployment, and the effects of the introduction of new machinery which could change the structure of a job in such a way that what previously had been skilled labour became unskilled. Although rationalization did create a number of new jobs, particularly in the white-collar areas of management and administration, Peukert concludes:

rationalization in no sense ushered in a well-ordered world of high productivity and social engineering. Automated methods of production and the pursuit of higher profits often led to a more rapid rate of human attrition. Higher productivity created higher unemployment and a consequent waste of human resources. Vistas of rational micro- and macro-economic control dimmed as the insistent realities of bureaucratic market mechanisms and irreconcilable social conflicts of interest asserted themselves.<sup>17</sup>

It is important to keep this fact in mind when considering the implications of rationalization for Weimar society and culture in general. From the introduction of scientific work methods in industry

to the utopian visions of the designers in the Bauhaus, rationalization, in one form or another, informed people's visions and ideologies, although they were not necessarily compatible with one another, and did not necessarily materialize to any significant degree. The reality of rationalization for the workforce was generally something very different from that which groups had hoped rationalization would call into being.

In Berlin, most of the larger industries had by the 1920s moved to the outskirts of the city where the land was cheaper and the firms had room to expand.<sup>12</sup> This tendency, along with the tendency to build the new housing on the outskirts of the city, meant that large extensions to Berlin's public transport network and electrical grid were needed (see also fig. 42). By 1929 the Hochbahn and U-Bahn network had nearly doubled (see fig. 3) and the *Berliner Städtische Elektrizitätswerke AG* (Bewag) built two new power stations, one in Rummelsberg, completed in 1927, and one in the West, completed in 1930, both of which were celebrated as great engineering achievements.<sup>13</sup>

With most of the large factories on the outskirts of the city, and many smaller industries, such as textiles, still operating from the *Hinterhöfe* (particularly in Kreuzberg) as they had done before the war, the centre of the city was left to the banks, concentrated around Behrenstraße, the newspapers, in the *Zeitungsviertel*, the theatres and revues, the department stores around Leipziger Straße, the film industry to the south of Friedrichstraße, the Haute Couture scene at Hausvogteiplatz and the rapid commercial expansion around Kurfürstendamm and Tauentzienstraße with its premiere cinemas, numerous bars, cafés, dance halls and luxury shops (see map, fig. 61). In other words, while the city's periphery became Berlin's production site, the city centre became ever more associated with consumption, particularly mass consumption. Much has been written on the mass culture *per se* of

Weimar Berlin, but little attention has been paid to the buildings in which that mass culture was presented, and the types of people involved both in its dissemination and consumption.

The three large department stores, Wertheim, Tietz (fig. 4) and KaDeWe, which had existed before World War I, continued to expand in the Twenties, although KaDeWe (Kaufhaus des Westens) was taken over by Tietz in 1927. And in June, 1929, a new department store, Karstadt, opened on Hermannplatz in Neukölln (fig. 5).<sup>20</sup> However, it was the area around the Kurfürstendamm which saw a rapid expansion in shop developments. This phenomenon is described very well in a 1927 article which appeared in the *Vossische Zeitung*:

Die geschäftliche Hauptentwicklung zeigt der Kurfürstendamm, als ob geglaubt wird, daß nur in dieser Straße erfolgreich Geschäfte gemacht werden können. Gerade hier wollen alle Firmen von Bedeutung vertreten sein. Zwanzig Meter weiter, in einer Nebenstraße, kostet das Grundstück nur noch ein Drittel, weil höchstens für Büroräume verwertbar; der Laden in einem solchen Hause ist noch kaum ein Viertel soviel wert wie der an der Ecke.

Der Kurfürstendamm beginnt sozusagen am Wittenbergplatz und heißt in seinem ersten Teile Tauentzienstraße. Fast historisch schon geworden in der raschen Entwicklung sind hier die ersten Niederlassungen mancher Firmen aus der Innenstadt. So - neben dem Kaufhaus des Westens - viele Schuhläden, wie Salamander, Stiller, Leiser, dann die großen Juwelen- und Photographengeschäfte. Gegenüber dem KaDeWe Singers Nähmaschinenhaus und, durch hohe Lichtreklamen betont, eine Ullstein-Filiale, die jetzt ein neues Fassadenkleid bekommt. Ferner sind da zahlreiche andere Firmen, deren Stannahäuser in Stadtkern stehen, wie Ruhnke, Guthmann, Metzger, Arnold Müller, Bote & Bock, Resi- und Lichtenstein-Schirme u.a. [...]

Hinter der Joachimsthaler Straße der große Bau von Cords, gegenüber hat Tietz ein Haus, in dem sich aber noch Wohnungen befinden. Bis zur Uhlandstraße sieht man von Bekannten aus der Innenstadt noch Wertheim, Jacoby (Schuhe), Bette, Bud u. Lachmann, Ehlermann (Hüte), Kempinski und Filialen jener Firmen, die an vielen Stellen der Stadt Zweigniederlassungen haben und Tabak, Schokolade, Tee, Strümpfe,

Korsetts, Duftstoffe, Geschenkwaren usw. feilhalten. An der Uhlandstraße wird sich Rudolph Hertzog niederlassen, ferner Conrad Felsing (Uhren), Carl Salbach (Pelze). Die Bismarckstraße und der Kaiserdamm scheinen das Monopol der Autoniederlassungen zu verlieren, denn man findet jetzt am Kurfürstendamm Verkaufsstellen von Dixi, N.S.U., Wanderer, Mercedes, Opel, Ford, Fiat u.a.

Es fehlen im Westen also nur wenige der großen Firmen. G. Adam hat sich bereits ein Haus gesichert. Israel verhandelt ebenfalls, auch die Firma Gerson, die schon mehrere Niederlassungen dort hat, über die Einrichtung eines großen Zweigbetriebes.<sup>21</sup>

Interestingly, consumer durables, although available and obviously very visible in shops, had not yet made a huge impact on life in Weimar Germany. While irons and vacuum cleaners were popular and affordable (see figs 6 and 7), fridges, washing machines and cars remained luxuries few could afford. The extension of the power grid in 1927 meant that by 1928 over 50% of households had electricity (compared to 27% in 1925). And in 1926 Bewag had introduced an instalment-payment scheme called *Elektrissima* which led to a small boom in the purchase of household electrical appliances.<sup>22</sup> Berlin boasted the highest number of radio and telephone subscribers in the Republic with 600 000 registered *Rundfunkteilnehmern* and nearly ½ million telephone lines in 1928.<sup>23</sup>

While it was generally only the wealthy who could buy consumer durables, a larger proportion of the population could afford the magazines, films, dance music, revues and fashion which constituted the bulk of Berlin's mass culture. It is interesting to note here the extent to which certain areas of that mass culture were controlled by a few financial interests.

The economic power of the Berlin publishing world was largely in the hands of three publishing houses; Mosse (Jerusalamer

Straße 46-49, see figs 8 and 9), Ullstein (Kochstraße / Ecke Charlottenstraße) and Scherl (Jerusalamer Straße / Ecke Zimmerstraße, see map, fig. 61). Between them, they published 2633 different newspapers and magazines.<sup>24</sup> In Berlin alone 147 daily newspapers were published, several having three editions a day. However, only 26 had a circulation of over 100 000 copies and 70 were local *Stadtbezirk* newspapers. The largest selling daily was the Berliner Morgenpost published by Ullstein with a circulation of 623 000 in 1930.<sup>25</sup>

Many new illustrated journals became popular such as Ullstein's fashion magazine Die Dame, the science journal Die Korymbelle, the satirical journal Uhu and the more intellectual Querschnitt. Advertisements were a significant feature of these magazines, and women were particularly targeted.

Scherl had been taken over by the infamous Alfred Hugenberg in 1916 when he was also the director of Krupp. By the end of the Twenties Hugenberg was not only leader of the extreme right-wing DNVP (*Deutschnationale Volkspartei*) but he also controlled a huge media empire consisting of the Scherl house, the Telegraphen-Union (which supplied over 1600 provincial newspapers with reportage and material in matrix form) and Germany's largest film company, Ufa. Ufa produced not only most of Germany's films but it also controlled numerous cinemas such as the premiere cinemas Gloria-Palast, Ufa-Palast am Zoo, Ufa-Theater am Kurfürstendamm and Universum (fig. 10).<sup>26</sup>

Like the new shops, the new cinemas were concentrated on the Kurfürstendamm, particularly around the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche. Most, as has been mentioned, belonged to Ufa. Other important premiere cinemas in the area were the Marmorhaus, Union-Palast and the Capitol (fig. 11). Many of the new cinemas could seat over 1000 people and little expense was spared in their decoration, furnishing and fittings,

regardless of the style in which they were built. Perhaps the most extreme example was the Gloria-Palast (fig. 12). The cinema was situated in a converted apartment block which had originally been built in 1895 in a Romanesque style. Converting the building to a cinema required the complete rebuilding of the interior. While the exterior was left in its Romanesque style, the interior was built in an elegant Baroque style. In a 1926 article the interior of the cinema was described as follows:

In den Farben unaufdringlich Gold, sehr viel warmes Rot, - weiches Licht, von goldgelben Flächen unterstützt und Nilgrün also ausgleichendes Farbmoment. Das Licht sehr reich, aber nicht grell. Alles auf Feststimmung gestellt, so etwa die Danastsessel der Bestuhlung, der dunkelrote Sammet des Bühnenvorhanges, die prächtigen Lüster, Blumen vor facetierten [sic] Spiegeln, Marmortreppen und -säulen, bordeauxfarbener Bodenbelag, schwere echte Teppiche.<sup>27</sup>

One of the most famous mass cultural establishments of the day was the Luna-Park situated at the lower end of the Kurfürstendamm near Halensee (fig. 13). The park was Europe's most technically advanced pleasure park with 'eine Berg- und Talbahn, [...] eine Geisterbahn, eine Rennbahn für Kleinautos [und] eine Wasserrutschbahn'<sup>28</sup> and in 1927 a swimming pool with a wave machine was added. The park also catered for sports and dance events. It was here that the boxer Max Schmeling won his German light-heavyweight title in 1926.

Luna-Park had originally been a café belonging to Aschinger who sold it in 1910 to a man named Bernhard Hoffmann, a former chef in a Kempinski restaurant. In the Twenties, Kempinski and Aschinger were still the two giants of Berlin gastronomy. In a 1928 guide to Berlin, Kempinski's and Aschinger's hold on the catering business was described in the following terms:

Auch in der Hotellerie und in Gaststättenwesen sind derartige Konzentrationstendenzen wirksam gewesen, und eigenartigerweise haben nicht die Unternehmungen des Luxusbedarfs die Grundlage für diese Konzernbildung abgegeben, sondern die Betriebe des breiten Massenkonsums und der bürgerlichen Bedarfsbefriedigung; Aschinger und Kempinski sind heute die stärksten Potenzen in Berliner Gastwirts-gewerbe.<sup>29</sup>

Aschinger's restaurants were a well established Berlin tradition, renowned for their inexpensive food. In 1928 the chain owned at least 23 restaurants, 15 *Konditoreien* as well as many other restaurants run under other names, mainly concentrated in the centre of the city (around Friedrichstraße and Potsdamer Platz, see fig. 14 and the map, fig. 61).

Berthold Kempinski was claimed to have initiated the 'Sozialisierung des Luxus' in that both the famous and the general public could be found in his restaurants.<sup>30</sup> The restaurants were often large and decorated in an elegant and luxurious fashion. In 1926, for example, a Kempinski restaurant was opened on the Kurfürstendamm:

Steht diese auch in räumlicher Ausdehnung hinter dem Stammhaus zurück, so besitzt sie vor diesem den Vorzug, aus einem Guß entstanden zu sein und in ihrer vornehm luxuriösen Ausstattung durch alle Räume hindurch ein einheitliches Gepräge zu besitzen.<sup>31</sup>

Food could be bought as half portions at half price giving less rich customers the chance to enjoy the surroundings in return for modest financial outlay. Smaller, more intimate rooms were included in the restaurant for the richer customers, but much of the charm of the place for the rich and famous was to sit in the main rooms with the general public.<sup>32</sup>

One of the most famous Kempinski establishments, which Ufa also had a stake in until 1927, was the Haus Vaterland near Potsdamer

Platz. In Haus Vaterland various restaurants were situated in rooms which had regional themes such as a Wild-West-Bar, a Turkish café, a Bavarian beer hall and a Rheinterrasse which had a huge wall painting of the Rhine and half-hourly thunder storm simulations (see figs 15 and 16).<sup>33</sup>

It was not uncommon during the Twenties to build what could be termed mass cultural complexes, often with a predilection for technical gadgetery, utilitarian design and American themes. Built in 1928 and situated in Hardenbergstraße not far from the Gloria-Palast, Haus Gourmenia, for example, was a building which housed the wine bar Traube, the Café Berlin, the Dachgarten Berlin and the beer hall Stadt Pilsen. The Stadt Pilsen had an American Buffet, the wine bar Traube had an indoor subtropical garden and the Dachgarten had a glass roof that could be opened and closed with the push of a button. Europahaus near the Anhalter Bahnhof was a similar development, housing the Café Europahaus, the Europa-Spiegelsaal, the Europa-Pavillon, the Europa-Dachgarten and the Theater im Europahaus.<sup>34</sup>

During the Twenties, then, there was an unprecedented amount of commercial development in the centre of the city, particularly around the Kurfürstendamm, and much of it in the financial hands of a few. While several of the shops, cafés and restaurants would have been catering to a specific, select audience, the vast majority of the establishments needed a mass clientele. So who were the people likely to enter and make use of these places and why?

### The Angestellten

In his famous study of the white-collar workers, Siegfried Kracauer remarked:

Sombert hat einmal bemerkt, daß unsere großen deutschen Städte heute



keine Industriestädte, sondern Angestellten- und Beamtenstädte seien. Wenn das von einer Stadt gilt, so von Berlin. Hier ist der wirtschaftliche Prozeß, der die Angestelltenmassen aus sich herausgesetzt hat, am weitesten gediehen; hier finden die entscheidenden praktischen und ideologischen Auseinandersetzungen statt; hier wird besonders auffällig die Gestalt des öffentlichen Lebens von den Bedürfnissen der Angestellten und denen bestimmt, die ihrerseits diese Bedürfnisse bestimmen möchten. Berlin ist heute die Stadt der ausgesprochenen Angestelltenkultur; das heißt einer Kultur, die von Angestellten für Angestellte gemacht und von den meisten Angestellten für eine Kultur gehalten wird. Nur in Berlin, wo die Bindungen an Herkunft und Scholle so weit zurückgedrängt sind, daß das Weekend große Mode werden kann, ist die Wirklichkeit der Angestellten zu erfassen. Sie ist auch ein gut Teil von der Wirklichkeit Berlins.<sup>35</sup>

Contemporaries and historians have shown that among the social classes, the *Angestellten*, sometimes also called the new middle class, were the most attuned to mass culture. In her article 'Class consciousness and consumption: The new middle class during the Weimar Republic', Sandra Coyner has shown that white-collar workers generally spent more money than workers or traditional middle-class groups on adult-orientated and modern forms of social life such as entertainment, films, radio and magazines.<sup>36</sup> Generally, the middle classes spent more money on housing, clothing and education, and the workers spent more on food, alcohol and tobacco and were more involved with their own organizations, the trade unions, than they were with commercial mass culture. Perhaps one of the most apt symbols for the modern tastes of the *Angestellten* is the fact that they tended to smoke a new form of tobacco, cigarettes, while the workers tended to smoke loose tobacco and the traditional middle-classes retained a preference for cigars. In order to understand why the *Angestellten* were the most receptive to the advances of mass culture, one first has to understand their rise as a

social group.

The numbers of *Angestellten* (white-collar workers) saw a dramatic increase in the Weimar Republic and they were particularly well represented in Berlin. In 1929 there were 3.5 million *Angestellte* in Germany, 1.2 million of whom were women.<sup>37</sup> The white-collar workers were the fastest growing section of the workforce; between 1882 and 1925 the number of workers had not even doubled while the number of *Angestellten* had increased five times.<sup>38</sup> Half of the total number of *Angestellten* were to be found in commerce, banks and distribution while the other half were in various organizations and government authorities. Within these spheres, 2 1/4 million were commercial clerks while office workers, technicians and foremen each accounted for about 1/4 million.<sup>39</sup> The white-collar workers were, not surprisingly, concentrated in urban areas, where administrative and distributive functions tended to be located.

Kracauer gives the following reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of *Angestellten*:

Die Entwicklung zum modernen Großbetrieb bei gleichzeitiger Veränderung seiner Organisationsform; das Anschwellen des Verteilungsapparates; die Ausdehnung der Sozialversicherung und der großen Verbände, die das Kollektivleben zahlreicher Gruppen regeln - das alles hat, jedem Abbau zum Trotz, die Ziffern nach oben getrieben.

Rationalization played a major part in this process:

Der dialektische Umschlag der Quantität in die Qualität ist nicht ausgeblieben. Oder inhaltlich ausgedrückt; die Qualität ist in die Quantität umgeschlagen. Ursache dieses Umschlages ist die vielgenannte Rationalisierung. Seit der Kapitalismus besteht, ist innerhalb der ihm gezogenen Grenzen schon immer rationalisiert worden, aber die Rationalisierungsperiode 1925 bis 1928 bezeichnet doch einen besonders wichtigen Abschnitt. Sie hat das Eindringen der Maschine und der

Methoden des "fließenden Bandes" in die Angestelltensäle der Großbetriebe bewirkt. Durch diese nach amerikanischem Muster vorgenommene Umstellung - sie ist noch lange nicht abgeschlossen - erhalten große Teile der neuen Angestelltenmassen eine gegen früher herabgeminderte Funktion im Arbeitsprozeß. Es gibt heute un- und angelernte Angestellte in Menge, die eine mechanische Tätigkeit versehen. (In den seit kurzen entstandenen Einheitspreisgeschäften etwa werden die Obliegenheiten der Verkäuferin mechanisiert.) Aus den ehemaligen "Unteroffizieren des Kapitals" ist ein stattliches Heer geworden, das in seinen Reihen mehr und mehr Gemeine zählt, die untereinander austauschbar sind.<sup>40</sup>

Although rationalization had already started before the war, *Angestellten* had generally enjoyed a high profile in Wilhelmine Germany, either as *Beamten* or administrators in small and middle sized companies or skilled foremen. But the dramatic increase in the size of (new) industries over the war combined with the introduction of new machine technology and more efficient production methods saw extensive changes to the role of the *Angestellten*. In industry there was a greater demand for organization in distribution, planning, preparation and administration both on a technical and bureaucratic level. Much of the work carried out by commercial clerks and office employees became mechanized through new machinery (type-writers, adding machines, stenography machines etc.). Procedures that previously had needed skilled labour now became unskilled or semi-skilled as all that was required was a machine operator.

It is interesting to note here developments in the structure of male and female employment. Both contemporary commentators and historians have noted that these semi-skilled or unskilled jobs were often performed by women while men tended to move into new jobs involving organization, statistics and management.<sup>41</sup> Many reasons have been put forward for this development. First, the gendered division of

labour could already be found in the structure of educational training programmes which led to white-collar careers.<sup>42</sup> Men generally completed three year commercial apprenticeships involving the study of all aspects of business, while women generally completed a one year course at a commercial school in which basic typing and rudimentary office organization were learnt. Secondly, women were, it seems, more prepared to perform unskilled tasks because they did not necessarily perceive their job as a career and considered it rather as a bridge between leaving school and marriage.<sup>43</sup> Statistics show that in 1925 65% of women working in commerce and industry were under 25 and 94% were single.<sup>44</sup> Male chauvinism, however, also played a part in keeping women in low positions:

It is true that, due to marriage, women generally left their occupations earlier than men, but even so, the social stratification of the workplace was at the same time a stratification according to sex. Men generally possessed authority while women were typically subordinates. This circumstance offered "objective support" for the demands for special prestige pressed by commercial clerks, demands that reflected the traditional anti-feminist ideology of men. Proletarianization affected the whole class of salaried employees, of course, but especially as it advanced, so also did the desire of male employees to translate their positions and sex into a right to exercise some authority within the enterprise.<sup>45</sup>

This type of thinking was perhaps reflected in the fact that wage agreements between employers and trade unions set salaries for women 10% to 25% lower than those for men.<sup>46</sup>

Another group of *Angestellten* who were economically disadvantaged, but in a quite different way from the women, were older members of the workforce. Many older *Angestellten* found it difficult to achieve promotion or move to new companies because of their age. The

older and more experienced they were, the higher was the salary they could expect to receive. But rather than fulfil such legal obligations, companies often preferred to hire younger, cheaper labour and lay off older members.<sup>47</sup> In 1926 more than 40% of *Angestellten* going to the *Berliner Stellennachweis für Angestellte* were over 40 years of age.<sup>48</sup> Kracauer claims the whole working environment favoured the young to such a degree that older people would go to considerable lengths to appear youthful:

Der Andrang zu den vielen Schönheitssalons entspringt auch Existenzsorgen, der Gebrauch kosmetischer Erzeugnisse ist nicht inner ein Luxus. Aus Angst, als Altware aus dem Gebrauch zurückgezogen zu werden, färben sich Damen *und* Herren die Haare, und Vierziger treiben Sport, um sich schlank zu erhalten. "Wie werde ich schön?" lautet der Titel eines jüngst auf den Markt geworfenen Heftes, den die Zeitungsreklame nachsagt, daß es Mittel zeige, "durch die man für den Augenblick und für die Dauer jung und schön aussieht". Mode und Wirtschaft arbeiten sich in die Hand.<sup>49</sup>

In contemporary studies on the white-collar workers the question of their social identity became a hotly contested issue.<sup>50</sup> Was a new middle class in the making or were the *Angestellten* nothing more than glorified workers who would ultimately recognize their real status, unite with the workers and join the revolutionary cause? The debate revolved around the fact that while the conditions of *Angestellten* employment would, more often than not, align them with the status of a worker (they, like the workers, did not own the means of production nor did they have any control over capital), the *Angestellten* themselves perceived their societal status to be superior to that of the workers. Furthermore, they enjoyed certain legal benefits, handed down from the *Kaiserreich*, to which workers had no right. These included the right to sick leave, longer vacations, and longer notification of job

termination than the workers.<sup>51</sup>

Aside from the legal right to certain benefits, the self-perception of the *Angestellten* as above manual workers on the societal ladder seemed to derive from a number of sources. For example, some white-collar workers who had been employed before the war and whose jobs may have carried more responsibility and prestige than they did after rationalization would have been loath to relinquish notions of middle class status. For younger *Angestellten* great importance was attached to receiving a monthly salary, rather than an hourly wage. Office work was associated with clean work and *Kopfarbeit*, while factory work was associated with dirty work.<sup>52</sup> For many female *Angestellten* a certain glamour was attached to the work of secretaries and sales assistants. Being a sales assistant supposedly meant coming into contact with a better class of customer, forcing women to be smartly dressed, well spoken and well mannered.<sup>53</sup> Another important factor in the salaried employees' perception of their status could be found in their mediatory role between management and worker. Involved with the delegation of work, they would see themselves as being in contact with the management while the workers actually carried out the work.<sup>54</sup>

The white-collar workers' insistence on middle-class status led Marxist critics to claim they suffered from a 'false consciousness'. Hans Speier, a young contemporary of Kracauer, claims false consciousness was usually presented as:

a symptom of a general retrogression. Different tempos in the development of the relation of production and of the conceptions which human beings form of them created the possibility of "inadequate", historically obsolete thinking. Also, the tradition of a non-proletarian, middle-class past remained alive among the salaried employees, and thus prevented their recognition of the current social

situation. It was only a matter of time, however, before sociological enlightenment would illumine this situation darkened by wishes, memories, habits, and resentments.<sup>56</sup>

Other critics, Speier included, argue that there was more to false consciousness than just economic considerations and an out-of-step or behind-the-times mindset. For a start, there were among salaried employees themselves many different levels of social rank and prestige depending on their position within an organization's hierarchy; they were in no way a homogenous group. Speier, for example, agrees with the Marxist view that salaried employees were not working in their own interest, but he argues that the inability of the white-collar workers to recognize their real status was not so much due to 'false consciousness' as to 'masked class membership'.<sup>56</sup> He defines masked class membership as the condition whereby an *Angestellter* in a large organization found him/herself in the rather confusing position of being both, as he puts it, a capitalist and a proletarian.<sup>57</sup> Unless he or she was at the bottom of the organization's hierarchy, the white-collar worker had a certain amount of authority over those lower in the hierarchy, but was, at the same time, subjected to the authority of those immediately above:

The correspondent who is subordinate to and receives directives from the chief of his section also transmits them to the secretary who takes his dictation. For her he is the boss (and she frequently calls him that). She, in turn, may function as a superior to the messenger, as, for example, when she orders him to have the letters signed or to discreetly fetch her a glass of water from the fountain. The employee who calculates the cost of filling an order reports to the chief of the bureau of calculations. In large enterprises, especially in cases of mass production, it is possible to separate out the mere arithmetic aspects of the work and have them done (with the help of machines) by less qualified persons. In relation to them the calculator functions as superior, especially when mistakes are discovered. He does not

supervise the manager and the foremen, but they are nevertheless "forced to respect him, because he can - and even must - look into their cards", [...]

It is not at the hand of the capitalist, therefore, that many employees directly experience exploitation. Rather, it is at the hand of one another.<sup>50</sup>

This phenomenon of hidden class membership, Speier argues, produced a fetish for social distinction and engendered moral confusion because 'the less comprehensible the total fabric of social life, the more difficult it becomes to locate the individual who is responsible for mishaps'.<sup>51</sup> In other words, an employee's anger, for example, would be directed at those immediately above in the hierarchy, and not at those at the very top whom he or she has never seen. The employees were for the most part unable to see beyond their social position and recognize the character of their labour and the structure of the organization because they only knew about what immediately affected them personally. Speier concludes:

The lowly worker can choose either to criticize the discipline to which he is subjected or else to endow it with an ideology. He usually does the latter, for otherwise, instead of participating as a co-worker in the order which has seized him, he falls victim to loneliness.<sup>52</sup>

Kracauer advances similar theories to those of Speier, although he does not give them terms such as Speier's 'hidden class membership'. Like Speier, Kracauer recognizes the bitter competition between different types of *Angestellten* for rank and status, and their susceptibility to 'false consciousness'.<sup>53</sup> But Kracauer recognizes many other developments, particularly among commercial white-collar workers, which conditioned *Angestellten* mentality.

First, he notes the intense discrepancy between an ever more



rationalized work environment and a workforce conditioned by notions of the importance of personality and 'Berufsfreude'.<sup>62</sup> While the actual demands of a job became increasingly monotonous and standardized, and the need for them determined solely by commercial considerations, employers emphasized the importance of personality by introducing psychological character tests before interviews, stressing the need to be 'nett und freundlich', favouring good looks, appealing to staff loyalty and organizing non-work related events such as sports teams and social evenings.<sup>63</sup>

Secondly, Kracauer recognizes the extreme dependency of the *Angestellten* on mass culture for their orientation. He claims the employees' need for diversion, or *Zerstreuung*, came about through the absence of a coherent class culture. Calling the *Angestellten* 'geistig obdachlos', he notes:

Zu den Genossen kann sie vorläufig nicht hinfinden, und das Haus der bürgerlichen Begriffe und Gefühle, das sie bewohnt hat, ist eingestürzt, weil ihm durch die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung die Fundamente entzogen worden sind. Sie lebt gegenwärtig ohne eine Lehre, zu der sie aufblicken, ohne ein Ziel, das sie erfragen könnte. Also lebt sie in Furcht davor, aufzublicken und sich bis zum Ende durchzufragen. Nichts kennzeichnet so sehr dieses Leben, das nur in eingeschränktem Sinne Leben heißen darf, als die Art und Weise, in der ihm das Höhere erscheint. Es ist ihm nicht Gehalt, sondern Glanz. Es ergibt sich ihm nicht durch Sammlung, sondern in der Zerstreuung.<sup>64</sup>

Changes in the structure of work had created the necessary conditions for white-collar fascination with mass culture. Not only did the cult of good looks in the workplace encourage *Angestellten* to experiment with new cosmetic products which promised youth and beauty, but the boredom of their workday also sent them seeking 'Zerstreuung' in the evenings:

Je mehr die Monotonie den Werktag beherrsht, desto mehr muß der Feierabend aus seiner Nähe entfernen; vorausgesetzt, daß die Aufmerksamkeit von den Hintergründen des Produktionsprozesses abgelenkt werden soll. Der genaue Gegensatz gegen die Büromaschine aber ist die farbenprächtige Welt. Nicht die Welt, wie sie ist, sondern wie sie in den Schlagern erscheint. Eine Welt, die bis in den letzten Winkel hinein wie mit einem Vakuumreiniger vom Staub des Alltags gesäubert ist. Die Geographie der Obdachlosenasyile ist aus dem Schlager geboren.<sup>66</sup>

Thirdly, a defining characteristic of the *Angestellten* is their administrative and representative function. Many *Angestellten*, particularly those working in commercial areas, provided the interface between the workplace and the world outside. White-collar workers such as shop assistants, salesmen and receptionists were the public representatives of their workplace, and, as has been noted above, were expected to cultivate good manners and speech when dealing with their customers; like the products they sold, they too were on display. Even though for the most part they could not afford the products they sold, they nevertheless felt the need to take part in the higher life which they pushed during the day:

die Ein- und Verkäufer in der Konfektion und wohl auch in den Luxusgeschäften [...] haben den begreiflichen Hang, sich selber die Eleganz zu leisten, die sie fortwährend vermitteln, und leben außerdem des Kontakts mit der Kundschaft wegen gern in die Nacht hinein.<sup>66</sup>

The *Angestellten*, then, perhaps more than any other group in the Weimar Republic, found themselves exposed to new forces both in the work sphere and in, to use Horkheimer's and Adorno's term, the culture industry.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, Peukert has called the group 'largely a *tabula rasa* on which the effects of the process of modernization were being

particularly vividly imprinted'.<sup>13</sup> Rationalization had called into being a miscellaneous group which had no common group identity nor coherent work environment, but which found a certain kind of expression and orientation in mass culture. And so as the *Angestellten* became more and more visible in the cities, so did the mass cultural establishments which were more than happy to provide them with the 'farbenprächtige Welt' they so desired. The illusion of escape was not only to be found in the content of the mass culture, in the words of the hit songs, or the messages of the films, magazine stories or advertisements. It also became visible in the layout of the city, in the concentration of shops, cinemas and dance halls along a few streets, and in the furnishings of the buildings in which those films were watched and hit songs were heard.

These new social forces and the need of members of the *Angestellten* group to find a corporate identity will be recurring themes in the following literary analysis of Fallada's, Kästner's and Keun's novels. Many of the characters, including the protagonists, are exposed to work environments in the process of or influenced by rationalization. Many rely on the new mass cultural venues as an escape from their monotonous workday; the venues are areas in which to seek excitement, a rich lover maybe or, particularly if unemployed, an antidote to their own misery and loneliness.

As we shall see, while the protagonists' own perception of their situation may not be as insightful as Kracauer's or Speier's, they nevertheless express, in a number of ways, their sense of distress, emptiness and exploitation. Where the novels go beyond the parameters of Kracauer's socio-cultural analysis is in their ability, as works of imaginative creation, to record with sympathy, understanding, irony and humour the protagonists' attempts to understand, control and make sense

of their often brutal urban environment.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NOVELS: WORK, LEISURE AND RELATIONSHIPS

The aim of this chapter is to provide a broad overview of Fallada's Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, Kästner's Fabian and Keun's Das Kunstseidene Mädchen. After giving a brief resumé of the secondary literature on them, their titles, openings and endings will be considered, followed by a preliminary analysis of some of the more striking thematic similarities between the texts. These similarities concern chiefly the depiction of the workplace, the private sphere and perceptions of sexuality. It will be argued that although the novels are essentially concerned with the individual experience of their protagonists, the social world surrounding them plays a highly important role in shaping their 'destinies', a role that cannot be described as mere background to the human foreground. This social world consists predominantly of commercially orientated forces which can be located in 'modern' areas of work and entertainment (such as department stores, advertising agencies, night clubs, cafés etc.). However, these forces are by no means confined to the outward sphere; rather they penetrate all areas of the protagonists' lives in subtle, concealed ways. How those forces shape the lives of the characters is the subject of chapters three and four, where I will look in greater detail at the role of language and the depiction of space in the novels.

As mentioned in the introduction, all the protagonists are *Angestellten* living in Berlin towards the end of the Weimar Republic. They are all employed in essentially modern organizations (department stores, advertising agencies, typing pools), and all three are made unemployed in the course of the novels. All are young, and only Pinneberg is married. The time span covered in the novels is short.

There is little sense of temporal continuity, of the characters emerging from a particular tradition or way of life - still less of their having clear-cut aims for the future. There is, rather, an overriding feeling of time locked in the present, with the characters neither looking forward nor back.

Much secondary literature has, of course, been written on these texts, ranging from monographs on the individual authors to studies on the literary genres in which the novels are generally placed. In the context of the thesis, it is perhaps particularly important to give a brief overview of the latter. *Angestelltenromane*, *Neue Sachlichkeit Romane*, *Krisenromane* or *Zeitromane* are the genres most frequently associated with these texts.

Research into the novels as *Angestelltenromane* has been quite diverse, largely because scholars have varying expectations of *Angestelltenliteratur*. For example, in her "Winzige Katastrophen", Marion Heister asks whether authors of so-called *Angestelltenromane* can make their novels interesting and readable, 'ohne die offenkundige Tristesse des Gegenstandes durch reizstiftende Gestaltungsmittel künstlich ästhetisch anzureichern und Angestelltenarbeit dadurch u. U. zu verklären'. Heister is concerned with the 'Schreibweise' of the novels and is only interested in whether an author can mediate stylistically a sense of the monotony of working life. She argues that an author must succeed in this if the novel is to be critical of its subject matter. She only discusses Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? and Martin Kessel's Herrn Brechers Fiasko from the Weimar period. Fabian and Das kunstseidene Mädchen are excluded because little emphasis is placed on the actual depiction of *Angestelltenarbeit*. Heister constructs certain aesthetic conditions which the novels must fulfil in order to be termed 'critical'. Unfortunately, Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? fails to meet any of her criteria

and she concludes:

Die auf dramatische Höhepunkte hin gestaltete Erzählstrategie ist wenig geeignet, tatsächlich langwierigen und langweiligen Vorgängen realitätsgetreu Ausdruck zu verleihen. Dieser Mangel wird besonders deutlich dort, wo Pinnebergs Arbeitsalltag beschrieben wird. Auch hier greift der Erzähler signifikante Situationen heraus und spart die Schilderung der zähen Kontinuität ganzer beliebiger Arbeitstage und -wochen aus. Die Situationen werden zwar recht detailliert beschrieben, aber da es sich allemal um untypische, nicht durchschnittliche Situationen handelt, erfährt der Leser über den normalen Arbeitsalltag des Angestellten nicht viel.<sup>2</sup>

In contrast, Christa Jordan chooses to include Das Kunstseidene Mädchen along with Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? in her Zwischen Zerstreuung und Berausung but to exclude Fabian.<sup>3</sup> As an intellectual, Fabian cannot, according to Jordan, be considered a typical *Angestellter* and therefore should not be included in an analysis of *Angestelltenliteratur*. Jordan offers a more historical interpretation of the novels, paying attention to the role played by language and style in representing and reflecting upon situations in which the actual white-collar workers of Weimar Berlin also found themselves. She opens her study with an overview of contemporary sociological studies of the *Angestellten* by Siegfried Kracauer, Hans Speier, Carl Dreyfus and Ernst Bloch. She then goes on to discuss a number of Weimar novels separately. Although much of Jordan's interpretation of Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen is insightful, she is nevertheless reluctant to draw any far reaching historical conclusions from it. For the most part she is happy to state whether or not the novels 'erhellen' aspects of the sociology of the *Angestellten* as described by contemporaries.

As mentioned in the introduction, I will be paying greater attention to *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the final chapter where I will also

comment in more detail on the secondary literature. Let it suffice to say here that there are chiefly two tendencies in the research on these novels as *Neue Sachlichkeit Romane*. The first places more emphasis on stylistic differences between post-1924 literature and Expressionist literature. And the second places more importance on the ideological orientation of the novels within the social and political sphere of the day. The work of Volker Klotz has been important in establishing the former of the two tendencies, and the work of Helmut Lethen the latter. In his 'Forcierte Prosa', for example, Klotz argues that Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen can be seen as typical *Neue Sachlichkeit* novels in which both the content and style are clearly distinct and distanced from earlier Expressionist prose.<sup>4</sup> For Helmut Lethen, on the other hand, *Neue Sachlichkeit* refers to a widespread political and economic ideology of the day characterized by a desire to mitigate social conflict through greater cooperation between workers and managers. However, the ensuing careful reorganization of society, Lethen argues, only concealed ruling class interests. For Lethen, novels such as Fabian and Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? fail to relinquish their blind faith in such an ideology even though both novels were written after 1929, when the hopes associated with rationalization had been dashed by the Wall Street Crash and the onset of the Depression.<sup>5</sup>

It is interesting to note that the novels have rarely been included in studies concerned with the literary representation of Berlin in the inter-war years. As I mentioned in the introduction (see above, pp.12-13), the majority of studies on the literature of Weimar Berlin tend to focus on *Berliner Tempo*, on the 'imagined' city or on the city created out of the mass media's exploitation of imagined realms. It is perhaps the so-called *Berliner Tempo* which is accorded the most importance in these studies, with literary scholars tending either to



accept tempo as a historical fact or to dispute that it ever existed. For example, in his 'Symphony and Jungle-noises' Philip Brady refers to *Berliner Tempo* broadly; 'Berlin - the point was made - lived in the present, a vivid present compounded not least of endless movement, of that much-invoked "Berliner Tempo"'.<sup>6</sup> Brady uses the notion of *Berliner Tempo* to approach the work of a number of disparate writers. He is less concerned with *Berliner Tempo* as a historical reality than he is with writers' strategies for coping with tempo. He asks how writers rose to the creative challenge of representing the Berlin to which they were exposed:

It is perhaps possible to bring the variety of responses to the tempo of Berlin into sharper focus by seeing them as modes of remaining on the "qui vive". It might indeed be said of the late 1920s that, as Berlin grew larger, noisier, more frantic, writers seemed to develop more strategies for coping with it. The result is differing distances from the turmoil, differing kinds of dual focus.<sup>7</sup>

Erhard Schütz, however, claims that the whole notion of *Berliner Tempo* is questionable and argues that the fascination with tempo on the part of a small group of Weimar writers has created and fuelled this central myth of Weimar Berlin:

Speed, or "tempo", is in fact *the* central conception Berlin has of itself in the Weimar Republic. Tempo is an article of faith created mainly by the "fast" media: the large newspapers and magazines, and later on the movies and radio, for all of which Berlin served as economic and institutional center. In literature, the Berlin myth was created in poetry and song, in short stories and literary essays, reports and brief accounts, anecdotes, pamphlets, programs, commentaries, and polemics. Such fast, modern texts added details and gloss to the image of Berlin as the metropolis of speed.<sup>8</sup>

The novels that concern me have rarely been included in such studies probably because they fail stylistically to register *Berliner Tempo* to any significant extent. Brady's essay is, in fact, one of the few which includes Fabian in its analysis.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, it is quite remarkable how often the novels have been quoted particularly in non-literary studies which are concerned with the appearance of certain architecture of the period. This has no doubt to do with the frequent passages particularly in Das Kunstseidene Mädchen and Fabian which describe street scenes and especially mass cultural venues in some detail. For example, in his Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste, Knud Wolffram quotes descriptions of the interiors of dance halls from both Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, Michael Bienert and Karl-Heinz Metzger quote street scenes from both novels in their books titled Die Eingebildete Metropole and Der Kurfürstendamm respectively.<sup>11</sup> In these studies, the passages from the novels are more or less unquestioningly accepted as eye-witness accounts of life in Berlin at the end of the Weimar Republic. While there is a certain danger in using fictional texts in this way, there is nevertheless no reason to assume that Fallada's, Kästner's and Keun's accounts of life in the city are any less indicative of the moods, tensions and anxieties of the time than other 'non-fictional' accounts. And it is to the analysis of the texts that I now turn.

#### Titles, beginnings and endings

Each novel starts and ends with its protagonist, emphasizing their primary importance and centrality to the novels. Indeed, all the titles refer directly or indirectly to the protagonist. Both the title and subtitle of Fabian. Die Geschichte eines Moralisten refer to Fabian.<sup>12</sup> By

telling us that Fabian is the story of a moralist, the title indicates that Fabian will be morally scrupulous and thoughtful, but we are given no further hint as to what precisely may be meant. The opening of the novel provides more of an insight into the behaviour of the protagonist:<sup>29</sup>

Fabian saß in einem Café namens Spalteholz und las die Schlagzeilen der Abendblätter:   Englisches Luftschiff explodiert über Beauvais, Strychnin lagert neben Linsen, Neunjähriges Mädchen aus dem Fenster gesprungen, Abermals erfolglose Ministerpräsidentenwahl, Der Mord im Lainzer Tiergarten, Skandal im Städtischen Beschaffungsamt, Die künstliche Stimme in der Westentasche, Ruhrkohlenabsatz läßt nach, Die Geschenke für Reichsbahndirektor Neumann, Elefanten auf dem Bürgersteig, Nervosität an den Kaffeemärkten, Skandal um Clara Bow, Bevorstehender Streik von 140 000 Metallarbeitern, Verbrecherdrama in Chikago, Verhandlungen in Moskau über das Holzdumping, Starhenbergjäger rebellieren. Das tägliche Pensum. Nichts Besonderes.

Er nahm einen Schluck Kaffee und fuhr zusammen, Das Zeug schmeckte nach Zucker. (F, 11)

The reporting of the newspaper headlines immediately positions the reader in the wider world surrounding Fabian. The headlines refer both to local and international news, to more serious news items and to sensationalist scandals. That Fabian is a product of the modern world is emphasized in his lack of reaction to the various scandals and news events which are perceived only as, 'das tägliche Pensum. Nichts Besonderes' - not the reaction one necessarily expects from a moralist. Instead, it is the flavour of the coffee which provokes an emphatic reaction from Fabian.

We are told that Fabian arrived at this café by chance:

Fabian legte eine Mark auf den Tisch und ging. Er hatte keine Ahnung, wo er sich befand. Wenn man am Wittenbergplatz auf den Autobus 1 klettert, an der Potsdamer Brücke in eine Straßenbahn unsteigt, ohne

deren Nummer zu lesen, und zwanzig Minuten später den Wagen verläßt, weil plötzlich eine Frau drinsitzt, die Friedrich dem Großen ähnelt, kann man wirklich nicht wissen, wo man ist. (F, 12)

Fabian is shown as a carefree, unconnected spirit who lives life for the moment, a man who acts on his observations rather than one who shapes his destiny through plans. The title and opening of the novel set up the uneasy relationship Fabian has to the world surrounding him, a situation which the end of the novel chooses not to resolve. At the end of the novel, Fabian has returned to his home town and is undecided what to do with his life until he sees a child fall into the river:

Ein paar Passanten, die den Schrei gehört hatten, drehten sich um, Fabian beugte sich über das breite Geländer. Er sah den Kopf des Kindes und die Hände, die das Wasser schlugen. Da zog er die Jacke aus und sprang, das Kind zu retten, hinterher. Zwei Straßenbahnen blieben stehen. Die Fahrgäste kletterten aus dem Wagen und beobachteten, was geschah. Am Ufer rannten aufgeregte Leute hin und wieder.

Der kleine Junge schwamm heulend ans Ufer,

Fabian ertrank. Er konnte leider nicht schwimmen.

(F, 236)

The novel ends abruptly with Fabian's rather unheroic death, drowning while trying to save a child who can swim. There is no resolution at the end of the novel to all of Fabian's thoughts and half-conceived plans. Instead we are left with the impression of a rather incompetent figure.

Fabian is present in the title, opening and ending of the novel. But he is shown to live on the fringe of the society which surrounds him, not shaping it but just moving through it. The novel ends as it started with Fabian depicted as an insignificant observer of the world, whose presence or absence makes no difference to how the

world continues to exist.

The title of Das Kunstseidene Mädchen avoids naming its protagonist by name and refers instead to a type. One can already imagine the type of girl the title is implying; one who aspires to high living but one who, through lack of means, has to make do with copies of the best, such as artificial silk, rather than the real thing. In the opening of the novel, the protagonist introduces herself and it is clear that she has high expectations that her hitherto banal life will change:

Das war gestern abend so um zwölf, da fühlte ich, daß etwas Großartiges in mir vorging. Ich lag im Bett - eigentlich hatte ich mir noch die Füße waschen wollen, aber ich war zu müde wegen dem Abend vorher, und ich hatte doch gleich zu Therese gesagt: "Es kommt nichts bei raus, sich auf der Straße ansprechen zu lassen, und man muß immerhin auf sich halten."

Außerdem kannte ich das Programm im Kaiserhof schon. Und dann immer weiter getrunken - und ich hatte große Not, heil nach Hause zu kommen, weil es mir doch ohnehin immer schwerfällt, nein zu sagen. Ich hab gesagt: "Bis übermorgen." Aber ich denke natürlich gar nicht dran. So knubbelige Finger und immer nur Wein bestellt, der oben auf der Karte steht, und Zigaretten zu fünf - wenn einer so schon anfängt, wie will er da aufhören?

Im Büro war mir dann so übel, und der Alte hat's auch nicht mehr dick und kann einen jeden Tag entlassen. Ich bin also gleich nach Hause gegangen gestern abend - und zu Bett ohne Füße waschen. (DKM, 5)

As in Fabian, the opening of the novel immediately positions the reader in Doris's world, a world that consists of work, home, evenings out and men. The feeling that 'etwas Großartiges in mir vorging' leads to Doris's decision to write about her life:

Und ich denke, daß es gut ist, wenn ich alles beschreibe, weil ich ein ungewöhnlicher Mensch bin. Ich denke nicht an Tagebuch - das ist lächerlich für ein Mädchen von achtzehn und auch sonst auf der Höhe.

Aber ich will schreiben wie Film, denn so ist mein Leben und wird noch mehr so sein. (DKM, 6)

Doris tells us that she is unusual and that her life is like a film. But her 'kunstseidene' side has already been revealed in the former passage by the way she talks, 'und zu Bett ohne FüÙe waschen', in the depiction of her job as lacking any kind of security and in her rather confused dealings with the man who has 'so knubbelige Finger'; it is unclear whether Doris rejects him because she has no sexual interest in him or because he did not have the necessary material standing to entertain her properly. Already in these opening pages we can identify several typical characteristics of *Angestellten* mentality that Kracauer observed in his book. Doris obviously spends much of her free time and energy going out to bars and the cinema; she dislikes menial work, she thinks of herself as different from those surrounding her and she likes to think that her life is like a film. (Doris's relationship to film is discussed at greater length in chapter three.) After her adventures in Berlin, the novel ends with Doris standing homeless at a train station, wondering what to do with her life:

Ich will - will - ich weiß nicht - ich will zu Karl. Ich will alles mit ihm zusammen tun. Wenn er mich nicht will - arbeiten tu ich nicht, dann geh ich lieber auf die Tauentzien und werde ein Glanz.

Aber ich kann ja dann auch eine Hulla werden - und wenn ich ein Glanz werde, dann bin ich vielleicht noch schlechter als eine Hulla, die ja gut war. Auf den Glanz kommt es nämlich vielleicht gar nicht so furchtbar an. (DKM, 140)

Unlike Fabian, Doris does have some kind of revelation at the end of the novel; she realizes that her aspirations to be a *Glanz* are perhaps misconceived. However, the end of the novel remains unresolved in that

it does not provide Doris with any new course of action in the light of her realization. The novel leaves her stranded; a passive bystander in the world around her.

Like Das Kunstseidene Mädchen, the title of Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? refers also to a type. It becomes clear in the novel that Pinneberg is meant as the 'kleine Mann' in the same way that Doris is the 'kunstseidene Mädchen'. Both titles immediately indicate their protagonists' position in the world as small and, to the extent that they are typical of their kind, just one of many. But Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? also has an air of cognitive superiority, 'Was nun?', of demanding from the protagonist what he intends to do now, of standing somewhat distanced from him yet scrupulously observing and commenting upon his actions and placing expectations upon him. The opening of the novel introduces Pinneberg:

Es ist fünf Minuten nach vier. Pinneberg hat das eben festgestellt. Er steht, ein nett aussehender, blonder junger Mann, vor dem Hause Rothenbaumstraße 24 und wartet.

Es ist also fünf Minuten nach vier und auf dreiviertel vier ist Pinneberg mit Lämmchen verabredet. Pinneberg hat die Uhr wieder eingesteckt und sieht ernst auf ein Schild, das am Eingang des Hauses Rothenbaumstraße 24 angemacht ist. Er liest:

DR. SESAM

Frauenarzt

Sprechstunden 9-12 und 4-6

"Eabend! Und nun ist es doch wieder fünf Minuten nach vier. Wenn ich mir noch eine Zigarette anbrenne, kommt Lämmchen natürlich sofort um die Ecke. Laß ich es also. Heute wird es schon wieder teuer genug." (KM-WN?, 5)

The novel opens with Pinneberg and Lämmchen going to a doctor so that Lämmchen can be fitted with a contraceptive diaphragm. Pinneberg is depicted as a conscientious and organized young man. He is keen to make

a good impression and be treated with respect:

Die Tür geht auf, und im halbdunklen Flur steht ein weißer Schemen vor ihnen, bellt: "Die Krankenscheine!"

"Lassen Sie einen doch erst mal rein", sagt Pinneberg und schiebt Lämmchen vor sich her. "Uebrigens sind wir privat. Ich bin angemeldet. Pinneberg ist mein Name."

Auf das Wort "Privat" hin hebt der Schemen die Hand und schaltet das Licht auf dem Flur ein. "Herr Doktor kommt sofort. Einen Augenblick, bitte. Bitte, dort hinein." (KM-WN?, 6)

Once Pinneberg mentions the word 'privat', the nurse immediately changes her behaviour towards the young couple to one of deference. But we are shown a few lines later that this is an unusual situation for the Pinnebergs. The nurse makes a comment to Pinneberg and Lämmchen about 'Kassenpatienten':

"Diese Kassenpatienten sind zu gewöhnlich. Was die Leute sich einbilden für das bißchen Geld, das die Kasse zahlt..."

Die Tür fällt zu, der Junge und Lämmchen sind in roten Plüsch.

"Das ist sicher sein Privatsalon", sagt Pinneberg. "Wie gefällt dir das? Schrecklich altmodisch finde ich."

"Mir war es gräßlich", sagt Lämmchen. "Wir sind doch sonst auch Kassenpatienten. Da hört man mal, wie die beim Arzt über uns reden."

"Warum regst du dich auf?" fragt er. "Das ist doch so. Mit uns kleinen Leuten machen sie, was sie wollen..." (KM-WN?, 6-7)

Although Pinneberg, the *Angestellte*, wants to be accepted as something above the 'little people', he is aware that that is his station in life, something which is reinforced by the bill he has to pay:

"Gar kein schlechtes Einkommen, sagt der, und nimmt mir fünfzehn Mark ab von meinen hundertachtzig, solch Räuber!" (KM-WN?, 10)



The opening pages of the novel define a rigid, economically hierarchical social structure around Pinneberg and Lämmchen which Pinneberg tries to manipulate but which inevitably leaves him feeling small and cheated. It is the first of many encounters in the novel that Pinneberg is to have with forces stronger than he, in which he struggles to maintain his sense of dignity.

By the end of the novel, Pinneberg is depicted as some kind of animal hiding behind a bush:

Da steht ihr Mann, ihr lieber junger Mann, im Dunkeln, wie ein verwundetes Tier, und traut sich nicht ans Licht. Jetzt haben sie ihn unten. (KM-WN?, 309)

He still has emotions but no function, the only thing he has left is his love for Lämmchen and the hope that life will eventually get better:

Sie wird festgehalten, der Junge hält sie fest, er schluchzt, er stammelt: "O Lämmchen, was haben sie mit mir gemacht...Die Polizei...heruntergestoßen haben sie mich vom Bürgersteig...weggejagt haben sie mich...wie kann ich noch einen Menschen ansehen...?"

Und plötzlich ist die Kälte weg, eine unendlich sanfte, grüne Woge hebt sie auf und ihn mit ihr. Sie gleiten empor, die Sterne funkeln ganz nahe; sie flüstert: "Aber du kannst mich doch ansehen! Immer und immer! Du bist doch bei mir, wir sind doch beisammen..."

Die Woge steigt und steigt. Es ist der nächtliche Strand zwischen Lensahn und Wiek, schon einmal waren die Sterne so nah. Es ist das alte Glück, es ist die alte Liebe. Höher und höher, von der befleckten Erde zu den Sternen. Und dann gehen sie beide ins Haus, in dem der Murkel schläft. (KM-WN?, 310)

The novel essentially has a happy, heavily sentimentalized, ending; Pinneberg and Lämmchen find that nothing can ruin the love they have for each other. However, this novel, like the others, has no real resolution. The ending does not provide the reader with the comforting

message that Pinneberg and Lämmchen lived happily ever after; the last line of the novel returns to the house and the 'Murkel' - the world of the everyday. But the ending does salvage the only positive element in Pinneberg's and Lämmchen's lives; namely the love and solidarity they can achieve together in the face of the batterings of the world around them.

The titles tell us of three protagonists, one of whom is a 'Moralist', one of whom is a 'kleiner Mann', and one of whom is the 'kunstseidene Mädchen'. All three have been defined in terms of an attitude or social position with which they must confront and deal with the world. By the end of the novels, all three have rejected or have been rejected by society and are left functionless at its periphery. Although all have retained some sense of self-dignity, that sense is protected at the expense of not interacting with society; Fabian and Pinneberg flee the city, Doris is left sitting in a train station. Already, the titles, beginnings and endings of the novels reveal a world that is, to varying degrees, hostile and ignorant either of the existence of the protagonists or of their desires. Firmly in the picture and seemingly in control of their actions at the beginning of the novels, at the end the protagonists are squeezed to the margins of society. A brief glance at the chapter headings further highlights the extent to which the protagonists' surroundings tend to encroach upon their independence and autonomy.

The chapter headings in Fabian name places and types of people showing us the world in which Fabian moves. Reference is made to a 'Kellner', 'Institut', 'Rechtsanwalt', 'Tanzparkett', the 'Märkisches Museum', a 'Fabrikant', 'Studenten', a club called 'Cousine', the area of Kreuzberg, a 'Kaufhaus', 'Bahnhöfe' etc.. The action is embedded in Berlin, and the types of people surrounding Fabian are city people

associated with the working world, particularly in the fields of law and entertainment. The headings tend to encapsulate certain scenes or spheres of action without necessarily allowing any connection to be made between them, rather like headlines in a newspaper or captions in a cartoon strip; 'Ein Kellner als Orakel - Der andere geht trotzdem hin - Ein Institut für geistige Annäherung' (11), or, 'Eine Zigarette, groß wie der Kölner Dom - Frau Hohlfield ist neugierig - Ein möblierter Herr liest Descartes' (41). Little reference is made to Fabian; it is almost as if he has very little to do with the action.

Das Kunstseidene Mädchen is more laconic with its chapter headings. The book is divided into three sections with no further subdivisions. The sections are headed 'Ende des Sommers und die mittlere Stadt' (5), 'Später Herbst - und die große Stadt' (43), and 'Sehr viel Winter und ein Wartesaal' (91). The action is placed in time and space with no reference made to Doris, as if she is excluded as an active agent in her story.

Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? is divided into four sections; 'Die Sorglosen' (5), 'Die kleine Stadt' (27), 'Berlin' (95), and 'Alles geht weiter' (278). The emphasis moves from the carefree couple to the small town, then onto the named city where the greater part of the novel takes place, and ends with an air of resignation, of 'life going on'. Again, emphasis is laid on the setting for the action, rather than on the autonomous individual self. However, within each section, chapters are given headings which refer predominantly to the Pinnebergs' everyday life, particularly their private life and their pathetic daily struggles to cope; 'Mutter Mörschel - Herr Mörschel - Karl Mörschel. Pinneberg gerät in die Mörschelei' (12) or 'Erbsensuppe wird angesetzt und ein Brief geschrieben, aber das Wasser ist zu dünn' (59). Occasionally they refer to psychological states; 'Pinneberg geht durch den kleinen

Tiergarten, hat Angst und kann sich nicht freuen' (112). And reference is also made to Pinneberg's dealings in and with the public world of work and money; 'Was Keßler für einen Mann ist, wie Pinneberg keine Pleiten schiebt und Heilbutt einen Tippel rettet' (116), and 'Pinneberg erhält Gehalt, behandelt Verkäufer schlecht und wird Besitzer einer Frisiertoilette' (126).

The chapter headings of all three novels establish the context in which the protagonists live. Particularly in Kästner's and Fallada's novels they are dominated by references to the public world, the private world, and confrontations with other characters. Whereas the headings in Fabian refer to the world through which Fabian moves, the headings in Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? refer to the world which directly affects Pinneberg; whereas Fabian is more on the fringe of events, events are directly bearing down upon Pinneberg. In their different ways, the structure of the headings in all three novels makes the protagonists seem largely unimportant in the flow of events, they seem to be caught up in events over which they have no control and of which they have little real understanding.

To summarize so far, there is a certain amount of ambiguity in the structure of the novels. There are the moral overtones in the titles of both Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? and Fabian. Die Geschichte eines Moralisten, but the endings of the novels are unresolved. What, if anything, is being demanded of the protagonists? We can see already in the structure of the novels a certain tension between the protagonists and the world in which they find themselves. While they appear to be of central importance in the novels, their urban environment encroaches upon and limits their actions in subtle and gradual ways. The endings of the novels raise the question of what forces conspire to reduce, denigrate and marginalize the protagonists. If we turn now to some of

the themes of the novels, we can begin to get a clearer picture of what constitutes the protagonists' world, how it acts upon them, and why the moral overtones and endings of the novels remain ambiguous and unresolved.

### The Protagonists' Worlds: Work, Leisure and Relationships

There are certainly many comments in the novels which highlight the uncertainty of the times, the general confusion of social life and the inability of individuals to comprehend what befalls them:

"das ist richtig, daß unsereiner immer Angst haben muß und daß es eigentlich ein Wunder ist, wenn es eine Weile gutgeht. Und daß immerzu etwas passieren kann, gegen das man ganz wehrlos ist, und daß man immer staunen muß, daß es nicht jeden Tag passiert." (Lämmchen, KM-WN?, 251)

Und erzählt mir so Komisches und immer von seiner Frau, und es wäre so eine Zeit heute, da wird alles zerstört und zerrissen, und wer ehrlich sein will, muß schon sagen, daß er sich nicht mehr zurechtfindet, und auch gerade ein Gebildeter kann sich gar nichts mehr aufbauen, und alles ist unsicher. Die ganze Welt wäre unsicher und das Leben und die Zukunft und was man früher geglaubt hat und was man jetzt glaubt, und die Arbeit macht nicht mehr so richtige Freude, weil man in sich immer so eine Art von schlechtem Gewissen hat, weil doch so viele gar keine Arbeit haben. (Doris reporting Ernst, DKM, 108)

"Wir leben provisorisch, die Krise nimmt kein Ende!" (Fabian, F, 62)

All the protagonists identify something which is disturbing but which they cannot quite articulate, a sense of flux, of not knowing what is coming next. While passages such as the above can easily be taken as general statements on life in Weimar Berlin, they also refer simply to the more immediate and personal fear of losing the source of one's livelihood, i.e. one's job.

In Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? the depiction of work forms a significant part of the narrative. Work is depicted in the novel as a place where personal interests dominate, where there is no solidarity between colleagues and where there is a constant assault from colleagues, managers and customers on Pinneberg's character and integrity which eventually affects his private life.

Throughout the early stages of the novel the reader is made aware of the pride Pinneberg takes in his work and of the successes he has had in his field while working for Bergmann and Kleinholz in the small town of Ducherow.<sup>14</sup> Upon arrival at the Warenhaus Mandel in Berlin, Heilbutt, Pinneberg's colleague, is quick to point out that Pinneberg is the 'geborene Verkäufer' (KM-WN?, 124) - a comment which Pinneberg accepts as a great compliment. But once the Warenhaus employs the odious Herr Spannfuß to rationalize work processes in the store, work becomes something to be dreaded, particularly when the end of the month draws near and Pinneberg has still to fulfil his quota:

"Morgen muß ich für dreihundert Mark verkaufen", das ist Pinnebergs letzter Gedanke, wenn er Lämmchen den Gutenachtkuß gegeben hat und in Dunkel liegt. Es läßt sich schlecht einschlafen mit solch einem Gedanken, es bleibt doch nicht der letzte Gedanke,

"Heute muß ich für dreihundert Mark verkaufen", - beim Erwachen, beim Kaffeetrinken, auf dem Weg, beim Eintritt in die Abteilung, immerzu; "Dreihundert Mark."

Nun kommt ein Kunde, er will einen Mantel haben, achtzig Mark, ein Viertel des Solls, entschließ dich, Kunde! Pinneberg schleppt herbei, probiert an, über jeden Mantel ist er begeistert, und je aufgeregter er wird (entschließ dich! entschließe dich!), um so kühler wird der Kunde. Ach, Pinneberg zieht alle Register, er versucht es mit Untertänigkeit: "Der Herr haben ja einen so vorzüglichen Geschmack, den Herrn kleidet ja alles..." Er spürt, wie er den Kunden immer unangenehmer wird, wie er ihm widerlich ist, und er kann nicht anders. Und dann geht der Kunde: "Will es mir noch mal überlegen."  
[...]

Oh, er verliert den Mut nicht, er reißt sich immer wieder zusammen und er hat glückliche Tage, wo er ganz auf seiner alten Höhe ist, wo kein Verkauf mißlingt. Er denkt, die Angst ist überwunden.

Und dann gehen sie an ihm vorbei, die Herren, und sagen so im Vorbeigehen: "Na, Herr Pinneberg, könnte auch etwas lebhafter gehen der Verkauf." Oder "Warum verkaufen Sie eigentlich gar keine dunkelblauen Anzüge? Wollen Sie, daß wir die alle am Lager behalten?"

Sie gehen vorüber, sie sind vorbei, sie sagen den nächsten Verkäufer etwas anderes oder dasselbe. Heilbutt hat ja recht, man darf gar nichts darauf geben, es ist nichts wie ödes Antreibergeschwätz, sie denken, sie müssen so was sagen.

Nein, man soll nichts darauf geben, was sie schwätzen, aber kann man das? Da hat Pinneberg heute für zweihundertfünfzig Mark verkauft, und da kommt dieser Herr Organisator und sagt: "Sie sehen so abgespannt aus, Herr. Ich empfehle Ihnen Ihre Kollegen drüben in den States als Vorbild, die sehen abends genau so munter aus wie am Morgen. Keep smiling! Wissen Sie, was das heißt? Immer lächeln! Abgespanntheit gibt es nicht, ein abgespannt aussehender Verkäufer ist keine Empfehlung für ein Geschäft..."

Er entschreitet, und Pinneberg denkt restlos: "In die Fresse! In die Fresse, du Hund!" Aber er hat natürlich sein Dienerchen und sein Smiling gemacht, und das sichere Gefühl ist auch wieder weg. (KM-WN?, 228-9)

In such passages the consistent use of the present tense seems to capture the hectic pressure of Pinneberg's workplace.<sup>15</sup> As a salesman in a large department store undergoing rationalization he is at the sharp end of the capitalist market with the pressure to sell an all engulfing force in his life. Away from work he is plagued by thoughts of how much he must sell and at work he becomes conscious of the obsequious way he creeps around the customers. While he tries to convince himself that he can still be an effective salesman, the managers of the store shatter his confidence by reminding him of other items he could be selling and alluding to his erroneous ways ('Wollen

Sie, daß...' etc). In order to keep his job, Pinneberg is unable to tell those around him how much he hates doing what he does, he simply continues doing his 'Dienerchen' and his 'Smiling'.

Pinneberg's relationship with his colleagues is little better than with the managers. The salesmen are all under pressure to fulfil the quota, and consequently they need to serve as many customers as possible even if it means stealing them from one another:

Es ähnelte stark einem Bordellgäßchen, und jeder Verkäufer frohlockte, wenn er dem Kollegen einen Kunden weggeschnappt hatte.

Pinneberg konnte sich nicht ausschließen, Pinneberg mußte mitmachen.

Lämmchen lernte es in diesen Februar, ihren Mann mit einem Lächeln zu begrüßen, das nicht gar zu lächelnd war, denn das hätte ihn bei schlechter Laune reizen können. Sie lernte es, still zu warten, bis er sprach, denn irgendein Wort konnte ihn plötzlich in Wut versetzen, und dann fing er an zu schimpfen über diese Schinder, die aus Menschen Tiere machten und denen man eine Bombe in den Hintern stecken sollte!

Um den Zwanzigsten herum war er ganz finster, er war angesteckt von den andern, sein Selbstvertrauen war fort, er hatte zwei Pleiten geschoben, er konnte nicht mehr verkaufen.

Es war im Bett, sie nahm ihn in ihre Arme, sie hielt ihn ganz fest, seine Nerven waren am Ende, er weinte. Sie hielt ihn, sie sagte inner wieder: "Jungchen, und wenn du arbeitslos wirst, verlier den Mut nicht, laß dich nicht unterkriegen. Ich werde nie, nie, nie klagen, das schwöre ich dir!" (KM-WN?, 174-175)

By means of the quota system, the commercial interests of the workplace set up a specific organization of labour which makes solidarity among the employees impossible, inducing instead a state of competition between members of the same group. The lack of solidarity between the salesmen, the pressure to fulfil the quota and the unwanted surveillance from the managers make Pinneberg intensely unhappy and anxious. The



only person he can turn to is Lämmchen who offers him patience, comfort and support. Throughout the novel, Pinneberg's and Lämmchen's relationship is set in opposition to the harsh world in which they find themselves. Regardless of their emotional, physical, economic or social situation, they always manage to reaffirm their love for each other and find a way of struggling on together in the face of extreme hardship. While Pinneberg can find no solidarity with his colleagues, he can with his wife. Both Pinneberg's perception of his work and his relationship with Lämmchen will be discussed further in the following chapter. The point I wish to make here is simply that work plays a negative and brutalizing role in Pinneberg's life.

In both Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen descriptions of work do not feature to any large extent. Both Fabian and Doris have a deeply felt contempt for their work and they both like to forget and avoid work as much as they can - something which becomes possible when they are both made unemployed in the early stages of the novels.

Fabian works as an advertising agent in a cigarette company. Living by his linguistic wit he works well at his job, and there are several descriptions in the text of the highly lucrative competitions he has devised for the company.<sup>16</sup> But Fabian has an essentially passive attitude to his work which does not change even when he is faced with unemployment:

"Denken Sie, ich habe mein Leben seit der Konfirmation damit verbracht, gute Propaganda für schlechte Zigaretten zu machen? Wenn ich hier fliege, such ich mir einen neuen Beruf. Auf einen mehr oder weniger kommt es mir nicht mehr an." (F, 42)

Thematically more important in the text is Fabian's relationship to Cornelia, and here it is the influence of Cornelia's work which exerts a

highly disruptive and damaging influence on the course of their relationship.

When Fabian first meets Cornelia he already mentions to her that economic pressures do not favour stable relationships and the family unit:

"Wir jungen Männer haben Sorgen. Und die Zeit, die übrigbleibt, reicht fürs Vergnügen, nicht für die Liebe. Die Familie liegt im Sterben. Zwei Möglichkeiten gibt es doch nur für uns, Verantwortung zu zeigen. Entweder der Mann verantwortet die Zukunft einer Frau, und wenn er in der nächsten Woche die Stellung verliert, wird er einsehen, daß er verantwortungslos handelte. Oder er wagt es, aus Verantwortungsgefühl, nicht, einem zweiten Menschen die Zukunft zu versauen, und wenn die Frau darüber ins Unglück gerät, wird er sehen, daß auch diese Entscheidung verantwortungslos war. Das ist eine Antinomie, die es früher nicht gab." (F, 90)

Fabian's attitude to work and relationships is pragmatic. He recognizes that due to job insecurity, men can no longer be expected to support a wife or family. But once he falls in love with Cornelia, his perspective on life changes. However, at the same time as he is prepared to change his attitude he loses his job and Cornelia starts her new job in the contracts' department of a film company. She is soon discovered by the film producer, Makart, who tells her she is precisely the type he has been looking for to star in his next film and invites her to a screen test. But once Cornelia is offered the role in the film she is also expected to become Makart's mistress:

"Sie wollen mich im nächsten Film herausstellen. Morgen unterschreibe ich den Kontrakt. Makart hat mir zwei Zimmer gemietet. Es ist nicht zu umgehen. Er sprach darüber, als handle es sich um einen Zentner Briketts. Fünfzig Jahre ist er alt, und er sieht aus wie ein zu gut angezogener Ringkämpfer im Ruhestand. Mir ist, als hätte ich mich an die Anatomie verkauft. [...] Ich werde nicht zugrunde gehen. Ich werde

mir einbilden, der Arzt untersucht mich. Er mag sich mit mir beschäftigen, es muß sein. Man kommt nur aus dem Dreck heraus, wenn man sich dreckig macht." (F, 161-2)

Cornelia allows herself to become Makart's mistress in order to get the role in the film and secure a financial existence for herself and Fabian. Fabian, however, finds this situation unacceptable but he realises he has no right to demand her fidelity if he cannot support her financially. Even before she has become Makart's mistress, he thinks:

Wenn er es getan und wenn er, aus dem Fenster gebeugt, gesagt hätte: "Komm wieder herauf, ich will nicht, daß du arbeitest, ich will nicht, daß du zu Makart gehst!", hätte sie geantwortet: "Was fällt dir ein? Gib mir Geld oder halte mich nicht auf." (F, 155)

And later after her first night with Makart:

Er dachte noch: "Wenn sie jetzt fragt, soll ich zu dir zurückkommen, was werde ich antworten? Ich habe noch sechsundfünfzig Mark in der Tasche." (F, 179)

Cornelia's entrance into the working world throws her relationship with Fabian into turmoil. The couple find themselves on unfamiliar, untested ground. Fabian's attitude fluctuates between an old-fashioned traditionalism where the man is expected to support the woman, and the pragmatic acceptance that if he cannot support her, than she can do what she likes even though he does not approve of her actions. Meanwhile, Cornelia secures her existence because Fabian cannot do it for her. But she secures it by surrendering her body and her private sphere for the chance of employment; she not only works for her boss, she is expected to sleep and live with him too. She no longer has the right to her own private world if she wants to be sure of some kind of economic

stability. Her public life (her job) and her private life (where and with whom she lives) become fused and she is left unable to function properly in any one realm. The area in which she could establish some kind of union with Fabian, through their mutual love and support of each other, is appropriated by the world of her employers.

The control that Cornelia's work situation exerts over her private life is, arguably, more destructive than what befalls Pinneberg in Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? While Pinneberg hates his job and is, on several occasions, moved to tears and despair by it, he can still escape to his private world with Lämmchen. Once Cornelia in Fabian becomes Makart's mistress, she no longer has any access to a secure and stable private world. And where Pinneberg and Lämmchen can support each other and offer some kind of resistance to the outside world, Cornelia and Fabian are driven apart by it precisely because Cornelia's work controls her private life too.

It should be noted that both Cornelia and Pinneberg (indeed Fabian, as well) work for modern commercial industries (the department store, the advertising agency, the film industry) all concerned with promoting and marketing products and images to be consumed by the masses. While Pinneberg, Cornelia and Fabian are involved in the dissemination of those industries' products, one character, Doris in Das Kunstseidene Mädchen, addictively consumes them.

During the early stages of the novel, Doris works as a typist in a lawyer's office, but after an unfortunate sexual encounter with her boss, she loses her job and decides she wants to become a *Glanz* :

Ich will so ein Glanz werden, der oben ist. Mit weißem Auto und Badewasser, das nach Parfüm riecht, und alles wie Paris. Und die Leute achten mich hoch, weil ich ein Glanz bin, und werden es dann wunderbar finden, wenn ich nicht weiß, was eine Kapazität ist, und nicht runter

lachen auf mich wie heute - [...].

Ich werde ein Glanz, und was ich dann mache, ist richtig - nie mehr brauch ich mich in acht nehmen und nicht mehr meine Worte ausrechnen und meine Vorhabungen ausrechnen - einfach betrunken sein - nichts kann mir mehr passieren an Verlust und Verachtung, denn ich bin ein Glanz. (DKM, 29-30)

Once Doris is made unemployed she realizes there is no job she could do that would grant her the style of life she wants, something which she explains to Ernst, the advertising draughtsman with whom she temporarily lives:

Kommt denn unsereins durch Arbeit weiter, wo ich keine Bildung habe und keine fremden Sprachen außer olala und keine höhere Schule und nichts. [...] Und gar keine Aussicht für über 120 zu gelangen auf eine reelle Art - und immer tippen Akten und Akten, ganz langweilig, ohne inneres Wollen und gar kein Risiko von Gewinnen und Verlieren. [...] Man hat 120 mit Abzügen und zu Hause abgeben oder von leben. Man ist ja nicht mehr wert, aber man wird kaum satt von trotzdem. Und will auch bißchen nette Kleider, weil man ja sonst noch mehr ein Garnichts ist. Und will auch mal ein Kaffee mit Musik und ein vornehmes Pfirsich Melba in hocheleganten Bechern - und das geht doch nicht alles von allein, braucht man wieder die Großindustrien, und da kann man ja auch gleich auf den Strich gehen. Ohne Achtstundentag. (DKM, 116)

Doris refers to the boring nature of her work, to the lack of prospects within the job, the small amount of money, the feeling of being insignificant and the wish to have a few nice things. However, achieving the status of a *Glanz* requires a very public display of wealth and material comfort. One of the ways Doris thinks she can achieve this status is to find a man who can pay for those goods and that life-style.' In order to attract such a man, she frequents many bars and clubs, assessing who might be able to provide her with what she wants. The men, of course, expect sexual favours in return and Doris is fully

prepared to oblige if she feels she is getting closer to reaching her goal. She may sometimes object, as Cornelia does, to the uses to which she puts her body, but she is always clear on why she is doing it:

[E]r bot mir eine Wohnung und Geld - mir kam die Gelegenheit zu einem Glanz, und es ist leicht mit Alten, wenn man jung ist - sie tun, als könnte man was dafür, und als hätte man es geleistet. Und ich wollte, ich wollte. Er hatte eine Kegelkugelstimme, die mich kalt macht, aber ich wollte - er hatte so verschleimtes Gelüge in den Augen, aber ich wollte - ich dachte, die Zähne zusammenbeißen und an machtvolle Hermeline denken, dann geht es. Und sagte: ja. (DKM, 55)

Doris, like Cornelia, uses her sexuality as a method with which to secure her material existence but she too thereby relinquishes the possibility of establishing any relationship with a man which is not based on exploitation. The more affairs Doris has, the more she becomes aware of her feelings of isolation and unhappiness and of her desire to have a different kind of relationship with a man:

Es gibt so viele Männer, warum nicht für mich auf einmal? Ich bin alles so satt. Wenn sie Geld haben, haben sie blödsinnige Frauen und werden verhaftet, ist das Moral? Es muß doch noch anderes geben auf der Welt. (DKM, 84-85)

Both Cornelia and Doris display sexual availability as a method for achieving economic stability and social climbing. But once they use their sexuality in this way, their public lives become intimately bound up in their private lives making love relationships, or any kind of relationship in which some form of solidarity can be established (as in Pinneberg's and Lämmchen's relationship), impossible. Their bodies become instrumental in both private and public - emotional responses, sexual acts and market forces all become inextricably bound

together with the boundary between public and private obliterated.

This commodification of sex and attendant blurring of distinction between public and private realms is not confined to the protagonists alone. Indeed it also dominates depictions of other characters' relationships in both Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen in which potential partners are looked at only in terms of their exchange value. In Fabian these figures range from the humorous character of the sexually insatiable Frau Irene Moll to the sad and powerless fat and thin women Fabian and Labude meet in Haupts Festsälen:

"Mein Verein unchristlicher junger Männer wird von Damen der besten Gesellschaft mit wahrer Leidenschaft frequentiert. Die Damen sind nicht immer schön und schlank, und daß sie mal jung waren, glaubt ihnen kein Mensch. Aber sie haben Geld. Und wieviel ich auch verlange, sie zahlen. Und wenn sie vorher ihre Herren Ehenänner bestehlen oder ermorden sollten, sie kommen. Meine Pensionäre verdienen. Der Möbelhändler sieht zu. Die Damen gehen ihren Passionen nach. Drei junge Leute sind mir schon abgekauft worden. Sie haben beträchtliche Einkünfte, eigene Wohnung und kleine Freundinnen nebenher, heimlich, versteht sich. Der eine, ein Ungar, wurde von der Frau eines Industriellen erworben. Er lebt wie ein Prinz. Wenn er klug ist, hat er in einem Jahr ein Vermögen. Dann kann er sich die alte Schießbudenfigur abschaffen." (F, 139-140)

Da lehnten sich zwei Trikotengel über die Brüstung. Die eine war dick und blond, und ihre Brust lag auf dem Plüsch, als sei serviert. Die andere Person war mager, und ihr Gesicht sah aus, als hätte sie krumme Beine. [...]

"Wer spendiert 'nen Schnaps?" fragte die Dicke. [...]

Die Magere trank ihr Glas auf einen Zug leer, zupfte Labude an der Nase und kicherte blöde. "Oben sind Nischen", sagte sie, strich die blauen Trikotosen von den Schenkeln zurück und zwinkerte. [...]

"Oben sind Nischen", sagte die Magere wieder, und man stieg hinauf. Labude bestellte kalten Aufschnitt. Als der Teller mit Fleisch und Wurst vor den Mädchen stand, vergaßen sie alles übrige und

In these scenes there is, on the one hand, evidence of a frenetic quest for pleasure, an indulgence in the hedonism of a new modernism. But on the other, there is a sense that exchanges between people are devalued, insubstantial and mechanical; sex is offered in return for some kind of social climbing or simply for a bite to eat.

Many of the scenes involving sexual encounters take place in night clubs and various lurid institutions. These spaces of the city will be discussed in greater detail in chapters four, five and six. But it is interesting to note here the kind of sexual exchanges that take place in them. More often than not, these encounters will involve some kind of exploitation when one person is more wealthy than the other. Conversely, when both would-be lovers are of the same socio-economic status, they compete with each other. When Doris goes out with the shoe salesman she calls the 'schwarze Rayon' she notes:

Ging ich aus den Laden mit Eidechsenkappen und abends mit dem schwarzen Rayon in ein Kabarett. Ich sagte ihm, ich wäre eine neue Künstlerin von Reinhardt, und wir haben uns beide furchtbar angelogen und uns aus Gefälligkeit gegenseitig alles geglaubt. (DKM, 50-1)

Because Doris and her companion are in the same situation, of wanting to go up in the world, they are forced to lie and pretend in order to make the 'image' of the life they lead convincing. But being forced to lie and pretend makes establishing the basis for common action or understanding impossible. Certain striking similarities can be seen here between the nature of relationships in the workplace and those in bars and night clubs. In the same way that Pinneberg is exploited by his managers and is in competition with his colleagues, so Doris finds



herself sexually exploited by economically more powerful men and unable to establish any solidarity with people in the same position as she. Either one person is economically stronger than the other, and so can dictate what happens, or, if two people are in the same position, they will necessarily be in competition with each other.

In all three novels there are, then, a number of thematic similarities with regard to the depiction of work, mass cultural areas and (sexual) relationships.

First, common to all the novels are the protagonists' status as *Angestellten* and their involvement with mass cultural spheres, either through their work (Pinneberg, Fabian, Cornelia) or through the areas in which they spend their leisure time (Fabian, Doris). Within these areas there is little evidence of the characters forming any kind of constructive relationship with others, either in the work<sup>f</sup>sphere, or in the bars and clubs. Instead, most relationships are based on competition and exploitation. This can be seen in the competition among employees and the surveillance of the managers in the *Warenhaus Mandel* in *Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?*, and in the various sexual relationships which dominate so much of *Fabian* and *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen* in which food, shelter, money and luxuries are sought in exchange for sex.

Secondly, the exploitation and competition occur<sup>f</sup>ing in leisure time is a counterpart to, and to some extent is derived from, the exploitative and competitive structure of the working world. Men's lives at work are dominated by the uncertainty of continued employment, which makes any kind of stable private existence extremely difficult (with the exception of Pinneberg and Lämmchen, who only just manage to cope). And women, for their part, suffer either from their menial, insecure jobs or from the consequences of using their sexuality for advancement. Clearly,

the protagonists' private lives, particularly in respect of love and sex, are deeply affected and shaped by a volatile public sphere.

Thirdly, while the protagonists seem to suffer because of their surroundings, they are all also desperate to be a part of them, at least insofar as they desire to be socially included. Pinneberg suffers at work but he would like to take pride in his job and be treated with respect. Cornelia ruins her relationship with Fabian but at the same time thinks that becoming a film star will secure her and Fabian's financial livelihood. And Doris allows herself to be sexually exploited and become unhappy in order to pursue her dream of being a *Glanz*.

Thematically there are no clear-cut boundaries or distinctions in the texts between what/who influences what/whom. At a very basic level, we can identify Pinneberg's managers, Cornelia's film producer and Doris's idolization of the *Glanz* as damaging influences in their lives, but we cannot, after a preliminary consideration of the thematic issues, understand why the protagonists do not do anything to counteract these forces. We still have not fully answered how it comes to be that the novels end with the protagonists on the margins of society. Of course, one of the obvious reasons is that they all lose the source of their financial livelihood. But judging from the ambivalent status of many of the relationships in the novels, their marginalization is caused by more than just unemployment. Why do the protagonists not have a clearer understanding of their circumstances? Why do they allow their lives to crumble around them yet fail to undertake any action to prevent this? Why do they (actively or passively) even seem to conspire with such damaging and destructive forces? Do they have any choice? To attempt to answer these questions, one has to look more closely at the environment in which the characters of the novels move; both at the language they have at their disposal and at the city in which they live.

Whose language do they speak? Are there alternative discourses they can enter and does the city provide them with spaces in which to function autonomously? In other words, do the protagonists have access to other areas which would allow them to begin to establish a clearer awareness and understanding of their circumstances and in which they could begin to form some kind of resistance. If not, why not? These are the subjects of the following chapters.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE

As we have seen from the previous chapter, a thematic analysis of the novels alone does not answer why the protagonists are all left functionless at the end of their stories. While they do all lose their jobs in the course of the novels, and with them the means of their livelihood, this alone does not explain why they behave as they do. The question persists: what forces conspire to reduce, demean and marginalize the protagonists? In an attempt to get closer to answering the question of why the protagonists become victims of their urban environment, I want to consider the language in the novels; both the language used to describe the protagonists and which they use to describe themselves and their surroundings. In a sense, language forms a crucial part of what up to this point has been broadly referred to as the protagonists' 'surroundings'.

For the sake of clarity, the novels will be considered separately with the discussion of each novel following and expanding on the thematic issues raised in the previous chapter. I will start with Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? and Pinneberg's antagonistic relationship with his work sphere, followed by an analysis of Doris's difficulty to establish an identity for herself while striving to become a *Glanz* in Das Kunstseidene Mädchen. Finally, the analysis of linguistic structures in Fabian will look at Fabian's clear perception of his situation but lack of desire actively to challenge his circumstances.

#### Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?

There are chiefly two types of language used in Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?. The first expresses Pinneberg's perception of himself and the second

perceptions others have of Pinneberg. The latter is important in that it is this social discourse which talks to, describes and deals with Pinneberg; in other words, it is the discourse of the world in which Pinneberg must situate himself. It is spoken mainly by people who occupy the working world, particularly the managers at the Warenhaus Mandel, but it can also be spoken by the narrator. The perception Pinneberg has of himself is, not surprisingly, deeply affected by the perception others have of him. But whereas the language of the working world tends to focus on questions and images of personal worth only in so far as it can heighten the commercial potential of the salesman, Pinneberg's language concentrates on developing strategies of protecting his sense of personal value. As we shall see, because his pride is so important to him, he remains largely oblivious to the motives behind the language of his employers.

Within the department store, the language used by the managers makes direct appeals to Pinneberg's perception of himself by associating bodily strength and strength of personality with the salesman's ability to sell:

"Meine Herren, Sie mögen es wahrhaben wollen oder nicht. Ihr ganzes Wesen, Ihr Organismus, Ihre Spannkraft, Ihre Energie - all das ist bereits auf das zwanzigfache eingestellt. Jede Herabsetzung der Quote ist auch eine Herabsetzung Ihrer Leistungsfähigkeit, die Sie selbst beklagen würden. Ich habe das feste Vertrauen zu Ihnen, daß jeder von Ihnen diese Quote erreicht, ja, sie überschreiten wird." (KM-WN?, 174)

Spannfuß, the manager, stresses the importance of personal achievement in the selling process, using language which appeals to notions of physical strength ('Wesen', 'Organismus', 'Spannkraft', 'Energie', 'Leistungsfähigkeit'). In a rather cold, militaristic fashion, it is left solely to the employees to 'prove' themselves. At the same time, there is

a hint of paternalism in the manager's language in that it implicitly encourages the employees to seek managerial approval for their actions, 'ich habe das feste Vertrauen zu Ihnen'. In other words, if the employees do not manage to fulfil the quota, the manager will be disappointed in them because they have not lived up to expectations.' In this schema, fulfilling the quota becomes representative not only of one's selling capability but also of one's personal worth. Selling capability associated with personality traits appears on a number of occasions:

"Warum reizen Sie denn die Leute? [...] Früher waren Sie ganz anders, Herr Pinneberg." (KM-WN?, 228)

"Lieber Herr Pinneberg, Sie besitzen keine große Menschenkenntnis. Ich sehe das oft an Ihrer Art zu verkaufen." (KM-WN?, 231)

In the first example, Pinneberg is told how he used to be earlier, not how he used to work, and in the second, he is told that when selling he reveals certain, in this case negative, character traits; what he is as a person is revealed in his work. The language of the managers equates Pinneberg's job as a salesman with his personality.

Spannfuß, the manager who speaks this personalized language, has been employed by the Warenhaus to rationalize work methods in the store; in line with the ethos of rationalization (see chapter 1, pp.20-25), it is his job to find ways of decreasing costs and increasing profits. However, he makes no reference to such commercial interests when talking to the salesmen about selling. Instead, his language concentrates on notions of manhood and personal value. It is a language to which Pinneberg himself unwittingly falls victim; when he is selling, he too becomes aware of his personality. There are several instances where Pinneberg is desperate to sell in order to fulfil his quota. The

more desperate his attempts become, the more he is aware of how fawning he must appear to the customer:

Nun kommt ein Kunde, ach, er will einen Mantel haben, achtzig Mark, ein Viertel des Solls, entschließ dich, Kunde! Pinneberg schleppt herbei, probiert an, über jeden Mantel ist er begeistert, und je aufgeregter er wird (entschließ dich! entschließe dich!), um so kühler wird der Kunde. Ach, Pinneberg zieht alle Register, er versucht es mit Untertänigkeit: "Der Herr haben ja einen so vorzüglichen Geschmack, den Herrn kleidet ja alles..." Er spürt, wie er dem Kunden immer unangenehmer wird, wie er ihm widerlich ist, und er kann nicht anders. (KM-WN?, 228)

Pinneberg is made to feel, and feels himself, that his selling capabilities are indicative of his capabilities as a human being; if he is a good salesman then he is also an adequate human being, if not, then he is 'unangenehm' and 'widerlich'. The public expectations placed on Pinneberg are couched in a private vocabulary of personal worth and value. Spannfuß's language transmutes the commercial pressure to sell into personal qualities in such a way that the economic interests behind his language remain unarticulated and, thereby, largely hidden to Pinneberg and the other salesmen. With his personal worth constantly under attack, Pinneberg is unable fully to recognize the business motives of the management and he struggles above all to preserve a positive sense of his personality. However, the language of the managers is not consistent. When Pinneberg is late for work because the 'Murkel' is ill we read:

"Sie überschätzen das Interesse, daß eine Firma an Ihrem Privatleben nimmt. Ihr Privatleben ist für das Haus Mandel ohne Interesse. [...] Die Firma ermöglicht erst Ihr Privatleben, Herr! Erst kommt die Firma, noch mal die Firma, zum dritten Mal die Firma, und dann können Sie machen, was Sie wollen. Sie leben von uns, Herr, wir haben Ihnen die Sorge um Ihren Lebensunterhalt abgenommen, verstehen Sie das!" (KM-WN?,

In the former examples, it suited the managers to equate sales performance with the employees' 'nature'. Here, however, the managers claim that there is no room in the workplace for the personal and personality. Now the company comes first and foremost, not Pinneberg's selling capabilities. In the workings of the company, Pinneberg is only a passive recipient of a job and, as such, should be grateful.

Pinneberg's behaviour is suspended somewhere between activity and passivity. On the one hand, he is encouraged to interact in the selling process in a physical way ('Wesen', 'Organismus', 'Spannkraft', etc.) and to seek approval from the managers for his actions. On the other, he is forced to acknowledge through passive acquiescence that having a job at all is due solely to Mandel's generosity and not to his own merit. The former demands that he proves his adequacy, the latter denies that it is an issue.

Fluctuation between activity and passivity characterizes Pinneberg's behaviour and language beyond the workplace as well, but here they are inherently linked to the perception he has of himself as well as to the perception others have of him. As Pinneberg moves between the workplace and his home and as he grapples with everyday situations, he is constantly made aware of his inadequacy. But in an attempt to maintain a coherent perception of himself, Pinneberg tries, with varying degrees of success, to develop strategies of self-defence, both behavioural and linguistic, which he would not dare even to attempt at work. In dialogue, for example, he may adopt an aggressive tone if he thinks he is being treated unfairly:

"Hören Sie mal!" fängt Pinneberg an sich gewältig zu ärgern.

Aber die Schwester telefoniert schon. Dann hängt sie ab. "Bett



wird erst morgen frei. Aber bis dahin wird's ja schon gehen."

"Erlauben Sie mal!" empört sich Pinneberg. "Meine Frau hat schon alle Viertelstunden Wehen. Sie kann doch nicht bis Morgen früh ohne Bett sein."

Die Schwester lacht, ach, sie lacht ihn direkt aus. (KM-WN?, 182)

Pinneberg thinks he is being unfairly treated because there is no bed free in the hospital for Lämmchen to give birth; in his exclamations he demands that he be listened to ('Hören Sie mal!', 'Erlauben Sie mal!'), something which the nurse does not do. When she then laughs because Pinneberg does not realize how long childbirth takes, he immediately thinks she is ridiculing him, something which the narrator conveys. His aggressive tone, which does not express itself in action, does not protect him from feeling insignificant.

Pinneberg is rarely able cognitively to articulate his fears and thereby achieve some distance from them. It is usually the narrator who articulates them:

Ja, er war klein und elend, er schrie und krakehlte und brauchte seine Ellbogen, um seinen Platz zu halten im Leben, aber verdiente er einen Platz? Er war ein Garnichts. Und um seinetwillen mußte sie sich quälen. Hätte er nie...wäre er nie---hätte er doch immer...

Da lag er, denken konnte man es nicht nennen, es trieb in ihm, er tat nichts dazu. (KM-WN?, 185-6)

Occasionally, when Pinneberg does articulate his outrage, he speaks in terms of the need for political change:

"Aber jetzt will ich...[...] Ich werde", sagt er feierlich, "noch einmal an das Aufsichtsamt schreiben. [...] Sitzen sie nicht schon warm und sicher und reich in ihren Palästen und verwalten uns? Und nun sollen sie uns noch mies machen dürfen und zu Stänkerern! Nein, ich lasse das nicht durch. Ich wehre mich, ich will was tun - !"

"Nein, es hat keinen Zweck", sagt Lämmchen wieder. "Es lohnt gar

nicht." [...]

"Und ich möchte doch..." fängt Pinneberg hartnäckig wieder an.

"Nichts", sagt Lämmchen. "Nichts. Hör doch schon auf." [...]

"Und das nächste Mal wähle ich doch Kommunisten!"

Aber Lämmchen antwortet nicht. Und das Kind trinkt zufrieden.

(KM-WN?, 226)

Pinneberg does not know how he can actively do something, he only knows that he wants to ('jetzt will ich...', 'ich möchte doch...'). He can identify where inequalities and injustices exist in society but he does not know how to do anything about them except vote for the Communists. But more often than not, his briefly glimpsed political convictions collapse, and the focus of attention returns to Pinneberg's and Lämmchen's matrimonial bliss:

"Das ist", sagt Pinneberg, "weil wir gar nichts sind. Wir sitzen allein. Und die anderen, die genau so sind wie wir, die sitzen auch allein. Jeder dünkt sich was. Wenn wir mindestens Arbeiter wären! Die sagen Genosse zueinander und helfen einander. [...] Unsereiner, Angestellter, wir stellen doch was vor, wir sind doch was Besseres..."

"Du!" sagt Lämmchen.

"Du!" sagt er, und sie geben sich die Hand.

"Ja, ganz schlimm ist alles nicht", sagt Lämmchen.

"Nein, solange wir uns haben", bestätigt er.

Und sie gehen wieder auf und ab. (KM-WN?, 259)

Pinneberg recognizes that there is no solidarity between white-collar workers. He even recognizes that the lack of solidarity has partly to do with the fact that white-collar workers tend to think of themselves as superior to other groups. But his anger and his inability to do anything about this become appeased by the solidarity he can achieve with Lämmchen, here emphasized by their repetition of 'Du!'. Anger has nowhere to go and turns into sentimental acquiescence. Refuge in the

private sphere and personal approval from Lämmchen are the most frequent antidotes to Pinneberg's sense of his unworthiness:

"Lämmchen, davon habe ich getraut. . . Weißt du, daß mir das in Erfüllung gegangen ist! Heilbutt, die mögen uns schlecht behandeln und saunäßig bezahlen, und wir mögen nur Dreck für sie sein, für die Bullen da oben...[...] Aber so was können sie uns doch nicht nehmen. Die sollen doch bloß abhauen mit ihrem ganzen Gerede. Aber daß ich hier meine Frau mit ihrem Bademantel im Spiegel sehe, das können sie mir doch nicht nehmen." (KM-WN?, 136)

Pinneberg divides the world in which he moves into two parts; the one is occupied by 'them', people with whom Pinneberg would have nothing to do if he could ('die sollen bloß abhauen...') and with whom he does not identify; 'die' are not the same as 'wir'. The other is his private world which 'they' cannot enter and in which he is left in peace, safe and hidden away in his private world where 'they' cannot control what he does.

It is not, however, always easy to maintain this divide, particularly when Pinneberg feels threatened in his private world. For example, when Lämmchen hears with disbelief the price of the Frisiertoilette, we read:

Er hat Lämmchens Stimme so anders gehört, sie rede so, als gäbe es ihn, den Jungen, überhaupt nicht mehr, als sei er ein Irgendwer, ein Beliebiger. Und wenn er sonst nur ein kleiner Verkäufer ist, bei dem sie früh genug gesorgt haben, daß er weiß, er ist nichts besonderes, irgend so ein Tierlein, das man leben lassen kann oder krepieren lassen, es ist wirklich nicht so wichtig - während sonst also, selbst in seiner tiefsten Liebe zu Lämmchen etwas Vorüberwehendes, Vergängliches, Unaufhebliches ist: nun ist er da, er, Johannes Pinneberg, jetzt geht es um das einzige, was in diesem seinem Leben Wert und Sinn hat. Das muß er festhalten, darum muß er kämpfen, darin sollen sie ihn nicht auch auspowern.

Und er sagt: "Lämmchen, du mein Lämmchen! Ich sage dir doch, ich

bin ein Idiot gewesen, ich habe alles falsch gemacht. Ich bin doch so [...] und deswegen mußt du doch bei mir bleiben und zu mir sprechen als deinem Jungen, und nicht, als wäre ich irgendwer, mit dem man sich zanken kann." (KM-WN?, 142-3)

Lämmchen's reaction, combined with Pinneberg's sense of his worthlessness in the workplace, leads to his demands for recognition from Lämmchen as someone special, her 'Junge'. Approval and recognition from Lämmchen are vital if Pinneberg is to hold onto a sense of himself as a feeling, acting person, even if those actions are sometimes stupid. Only when they are reconciled with each other, when they can again achieve that blissful solidarity between them, can Pinneberg feel some sense of worth; a few lines later we are told that he is 'voll Stolz' (KM-WN?, 144).

Because Pinneberg's sense of personal worth is so central to his identity, he lacks the necessary critical distance to formulate a rational response when it is assaulted in the public realm. Instead, he reacts instinctively by fleeing into the small and intimate world of the private and sentimental, the world in which he is left untouched and in which he can be 'himself'. 'Ich' is passive, it feels rather than acts, it is happy just to seek shelter from the brutal, hostile world of 'they'. 'They' are those who act, such as the 'Arbeiter', who 'sagen Genosse zueinander und helfen einander' (KM-WN?, 226), and the managers at Mandel who should 'bloß abhauen mit ihrem ganzen Gerede' (KM-WN?, 136).

Part of Pinneberg's inability to become aware of what is being done to him rests in his inability clearly to perceive why the managers are appealing to his sense of pride. He is unable to acknowledge that he is fulfilling solely a commercial, profit-making function within the store. Even when Pinneberg is himself selling to a customer, he is unable to differentiate between the act of selling and

his own personality. He is unaware of the commercial forces which control how he lives his life; they are hidden from him and he is left with the miniaturized discourse of home and family as the only effective linguistic sphere within which he can operate."

### Das kunstseidene Mädchen

#### 'Ich will schreiben wie Film' and the diary form

Doris's circumstances are similar to Pinneberg's insofar as her language and the way she leads her life are also very much influenced by commercial forces. These commercial forces operate in her life in various ways, often quite differently from those in Pinneberg's life, as Doris is principally on the consuming end of the market and Pinneberg on the supplying end. Despite this difference, however, the effects of such commingling of the private and public are much the same: by the end of the novel she is left questioning the way she has been leading her life and what she, up until then, has assumed to be her aim in life.

From the very beginning of the novel we are made aware of Doris's fascination with images. In fact, part of the reason she decides to write her journal is so that she can imagine she is in a film:

Das war gestern abend so um zwölf, da fühlte ich, daß etwas Großartiges in mir vorging. Ich lag in Bett [...] - der Mond schien mir ganz weiß auf den Kopf - ich dachte noch, das müßte sich gut machen auf meinen schwarzen Haar, und schade, daß Hubert mich nicht sehen kann, der doch schließlich und endlich der einzige ist, den ich wirklich geliebt habe. Da fühlt ich wie eine Vision Hubert um mich, und der Mond schien, und von nebenan drang ein Grammophon zu mir, und da ging etwas Großartiges in mir vor - wie auch früher manchmal - aber da doch nie so sehr. [...] Aber ich erkannte, daß etwas Besonderes in mir ist, was auch Hubert fand und Fräulein Vogelsang von der Mittelschule, der ich einen Erbkönig hinlegte, daß alles starr war. Und ich bin ganz verschieden von Therese und den anderen Mädchen auf dem Büro und so, in denen nie Großartiges vorgeht. Und dann spreche ich fast ohne Dialekt, was viel

ausmacht und mir eine Note gibt, besonders da mein Vater und meine Mutter ein Dialekt sprechen, das mir geradezu beschämend ist.

Und ich denke, daß es gut ist, wenn ich alles beschreibe, weil ich ein ungewöhnlicher Mensch bin. Ich denke nicht an Tagebuch - das ist lächerlich für ein Mädchen von achtzehn und auch sonst auf der Höhe. Aber ich will schreiben wie Film, denn so ist mein Leben und wird noch mehr so sein. Und ich sehe aus wie Colleen Moore, wenn sie Dauerwellen hätte und die Nase mehr schick ein bißchen nach oben. Und wenn ich später lese, ist alles wie Kino - ich sehe mich in Bildern. Und jetzt sitze ich in meinem Zimmer im Nachthemd, das mir über meine anerkannte Schulter gerutscht ist, und alles ist erstklassig an mir - nur mein linkes Bein ist dicker als mein rechtes. Aber kaum. Es ist sehr kalt, aber im Nachthemd ist schöner - sonst würde ich den Mantel anziehen.

Und es wird mir eine Wohltat sein, mal für mich ohne Kommas zu schreiben und richtiges Deutsch - nicht alles so unnatürlich wie im Büro. (DKM, 5-6)

Doris thinks her life is worth recording because there is something unusual and special about her, 'ich denke, daß es gut ist, wenn ich alles beschreibe, weil ich ein ungewöhnlicher Mensch bin'. She sets herself apart from everybody with whom she comes into contact in her daily life; she does not speak with an accent and she feels things which the women with whom she works, 'in denen nie etwas Großartiges vorgeht', would never understand. She decides that writing 'like film' would be the most appropriate style with which to mediate her life as it is now and as it will be in the future: 'Aber ich will schreiben wie Film, denn so ist mein Leben und wird noch mehr so sein'. The act of writing will also simply be enjoyable and a relief from how she has to write at work: 'Und es wird mir eine Wohltat sein, mal für mich ohne Kommas zu schreiben und richtiges Deutsch - nicht alles so unnatürlich wie im Büro'.

Doris's sense of being something special and her wish to

write like film are consequences of the perception she has of herself when she imagines others are looking at her; she imagines the effect of the moon shining upon her hair, she tells us she would put on a bathrobe because it is cold, but this would spoil the effect of her nightshirt hanging from her shoulder. She imagines an unseen audience watching her, it therefore seems logical that writing like film would capture and preserve in a material form the perception she has of herself, 'ich will schreiben wie Film [...]. Und wenn ich später lese, ist alles wie Kino, ich sehe mich in Bildern.'

The opening of the novel introduces not only Doris, but also two conflicting functions the text is to have. On the one hand, the text as journal will act as a medium through which Doris can communicate both to herself and to an unseen and unknown listener thoughts and feelings she has about her life; the text is a place in which she can express her subjective reflections on what she is doing and what is happening to her. On the other, the text is to serve as a film in which Doris can live out the fantasy she has of herself as being part of a film scenario; as an objective record of what is happening to her, the text will record her movements and conversations like the lens of a camera. Doris does not explain what form writing like film would take, but it would appear her intention is to copy the public medium of film in order to record her private self-analysis. But can these two functions be combined? Indeed, it can be argued that although she is introducing herself and telling us she wants to write like film, she has in fact already failed. There is nothing film-like about the language she uses during the opening; on the contrary, the language is conversational, the words directed to a listener. Already the text is functioning as a medium through which she can express and communicate thoughts and feelings she has; the language is dominated by 'ich denke',

'ich fühle' etc.. It is not the language itself that resembles film, but rather the perception she has of herself of being visible to others which is like film.<sup>9</sup>

The basic issues in Doris's perception of herself are introduced in these opening pages. On the one hand she likes to believe that reality and her life are like a film (something which she would like to show in the way she writes). On the other, by confiding to us how she would like to write, and by telling us how she **thinks**, for example, the light of the moon must look upon her hair, she displays an awareness that reality is not like film after all (something which she can admit privately to her journal but which she would never reveal in her actions). Her dilemma lies in her overriding inability to grasp and hold on to this distinction. Part of the reason why she cannot, as I hope to show below, has to do with the language she has at her disposal and the power that commercial imagery holds over her. In view of the fact that the novel is written in the first person, one of the best ways of following Doris's linguistic predicament is by analysing how she uses 'ich'.

#### 'Ich' in control

Certainly in the opening sections of the novel when Doris is reporting where she is and what she has been doing she is sure of herself and her actions:

Ich hatte einen angenehmen Tag [...]. Und nu sitze ich hier in einem Kaffee - Tasse Kaffee kann ich mir heute auf eigene Faust leisten,  
(DKM, 7)

Also ich fliege und bin so aufgereggt. Bin gerade nach Hause gekommen,  
(DKM, 10)

Jetzt sitze ich hier in einem Lokal und habe furchtbar viel Leberwurst



gegessen. (DKM, 15),

Ich bin ganz kribblig - den ganzen Tag ohne was zu tun und habe Hunger auf Dunkelwerden - und habe in meinen Ohren immer die Melodie; ich hab dich lieb, braune Madonna - in deinen Augen glüht der Sonnenschein. (DKM, 19),

Heute hatten wir Generalprobe - auch das Zelt ist jetzt da. (DKM, 31)

Das war ein Tag. Ich hatte meine Premiere von Wallenstein. (DKM, 34)

She uses full sentences and differentiates between the moment of writing, which is in the present tense, and what she has been doing, reported in the imperfect. Sentences are full, with 'ich' the subject of the sentence. Doris's impressions are ordered; she is sure about what she is doing and, accordingly, the narrative flows smoothly. This style of writing reappears on several occasions throughout the text mostly when Doris is happy or is economically stable. For example, when she becomes the lover of a rich industrialist: 'Ich lese jetzt auch wieder viel Romane. Ich bade sehr viel' (DKM, 81); when she acquires consumer objects: 'Es geht etwas vorwärts. Ich habe fünf Hemden Bembergseide mit Handhohlsaum, eine Handtasse aus Rindleder mit etwas Krokodil dran, einen kleinen grauen Filzhut und ein Paar Schuhe mit Eidechsenkappen' (DKM, 50); and when she is in love: 'Das ist ein wunderbares Leben. Es könnte ja noch wunderbarer sein, aber es ist jetzt derartig wunderbar, daß ich nicht mehr viel zu schreiben habe in mein Buch' (DKM, 123-4). The text is reminiscent of the diary form; Doris communicates on a personal level, she uses her journal/book to tell it/us what she thinks and is doing by means of colloquial language. She is definitely in control of her actions and thoughts and, accordingly, the language is conventional and ordered.

However, when Doris arrives in Berlin and is confronted by new impressions, her ability to keep both a perceptual and linguistic hold on her actions becomes more difficult.

### 'Ich' in disarray

On arrival in Berlin, as Doris is overcome by a multitude of impressions, the narrative speeds up. Although she still describes what she has been doing, 'Ich bin in Berlin. Seit ein paar Tagen. Mit einer Nachtiahrt und noch neunzig Mark übrig' (DKM, 43), she does not organize events into sections:

Heute gehen wir ins 'Resi' - ich bin eingeladen von Franz, der arbeitet in einer Garage.

Das ist die Liebe der Matrosen,,und rrrrr macht das Telefon, das ist an allen Tischen. Mit ganz echten Nummern zum Drehen. [...] Das ist gar kein Lokal, das 'Resi', das hinten in der Blumenstraße ist - das ist lauter Farbe und gedrehtes Licht, das ist ein betrunkenen Bauch, der beleuchtet wird, es ist eine ganz enorme Kunst. (DKM, 58).

Events are now described in the present tense; she no longer reports on her visit to the Resi but tells us about it as if she were there. Furthermore the words of the popular song ('das ist die Liebe der Matrosen') enter the narrative directly along with the sound of the telephone.

As she tells her blind friend Brenner what she has seen in Berlin, the structure of the prose starts to disintegrate. Although the language is still descriptive, an overriding sense of order disappears. Thematically, Doris has difficulty in situating herself in her new surroundings and in maintaining a stable perception of herself. This is reflected stylistically in the use of 'ich' which, as an ordering force around which events have up until now been described, gives way to

unconnected description in which 'ich' finds little room to exist:

Ich habe gesehen - ein Mann mit einem Plakat um den Hals; 'Ich nehme jede Arbeit' - und 'jede' dreimal rot unterstrichen - und ein böser Mund, der zog sich nach unten mehr und mehr - es gab eine Frau ihm zehn Pfennig, die waren gelb, und er rollte sie auf das Pflaster, das Schein hat durch Reklame von Kinos und Lokalen. Und das Plakat war weiß mit schwarz drauf. Und viele Zeitungen und sehr bunt und das Tempo rosa-lila und Nachtausgabe mit rotem Strich und ein gelber Querschnitt - und sehe das Kempinsky mit edlem Holz und Taxis davor mit weißen Karos und Chauffeure mit eingeknicktem Kopf, weil sie ja immer warten. [...] Ich sehe - gequirlte Lichter, das sind Birnen dicht nebeneinander - Frauen haben kleine Schleier und Haar absichtlich ins Gesicht geweht. [...] - und sehe - da ist die Gedächtniskirche und mit Türmen so grau wie Austernschalen. (DKM, 65-6)

Doris, as the subject, cannot compete with the onslaught of impressions that crowd in upon her, full sentences do not exist and 'ich' as an ordering force cannot sustain itself. The language struggles to maintain an ordered relationship between the subject and verb, 'ich habe gesehen', and the objects which the subject is describing. The subject, 'ich', eventually becomes insignificant, and the objects become subjects: 'Ich sehe - [...] Frauen haben kleine Schleier [...] - und sehe - da ist die Gedächtniskirche'. A general disregard for syntax emerges, subjects and verbs are missing and the discourse becomes dislocated, unbound and free. Scenes are depicted in an unconnected flow and impressions follow one another too quickly for any meaning to be attached to any one impression. In the same way that the language is free and unconnected, so are Doris's actions as she moves around Berlin, yet she, too, struggles to find order in what she sees: '- und ich gehe - es sind braune Schuhe und ein Automatenrestaurant mit Walkürenradiomusik und Brötchen, wie ein Stern arrangiert - und Delikatessen, die man sich schämt, nicht zu kennen - in der Stadtküche.' (DKM, 68). By surrendering

herself to the stimulations around her, Doris loses all sense of connection and is unable perceptually to position herself in relation to her surroundings. Meanwhile, the impressions filling her head stem partly from the sight of poverty but mostly from the sight of consumer products, areas of consumption and elements of the mass media ('Reklame', 'Kinos', 'Lokalen', 'Zeitungen', 'Kempinsky', 'gequirlte Lichter', 'Austernschalen', 'edle(s) Holz').

This style of disjointed writing continues as Doris spends an evening with Brenner in Berlin. However, what was previously a flow of descriptions in which Doris could find little room to place herself now becomes a desperate search for meaning, understanding, and communication:

Und dann in ein Kaffee - ich schenk mein Herz nur dir allein - der Geiger, wie der singt! Wir essen was Süßes, das schmeckt ganz rosa - sei doch glücklich - ich will zu sehr wollen, das macht mich betrunken. [...] Und rein in den Omnibus, der springt mit uns übers Pflaster und ist doch so groß und dick - hopp, ein Ruck - und so voll, alle atmen sich an - und aus Polstern ein Dunst. [...]

Im Vaterland sind toll elegante Treppen wie in einen Schloß mit Gräfinnen, die schreiten - und Landschaften und freude Länder und türkisch und Wein und Lauben von Wein [...]. Die Menschen sind alle so eilig - manchmal sind alle blaß im Licht, dann sehen die Kleider von den Mädchen nicht bezahlt aus, und die Männer können sich den Wein eigentlich nicht leisten - ob denn keiner glücklich ist? Jetzt wird doch alles dunkel - wo ist mein helles Berlin?. (DKM, 73-4)

The flow of enchanting descriptions, full of sensuous metaphors, is disrupted by Doris's sudden realization that people are not as rich or happy as they pretend to be. The language during her moment of insight is not at all metaphoric or disjointed, but rather is characterized by a return to full sentences which mediate an opinion rather than a sensation. Doris's cognition, however, cannot be maintained in the face

of the bombardment of physical impressions; the moment of clarity and reflection fades and she seeks again the world of enchantment, 'wo ist mein helles Berlin?' Throughout this section, Doris notices a large amount of misery among the Berlin public. With a popular song in her head she tells us:

ein Mädchen von Sankt Pauli, ein Mädchen von der Reeperbahn...und die Musik ginge eigentlich lieber nach Hause - und so'n Reeperbahnmädchen ist eigentlich ein viel zu armes Luder, als daß sie das so rausjubeln brauchen. Und manchmal lacht einer - und stopft sich mit seinem Lachen den ganzen Ärger von gestern und morgen in den Mund zurück, indem der rausquillt. (DKM, 76)

In this example it is the words of the song which lead Doris to her realization, powerfully formulated, that the people surrounding her are perhaps not enjoying themselves to the extent they appear to be.

Doris's perception of and attitude towards the world of entertainment and commercial culture are ambivalent. While she is immensely attracted to that world, she also frequently sees through its illusions and hype. She has an intense visual awareness which allows her to recognize not only the charm and beauty of bright lights but also the sight of artifice and misery. However, she is rarely able to retain her disturbing insights for any length of time.

Unable to surrender herself completely to her physical surroundings, but unable linguistically to articulate what it is that disturbs her beyond her momentary insights, Doris's perception of herself, her actions and her environment enters a state of flux. She displays an uneasy awareness that reality is not how she would like to perceive it and she therefore becomes uneasy about the way she leads her life. After connecting the words of the song with the sight of misery, Doris claims: 'Betrunken sein, mit Männern schlafen, viel Geld haben -

das muß man wollen, und nichts anderes denken, wie hält man es sonst denn aus - was ist denn wohl kaputt auf der Welt?' (DKM, 76-7). Her inability to pinpoint the source of her unease hinders her from reaching any sustainable insight into her predicament or the predicament of others. Of course, she frequently manages to communicate her thoughts to her diary and, via the diary, to us. But of all the different types of language she employs in an attempt to understand things (descriptions, metaphors, questions), none leads to sustainable cognition. In other words, she is not in possession of the language which would allow her to express in a coherent way what she feels and senses and which would give her the necessary linguistic tools to understand critically what she sees. She cannot answer the question she asks of 'was ist denn wohl kaputt auf der Welt?' The one thing which she believes can improve her situation is to become a *Glanz*.

In an attempt to take control of her life, Doris channels all her energies into becoming a *Glanz*. She has a very definite idea of what a *Glanz* is, but is less sure how to become one:

Am Tisch nebenan saß eine wunderbare Dame mit ganz teuren Schultern und mit einem Rücken - ganz von selbst gerade, und ein so herrliches Kleid - ich möchte weinen - das Kleid war so schön, weil sie nicht nachdenken braucht, woher sie's bekommt, das sah man dem Kleid an. Und ich stand auf der Toilette neben ihr, und wir sahen zusammen in den Spiegel - sie hatte leichte weiße Hände so mit vornehmen Schwung in den Fingern und sichere Blicke - so gleichgültig nebenbei - und ich sah neben ihr so schwer verdient aus. [...] Ob man wohl ein Glanz werden kann, wenn man es nicht von Geburt ist? Aber ich bin doch jetzt schon Schauspielschule. Ich habe aber noch keinen Abendmantel - alles ist halber Kram - das Stück mit Fuchs ist nachmittags eine gute Sache und abends ein Dreck. (DKM, 30-1)

[I]ch habe eine Lust, mein Gesicht in meine Hände zu tauchen, damit es nicht so traurig ist. Es muß sich soviel Mühe geben, weil ich ein Glanz werden will. Es strengt sich ungeheuer an [...].

Und es gibt Hermeline und Frauen mit Pariser Gedufte und Autos und Geschäfte mit Nachthemden von über hundert Mark und Theater mit Samt, da sitzen sie drin - und alles neigt sich, und sie atmen Kronen aus sich heraus, [...] Und sie lächeln Fremdworte richtig, wenn sie welche falsch aussprechen. Und sie wogen so in einer Art mit Georgettebusen und tiefen Ausschnitten, daß sie nichts wissen brauchen, [...] Und sie sind ihre eigene Umgebung und knipsen sich an wie elektrische Birnen, niemand kann ran an sie durch die Strahlen. (DKM, 52-3)

When describing a *Glanz*, Doris uses language of a highly poetic, metaphoric and illusionary kind. The state of being a *Glanz* is evoked in phantasmagorical images which are wholly reminiscent of advertisements, something which Doris seems to be completely unaware of. In the first example the woman has 'teure Schultern', 'sichere Blicke' and her hands have a 'vornehme[r] Schwung'. In the second example, Doris pictures the women as breathing 'Kronen aus sich heraus', as smiling 'Fremdworte richtig' and as being 'ihre eigene Umgebung'. But Doris cannot imitate this, she strains her face and asks herself if one has to be a *Glanz* from birth.

Doris has a very specific image of a *Glanz*, and wants desperately to live this image. But when she momentarily achieves this status by becoming the lover of a rich industrialist, she cannot understand why her experience of being a *Glanz* does not match the image she has. While living in an apartment on the Kurfürstendamm she tells us:

- und dann hebe ich meine Arme wie eine Bühne und schiebe die große Schiebetür auseinander und bin eine Bühne. Ich glaube, daß eine Schiebetür das äußerste an Vornehmheit ist. Und schiebe sie wieder zusammen und gehe zurück und tue es noch mal - und bin eine Bühne mindestens zehnmal jeden Vormittag, [...] Was ist eine Gesellschaft? Bin ich jetzt eine Gesellschaft? Ich habe weiße Seidenschuhe von Pinet

zu vierzig Mark und kann olala-c'est ca, daß jeder denkt, ich spreche  
perfekt Französisch. (DKM, 80-81).

Doris consciously tries to experience herself as a *Glanz*. But she is still not sure if she is experiencing the 'real thing'; one minute she claims she is a 'Bühne' and the next she asks, 'Was ist eine Gesellschaft? Bin ich jetzt eine Gesellschaft?'. Her only yardstick for assessing whether she is now a *Glanz* is to confirm what new consumer products she has acquired and whether she can speak French. To the reader it is obvious that Doris has been largely taken in by advertising; she describes a *Glanz* in phantasmagorical images and she invests all her time and money into acquiring fashionable accessories in an attempt to live her image. But Doris fails to recognize how the world of advertising and image-making has affected her. She questions neither the image itself, nor the advertisement-laden language with which she describes it. However, she is honest enough to recognize that her experience of being a *Glanz* is not up to the image she has. Her tragedy is that she has no language other than advertising by which to conceive of the *Glanz* and is therefore unable to act decisively on her insight. In other words, she lacks the critical language that would allow her to distinguish between her own experience and the image.<sup>4</sup> As with Pinneberg, the influence of commercial interests in shaping her life is hidden from her, so hidden, that they have become an almost integral part of her. Indeed, there are several instances when Doris comes out with statements such as, 'Mein Leben ist Berlin, und ich bin Berlin (DKM, 59), 'Ich bin ein Detektivroman' (DKM,39), 'Da war ich ein Film und eine Wochenschau' (DKM, 81).

With no intention of returning to her old life of home and job, yet increasingly disillusioned with her life in Berlin, Doris is left



at the end of the novel with nothing with which she can identify, she is left alone.

'Ich' alone

At the end of the novel, Doris finds herself at Friedrichstraße train station:

Das war heute abend - meine Hand ist so lahm - mein liebes Buch - jetzt lasse ich alles aus mir herausfallen. [...] Ich sitze auf Bahnhof Friedrichstraße. Hier bin ich mal angekommen vor langem mit den Staatsmännischen und jetzt höre ich hier auf - verdammt nein, ich denke ja nicht dran. Für drei Tage bin ich noch satt gegessen. (DKM, 133-4)

She can situate herself for the moment in time and space but she does not know what she will do next:

Ich will - will - ich weiß nicht - ich will zu Karl. Ich will alles mit ihm zusammen tun, wenn er mich nicht will - arbeiten tu ich nicht, dann geh ich lieber auf die Tauentzien und werde ein Glanz.

Aber ich kann ja dann auch eine Hulla werden - und wenn ich ein Glanz werde, dann bin ich vielleicht noch schlechter als eine Hulla, die ja gut war. Auf den Glanz kommt es nämlich vielleicht gar nicht so furchtbar an. (DKM, 140)

She is left alone, she has no place in which to feel at home, and there is nothing with which she can identify or which she recognizes as offering her an avenue of action. Only subject and verb remain, 'ich will'. She realizes, perhaps too late, that being a *Glanz* is not that important: 'Auf den Glanz kommt es nämlich vielleicht gar nicht so furchtbar an'. But at the same time, she cannot identify with what she has come from, 'ich habe keine Meinesgleichen, ich gehöre überhaupt nirgends hin' (DKM, 138). The only thing left with which she can identify is her journal ('mein liebes Buch'); she communicates with it,

confides in it, and it is her one constant companion. In the end, when she is left alone, her journal remains the last available avenue with which and in which she can communicate her thoughts and feelings.

By the end of the novel Doris has come a long way since the expression of her desire to write like film at the beginning. She may, at the end, still lack a thorough critical understanding of her circumstances and she may also be unsure what to do with her life, but she has come to some kind of understanding that leading the life of a *Glanz* may not be so important after all. She eventually manages this despite the onslaught of commercial images telling her otherwise. We do not know whether she maintains this understanding, but it seems her only chance of retaining it is by withdrawing from the world which she at first so desperately wanted to be a part of. The narrator in Das Kunstseidene Mädchen bears witness both to Doris's entrapment and also to the possibility of her finding a measure of cognitive autonomy and independence.<sup>5</sup>

### Fabian

Of the three novels under discussion, Fabian possesses by far the most conventional narrative structure. No innovative stylistic techniques are employed in the depiction of the protagonist's perception of the world and of himself. There is no disintegration, radical development or change in the language; sentence structure is always conventional with respect for traditional grammatical forms. The strength of the novel lies arguably in the thematic depiction of a world in flux, not in the mediation of it. A large part of the novel is, however, devoted to Fabian's analysis of contemporary society and his disinclination to become an active part of it. It is here that one can make certain observations concerning the discourse which is used to convey his

thoughts. Although Fabian is highly articulate, the language he uses to explain why he cannot interact with society places all responsibility for his isolation on events which are out of his control and which he believes he cannot change. Moreover, circumstances which would force him to make an active decision concerning his life are curtailed by the narrator, who dictates events in such a way that Fabian can always justify his behaviour.

The narrator never challenges the protagonist. On the contrary, narrator and protagonist are virtually interchangeable throughout the text. Fabian's thoughts, for example, can be mediated both with or without inverted commas; both in reported speech and in free indirect speech:

Fabian beugte sich vor und dachte: "Warum verwandelst du dich? Willst du mir den Abschied leicht machen? Ich wünschte, du könntest reden, denn ich hätte viel zu fragen, mein Lieber." (F, 191)

Wo war Cornelia? Warum verdamnte sie ihn zur Untätigkeit? Warum tat sie das in einem der wenigen Augenblicke, wo es ihn zu handeln trieb? (F, 163)

The narrator depicts predominantly Fabian's actions and thoughts. All other characters revolve around Fabian, and any thoughts they may have are mediated solely through dialogue. Although their actions are recounted by the narrator, they all take place in the presence of Fabian as if he were watching them. Only on three occasions is the narrator in possession of knowledge to which Fabian does not also have access.<sup>6</sup> Although Fabian is constantly the centre of attention, he remains detached from his surroundings. On a number of occasions he articulates why he does not want to interact with society:

"Ich kann vieles und will nichts. Wozu soll ich vorwärtskommen? Wofür

und wogegen? Nehmen wir wirklich einmal an, ich sei der Träger einer Funktion. Wo ist das System, in dem ich funktionieren kann? Es ist nicht da und nichts hat Sinn. [...] Ich weiß ein Ziel, aber es ist leider keines. Ich möchte helfen, die Menschen anständig und vernünftig zu machen. Vorläufig bin ich damit beschäftigt, sie auf ihre diesbezügliche Eignung hin anzuschauen."

Labude hob sein Glas und rief: "Viel Vergnügen! [...] Erst muß man das System vernünftig gestalten, dann werden sich die Menschen anpassen. [...] Das siehst du ein, nicht wahr? Natürlich siehst du das ein. Aber du phantasierst lieber von einem unerreichbaren vollkommenen Ziel, anstatt einem unvollkommenen zuzustreben, das sich verwirklichen läßt. Es ist dir bequemer so." (F, 53-4)

"Ich treibe mich herum, und ich warte wieder, wie damals im Krieg [...]. Die nächste Zukunft hatte den Entschluß gefaßt, mich zu Blutwurst zu verarbeiten. Was sollte ich bis dahin tun? Bücher lesen? An meinem Charakter feilen? Geld verdienen? Ich saß in einem großen Wartesaal, und der hieß Europa. [...] Und jetzt sitzen wir wieder in Wartesaal, und wieder heißt er Europa! Und wieder wissen wir nicht, was geschehen wird. Wir leben provisorisch, die Krise nimmt kein Ende!"

"Zum Donnerwetter!" rief Labude, "wenn alle so denken wie du, wird nie stabilisiert! Empfände ich vielleicht den provisorischen Charakter der Epoche nicht? Ist dieses Mißvergnügen dein Privileg? Aber ich sehe nicht zu, ich versuche, vernünftig zu handeln."

"Die Vernünftigen werden nicht an die Macht kommen", sagte Fabian, "und die Gerechten noch weniger." (F, 61-2)

In both instances Fabian perceives the problem to lie not in his lack of desire to interact with society but in the absence of the system in which he could function, something for which Labude criticizes him. Fabian prefers to distance himself from the world around him rather than seek a role in society in which he may have to compromise some of his standards. Stylistically, this is emphasized by the constant use of

'ich' as subject followed by an object which denotes everything other than Fabian. The implication seems to be that his 'ich' cannot change; by contrast, the world can, but it is not going to. His behaviour is characterized by critical detachment; because the society in which he could function does not exist, he chooses not to function at all; because society is not 'vernünftig', which he is, he chooses to wait until society is; and because Europe is in decline, he decides there is no point in undertaking any action whatsoever because, in the end, the 'Vernünftigen' and 'Gerechten' are not going to come to power in any case. Undertaking political action is also out of the question, not only because his political leanings are not representative of the class from which he comes, but also because he believes that, regardless of his own actions, things will not improve:7

"[I]ch bin ein Kleinbürger, das ist heute ein großes Schimpfwort. [...] Das Proletariat ist ein großer Interessenverband", sagte Fabian. "Es ist der größte Interessenverband. Daß ihr euer Recht wollt, ist eure Pflicht. Und ich bin euer Freund, denn wir haben denselben Feind, weil ich die Gerechtigkeit liebe. Ich bin euer Freund, obwohl ihr darauf pfeift. Aber, mein Herr, auch wenn Sie an die Macht kommen, werden die Ideale der Menschheit im Verborgenen sitzen und weiterweinen. Man ist noch nicht gut und klug, bloß weil man arm ist." (F, 66)

Fabian is clever and articulate. He is able to identify where problems lie and to adopt a cognitive position in relation to them, but it is a position which does not demand any action from him. In his passive complacency he can be sure of himself and what he is (not) doing. Only once, when he falls in love with Cornelia, does he seriously consider abandoning his detachment in favour of action:

Gestern Nacht, bevor er einschlief, hatte er noch gedacht: Vielleicht sollte man doch eine kleine Tüte Ehrgeiz säen in dieser Stadt, wo Ehrgeiz so rasch Früchte trug; vielleicht sollte man sich doch ein

wenig ernster nehmen und in dem wackligen Weltgebäude, als ob alles in Ordnung sei, eine lauschige Dreizimmerwohnung einrichten; vielleicht war es Sünde, das Leben zu lieben und kein seriöses Verhältnis zu ihm zu haben, (F, 109)

Even though Fabian is considering action, it is interesting to note that the narrator (and then also Fabian) refers to 'man' instead of 'er'; Fabian is already being distanced (or distancing himself) from the would-be action which does not take place in any case because he loses his job:

Der Zufall hatte ihm einen Menschen in die Arme geführt, für den er endlich handeln durfte, und dieser Mensch stieß ihn in die ungewollte, verfluchte Freiheit zurück. [...] In dem Augenblick, wo die Arbeit Sinn erhielt, weil er Cornelia fand, verlor er die Arbeit. Und weil er die Arbeit verlor, verlor er Cornelia. (F, 164)

The necessary involvement and action which would be demanded from him cannot take place because he loses his job, something which Fabian can do nothing about. This is reiterated in the syntax; whereas Fabian has up until now been the dominant subject of the sentences, controlling how he lives his life, he now becomes the helpless object, 'ihn', dependent on the subjects, 'der Zufall' and 'dieser Mensch'. Fabian is both exonerated from responsibility and left unchallenged by the narrator.

Throughout the novel, Fabian is in control of the discourse even if not in control of the events: Fabian as a thinking subject is always present, yet his actions are passive, characterized by critical detachment and depoliticized withdrawal. He is not prepared to abandon his moral standards and seek an active role in society; this would be a betrayal of what he believes in. Fabian remains passive and consistently justifies that passivity. The moralist retains his

integrity, but at the price of ineffectuality.<sup>83</sup>

With regard to the period in which Fabian does have a job, he is, like Pinneberg, involved in commercial sales. He is employed in the advertising section of a cigarette company writing copy for advertisements; he therefore has to use his linguistic wit in order to be successful. There are only a few scenes in the novel which take place in Fabian's office but in them we can detect certain similarities between his and Pinneberg's job. The chief difference, however, is that Fabian manages to maintain a certain level of critical distance between himself and his job and colleagues. During one scene we read:

Fabian rollte ein Plakat auf, befestigte es mit Reißzwecken an der Wand, stellte sich in die entlegenste Zimmerecke und starrte das Plakat an, das mit einer Fotografie des Kölner Doms und einer vom Plakathersteller daneben errichteten, dem Dom an Größe nichts nachgebenden Zigarette bedeckt war. Er notierte: "Nichts geht über...So groß ist...Turmhoch über allen...Völlig unerreichbar..." Er tat seine Pflicht, obwohl er nicht einsah, wozu,

Fischer fand keinen Reim und keine Ruhe. Er fing eine Unterhaltung an. "Bertuch erzählt, es stünden wieder Kündigungen bevor."

"Schön möglich", sagte Fabian.

"Was fangen Sie an", fragte der andere, "wenn man Sie hier vor die Tür setzt?"

"Denken Sie, ich habe mein Leben seit der Konfirmation damit verbracht, gute Propaganda für schlechte Zigaretten zu machen? Wenn ich hier fliege, such ich mir einen neuen Beruf. Auf einen mehr oder weniger kommt es mir nicht mehr an," (F, pp.41-42)

Fabian, like Pinneberg, is shown to be conscientious; he stands in the opposite corner to where he has attached the poster in order to think of a catchy slogan for it. He thinks of various possibilities for the opening line ('Nichts geht über...So groß ist...' etc.). But the following sentence ('Er tat seine Pflicht, obwohl er nicht einsah, wozu')

immediately distances Fabian from his work - something which is reinforced by his comments to Fischer, 'Denken Sie, ich habe mein Leben seit der Konfirmation damit verbracht, gute Propaganda für schlechte Zigaretten zu machen?'

A little later in this scene Fabian is in his boss's office and it is interesting to note how the language of the boss combines a threatening tone with a hint of paternalism, just like Pinneberg's managers:

"Sie könnten sich mal ein kleines, hübsches Preisausschreiben ausdenken", meinte der Direktor. "Ihr Prospekt für Detailhändler hat uns ganz gut gefallen. [...] Wir brauchen etwas Neues", fuhr der Direktor fort. "Ein Preisausschreiben oder was Aehnliches. Es darf aber nichts kosten, verstehen Sie? Der Aufsichtsrat hat schon neulich geäußert, er müsse den Reklame-Etat möglicherweise um die Hälfte reduzieren. Was das für Sie bedeuten würde, können Sie sich denken. Ja? Also, junger Freund, an die Arbeit! Bringen Sie mir bald was Neues. Ich wiederhole aber: So billig wie möglich. 'n Morgen."

Fabian ging. (F, pp.43-44)

Fabian is praised for his previous work and is told to think out a 'kleines, hübsches Preisausschreiben'. The boss addresses him as 'junger Freund' but at the same time he warns of pending redundancies and directly threatens Fabian with his, 'Was das für Sie bedeuten würde, können Sie sich denken'. However, Fabian shows no reaction to the threat and simply leaves the office.

Withdrawal, escapism and (enforced) passivity characterize the behaviour of all the protagonists in these three novels. Doris, more than Fabian and Pinneberg, seeks to interact with society. She appropriates different forms of behaviour and language in an attempt to find something with which she can identify. The various discourses she



employs represent attempts to find a niche for herself. But due both to bad luck and the idealization of a life-style that does not offer fulfilment, she fails in the end to achieve her aim, and her language returns to sober, simple description while she is left wondering what to do.

Pinneberg also fails to find a niche for himself. He flees to the refuge of his private, sentimental sphere when the public world, which has made him so acutely aware that success depends on personality, goes on to attack and destroy his sense of pride and personal worth.

The perception that Pinneberg and Doris have of themselves has, largely unbeknown to them, been shaped by various marketing discourses. Pinneberg is unable clearly to see behind the motives of the managers' appeals to his sense of manhood and personal value. Instead, he comes to perceive himself in similar terms, and he struggles to find ways to counteract the adverse effects of such a perception. Likewise, Doris is frequently unaware of what is influencing the way she thinks, she does not radically question her image of a *Glanz*, nor her desire to acquire so many fashionable consumer products. Neither Pinneberg nor Doris notice that they are speaking a discourse that is being aimed at them, largely because they cannot achieve any critical distance from it; the commercial interests have latched onto and hooked themselves into the protagonists' perception of themselves. It is a language which has been dictated by more powerful groups and which uses less powerful groups to disseminate it (Pinneberg) and to consume it (Doris).

Unlike Pinneberg and Doris, Fabian has education and self-confidence; he is able to formulate what he does not like about society. But because he considers any concession to the outside world to be a

breach of personal integrity, he refuses to do anything about it. Even though he works with commercial language, he manages to distance himself from it, but this leaves him just as isolated as Pinneberg and Doris. Stylistically, his isolation is reflected in the dominance of one discourse throughout the novel.

In all three novels, the protagonists (unconsciously) find their language restricting. Part of their linguistic entrapment stems from the fact that all three of them work or spend their free time in environments where personal qualities (charm, wit, sophistication) have been appropriated by the public commercial realm. There then remains little linguistic room for the protagonists to express themselves; they either have to accept this commercial language or reject it. If they reject it, they find they are left with no other socially effective discourse. Doris may still have her journal, Pinneberg may still have Lämmchen and Fabian may die with his integrity intact. But their language, like their actions, becomes ineffective and they become passive spectators of the world around them.

CHAPTER FOUR  
SPACES OF THE CITY

The language which the protagonists have at their disposal constitutes only one part of their (restricting) environment. Another crucial component is, quite obviously, the urban world within which they must live. How do the narrators describe the spaces of the city and how do the characters behave in them? In what ways do buildings and streets influence the actions, themes and ideas of the novels? Are the buildings and streets restrictive or liberating? In the following, I am primarily concerned with the spaces within which the characters move: their homes, public institutions, the areas they seek for entertainment and the streets which both facilitate their movement and which also encroach upon their senses with noise, traffic, crowds and shops.<sup>1</sup>

It will become clear that the city is a place in which the characters, for good and for ill, live, move and have their being. But, particularly in times of crisis, the city can become a hostile place, home more to powerful and destructive social forces than to the characters. The city is a place that, on the one hand, accommodates the characters and, on the other, constantly disturbs and disorientates them, forcing them to adopt new strategies of defence and self-protection, whether it be in the form of coming to terms with their situation or causing them to flee the city. As we shall see, the role commercial forces play in this is again particularly significant.

The Private Realm

At first sight it might seem more appropriate to end, rather than begin, an analysis of spaces of the city with a discussion of the private sphere, because the home would seem to provide a refuge from the city.

This is, however, not always the case. Indeed, with the exception of Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, the private sphere of the protagonists reveals itself to be generally grim and depressing, an area in which the protagonists spend as little time as possible and which forces them out into other areas of the city.

Only in Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? is the private sphere depicted as a haven away from the rest of the world. It is Pinneberg's and Lämmchen's most profound wish to have a place to call their own. This wish becomes fulfilled when they move into the rooms in the yard of Meister Puttbreese's furniture shop. The rooms are situated above a cinema in Alt-Moabit. This space becomes the area in which Pinneberg and Lämmchen cannot be reached by the outside world; they do not have to share with other people, they live there unofficially because Meister Puttbreese is not actually allowed to let the rooms and the rooms have to be reached via a ladder - the implication being that if they so wanted, Pinneberg and Lämmchen could draw up the ladder in the event of outside danger. Indeed, the flat is referred to as a 'Burg' (KM-WN?, 266), 'Kajütenwohnung' (184), 'Schiffskabine' (186), and a 'Mastkorb' (260). Outside noise only penetrates the rooms dimly and even then it is described using nautical imagery:

Man mag in einer halben Schiffskabine liegen, in Berlin NW, auf einem Wachstuchsofa, nach einem Garten hinaus; der Lärm der Großstadt kommt doch zu einem. Nur daß er hier verschmolzen ist aus tausend Einzelgeräuschen in ein großes allgemeines Geräusch. Das schwillt und nimmt ab, das wird ganz laut und ist fast fort, als hätte es der Wind geschluckt.

Pinneberg liegt da, das Geräusch erreicht ihn und hebt ihn auf, dann senkt es ihn langsam nieder, er fühlt, wie das kühle Wachstuchsofa seinem Gesicht entgegenkommt, ihn hebt und senkt und doch nie aus dem Arm läßt, das ist wie die Dünung der See. Die geht auch so zwecklos vor sich hin, immer weiter, warum eigentlich -? (KM-WN?, 186)

City noise is described using images of nature. Protected in his apartment, Pinneberg finds the sounds comforting; they lull him to sleep. However, the space that allows Pinneberg and Lämmchen to exist away from the gaze and interference of the outside world can become a space signifying isolation and helplessness. When they think the *Murkel* is ill, they realize they cannot fetch a doctor:

"Jungchen, wenn du ihn hier rauf bringst in diese Wohnung, die Leiter rauf, es gibt Stank. Der zeigt uns wonöglich an, daß wir hier wohnen. Ach, der klettert gar nicht erst die Leiter rauf, der denkt, du willst ihm was tun." (KM-WN?, 258)

The area that protects them from the outside world is also the area that severs them from it:

"Das ist", sagt Pinneberg, "weil wir gar nichts sind. Wir sitzen allein. Und die anderen, die genau so sind wie wir, die sitzen auch allein. Jeder dünkt sich was. Wenn wir wenigstens Arbeiter wären! Die sagen Genosse zueinander und helfen einander..." (KM-WN?, 259)

Pinneberg's and Lämmchen's experience of the private sphere as a place to be cherished stands in stark contrast to Fabian's and Cornelia's experience in *Fabian* and Doris's in *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen*. In these novels the characters express an intense dislike of their rented accommodation. In *Fabian*, Fabian spends as little time as possible in his rented room in Schaperstraße 17, situated off the Kaiserallee (see map, fig. 61). His room is described as a 'fremde[s], gottverlassene[s] Zimmer', and his landlady as 'Witwe Hohlfeld, die das Vermieten früher nicht nötig gehabt hatte' (F, 46). Shortly after Cornelia moves into her room in the same apartment, she describes it as 'fremd' (F, 101), 'eine fürchterliche Bude' and 'häßlich' (F, 102). And

during Doris's one period of living in a rented room we read:

Die Wirtin ist eine Schweinerei, und das Treppenhaus ist eine Schweinerei und das Klosett, was in einem mit eine Besenkammer ist ohne Licht und alles. Ueberhaupt ein möbliertes Zimmer! Wie man da auf gemeine Art allein ist. (DKM, 84)

And a little later:

Und da gibt es einen Kursus für fremde Sprachen zu lernen und für tanzen zu lernen. Da gibt es aber keinen Kursus, zu lernen allein sein in möblierten Zimmern mit zerbrochenem Waschgeschirr und überhaupt allein sein ohne kümmernde Worte und Geräusche. (DKM, 87)

Doris never lives in any one area for any significant length of time. This has partly to do with the fact that she has no job in Berlin and so must live off the generosity of others. But mobility is also the necessary prerequisite for attaining the status of a *Glanz* which Doris so desperately desires. In pursuing that status, she must be flexible enough to exploit chances of upward mobility. In doing so, she comes to occupy highly diverse private spaces. One of the first places she stays when she arrives in Berlin is 'bei Tilli Scherer in der Münzstraße, das ist beim Alexanderplatz, da sind nur Arbeitslose ohne Hemd und furchtbar viele. Aber wir haben zwei Zimmer' (DKM, 43, see map). Above her live a pimp and some prostitutes, whose close proximity makes Doris anxious, 'denn es war mir doch eine furchtbar fremde Unterwelt, und so weit kann man kommen' (DKM, 78). And below her live her blind friend Brenner and his wife, whose flat is also described as a grim, depressing place:

Und sitze in der Küche, und es ist hinter dem Vorhang das Bett. Ich würde den Vorhang, der gelb ist und so voll armen Flecken, vor den Herd hängen und nicht vor das Bett. [...] Und es ist eine Stille und so feuchtes Gedampfe und am Fenster die graue Mauer, das fällt alles auf

uns. (DKM, 64-65)

This area serves as an abode until Doris finds something better. When she becomes the lover of a rich industrialist she lives for a while in a 'Zimmerflucht am Kurfürstendamm' (DKM, 78):

Die Wohnung ist so fein, der Chauffeur ist so fein, alles ist so fabelhaft, ich wandle durch die Räume. Und es sind Tapeten von dunkelroter Farbe - so toll vornehm - und Eichenmöbel und Nußbaum. Es sind Tiere mit Augen, die leuchten, und die knipst man elektrisch an, dann fressen sie Rauch. Und Klubsessel, die haben kleine Aschenbecher umgeschallt wie Armbänder - so eine Wohnung ist das.

Und dann tue ich etwas ganz Großes. In meinem Negligé, das meine Füße seidig umwallt und meine Knie streichelt, bewege ich mich vor und hebe ganz langsam meine beiden Arme, die von Spitzen überstürzt werden - und an meinen Füßen rosa seidene Pantoffeln mit Pelz dran - und dann hebe ich meine Arme wie eine Bühne und schiebe die große Schiebetür auseinander und bin eine Bühne. Ich glaube, daß eine Schiebetür das äußerste an Vornehmheit ist. Und schiebe sie wieder zusammen und gehe zurück und tue es noch mal - und bin eine Bühne mindestens zehnmal jeden Vormittag. (DKM, 80)

The phantasmagoric flat serves as the background against which Doris can live out her dream of being a *Glanz* rather than as a place in which Doris can 'live'.

It is not surprising that Doris is happiest in Ernst's apartment, which she describes as:

die Wohnung eines Sommers [...]. Ganz modern alles. Und nicht so reiche Eichen wie bei den Großindustriellen. [...] Hat da 'ne Wohnung mit Korkteppich, drei Zimmer mit Bad, einen Gunnibaum und ein Diwan so breit mit seidiger Decke und so feine stahlene Zahnarztlampen [...]. Hat da 'n lackiertes Bett, so ganz flach, und kleine Nachttische wie japanische Kochkisten [...]. (DKM, 99-100)

Whereas her first living areas were only depressing, and the industrialist's apartment only transitory and phantasmagoric, Ernst's flat embodies a modern design which Doris likes - probably because, in its modern simplicity and lack of any reference to tradition, it reflects Doris's own 'uprooted' lifestyle. The longer Doris lives there and the more she falls in love with Ernst, the more she identifies with the space:

Die Wohnung ist mir, die Gardinen sind mir, sein Kochen mir, seine lederne Haut mir. (DKM, 120)

Doris is the most mobile character in the three novels under consideration, but other characters also regularly change their places of residence. In Fabian, Frau Moll, the wife of the lawyer, moves twice (the second time she has to flee Berlin). Labude has a second residence in the centre to which he withdraws, 'wenn ihm der Westen, die noble Verwandtschaft, die Damen der guten Gesellschaft und das Telefon auf die Nerven gingen' (F, 49). The Grunewald villa, from which he is escaping, is described as a 'Wohnmuseum' (F, 78). Cornelia moves out of her room in Schaperstraße shortly after she has moved in and goes to live in the two rooms that Makart, the film producer, rents for her. And Fabian leaves the city spontaneously to return to his hometown. In Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, Pinneberg and Lämmchen initially live in the small town of Ducherow. Upon their arrival in Berlin they first live with Pinneberg's mother in Moabit, then they move into their own flat in Alt-Moabit and finally, when they can no longer afford the rent, they are forced to move into a 'Laubenkolonie' just beyond the city to the east.

This constant moving suggests on the one hand a mobile society, (which may display liberating energy and vitality) but on the other hand, a society in flux. There is no sense of permanence and



continuity, no private environment that is constant and stable. This sense of a society in flux is further emphasized by the nature of many of the sexual encounters which take place in the private sphere. They frequently have little to do with stable partnerships and more to do with sexual marketing, exploitation or fleeting one-night-stands.

For example, in Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, Pinneberg's mother runs a private establishment in her apartment for people suffering from 'keinfem] Glück in der Liebe' (KM-WN?, 151). In Fabian, Frau Moll uses her first apartment to molest men under a contractual agreement she has with her husband and her second apartment to run a 'Männerbordell' (F, 140). Fabian has a one-night-stand both with Frau Moll in her apartment and with the wife of a travelling salesman in the Müllerstraße in the north of Berlin. Cornelia moves into the rooms that Makart has rented for her in which she will be his mistress. And Labude's father also rents rooms for his various mistresses who, like Cornelia, thereby acquire the springboard they need for entry into the acting world. In Das Kunstseidene Mädchen, Doris has transitory encounters with men from many different kinds of milieux including Tilli's unemployed husband, a rich industrialist and a poor intellectual. In most of these examples there is more at issue than simply sex; money and careers are also at stake. Both Doris and Cornelia are given the assurance of a roof over their heads in exchange for sexual favours; their sexual value and market value thereby become inextricable, and the women become owned like the property in which they live (see chapter two above, pp.69-70).

In these novels the private sphere appears to have a number of roles and functions. For Doris, Fabian and Cornelia it is a place that can be grim and depressing, an area from which they want to escape as quickly as possible. For Frau Moll, Frau Mia Pinneberg, Makart and Labude's father it is an area in which to carry out various kinds of

business based on sex.

Interestingly, although the characters move frequently and have sexual encounters with people from very different social milieux, the areas in which they live can nevertheless be associated with the type, or class, of people they represent. Although the characters are all fictional, all areas and street names refer to places that existed in Berlin in the Twenties and Thirties.

Labude's family, for example, in Fabian, live in Grönewald, an elegant suburb for the wealthy to the west of Berlin. His second flat is described as being in the centre, an area which by the end of the Twenties had become less fashionable but which had not yet by any means lost its prestige. When Fabian escapes from Frau Moll, he finds his way to the S-Bahn station Heerstraße which is located in the Westend, an area that had become fashionable since the turn of the century. Fabian, typical of his position as a single, educated and fairly well paid white-collar worker, lives in a rented room in a large apartment in Charlottenburg. Before the war, Charlottenburg had been more or less exclusively middle-class. But with the loss of husbands in the war and/or the loss of savings in the years of inflation, the area became a kind of 'bed-sit-land', it was a popular residential area for the kind of *Angestellter* that Fabian represents.

In Das Kunstseidene Mädchen Doris lives amidst the misery of the eastern side behind Alexanderplatz, a traditional working class area with high unemployment. Her 'Zimmerflucht' is appropriately on the Kurfürstendamm; the street which at that time was establishing its association with everything glitzy and exclusive in Berlin. Her time with Ernst is also appropriately set in Friedenau; an area south of the centre of Berlin, which could call itself metropolitan but which still retained its small-town atmosphere even after its annexation to Berlin

in 1920.

Pinneberg's mother, in Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, lives in Moabit, a traditional working class area. Pinneberg and Lämmchen move to Alt-Moabit, still working-class, but with some claim to a new image in that it was situated just north of the up-and-coming western parts of the city. And, finally, they are forced to live in a *Laubenkolonie*, just beyond the city to the east when they can no longer afford their rooms in Alt-Moabit.

Clearly, the private sphere is never a stable or constant environment in these novels. Like the lovers that move through them, the flats and apartments are also exchangeable and transitory. If an area does serve as a stabilizing force, as in Pinneberg's and Lämmchen's rooms, then that stability can turn into severance and isolation from the outside world.

#### Institutions and night life

Interestingly, descriptions of the physical appearance of work environments do not feature to any significant extent in any of the novels. Doris and Fabian are, of course, made unemployed in the early stages of the novels, and in Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? depictions of the workplace tend to concentrate on Pinneberg's dealings with his managers, customers and fellow salesmen (see chapter 2). The physical appearance of the buildings in which work takes place is perhaps simply too mundane, or too much taken for granted, to merit description. More interesting are the protagonists' reactions when they enter areas with which they are not familiar. When faced by these scenes, they can express surprise and confusion, but they are also capable of adapting to them and accepting them.

For example, when Heilbutt takes Pinneberg to his 'Frei-

Körper-Kultur' evening in a swimming pool, Pinneberg is first surprised to discover that the evening takes place in a normal swimming pool; 'Ach so, es ist eine richtige Schwimmbadeanstalt. Ich dachte...' (KM-WN?, 195). Secondly, he is surprised to find himself among people he would not expect:

das Hauptkontingent stellen würdige ältere Herren und behäbige Frauen, Pinneberg kann sie sich gut in einem Militärkonzert vorstellen, Kaffee trinkend, hier, wo sie jetzt sind, wirken sie ganz unwahrscheinlich, (KM-WN?, 198)

Pinneberg does not expect to see such people unclothed in a public swimming pool. They assume a different guise; they do not represent what they 'normally' would represent.<sup>22</sup> Conversely, Fabian is surprised by the quality of the clothing of the unemployed when he goes to the *Arbeitsamt*:

Er zog sich zurück, trat auf die Straße und fand, ein paar Hausnummern weiter, einen Laden, der wie das Geschäft eines Konsumvereins aussah, jetzt aber eben jene Filiale des Arbeitsamts darstellte, in der er sich melden sollte. [...] Fabian war erstaunt, wie sorgfältig diese Arbeitslosen gekleidet waren, manche konnten geradezu elegant genannt werden, und wer ihnen auf dem Kurfürstendamm begegnet wäre, hätte sie fraglos für freiwillige Müßiggänger gehalten. (F, 123)

It is interesting to note that Fabian is not surprised to find that the office is situated in what used to be a shop. In the same way that characters regularly change their place of residence, so buildings change their functions. The fact that some of these shifting scenes are unquestioningly accepted by the characters shows that they can at times feel at home in the modern city, but that they sometimes register confusion points to a sense of displacement that the modern world can

so easily create.

The sense of a world in flux, a place in which scenes shift and assume new guises and in which the individual must adopt certain codes of behaviour if he or she wants to find some footing, dominates depictions of night life in both Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen. The intense dislike the protagonists have for their private rooms often forces them to seek these areas. Here they escape both the misery of the private sphere and the monotony of the work sphere.<sup>29</sup> Descriptions of the establishments concentrate on the interiors, on the type of people in them and their activities. The way the protagonists interpret their surroundings determines to a large extent their behaviour within them. So, for example, a description of the 'Resi' in Das Kunstseidene Mädchen reveals a lavish interior:

Das ist gar kein Lokal, das "Resi", das in der Blumenstraße ist - das ist lauter Farbe und gedrehtes Licht, das ist ein betrunkenen Bauch, der beleuchtet wird, es ist eine ganz enorme Kunst. So was gibt es nur in Berlin. Man denke sich alles rot und schillernd noch und noch und immer mehr und wahnsinnig raffiniert. Und Weintrauben leuchten, und auf Stangen sind große Terrinen, aber der Deckel wird von einem Zwischenraum getrennt - und es glitzert, und wasserartige Fontänen geben so ganz feinsinnige Strahlen. Aber das Publikum ist keine höchste Klasse. Es gibt Rohrpost - da schreibt man Briefe und tut sie in Röhren und in ein Wandloch, da kommt ein Zugwind und weht sie zum Bestimmungsort. Ich war von der ungeheuren Aufmachung wie berauscht.[...] Ich friere und geh jetzt schlafen. Aber das "Resi" war so schön - das ist die Liebe der Matrosen - jawohl Herr Kapitän, jawohl Herr Kapi - gute Nacht, ihr herrlichen bunten Farben. (DKM, 57-58)

Doris does not describe the shape of the building in much detail. Rather it is the decorations and their effects which so fascinate her, and the features that catch her attention are on the one hand those that speak of natural abundance (such as the grapes and

fountains) and on the other they represent the achievement of sophisticated technology (such as the 'Rohrpost'). Doris happily allows herself to be captivated by everything: 'Ich war von der ungeheuren Aufmachung wie berauscht'. Even though she remarks that the clientele is not very elegant, she still manages to recreate the magic of the Resi when she goes to bed in her cold room. Here, the 'Schlager' she has heard and the memory of the lights she has seen help her to recreate the atmosphere when she goes to sleep.

Not only is interior decoration important in establishing the aura of an establishment, but also the aura of the people within these places. For example, when Doris recognizes the connection between the Romanisches Café and the 'geistige Elite' which populates it, her reaction is to assume the same aura as those around her:

- und drüben das Romanische Café mit den längeren Haaren von Männern!  
Und da verkehrte ich einmal Abend für Abend mit einer geistigen Elite, was eine Auswahl ist, was jede gebildete Individualität aus Kreuzworträtseln weiß. Und wir bildeten alle einen Kreis. [...] Da legte ich meinen Kopf weit zurück, während sie reden, und werfe Blicke in die Luft und höre nicht zu. Und plötzlich presse ich meinen Mund ganz eng zusammen und dann leger auf, blase Rauch durch die Nase und werfe voll Gleichgültigkeit und eiskalt ein einzelnes Fremdwort in sie hinein. Weil nämlich alle einzelnen Fremdworte in Gespräche geworfen ein Symbol sind, und ein Symbol ist das, was immer paßt. Wenn man es mit Sicherheit macht, schämt sich jeder, es nicht zu verstehen. Bei einem Symbol kann einem gar nichts passieren. Aber ich habe sie dann nachher sehr über bekommen. (DKM, 66-67)

In the Romanisches Café it is the display of academic self-confidence which determines if one belongs. In Josty on the Potsdamer Platz it is the ability to pay:

ich sitze bei Josty am Potsdamer Platz, und es sind Säulen von Marmor und eine Weite. Alle Leute lesen Zeitungen und auch ausländische und

bedeutend gedrückt, und sie haben so eine Ruhe, indem sie sitzen, als wenn ihnen alles gehört, denn sie können bezahlen. Ich ja auch heute. (DKM, 61)

In other bars it is possible to display the aura in one's facial expression:

Die Mädchen haben weiße, kleine Schürzen und sind hübsch wie Lockenpuppen mit Kulleraugen und russischer Sprache - und können gut durch vornehmes Gesicht jedem beweisen, sie sind Generalfrauen. (DKM, 69)

man darf hier nicht merken, daß er nicht sieht, dann würden sie böse, weil es die Fröhlichkeit stört. (DKM, 75)

ich habe eine Lust, mein Gesicht in meine Hände zu tauchen, damit es nicht so trau<sup>r</sup>ig ist. Es muß sich soviel Mühe geben, weil ich ein Glanz werden will. Es strengt sich ungeheuer an - und überall sitzen Frauen, von denen die Gesichter sich anstrengen. (DKM, 52)

Doris assesses the clientele to decide how she must act within these areas. Whether she belongs or not is determined by whether she can copy the aura of those who surround her. The creation of this aura depends both on the existence of such establishments and on the presence, in sufficiently large numbers, of a clientele that helps to create and perpetuate that aura, whether through clothing, ways of speaking or facial expressions. But the superficiality and playfulness of the signs and the often playful response of the people in them cannot always hide or completely repress scenes of economic plight and poverty. This is very evident after an evening in Berlin with her friend Brenner:

Im Vaterland sind toll elegante Treppen wie in einem Schloß mit Gräfinnen, die schreiten - und Landschaften und fremde Länder und türkisch und Wein und Lauben von Wein und die kolossale Landschaft

eines Rheines mit Naturschauspielen, denn sie machen einen Donner, [...] Es ist doch schön und wunderbar, welche Stadt hat denn so was noch, wo sich Räume an Räume reihen und die Flucht eines Palastes bilden? [...] Ein Mädchen von Sankt Pauli, ein Mädchen von der Reeperbahn, und die Musik ginge eigentlich lieber nach Hause - und so'n Reeperbahnmädchen ist eigentlich ein viel zu armes Luder, als daß sie das so rausjubeln brauchen. Und manchmal lacht einer - und stopft sich mit seinem Lachen den ganzen Aerger von gestern und morgen in den Mund zurück, indem der rausquillt, (DKM, 74-76)

The recognition of the words in the song combined with the sight of artificiality make Doris aware of the narcotic effects created by the atmosphere of these areas. She notes the elaborate fiction at work here and the immense effort required of some adherents of that fiction.

In both Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen there are frequent references to the fact that some people never quite fit in with their surroundings. One of Doris's lovers 'war nur aus Zufall im Jockey, weil er unmodern ist und die neue Zeit ihn ekelt wegen der Unmoral und der Politik' (DKM, 51). In Fabian, Fabian only goes to Frau Sommer's establishment because he is 'sehr neugierig' (F, 18). And when he and Labude are in Haupt's Festsälen we are told they love the place precisely because 'sie nicht hierher gehörten' (F, 52). The public is described as full of 'Straßenmädchen [...] Kommis, Buchhalter und Einzelhändler' (F, 52). Each table has a telephone, which is one of its main attractions:

Das Nummernschild ihres Tischtelefons glühte ohne Unterbrechung. Der Apparat surrte. Man wollte sie sprechen. Labude hob den Hörer aus der Gabel und legte ihn unter den Tisch. Sie hatten wieder Ruhe. Denn der Lärm, der übrigblieb, die Musik, das Gelächter und der Gesang waren nicht persönlich gemeint und konnten ihnen nichts anhaben. (F, 52)

Labude and Fabian set themselves apart from those around them by disconnecting the telephone. They like the fact that their telephone



constantly rings and lights up, but they do not want to be associated with the people there. They are not the only ones who do not belong. It is during this scene that Frau Moll is described by another woman in Haupt as:

'ne Marke. Sie gehört gar nicht hierher, kommt in teuren Pelzmänteln an, aber darunter trägt sie was ganz Durchsichtiges. Es soll eine reiche Frau aus dem Westen sein, sogar verheiratet. Sie holt sich junge Kerle in die Nische, bezahlt für sie und gibt an, daß die Wände rot werden. (F, 58)

All characters are intent on establishing who does and who does not belong. There seems to be a desire to find some kind of footing in these areas, something through which the characters can establish an identity for themselves. But there is nothing 'obvious' by which they can manage this. Who belongs is established through signs, whether they be read from the interiors of the places themselves, the clothes worn by the people within them, their faces, their actions or their speech. Not belonging, however, is no obstacle to entering and inhabiting these areas which have their *raison d'être* in the transitory social mingling which they make possible. But, as in the private sphere, that mingling is usually centred around sexual exchanges between different sections of society whereby one party is economically more powerful than the other. In Fabian, the women in Haupt make it clear to Fabian and Labude that they can expect sexual favours in return for a drink and some food. In Das Kunstseidene Mädchen, Doris often wonders how much she can drink, eat or smoke and what she must offer in return when men are paying for her.

If the drabness of the private sphere is what forces the characters into the bars and cafés, then these places are more home to them than their homes. As Volker Klotz has pointed out, the cafés are

'vorläufige, transitorische Orte, wo man sich niederlassen kann, ohne sesshaft zu sein, wo man unbeteiligt aufnehmen kann, was drumherum passiert'.<sup>4</sup> But there are definite constraints in these areas. First, the jovial and convivial atmosphere of the establishments is combined with the pressure to consume. If one hasn't the money then the display of sexual availability is a certain way to assure that one's drinks will be paid for. Secondly, a level of conformity is expected, whether it be in straight forward purchasing power, quality of clothing, facial expression or ability to display intellectual prowess. But the terms of conformity derive from the projected phantasmagoria of consumerist display. They are not codes of established behaviour - nothing to do with 'manners'; the signs are a product of marketing rather than any kind of etiquette. With such forces at work, it is no wonder the characters are looking for some kind of footing and identity in the city.

### Streets

The similarities between the private spheres and night clubs, as areas in which social mixing and exploitation of economic and sexual power relations take place, points to a lack of distinction between the public and private spheres. Both areas serve partly as homes, partly as places in which to carry out some kind of business. How do the streets accommodate the characters?

Street scenes are a feature of all three novels. They are areas consisting of buildings, shops, roads, pavements, traffic and the people who move through them. They are areas quivering with signs, some of which are easily decipherable, others not. They both accommodate the protagonists and are places of confrontation between different sections of society, between the sexes and in the

protagonists themselves.

Both the opening of the second section of Das Kunstseidene Mädchen and the opening of Fabian take place in streets:

Ich habe Maßloses erlebt, Berlin senkte sich auf mich wie eine Steppdecke mit feurigen Blumen, Der Westen ist vornehm mit hochprozentigem Licht - wie fabelhafte Steine ganz teuer und mit so gestempelter Einfassung, Wir haben hier ganz übermäßige Lichtreklame, Um mich war ein Gefunkel. (DKM, 43)

Doris describes the underground as 'wie ein beleuchteter Sarg auf Schienen' (DKM, 43) and the omnibusses as 'sehr hoch - wie Aussichtstürme, die rennen. Damit fahre ich auch manchmal. Zu Hause waren auch viele Straßen, aber die waren wie verwandt zusammen. Hier sind noch viel mehr Straßen und so viele, daß sie sich gegenseitig nicht kennen. Es ist eine fabelhafte Stadt' (DKM, 44). People in the street are described as moving 'wie rasender Staub, bei denen man merkt, daß Betrieb ist in der Welt. Ich habe den Feh an und wirke' (DKM, 44). The streets and the people in them are described in language which evokes both a shiny surface quality ('fabelhafte Steine', 'Gefunkel', 'rasend', 'wirken') and more ominous images ('beleuchteter Sarg', 'Aussichtstürme', streets which do not 'know' each other). The street is sensed as a place in which dazzling surface qualities, arrogance, forces of social control, human decay and death are present. The home town, by contrast, is recognized as a unity. Doris mentions the streets of her hometown again in a letter to her mother:

Ich hatte bekannte Straßen bei euch mit Steinen, die Guten Tag sagten zu meinen Füßen, wenn sie drauf traten, Und es war die Laterne mit einem Sprung in der Scheibe und Gekratze am Pfahl; Auguste ist doof, Das habe ich gekritzelt vor acht Jahren von der Schule nach Haus und steht immer noch da. (DKM, 53)

Here the streets served as a place which could accommodate her body and which represented continuity and stability; the words scratched into the wood are still there. In the Berlin street everything is reduced to its surface, including the human body:

Ich habe gesehen - Männer an Ecken, die verkaufen ein Parfüm, und keinen Mantel und kesses Gesicht und graue Mütze, - und Plakate mit nackten rosa Mädchen - keiner guckt hin - ein Lokal mit so viel Metall und wie eine Operation, da gibt es auch Austern - und berühmte Photographen mit Bildern in Kästen von enormen Leuten ohne Schönheit. Manchmal auch mit. [...] Ich habe gesehen - ein Mann mit einem Plakat um den Hals: "Ich nehme jede Arbeit" - und "jede" dreimal rot unterstrichen - und ein böser Mund, der zog sich nach unten mehr und mehr - es gab eine Frau ihm zehn Pfennig, die waren gelb, und er rollte sie auf das Pflaster, das Schein hat durch Reklame von Kinos und Lokalen. Und das Plakat war weiß mit schwarz drauf. Und viele Zeitungen und sehr bunt und das Tempo rosa-lila und Nachtausgabe mit rotem Strich und ein gelber Querschnitt - und sehe das Kempinsky mit edlem Holz und Taxis davor mit weißen Karos und Chauffeure mit eingeknicktem Kopf, weil sie ja immer warten. Und von innen Spiegel und was von Klub. Und Menschen eilen. Und Vorgärten von Kaffees, die sind ein Winter und drinnen Musik. Und auch mal Bars und ein großes Licht hoch über der Erde von Kupferberg Sekt - und einer mit Streichhölzern und auf der Erde mit schwarzen Beinen - quer übers Pflaster und Schachteln von Streichhölzern, die sind blau mit weiß und kleiner roter Rand - [...] Ich sehe - gequirelte Lichter, das sind Birnen dicht nebeneinander - Frauen haben kleine Schleier und Haar absichtlich ins Gesicht geweht. Das ist die moderne Frisur - nämlich; Windstoß - und haben Mundwinkel wie Schauspielerinnen vor großen Rollen und schwarze Pelze und drunter Gewalle - und Schimmer in den Augen - und sind ein schwarzes Theater oder ein blondes Kino. Kinos sind ja doch hauptsächlich blond - ich rase da mit und in meinem Feh, der ist grau und weich - und ganz rasende Füße, meine Haut wird rosa, die Luft ist kalt und heiße Lichter - ich sehe, ich sehe - meine Augen erwarten ein Ungeheures - ich habe Hunger auf was Herrliches und auf ein Rumpsteak so braun mit weißem Meerrettich und so Stäbchenkartoffeln, das sind in die Länge gezogene Bratkartoffeln - und manchmal liebe ich ein Essen so, daß ich es in die Hand nehmen möchte und reinbeißen und

nicht immer essen mit Messer und Gabel - [...]. Ich sehe - mich in Spiegeln von Fenstern, und dann finde ich mich hübsch, und dann gucke ich die Männer an, und die gucken auch - und schwarze Mäntel und dunkelblau und im Gesicht viel Verachtung - das ist so bedeutend - und sehe - da ist die Gedächtniskirche und mit Türmen so grau wie Austernschalen - ich kann Austern essen hochfein - der Himmel hat ein rosa Gold im Nebel - es treibt mich drauf zu - man kann nicht ran wegen der Autos - ein roter Teppich liegt im Betrieb, weil am Nachmittag eine blödsinnige Hochzeit war - der Gloriapalast schillert - ein Schloß, ein Schloß - es ist aber Kino und Kaffee und Berlin W - um die Kirche sind schwarze eiserne Ketten - und drüben das Romanische Café mit den längeren Haaren von Männern! (DKM, 64-66)

The passage is dominated by the breathless refrain of 'ich sehe' with which Doris pays tribute to an urban culture of visibility and availability. The street is a place in which the surface qualities of shop windows, lights, newspapers, cinemas, advertisements and faces are registered but with no distinction made between them. Only parts of people's bodies exist - 'kesses Gesicht', 'böser Mund'. Other parts exist as fashion symbols; hair styles are described as 'Windstoß' and mouths as 'Mundwinkel wie Schauspielerinnen'. People are described not as individuals but as carriers and displayers of cosmeticized images. This has a playful quality; Doris perceives a certain theatricality to the scene. Hair colour and eyes are associated with the theatre and cinema 'und sind ein schwarzes Theater oder ein blondes Kino'. The street is the stage and the lights in it serve as the stage lighting. The people in the streets are the actors, masked, aestheticized and not 'real'. The phantasmagoria are situated not only in the shop window displays but are created and recreated in the streets; in the advertisements and in the way the people move and project themselves, 'embodying' the aura. As in the night clubs, the streets are areas of display. However, the playful, theatrical nature of the street still works, as in the night

clubs, in the service of forces intent on encouraging consumption. Although Doris only registers the surface of people's bodies, including her own, (she perceives it superficially, in mirrors and it moves 'rasend') she expresses the desire to consume something. On the one hand the modernity of the street represses the physicality of the body, but on the other the phantasmagoria of the shop windows encourage the individual incessantly to consume. This street is very different from the streets in her hometown which Doris describes in the letter to her mother. There is no sense of continuity in this street and Doris has no sense of physicality in it; she has no sense of herself.<sup>5</sup>

As Doris becomes more acquainted with Berlin and as her situation changes, her perception of the streets changes. When faced by the prospect of becoming a prostitute at the end of the second section of the novel, she perceives the street as empty of all the enchanted signs she encountered before. The one similarity is in the portrayal of the street as a place dominated by business transactions but it is now the business of prostitution:

Und gestern war ich mit einem Mann, was mich ansprach und für was hielt, was ich doch nicht bin. Ich bin es doch noch nicht. Aber überall abends stehen Huren - an Alex so viele, so viele - auf dem Kurfürstendamm und Joachimsthaler und am Friedrichbahnhof und überall. Und sehn gar nicht immer aus wie welche, sie machen so einen unentschlossenen Gang - das ist gar nicht immer das Gesicht, was eine Hure so ausmacht - ich sehe in meinen Spiegel - das ist eine Art von Gehen, wie wenn einem das Herz eingeschlafen ist.

Ging ich langsam an der Gedächtniskirche vorbei, Tauentzienstraße runter, immer so weiter und mit Gleichgültigkeit in meinen Kniekehlen, und da war somit mein Gehen ein Stehenbleiben zwischen einem Weitergehewollen und einem Zurückgehewollen, indem ich zu keinem von beiden Lust hatte. Und dann machte an Ecken mein Körper einen Aufenthalt, denn Ecken machen dem Rücken so eine Sehnsucht nach einer Anlehnung an die scharfe Kante, die Ecke heißt, und man möchte sich mal dranlehnen und sie sehr fühlen. [...] Und dann sprach mich

einer an, das war so ein Besserer, ich sagte: "Ich bin nicht 'mein Kind' für Sie, ich bin eine Dame." (DKM, 91-92)

The street consists only of prostitutes and street corners. Because Doris is so close to being one herself, and is indeed mistaken for one, she observes them closely, trying to decide what it is that makes a prostitute. The lack of distinction which Doris found so exciting and playful when she first arrived in Berlin has become here threatening and hostile, making time spent in the streets unpleasant. By stopping in the streets, Doris is assumed to be a prostitute. She is denied acquiring a sense of the physicality of the street by touching and leaning against the corner of the building, because by doing so she would be putting herself on a level with everything else displayed in the street - namely that what is on display is purchasable. The streets serve as places in which to keep moving and consuming, the 'stones' of the streets are surfaces upon which that display can take place.<sup>6</sup>

These two scenes take place in the same area of west Berlin, around the Kurfürstendamm and Taentzienstraße. As a consumer, Doris perceives the street first as something magical and fantastic - it is the stage upon which the spectacular production (in the theatrical sense) of modernity takes place. Even though there are undertones that the street represses the body while encouraging it to consume, Doris is enthralled by the scene. But as a woman close to destitution, she finds the street hostile and threatening.

In both Fabian and Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, the street also accommodates the characters so long as they have a function within them. But as soon as the characters are without one, either the street itself or the people in them slowly push the characters out of the city, and, eventually, out of society.

In the opening of Fabian, Fabian moves from a café in east Berlin to a private night club in west Berlin. After leaving the café, we read:

Er folgte drei hastig marschierenden Arbeitern und geriet, über Holzbohlen stolpernd, an Bauzäunen und grauen Stundenhotels entlang, zum Bahnhof Jannowitzbrücke. [...] Er fuhr bis zum Zoo. Auf der Joachimsthaler Straße fragte ihn ein dünnbeiniges, wippendes Fräulein, wie er drüber dächte. Er beschied das Anerbieten abschlägig, drohte mit dem Finger und entkam.

Die Stadt glich einem Rummelplatz. Die Häuserfronten waren mit buntem Licht beschmiert, und die Sterne am Himmel konnten sich schämen. Ein Flugzeug knatterte über die Dächer. Plötzlich regnete es Aluminiumtaler. Die Passanten blickten hoch, lachten und bückten sich. Fabian dachte flüchtig an jenes Märchen, in dem ein kleines Mädchen sein Hemd hochhebt, um das Kleingeld aufzufangen, das vom Himmel fällt. Dann holte er von der steifen Krempe eines fremden Hutes einen der Taler herunter. "Besucht die Exotikbar, Nollendorfplatz 3, Schöne Frauen, Nacktplastiken, Pension Condor im gleichen Hause", stand darauf. Fabian hatte mit einem Male die Vorstellung, er fliege dort oben im Aeroplan und sehe auf sich hinunter, auf den jungen Mann in der Joachimsthaler Straße, im Gewimmel der Menge, im Lichtkreis der Laternen und Schaufenster, im Straßengewirr der fiebrig entzündeten Nacht. Wie klein der Mann war. Und mit dem war er identisch!

Er überquerte den Kurfürstendamm. An einem der Giebel rollte eine Leuchtfigur, ein Türkenjunge war es, mit den elektrischen Augäpfeln. Da stieß jemand heftig gegen Fabians Stiefelansatz. Er drehte sich mißbilligend um. Es war die <sup>A</sup>Straßenbahn gewesen. Der Schaffner fluchte.

"Passense auf!" schrie ein Polizist.

Fabian zog den Hut und sagte: "Werde mir Mühe geben."

(F, 12-13)

Fabian moves from the east of the city, represented by workers and grey hotels, to the west, the same area described by Doris (above). The city consists of lighted advertisements, shops, trams, and marketed sex.



References to nature refer only to the lack of it. Fabian shows himself to be at home in this world; the thought of looking at himself from above leads not to a sense of panic and despair but to a humorous acceptance of being small and insignificant, and he has a sharp, witty comment for anyone who speaks to him.<sup>7</sup> However, Fabian is not always so at home in the modern world and in the course of the novel the street becomes a less hospitable place. On leaving his workplace after hearing of his redundancy, Fabian stands for a moment in the street:

Bevor er auf die Straße trat, blieb er minutenlang im Tor stehen. Lastautos ratterten vorbei. Ein Depeschbote sprang vom Rad und eilte ins gegenüberliegende Gebäude. Das Nebenhaus war von einem Gerüst vergittert. Maurer standen auf den Laufbrettern und verputzten den grauen, bröckligen Bewurf. Eine Reihe bunter Möbelwagen bog schwerfällig in die Seitenstraße. Der Depeschbote kam zurück, stieg hastig auf sein Rad und fuhr weiter. Fabian stand im Torbogen, griff in die Tasche, ob das Geld noch darin sei, und dachte: Was wird mit mir? (F, 108)

In this street, the world is constantly on the move; transactions, new buildings, new occupiers, and people generally rushing around. In other words, the street is full of people and things at work - often frenetically so. Fabian is the person, now without work, about to enter the street: 'Was wird mit mir?' He does not perceive the street to be a place to accommodate him in his new situation and expresses the wish to be able to go to a forest, '[er] setzte sich von neuem in Bewegung, obwohl er sich lieber traurig in den tiefen Wald verkrochen hätte. Aber wo war hier ein tiefer Wald?' (F, 108) Instead, he makes his way to the Kreuzberg, Berlin's one natural hill situated slightly south of the centre of the city, but still very much within the city. In trying to escape the city and its streets, Fabian goes to the top of the Kreuzberg, beyond the city so to speak. The gesture is by no means desperate. A

park is, after all, as much a part of a city as a street. But the implication is of a need to escape the city.

The most extreme expression of city anxiety comes after Fabian has lost Cornelia and any hope of a job:

Als er aus dem Bahnhof trat und wieder diese Straßenfluchten und Häuserblöcke vor sich sah, dieses hoffnungslose, unbarmherzige Labyrinth, wurde ihm schwindlig. Er lehnte sich neben ein paar Gepäckträgern an die Wand und schloß die Augen. Doch nun quälte ihn der Lärm. Ihm war, als führen die Straßenbahnen und Autobusse mitten durch seinen Magen. Er kehrte wieder um, stieg die Treppe zum Wartesaal hinauf und legte dort den Kopf auf eine harte Bank. Eine halbe Stunde später war ihm wohler. (F, <sup>160-</sup>161)

The sight of the city reawakens his anxieties about his future. The city is no longer the place in which he floats from one area to the next, but has taken on a more threatening character. The effects of the sights and sounds of the city are compared to a physical attack on his body. Not being able yet to re-enter and face the city, he goes to the waiting room, the place between the city and his hometown. In this episode the city represents his anxieties while the waiting room becomes a kind of neutral space, between the city and his home.

In Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, Pinneberg is often depicted as being at home in the streets. Unlike Doris and Fabian though, he rarely moves in the areas associated with shops, bars and other areas of consumption. When we glimpse Pinneberg in the streets, it is usually when he is travelling or walking large distances:

Und er nimmt seinen Weg unter die Füße, diesen weiten Weg aus dem äußersten Osten bis nach Alt-Moabit, dem Nordwesten Berlins. Er kann gut laufen, er hat Zeit bis zwölf, er kann das Fahrgeld sparen. Manchmal denkt er flüchtig an Lämmchen, auch an Nothnagel, auch an Jänecke, der nun bald Abteilungsleiter werden wird, denn Herr Kröpelin

soll nicht gut angeschrieben sein bei Herrn Spannfuß -, aber meistens denkt er an nichts. Man kann so laufen und in die Läden sehen, und die Autobusse fahren vorüber und die Lichtreklame sind sehr nett [...]. (KM-WN?, 201)

There is no expression of anxiety and street sights are registered as nothing more than 'sehr nett'. The streets can be perceived as large and anonymous, but this happens only when Pinneberg is accompanied by Lämmchen and is made aware of the bodily warmth he feels when with her:

Sie gehen immer eingehängt, und zwar so, daß Pinneberg seinen Arm durch Lämmchens Arm steckt. Er fühlt dann ihre Brust, die schon voller wird, so angenehm, es ist wie ein Zuhause sein auf allen diesen weitweiten Straßen mit den tausend fremden Leuten. (KM-WN?, 128)

In contradistinction to Fabian, when Pinneberg becomes unemployed the streets still remain a home for him:

Schließlich hatte sich Pinneberg nicht mehr heimgetraut, den langen Tag saß er in irgendwelchen Parks oder bummelte ziellos durch die Straßen und sah in den Läden, wieviel gute Dinge es für gutes Geld gab. (KM-WN?, 289)

Pinneberg ist früher viel in der Friedrichstraße spazieren gegangen, er ist gewissermaßen zu Hause hier, darum merkt er auch, wie viel Mädchen <sup>mehr</sup> jetzt hier stehen als früher. (KM-WN?, 299)

It is only when Pinneberg becomes identifiable as an unemployed man that the anonymity that allowed him to exist within the city, even though he did not have a function within it, is lost. His lack of disguise now becomes a cause of anxiety for those around him and they chase him out of the city:

"Sie sollen weitergehen, Sie, hören Sie!" sagt der Schupo laut. [...]

Pinneberg möchte sprechen, Pinneberg sieht den Schupo an, seine Lippen zittern, Pinneberg sieht die Leute an. Bis an das Schaufenster stehen die Leute, gutgekleidete Leute, ordentliche Leute, verdienende Leute.

Aber in der spiegelnden Scheibe des Fensters steht noch einer, ein blasser Schemen, ohne Kragen, mit schäbigem Ulster, mit teerbeschmierter Hose.

Und plötzlich begreift Pinneberg alles, angesichts dieses Schupo, dieser ordentlichen Leute, dieser blanken Scheibe begreift er, daß er ~~■~~ draußen ist, daß er hier nicht mehr hergehört, daß man ihn zu Recht wegjagt; ausgerutscht, versunken, erledigt. Ordnung und Sauberkeit; es war einmal, Arbeit und sicheres Brot; es war einmal, Vorwärtskommen und Hoffen; es war einmal, Armut ist nicht nur Elend, Armut ist auch strafwürdig, Armut ist Makel, Armut heißt Verdacht.

"Soll ich dir Beine machen?" sagt der Schupo.

Pinneberg gibt sofort klein bei, er ist wie besinnungslos, er will seinen Zug erreichen, er will zu Lämmchen... (KM-WN?, 300-301)

The streets remain home to the protagonists so long as they remain anonymous and unidentifiable in the city. In Doris's case, she is happy in the streets if she can be a part of the glamorous side of modernity; as long as she is a consumer, she is safe. The streets become more threatening if she finds herself to be a part of a display she does not want. Likewise, once Fabian recognizes he no longer belongs in the city, he leaves. And once Pinneberg becomes noticeable as not belonging, he is chased away by others.

#### Train stations and waiting rooms

When neither the home nor the bars and cafés nor the streets serve to accommodate the protagonists, the last area they seek within the city is the train station and the waiting room. Fabian's last encounter in Berlin, before he returns home, takes place in a train station. Doris finds herself in a train station at the end of the second section of the

novel, the beginning of the third, and at the end of the novel. And Pinneberg runs to the train station towards the end of the novel once the police have chased him from the street. Waiting rooms serve not only as places to wait before catching a train, they also serve as neutral territory, as places in which one can be oneself, and in which to ponder on all that has happened, and, lastly, as places in which to wait simply for something better to happen.

I have already mentioned how Fabian retreats to the waiting room when the prospect of the street fills him with anxiety (see p.129 above). His final encounter in a waiting room occurs when he decides to leave Berlin and return to his hometown, 'Er mußte fort aus dieser Stadt' (F, 209). He has an hour to wait before the train departs and so he sits in the waiting room with several newspapers and reflects on all that has recently happened in his life:

Eine unsichtbare gespenstische Schere hatte sämtliche Bande, die ihn an diese Stadt fesselten, zerschnitten. Der Beruf war verloren, der Freund war tot, Cornelia war in fremder Hand, was hatte er hier noch zu suchen? (F, 211)

His decision to leave the city is not based on any anxious responses to the physical make-up of the city, as it was previously when he sought the waiting room as a refuge from the noise and sights of the city. Rather it is the people that inhabit the city which make him decide to leave. Zacharias, the journalist, is described as an 'eitle[r], verlogene[r] Mensch' (F, 209), Makart as a 'Teufel ohne Gymnasialbildung' (F, 211), and Cornelia's photo in the newspaper creates only the response that Fabian is looking at a 'Grab' (F, 211). Whereas the waiting room previously served as a neutral space, free from the city, the waiting room here becomes a non-existent space:

Nichts hielt ihn zurück, er verlangte dorthin, woher er gekommen war; nach Hause, in seine Vaterstadt, zu seiner Mutter. Er war schon lange nicht mehr in Berlin, obwohl er noch immer auf dem Anhalter Bahnhof saß. [...] Nur fort von hier! Der Minutenzeiger der Bahnhofsuhr rückte weiter. Nur fort! (F, 212)

As he sits in the train, and waits for it to depart, the last image is of the clock. Of course, at one level the image serves to create suspense. But on the other, it is symbolic that Fabian cannot wait to leave the city in both space and time. His hometown is associated with the parents; it is his 'Vaterstadt' in which he can also find his mother. It is a place offering him protection and security as opposed to Berlin, where an 'unsichtbare gespenstische Schere' has cut any connections he had with it.

In Das Kunstseidene Mädchen, the train station, particularly the Bahnhof Zoo, is a place in which Doris comes into contact with certain social groups who generally mean well and who come to the waiting room in search of peace and a little time for themselves:

Ich gehe herum mit mein Koffer und weiß nicht, was ich will und wohin, Im Wartesaal Zoo bin ich sehr viel (DKM, 91)

Da hatte ich eben ein Gespräch voller Anregung, nämlich durch Karl, Der ist vielleicht eine ulkige Kruke, [...] Und macht lauter Kleinigkeiten, die trägt er in einem Kasten um den Hals und auch Rettiche und lauter so Zeug und sagt, er wär der laufende Woolworth bei Sonne und Regen. Und verkauft sein Zeug im Westen und trinkt dann manchmal schnell eine Molle im Wartesaal Zoo. [...] An meinem Tisch sitzt der schwule Gustav, sieht aus wie 'n Stückchen gekotztes Elend, Sitzt da und pennt, [...] Und ist so müde, daß er ganz vergißt, schwul zu sein, nämlich bei so viel Hunger und Müdesein wird man normal, (DKM, 95-96)

The waiting room is full of recognizable people, the 'schwule' Gustav,

who becomes 'normal', and Karl, a 'richtiger Berliner' (DKM, 95). The area is free of signification, unlike all the other areas of the city. The space serves as a respite from work, from looking for work, or, as in the case of the 'schwule' Gustav, as a respite from assumed roles. It is a place to which the characters can withdraw during their constant journeying of the city, rather than an area in which to wait before catching a train. It is also the place in which Doris confronts herself with her background and with thoughts on the way she leads her life:

Aber das ist es ja eben, ich habe keine Meinesgleichen, ich gehöre überhaupt nirgends hin. [...] Ich will zum Wartesaal Zoo - vielleicht kommt der Karl, der Kreuzstanger. Ich würde ihn sehr bitten, daß er mich eine Zeit in Ruhe läßt mit Erotik. [...] Ob er das versteht? Ich werde mich ja nie mehr gewöhnen an einen ohne Bildung, zu dem ich eigentlich doch gehöre - und einer mit Bildung wird sich an mich nicht gewöhnen. (DKM, 138-139)

At the end of the novel, Doris is in Bahnhof Friedrichstraße, the station from which she arrived in Berlin, and at which she, theoretically, could leave. But rather than considering going back home, Doris decides to go to Wartesaal Zoo and look for Karl, with whom she would then live. Her decision calls her away from Friedrichstraße, the station where people arrive and leave, to Wartesaal Zoo, where people wait, not for trains, but for something to happen and who, until then, scrape by as best they can. The novel ends with Doris in one train station deciding to go to the waiting room of another. She, too, can only wait: 'Ich bin ja immer das Mädchen vom Wartesaal' (DKM, 135).

Although so much of the city seems to be a home in one form or another for the protagonists, they all end up fleeing it. Pinneberg runs away

from the city and returns to his *Laubenkolonie* in the east. Fabian leaves the city by train to return to his mother. Doris waits in a train station having made up her mind to go to another waiting room to look for Karl who will then take her to his *Laubenkolonie* in the east. Why? The private sphere is grim, depressing and unstable. The work spheres are oppressive and dull, and all three protagonists are made redundant. The night clubs are phantasmagoric, but the illusion is frequently broken by the protagonists' recognition of scenes of misery and artificiality. The streets are home to the protagonists only to the extent that they keep moving in them either as workers or consumers. That is to say, the streets are more functional and instrumental than accommodating. In the more commercial areas of the city, the streets are places in which to market, display, sell and consume various goods; they do not accommodate the unemployed man who can be identified as such, nor the unemployed woman who does not want to become a prostitute. All in all, the spaces of the city restrict the activities of the protagonists to the same extent that their language restricts their thinking (see chapter three).

The city is pervaded by scenes of shifting roles and images; people populate areas in which they are perceived as not belonging, whether it be in institutions as diverse as swimming pools, job centres or various bars and cafés. Spaces are no longer permanent; they too, like the people moving in them, can change and assume new guises. There are also no clear distinctions between types of people, and the only referents with which to establish difference stem from the phantasmagoria of the market and purchasing power. The inability to distinguish is acknowledged by all three protagonists. As long as they themselves can function within this system, they are content. But when they can no longer adapt, they become something outside of the city;



they no longer belong. They are not the makers and creators of change, these things happen away from them, beyond their control. And there is no shelter for them other than the waiting room.

In the light of the last two chapters on language and space, we are now in a position to answer some of the questions posed in chapter two: what forces conspire to reduce, demean and marginalize the protagonists? What constitutes the protagonists' world and how is it imposing itself upon them? Why do the protagonists not have a clearer understanding of their circumstances? Why do they seemingly allow their lives to crumble around them yet fail to undertake any action to prevent this? What choices are open to them?

First, there are no obviously malign forces conspiring to denigrate and marginalize the protagonists. What there is, however, is a city geared towards certain interests located in the world of marketing, advertising, selling and consumerism. The protagonists are all to varying degrees involved with this world, and all are to varying extents affected by it. Perhaps the most damaging effects are on Pinneberg and Doris because they are not in a position to achieve any critical distance or freedom from the commercial environments of which they are so much a part. Their lack of a critical understanding is partly due to their lack of education, and partly to the fact that the interests they are serving have subtly entered their language, and hence also their thinking. They both may suffer and feel unhappy, but they both have difficulty articulating their unease or locating the source of their unhappiness.

Secondly, all three protagonists, particularly Fabian, have certain moral standards; they have a sense of what is right and what is wrong. However, the city in which they live seems to channel them into

certain life-styles, or patterns of behaviour, where there is little to do other than accept their lot. At the end of the novels, they find themselves marginalized from society in socially ineffective spheres beyond the city - the *Laubenkolonie*, the waiting room, a different town.

Thirdly, a crucial component of the protagonists' inability clearly to assess and articulate their perception of the world has to do with the volatile public sphere depicted in the novels - a world which is in a state of constant change and transformation and in which there are no clear models of how to respond to shifting circumstances and relationships. There are numerous examples of this, ranging from the destruction of Fabian's and Cornelia's relationship in the wake of her decision to work for and live with Makart, to the manipulative use of language by Pinneberg's managers and his attempts to come to terms with it, to Doris's enactment of her image of a *Glanz* and her attraction to the bright city lights which reveal also poverty and misery.

In the penultimate and final chapters, I want to look more closely at the influences of commercial forces and mass culture on Weimar Berlin society more generally. The many similarities between the novels suggest that the authors were all writing about very contemporary influences which must be identifiable in areas of cultural production other than literature. In the following chapter, I will draw on the little known, rather frivolous, but illuminating Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin. And in the final chapter, I will look at some of Weimar Berlin's new commercial architecture in the so-called *Neue Sachlichkeit* style and the analysis of that architecture in two contemporary articles; one by the art historian, Adolf Behne, and the other by the sociologist and cultural theoretician, Siegfried Kracauer. As we will see, an analysis of both the Führer and new commercial architecture confirms and differentiates the picture of Weimar Berlin

society that has emerged from the novels.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CURT MORECK'S FÜHRER DURCH DAS "LASTERHAFFE" BERLIN

In accounts of the 'mass' aspect of Weimar culture there are a number of people, places and productions which are nearly always mentioned; Marlene Dietrich and *Der Blaue Engel*, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, the appearances of the Tiller Girls and Josephine Baker, the throng of traffic around the Potsdamerplatz and the incessant building and rebuilding of Alexanderplatz symbolizing the transforming city as a whole. All of these phenomena have become metonymical for Weimar Berlin.<sup>2</sup> But far more important for Fabian and Doris are the more modest places within the city. What of the cafés and bars they enter along with a host of other characters from novels set in Weimar Berlin (the kind to be found in Isherwood's novels and Gabriele Tergit's Käsebier erobert den Kurfürstendamm)? What did these places look like? What kind of public went to them? In the previous chapter we saw that the dance halls and cafés created certain auras to which the public was attracted. The characters of the novels often assumed certain roles which were projected through clothes, speech, actions and facial expressions. There was a tendency to be aware that other people did not fit in, although groups from different social classes mixed very readily. And behind the characters' indulgence in night life, scenes of economic plight and sexual exploitation regularly emerged. Can the accounts in Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen claim to be typical representations of Weimar Berlin? To what extent did mass cultural venues project images to which a public had to, were expected to, or chose to adapt?

One of the most interesting contemporary sources which provides answers to some of these questions is Curt Moreck's Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin. Published in 1931 with 66 illustrations,

the book is essentially an alternative guide to Berlin night life. It gives detailed descriptions of venues, particularly of the interior decoration of places and the kind of public to be found within them. As the title (especially the word 'lasterhaft') suggests, the guide includes alongside information on standard venues descriptions of the seedier side of Berlin mass culture. The book, however, has to be used as a contemporary source with extreme caution, for it is anything but a dispassionate guidebook. Although one can accept the descriptions of the venues as largely accurate, the book does have a narrative which tends to exaggerate and overdramatise its picture of Berlin night life. Throughout the guide a narrator is present who not only addresses, warns and questions the reader, but who also constantly changes his perspective.<sup>9</sup> As we shall see, one minute he gives a sober account of a venue, the next he fantasizes about the secrets of Berlin. He will engage in colourfully metaphoric language creating a certain image of Berlin and then he announces that this is all an illusion. At other times he is highly critical of his subject matter and offers illuminating social insights into the causality behind the spectacle of Berlin night life. And he can also be acutely aware of and deeply sympathetic to the plights of 'the little people'.

The illustrations add to the ambiguous status of the book in several ways. First they occupy a position somewhere between advertisement and artwork (the original cover of the guide being an interesting case in point - see fig. 17); they are generally titled with the name of a venue yet they are not simple photographs of those areas as one would expect in a guide. Instead they are evocative representations of them. Secondly they are by a number of artists, some of whom have very different styles. And thirdly the illustrations usually correspond to the subject matter of the text, though sometimes

they offer completely different readings and undermine what is being claimed in the text.

In the following, a brief outline of the construction of the text will be given, after which the discussion will concentrate on the narrator and some aspects of the text and the illustrations which contribute towards a mythologization of Berlin. In the second part of this chapter, the discussion will concentrate on the historicity of the subject matter; of the description of the venues, the kind of public that frequented them and the extent to which the description of them corresponds to descriptions in Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen. Because the guide has received such little academic attention and is such a rarity in libraries, passages will be quoted extensively.

It will become apparent that at one level the text exposes elements of pretence and myth-making on the part of a public of a given time; but at another level it is a text aimed at enticing a readership, and it therefore cannot avoid becoming involved in myth-making itself. The guide is then interesting not only as a contemporary source but also as a product of its time, as much a part of the metropolitan discourse which concerns us in the three novels.

### The Construction

Curt Moreck's Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin is divided into seven chapters; 'Wir zeigen Ihnen Berlin!' (1-48); 'Auftakt zum Nachtleben' (49-74); 'Es dämmert...' (81-89); 'Wohin gehen wir? (Ein schwieriges Kapital.)' (90-185); 'Wünschen Sie einen Blick in die Unterwelt zu tun?' (186-229); and 'Beschluß' (230). Illustrations appear in all sections of the guide (except the 'Beschluß') by both famous artists (the likes of George Grosz, Christian Schad and Heinrich Zille) and completely unknown artists (such as Christophe, F. Hilf, Matthias Schultz). The majority of

the illustrations are by Jeanne Mammen, Christian Schad and Paul Kamm.<sup>4</sup>

The book follows a chronological scheme, in that it groups together in each section places to visit at a particular time of day. Within each section the naming of venues is roughly focused around geographical areas. So the guide starts with afternoon cafés and 'Fünfuhrtee'. It goes on to suggest possible cinema visits before naming places to eat. After listing restaurants, the guide suggests a visit to various fairgrounds and 'Variétés'. There then follows in-depth descriptions of the various 'Tanzpaläste', 'Stammlokale des mann männlichen Eros', and 'Lesbische Lokale', all of which are open until the early hours of the morning. As an alternative to the dance halls and the gay and lesbian clubs, 'Nacht-Badeanstalten' and a 'Blick in die Unterwelt' are suggested and described. The book ends with the suggestion of a trip to one of Berlin's lakes 'um dort auf weiter Terrasse in der Morgensonne das Frühstück einzunehmen' (230). The narrator concludes:

Wer ein Freund von gemeinsamen Weekendausfahrten ist, der findet dazu in Berlins Umgebung unzählbare Gelegenheiten. Mit einer Einladung an die Havelseen und an die andern märkischen Gewässer stößt man bei der naturliebenden Berlinerin niemals auf Widerstand. Gewissen Bedenken in die Illegitimität solcher Unternehmungen hat die großstädtische Bijouteriewarenindustrie Rechnung getragen, indem sie "Trauringe fürs Wochenende" für nur drei Mark auf den Markt gebracht hat, die ihren Goldglanz länger bewahren als für die Dauer einer solchen Weekend-Ehe erforderlich ist. (230)

Interestingly, no maps are provided in the guide or clues given as to how to find the places named using public transport. On the whole, only the name and street (without street number) of a venue are given. Maps and transport tips would, perhaps, ruin the sense of adventure which the guide so obviously wants to create (see below).

Factual information of a statistical kind is also missing although a few interesting items of information are given. For example, we are provided with the number of bars catering to homosexuals, claimed to be around 80 (134), and to lesbians, claimed to be 'nicht geringer' (156).<sup>6</sup> We are also told that around Alexanderplatz there are at least 70 'Häuser, mit dem anspruchsvollen Schild "Hotel". [...] Das macht ungefähr siebenhundert Zimmer, und diese Zimmer beherbergen jede Nacht durchschnittlich fünf Paare. Samstags und Sonntags sind es sogar mehr' (189). Following the narrator's calculations, this means that around Alexanderplatz alone a total of 3500 couples could make use of these hotels in any one night.

The concentration and sheer variety of venues named in the text is breathtaking. One easily understands why Weimar Berlin earned the reputation of the capital of the 'Roaring Twenties'. The narrator names various places in which to drink tea and dance at five o'clock, and the guide refers to the numerous large cinemas concentrated around the Gedächtniskirche. There were restaurants serving cheap food ranging from the typically Berlinesque Aschingers to the Americanized Quick in which food could be bought from vending machines. Many restaurants prided themselves on serving international food, of which the narrator mentions Italian, Russian, Hungarian, Chinese and Japanese ones. There were numerous cabarets and 'Varietés', some posing as little more than peep shows while others claimed cosmopolitan status with show titles such as 'Nacht am Broadway' (112). There were different types of fairgrounds from the working class Onkel Pelles Nordplatz to the Americanized Luna-Park. Dance halls, often with more than one orchestra, combined extravagant interiors with technological gadgets such as opening roofs, revolving stages, table telephones and 'Rohrpost'. Many buildings consisted of bars, restaurants, cabarets and dance halls all in



one, and they often had sections with different themes. Swimming pools were open at night and provided with coloured lights and music. There were many bars and clubs catering to gays, lesbians and transvestites. And finally there were the bars in the working class eastern suburbs with their reputation as criminal haunts.<sup>6</sup>

### The narrator and the tendency to mythologize Berlin

The tendency of the narrator and some of the illustrations to offer exaggerated, even hyperbolic description takes many forms. More often than not (and this is what makes the guide such an interesting work), a flight into complete myth-making is quickly brought back to a level of sobriety. This can be done by the narrator himself as he makes assertions one minute and exposes them as an illusion the next. It can also happen that the narrator claims something but a nearby illustration will suggest the opposite.

The sense of a text with a narrative, as opposed to a guide book providing information, is made apparent in the early stages of the book. In the opening, there is no sense that what is being provided is a dispassionate guide to the numerous venues which had sprung up in Berlin since the end of the first world war. Instead the opening justifies the need for a guide as part of some necessary survival equipment before embarking on an adventure, a journey into the unknown likened to Theseus's entering the Labyrinth:

Jeder einmal in Berlin! Auch im nächtlichen. Auch im halboffiziellen. Auch auf der andern Seite, deren Sehenswürdigkeiten nicht vom Ausrufer der Rundfahrtwagen mit witzigen Glossen angekündigt werden.

Aber man kommt auch hier nicht ohne Führer aus. Hier vielleicht am allerwenigsten. Niemals hätte Theseus sich ohne Ariadnes Faden in das Labyrinth gewagt. Und was war das Labyrinth gegen das nächtliche Berlin, gegen die in ihrem Licht und in ihrem Dunkel

Already in this quotation we can hear the narrator constructing a myth of Berlin; he describes the city as 'verwirrend' and draws on classical mythology to support his claims for the need of a guidebook. ('Jeder einmal in Berlin' is actually a reference to an advertising campaign launched in 1927 by the Berlin tourist office to encourage tourism in the city. An official guide was published for the occasion with the title Jeder Einmal in Berlin and it is clear that Moreck is presenting his guide as the alternative to the official guide.')

After opening with a justification of the need for an 'alternative' guide, the narrative continues with a panoramic sweep of Berlin starting in the city centre around Friedrichstraße moving over to the west. This opening section whets the reader's appetite for adventure (in an often very male way) with its references to various haunts and purveyors of erotica:

Zuweilen vibriert das Pflaster vom unterirdischen Dahinrasen der Untergrundbahnen. Um Mitternacht speien die Revuetheater, in denen Girls aus keuscher Gymnastik ein erotisches Geschäft gemacht haben, ihr Publikum aus. Dann pulst das Leben der Straße wieder stärker. Dann staut sich die Menge vor den portierenverhängten Türen der Tanzdielen und in den Bars füllen sich die hohen Stühle und klappern die Gläser. "Spanner" schieben sich in Tuchfühlung an die männlichen Alleingehere heran und flüstern ihnen zu: "Nachtlokal -- Spielklub -- Nackttänze..."

(20)

There is an illustration on the following page which shows the activities of the 'Spanner'. Christophe's 'Gleich um de Ecke, meine Herrschaften! Da könn'n Se alles haben, alles!' (fig. 18) shows a couple and a 'Spanner'. The 'Spanner' obviously whispers the caption to the man and slips him a piece of paper. The body of the 'Spanner' is at the

edge of the picture, emphasizing his secretive role and suggesting that he is about to slip off down a dark side road. The woman, in full light, pulls her partner away from the 'Spanner' continuing her path in the stream of light ahead, which presumably leads to more mainstream (and conceivably more respectable) venues. She looks squarely at the 'Spanner' while her partner slightly bows his head, as if he is embarrassed to be taking the slip of paper he is being given.

The opening pages of text and illustrations suggest a very male narrator talking to a male audience. Paul Kamm's illustrations further emphasize notions of male erotic adventure with his 'Böse Buben' (fig. 19) and 'Individuelle Massage' (fig. 20). While 'Individuelle Massage' offers little more than the promise of erotic adventure seen in the inviting face of the woman dressed up with a whip looking at the viewer, a more interesting level of erotic display is introduced in 'Böse Buben'. The picture is a montage of photographs and drawings showing four semi-naked women, each from a different angle. The women are all aware that they are on display, they are obviously all part of an erotic performance. However, the woman in the foreground with her back turned to us could be a member of the audience sitting in front of us, the viewers. She has a cigarette in her hand and although she appears to be as semi-naked as the other women, it could just be the style of her dress that only goes over one shoulder. The picture is ambiguous in that it seems to revel in feminine erotic display yet it also seems to imply notions of sexual market exchange by equating the status of the woman in the audience with that of the performing women - all are objects to be consumed. There is nothing in the picture to suggest that this is either a critical or approving statement.

Kamm's pictures are rather singular in the guide. He is the best represented artist with twenty illustrations to his credit and his

pictures follow the text closely in that they always depict a venue which has just been mentioned in the text. His work is, however, also the least critical in the guide, more often than not functioning as advertisements for the places they depict. His illustrations are usually montages of drawings and photographs in which suggestive scenes are created. Figures 21, 22, and 23 show photographs of the interior of cabarets and naked performing women combined with drawings of elegantly dressed couples dancing and conversing. 'Barberina' (fig. 21), for example, combines the realism of the photographs with suggestive drawings of two couples who exude elegance and high living. The photographs of the buildings are bereft of people, the kind of public that frequents Barberina is created in the drawing, no real public is shown. In 'Rokoko' (fig. 22) and 'Steinmaier' (fig. 23) the promise of erotic adventure is introduced either in the drawing or is present in the photographs of the revue girls. In all of these examples, the combination of 'fictional' drawings with 'real' photographs advertise the venues as places promising and delivering high living and erotic adventure.

The narrator tends to flagrant exaggeration when he describes women. However, on at least two occasions the presence of sober illustrations counteracts his rather exaggerated claims. For example, at one point we read:

Was Berlin an hübschen, eleganten, lebenslustigen Frauen besitzt, das ist in diesen Räumen anzutreffen, das ist ihr Stammublikum. Viele beweisen auch hier ihre Unbeständigkeit und Flatterhaftigkeit und erweisen heute dem, morgen jenem Lokal ihre Gunst, inner auf der Suche nach Ueberraschungen, nach Sensationen, nach Abwechslung. (50)

An illustration which appears on the facing page tells quite a different story. Hans Reinhard's 'Teestunde' (fig. 24) shows a group of three

women sitting at a table in bare surroundings with two isolated women standing behind. As in so many of the illustrations the women are all clothed fashionably and are depicted with stylized faces emphasizing conformity. The only reference to the building they are in is the large, seemingly very modern, pillar in the background. The gaze of the women is blank, although two seem to be looking at the viewer. There is no contact between the women and a sense of boredom prevails. The bare surroundings only add to the sense of dislocation, there are no warm tones of light and shade; instead the atmosphere is positively sterile. There is nothing to suggest that these women are 'lebenslustige Frauen [...] immer auf der Suche nach Ueberraschungen, nach Sensationen, nach Abwechslung'.

It is not only the narrator's fascination with Berlin's beautiful women that incites his emphatic descriptions of the feminine. It can also be his disgust at the sight of 'perversion':

Im Lichtfeld der Schaufenster des "Kadewe" [Kaufhaus des Westens], das mit seinem Warenangebot allen Bedürfnissen der modernen Menschheit genügt, ergehen sich jene Spezialistinnen, die ein erotisches Sonderbedürfnis der modernen Männerwelt herangezüchtet haben. [...] Wer ohne fetischistische Neigungen ist und von diesen in ihren hohen, bis zu den Knien reichenden Stiefeln dahinstelzenden Damen attackiert wird, der wird sich kaum der Komik, der Bizarrerie, der Skurrilität dieses pfauehaften Getues der in voller Kriegsbemalung auftretenden Geschöpfe entziehen können, die gegen Kasse (zu erhöhten Preisen!) der begehrlichen Männerwelt die Komödie einer Perversität vormimen, die durch ihren gewerbsmäßigen Betrieb jede Tragik der Entartung verliert. Die grotesken Manöver dieser Frauen, die ihre Annäherungsversuche in schärfsten Kommandoworten, mit den einstudierten Allüren der Domina, der Donna mit der Peitsche vollführen, mögen dem braven Provinzler, der des Menschlich - Allzumenschlichen ungewohnt ist, Schauer des Grusels über den Rücken treiben, ähnlich denen, die der Naivling in einer Schreckenskammer kennen lernt. (29-30)

There is an illustration titled 'In hohen Stiefeln...' (fig. 25) by Jeanne Mammen on the following page and, again, a reading of it leads to a more sober picture. The illustration shows two prostitutes doing what they most often have to do - waiting. The women are not exposed to the same level of scrutiny as in the text and Paul Kamm's illustrations. Light falls from behind in Mammen's picture, lighting neither of the women's faces for our pleasure. Indeed, the woman whose face would be flooded with light has her back to us. The women stand together and although the one could be looking at us, she makes no attempt to parade herself or catch our attention at the expense of her companion. Instead she stands slouching, looking miserable and cold. The lack of glamour is emphasized in the background with the war invalid and old woman standing at the shop window, and the stooped man buying a *Wurst* from the small stand at the back.

While the narrator obviously sees through the 'Komödie' of the grotesque gestures of the women he talks about, Mammen's picture suggests there is no 'Komödie' in the first place. There is no sign of 'pfaunhaften Getues', of sharp 'Kommandoworte' nor of 'einstudierten Allüren der Domina, der Donna mit der Peitsche'. Instead there are just two weary, bored-looking women. The reading of the illustration leads one to question the accuracy of the narrator's perception; perhaps he is wrong to assume that there is so much behind these women's activities and that he is perhaps projecting figments of his own imagination into the scene he describes.

Certainly the narrator often becomes aware of his tendency to exaggerate. When musing on city life, for example, the narrative often takes twists and turns as the language indulges in biblical, technological, nautical, and mythological metaphors only to catch itself and quickly negate all that it has just claimed through use of irony and

humour:

Es dämert [...]. Der echte Großstadtmensch spürt es in seinen Adern und Nerven, wenn der elektrische Strom in die Millionen Glühlampen schießt und sie aufflammen läßt, daß die großen Straßen wie in ein plötzliches Feuerwerk gehüllt sind. Dann duldet es ihn nicht mehr an seinem Schreibtisch. Dann verlangt ihn nach dem Lichtbad und etwas von der elektrischen Kraft strahlt über in seine Glieder. Schon ein Bummel unter Lichtreklamen ist wie eine belebende Dusche, gibt Spannkraft, Lebensfreude, gibt Erwartung und Hoffnung auf Erlebnis und Abenteuer. Zumindest auf Sensation, [...]

Aber die Dämmerung ist nicht nur die Erweckerin der Lebenslust und der Genußsucht, sie ist auch die erosgesegnete Stunde, die für Zärtlichkeiten geneigt und nach ihnen verlangend macht. Das ist beim heutigen Menschen Nervensache. Seine Nervenspitzen, die von so vielen alltäglichen Erregungen gereizt werden, verlangen plötzlich nach einem Kontakt. Es ist wie beim Radio. Die Sender arbeiten und suchen nach einer Antenne, der ausstrahlende Strom will nicht ins Leere sprühen. Es ist nicht zu leugnen, daß in unserer Zeit ein sehr großes Liebesbedürfnis herrscht, wenigstens ein Bedürfnis nach dem, was man so im Tagesjargon Liebe nennt. Diese Liebe ist zu einem guten Teil Flucht vor dem Alleinsein. Warum allein sein, wenn man zu zweien sein kann, und wenn einen dies Zu-zweien-sein weder mit Gefühlen noch mit Verantwortung belastet. Denn so ist doch die heutige Partnerschaft, die zur Sicherung gleich vorneweg erklärt, daß "Heirat völlig ausgeschlossen" sei. (75-78)

In the first paragraph the language moves from the statement that the 'echte' city dweller feels in his nerves and arteries the electrical current from the street lights to the simile about walking under the lights being like a refreshing shower. The promise of 'Erlebnis und Abenteuer', however, is quickly qualified by the 'zumindest auf Sensation' rendering the previous statements suspect. The technological metaphors continue in the second paragraph with the reference to the human need to make contact being like a radio. Getting caught up in the

imagery of electrical currents desperately seeking contact, the narrator makes the somewhat overdramatic statement, added universal weight with the 'it is not to be denied', that there is a great need nowadays for love. The following 'wenigstens' again negates all that has just been said by acknowledging that the contemporary understanding of love is quite different from the intense emotional need for tenderness that the previous sentences would have us believe. With the language having returned to a level of dispassion, an attempt is made in the next sentence to understand why people are so desperate for love ('Diese Liebe ist zu einem guten Teil Flucht vor dem Alleinsein'). By the following sentence, however, the text begins playing again, becoming involved in the discourse of advertising ('Warum allein sein, wenn man zu zweien sein kann') and ends with a rather cynical yet humorous swipe at the whole institution of love and marriage.

A highly self-conscious narrative that dismantles its own mythic constructions with a hint of self-irony surfaces on many occasions:

Der Kurfürstendamm ist Berlin, das heutige, das lebendige, gegenwartssichere Berlin. Die Sprachen aller Nationen, die Dialekte aller Stämme schwirren hier in einem babylonischen Gewirre durcheinander. In allen Idiomen singen die Kehlen der Frauen, die ihre angemalten Gesichter in die hohen Krägen ihrer Pelzmäntel drücken. Es soll hier auch sogar Berlinisch gesprochen werden. (36)

The language moves from the simple statement that the Kurfürstendamm represents modern Berlin to embark on two sentences which conjure up biblical and mythological images of swarms of people all speaking different tongues in blissful dissonance, only to return in the last sentence to the now somewhat mundane (and thereby humorous) observation that even Berlin dialect is spoken in Berlin. The first and



the last sentence are like anchors from which the text briefly releases itself to go off into a wonderful fantasy only to return to where it left - a street and a dialect being typical of the area in which they are to be found.

However, the self-conscious, self-mocking tone of the text does not always dominate. The playful mythologizing of Berlin is often counteracted by a narrator acutely aware of and sympathetic to the plight of the 'little people':

Die jungen Männer, die hier Stunde um Stunde sitzen und warten, sind meist sehnige Kraftgestalten, deren Muskeln von der Arbeitslosigkeit zur Untätigkeit verurteilt sind. Sie ständen lieber acht Stunden jeden Tag hinter dem Schraubstock oder auf dem Baugerüst und sänkten abends werkmüde ins Bett, als hier sich vom endlosen Warten auf einen kleinen Verdienst zermürben zu lassen. Das Lächeln ist ihnen schon zur Gewohnheit geworden, aber wie schlecht steht es ihnen zu Gesicht. Wie ungewohnt sind sie, mit wenigen Ausnahmen, dieses Treibens. (138)

The 'Treiben' referred to are the men's activities as 'rent boys'. The narrator's tone here is sympathetic; he does not make fun of the men, nor does he express disgust at their activities. Instead, he simply acknowledges the reasons behind their turn to prostitution. The narrator expresses sympathy and understanding for certain types of women in lesbian bars as well:

Violetta ist für viele lesbische Frauen das Heim, das sie andwärts entbehren müssen. Kleine Angestellte verbringen hier ihre freien Abende, suchen hier Zerstreuung, Unterhaltung, Genütlichkeit, Liebe. [...] Hier finden sie ihre gute Laune wieder, diese jungen Frauen, die tagsüber hinter Ladentischen an den unfaßbaren Wünschen kaufender Kunden ihre Geduld üben und freundlich sein müssen, hier finden sie das echte Lachen wieder, das sie einen ganzen Tag lang haben spielen müssen, hier finden sie die mitfühlende Leidensgenossin des Alltagsdaseins und hier dürfen sie ihre Einsamkeit vergessen. (162)

No doubt there is a hint of condescension in the narrator's tone, and his claim that the women find their 'echte Lachen wieder' in the bar may be myth-making again. But the recognition that many people have difficult existences caused particularly by their work situations (or lack of them) is to acknowledge a reason behind people's involvement with mass culture. In the former example, the emphasis is on the men's desperation to earn some kind of a living. In the latter, the emphasis is on the need to escape the monotony and pretence of the workday. The juxtaposition of these two examples is interesting in that it shows how mass culture accommodates everyone; in its bars and night clubs one can earn a bit of money or one can relax and feel at home. But the narrator also suggests that this accommodation is a last option - it is the last place the men can earn some kind of money ('sie ständen lieber acht Stunden jeden Tag hinter dem Schraubstock') and it is the last place the women can feel at home ('Violetta ist für viele lesbische Frauen das Heim, das sie anderwärts entbehren müssen'). In other words, mass culture functions as a substitute for areas of life (work, home) that are no longer provided for in or by society (- something which we have also seen in the previous chapter in Fabian's and Doris's use of mass cultural spheres).

Sympathy is by no means reserved only for gays and lesbians. There are many instances when that same recognition is directed towards the city inhabitant in general:

Es gibt noch immer genug Menschen in einer so großen Stadt, die ihre Sorgen nicht mit in den Abend nehmen. Die mit dem Abendanzug den andern Menschen anziehen, den leichten, beschwingten, unbekümmerten, Leichtfertigkeit nennt das der Moralist. Aber diese sogenannte "Leichtfertigkeit" ist das Antitoxin der Griesgrämigkeit, der Lebenslust, der Verzweiflung. Man braucht den Aufschwung. Und der zauberhafte Boden der Großstadt gibt noch immer vielen Menschen die Mittel, für ein paar Stunden sich unter die Wirkung des köstlichen

Narkotikums zu setzen, das Vergessenheit heißt. (75)

In this passage the narrator clearly acknowledges the misery of the workday and he sees that people's flight into the night world is a 'Narkotikum' against 'Griesgrämigkeit' and 'Verzweiflung'. While the narrator here seems to believe that the city at night is 'zauberhaft', he also regularly notices that evening venues exist as economic enterprises for a small group of managers and owners:

Die alten Kabarets von Montmartre gingen an ihrer geschäftlichen Organisation zugrunde, die Kabarets von Berlin sind von Anfang an geschäftliche Organisation. Die Industrialisierung des Vergnügens ist aber im heutigen Wirtschaftsleben nicht zu vermeiden, sie ist nur logisch bedingt.

Den Ruf besonderer Eleganz beansprucht der Vergnügungspalast "Casanova" an der Lutherstraße im Hause der Scala. Er gilt als Hauptquartier der feinen Lebewelt und bemüht sich um das Aroma des mondänen Lasters. Zügellosen Pomp hat in diesen Sälen, die als "Blauer Saal", "Gelber Saal", "Spiegelsaal" sich fürstlich offenbaren, der Architekt und der Dekorateur entfesselt. Und dieser Pomp verpflichtet. Er verpflichtet den Gast schon bei der Wahl seiner Kleidung, er verpflichtet ihn, wenn er die Weinkarte in die Hand nimmt und der Ober erwartungsvoll ihm sein Ohr leiht, er verpflichtet ihn, wenn er die Brieftasche zieht, um seine Rechnung zu begleichen. Er verpflichtet ihn, wenn er sich für die anwesende Weiblichkeit interessiert, wenigstens für die berufsmäßig anwesende. (117)

The narrator acknowledges that the lavish decor of Casanova determines how the public has to behave. He implies that the snobbish surroundings pressurize the public into parting with large sums of money. (In the illustration of Casanova, the fine lines used to draw the figures blend in with the lines used to draw the room in an art nouveau style - the public becomes inseparable from the decor. Fig. 26) But he ends with

the rather humorous observation that both prostitutes and 'ladies' are present in the public.

It can be seen, then, that the reading of the illustrations and the claims of the narrator operate on many different levels. The text functions both as a creator and critical dismantler of 'fictions'. The language engages in titillating metaphors captivating the reader with its descriptions of the magic of the city. Yet the text also regularly demystifies its own constructions referring to the flight from the everyday and the presence of illusion. The illustrations function in the same way; some parade as sheer advertisements for places, encouraging a sense of adventure, erotic promise and high living, while others expose boredom, conformity, dislocation and alienation<sup>a</sup>.

It is as if the text is constantly struggling with itself. While it wants to believe in the spectacle of Berlin night life and the idea of a magic and harmonious world, it cannot help but acknowledge that this is just an illusion. It reveals that the spectacle exists both to provide an escape from the everyday on the part of the general public and as an economic enterprise on the part of managers and owners.

Having established the complex textual status of the guide, we can now go on to take a closer look at the subject matter itself. For however much the narrator is present in his subject matter, the text still undoubtedly reveals a fascinating picture of Berlin life and of processes that were shaping both the appearance and the attitude of the Berlin public.

#### The venues, the public and the novels

The similarity between descriptions of certain venues in the novels and their description in the Führer is fascinating. In the previous chapter, the depictions of Resi, Haus Vaterland and the Romanisches Café in Das

Kunstseidene Mädchen and Haupts Festsälen in Fabian were discussed. It was seen that venues had certain images which were either consciously created by the owners (such as the lavish and indulgent interiors of Resi and Haus Vaterland) or which became associated with a certain place (such as Berlin's cultural elite with the Romanisches Café). The public became captivated by such images and tried to become a part of them. When Doris, for example, enters Resi and Haus Vaterland, she imagines herself to be supremely refined and parades herself as a *Glanz*. In the Romanisches Café, she realizes the importance of intellectual display and tries to copy intellectual prowess through 'body language' and speech. And Fabian and Labude in Fabian create their own image in Haupts Festsälen (which is the novel's fictional name for Mundts Festsälen) to show they do not belong, even though they love going there and are both prepared to enter into sexual adventures with the women.

In both novels, there is a tendency by all the characters to assess who does and who does not belong in certain places, as if they are all trying to find some kind of footing in the city and an identity for themselves. Judging who belongs is established through signs, and these signs derive mostly from mainstream commercial culture; from the auras created and propagated in mass cultural venues and from the fashionable clothes used by the public to enter them. Both novels expose the extent to which people are involved with self-representation, with projecting fashionable images of themselves which attempt, mostly in vain, to conceal or disguise any inner vulnerability they may have.

As we shall see, descriptions of the Berlin public in the Führer show a group of people similarly fascinated with image-making, and again those images derive mostly from mainstream commercial culture centring upon fashion and advertising. On the one hand, the narrator positively accepts this modern public, in which he rejoices in the signs

of a classless and, at times, even genderless society. But on the other he also acknowledges that the ensuing lack of distinction between social groups confounds processes of perception, creating an uneasy and slightly confused public, precisely because social distinction did, of course, still exist on many levels.

Before going on to discuss the appearance and attitude of the Berlin public, it is first worth mentioning just how much the descriptions of Resi, the Romanisches Café, Mundts Festsälen and Haus Vaterland in the Führer correspond to their depiction in the novels.<sup>6</sup>

When discussing Resi the narrator, like Doris, describes first the lavish interior composed of lights and mirrors and then proceeds to the various uses of the table telephones and the 'Rohrpost' (see figs. 27 and 28):

Die Stätte östlicher Lebenslust ist das Residenz-Casino an der Blumenstraße, kurz "Resi" genannt. [...] Seit fünfmal fünf Jahren tanzt hier Berlin, tanzt in immer wieder sich verjüngendem Rahmen. Tanzt in einer Märchendekoration, tanzt in einem Raum, wie romantische Phantasie sich die Zauberschlösser aus 1001 Nacht vorstellen mag. Leuchtfontänen säumen die Tanzfläche, die niemals leer wird. Zwei Orchester, auf Balkonen plaziert, wechseln einander ab. Und die kleinen Brunnen in den sich drehenden Glashemigloben plätschern. Zu rosiger Dämmerung verebbt das Licht und flammt wieder auf zu glitzernder Helligkeit. Tausend Spiegel werfen ihre Reflexe, und dann und wann sinkt der ganze Raum in Dunkelheit. Dann sprühen nur kleine Farbflecke über die tanzende Menge, wie brennendes Konfetti. Und ein Rausch unfängt die Tänzer, die ein Tango dahin trägt. Schmelzende Musik, schwachtendes Hingegebenheit der Frauen in den Männerarmen, lautloses Flüstern... Durch die Kanäle der Rohrpost schießen Briefe von Tisch zu Tisch. Die Sehnsucht der Einsamen spricht sich in führenden Worten der Schüchternheit aus. Angehende Don Juane stammeln ihre verwegenen Werbungen auf dem Papier. Die selbständig gewordene Frau fordert den Tänzer auf, den sie sich wünscht; sie ermuntert den Scheuen. Die Jugend versucht sich in kesser Unternehmungslust. Eine Briefzensur gibt es nicht; man spricht also ohne Zeugen. Tischtelefone ergänzen

das Arsenal der Mittel, die der Verständigung und der Annäherung dienen. Manchmal geht ein heiteres, keckes Wortgeplänkel durch den Draht, der unbedingt verschwiegen ist. Und in Musik und Licht untertauchend vergißt eine festlich gestimmte Menge ihren Alltag, ihre Sorgen, ihre Arbeit und Mühsal... (191-192)<sup>9</sup>

Of course, both Doris's and the narrator's description of Resi are clothed in wonderfully descriptive language full of metaphors and similes. But that they are so similar strongly suggests that they are referring to an atmosphere to which the Berlin public actually was exposed as part of the all-pervasive commercialization of pleasure.

The narrator's description of the Romanisches Café is more overtly critical than Doris's:

In dieser vollkommenen Demokratie des Geistes fallen alle Klassenunterschiede im schill<sup>er</sup>nden Durcheinander des Illusionismus, des geistigen Narzißmus und Exhibitionismus. (33)

According to the narrator, signs of class distinction in this café are replaced by displays of illusionism, narciss<sup>is</sup><sub>m</sub> and exhibitionism - it is exactly this kind of behaviour which Doris tries to adopt when she is briefly part of the 'geistige Elite' (see p.117 above). The similarity between the narrator's and Fabian's des<sup>c</sup><sub>A</sub>ription of Mundts Festsälen is perhaps the most remarkable. The narrator writes:

Mit minderer Pracht inszeniert, weniger an westlichem Luxus orientiert, echter östliches Milieu bekennd sind die Strandfeste in Mundts Festsälen an der Köpenickerstraße 100. Das Lokal hat eine reiche und nicht unbewegte Vergangenheit in der Sittengeschichte Berlins. Unten zwei Tanzflächen, Oben eine Galerie mit Logen. Auch hier hat sich das Tischtelefon als unvermeidlich erwiesen.[...] Die Mädchen in Mundts Ballsaal sitzen tagsüber an Schreibmaschinen, stehen hinter Ladentischen, beugen sich über die Nähmaschine. Von Arbeit und Mühe sprechen ihre Hände trotz der Politur, die sie ihnen für den Abend

gegeben haben. Sie sind Kinder der östlichen Viertel oder von der Provinz Zugewanderte, die hier das Glück erhofften, sie stammen aus den Vorstädten oder aus Kleinstädten; das hört man, wenn sie sprechen. [...] Wenn Leute aus den Westen hier ein Gastspiel absolvieren, so wollen sie sich einen Spaß mit den Badegirls machen, die so gar nicht spröde sind. Jeden Abend gibt es eine Prämierung. Man hat etwas von Amerika gelernt und setzt das ins Berlin-Oestliche um. Die schönsten Badekostüme erhalten einen Preis. Zu diesen Zweck müssen die Preisbewerberinnen sich natürlich einer gründlichen Prüfung unterwerfen, die von den anwesenden Herren mit aller Sorgfalt durchgeführt und von den Show-Girls mit engelhaftem Gleichmut erduldet wird. Auch gegen weitergehende Untersuchungen ihrer Reize sind sie nicht abgeneigt, wenn der Prüfende ihre Sympathie gefunden und sich als splendor Kavalier erwiesen hat. (194-198)

The description of the dance hall, the 'Strandfeste', the 'Prämierung', the sexual adventures of men from the west, even the roughness of the women's hands all correspond (Labude asks 'die Magere', 'Woher haben Sie so rauhe Hände?'<sup>55</sup>) - the textual overlap is striking.

There is one illustration of Resi by Christian Schad (fig. 29) and two of the Romanisches Café by Irre Goth and Jeanne Mammen (figs 30 and 31). Mammen's illustration is perhaps the most interesting with its depiction of a smart young woman, who could easily be a Doris, eyeing the viewer with her somewhat coquettish gaze.<sup>10</sup> The soft tones of the illustration combined with the precision of the outlines of figures and objects give the illustration a stylish, sensual quality - style, apparently, being a major concern of the clientele.

The most famous institution to be mentioned in the novels and probably one of the most famous institutions of the day was Haus Vaterland. It was in this building more than any other that technology was combined with innovative settings to create completely make-believe worlds (see also figs. 15 and 16). In the Rührer we read:



Unter der rotierenden Lichtkuppel am Potsdamerplatz, die wie ein Leuchtturm durch die Nacht winkt, befindet sich, eine Kempniskische Gründung, "Haus Vaterland". In diesem Hause haben so ziemlich alle Nationen der Kulturwelt ihre Filialen. Das eigentliche deutsche "Vaterland" ist mit dem Rheinland und durch Bayern vertreten. In dem einen Raum spielt eine Gebirglerkapelle unentwegt auf der Klampf'n und jodelt, in dem anderen öffnet sich der Blick auf eine romantische Rheinlandschaft mit Weinbergen und Ruinen und "drunten fließt der Rhein", immer lang, immer lang, von der Suppe bis zum Dessert und immer weiter, und auf Sonnenschein folgt Regen mit Donner und Blitz und auf Regen wieder Sonnenschein in holdem Wechsel, bis man seine Zeche zahlt und geht, und er folgt einem noch, bis man zur Türe hinaus gewandert ist und andern Gästen Platz gemacht hat. Ein anderer Raum lädt zum "Heurigen" nach Grinzing und es gibt im Hintergrund als Panorama die Wienerstadt mit dem Stephansturm und Straußsche Walzermusik, denn Wien ist ja die "Stadt der Lieder" und das wissen die Leute vom Film her, also muß Musik gemacht werden, denn das verlangen sie halt für ihr Geld. Und in Haus Vaterland kriegt man alles, was man für sein Geld verlangen kann. Sogar die Türkei ist da. Nicht mit einem Harem, denn das gibt es ja in der Türkei nicht mehr und so was ist anderswo doch besser zu machen, sondern mit einem Mokkaausschank. Spanien hat eine Bodega mit Mandolinengeklimper und südlicher Leidenschaft, mit gedämpftem Rotlicht und allerhand ähnlichem Zauber des Südens. Anderswo ist die PuBta aufgebaut; da gibt es Zigeuner, Tokayer, Csardasmädel, Grüne Husarenuniformen bedienen. Und schließlich kann man aus der Zivilisation sogar einen Seitensprung nach Wild-West machen, in dem eine Bar untergebracht ist. Unter riesigen Schlapphüten darf man in verwegene Cowboygesichter sehen, die von der Theke her merkwürdige Songs in den Raum schmettern. Das alles gibt es in Haus Vaterland, das eigentlich gar kein Vaterland, sondern ganz international ist. Die Berliner gehen nicht hin. Aber es ist eine Sehenswürdigkeit und darum den Fremden empfohlen. Denn für die ist es ja aufgebaut worden.(87-89)

The effect of the decor of this institution was undoubtedly to encourage an audience to indulge in escapist fantasies. Haus Vaterland provided its clientele with scenery which they, the audience, were invited not

only to consume but also to partake in and project their desires into; one sat in and was surrounded by the scenery. It was not like a play taking place on a stage where stage and audience are separated. Instead, the audience became part of the image being projected.''

The notion of image-making, of a public obsessed with self-representation becomes a major theme of the book. Already in the opening sections of the guide, one is struck by the impression of a highly self-conscious Berlin public that is fascinated with looking and being looked at:

Der Kurfürstendamm - das ist das Schaufenster Berlins. Und auf Schau ist alles eingestellt. Wer hier flaniert, will sehen und gesehen werden, will - eingeknüpft in den flanelleweichen, behaglichen Mantel der Anonymität - Kontakt gewinnen mit der Mitmenschheit, sucht die Nachbarlichkeit der Unbekannten, die mit ihm dieselbe Luft atmen und denselben Asphalt treten. Der moderne Mensch hat das Talent zur Einsamkeit verloren, er flüchtet in die Masse, vielleicht, weil er inmitten ihrer eine andere Einsamkeit erlebt. Der weibliche Exhibitionismus feiert hier Orgien. Das Geltungsbedürfnis expansioniert. Was wäre die Frau, wenn sie keine Zuschauer hätte? Sie muß sich zeigen, sie muß wissen, daß sie gesehen wird. [...]

Der Kurfürstendamm ist die jugendlichste Straße Berlins, die frische Blutader des neuen Westens. [...] Die jugendlichen Gestalten des Kurfürstendamms sind nicht mehr so zerbrechlich und blutleer wie die, die uns einst auf der Tauentzien begegneten. Sie haben auf den Sportplätzen und in den Wassern der Havelseen ihre Muskeln gestählt, im durchsonnten Ufersand ihr Blut geglüht und ihre Lungen in den märkischen Kiefernwäldern gestärkt. Ihre Wangen wetteifern mit dem Rot der Schminke, ihre Lippen sind nicht blasser als der Lippenstift und sie können auf die kosmetischen Behelfe meist verzichten, wenn es nicht gerade Mode wäre, sich zu schminken und die Kosmetik mehr geschätzt würde als die Natur. Der amerikanische Flapper hat die Natur diskreditiert und man glaubt, sein Vorbild nicht ignorieren zu können.

Zur Anmut ihrer Haltung hat die Berlinerin des Westens

ein adäquates Talent entwickelt in der Schulung des Mannes, der sich ihr galant als Minnediener attachiert. [...] Das macht die Frau als Einzellerscheinung im Straßenbilde viel seltener und auch in den Kaffeehäusern sitzt sie darum fast ausschließlich in männlicher Gesellschaft oder in deren Erwartung. Damentische sind fast zur Rarität geworden.

Das erleichtert den Damen, die als Professionals den Kurfürstendam frequentieren und nach zahlungsfähigen Begleitern Ausschau halten, die Unterscheidung, denn sie müssen sich schon erhebliche Mühe geben, um nicht mit ihren Geschlechtsgenossinnen, die hier als Amateurrinnen flanieren, verwechselt zu werden. Früher war die Schminke ein Etikett, aber sie ist heute ein kosmetisches Uniformstück des weiblichen Geschlechts geworden. (38-42)

The passage shows not only the importance of fashion in shaping people's (particularly women's) appearance but also the effect this has in reducing distinction between groups (the inability to distinguish prostitutes from non-prostitutes being one of the most remarkable). With references to 'Schau', 'Anonymität', 'Kontakt', 'Einsamkeit', 'flüchten', 'Geltungsbedürfnis', 'Zuschauer', the text suggests that there is not only a particular willingness among the young to conform to a fashionable image but also a desire to 'blend in', to look and to be noticed, to see and to be seen, but in such a way that individuality, or difference, remains hidden. And so a fashionable mask, consisting of cosmetics and clothes, is adopted behind which one can move in the exposing public arena. This fear of exposure combined with the desire to blend in (made possible through cosmetics and clothes) results in a public in which distinction is blurred. We have seen in both Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen that there are many instances involving fear of exposure and lack of distinction. Both Fabian and Doris regularly comment that people do not belong in certain night clubs although they cannot say exactly why they do not. Doris herself suppresses her social

background in order to pass as a *Glanz* or as a member of the 'geistige Elite'. Similar situations are described in the Führer; as the narrator proceeds to talk about the seeming homogeneity of the Berlin public, he slowly exposes the extent to which this assimilation consisted only of images. As we shall see, social distinction is not somehow obsolete, it is only concealed; for behind the fashionable masks (particularly) class and gender distinction is still very much an issue. This may not be so apparent in the streets where there is much movement, but it certainly becomes apparent away from them once people enter certain areas.

There are many passages in the text where the blurring of distinction is addressed and reinforced in the illustrations. First, the text mentions many ways in which blending-in is made possible. For example, it is possible through adopting role models derived from the cinema:

Man möchte gern international tun, aber man bringt es doch im Kern über das Berlinische nicht ganz hinaus, und das ist vielleicht gerade das Originelle daran, dieser berlinische Internationalismus, diese lokale Note in kosmopolitischen Getue, das ja auch im Publikum und in seinen Allüren vorherrscht. Die Männer möchten für Gents gehalten werden und tragen ihre Menjoubärtchen mit blasierter Würde, die Damen färben sich noch blond und frisieren sich noch auf Greta Garbo, weil bisher noch kein anderer Prototyp des Sex appeals entdeckt worden ist und man der Marlene Dietrich ihre langen Beine doch nicht nachmachen kann. (114)

Here it is the image of the cinema which determines how people behave. Although the class of the people is not exposed in this passage, the narrator recognizes that the people are pretending to be something they are not.

Another way to blend in is to deny class distinction by allowing different classes to move in areas that normally would be class-distinct. So, for example, in one of the early sections of the guide the

narrator is referring to 'Nachmittagstee der großen, der kleinen und der halben Welt'. At one point we read:

Die Avantgarde der großen und der größeren Welt bevorzugt die durch den Glanz ihres Namens ausgezeichneten Nachmittagstees in den großen Hotelhallen. Sie trifft hier die Repräsentantinnen ihrer Kreise, deren Umgebung sie zu ihrem Wohlbefinden bedarf. Aber die Berlinerin ist diesem Klassengeiste nur vereinzelt verfallen. Sie ist zu sehr kosmopolitisch eingestellt, um törichte Abgrenzungen zu sanktionieren und den Glauben zu hegen, daß Klassenzugehörigkeit den Persönlichkeitswert beeinflusst, daß sie den Einzelnen hebt oder erniedrigt. Wenn sie Exklusivität sucht, geht sie in ihren Klub. Aber der Rahmen und Raum des Klubs ist den meisten Frauen zu eng, besonders wenn sie jung hübsch und elegant sind, wenn sie sich in den bewundernden Augen der Männerwelt spiegeln, wenn sie sich dem Leben näher fühlen wollen. (50-52)

And a little later:

Man sehe aber nicht in jeder eleganten Blondine eine englische Lady, besonders wenn sie sehr hübsch ist, taxiere nicht jede Trägerin einer dicken Perlschnur auf eine amerikanische MillionärsGattin und auch der riesige Smaragd an den schlanken Fingern der Koketten in dem neuen Patoumodell muß nicht unbedingt echt sein, ist vielleicht "Halbedelstein" wie seine Trägerin, (56)

Already the narrator is distinguishing between the 'Repräsentinnen' of the avant-garde and the 'Halbedelstein' woman who only parades herself as 'eine englische Lady'. While he appears quite sure in the first example that the women he is describing are the 'Avantgarde der großen und der größeren Welt', he is not so sure what type of woman he is dealing with in the second.

This lack of distinction is regularly addressed in the illustrations to the text as well. Between the two passages quoted

immediately above there is an illustration by F. Hilf entitled 'Beim Tee' (fig. 32). The picture shows a close-up of the profile of an elegant woman with a stylized face. Light falls over her face and reveals a man with a monocle sitting behind her who is looking at her. The woman appears to be very conscious of herself, her head is turned into the light and her hands elegantly hold onto her cup. With our gaze directed straight at the woman, the man gazing at her from behind and her face illuminated from the side, the woman is exposed on three sides of her body. While this suggests that she is inviting attention, her own attention is also engaged with something. She is both looking, and being looked at. But what is her social status? Is she one of those parvenus mentioned in the text or is she an upper class lady frequenting a place not normally associated with her level of society? What is the social status of the man? Both figures have very stylized faces. Their faces and clothes conform to a type in which individuality is repressed. In the end it is impossible to determine the social status of the figures simply because the elegance of both their clothes and comportment derive from fashionable stereotypes.

A surer way to judge someone's class is by looking at the geographical location of a venue. A club in the east, for example, could never claim the same cosmopolitan status as one in the west (unless it was an expensive hotel) simply because of its location. The east was working class and the west 'mondän' as the following passage shows:

An einer Stelle nimmt der dunkle Osten einen Anlauf ins Mondäne, Weltstadtbetrieb für den Mittelstand. Zuweilen kommen Gäste aus den Westen aus Neugier oder um eines Abendteuers mit der Kleinbürgerlichkeit willen. Die kleinen Mädchen aus O wachsen an der Brust der Kavaliere aus W, wenn diese sich zu einem Tanz mit ihnen herablassen, gleich um eine Elle an Selbstbewußtsein. Sie sind so "mondän" wie Kinostars, sie bemühen sich mit rührendem Eifer um die Haltung der neuesten Mode und sie möchten, ach so gern, für Damen

gehalten werden, daß es grausam wäre, sie nicht dafür zu nehmen. In Tanzpalast verschwinden beinahe die Klassenunterschiede. Die lackierten Fingernägel und die kirschrot gefärbten Lippen, die ondulierten Bubiköpfe und die glänzenden Liebesaugen, die alle eine Sehnsucht haben, machen die Frage nach der Herkunft dieser kleinen Tanzmädchen vergessen. Sie sind so schmiegsam und so schlank, so elastisch und so rank wie ihre den eigenen Wagen kühn im Straßengewühl dahin steuernden Schwestern aus dem Westen. Sie tanzen mit derselben Sicherheit und ihre Haut duftet vielfach dieselbe Frische und Gepflegtheit. Sie haben dieselbe Geringschätzung gegen Vorurteile und bekennen sich mit demselben Freimut zu einer hemmungslosen Lebensauffassung. Es ist schwer zu sagen, wodurch sie sich von jenen unterscheiden, wenn man nicht die Qualität ihrer Eleganz zu einem Vergleich heranzieht. (189-190)

The narrator identifies the women in the club as 'kleinbürgerlich', he calls them the 'kleinen Mädchen aus O' and is aware of questions of 'Herkunft'. But he admits there is nothing easily identifiable which differentiates the women here with the 'Schwestern aus dem Westen' other than that they are to be found in a working class area.

Once the narrator enters an area he is frequently acutely aware of social rank and status, even if he cannot pinpoint what it is that makes some women parvenus and others working class. At times such as these, the narrator is as aware of class and distinction as Fabian and Labude in Fabian when they describe Haupts Festsälen as full of 'Straßenmädchen, [...] Kommis, Buchhalter und Einzelhändler' (F, 52) at the same time noting that they themselves do not belong there (see pp.119-120 above). The narrator is as keen as the characters of the novels to identify those who surround him and in order to do so he automatically thinks in terms of class difference.

Class, then, is only superficially concealed by fashionable images. On the one hand society appears classless and harmonious; on

the streets around the Kurfürstendamm everyone blends in. But as soon as people enter certain areas attempts are made to label them. Even though no difference in outer appearance can be perceived, the geographical location of the club a person was in could betray him or her as working class or 'kleinbürgerlich'.

Certainly the narrative and the illustrations present a more acute awareness of class as it descends the social scale. Towards the end of the book, in which the bars of the east and north are discussed, the illustrations show men in work clothes with sullen expressions and women in simple dresses. There are no more elegant dresses or lavish interiors (figs. 33 and 34). But if the working classes and the unemployed were still easily recognizable, why weren't the other classes? The answer has, of course, to do with fashion. There can be no doubt that the coming of mass culture and mass fashion changed processes of class signification. While the increase in (in this case) entertainment venues meant that more (usually new) places were opened up to more people, adhering to fashion became the passport for entry and acceptance in them. By means of adopting a certain outer appearance, people could partake in the spectacle in a way that left them for the most part undetected or, at best, indistinct. As long as a person was moving in the streets or in the right areas, no-one could tell that he or she was anything other than a fashionable person.

Added to this confused distinction of class in the Führer is an even more confusing distinction of gender, both in hetero- and homosexual relationships. Concerning the former, there are many passages in the book which refer to the new 'Assimilierung der Geschlechter' (42) and to modern day relationships being equal in terms of the level of commitment between men and women. But when it comes to paying for things the rules of equal relationships suddenly no longer



apply:

Damen, die sich radikal zur kameradschaftlichen Gleichberechtigung bekennen, bestehen auf "Kassentrennung", aber ihrer mehr lassen doch keinen Zweifel darüber, daß sie dem "großzügigen" Freunde den Vorzug geben und daß sie eine pralle Brieftasche zu den primären männlichen Tugenden zählen. [...] Frauen beanspruchen immer mehr als sie zu erhalten selbst glauben; das ist das Geheimnis ihrer Politik. Aber es gehört für den Mann schon sehr viel Diplomatie dazu, ihre Forderungen zu reduzieren ohne selbst beschämt zu sein. (64)

Geteiltes Vergnügen ist doppeltes Vergnügen. Natürlich darf man nicht immer an die Rechnung denken, die am Ende präsentiert wird. Genießen und zahlen, das sind eben getrennte Angelegenheiten, und es gehört zur Lebenskunst, diesen Trennungsstrich ganz radikal zu ziehen. (80)

Berlin's rapidly changing social etiquette simply is not consistent. The outer appearances of people and their underlying economic circumstances simply did not match. Perception fluctuates between a desire to believe in the surface and an unsettling awareness of the (social and economic) reality beneath the surface.

But what about the lack of distinction between gender itself? There are some extremely amusing passages in the book that refer to the inability to distinguish men from women and vice-versa in various clubs and bars. The narrator talks about one building in particular which housed an upstairs bar for men only and a downstairs bar only for women. The two bars are discussed in two different sections of the book, the first in the section on 'Stammlokale der Homosexuellen' and the second in 'Lesbische Lokale'. Juxtaposing the two passages illustrates the wonderful farce of gender which took place in this building and which Christian Schad's illustration helps to clarify (fig. 35). On the men's bar we read:

Kulissenwechsel. Kommandanten - Straße. "Zauberflöte" heißt das Lokal. Im breiten Torweg schon empfängt ein würdevoll aussehender Herr in dunklen Anzug die Gäste. Herren eine Treppe hoch, zum Florida-Saal. Im Treppenhaus geheimnisvolle Zeichen BfM. Unkundige deuten; Bund für Männer. Eingeweihte wissen, daß es das Zeichen des Bundes für Menschenrechte ist, der gegen die Entrechtung der Gleichgeschlechtlichen und gegen ihre Ausnahmestellung gegenüber dem Gesetz kämpft, gegen ihre Achtung und Verfolgung. Hier herrscht Garderobezwang und es wird bescheidener Eintritt erhoben. Man sieht sofort, wie sehr hier auf Ordnung gehalten wird. Höflich, aber konsequent werden weibliche Gäste, auch in männlicher Begleitung zurückgewiesen. Selbst der Hinweis, daß bereits Damen im Saale anwesend seien, fruchtet nichts. Es wird uns lächelnd bedeutet, daß das ein Mißverständnis zu sein scheine. Und die beiden Abendkleider an einem kleinen Tische sind als Verkleidung schon legitimiert. (142-144)

And on the women's:

Männer ausgeschlossen! Das ist Prinzip im Damenklub Monbijou, der im Tanzpalast Zauberflöte an der Kommandantenstraße im Erdgeschoß tagt. An diesen Grundsatz wird mit äußerster Strenge festgehalten. Weibliche Gäste werden zugelassen. Wer als Mann hinein will, der muß sich gut verkleiden können. Dann allerdings... Was man im übrigen an Männerkleidern sieht, das sind natürlich Frauen. Aber ein Mann wird in Männerkleidern niemals so aussehen, wie eine verkleidete Frau. Während er in Frauenkleidern nicht so leicht zu erkennen ist, denn es gibt dort Frauen, die noch männlicher aussehen als ein Mann. Die Kontrolle am Eingang wird mit polyphemischem Argwohn ausgeübt. Sie ist selbst für geübte Augen nicht leicht, denn hier sind die Unterschiede zwischen den Geschlechtern zu sehr verwischt. (172)

Schad's drawing shows the entrance hallway to the Zauberflöte. Two signs, one on the left hand side of the picture, the other on the right, indicate the areas for the men and the women. At the centre of the picture is a large man in uniform who blocks the entrance and looks straight at us. Behind him are five people, two are going upstairs to

the men's section and three stand around the women's. The two boys have young, slightly effeminate features. The three women look at us, the position of the one in the middle is similar to the man at the front; she stands squarely with a hand in her pocket and her face, with cigarette or cigar hanging out of it, is no less severe than his.

In a number of illustrations which depict the interiors of gay bars, it is impossible to tell which figures are male and which female. In Paul Kamm's 'Männerball', for example (fig. 36), many of the dancers seem to be female although the title suggests they are all men. And in Benari's 'Tanz im "Eldorado"' (fig. 37) the dancers seem to have female-shaped bodies with their small waistlines, but everything else, such as their hair styles (male or female), clothes (more male) and made-up faces (more female), which normally are gender-specific cultural trappings, become appropriated in such a way that difference becomes indiscernible. The narrator comments on the confusion this play on gender creates in several clubs:

Außer diesen Transvestiten gibt es welche, die wohl die ihren Geschlecht entsprechende Kleidung tragen, aber doch pervers orientiert sind. Bei dieser vierdimensionalen Geometrie dreht sich dem Besucher alles im Kopf und Magen. Man mustert seinen Nachbar mit Mißbehagen; weiß man doch nicht, welches der vier Ungeheuer er verkörpert. (132)

Echtheit und Imitation der Inversion mischen sich hier so seltsam, daß man davon verwirrt wird und geneigt ist, das ganze für eine Komödie zu halten. Es schmeckt nach einer Modeströmung. Man hegt den Verdacht, als ob die meisten in dieser Gesellschaft augenblicklich Homosexualität trügen, weil sie so kleidsam ist, weil man gewissen Leuten damit imponieren kann, weil man damit auffällt. In diesem Gemisch von Echten und Unechten begegnen die Echten den Unechten mit einem verächtlichen Achselzucken. Es herrscht in diesen Kreisen ein strenger Kastengeist. Die Inversion schafft eine gewisse Exklusivität. Aber sie ist notwendig als eine Schutzwehr gegen das feindliche Draußen. (148)

The narrator acknowledges the difficulties in perceiving situations accurately, he talks about 'Mißbehagen' and 'Verdacht'. He becomes sceptical of those around him and suspects that what he sees is a 'Modeströmung' which people have adopted in order to impress others, to achieve a sense of exclusivity and to protect themselves from the 'feindliche(n) Draußen'. While the narrator himself is suspicious, he notes there is an element of competition between the groups themselves; the 'Echten' wish to be acknowledged as such and dismiss the 'Unechten'.

Curt Moreck's Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin reveals Weimar Berlin as a place full of contradictions, paradoxes and blurred distinctions. The playful Berlin public was fascinated with appearances deriving mostly from mainstream commercial culture. In striving for a certain appearance, people projected images of themselves which disguised social status and sometimes even gender under a veil of fashionable clothes, habits and tastes (we have seen this in Doris's behaviour). The society of Berlin's night<sup>l</sup>life appeared more egalitarian because it was difficult to distinguish between upper and lower class, and between male and female roles. The blurring of distinction which arose from this situation, however, confounded processes of perception, creating an uneasy and slightly confused public. The spectator became unsure of the accuracy of his or her own perception of a given situation; he or she wanted to believe that the fashionable surface appearances were accurate indicators of people's social standing. But other, more concrete, constraints exposed the fallacy of such beliefs. Class remained distinct through its association with geographical space as well as through people's sceptical awareness of parvenus. Men and women pretended to be equal, but women still tended to believe a man would pay in the end and men still felt obliged to do so, even if they could

scarcely afford it (a situation which is reflected in Fabian's and Cornelia's relationship in Fabian and in several of Doris's relationships with poorer men in Das Kunstseidene Mädchen). And while the clothes of the people frequenting Zauberflöte flirted with notions of gender, the actual sex of the people inside them still determined which area they were allowed into; there were only men upstairs and only women downstairs, or, in other areas, groups would try to distinguish themselves from others by claiming to be the 'Echten' as opposed to the 'Unechten'.

All of these issues, the lack of distinction, the desire to blend in and the inability to assess others accurately, are, as we have seen in the chapters above, features common to all the novels as well. A picture of Berlin night life emerges which was confusing, fluid and, insofar as it was based on fashionable trends, commercialized to the core. As the narrator notes:

Das Berliner Nachtpublikum kennt keine besondere Anhänglichkeit, es hat keine Neigung zum Habitué, es jagt der Sensation nach, (150)

I have in the foregoing quoted extensively from Moreck's Führer in order to give a flavour of its visual and verbal texts. I have also sought to indicate obvious moments of overlap between Moreck's picture of Berlin and that given by the novels. Yet what is at stake is something more than an overlap of setting or theme. Because what Moreck constantly shows is the ways in which and the extent to which the public for and the purveyors of pleasure in Berlin of the late 1920s and early 1930s merge in an intense climate of consumerism. Constantly frontiers are crossed, between genders, between performers and public, between classes, between public and private, between styles of

architecture and decor. All the three protagonists of the novels are touched by its climate. All of them partly surrender to it, part resist it. All of them feel that their individuality, their coherence as human entities is under threat. All of them end up marginalized in a world driven by advertising, fashion and entertainment. The textuality of the novels, then, both acknowledges and takes issue with the dense textuality of the society. And so, too, in its part-adulatory, part-sceptical way does Moreck's Führer.

## CHAPTER SIX

### *NEUE SACHLICHKEIT* AND COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE

No study of this kind would be complete without a discussion of *Neue Sachlichkeit* - the dominant category used to describe cultural production during the Weimar Republic. Indeed, not only have all three novels been subsumed under this term in the work of literary scholars (such as Volker Klotz and Helmut Lethen)<sup>1</sup>, but a number of artists represented in Moreck's guide have been associated with the so-called *Neue Sachlichkeit* movement.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, the economic developments outlined in chapter one concerning the ideologies behind rationalization of industry have also been ascribed to 'the proponents of *Neue Sachlichkeit*'.<sup>3</sup>

However, the term *Neue Sachlichkeit* has a long history of being endowed with various definitions in different contexts. The *Neue Sachlichkeit* debate is complex, often contradictory and tends to revolve around the definition of the term rather than the issues which it is supposed to be describing. Deciding what is and what is not *Neue Sachlichkeit* has essentially become more important than the commentary on the issues themselves.<sup>4</sup> It is for this reason that I have been careful to avoid using the term up until now. But instead of trying to define or redefine the term, I would argue that much can be learned simply by looking at the common threads running among its various uses. As I hope to show below, the novels, the guide, the lifestyles of the characters, the areas in which they move and which really existed, all these have been described as *Neue Sachlichkeit* and common to all is the issue of commercialism.

A particularly useful way to view this commonality is to analyse aspects of commercial architecture from the period.

Architecture is, after all, an important interface between aesthetics and social function, and it is here, I believe, that one can find a confluence of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the issues of commercialization, fashion, class, sex, gender, perception, identity, fluidity and lack of distinction which have so dominated the interpretation of the novels and Curt Moreck's Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin. It has already been established in the thesis that many of the venues mentioned in the texts closely resemble places which actually existed in Weimar Berlin. By concentrating on the appearance of some 'real' buildings in more detail, and by looking at the perception of that architecture in the writing of the cultural commentators Adolf Behne and Siegfried Kracauer, it becomes possible to understand how subtle commercial influences shaped aspects of urban life in Weimar Berlin. But before doing so, it is perhaps first useful, for the sake of clarity, to provide a short overview of aspects of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* debate in the fields of art and literature.

In many standard books on Weimar culture the first use of the term is credited to the art critic Gustav F. Hartlaub, who, as newly appointed director to the 'Kunsthalle' in Mannheim, sent out a circular dated 18th May, 1923 to museum colleagues, art dealers and art critics in which he asked for names and addresses of artists whose work might be displayed in an exhibition he was planning to stage under the title 'Die Neue Sachlichkeit':

Ich möchte im Herbst eine mittelgroße Ausstellung von Gemälden und Graphik veranstalten, der man etwa den Titel geben könnte "Die Neue Sachlichkeit". Es liegt mir daran, repräsentative Werke derjenigen Künstler zu vereinigen, die in den letzten 10 Jahren weder impressionistisch aufgelöst noch expressionistisch abstrakt, weder rein sinnhaft äußerlich, noch rein konstruktiv innerlich gewesen sind. Diejenigen Künstler möchte ich zeigen, die der positiven greifbaren Wirklichkeit mit einem bekennenden Zuge treu geblieben oder wieder treu geworden sind.<sup>6</sup>



Hartlaub distinguished between two different types of *Neue Sachlichkeit* painting. These were:

der "rechte" Flügel (Neu-Klassizisten, wenn man so sagen will), wie etwa gewisse Sachen von Picasso, Kay H. Nebel etc., als auch der linke "veristische" Flügel, dem ein Beckmann, Grosz, Dix, Drexel, Scholz etc. zugezählt werden können.<sup>6</sup>

Although Hartlaub notes two, politically opposed, tendencies in painting, the main idea behind the exhibition was that the pictures should differ formally from Expressionist works. The exhibition was then staged in Mannheim in 1925 under the title, *Neue Sachlichkeit. Deutsche Malerei seit dem Expressionismus*. Among the best represented artists in the exhibition were M. Beckmann, O. Dix, G. Grosz, A. Kanoldt, C. Mense, K. H. Nebel, G. Scholz and G. Schrimpf.

However, both the term *Sachlichkeit* and *Neue Sachlichkeit* were being used before 1923 in the realm of politics and the economy. In his ground-breaking study, *Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932*, Helmut Lethen has shown how *Sachlichkeit* came to denote economic developments in German society from the turn of the century onwards. As early as 1903, the sociologist Georg Simmel applied the term to social relations in a *Geldwirtschaft*:

Die Großstädte sind von jeher die Sitze der Geldwirtschaft gewesen. [...] Geldwirtschaft aber und Verstandesherrschaft stehen in tiefsten Zusammenhänge. Ihnen ist gemeinsam die reine Sachlichkeit in der Behandlung der Menschen und Dinge, in der sich eine formale Gerechtigkeit oft mit rücksichtsloser Härte paart.<sup>7</sup>

After World War One and especially during the period of relative stability between 1924-1929 the term was used frequently in conjunction with the visions attached to the process of technological rationalization

in industry and society (see chapter 1 above, pp.21-25). In 1922 Carl Schmitt, the legal scholar, noted:

Heute ist nichts moderner als der Kampf gegen das Politische, Amerikanische Finanzleute, industrielle Techniker, marxistische Sozialisten und anarcho-syndikalistische Revolutionäre vereinigen sich in der Forderung, daß die unsachliche Herrschaft der Politik über die Sachlichkeit des wirtschaftlichen Lebens beseitigt werden müsse. Es soll nur noch organisatorisch-technische und ökonomisch-soziologische Aufgaben, aber keine politischen Probleme mehr geben.<sup>9</sup>

*Sachlichkeit*, Lethen claims, was propagated as a way of life which the population were encouraged to emulate. Articles were written with titles such as 'Sachlichkeit als Ziel der Volks- und Jugenderziehung', 'Sachlichkeit als ethischer Grundbegriff' and 'Zur Charakterologie der Sachlichkeit'.<sup>9</sup>

The tendency of researchers to locate the source of the term either in Hartlaub's *Rundbrief* or in the political and economic climate of post-WWI Germany has led to two quite different notions of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. The first tendency, which dates the beginning of *Neue Sachlichkeit* with Hartlaub's *Rundbrief*, has meant *Neue Sachlichkeit* is considered chiefly as an artistic style following Expressionism; pinpointing differences in style between Expressionist works and *Neue Sachlichkeit* works becomes the key to understanding post-1923 art and literature. The work of the art historian Wieland Schmied and the literary scholars Volker Klotz and Horst Denkler is heavily influenced by such stylistic considerations, although all acknowledge the significance of historical circumstances of the day.<sup>10</sup> For example, in his 'Forcierte Prosa' Volker Klotz recognizes that changes in literary style after 1923 stem from a new relationship between both the author and his or her text, and the literary subject and his or her

surroundings. He offers brilliant interpretations of Kästner's Fabian and Keun's Das Kunstseidene Mädchen noting such stylistic techniques as the 'verräumlichende Metaphern' which both Fabian and Doris use to describe inner thought processes. For example, when Fabian describes his feelings in the following terms, Klotz sees here an attempt to make feelings 'faßlich und übersichtlich [...] um sie berechnen zu können':<sup>1</sup>

Sein leicht ermüdbares Gefühl gab Ruhe und wich dem Drang, Ordnung zu schaffen. Er blickte auf das, was geschehen war, wie auf ein verwüstetes Zimmer und begann kalt und kleinlich aufzuräumen. (F, 177)

Er betrieb die gemischten Gefühle seit langem aus Liebhaberei. Wer sie untersuchen wollte, mußte sie haben. Nur während man sie besaß, konnte man sie beobachten. Man war Chirurg, der die eigene Seele aufschnitt. (F, 20)

Both Fabian's attitude and the literary means used to communicate that attitude are, according to Klotz, worlds apart from the all-feeling Expressionist subject. In a similar style, Doris describes her life in similes borrowed from the mechanical world:

In mir pufft die Wut wie ein Motor. (DKM, 85)

das ist ein Emigrant - wie er spricht - die Worte stolpern ihm rau und weich, wie so ein Mercedesrad über holpriges Pflaster rollt - (DKM, 70)

For Klotz, Doris is an archetypal representative of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Her pragmatic attitude towards life is reflected in language which gives possessions the same status (if not greater) than feelings and emotions:<sup>1 2</sup>

Und heulte Tränen in den Kaffee und mußte mir mit echt waschledernen Handschuhen innerzu die Nase wischen, weil ich gerade kein Taschentuch da hatte und Therese ihr's voll Stockschnupfen war. Und heulte Tränen

auf das neue Kleid - und hätte nur noch gefehlt, daß die Tupfen nicht waschecht waren und ausgingen und zu allem andern mein lachsfarbenes Kombination mit verfärbte. (DKM, 14)

Klotz's analyses of stylistic differences between Expressionist works and *Neue Sachlichkeit* works, along with his analyses of how Fabian and Doris perceive and experience their surroundings, are certainly insightful and illuminating. Technology and consumption are recognized as influential factors in the protagonists' lives. But while Klotz tells us precisely how Fabian and Doris experience their world, he tells us relatively little about why they experience it the way they do. In other words, although Klotz locates the source of stylistic change in the post-1918 political and social climate he is mainly concerned with how *Neue Sachlichkeit* differs as a literary style from Expressionism.

The question of why leads us to the second strand in research on *Neue Sachlichkeit*; it is the one that locates the roots of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the political and economic ideologies of the day. This tendency has been adopted chiefly by critics of the New Left such as Helmut Lethen. But the question which such critics ask is not so much why protagonists such as Fabian behave the way they do, as why they do not behave class-consciously. For example, in his analysis of Fabian and Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?,<sup>19</sup> Helmut Lethen looks at how and why the protagonists of the novels are not class-conscious and politically active. Lethen argues from the premise that novels written after 1929 and the onset of the Depression should have been class-conscious because the visions attached to rationalization had so clearly failed to materialize. In his analysis, he does not concentrate on formal and stylistic questions. Rather he is concerned with the political potential of literature to present a protagonist who will act

as an example for the collective. Of course, Fabian and Pinneberg fail to be such role models and Lethen attributes their failure to the legacy of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* ideology; in the same way that the ideologies behind rationalization, which sought to create a classless society through peaceful cooperation in the workplace and the celebration of technology, failed to account for the continued existence of class struggle, so the art and literature of *Neue Sachlichkeit* chose to ignore questions of class difference. According to Lethen, Fabian and Pinneberg fail to become class-conscious because they refuse to relinquish their moral identity. If they were to become class-conscious they would have to give up their moral fastidiousness, 'dirty' themselves and join social groups which they actually despise.

The work of critics such as Schmied, Klotz and Denkler has certainly helped to situate the post-1923 tendency in art and literature in its literary and cultural context. And Lethen has made us aware of the political implications - and limits - of these novels. However, while both tendencies acknowledge the role played by commercialization within and beyond the literary work, it does not constitute their main focal point - Klotz prefers to concentrate on movements in art and literature and Lethen on issues of class war. However, more recent, post-1989 research on *Neue Sachlichkeit* has begun to apply the term much more broadly to the society and culture of Weimar Germany. With the current tendency in German cultural criticism to look at continuities between the Weimar Republic and post-89 unified Germany, new emphasis is being placed on the issue of technology and commercialization in Weimar Germany and particularly Weimar Berlin.<sup>14</sup>

One of the more important scholars of this recent tendency to equate *Neue Sachlichkeit* with commercial processes is Jost Hermand. In his '*Neue Sachlichkeit: Ideology, Lifestyle, or Artistic Movement?*'<sup>15</sup>

Hermand is not so much concerned with the representation of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in literature or painting. Instead he asks how *Neue Sachlichkeit* may be used to refer 'beyond the arts - to politics, the economy, ideology, the media - indeed, the entirety of life in a particular epoch'.<sup>16</sup> Hermand, like Lethen, locates the roots of *Neue Sachlichkeit* in the political and economic climate of 1924 after inflation, the Dawes Plan and the onset of the years of relative stability. But he goes beyond the relations of production to attach equal importance to the increasing commercialization of life which, he argues, played a vital role in the democratization of society. Hermand claims the democratic hopes of the governments were placed both in the acceleration of economic expansion and in the increasing commercialization of leisure time. By introducing new technologies and rationalizing industrial production techniques it was hoped there would be a decline in the industrial proletariat and an increase in the number of workers involved in administration and services. At the same time the increase in free time brought about by the mechanization of industrial processes meant more people had more access to mass cultural forms than ever before. Hermand calls this whole process *Neue Sachlichkeit* and interprets it as one which aspired to bring about a more equal, and hence 'democratic', society.<sup>17</sup>

According to Hermand, the white-collar workers were the embodiment of this 'democratic' ideology with their administrative jobs and their readiness to adopt modern lifestyles (see chapter 1, pp.31-34 above). And it was in the city, where industrialization and rationalization had taken place, that this democratic ideology and corresponding lifestyle were most propagated. Here the population supposedly enjoyed more mobility and anonymous freedom (sometimes called 'positive alienation') than ever before. They were less tied to

family tradition and background, and enjoyed the same access to (mass) culture as more elite groups:

From the beginning of the 1920s on, proponents of *Neue Sachlichkeit* believed that the most important of these new leisure-time opportunities were those offered by the rapidly expanding entertainment industry; sports such as soccer, boxing, cycling, and auto rallies; new technical accomplishments such as automobiles, radio, film, and records; advertisements, shop windows, and household implements; the feeling of being constantly up-to-date and informed by newspapers and illustrated magazines; and the largely free satisfaction of sexual needs in the homosexual and lesbian scene, or in open uncommitted heterosexual relationships.<sup>18</sup>

In line with Hermand's arguments it can be seen that many of the issues explored in this thesis can be linked to *Neue Sachlichkeit*; from the rationalized work spheres in which the protagonists move to their perception of and engagement with mass culture and their involvement in numerous sexual relationships, all belong within the orbit of *Neue Sachlichkeit*. But there are certain problems with Hermand's claims; he provides very little evidence in his article that *Neue Sachlichkeit* was understood by Weimar contemporaries in the way he describes it; there are no footnotes and the 'proponents of *Neue Sachlichkeit*', whom he often mentions, are never named. More evidence is needed if one wants to support the claim that *Neue Sachlichkeit* was inextricably linked to the increasing commercialization of urban life. It is at this point pertinent to turn to commercial *Neue Sachlichkeit* architecture.

Much of the work of avant-garde architects of the Weimar Republic is associated with *Neue Sachlichkeit*.<sup>19</sup> From the social housing projects of Wagner and Taut (see fig. 2) to the buildings in which the Bauhaus was housed (fig. 41), the *Neues Bauen* was, and often

still is, celebrated as a functional architecture which rejected ornamentation, favouring instead a simple style that reflected the needs of the people and the modern, democratic, technologically minded times. The *Prunk* of Wilhelmine architecture was rejected as bombastic and monarchical; it belonged to an old order. A simpler architectural style was required to reflect the new order. In many manifestoes and architectural tracts of the day, the need to return to basics in the question of architectural style and human requirements comes to the fore and is tied to the concept of *Sachlichkeit* or *neue Sachlichkeit*:

Sachlichkeit nennen wir jene Phantasie, die mit Sachen, mit Exaktheiten, mit Wirklichkeiten arbeitet. (*Adolf Behne*)<sup>20</sup>

Die neue Sachlichkeit ist anerkannt, es muß einfach bebaut werden. [...] Und Architekt sein, heißt, nicht Fachmann sein, nicht Spezialist, sondern Mensch, Kämpfer sein für alles Menschliche - dann wird uns die Form von selbst zufallen. (*Hans Poelzig*)<sup>21</sup>

Die neue Architektur strebt zu unmittelbarer, freier und originaler Gestaltung jeder Aufgabe, zum Optimum, zum Planorganismus, zum architektonischen Organismus. [...] In Uebereinstimmung mit dem Leben aktiviert sie die eingeborene Raumfreude der Menge und macht aus dem Bau ein Manifest.

Die Architektur spricht wieder eine elementare Sprache, die die ganze Welt versteht. (*Erich Mendelsohn*)<sup>22</sup>

Particularly in the realm of housing our understanding of this architecture is that it was a genuine attempt to solve some of the social problems of the day and that it used a style which, in the view of the architects, best expressed that attempt. It is an image which the architects themselves were keen to propagate. In the eighth issue of the journal Das Neue Berlin a plan appeared showing the whereabouts <sup>H H</sup> of some of the new building projects in the city (see fig. 42). On the



facing page the editors of the journal wrote:

Das "Neue Berlin" wünscht, die Gäste unserer Stadt auch zu dem neuen Berlin zu führen, das an den Rändern der Riesenstadt entsteht. Hier finden wir einige der besten Leistungen unserer Architekten: Arbeiten, die einen neuen Abschnitt Berliner Städtebaues einleiten - große Wohnblöcke ohne Höfe, Siedlungen in Gärten, Sport- und Spielplätze. Um diese Uebersicht zu haben, bringen wir auf gegenüberliegender Seite einen Plan, in dem das neu Entstandene und auch die wichtigsten neuen Geschäfts- und Industriebauten eingezeichnet sind.<sup>29</sup>

However, while the housing projects of Weimar German architects have been received as important experiments in avant-garde architecture, it is often forgotten that many of those same architects designed cinemas, shops and *Tanzlokale* using the same *Neue Sachlichkeit* style. Does this alter in some way the implication of the style? Can one still speak of an architecture that put human and functional requirements above all other considerations? Certainly in the avant-garde housing projects the style of the buildings was clearly associated with socialist ideals of providing low-cost, hygienic housing for as many people as possible. But what about buildings designed for private businesses? Can that style still claim to embody socialist ideals? Some Weimar commentators noted the paradox that a style which was celebrated as the architectural embodiment of socialism on the one hand was also used for private commercial enterprises on the other. Albert Siegrist, a contemporary who wrote a book titled Das Buch vom Bauen, noted:

Das neue Bauen hat ein Doppelgesicht: es ist in der Tat beides, großbürgerlich und proletarisch, hochkapitalistisch und sozialistisch. [...]

Jedoch die äußere Erscheinung allein zeigt so starke gemeinsame Züge, bildet ein Bindeglied, da sie zusammengeht mit ganz verschiedenen Zwecken und vor allem mit ganz verschiedenen Einstellungen der Besitzer und Bauherren. [...] Auf der

kapitalistischen Seite sind es gerade die führenden Gruppen des Großkapitals, die vielfach die moderne Bauweise begünstigen: das zeigt sich unter anderem darin, daß der Farbenkonzern den Bau seines neuen Verwaltungsgebäudes in Frankfurt a. M. dem Berliner Professor Poelzig, einem anerkannten Führer der modernen Richtung, übertragen hat, daß ein anderer Führer dieser Richtung, Erich Mendelsohn, verschiedene Kaufhäuser gebaut, dem großkapitalistischen Verlag Mosse sein Haus mit einer neuen Fassade versehen hat. Einer der älteren Männer des modernen Bauens, Professor Peter Behrens, ist seit langem der künstlerische Berater der AEG. Auch zu privaten Bauten, für die Landsitze und neuen Stadtvillen der Industriellen und Finanz-Großbourgeoisie sind vielfach ausgesprochen moderne Baukünstler geholt worden. [...]

Aber derselbe Mendelsohn z. B., über den wir eben gesprochen haben, hat auch für Sowjetrußland Fabriken gebaut. Und die Gehag, die die modernen Siedlungsbauten in Zehlendorf bei Berlin errichten ließ, die Buchdruckergewerkschaft, die ihr Berliner Haus von Taut erbauen ließ, [...] das sind doch sicher alles Arbeiterorganisationen, die in hohem Maße unter dem Einfluß sozialistischer Gedankengänge stehen.<sup>24</sup>

Siegrist realized that the style of a building alone does not express the political orientation of its architect, nor does it determine whether a building is being used to further a socialist cause. Rather it is the function of a building and the interests which the building is serving which tell us about a building's position in the political and economic sphere. So if a building has been financed by private business and is used by private business for private business, then the building and its style are serving private business interests. Likewise a building serving the interests of a workers' organization is furthering a socialist cause. Erwin Redslob, also a contemporary, formulated the relationship in simpler terms:

Bei Mendelsohn plastische Form, bei Taut raumbildende Gestaltung. Auf der einen Seite Geschäftshaus, Kino, Theater, auf der anderen Seite ein

Siedlungsanlage, die unzählige Kleinwohnungen zur klaren Einheit zusammenschließt. Dort Verkehr, Handel, die City, der Kapitalismus, hier Erfüllung der Forderungen des Sozialismus.<sup>25</sup>

It is, I think, important to note that modern architecture of the late 20's and early 30's in Berlin was not simply a style which represented the socialist visions of its architects. The style was employed for buildings with diverse functions serving different socio-economic and political interests; it was used both for buildings controlled by workers' organizations and for commercial enterprises in private hands. As Karl-Heinz Hüter has noted in his study of Weimar Berlin architecture:

Nur wenige progressive Architekten fanden, ohne Verrat an den eigenen Idealen, Zugang zu Bauaufträgen in der City. Die Zentralen Bereiche Berlins waren ganz in der Hand des Großkapitals. Wer dort bauen wollte, mußte Auftraggeber unter Konzernchefs finden. Vom Wesen her bestanden grundsätzliche Widersprüche zwischen den demokratischen Strukturen des Neuen Bauens und den Repräsentationsbedürfnissen von Konzernen.<sup>26</sup>

In this context the mass cultural venues of Weimar Berlin occupy a somewhat ambiguous position. On the one hand they were obviously built for private interests keen on maximizing profits. On the other they were aimed at mass audiences and, as such, they opened up areas of (mass) cultural life to more people than ever before. While an immense amount of commercial calculation went into the designs of such buildings, equal attention was paid to creating bright, modern and comfortable interiors which Berlin's masses would want to frequent. As I hope to show below, this ambiguous status contributed in a number of ways to the terms in which the Berlin public responded to its surroundings, responses which we have seen in the novels and the Führer.

A number of new commercial buildings in the *Neue Sachlichkeit* style were completed in Weimar Berlin. But much of the time existing buildings were thoroughly modernized and given a new facade because of laws forbidding demolition work.<sup>27</sup> Most of the new commercial building took place in and around the Kurfürstendamm as the west side of the city became the attractive *Vergnügungsgegend* for Berlin's inhabitants. It is around this area that the protagonists, Doris and Fabian, and the narrator of the *Führer* spend much of their time.

It was the use of advertisements and lighting which most clearly distinguished the style of modern commercial buildings from that of the modern housing projects. Indeed, how a building was going to accommodate advertisements became an increasingly important question; when designing a building, where and how the advertisements were to be located not only influenced the designs but sometimes even led to designs being changed. In the eighth issue of the journal *Das Neue Berlin*, there is a description of a building being entered in a competition for 'Geschäfts- und Bürohäuser' (fig. 43). In it, one sees how much commercial calculation went into a *Neue Sachlichkeit* building:

Zwei Möglichkeiten für die Ausgestaltung der Straßenseiten waren gegeben. Die erste war; nur aus rein formalen Gründen durch Vor- und Rückspringen einzelner Baukörper eine Belebung des Straßenbildes zu erreichen. Das würde eine Atrappenarchitektur zur Folge haben, die nicht mit den Forderungen der heutigen Zeit übereinstimmen würde. Die zweite Möglichkeit ist rein sachlicher Natur, die auch in diesem Entwurf, soweit die Möglichkeit bestand, ihren Ausdruck gefunden hat. Zugrunde gelegt wurden:

In der Annahme, daß es sich um Geschäfts- und Bürohäuser handelt, wurde für die Konstruktion ein Betonrahmenbau gewählt. Diese Bauart hat sich für derartige Bauten ganz gut bewährt. Sie gestattet große Fensteröffnungen und eine wunschentsprechende Raumaufteilung. [...]

Im Erdgeschoß sind, wie der schematische Grundriß zeigt,

Ladeninseln angenommen worden. Diese haben den Zweck, das kaufende Publikum in die dahinterliegende Passage zu führen und den Verkehr für das andere Publikum freizumachen. Außerdem erhält man durch diese Anordnung eine doppelte Schaufensterfläche für den laufenden Meter Straßenfront. Die Passage ist genügend erhellt und ist zugänglich an den Treppenhäusern und den dazwischenliegenden Eingängen.

Horizontale Reklameflächen an der Straßenfront in den oberen Geschossen anzubringen, wurde nicht für zweckmäßig erachtet, da hier die Reklame nicht zur Geltung kommt. Dagegen sind nach Meinung des Verfassers vertikale Reklameflächen, die dem Auge des Passanten direkt sichtbar sind, zweckentsprechend. Die vertikalen Flächen wurden in Verbindung mit den Treppenhäusern gebracht, das Treppenhaus selbst somit in den Mittelpunkt gerückt. Die kleinen verbleibenden Flächen zwischen den Treppenhausfenstern können zur Aufnahme der Namen für jeden Geschäftsinhaber im betreffenden Geschoß dienen.

Die Straßenecken sind, um eine bessere Verkehrsübersicht zu haben, abgerundet. Für die Straßenecken wurden horizontale Reklameflächen angenommen. Hier ist der Blickpunkt auch ein ganz anderer als in der Straße selbst.<sup>20</sup>

The description could not reveal better how functionalism and simplicity of form ('rein sachlicher Natur') were put in the service of commercial interests. The structure of the building was planned in consonance with the kind of advertising that would be most effective at different points.

Along with the greater importance accorded to advertisements came an increased awareness of the commercial potential behind effective lighting. Not only were advertisements frequently lit up at night, but the facades of buildings became bathed in light. Figs 11 and 44 show the facade of a building designed by the avant-garde architect Hans Poelzig. The building had wide, flat horizontal and vertical supports, was two storeys high and situated on the north side of the Auguste-Viktoria-Platz, opposite the Gedächtniskirche and next to the *Haus Gourmenia* (see chapter 1, p.31 above). Poelzig's building was one of very few on the Platz to be in a modern style; most of the surrounding

buildings were in an imitation Romanesque style reminiscent of the church (fig. 45). The office block contained a row of shops on the ground floor, offices, the restaurants Café am Zoo, Palais am Zoo and Grill am Zoo (all of which, interestingly and paradoxically, had Baroque furnishings, see figs 46 and 47) and the cinema, Capitol, which opened in December 1925. The advertisements on the facade combined artistic sensitivity with sheer commercial marketing:

Diese Reklame, die sich in ihrem figürlichen Aufbau den architektonischen Linien in künstlerischer Form anpaßt, [...] gliedert sich in drei Teile und besteht aus den Farben gelb, blau und rot. Der erste Teil ist das Diadem, das dreimal das Wort "Capitol" trägt. Der zweite Teil ist der Tambour, der durch sechs Scheinwerfer von je 8000 Watt rot beleuchtet wird. Der dritte Teil enthält den Titelnamen des jeweils gespielten Stückes, der auf der Attika angebracht ist.<sup>29</sup>

In many respects the outside appearance of the building with its broad, flat surfaces resembled the structures used in the housing projects. But where the flat surfaces in the housing estates were an expression of simplicity of form, of lack of ornamentation, the surfaces of the commercial buildings were ideal backgrounds for neon advertisements. By the end of the Twenties this use of lighting had undergone significant developments. Several commercial buildings were modernized in a way that shifted vision away from neon advertisements to the actual interiors of shops or cafés by increasing the size of windows and concentrating on effective lighting from the inside of a building. This gave several buildings a transparent appearance. The Grünfeldeck and the Uhlandeck serve as good examples here.<sup>30</sup>

The Firma Grünfeld was an established clothes store in a luxurious Classical building on the Leipziger Straße. In 1923 the company decided, like many others of the time, that it needed a branch

on the Kurfürstendamm and so it bought the house number 227 (see chapter 1, pp.26-27 above). Number 227 was a typical Wilhelmine four-storey apartment block built in 1887-88. At first the company could only open a small shop on the ground floor because of existing contracts between tenants and the previous owners. Soon the shop expanded onto the first floor with an extra storey added to the building to compensate for lost living space. During 1927-28 the first two floors and part of the facade were radically modernized by the architect Otto Firle. And in 1930 the remaining parts of the facade were modernized so that one could finally speak of a 'Grünfeldeck' (see figs 48-51). Additions to the building included a glass lift, larger shop windows, a large neon 'E. V. GRÜNFELD' on top of vertical neon bands and an intensified lighting of the interior of the shop drawing in the vision of the pedestrians through the large shop windows. (The company also added a 'Hunde-Bar' on the outside of the building with a sign reading 'Hunde-Bar' placed, as a joke, at the eye level of a dog.) In his opening speech in 1928, the owner, Heinrich Grünfeld, presented the new lighting to the public as the chance clearly to see what good quality products the company sold. He chose to stress the benefits of the lighting to the consumers rather than the ability of the lights to captivate and entice passers-by into the shop:

Ich möchte es als erzieherisch bezeichnen, daß man bei so viel Licht nicht einmal den Versuch wagen kann, minderwertige Waren, sei es in Stoff- oder Näh- bzw. Stickerei-Ausführung, einzuführen, die vielleicht im Halbdämmer noch irgendwie als vollwertig dargeboten werden könnte. So wird auch die Bautechnik zur Förderin kaufmännischer Grundsätze.<sup>91</sup>

Uhlandeck was also a Wilhelmine building which was stripped of its old ornamentation to be replaced with a facade consisting of large windows and lights. The house dated from 1892 and was situated

on the corner of the Kurfürstendamm (number 31) and Uhlandstraße. It was a six-storey apartment house with an ornate facade and gable. In 1928-29 the building was modernized by the architects Kaufmann & Wolffenstein under the artistic direction of Max Ackermann. The turrets and the gable on the roof were removed along with the balconies and all of the stucco on the facade (see figs 52 and 53). Smooth plaster which would carry neon advertisements took the place of the stucco. The corners of the building were rounded off and the supports and walls between the windows were faced with golden coloured ceramic tiles (figs 54 and 55). On the ground and first floor of the building the windows were enlarged. It was on these floors that the Café Uhlandeck was located. The café consisted of a *Konditorei* and café on the ground floor with a *Tanzcafé* on the first floor. Behind the counter of the *Konditorei* there was a pillar with umbrella-shaped ribbing extending onto the ceiling. At night the ribs were illuminated which, like the intensified lighting in the Grünfeldeck, drew the vision of the passers-by into the café (figs 56 and 57).

In the examples of the Capitol cinema, the Grünfeldeck and the Uhlandeck it can be seen that the 'democratic spirit' of the new republic was certainly evident in the rejection of the old grandiose and ornamental facade architecture of pre-Weimar Germany. But it cannot be suggested that this new style of commercial architecture rejected ornamentation completely. The lights, the advertisements, the larger shop windows - all these features were also ornamental. But where previous ornamental architecture in Wilhelmine Germany had celebrated monarchical and military power, the new ornamentation celebrated commercial power and technological know-how. This style of *Neue Sachlichkeit* commercial architecture may have been created, like the mass housing projects, in the name of the democratic Weimar spirit,



making new areas of the city available to the masses. But the features of the architecture were all geared towards increasing consumption. The architects may have wanted to celebrate the dawning of a new society where the masses had the same access to the pleasures of modern life as the former elites, but their creations ultimately served commercial interests.<sup>32</sup>

Before linking these developments to the experiences of the protagonists in the novels, there are two articles I would like to mention, one by Adolf Behne and the other by Siegfried Kracauer, in which it is possible to find confirmation from two important cultural commentators of the time that much of the everyday experience of the Berlin public was shaped by commercial forces. Behne is predominantly concerned with the appearance of the Berlin street, and Kracauer with the perception of it.

Behne's article appeared in the journal Das Neue Berlin in 1929 under the heading 'Kunstaussstellung Berlin'.<sup>33</sup> An art historian by training, Behne had been an important proponent of *Neue Sachlichkeit* architecture for a number of years. But in his 'Kunstaussstellung Berlin' he undoubtedly expresses some reservations about how the new architecture has been used for commercial ends. He opens his discussion by claiming that the most beautiful art exhibition to be seen in Berlin is the one that adorns the front of commercial buildings:

Die schönste Kunstaussstellung ist auch die billigste. Sie ist umsonst geöffnet - Tag und Nacht; Schaufenster und Giebelfronten der großen Kaufstraßen.

Klare große Flächen; Farbigkeit ohne Buntheit, sparsame, gutgesetzte Schrift; einheitliche Bewegung; rhythmische Wiederholung eines Motivs; Ausspielen einer realistischen Pointe gegen dekorativen Grund; schattenloses Licht; räumliche Spannung - und alles in allen eine sichere Beherrschung, eine kluge Dosierung aller Reizmittel moderner Regie. Die Arrangeure wissen gut Theater zu spielen, ihre

Schauspieler, die Fensterpuppen, sind schick wie die Massary. Nur Friseure haben noch die lionardesken Florabüsten.<sup>34</sup>

He goes on to discuss the artistic achievement of these surfaces. While the Expressionist and Constructivist art movements could only yearn to connect with the masses, the art of the streets has gone ahead and actually managed to make that connection:

Soziologisch gesehen erfüllt das moderne Schaufenster eine wichtige Funktion: es holt die Masse an ein neues Kunstniveau heran, gleicht die Kluft, die erst meilenweit war, allmählich aus, hilft einen neuen Vormarsch neuer Pioniere vorbereiten.

Eine ernsthafte Kunstbetrachtung muß heute Mode und Konfektion, Revue und Sport, Tanz und Schaufenster in die Beobachtung einbeziehen. Auf welchen Wegen kommt denn die Kunst zur Masse? Nicht durch Ausstellungen, Vorträge und Bücher, sondern durch Grammophon, Modebilder, Film und Illustrierte. [..]

Eine merkwürdige Umdrehung hat sich vollzogen. Expressionismus und Konstruktivismus waren theoretisch sozial, waren im Atelier proletarisch. Sie waren der kühnste revolutionäre Vorstoß in der Kunst - und blieben esoterisch. Sie kamen nicht auf die Straße.

Heute ist ein Gedanke des Konstruktivismus verwirklicht. Die Kunst lebt an der Straße, in der Straße, auf der Straße. Was in den Salons und Ausstellungen hängt, das hübsch gerahmte Oelgemälde, kann nur noch selten und in besonderen Fällen den Kampf aufnehmen mit dem tausendfältig spielenden Werbetheater der Straße. Hier werden die Massen gepackt, unmittelbar, praktisch und vergnüglich. Keep smiling!<sup>35</sup>

It is in this last sentence that we can detect a slightly critical tone; the masses are 'gepackt', they are kept happy in a passive way, and Behne tells us to 'keep smiling!' He goes on:

Eine anti-bürgerliche Theorie füllte sich mit bürgerlichen Inhalten, und das Resultat ist erstaunlich: Abbau der Monumentalität, zumindest der alten Monumentalität an falschen Plätze.

Die neue Monumentalität ist Sache der Kalkulation, hängt direkt vom Umsatz ab. - Wir geben hier keine Urteile, nur Konstatierungen. - Der Augenblick siegte über die Ewigkeit. Mode über die unsterbliche Renaissance, Konfektion über Akademie, Werbung, Preisnotierung über den goldenen Schnitt. Die Front des Geschäftshauses ist keine Architektur mehr, sondern eine Schreibtischplatte. Und wäre die Tendenz zum Hochhaus noch ebenso stark, wenn unsere Damen wieder lange Kleider trügen? (Lange Röcke und Heimatschutz, lange Beine und Hochhausfreude.)

Die Straße schafft - ein gewaltiges Kollektiv - den neuen Typ Mensch. Greta Garbos Antlitz fasziniert von den Hauswänden herab die Passanten, seit der Antike gab es nicht solche Götterbilder.

Angeschlossen an die Passantenströme der Straßen sind Kinos. Ihre Reklame beschäftigt ein Heer von Malern, die nicht vor Campo-Santo-Dimensionen zurückschrecken und die schnelle Vernichtung ihrer Werke nicht beweinen.

Hier wird den Menschen ihr geistig-seelisches Gewand von einem Riesenkonfektionstrust zugeschnitten und verpaßt, in rasender Eile. Was steht dem homo sapiens 1929? Krieg? Pazifismus? Romantik? Neuer Erdteil? Grotteske? Negertänze? Liebe? Schönheit? - happy-end.<sup>36</sup>

Behne shows how art has moved from the atelier to the streets to become a mass communication medium, but he also recognizes what is guiding that move, the 'neue Monumentalität ist Sache der Kalkulation, hängt direkt vom Umsatz ab'. He recognizes the transitory nature of this art, that it is not permanent. The advertising display 'beschäftigt ein Heer von Malern, die [...] die schnelle Vernichtung ihre Werke nicht beweinen'.

Like Behne, Kracauer is also struck by the impression that nothing is permanent. In his 'Strasse ohne Erinnerung'<sup>37</sup>, which was first published in the Frankfurter Zeitung on 16.12.1932, Kracauer describes changes on the Kurfürstendamm and the effects of change generally on memory. He refers to cafés closing, to shops which appear and disappear and to the products in them which can change at the drop of a hat:

Scheinen manche Straßenzüge für die Ewigkeit geschaffen zu sein, so ist der heutige Kurfürstendamm die Verkörperung der leer hinfließenden Zeit, in der nichts zu dauern vermag.<sup>30</sup>

He describes two similar events which took place a year apart. The first happened when he decided to go to a local 'Teestube' for a bite to eat one lunchtime. He automatically pushes the handle of the door to enter the 'Stube' and only then notices that the 'Stube' has gone and the room is empty:

Es muß über Nacht geräumt worden sein, denn am Abend vorher war die Teestube noch erleuchtet gewesen. Oder täusche ich mich? Während ich mir den gestrigen Abend zu vergegenwärtigen suche, bemerke ich unmittelbar vor mir ein Schild an der Tür, auf dem erklärt wird, daß der Eigentümer des Lokals dieses bald an einer anderen Stelle aufzumachen gedenke. Da ich nicht so lange warten kann, kehre ich traurig um und besuche ein mir bisher unbekanntes Café an der nächsten Kurfürstendamm-Ecke.

The second event which took place a year later refers to this new café to which he went. He tells us he never went there again although he passed it almost every evening:

Ich kam hier fast jeden Abend vorbei, und mochte ich auch gerade zerstreut oder in ein Gespräch vertieft sein, so rechnete ich doch an diesem Punkt meines Weges fest mit den Lichteffekten, die das Lokal in verschwenderischer Fülle entsandte. Je heller die Lichter, desto trüber das Publikum.

One evening he decides to go back to the café but once he arrives there, the café has, like the 'Teestube', disappeared:

Die Ecke leuchtet nicht mehr, und an Stelle des Cafés tut sich ein verglaster Abgrund auf, in den ich langsam hineingezogen werde. Er ist per sofort zu vermieten. Ich entschließe mich nur zögernd zu einem neu

gegründeten Lokal, das zwischen dieser und der folgenden  
Straßenkreuzung liegt.

These two impressions lead him to discuss shops and shop displays on the Kurfürstendamm and how they are just as transitory as the cafés which appear and disappear. He describes the shops as a 'Hafenbevölkerung' implying the Kurfürstendamm is like a harbour with ships docking, unloading their goods and then leaving to make room for the next ship with the next load. He notes that the shops are small, making their transport easier, that they sell goods which are piled in such a way that it looks as if they, too, are ready to move off at a second's notice. Furniture, he claims, is also possessed by a 'Wanderbetrieb'. Old furniture that lived in apartments for years now finds itself thrown out and temporarily housed in 'Asylen für Obdachlosen' (presumably antique shops) and the new furniture waits to be purchased in modern 'Einrichtungsgeschäfte' which are compared to 'Hotelhallen':

Unabsehbare Schrankflächen blinken wie der Meeresspiegel, stählerne Tischbeine fahren unbeschwert durch die Luft. Ihre Wurzellosigkeit ist zum Vorbild aller dieser Geschäfte selber geworden. Viele von ihnen geben sich nicht einmal mehr die Mühe, wie ein festgegründetes Unternehmen zu wirken, sondern erwecken von vornhinein den Eindruck der Improvisation. Stapellager voller Gelegenheitsware, die jeden Augenblick aufbrechen können. Aber sie sind nur die fliegende Vorhut eines Ladenheeres, das stets zum Nachrücken bereit ist. Den ausscheidenden Firmen folgen andere, die wie die Verschwundenen sind.<sup>39</sup>

Not only are the shops themselves transitory, given to closure at any time, but the products within them are strangely fluid and 'wurzellos', made from light and airy steel with flat and shiny surfaces (the *Neue Sachlichkeit* designs of the Bauhaus spring to mind). Neither the status

of the shops nor the products in them is clear; the shops look like 'Hotelhallen' and the furniture appears to float.

Kracauer goes on to describe how it was only upon seeing the second café closed that he remembered anything about the first. Up until then, an awareness of the old 'Teestube' had been impossible because of the dominating presence of the new establishment that moved into its premises:

Der immerwährende Wechsel tilgt die Erinnerung, [...] Jene Teestube ist bald nach ihrer Schließung durch eine ziemlich betriebsame Konditorei ersetzt worden, die ich inzwischen nicht selten aufgesucht habe. Wäre nun der Raum mit der Kraft begabt gewesen, Erinnerungen entstehen zu lassen, so hätten sie mich in der Konditorei zwangsläufig überwältigen müssen. Statt dessen ist mir während der Stunden, die ich in dem Lokal zugebracht habe, seine frühere Daseinsform auch nicht im Traum nachgegangen. Der Konditoreibetrieb hat in Wirklichkeit die einstige Teestube nicht nur abgelöst, sondern sie so völlig verdrängt, als sei sie überhaupt nicht gewesen. Durch seine komplette Gegenwart ist sie in eine Vergessenheit getaucht, aus der sie keine Macht mehr erretten kann, es sei denn der Zufall, über dem sich der Alltag rasch wieder schließt.

The new 'Konditorei' in the old 'Teestube' has so completely changed the surroundings that any memory of the 'Teestube' has become 'abgelöst' and 'verdrängt'. Such an event is, Kracauer claims, typical of the Kurfürstendamm as a whole:

Sonst bleibt das Vergangene an den Orten haften, an denen es zu Lebzeiten hauste; auf dem Kurfürstendamm tritt es ab, ohne Spuren zu hinterlassen. Seit ich ihn kenne, hat er sich in knapp bemessenen Perioden wieder und wieder von Grund auf verändert, und immer sind die neuen Geschäfte ganz neu und die von ihnen vertriebenen ganz ausgelöscht. Was einmal war, ist auf Nimmerwiedersehen dahin, und was sich gerade behauptet, beschlagnahmt das Heute hundertprozentig. [...] Man hat vielen Häusern die Ornamente abgeschlagen, die eine Art Brücke

zum Gestern bildeten. Jetzt stehen die beraubten Fassaden ohne Halt in der Zeit und sind das Sinnbild des geschichtslosen Wandels, der sich hinter ihnen vollzieht. Nur die marmornen Treppenhäuser, die durch die Portale schimmern, bewahren Erinnerungen: die an die Vorkriegswelt erster Klasse.<sup>40</sup>

One has no memory of the past because the present is so dominant and unlike the past - the new is 'ganz neu' and the old is 'ganz ausgelöscht'. It is a phenomenon which is reflected in the new, fashionable facades of old, ornamental buildings. Were the old facades to have retained their ornamentation they would have acted as a bridge to the past - through their presence one would still retain a sense of the past and one would therefore still have a memory. But instead the facades of the houses have been stripped of their ornamentation to become 'ohne Halt in der Zeit' and 'das Sinnbild des geschichtslosen Wandels' (see fig. 58 which shows a modernized shop front with the old ornamentation remaining on the upper levels of the building). Now there are no obvious connections to the past and one's consciousness becomes aware only of the present.

Kracauer does not explicitly name commercial interests as the instigators of such change, he speaks instead of 'Hexerei', 'unheimliche Winde' and 'der Spuk'. But he makes it clear in the text that it is difficult for the city inhabitant to find anything familiar in the city. Buildings are altered, shops change, their displays change, cafés appear and disappear - the city inhabitant has constantly to keep up with these changes and adapt to them. Discovering a café has closed evokes no sense of loss but simply the need to find a new one, 'Da ich nicht so lange warten kann, kehre ich traurig um und besuche ein mir bisher unbekanntes Café an der nächsten Kurfürstendammecke' and 'Er ist per sofort zu vermieten. Ich entschließe mich nur zögernd zu einem neu

gegründeten Lokal, das zwischen dieser und der folgenden Straßenkreuzung liegt'. He enters these places not because he is necessarily seeking them but because what he had been looking for has now disappeared. It is quite obvious that Kracauer is making a direct connection between the loss of memory and a new kind of 'boom and bust' commercial culture. On the Kurfürstendamm the consumer is not given an opportunity to become familiar with the street. Commercial forces repress the memory and ensure new consuming patterns of the city inhabitant as he or she wanders through the ever transforming city. Kracauer ends his article by suggesting that:

Wer sich zu tief mit der Zeit einläßt, altert geschwind. Ein Haus auf dem Kurfürstendamm beginnt dieses Schicksal zu spüren. In seinen Erdgeschoßräumen haben viele Restaurations- und Varietébetriebe ihr Glück probiert, ohne daß es einem von ihnen je gelungen wäre, sich über Wasser zu halten. Im Gegenteil, nach gewissen Fristen, die inner enger zusammenschrumpften, sind sie alle verkracht oder weitergewandert. Da sich schon seit längerer Zeit niemand mehr in das Haus hineintraut, ist es aus dem Veränderungsprozeß ausgeschieden und lungert jetzt beschäftigungslos herum. Noch prangen Schilder an Gitter. Aber sie sind unnütz geworden, und statt dem Haus Leben zuzuführen, bezeugen sie nur seinen frühen Verfall. Er läßt sich nicht aufhalten, weil das Haus am Gewesenen keine Stütze hat. Niemand widmet ihm einen Blick. Die Zeit nimmt es rasch mit sich fort.

Restaurants and *Varietés* have tried to establish themselves in this house but to no avail; they have either moved on or gone bankrupt. With no-one daring to set up a business in the house, it becomes functionless and drops out of the 'Veränderungsprozeß'; the notices on the fences fail to bring life to the house and highlight, rather, its premature delapidation.

What Kracauer perceives here, and throughout his article, is the energy, volatility and brutalization of a highly developed commercial



culture. The rapid transformation of the environment stems not only from new technology, but also from a restless need for novelty fuelled by fashion and advertising. It is to this commercial culture, and the human shocks that result, that Fallada's, Kästner's and Keun's novels bear eloquent witness. What all three novels do, and very cogently at that, is to count the cost. One may perhaps draw an analogy between the forgotten house that Kracauer speaks of and the protagonists Fabian, Pinneberg and Doris. Like the house, they have all tried to adapt to the times, adopting various strategies for coping with their circumstances. But having failed, they all give up and cease to be engaged or involved with society. Like the house, they are all left alone at the end of the novels. No-one notices them anymore, except, of course, we the readers.

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of the novels showed the extent to which commercial forces shape the experiences of the protagonists. Commercialism is present in the themes of the novels (the jobs of the protagonists, the places they spend their leisure time and the kind of relationships they have with those around them), it saturates the protagonists' language (the language of the managers in the department stores, the language of a would-be *Glanz*), and it is omnipresent in the set-piece descriptions of the spaces of the city (public institutions, night clubs, the streets). Overwhelmed by these forces, and losing the economic means of their livelihood, the protagonists of the novels become functionless in society and move, literally, onto its margins. At no point do the protagonists directly identify commercial interests as factors contributing to their distress. Their inability to do so suggests that these interests remain largely concealed; but their very concealment reinforces their ubiquity (they are implicit in human actions, speech and language, and areas of the city).

There are several points to be made here concerning the commercial architecture, *Neue Sachlichkeit* and the issues raised in the analyses of the texts. First, the intensified lighting and larger shop windows in commercial *Neue Sachlichkeit* architecture would obviously have caught the attention of the Berlin public; the masses were made aware of the existence of these new areas of the city. It follows that upon seeing the bright interiors of the cafés and shops the public would want to enter them. The commercial architecture was effective in creating the desire among the public to be a part of these festive scenes. In other words, the visibility of and access to the new areas of the city were facilitated by an architectural style which made use of

advertisements, large windows and bright lights. The transparent effect of the windows allowing the increased visibility of wealth invited the Berlin public to partake in the consumption of luxury. Contemporaries such as Curt Moreck and scholars such as Jost Hermand call this the democratization of society. But if one is to use that term in this context then it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of a quasi-democratization of society. The public may have been led to believe that everyone could be a part of these new areas because they were visible and accessible to all, but actually being in a position to make use of them was quite a different matter. As we have seen from the analyses of the novels, being able to enter an area did not necessarily mean one could afford to stay there. In both Fabian and Das Kunstseidene Mädchen many (female) characters who do not have the money to pay for their amusements are forced to rely on the wealthy (men). The men, in return, often expect sexual favours and the women feel they have to oblige. In Curt Moreck's Führer the narrator welcomes the sight of women paying for themselves, but he also notes the games that are played between the sexes to test the willingness of men to play the role of the chivalrous gentlemen. The narrator notes that neither the men nor the women really want to have to pay because they cannot really afford to do so. (See chapter 2, pp.71-72, chapter 4, pp.120-121 and chapter 5, pp.167-168 above.)

If part of the cost of entering and staying in the new areas of the city involved sexual exploitation, what does this tell us about those new liberal attitudes to sex which Hermand and many others have linked to *Neue Sachlichkeit*? Judging from the novels they were not merely the result of enlightened sexual emancipation but were in part a result of the public's attempts to come to terms with the new areas of the city and the financial constraints imposed by them. An average

white-collar worker would not have got very far in the new areas of the city if he or she did not have a liberal attitude towards sex. It is important to note the distinction between changes in behaviour and the reasons for those changes; while new attitudes to class, sex and gender may have made inroads into Weimar Berlin society, gender inequalities and class distinctions certainly still existed. Furthermore, the new attitudes brought with them a new set of anxieties; Fabian does not know how to cope with Cornelia's decision to move in with Makart. Doris parades herself as a *Glanz* while suppressing her background, she is at pains to inform men that she is not a prostitute although she will enter into fleeting sexual encounters with them in exchange for a drink and some food. And the narrator of the *Führer* is constantly guessing whether someone is a parvenu, a lady, a prostitute, a homosexual or a transvestite. Clearly this increasing democratization of society brought with it a new set of ambivalent social relations which did not banish gender and class differences, but which, rather, gave them a new guise.

But it is not only the perception of the (quasi-) democratization of society and ambiguous liberal attitudes towards sex which link this kind of architecture to the themes of the novels and guide. It is arguable that the increased lighting, the larger shop windows and the larger spaces devoted to mass culture all contributed to the fear of exposure discussed in the previous chapters. The narrator of the *Führer* makes frequent references to the fashionable cloaks and masks which the Berlin public adopted in order to walk along the Kurfürstendamm without being exposed as anything other than part of the fashionable scene (see above pp.161-162). Adhering to fashionable tastes and attitudes was a sure way of remaining anonymous, suppressing class and even gender distinctions. Doris, Fabian and Pinneberg all leave the city when they are identified as something 'other'. Part of

that fear of exposure possibly came from the fact that the festive lights on the streets and the bright interiors of the street architecture could instantly reveal someone as not being a part of the 'scene'. Keeping up with fashion became a way of avoiding such exposure. There is a wonderfully pertinent advertisement<sup>e</sup> on fashion and architecture which appeared in a fashion magazine in 1929 (see fig. 59). The advertisement shows the figure of a fashionable young woman towering above a model designed by the Luckhardt brothers for the rebuilding of the Alexanderplatz (see fig. 60). The caption reads, 'Der Geist der neuen Architektur entspricht dem Geist der neuen Mode'. The poignancy was not lost on contemporaries. Indeed Adolf Behne used the advertisement to illustrate his 'Kunstaussstellung Berlin' in which he asks:

Wäre die Tendenz zum Hochhaus noch ebenso stark, wenn unsere Damen wieder lange Kleider trügen? (Lange Röcke und Heimatschutz, lange Beine und Hochhausfreude.)'

Fabian, Doris and the narrator of the Führer all love going into bars, clubs and dance halls, observing the decor and the clientele, feeling a part of the 'scene' and keen to join in the fun. But all are frequently struck by the sudden insight that all is not as it appears to be and it is often the brightness of the lights that lead them to their realization. Doris, herself desperate to hide her background and to present, instead, an image of herself as a *Glanz*, notices that women's dresses look cheap, men cannot afford the wine and people look pale and exhausted. Fabian notices the desperate attempts on the part of the public to escape the misery of the workday or the pain of unhappy relationships. And even the narrator of the Führer, who tries the hardest to believe that the Berlin public is young, beautiful and

classless, cannot help noticing that many people cannot really afford the pleasures which they are so enticingly offered, nor are they as classless and homogeneous as they first appear. When the characters realize that the enchantment of their surroundings is no more than an illusion, they are left feeling lonely, isolated, disorientated and, particularly in Doris's case, unsure of their own identity. While the lavishness of the interiors along with the spectacle of flood-lit streets invited people to indulge in theatrical displays, to assume masks and engage in the pleasures of the day, they also exposed those who did not manage to conform. Again, one would not have got very far in the new spaces of the city if one's consumption patterns were not geared towards acquiring the latest fashions.

I do not wish to suggest that commercial architecture alone is responsible for the responses of the Berlin public and the protagonists of the novels to their urban surroundings. Although common, such architecture was by no means dominant in Weimar Berlin. What I am suggesting is that this architecture is expressive of an increasingly commercialized society and culture; it was just one part of a new set of powerful, ubiquitous commercial developments which strongly influenced the lives of the public of Weimar Berlin and the characters of the novels. For want of a better term, these developments may be conveniently grouped under the heading *Neue Sachlichkeit*. But if one is to use the term, one must acknowledge its many ambiguities and accept its thoroughly commercial impetus.

**ILLUSTRATIONS**

**and**

**MAP**

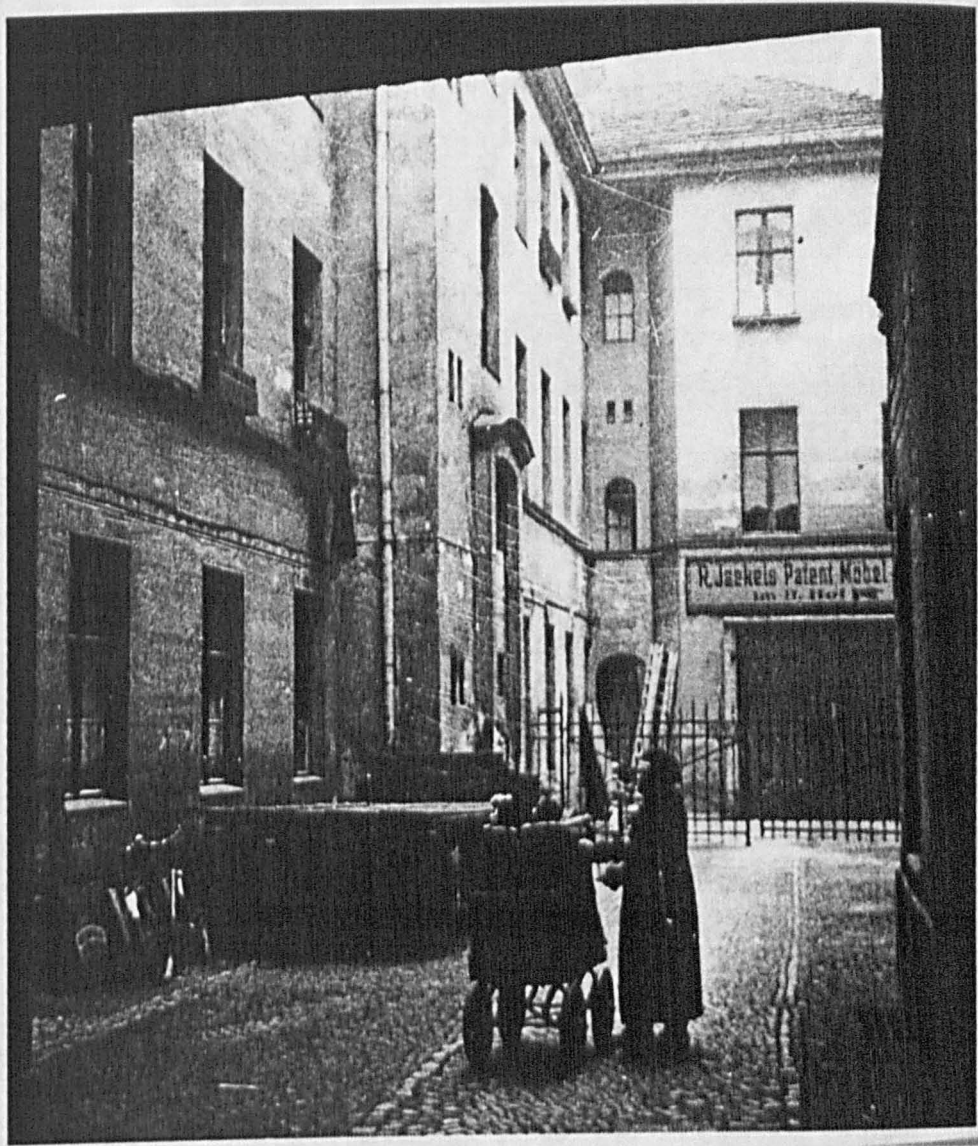


Fig. 1 Berlin's 'Hinterhöfe', photograph dating from 1931.



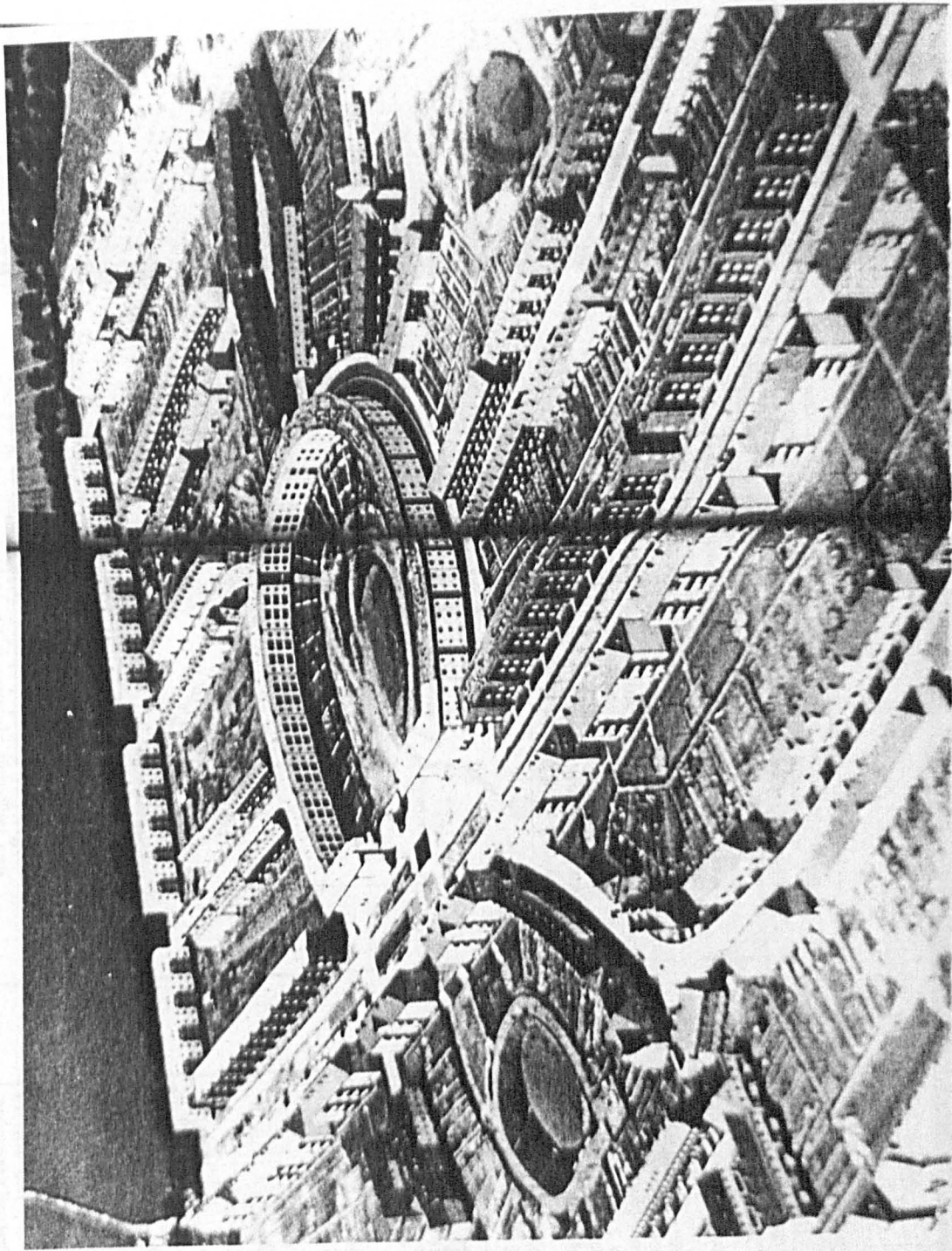
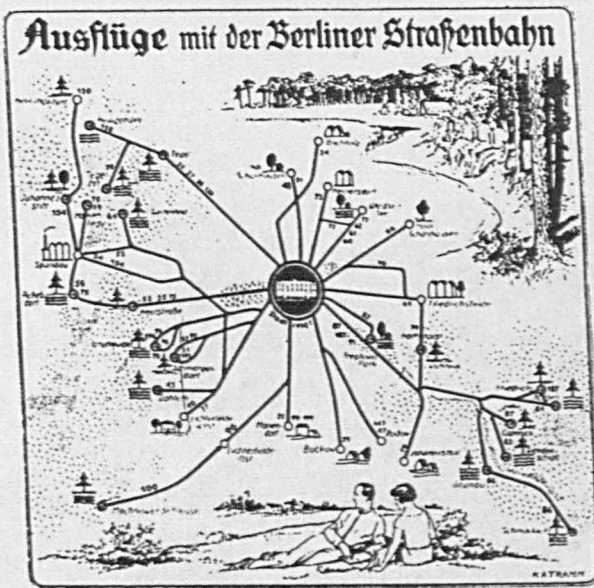


Fig. 2 Photograph of Britz housing estate, started in 1925.

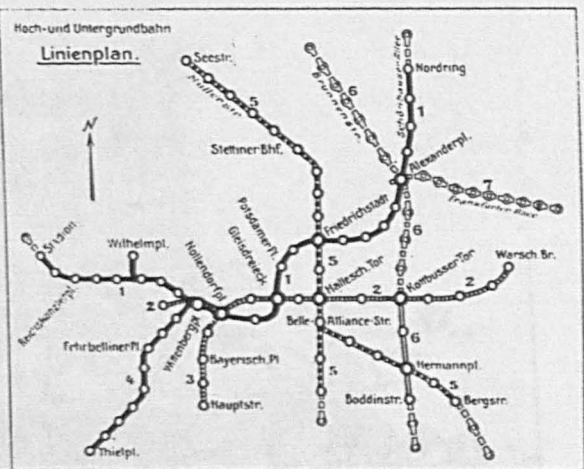


tun, eine *Untergrundbahn*-Strecke und eine *Hochbahn*-Strecke zu befahren und bei einzelnen wichtigeren Bahnhöfen die Fahrt kurz zu unterbrechen.

**Vorschlag:** Ausgangspunkt *Untergrundbahn*hfhf. *Friedrichstraße* (unmittelbar am *Stadtbahnhof Friedrichstraße* gelegen). Fahrt auf der *Untergrundbahn* Linie 3 (Nordsüd-Linie) bis Bhf. *Hallesches Tor*, nach dessen Besichtigung Aufstieg zur *Hochbahn*, Fahrt am *Landwehrkanal* entlang, unterwegs kreuzt die *Hochbahn* drei Verkehrswege: die Straße, den Wasserweg, die *Eisenbahn*, dann durch das *Torhaus* zum Kreuzungsbahnhof *Gleisdreieck* (Besichtigung), weiter zum *Nollendorfplatz*, ein Bahnhof mit drei Stockwerken (Besichtigung). Weiter zum Bhf. *Wittenbergplatz* (Besichtigung dieses Hauptbahnhofs und namentlich der darüber liegenden Eingangshalle). Von hier aus bequemer Ausflug mit der *Untergrundbahn*, später *Einschnittbahn*, nach *Dahlem*, einem schön gelegenen Villenvorort am Saume des *Grünwalds*.

Gesamte *Fahrt*dauer einschl. *Rückfahrt* bis *Potsdamer Platz* oder *Friedrichstraße* 2—2½ Stunden.

Bei längerem Aufenthalt zu empfehlen: Besichtigung des großen Kreuzungsbahnhofes *Hermannplatz* in *Neukölln* mit *Fahrt*treppe und des Bahnhofs *Flughafen* auf dem *Tempelhofer Feld*, ferner der *Brücke* über die *Oberspree* mit *Bahnviadukt* hinter Bahnhof *Schlesisches Tor* und der *Neubauten* am *Alexanderplatz*.



Mit dem *Autobus* lassen sich besonders lohnende ½ *Tags*- und *Tagesausflüge* in die weitere Umgebung *Berlins* machen. An schönen *Tagen* fährt man ab Bhf. *Zoo* durch die *wald- und wasserreichen* Vororte des *Westens* nach *Nedlitz* bei *Potsdam*, oder ab *Stettiner Bf.* zu dem einsam beschattet liegenden *Wandlitzsee*.

Weiter veranstaltet die *Allgemeine Berliner Omnibus A.-G.* von *Frühjahr* bis *Herbst Tagesausflüge mit Gesellschaftswagen* nach dem geschichtlich bekannten *Rheinsberg*, dem von *Seen* umgebenen mecklenburgischen Städtchen *Fürstenberg*, nach dem *waldreichen* Bad *Freienwalde* und *Buckow* und nach anderen schön gelegenen Orten der *Mark*.

Größeren *Reisegesellschaften* ist auch *Gelegenheit* geboten, bequem eingerichtete *Gesellschaftswagen* von der *Omnibus A.-G.* für *Ausflüge* zu mieten.

FIG. 3 Map of Berlin's underground and part of tram network from Leder-Edman in Berlin. -209-



Fig. 4 Facade of Tietz department store, Leipziger Str.,  
built in 1899-1900.

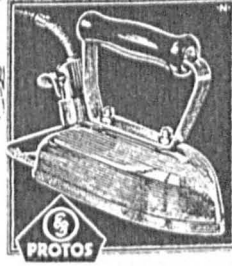


Fig. 5 Photograph from Das Neue Berlin of the roof garden of the Karstadt department store, Hermannplatz, opened in 1929.

# PROTOS BÜGELEISEN



V  
D  
E  
GEWICHT 3 kg



SIEMENS-SCHUCKERT-ERZEUGNIS

## AEG

# VAMPYR

Der  
führende Staubsauger

A detailed illustration of the AEG Vampyr vacuum cleaner, showing its long tube, motor, and wheels. The brand name 'VAMPYR' is written vertically on the side of the tube.

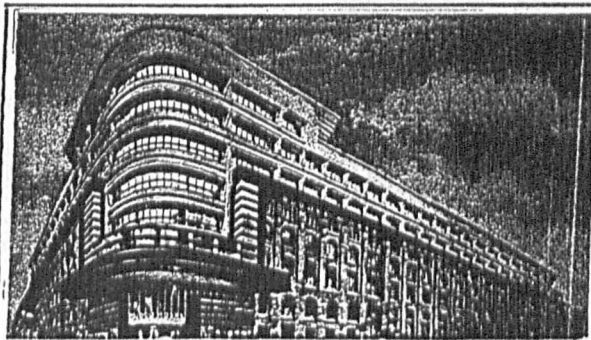
Ueberall erhältlich  
in bequemen Monatsraten

Figs 6 and 7 Advertisements from Jeder Einmal in Berlin.



Fig. 8 Facade of the Rudolf Mosse Verlag, Jerusalemer Str.. The alterations to the front (corner curving and extra stories) were designed by the architect, Erich Mendelsohn, and date from 1921-1922.

Fig. 9 Advertisement for the Rudolf Mosse Verlag from Jeder Einmal in Berlin.



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## RUDOLF MOSSE

Zentrale Berlin SW 19, Jerusalemer Strasse 46-49  
Filialen und Agenturen in allen grösseren Städten des In- und  
Auslandes

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ANNONCEN - EXPEDITION  
Inseratenannahme für alle Zeitungen der Welt zu den Original-  
preisen der Verleger

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DEUTSCHES REICHS-ADRESSBUCH  
für Industrie, Gewerbe, Handel und Landwirtschaft

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DER INTERNATIONALE RUDOLF MOSSE-CODE  
Deutsch, Englisch, Französisch, Spanisch

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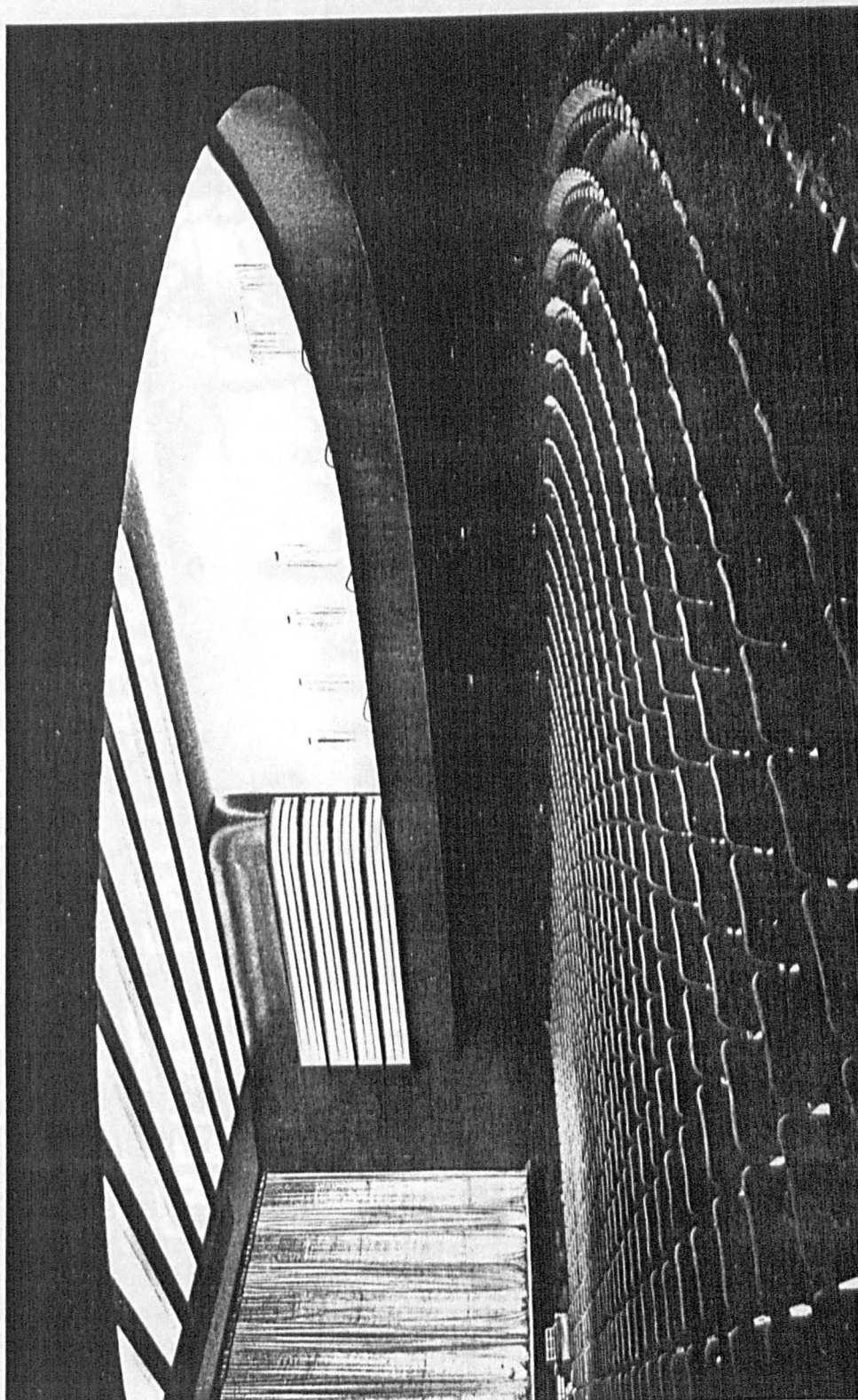
ESPERANTO-VERLAG: BIBLIOTEKO TUTMONDA

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## BERLINER TAGEBLATT

Mit den 10 Gratis-Zeitschriften  
Welt-Spiegel · Moden-Spiegel · Kunst-Spiegel · Technische  
Rundschau · Film-Zeitung · Photo-Spiegel · Witzblatt „ULK“  
Haus Hof Garten · Jugend-Spiegel · Jede Woche Musik  
DAS DEUTSCHE WELTBLATT

Fig. 10 Interior of the Universum cinema. The cinema was designed by the architect, Erich Mendelsohn, and opened in 1929. The photograph is from Das Neue Berlin, 1929.





! ☆ CAPITOL ☆ CAPITOL

! ☆ CAPITOL ☆ CAPITOL

DER NEUE GRETA GARBO FILM



HELGAS FALL UND AUFGSTIEG

Greta Garbo

HELGAS FALL UND AUFGSTIEG  
EIN METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER-FILM

CAPITOL

UT-AM-ILBAD

NICKE PATENT-EUHEI

Greta Garbo  
HELGAS FALL UND AUFGSTIEG  
EIN METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER-FILM



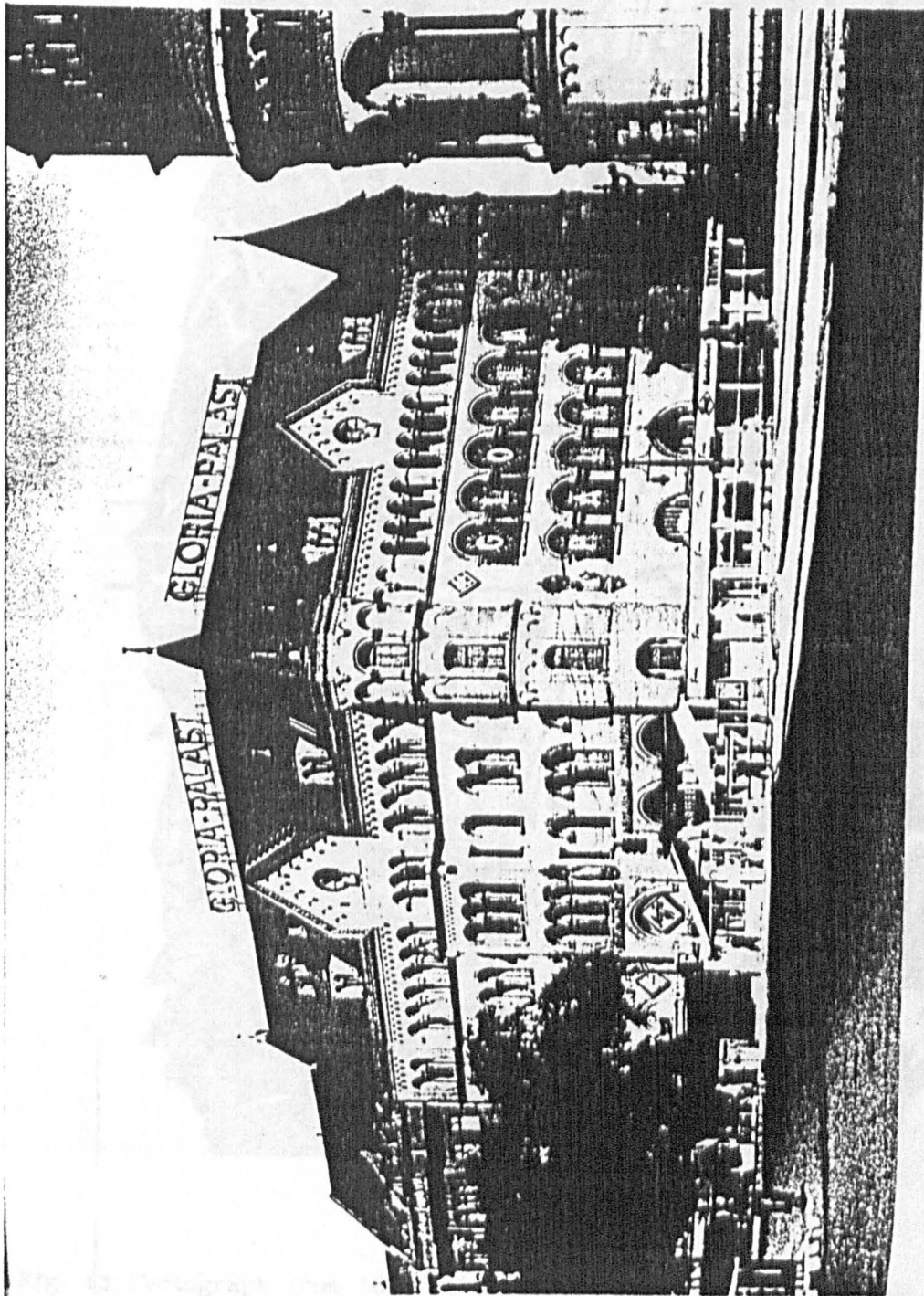
30

7

7

Fig. 11 (Previous page) Facade of the Capitol cinema, designed by the architect, Hans Poelzig. The cinema opened in 1925 and the photograph dates from 1931.

Fig. 12 Photograph dating from c.1930 of the Gloria-Palast cinema. The facade of the building was listed, making surface alterations impossible. However, designers realized they could place neon letters in the windows of the neo-Romanesque building to spell GLORIA-PALAST.



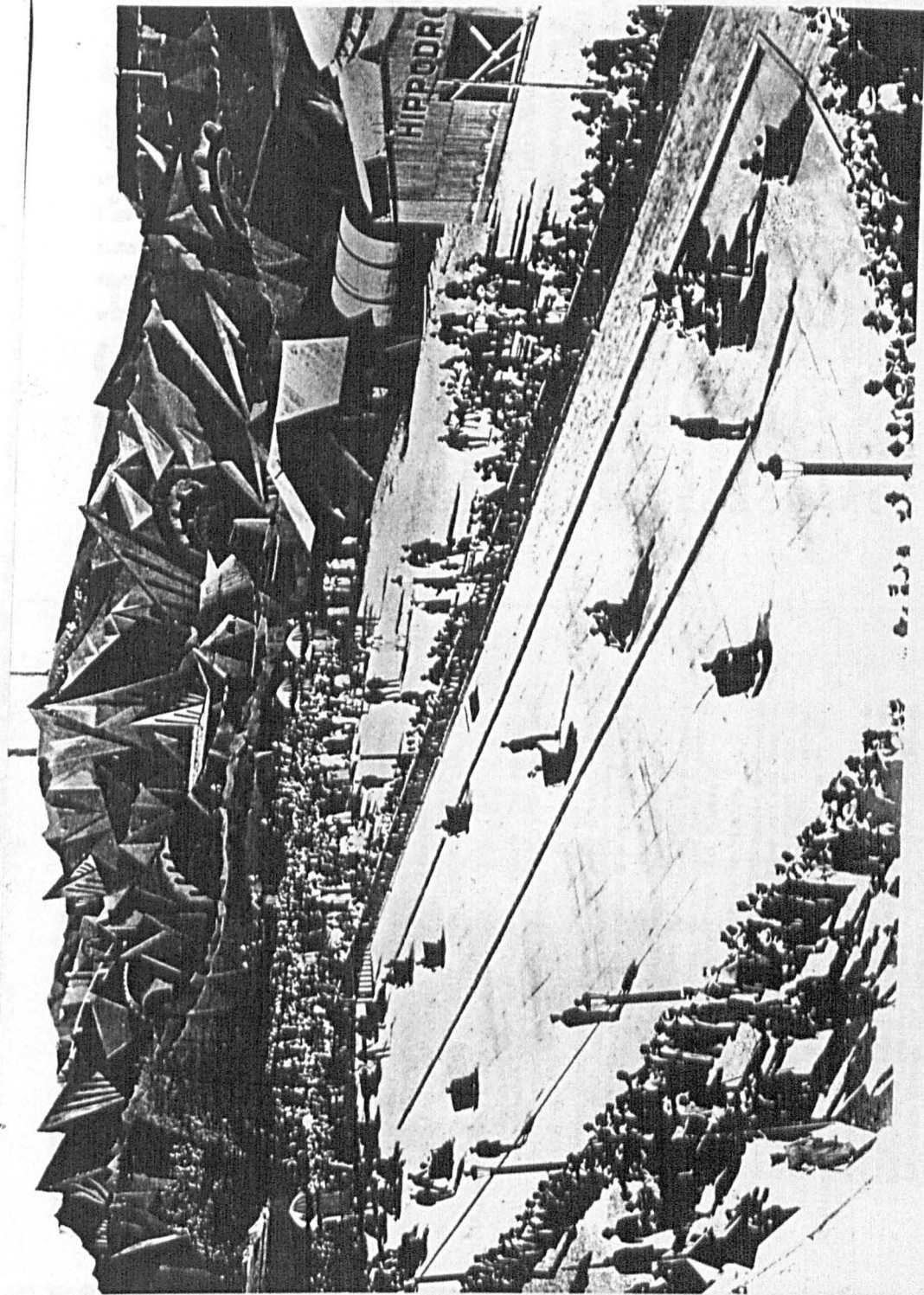


Fig. 13 Photograph from 1923 of the theme park, Luna-Park. Note the Expressionist city-scape backdrop.

# ASCHINGER

überall in Berlin billig und vorzüglich!

## Rheingold

Weinhaus Rheingold, Berlin W, Bellevuestraße 19/20, Potsdamer Straße 3. Europas größtes Restaurant. Bier- und Weinabteilung. Diners von 1-3, 4 Uhr-TEE, Tanz-TEE, Gesellschaftstanz. Zivile Preise. (Das Haus wurde erbaut 1906 von Professor Bruno Schmitz und bedeutet in seiner ganzen Anlage und Innenarchitektur eine Sehenswürdigkeit Berlins). Tel. Nollendorf 1830-1832. Konzerte Nachmittags und Abends in den verschiedenen Sälen.

## Café Fürstenhof

W 9, Potsdamer Platz. Großes, elegantes Kaffee im gleichnamigen Hotel. Zivile Preise. Konzerte, Zeitungen. Tel. Zentrum 1650 u. 5977.

## Leipziger Hof

W 9, Königgrätzer Straße 124/129 (im Hause des Hotels „Der Fürstenhof“). Anerkannt vorzügliches Bierrestaurant. Ausgezeichnete Speisen, sowie Berliner, Münchener und Pilsener (Urquell) Biere. Zivile Preise. Tel. Zentrum 1466.

## Fürstenhof Likörstube

W 9, Potsdamer Platz (im Hause des Hotels „Der Fürstenhof“). Beliebtes Imbiß-Restaurant. Das berühmte kalte Büffett. Erstklassige Frühstückswine und Liköre. Tel. Zentrum 1648.

## Palast Café

Potsdamer Platz, Ecke der Friedrich-Ebert-Straße. Großes, vornehmes Café im gleichnamigen Hotel. Geschmackvolle, künstlerische Ausstattung, gutes Konzert. Alle Konditoreiwaren in höchster Vollendung. Zeitungen. Tel. Zentrum 7414

## Aschinger's City-Restaurant

Leipziger Str. 85 (gegenüber Tietz). Das neue, moderne Bier-Restaurant mit vorzüglicher Küche u. hervorragend gepflegten Bieren (Münchener, Pilsener und Berliner Bier). Mäßige Preise. Tel. Merkur 701.

## „Fürstenhof-Bierstube“ Equitable-Haus

W 8, Friedrichstraße 59/60. Das gemütliche Restaurant an der Friedrich-Ecke der Leipziger Straße für den Einheimischen und den Fremden. Das köstliche kalte Büffett, die schmackhafte warme Küche (mit Gerichten in allen Preislagen). Bestgepflegte Biere, vorzügliche Frühstückswine (glasweise). Täglich Konzert. Tel. Merkur 6534.

## Zillertal

am Moritzplatz, S 42, Oranienstraße 147, Konzerthaus-Restaurant in oberbayerischer Art. Vorzügliche echte bayrische und Berliner Biere. Ausgezeichnete Küche. Original bayrische Madl-Bedienung. Tägliche Konzerte der lustigen oberbayerischen Kapelle und Tanz in den herrlich dekorierten Räumen. Tel. Moritzplatz 12938.

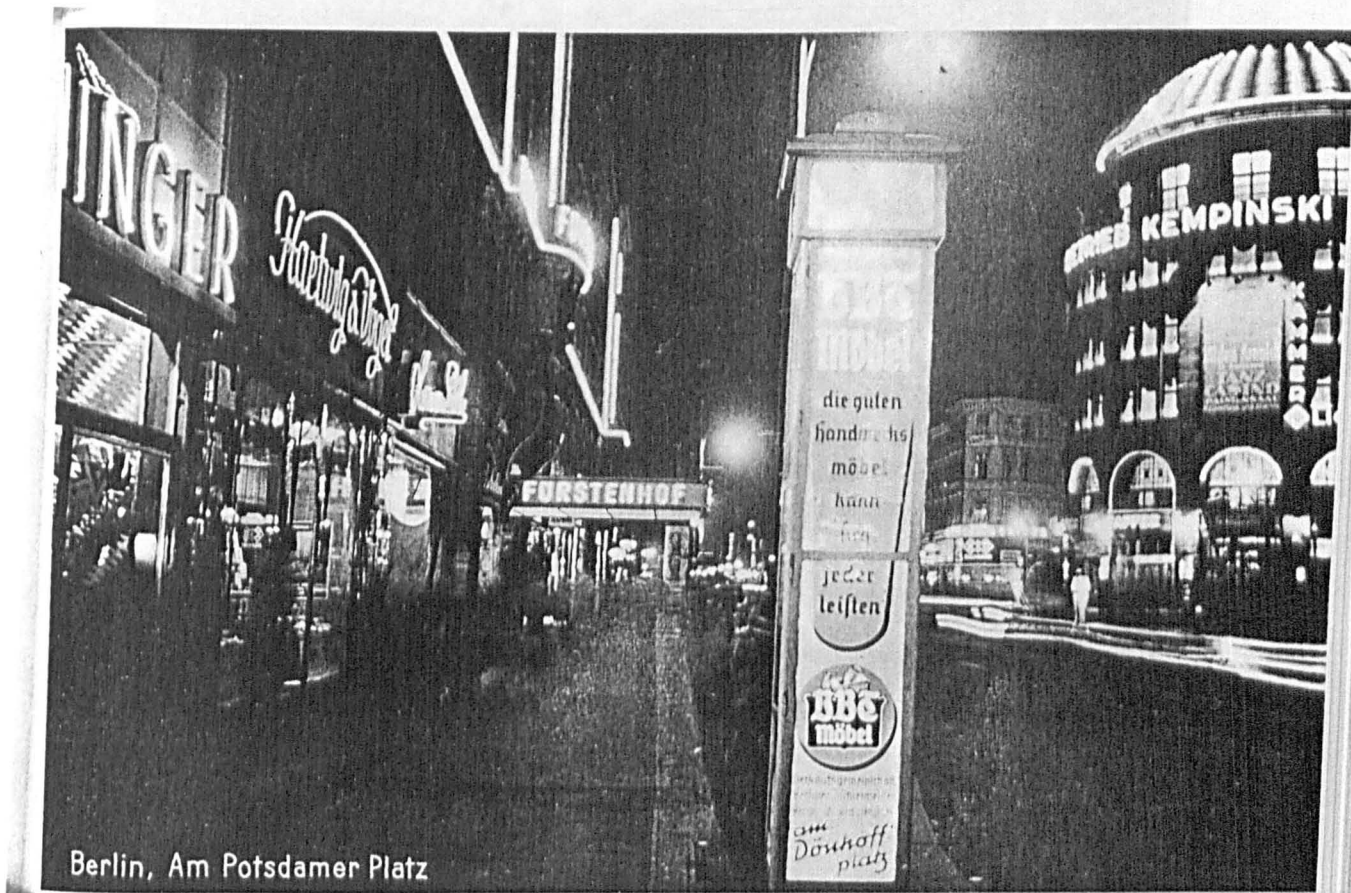
# ASCHINGER

überall in Berlin billig und vorzüglich!

## RESTAURANTS:

Friedrichstraße 191 (nahe Leipziger Straße), Kü  
Friedrichstraße 79a (nahe Behrenstraße), Kü  
Friedrichstraße 97 (Stadt-Bhf. Friedrichstraße), Kü Wu  
Königgrätzer Straße 124-129 (Potsdamer Platz), Kü  
Königgrätzer Straße 29-30 (nahe Dessauer Str.), Kü Wu  
Königgrätzer Straße 116 (Anhalter Bahnhof), Kü  
Leipziger Straße 79 (Dönhoffplatz), Kü Wu  
Leipziger Straße 60-61 (Spittelmarkt), Kü Wu  
Potsdamer Straße 3 (Potsdamer Platz), Wu  
Potsdamer Straße 114 (nahe Lützowstraße)  
Potsdamer Straße 101-102 (nahe Kurfürstenstraße), Kü  
Potsdamer Straße 57-58 (Ecke der Bülowstraße), Kü Wu  
Alexanderstraße 2 (Alexanderplatz), Kü Wu  
Alexanderstraße 55 (nahe Prenzlauer Straße), Kü Wu  
Hackescher Markt 5 (nahe Bahnhof Börse)  
Rosenthaler Straße 72a (Rosenthaler Platz), Kü Wu  
Blücherplatz 2 (Hallesches Tor), Kü Wu  
Oranienstraße 145-146 (Moritzplatz), Kü  
Rathenower Straße 1 (Moabit Kriminal-Gericht), Kü  
Turmstraße 73 (Moabit nahe Ottostraße), Kü Wu  
Müllerstraße 3b (Wedding), Kü  
Chausseestraße 1 (Oranienburger Tor), Kü Wu  
Invalidenstraße 123 (Stettiner Bahnhof), Kü

Kü = warme Küche Wu = Wurstverkauf



Berlin, Am Potsdamer Platz

Fig. 15 Photograph of Potsdamer Platz with Haus Vaterland to the right.

This photograph shows a view of the interior of Haus Vaterland. Note the neon signs on the right along the back wall.

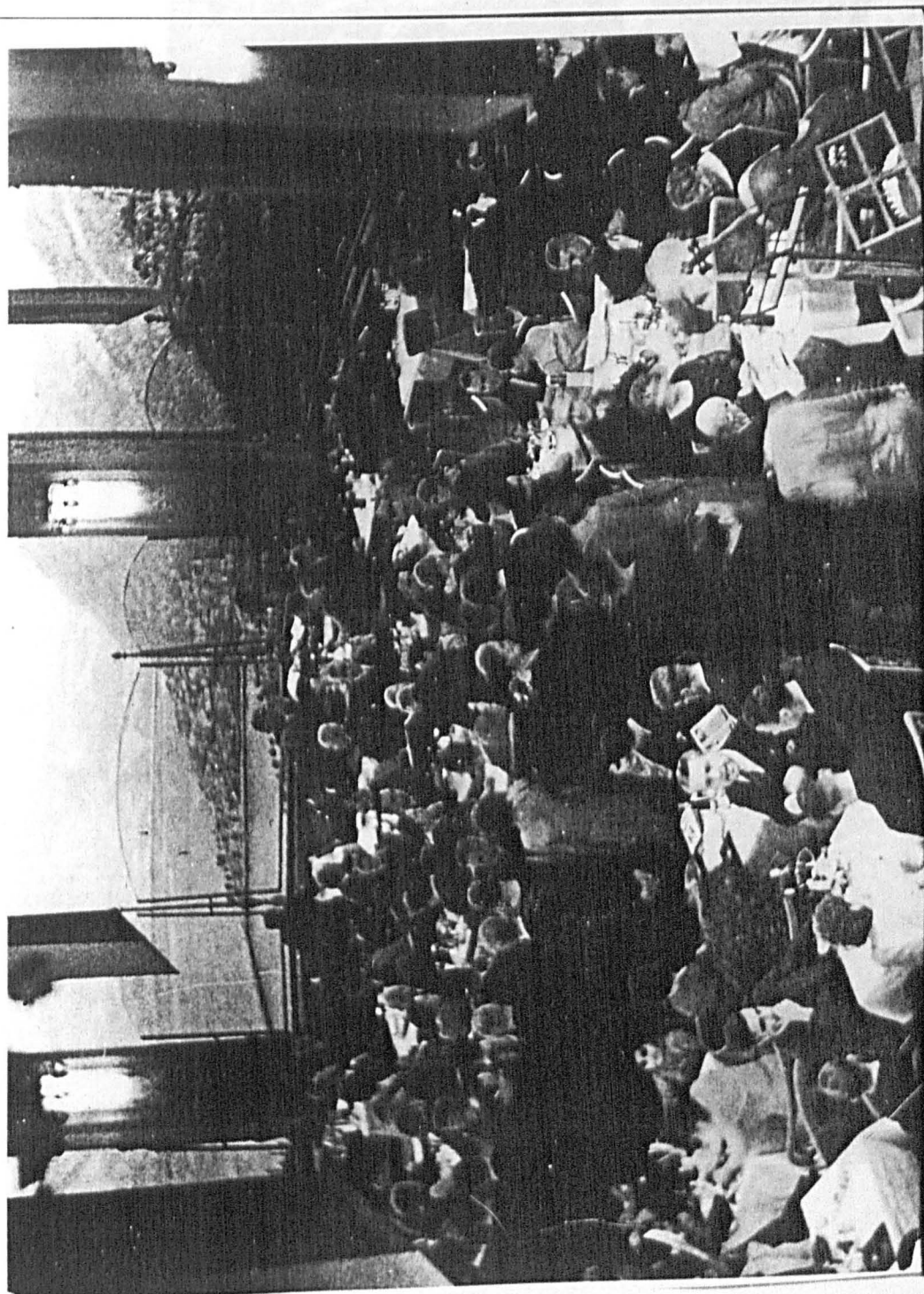


Fig. 16 Photograph from c.1930 of the interior of Haus Vaterland. Note the panorama of the Rhine along the back wall.



Fig. 18  
malen  
Fig. 17 Copy of the original cover for Curt Moreck's Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin, published in 1931.



Gleich um de Ecke, meine Herrschaften! Da könn'n Se alles haben,  
alles! *Christophe*

Fig. 18 'Gleich um de Ecke, meine Herrschaften! Da könn'n Se alles haben, alles!' by Christophe.



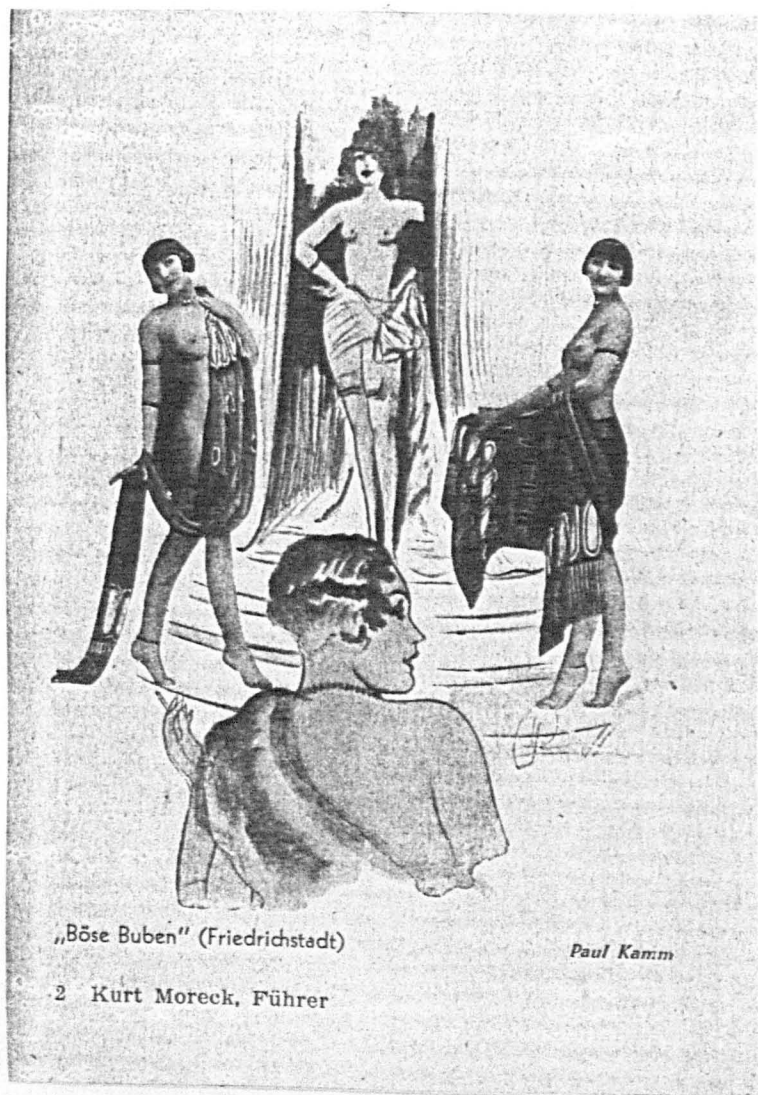


Fig. 19 'Böse Buben' by Paul Kamm.

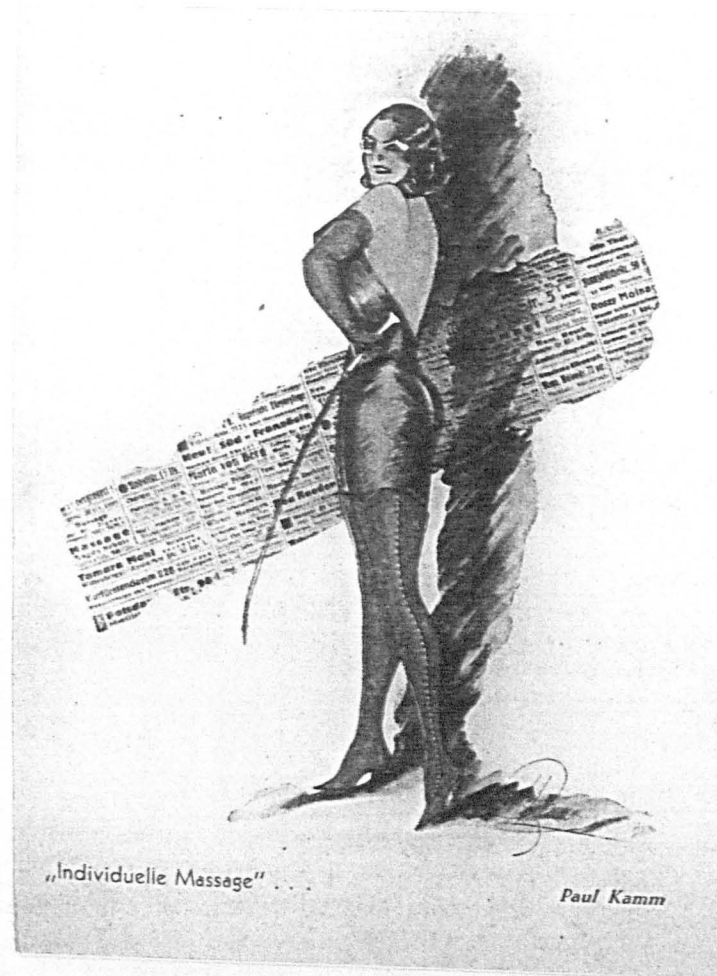


Fig. 20 'Individuelle Massage' by Paul Kamm.



Barberina

Paul Kamm

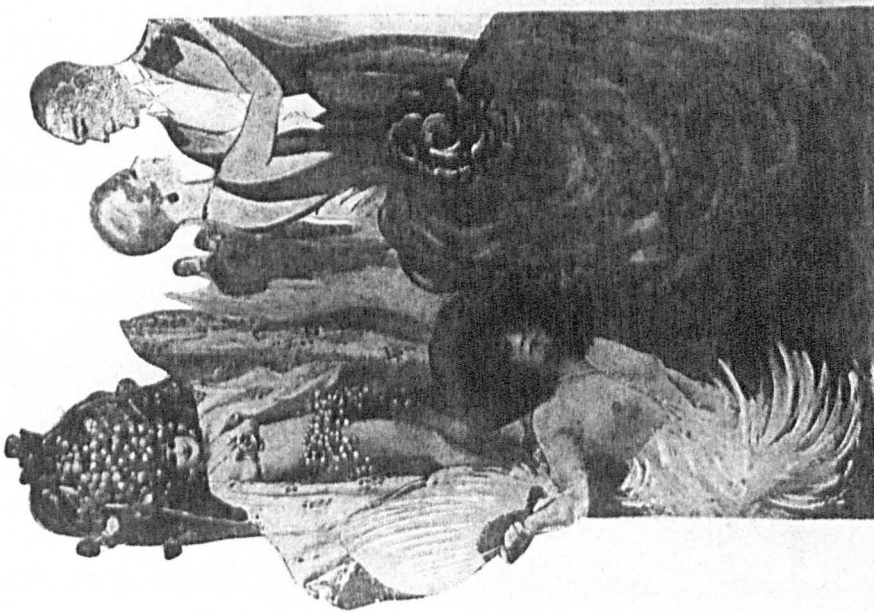
Fig. 21 'Barberina' by Paul Kamm.



Rokoko

Paul Kamm

Fig. 22 'Rokoko' by Paul Kamm.



Steinmaier

Paul Kamm



Teestunde

Hans Reinhard

Fig. 23 'Steinmaier' by Paul Kamm.

Fig. 24 'Teestunde' by Hans Reinhard.



In hohen Stiefeln . . .

*Jeanne Mammen*

Fig. 25 'In hohen Stiefeln' by Jeanne Mammen.



Fig. 26 'Rokokosaal "Casanova"' by Duperrex.

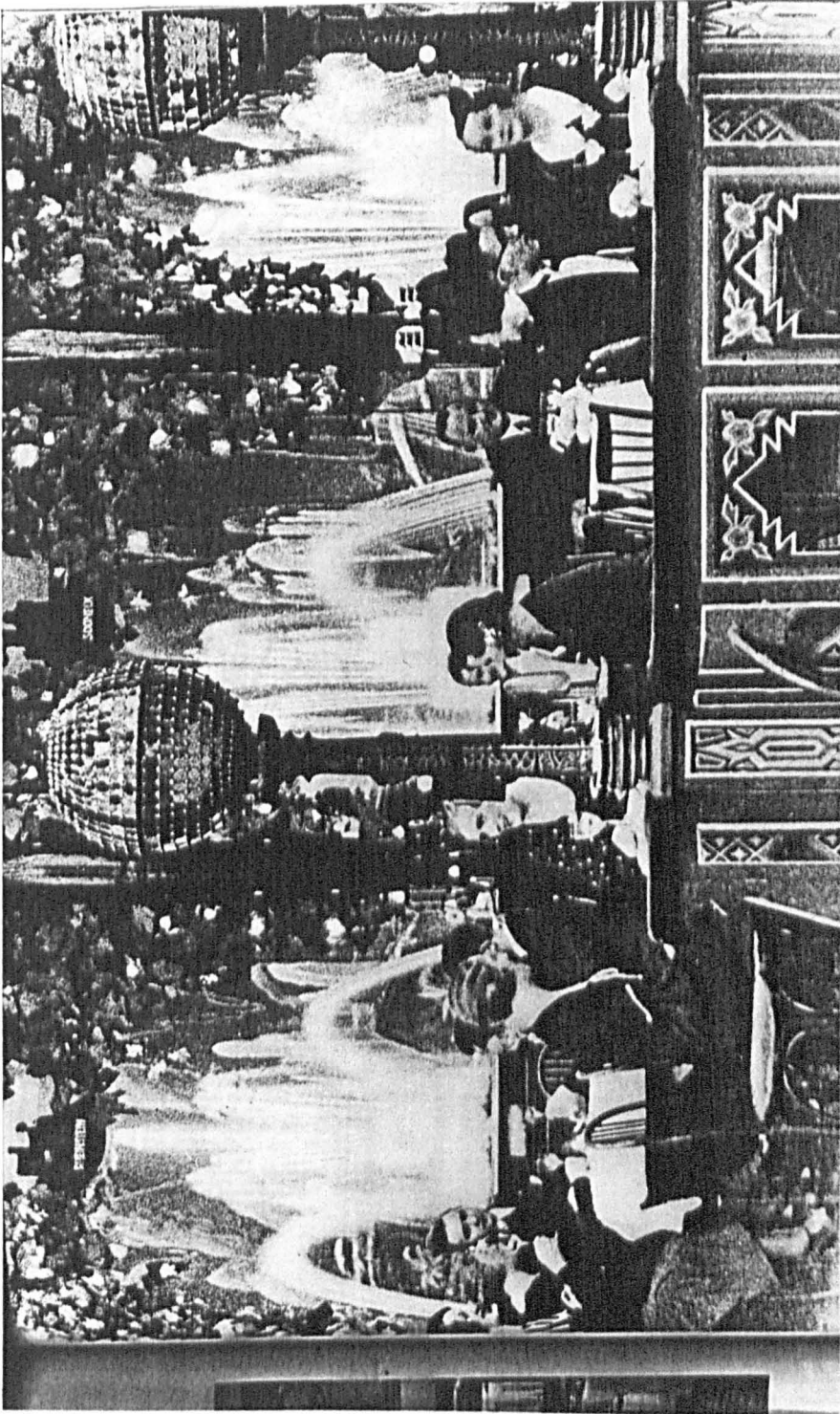
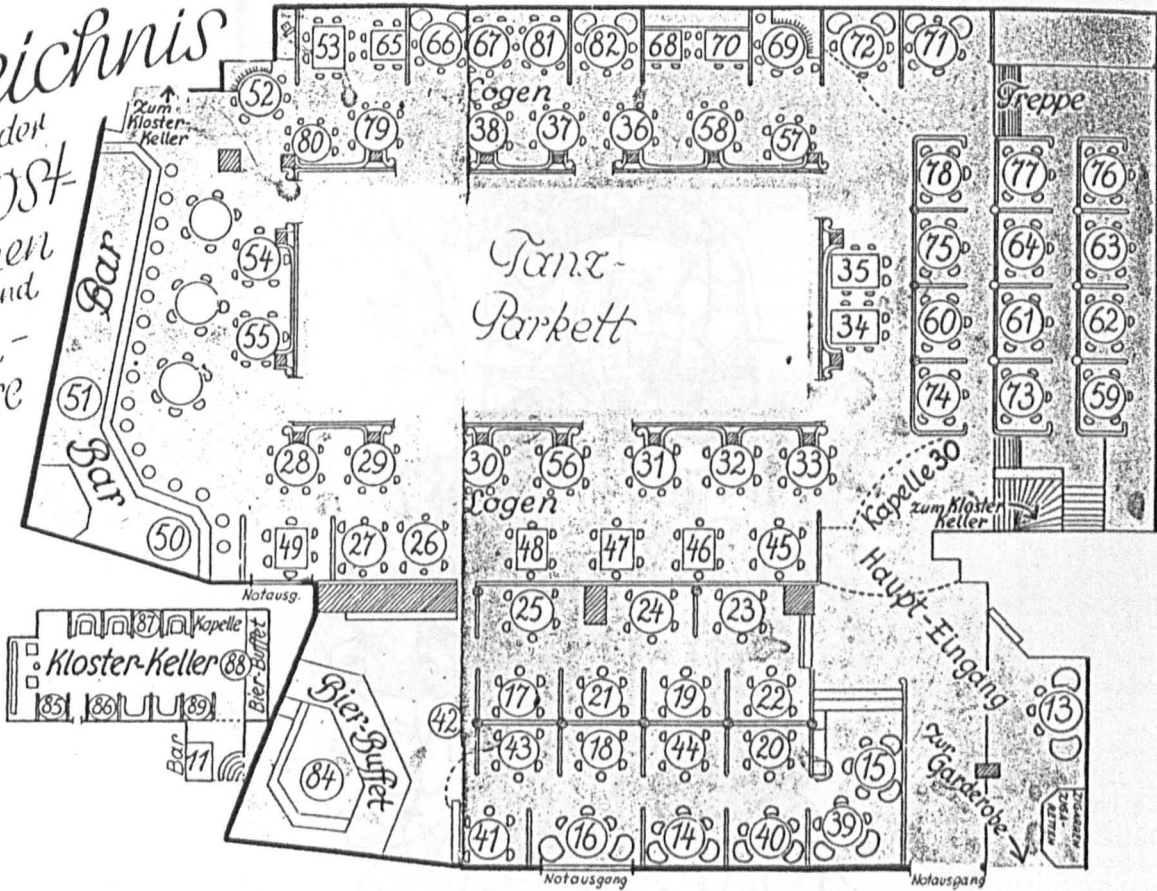


Fig. 27 Photograph dating from 1927 of the interior of the Resi. Note the fountains in the background and the table telephones.

# Verzeichnis der Rohrpost Stationen und Telefon-Anschlüsse



**Achtung!**  
 der Kloster-Keller  
 u. die Nummer  
 10 · 84 · 13  
 haben keine  
 Rohrpoststation.

## Verzeichnis der durch Rohr-Post zu beziehenden Waren

Waren-Bestell-Nr.	Waren	Preis RM
<b>Genüsse</b>		
54	Burgunder Panach	1.-
55	Schwedischer Panach	1.-
56	Schlummer Panach	1.-
57	Rum Panach	1.-
58	Arrak Panach	1.-
<b>Generer</b>		
59	Schiedammer Generer	1.-
<b>Liv. Marken</b>		
60	Jamaica-Rum V. O. S.	1.-
61	Banana-Arrak V. O. P.	1.-
62	Kirschwasser	1.-
<b>Ausländische Erzeugnisse</b>		
63	Calvet Cognac Vieux	2.-
64	Originals-einigerand Teaker V. S. O. P.	1.-
65	White Horse Whisky	2.-
<b>Zigaretten</b>		
66	10 Stück Reemtsma Ova	-.50
67	10 Stück Muratti Iplie	-.50
68	10 Stück Haus Neuenburg Overstolz	-.50
69	10 Stück Bergmann Gildehof	-.50

Bei Warenbestellung bitte den Geldebetrag nicht zu vergessen.

Waren-Bestell-Nr.	Waren	Preis RM
<b>Zigaretten</b>		
70	10 Stück Reemtsma Gelbe Sorte	-.60
71	10 Stück Muratti „For ever“	-.60
72	10 Stück Bergmann Privat	-.60
73	10 Stück Geener, Tabakregie „Dritte Sorte“	-.60
74	10 Stück Abdallah Nr. 6	-.60
75	10 Stück Greiling Regatta	-.60
76	10 Stück Muratti Arison	-.60
77	10 Stück Haus Neuenburg Löwenbrück	-.60
78	10 Stück Nestor Lord	-.60
79	10 Stück Waldorf Astoria Hauptpunkt	-.60
80	10 Stück Reemtsma Senoussi	1.-
81	10 Stück Muratti Gentry	1.-
82	10 Stück Nestor Queen	1.-
83	10 Stück Muratti de Luxe	1.20
84	10 Stück Reemtsma I. Sorte	1.50
<b>Zigarren</b>		
85	2 Zigarren der Firma Heistrich à 20 Pfg.	-.40
86	2 Zigarren der Firma Heistrich à 25 Pfg.	-.50
87	2 Zigarren der Firma Heistrich à 30 Pfg.	-.60
88	2 Zigarren der Firma Graf Arco à 20 Pfg.	-.40
89	2 Zigarren der Firma Graf Arco à 25 Pfg.	-.50
90	2 Zigarren der Firma Graf Arco à 30 Pfg.	-.60
91	2 Zigarren der Firma Gyscar à 20 Pfg.	-.40
92	2 Zigarren der Firma Gyscar à 25 Pfg.	-.50
93	2 Zigarren der Firma Gyscar à 30 Pfg.	-.60

Bei Warenbestellung bitte den Geldebetrag nicht zu vergessen.

Waren-Bestell-Nr.	Waren	Preis RM
<b>Sarotti-Schokoladen</b>		
94	Berliner Mischung	1.-
95	Sonderklasse-Pralinen	1.-
96	Piccolo	1.-
97	Sortierte Fruchttragere	1.-
98	Gebrannte Mandeln	1.-
99	Schokolade-Sultaninen	1.-
100	Schokolade-Orangenschalen	1.-
101	Knabbermandeln	1.-
102	Französische Mandeln	1.-
103	Makkabohnen	1.-
104	Knabberbrot	1.-
105	krokant-Mandeln	1.-
106	Schokoladen-Ingwer	1.-
107	Vollmilch-Pastillen	1.-
108	Bitter-Pastillen	1.-
<b>KLleine Geschenke</b>		
<i>Neu Fabrikat Erster Klasse</i>		
<b>Für die Dame</b>		
109	1 Manikurett in Galathilblose (verschiedene Farben)	1.50
110	1 Nähetut in Galathilblose	1.50
111	1 Damenkämm in eleganten Wildlederutt	1.50
112	1 Schuhhöfel mit Knöpfen im Lederutt	1.-
113	1 Streichholzbehälter (Kunstleder)	1.-
114	1 Reisebesteck fürs Wochenende im eleganten Lederutt	3.-
115	1 praktische Schlüsseltasche in Wildleder	1.50
116	1 Damenhandtasche in bestem Wildleder	1.-

Bei Warenbestellung bitte den Geldebetrag nicht zu vergessen.

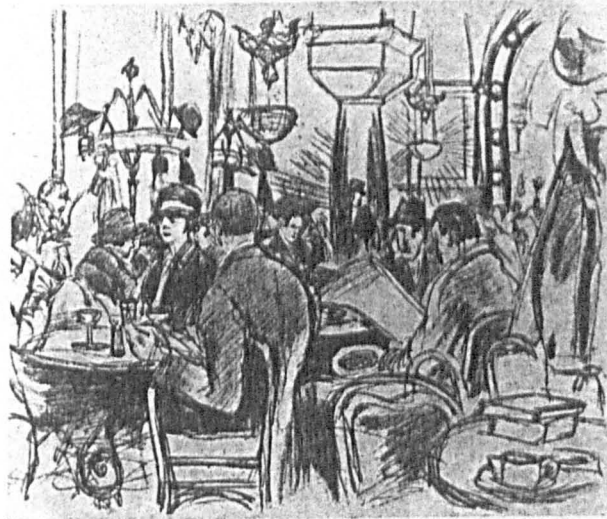
Waren-Bestell-Nr.	Waren	Preis RM
<b>Parfümerien</b>		
117	1 Fläschchen Parfüm im Geschenkkarton, Orchidee-Geruch	1.50
118	1 Fläschchen Parfüm im Geschenkkarton, Flieder-Geruch	1.50
119	1 Fläschchen Parfüm im Geschenkkarton, Veilchen-Geruch	1.50
120	1 Fläschchen Parfüm im Geschenkkarton, Gelbblat-Geruch	1.50
121	1 Lippensitt (goldene Hölbe)	-.50
122	1 Lippensitt (goldene Hölbe)	1.-
123	Pudler Compact (goldene Dose)	1.50
124	1 Döschen Nagelpuder	-.50
125	1 Dose Nagelweiß	1.-
<b>Für den Herrn</b>		
126	1 Cigarrenabschneider (Neuuttler)	1.-
127	1 Feuerstör in verschiedensten Farben	1.-
128	1 Streichholzbehälter (Kunstleder)	1.50
129	1 Korkenzieher mit Flaschenöffner	1.50
130	1 praktische Schlüsseltasche in Wildleder	1.50
131	1 Taschenkämm im Wildlederutt	1.50
132	1 Rasierapparat mit Klinge im Lederutt für die Westentasche	2.-
133	1 Reisebesteck fürs Wochenende im eleganten Lederutt	3.-
134	1 Schachtel Streichhölzer (Luxuspäckung)	-.80

Bei Warenbestellung bitte den Geldebetrag nicht zu vergessen.

Fig. 28 Layout of the table telephones in Resi and list of goods which could be purchased via the 'Rohrpost'.



Fig. 29 'Im "Resi"' by Christian Schad.



Romanisches Café

*Imre Goth*

Fig. 30 'Romanisches Café' by Imre Goth.



Im Romanischen Café

*Jeanne Mammen*

Fig. 31 'Romanisches Café' by Jeanne Mammen.





Beim Tee

*F. Hilf.*

Fig. 32 'Beim Tee' by F. Hilf.



Um den Alexanderplatz

Jeanne Mammen

Fig. 33 'Um den Alexanderplatz' by Jeanne Mammen.



Im „Krug zum grünen Kranze“

Jeanne Mammen

Fig. 34 'Im Krug zum grünen Kranze' by Jeanne Mammen.

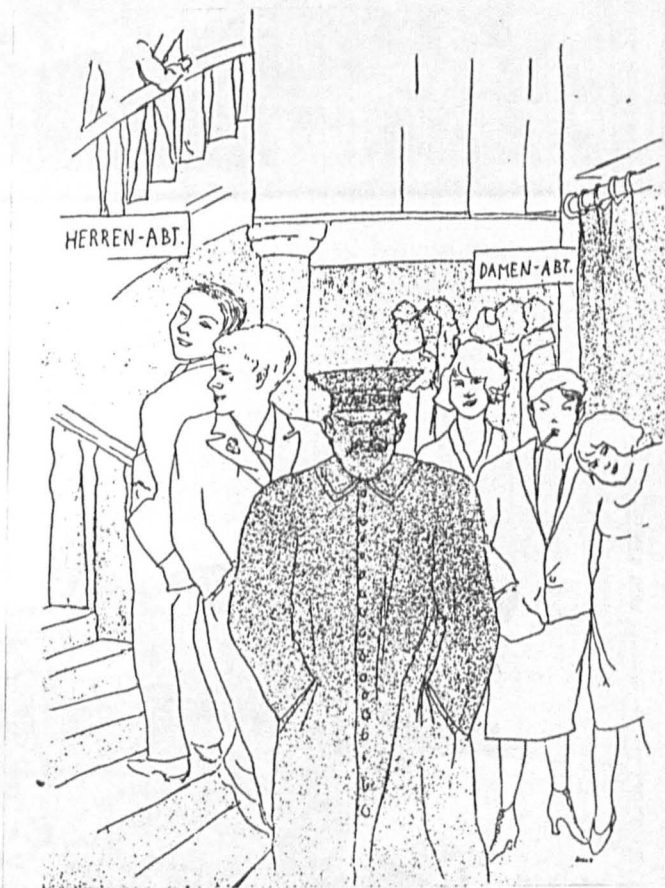


Fig. 35 'Zauberflöte' by Christian Schad.

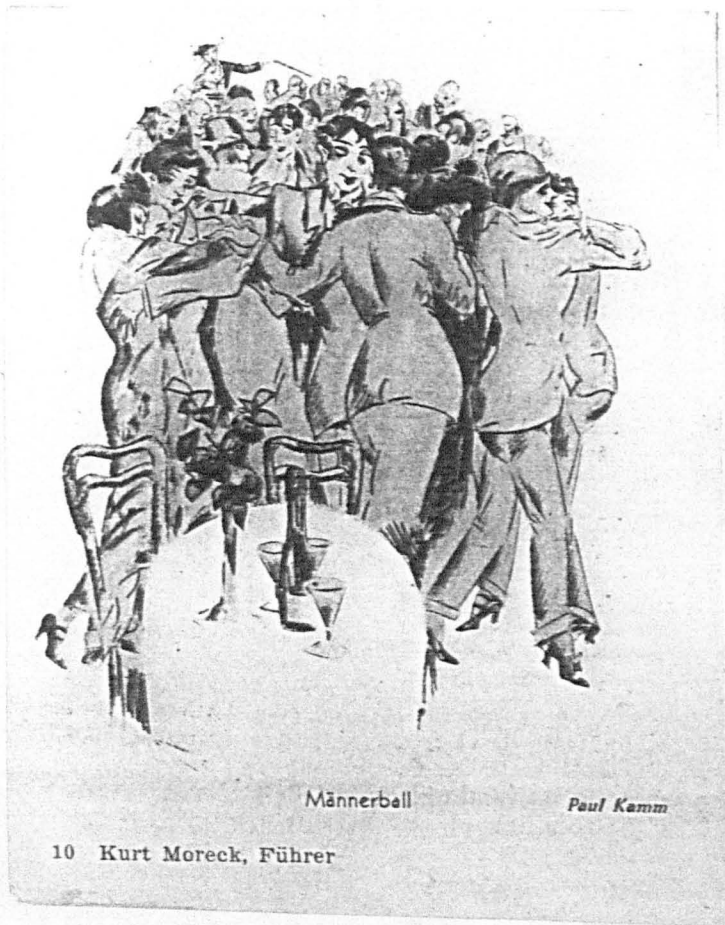


Fig. 36 'Männerball' by Paul Kamm.



Fig. 37 'Tanz im "Eldorado"' by Benari.



Fig. 38 'Berliner Straßenszene' by Jeanne Mammen, published in Vlk in 1929 with the caption: 'Hier scheint man sich nur für Mulattinnen zu interessieren. - Schade, daß ich meine Gelbsucht nicht mehr habe'.

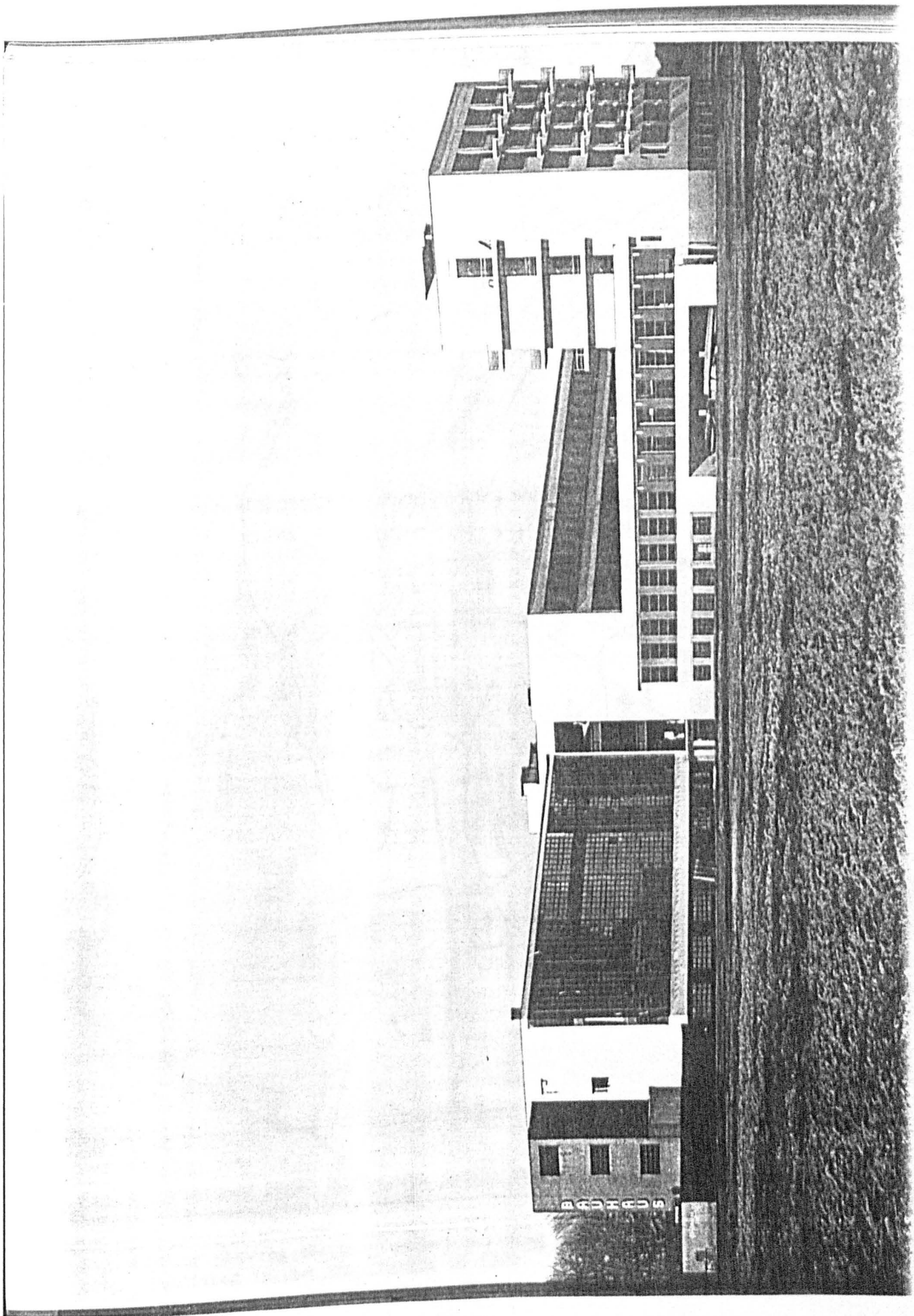


Fig. 39 'Er und Sie' by Jeanne Mammen, published in Simplicissimus in 1930 with the caption: "Keinen Mann hat se und keinen Freund hat se, was hat se denn nur?" -

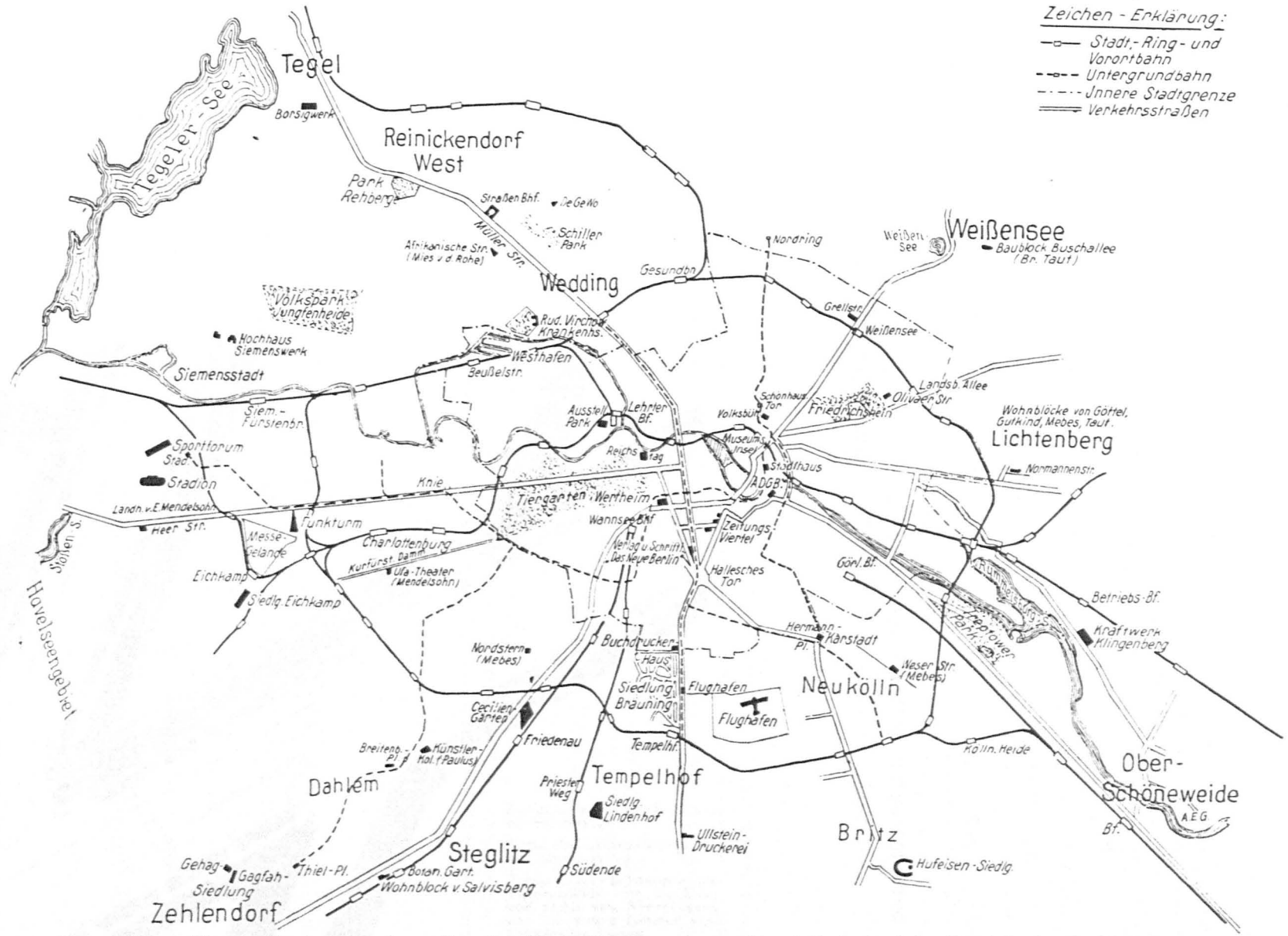
"Zu dicke Beene hat se".



Fig. 40 'Börse' by Jeanne Mammen, published in Vlk in 1928 with the caption: 'Tut mir leid, mein Kind. Thermometer-Ag fallen dauernd, der PatentmiederKonzern liegt schief. Wir müssen unsere Fusion lösen und uns wieder den freien Verkehr widmen'.



- Zeichen - Erklärung:**
- Stadt-, Ring- und Vorortbahn
  - - - - - Untergrundbahn
  - · - · - · Innere Stadtgrenze
  - ==== Verkehrsstraßen

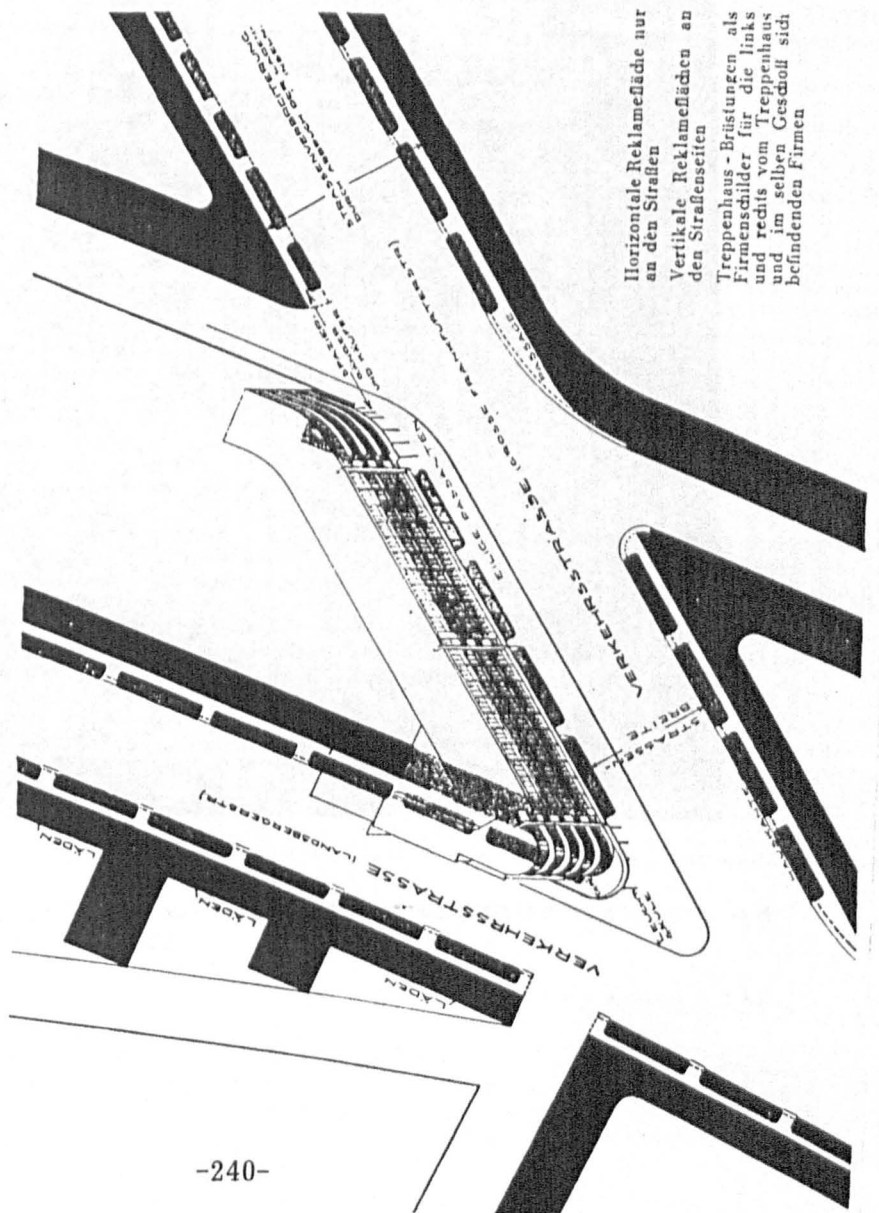


Dieser Plan ist ein erster Anfang; für seine Weiterführung rechnen wir auf die freundliche Mitarbeit der Architekten

Fig. 41 (Previous page) Photograph dating from 1928 of the Bauhaus building in Dessau, built in 1925.  
 Fig. 42 Plan showing the most recent building projects completed in the city. Published in Das Neue Berlin in 1929.



Fig. 43 Plan for a new commercial building which appeared in Das Neue Berlin in 1929.



Horizontale Reklamefläche nur an den Straßen  
 Vertikale Reklameflächen an den Straßenseiten  
 Treppenhaus - Brüstungen als Firmenschilder für die links und rechts vom Treppenhaus und im selben Geschloß sich befindenden Firmen

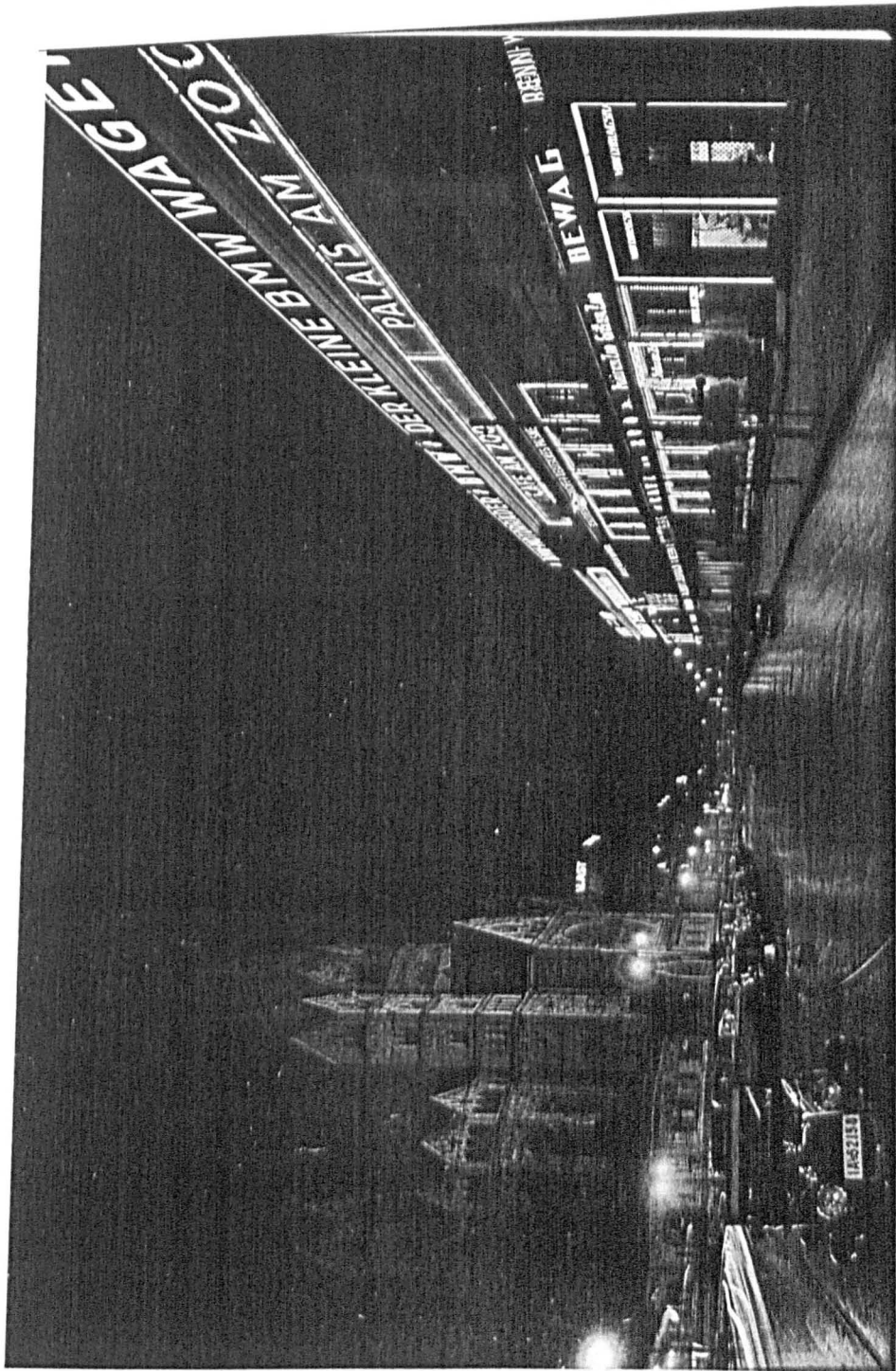
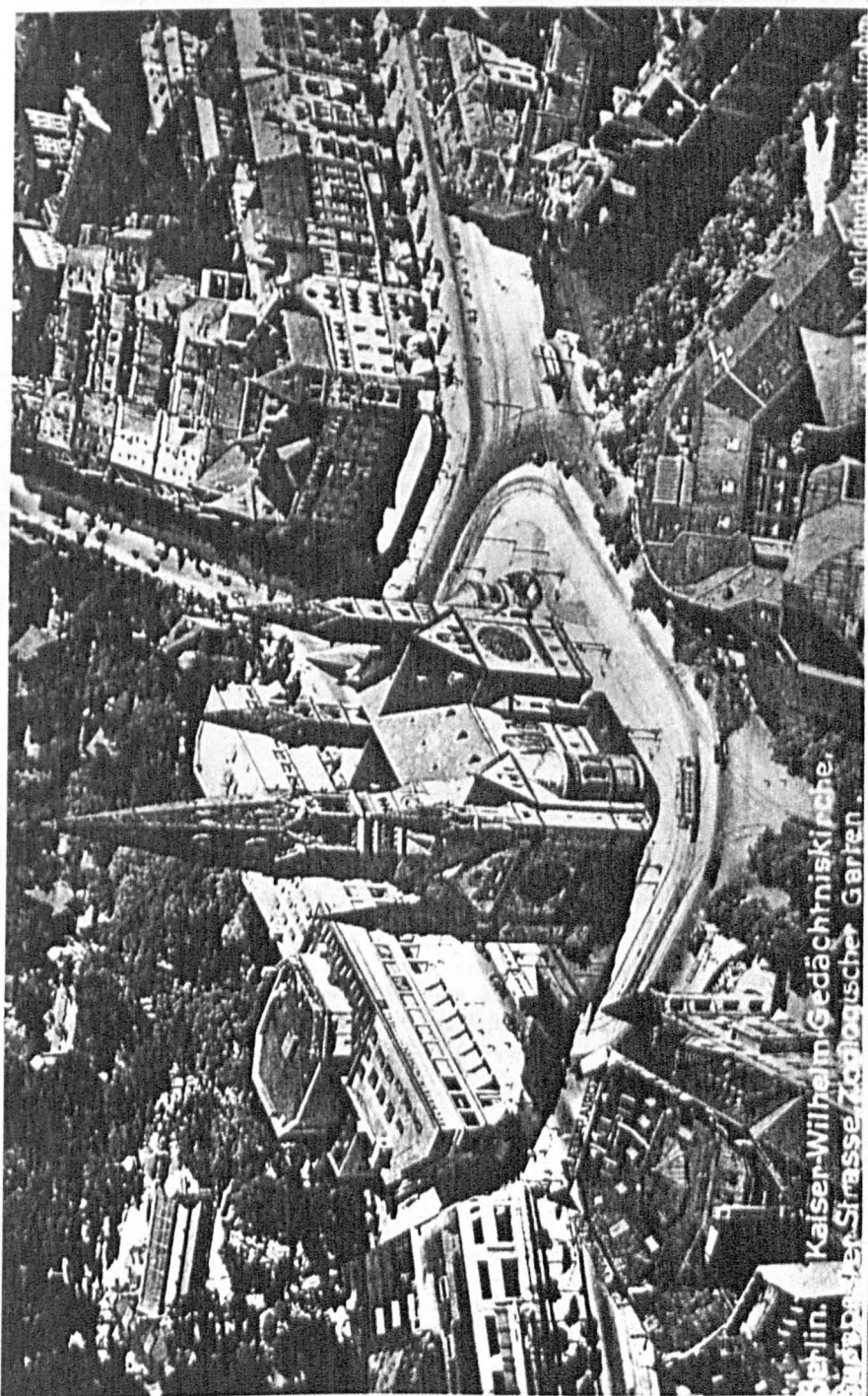


Fig. 44 Auguste-Viktoria-Platz with the Capitol-cinema to the right and the Gedächtniskirche to the left.

Fig. 45 Postcard of the Auguste-Viktoria-Platz with Hans Poelzig's office block (including the Capitol cinema) to the upper left side of the church, the Gloria-Palast cinema to the lower left side and the Romanisches Café to the upper right side of the church.



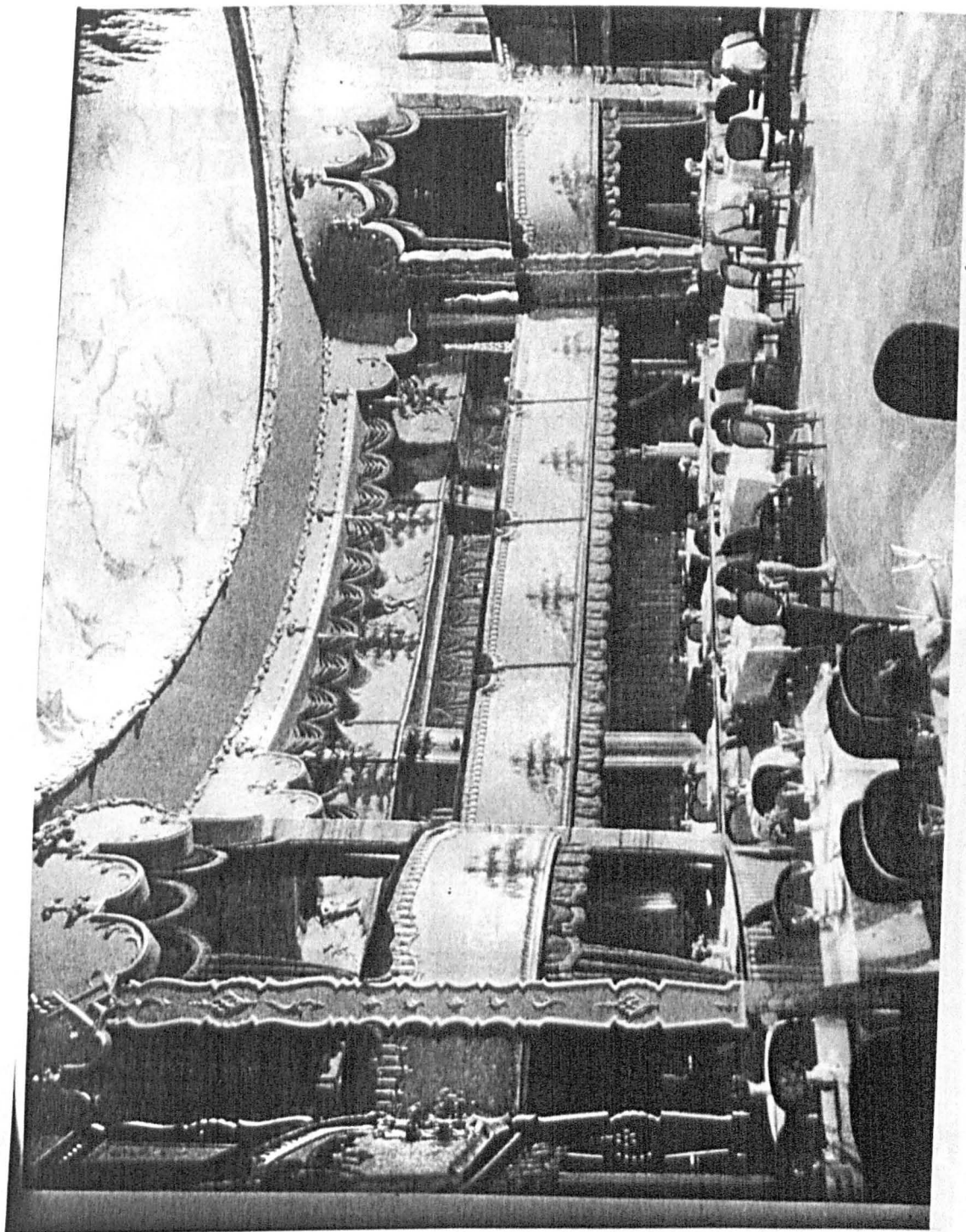


Fig. 46 Interior of the Palais am Zoo which was located within Hans Poelzig's office block on the Auguste-Viktoria-Platz. One of the slogans of the Palais was 'Feudal im Stil, Bürgerlich im Preis'.

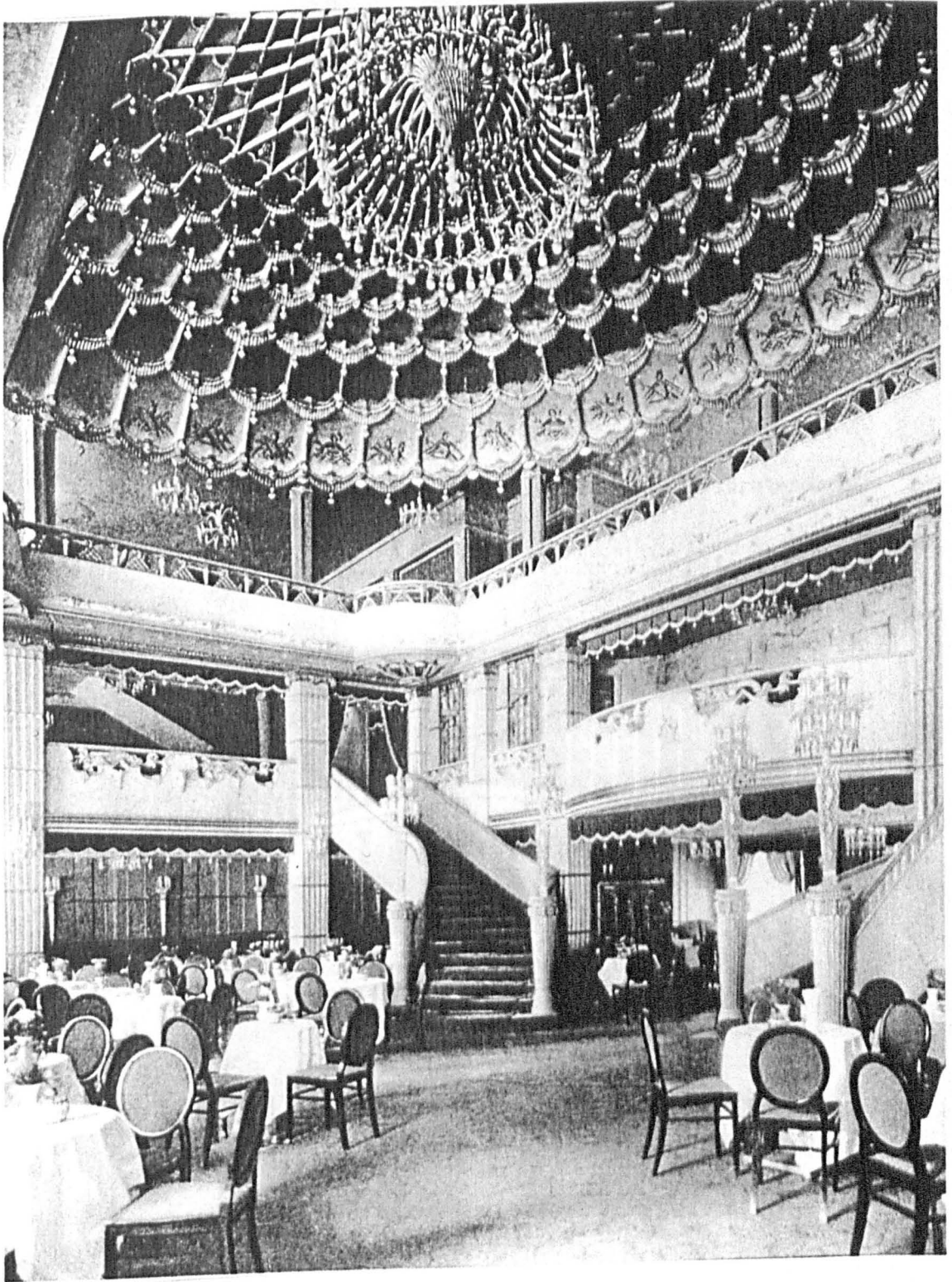


Fig. 47 Interior of the Café am Zoo which was also located in Hans Poelzig's office block.



Fig. 48 Photograph from c.1928 of the Kaufhaus Grünfeld, Kurfürstendamm, after the first set of alterations to the facade.



Fig. 49 Photograph dating from c.1933 of the Kaufhaus Grünfeld after the second set of alterations to the facade.

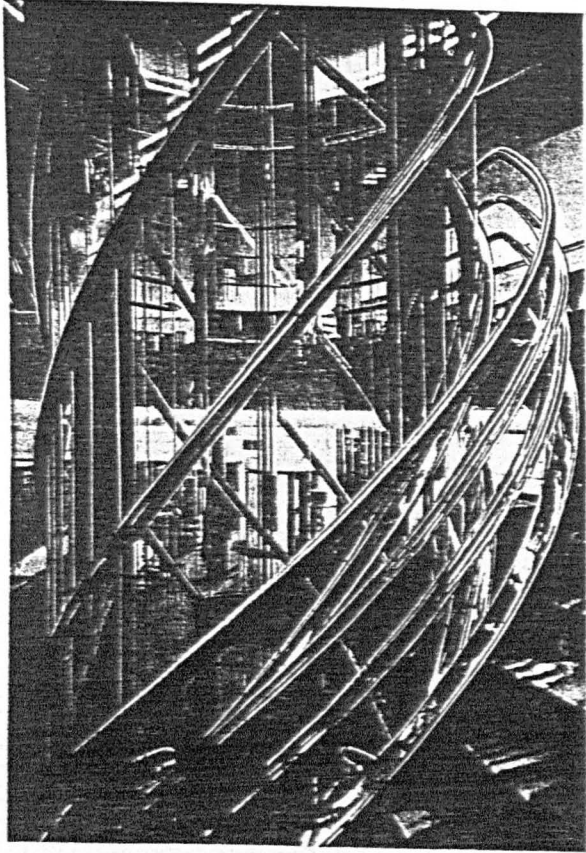


Fig. 50 Photograph of the new glass lift in the Kaufhaus Grünfeld.



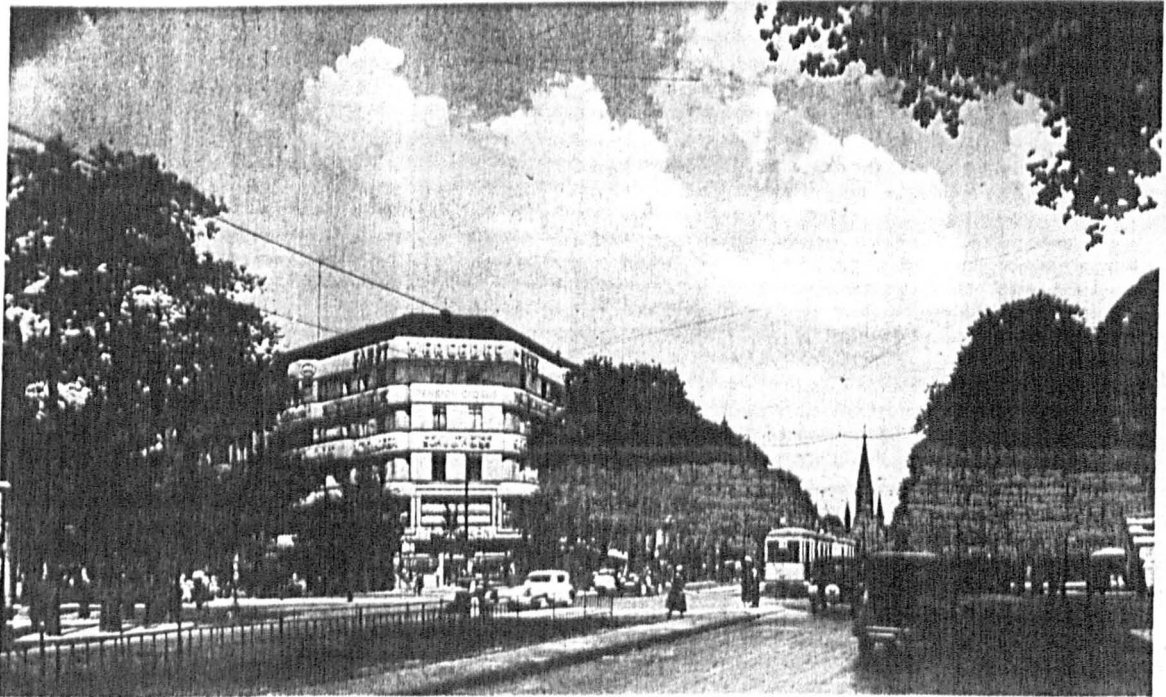
Fig. 51 Photograph dating from c.1933 of the Kaufhaus Grünfeld by day.

Fig. 52 Photograph of Kurfürstendamm Ecke Uhlandstraße before the alterations to the facade.

Fig. 53 Photograph dating from 1931 of Uhlandeck after the alterations to the facade.

1918 - 1933

Kurfürstendamm Ecke Uhlandstraße



... und nach der Umgestaltung, aufgenommen 1931





Fig. 54 Café Uhlandeck by day. Photograph from c.1930.

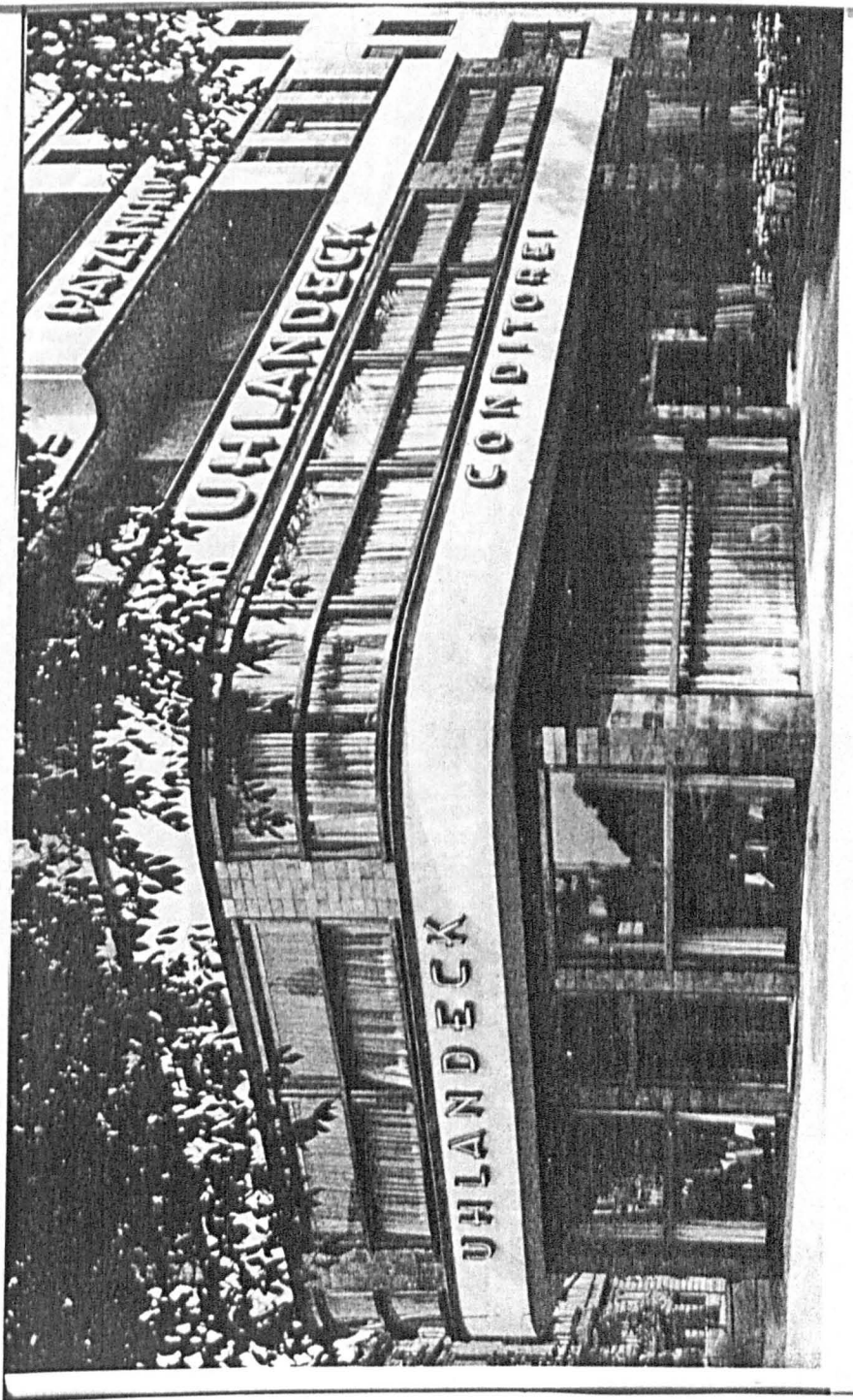


Fig. 55 Café Uhlandeck by day.

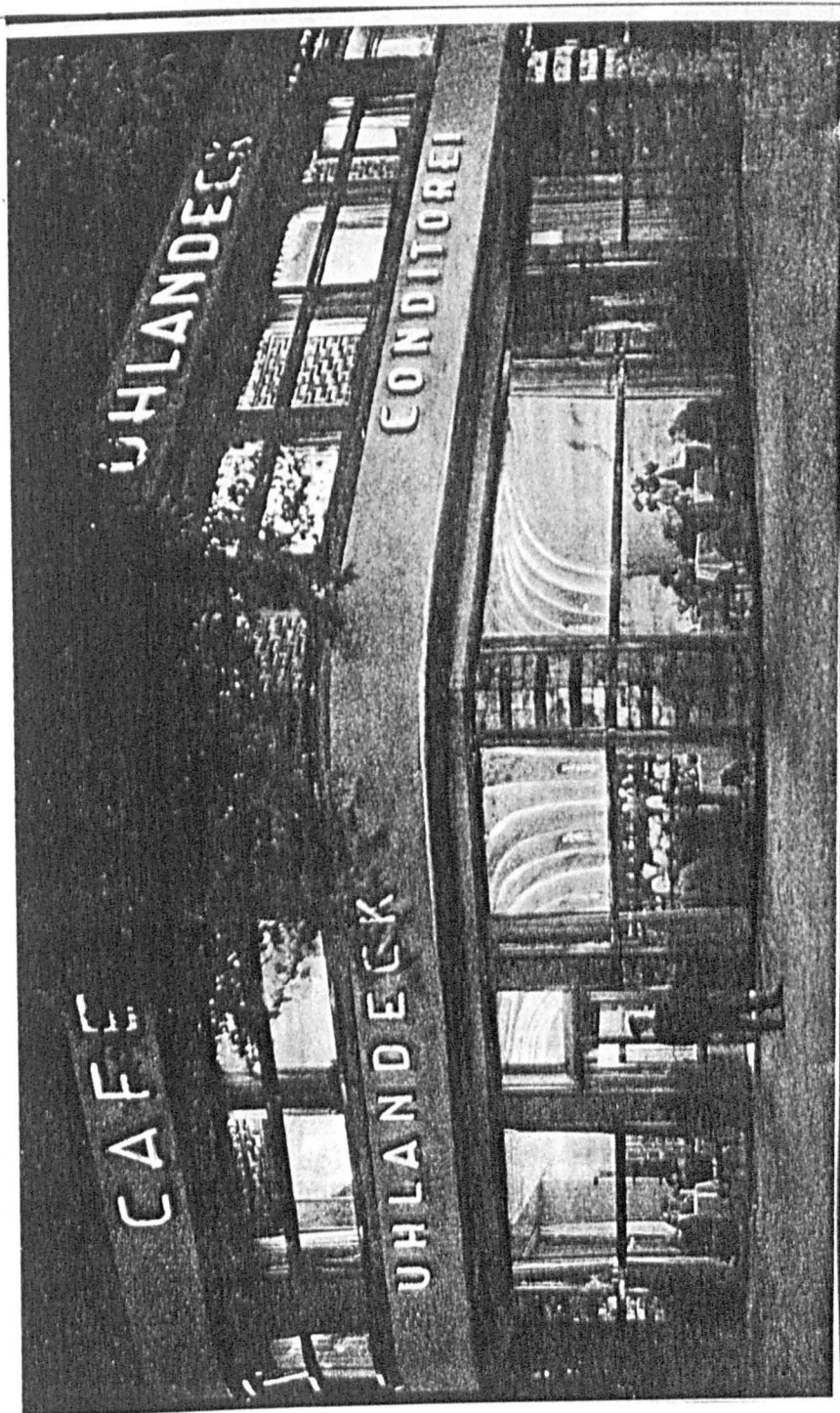


Fig. 56 Café Uhlandeck by night.



Fig. 57 Photograph dating from c.1930 of the interior of Café Uhlandeck. Note the ribbing extending from behind the counter to the ceiling which was illuminated at night.



Fig. 58 Photograph from *Das Neue Berlin* of a car showroom on the Kurfürstendamm. Note the old elaborate ornamentation on the first floor above the modernized ground floor facade.



Fig. 59 Advertisement from a fashion magazine of the Lette-Haus dating from 1929.

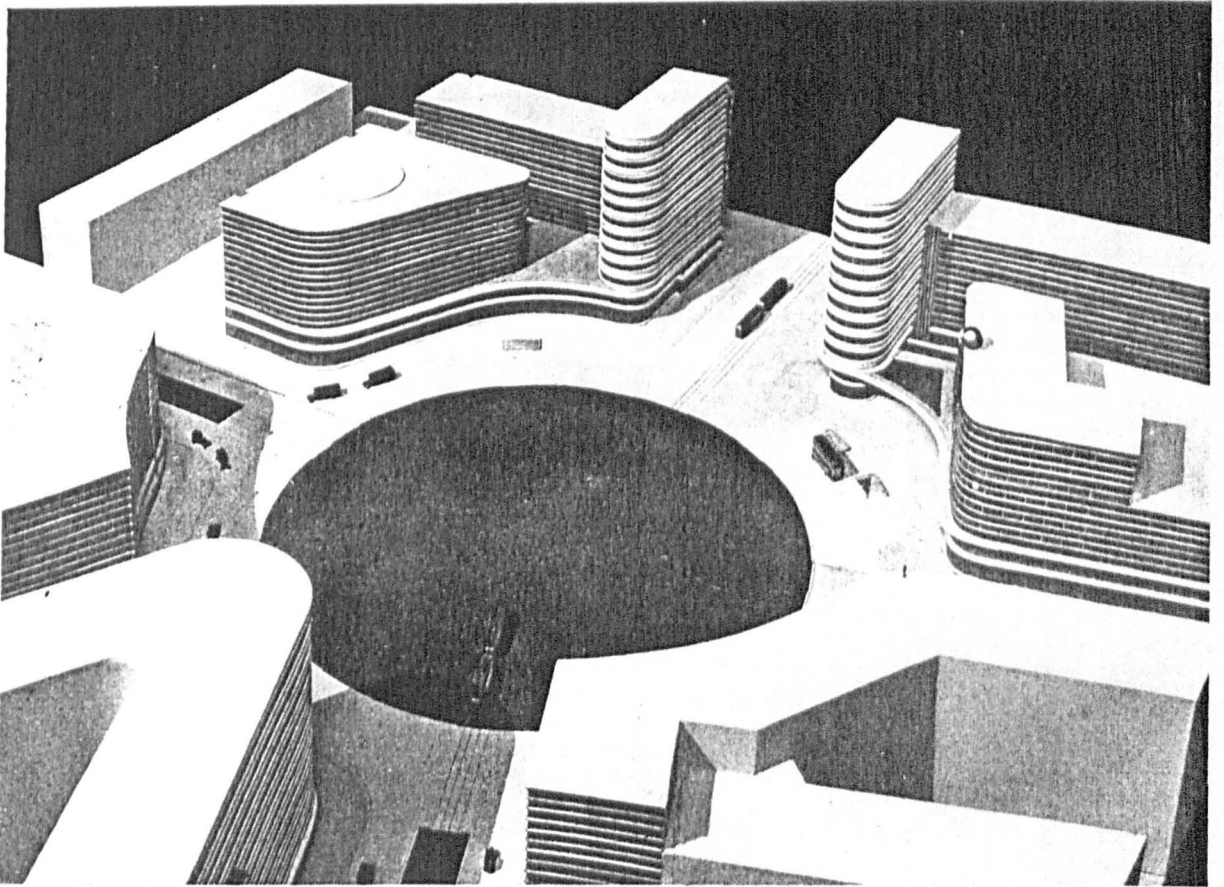
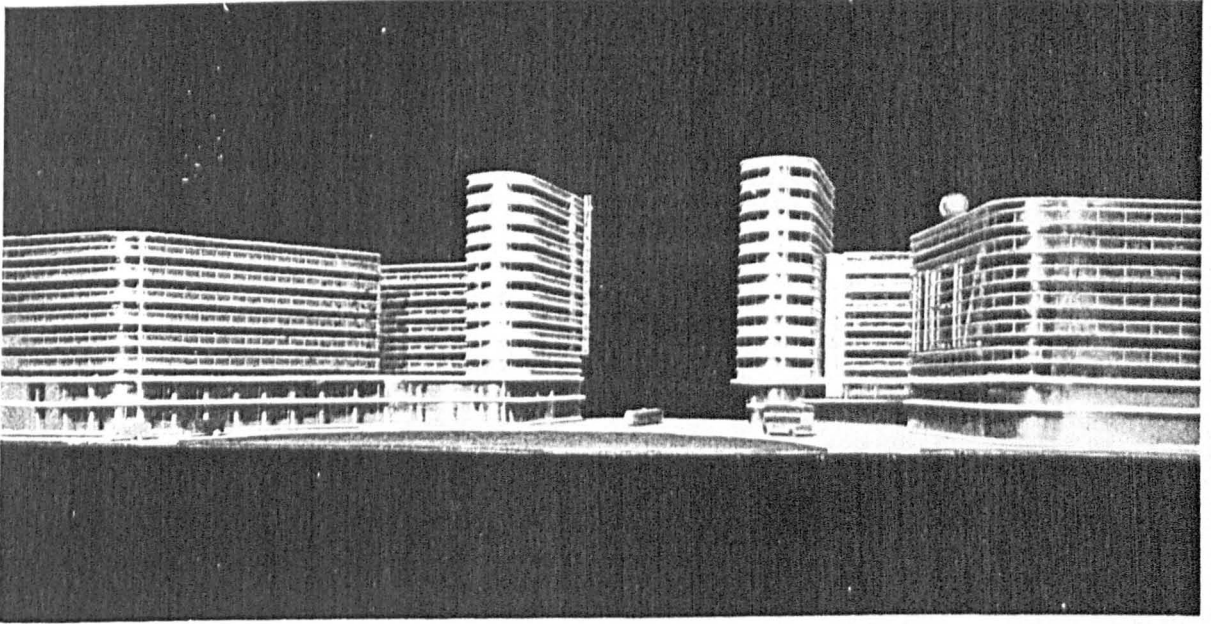


Fig. 60 Models for the rebuilding of the Alexanderplatz designed by the architect brothers, Luckhardt. The buildings surrounding the female figure in fig. 59 have been copied from the brothers' model. Note also how the brothers have modernized and incorporated Tietz department store (immortalized in Alfred Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz).

Fig. 61 Map of central Berlin, dating from c.1931.

<u>Streets</u>	
Alexanderplatz	F2
Auguste-Viktoria-Platz (Gedächtniskirche, Romanisches Café, Capitol, Gloria-Palast, Zoolog. Garten)	C3
Behrenstr. (banks)	E2
Blumenstr. (Resi)	G2
Friedrichstr.	E2-3
Halensee (Luna-Park)	A4
Hausvogteiplatz (fashion industry)	F3
Hermannplatz (Karstadt)	G5
Jerusalemer Str. (centre of 'Zeitungs Viertel')	F3
Joachimsthaler Str.	C3
Köpenicker Str. (Mundts Festsälen)	G3
Kurfürstendamm (numerous cafés, cinemas and shops, including Grünfeldeck and Uhlandeck)	A4-B3
Leipziger Str. (shops and department stores)	E3-F3
Münzstr.	F2
Potsdamer Platz (Haus Vaterland, Josty)	E3
Schaper Str.	B4-C4
Taentzienstr.	C3





A

B

C

D

E

F

G

CHARLOTTE

BURG

Charlottenburger

WILMERS  
DORF

SCHÖNERBERG

Zentral-Flughafen  
Berlin

2

3

4

5

6

## NOTES

## Introduction

- 1 Hans Fallada, Kleiner Mann - Was Nun? (1932), Rowohlt, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1950; Erich Kästner, Fabian (1931), dtv, Munich 1989; Irmgard Keun, Das Kunstseidene Mädchen (1932), dtv, Munich 1989. All quotations are taken from the above editions, page numbers are preceded by the following abbreviations for the novel from which the quotation is taken: KM-WN?, F, DKM.
- 2 The process of rationalization and the advent of mass culture will be charted in more detail in chapter one.
- 3 Curt Moreck, Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin, (1931) facsimile of the first edition, Berlin 1987. See chapter five for an analysis of the guide.
- 4 I will be considering *Neue Sachlichkeit* in much greater detail in chapter six where I will also cite relevant literature.
- 5 See, for example, E. Schütz, 'Beyond Glittering Reflections of Asphalt' in T. Kniesche / S. Brockmann (eds.), Dancing on a Volcano, Columbia 1994, pp.119-126; the essays in D. Glass et al. (eds.), Berlin. Literary Images of a City, Berlin 1989; and the essays in K. Scherpe (ed.), Die Unwirklichkeit der Städte, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1988. The tendency of secondary literature to concentrate on these aspects of the city is probably due to the stature of Alfred Döblin's Berlin Alexanderplatz as the Berlin novel of the Twenties.
- 6 Novels such as Rudolf Braune's Das Mädchen an der Orga privat (1930), Martin Kessel's Herrn Brechers Fiasko (1932) or Gabriele Tergit's Käsebier erobert den Kurfürstendamm (1931) are all set in the *Angestelltenmilieu* of Weimar Berlin.
- 7 Fallada's novel has even been published in the series of Methuen's

Twentieth Century Texts with an introduction and commentary written by Roy Reardon; Hans Fallada, Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, London 1987.

### Chapter one

- 1 'Die Gemeinde Berlin' in Jeder Einmal in Berlin, Berlin 1928, pp.63-68; Simmons, Berlin: The Dispossessed City, London 1988, pp.58-60; G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, Berlin 1987, p.366.
- 2 W. Hegemann, ('Das steinerne Berlin', 1930, p.18 and p.24) quoted in Schrader / Schebera (eds.), Kunstmropole Berlin 1918-1933, Berlin/Weimar 1987, p.142.
- 3 Willett, The New Sobriety, London 1978, p.125. The societies built around 64 000 homes and private organisations built around 37 000.
- 4 Ibid., pp.124-126; G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, pp.367-368.
- 5 Willett, The New Sobriety, p.126.
- 6 Interview with Wagner, ('Das neue Berlin', Heft 3, 1929) in Schrader / Schebera (eds.), Kunstmropole Berlin 1918-1933, p.153.
- 7 Jeder Einmal in Berlin, p.70.
- 8 G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, p.401.
- 9 See Detlev Peukert, The Weimar Republic, London 1991, and Kolb, The Weimar Republic, London 1988, for perceptive analyses of the various uses of the term.
- 10 See Charles Maier, 'Between Taylorism and Technocracy: European ideologies and the vision of industrial productivity in the 1920s' in Journal of Contemporary History 5:2, April, 1970, pp.27-61; and Nolan, 'Imagining America, Modernizing Germany' in Thomas Kniesche / Stephen Brockmann, Dancing on a Volcano, Columbia 1994, pp.71-84.
- 11 Nolan, 'Imagining America, Modernizing Germany', p.72. The quotation is from Modest Rubinstein, 'Die kapitalistische Rationalisierung', Unter dem Banner des Marxismus III:4 (1929) p.550.

- 12 Peukert, The Weimar Republic, p.113.
- 13 Ibid., p.112, Nolan; 'Imagining America, Modernizing Germany', p.76-77.
- 14 Peukert, The Weimar Republic, p.114.
- 15 Ibid., p.112; Nolan, 'Imagining America, Modernizing Germany', p.77.
- 16 Peukert, The Weimar Republic, pp.114-115.
- 17 Ibid., p.117.
- 18 Jeder Einmal in Berlin, p.94.
- 19 G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, p.368.
- 20 Ibid., p.465. See below, chapter six for a more detailed discussion of commercial architecture.
- 21 Vossische Zeitung, (21.6.1927) quoted in Metzger / Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, Berlin 1986, pp.110-112.
- 22 G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, p.403.
- 23 Lethen, 'Chicago und Moskau' in Boberg/Fichter/Gillen (eds.), Die Metropole, Munich 1986, pp.190-213, p.210; Jeder Einmal in Berlin, p.31. See Lethen for further statistics on radio owners and radio prices; see also G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, p.463 on the development of the radio.
- 24 Lethen, 'Chicago und Moskau', p.210.
- 25 Ibid., p.210; Kolb, The Weimar Republic, p.92; G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, p.461.
- 26 Metzger / Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, pp.127-136. For more on Hugenberg and his ability to further his political agenda via his media empire, see Bruce Murray, Film and the German Left in the Weimar Republic, Austin 1990.
- 27 'Neue Baukunst', (2, 1926, p.8) quoted in Metzger / Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, p.132.
- 28 G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, pp.411-412.
- 29 Jeder Einmal in Berlin, p.73.

30 Metzger / Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, p.116.

31 Deutsche Bauzeitung, (61, 19027, p.297) quoted in *ibid.*, p.114.

32 Metzger / Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, pp.114-116

'Nun war Kempinski durchaus ein Betrieb, der auf Massenabfertigung eingerichtet war und mit Billigangeboten lockte. Das hielt aber keineswegs die Prominenz davon ab, sich hier ebenfalls regelmäßig sehen zu lassen. Es gab ja spezielle, kleinere, besonders exquisite Räumlichkeiten, wohin man sich zurückziehen konnte, wenn man unter sich sein wollte, aber viele suchten eher das Bad in der Menge und ließen sich gerne bestaunen. Die Liste der Prominenten ist lang: Max Reinhardt und sein Bruder Edmund Reinhardt, Heinrich Mann, Lya de Putti, Artur Landsberger, Hanns Heinz Ewers, Wolfgang Goetz, Paul Wegener, Hans Pfitzner, Erik Hanussen, Olga Desmond, Max Pallenberg, Fritzi Massary, Roda Roda usw..'

33 See also chapters four and five for further discussion of Haus Vaterland, and night life as a whole.

34 Knud Wolffram, Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste, Berlin 1992, pp.39-52, and pp.110-118.

35 Kracauer, Die Angestellten (1929), Frankfurt a. M. 1971, p.15.

36 Sandra Coyner, 'Class consciousness and consumption: The new middle class during the Weimar Republic' in Journal of Social History, vol. 10, no. 3, March 1977, pp.310-331, p.314.

37 S. Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.11.

38 H. Speier, German White-Collar Workers and the Rise of Hitler, New Haven 1986, p.2.

39 Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.12.

40 *Ibid.*, pp.12-13.

41 Speier, German White-Collar Workers, p.52; Peukert, The Weimar Republic, p.97; Frevert, Women in German History, Oxford 1989, p.178.

- 42 Frevert, Women in German History, p.178.
- 43 Peukert The Weimar Republic, 'p.98; Anselm 'Emanzipation und Tradition in den 20er Jahren' in Anselm / Beck (eds.), Triumph und Scheitern in der Metropole, Berlin 1987, pp.252-274, p.254.
- 44 Frevert, 'Kunstseidener Glanz, Weibliche Angestellte' in von Soden / Schmidt (eds.), Neue Frauen. Die 20er Jahre, Berlin 1988, p.27.
- 45 Speier, German White-Collar Workers, p.52.
- 46 Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.13; Frevert, Women in German History, p.179.
- 47 See Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.44.
- 48 G. Korff / R. Rürup (eds.), Berlin, Berlin, p.402.
- 49 Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.25.
- 50 See *ibid.*; Speier, German White-Collar Workers and the Rise of Hitler; Bloch, Erbschaft dieser Zeit (1935), Frankfurt a. M. 1973; Dreyfuss, Beruf und Ideologie der Angestellten, Leipzig 1933.
- 51 Speier, *ibid.*, p.65, p.77.
- 52 Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.81.
- 53 Frevert, Women in German History, p.181; Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.93.
- 54 Speier, German White-Collar Workers, p.84.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p.78.
- 56 *Ibid.*, p.90.
- 57 *Ibid.*, p.88.
- 58 *Ibid.*, pp.88-89.
- 59 *Ibid.*, p.90.
- 60 *Ibid.*, p.93.
- 61 Kracauer, Die Angestellten, pp.81-84.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p.32.
- 63 *Ibid.*, pp.19-24 and pp.73-77.

64 Ibid., p.91.

65 Ibid., p.97.

66 Ibid., p.95.

67 Horkheimer, Adorno, Dialektik der Aufklärung, Frankfurt a. M. 1988, pp.128-176.

68 Peukert, The Weimar Republic, p.157.

## Chapter two

1 Marion Heister, "Winzige Katastrophen." Eine Untersuchung zur Schreibweise von Angestelltenromanen, Frankfurt a. M. 1989, p.10.

2 Ibid., p.90.

3 Christa Jordan, Zwischen Zerstreuung und Berauschung. Die Angestellten in der Erzählprosa am Ende der Weimarer Republik, Frankfurt a. M. 1988. []

4 Volker Klotz, 'Forcierte Prosa', in R. Schönhaar (ed.), Dialog, Berlin 1973, pp.244-271, p.265.

5 Helmut Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit, Stuttgart 1971, pp.142-167.

6 Philip Brady, 'Symphony and Jungle-Noises', in D. Glass et al. (eds.), Berlin. Literary Images of a City, Berlin 1989, p.86.

7 Ibid., p.87.

8 Erhard Schütz, 'Beyond Glittering Reflections of Asphalt' in Kniesche / Brockmann (eds.), Dancing on a Volcano, p.120.

9 Brady argues that Fabian is inseparable from his Berlin environment, with his experience of the city taking many forms ranging from ironic equilibrium to grotesque distance. He concludes that Kästner uses 'his enigmatic observer not simply to portray Berlin but also to explore varieties of distance from it, <sup>↑</sup>varieties which coexist within the reactions of one individual to one city'. Brady, 'Symphony and Jungle-Noises', pp.105-106.

- 10 Knud Wolffram, Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste, p.14 and p.121.
- 11 Michael Bienert, Die Eingebildete Metropole, Stuttgart 1992, pp.129-130; Karl-Heinz Metzger / Ulrich Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, p.155.
- 12 The title was Kästner's second choice. He originally intended it to be Der Gang vor die Hunde, but apparently the publishers did not allow him this: 'Der ursprüngliche Titel, den samt einigen krassen Kapiteln, der Erstverleger nicht zuließ, lautete "Der Gang vor die Hunde". Damit sollte, schon auf dem Buchumschlag, deutlich werden, daß der Roman ein bestimmtes Ziel verfolgte: Er wollte warnen.' Kästner, 'Vorwort des Verfassers' in Fabian, p.9.
- 13 See Volker Klotz, 'Forcierte Prosa' for an excellent analysis of the opening of Fabian, pp. 256-258.
- 14 Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?, p.45.
- 15 I will focus on narrative modes in greater detail in chapter three.
- 16 Fabian, p.44, p.106, p.128.
- 17 In this respect, Doris's attitude is strikingly similar to Sally Bowles's and her 'gold digging' in C. Isherwood's Goodbye to Berlin (1939), London 1987.

### Chapter three

1 One is reminded here of Kracauer's references to the increased importance accorded to personality, 'Berufsfreude', good looks and the need to be 'nett und freundlich' in white-collar work spheres; see p.40 above. In his book, Hans Fallada (Rowohlt, 1963, p.88) Jürgen Manthey notes that Fallada had read Kracauer's Die Angestellten before he started writing Kleiner Mann - Was Nun?. It would, however, be difficult to ascertain to what extent Fallada borrowed directly from Kracauer's observations and I am not aware of any study which addresses this issue. Jürgen Manthey, Hans Fallada, Reinbek bei Hamburg 1963, p.88.



2 See also Helmut Lethen's Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932 for an analysis of Pinneberg's use of commercial language, his lack of solidarity with his colleagues and his flight into the world of the private and the family. Concerning Pinneberg's lack of political action, Lethen argues, 'Die Tiermetaphern, in denen er den Widerstand begreift, zeugen davon, daß seine Aufklärung an ihre Klassengrenze gestoßen ist [...]. Wenn Pinneberg über die "Schinder, die aus Menschen Tiere machen" schimpft, und meint, daß man denen "eine Bombe in den Hintern stecken sollte", so schließt diese Drohung ein, daß er selbst alle Energien aufbieten wird, um nicht zum "Tier" deklassiert zu werden wie die anderen zur "Kriminalität" tendierenden Arbeitslosen, die ihm als die "Bestien des Proletariats" erscheinen'. Helmut Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932, pp.161-162.

In his Literatur der Weimarer Republik, Erhard Schütz gives a more psychoanalytical interpretation of Pinneberg's behaviour. He suggests that Pinneberg is a 'verwöhnter Schwächling' who is permanently 'selbstanklage- und unterwerfungsbereit'. His relationship to Lämmchen is an 'Idylle, in der er infantil, der "Junge" sein darf'. Schütz concludes, 'Und das ist es, was den Roman so erfolgreich gemacht hat: Die unablässig kleinlichen Gekränktheiten, das klägliche Verzagen im Alltag einerseits und die sentimental nördlichen bis grob kitschigen, idyllenwütigen Symbioseanfälle des Autors'. Erhard Schütz, Literatur der Weimarer Republik, Munich 1986, pp.175-176.

Both Schütz's and Lethen's interpretation of Pinneberg's behaviour is less sympathetic than my own. Whatever Pinneberg's failings and shortcomings may be, he is nevertheless a victim who suffers at the hands of those more powerful than he.

3 In the secondary literature on Das Kunstseidene Mädchen, much importance is accorded to Doris's wish to write like film. Volker Klotz,

for example, writes, 'Sich selbst und was ihr begegnet erlebt sie in Bildern und will auch später ihre Aufzeichnungen derart filmisch genießen können'. And Ursula Krechel suggests Doris, 'will eine eigene Dramaturgie ihres Lebens entwerfen und gleichzeitig wie eine Zuschauerin im Kino genießen'. However, scholars rarely ask whether Doris manages to maintain a film-script version of her life throughout the text. It seems to me that although Doris expresses the wish to write like film and, indeed, may occasionally write in a cinematic style, the text ultimately serves as a medium through which she can contemplate, question and attempt to understand her world, and in so doing communicate it to us. See Volker Klotz, 'Forcierte Prosa', p.261; and Ursula Krechel, 'Irmgard Keun: Die Zerstörung der kalten Ordnung' in Literaturmagazin, 10, 1979, pp.103-128, p.112.

4 In several studies on Das Kunstseidene Mädchen scholars have noted that Doris has difficulty in maintaining her insights and in separating the world of advertising and film from the world of her more immediate experiences. But on the whole, scholars fail to address how and why this happens. Christa Jordan, for example, states, 'Die Welt wird mit der aus Film und Werbung bekannten verwechselt. Von der Realität gibt es keine andere Vorstellung mehr als die durch die Kulturindustrie vermittelte'. And Doris Rosenstein claims, 'Bei der Schilderung dieses Aufstiegsversuches stellt die Autorin entscheidende Bedingungen der bürgerlich-kapitalistischen Gesellschaft dar, aus diesen Bedingungen leitet sie zu einem großen Teil das Scheitern ihrer Großstadt-Heldin ab, sie läßt sich jedoch nicht auf einen Antwortversuch ein, der in eine neue Richtung zielen könnte'. Both scholars recognize what is influencing Doris's life but they do not attempt to offer an interpretation of how or why it is that Doris comes to be in this situation. See Christa Jordan, Zwischen Zerstreuung und Berausung, p.87; and Doris Rosenstein,

Irmgard Keun, Das Erzählwerk der dreißiger Jahre, Frankfurt a. M. 1991, p.97.

5 Erhard Schütz suggests that Doris's life would probably continue as it has, 'Der Männertraum von der fröhlich-sauberen, unkomplizierten "Girlnmaschine" ist eben ein Männertraum, dessen Opfer die Frauen sind, die ihn zu erfüllen suchen. Diese hier, läßt der Schluß befürchten, wird nicht anders können, als immer so weiterzumachen, auch wenn sie im letzten Satz ahnt: "Auf den Glanz kommt es (...) vielleicht gar nicht so furchtbar an"'. Erhard Schütz, Literatur der Weimarer Republik, p.169.

6 The narrator once tells us what Cornelia is thinking: "Ich weine schon, und er schlägt mich noch", dachte sie verwundert' (F, 178). One conversation between Fabian's mother and father is depicted in the absence of Fabian (F, 216), and at the end of the novel the narrator tell us that Fabian has drowned (F, 236).

7 Helmut Lethen argues that it is Fabian's antinomies which prevent him from ever undertaking any (political) action which might then free him from his 'Ohnmacht'. He argues that Fabian's 'Berührungsangst vor jeder Theorie, die auf gesellschaftliche Praxis aus ist, ist seine Angst vor dem Verlust seiner Identität als "Moralist"'. He claims Fabian sets up abstract utopias which he then destroys through 'pessimistische Anthropologie'. Fabian tells Labude that there is no point striving for a better society because even then people will still 'sich die Fresse vollhauen!' (F, 54) Lethen points out that in his vision of utopia, Fabian fails to remove the dominant relations of production and that he therefore calls for the continued oppression of the unenlightened masses: 'Im Interesse der Machtelite ist in dieser Argumentation die richtige Einsicht, daß "die Menschen" aggressiv sind, weil sie unterdrückt werden, umgekehrt in die Forderung nach Unterdrückung, um die Aggressivität zu bändigen'. Helmut Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-

1932, p.145.

8 Erhard Schütz suggests that Fabian has learnt his 'Moralkodex' from his mother who, with her expressions such as 'Arbeiten ist gesund', demands 'Gehorsam und Anstand' along with 'Leistung und Erfolg' - something which, Schütz argues, cannot be combined. With Fabian's death at the end of the novel - the result of Fabian's decision to become active - Schütz claims, 'Mit diesem Tod gibt er indirekt der Mutter die Schuld, deren Moralkodex ihn in Handlungsunfähigkeit und die unfähige Handlung getrieben hat. Die Kapitalüberschrift belehrt die Leser über die Rebellion: "Lernt schwimmen!" Uebersetzt: - Werdet selbständig'. Erhard Schütz, Literatur der Weimarer Republik, pp.180-182.

#### Chapter four

1 As mentioned in the introduction, little attention has been given to the depiction of the spaces of the city. I will, therefore, make little reference to secondary literature in this chapter.

2 Helmut Lethen, however, makes the point that although naked, the people in the swimming pool remain 'Wirtschaftssubjekte'; the Jewish woman with whom Pinneberg speaks tells him she has been advised to join the club in order to make business contacts. Helmut Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932, p.164.

3 We can again draw parallels here between the novels and Kracauer's Die Angestellten. Kracauer writes: "'Warum die Leute so viel in Lokale gehen?', meint ein mir bekannter Angestellter, "doch wohl deshalb, weil es zu Hause elend ist und sie am Glanz teilhaben wollen.'" Kracauer, Die Angestellten, p.91.

4 V. Klotz; 'Forcierte Prosa', p.256.

5 For a similar interpretation of this passage, see Michael Bienert, Die Eingebildete Metropole, pp.129-130.

6 Interestingly, Volker Klotz offers a very different reading of this passage. In his 'Forcierte Prosa', he cites the section in which Doris walks past the Gedächtniskirche and along the Tauentzienstraße but he ends his quotation before Doris is addressed as 'mein Kind' by the 'Besserer'. Klotz suggests this moment is a very happy one for Doris: 'In Großaufnahme erlebt sie nicht nur ihren ganzen Körper, wie sie da durch die Tauentzienstraße schlendert, auch ihre Körperteile: Kniekehle, Rücken. Und, gleichfalls erlebnisgeschult durchs Kino, werden ihr entsprechend den Einzelphasen einer Filmsequenz die Einzelphasen der eigenen Bewegung bewußt und damit zum Anlaß erkennenden Vergnügens [...] Rar, wie gesagt, sind diese Glücksmomente, in denen Doris sich derart der eigenen Person vergewissert'. With Doris's anxious awareness of prostitutes and prostitution immediately before and after this section, I would suggest that Klotz's interpretation is misleading. Volker Klotz, 'Forcierte Prosa', p.266.

7 For a detailed and illuminating analysis of this section, see Volker Klotz, 'Forcierte Prosa', pp.257-259.

## Chapter five

1 Curt Moreck, Führer durch das "lasterhafte" Berlin (Leipzig 1931), facsimile of the first edition, divan, Berlin 1987. All quotations are taken from this edition with page numbers given in brackets.

2 For an illuminating discussion of these phenomena, see Erhard Schütz, 'Beyond Glittering Reflections of Asphalt'.

3 I think the narrator definitely is a 'he' for reasons that will become apparent in the following discussion.

4 The artists featured and the number of their illustrations in the guide are as follows:

Paul Kamm

20

F. Hilf

1

Jeanne Mammen	14	Kain	1
Christian Schad	10	W. Krain	1
Benari	2	Otto Linnekogel	1
George Grosz	2	Hans Leu	1
Heinrich Zille	2	F. Meisel	1
anonymous	2	Melchoir	1
Christophe	1	Hans Reinhard	1
Duperrex	1	Matthias Schultz	1
Alois Florath	1	Kurt Wirth	1
Imre Goth	1		

5 To put this figure in some perspective, I was told on a tour of 'Das schwule Leben der zwanziger und dreissiger Jahre', organised by the KulturAmtBerlin in 1993, that there are currently approximately 100 gay bars and clubs in the city.

6 For further literature on venues see especially Karl-Heinz Metzger / Ulrich Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, and Knud Wolfram, Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste.

7 Jeder Einmal in Berlin (Offizieller Führer für Berlin und Umgebung) is also a fascinating publication in its own right. A glance at the chapter headings of the guide reveals the city's desire to promote a modern and cosmopolitan image of Berlin. There are, for example, contributions from 'Ausländer in Berlin über Berlin' (p.16), and 'Der Ingenieur in Berlin' (p.92) along with chapters on 'Berlin als Wirtschaftsstadt' (p.69), 'Berlin in Zahlen' (p.29) and 'Berlin als Sport-Stadt' (p.108). For more on the advertising campaign see M. Bienert, Die Eingebildete Metropole, pp.96-103.

8 Here are the passages from the novels:

'Das ist gar kein Lokal, das "Resi", das in der Blumenstraße ist - das ist lauter Farbe und gedrehtes Licht, das ist ein betrunkenener Bauch, der

beleuchtet wird, es ist eine ganz enorme Kunst. So was gibt es nur in Berlin. Man denke sich alles rot und schillernd noch und noch und immer mehr und wahnsinnig raffiniert. Und Weintrauben leuchten, und auf Stangen sind große Terrinen, aber der Deckel wird von einem Zwischenraum getrennt - und es glitzert, und wasserartige Fontänen geben so ganz feinsinnige Strahlen. Aber das Publikum ist keine höchste Klasse. Es gibt Rohrpost - da schreibt man Briefe und tut sie in Röhren und in ein Wandloch, da kommt ein Zugwind und weht sie zum Bestimmungsort. Ich war von der ungeheuren Aufmachung wie berauscht.[...] Ich friere und geh jetzt schlafen. Aber das "Resi" war so schön - das ist die Liebe der Matrosen - jawohl Herr Kapitän, jawohl Herr Kapi - gute Nacht, ihr herrlichen bunten Farben.' (DKM, 58-59)

' - und drüben das Romanische Café mit den längeren Haaren von Männern! Und da verkehrte ich einmal Abend für Abend mit einer geistigen Elite, was eine Auswahl ist, was jede gebildete Individualität aus Kreuzworträtseln weiß. Und wir bildeten alle einen Kreis. [...] Da legte ich meinen Kopf weit zurück, während sie reden, und werfe Blicke in die Luft und höre nicht zu. Und plötzlich presse ich meinen Mund ganz eng zusammen und dann leger auf, blase Rauch durch die Nase und werfe voll Gleichgültigkeit und eiskalt ein einzelnes Fremdwort in sie hinein. Weil nämlich alle einzelnen Fremdworte in Gespräche geworfen ein Symbol sind, und ein Symbol ist das, was immer paßt. Wenn man es mit Sicherheit macht, schämt sich jeder, es nicht zu verstehen. Bei einem Symbol kann einem gar nichts passieren. Aber ich habe sie dann nachher sehr über bekommen.' (DKM, 66-67)

'In Haupts Sälen war, wie an jedem Abend, Strandfest. Punkt zehn Uhr stiegen, im Gänsemarsch, zwei Dutzend Straßenmädchen vor der Empore

herunter. Sie trugen bunte Badetrikotts, gerollte Wadestrumpfe und Schuhe mit hohen Absätzen. Wer sich derartig auszog, hatte freien Zutritt zum Lokal und erhielt einen Schnaps gratis. Diese Vergünstigungen waren in Angetracht des darniederliegenden Gewerbes nicht zu verachten. Die Mädchen tanzten anfangs miteinander, damit die Männer etwas zu sehen hatten.

Das von Musik begleitete Rundpanorama weiblicher Fülle erregte die an der Barriere drängenden Kommis, Buchhalter und Einzelhändler. Der Tanzmeister schrie, man möge sich auf die Damen stürzen, und das geschah. Die dicksten und frechtesten Frauenzimmer wurden bevorzugt. Die Weinnischen waren schnell besetzt. Die Barfräuleins hantierten mit dem Lippenstift. Die Orgie konnte beginnen.  
[...]

Unten im Saal wurde die schönste Figur prämiert. Die Frauen drehten sich mit ihren knappen Badeanzügen im Kreis, spreizten die Arme und die Finger und lächelten verführerisch. Die Männer standen wie auf dem Viehmarkt.' (F, 52-56)

'Im Vaterland sind toll elegante Treppen wie in einem Schloß mit Gräfinnen, die schreiten - und Landschaften und fremde Länder und türkisch und Wien und Lauben von Wien und die kolossale Landschaft eines Rheines mit Naturschauspielen, denn sie machen einen Donner. [...] Es ist doch schön und wunderbar, welche Stadt hat denn sowas noch, wo sich Räume an Räume reihen und die Flucht eines Palastes bilden?' (DKM, 74)

9 Other clubs, such as Femina, felt it necessary to censor letters sent via the 'Rohrpost'. On Femina Moreck writes: 'Vereinzelt sollen auch junge und ältere Raffaele sich einer nicht mißzuverstehenden Bildsprache bedient haben, was zur Konfiszierung durch die Zensur führte' (pp.126-



128).

10 Jeanne Mammen's work is the second best represented in the Führer after Paul Kamm's. As a woman artist, Mammen was largely forgotten until the 1970s. Since then her work has received greater recognition resulting in her presence in a number of exhibitions on Berlin art. Many references have been made to the similarity of the subject matter of her work and Irmgard Keun's novels. Since her work is not well known beyond a fairly specific art audience, it is perhaps worth saying a little more about it here, particularly with reference to images showing people in Berlin's night life. Towards the end of the 1920s Mammen was publishing work fairly regularly in journals such as Ulk, Uhu, Jugend and Simplicissimus. Her pictures often appeared with satirical captions guiding their reading. In these works there is a preoccupation<sup>a</sup> with social appearance and the attempts to disguise social status or social background. For example her 'Berliner Straßenszene' (fig. 38), which was published in Ulk in 1929, appeared with the caption, 'Hier scheint man sich nur für Mulattinnen zu interessieren. - Schade, daß ich meine Gelbsucht nicht mehr habe'. The picture shows a busy street scene with a group of people sitting outside a café and crowds moving past. Light falls out onto the street from the café lighting up the outside tables like a stage. The passers-by, whose faces are also flood-lit, look into the café while the figures at the tables look at the passers-by. All the women are dressed similarly in their hats and coats with fur trims. They all too have stylized faces. The only hint of individuality is revealed in body shapes with the presence of fat and thin figures and the juxtaposition of slouching compartments (the woman in the middle of the picture) with highly self-conscious accentuated ones (the woman in the bottom right corner). The gaze directed into and away from the café creates a criss-cross effect of exchange between the

two groups; both groups seem aware that they are both looking and being looked at. This is emphasized in the caption as its speaker notices what is receiving attention and wishes she/(he?) still had jaundice in order also to be a recipient of such attention. The element of exchange is further emphasized in the fact that it is unclear who is speaking the caption, presumably it could be any of the (female) figures.

In 'Er und Sie' (fig. 39) , published in Simplicissimus in 1930, a couple are shown standing at the bottom of a stair<sub>case</sub> with a number of people in the background. The couple are dressed stylishly and, with their assured stance and hard, somewhat brutal gaze, exude wealth and confidence. However, the caption reads; "Keinen Mann hat se und keinen Freund hat se, was hat se denn nur?" - "Zu dicke Beene hat se". The rather cruel observation of the couple spoken in local Berlin dialect exposes the couple as either parvenus or part of the *nouveaux riches*<sup>es</sup> who are obsessed with surface appearances.

A more sympathetic picture appeared in Ulk in 1928 titled 'Börse' with the caption 'Tut mir leid, mein Kind. Thermometer-Ag fallen dauernd, der Patentmieder-Konzern liegt schief. Wir müssen unsere Fusion lösen und uns wieder den freien Verkehr widmen' (fig. 40). The picture shows a couple in front of a shop window or 'Litfaßsäule'. Our attention is drawn to the young woman ■ in the centre of the picture plane. Although the man is in the background, he is, nevertheless, larger and, through the use of black, heavier than the girl whose presence seems altogether flimsy. Both figures conform to types; the man has the cigar and newspaper associated with businessmen and the young woman is clothed fashionably with her coat with fur trim, fashionable hair style and stylized face. That the couple have just split up is emphasized stylistically in the transparent black line between the two bodies dividing them and the different directions of the

couple's gaze. The face of the man is indifferent as he looks on while the girl's sad face looks down. The use of technological and mechanical words in the caption, such as 'Fusion' and 'Verkehr' and the word 'neu' in the picture, play on notions of circulation and exchange. See bibliography for references to the secondary literature on Mammen.

11 See also Franz Hessel's description of Haus Vaterland in his Spazieren in Berlin (1929), Berlin (East) 1979, pp.52-54. For more on the history of Haus Vaterland see Geschichtslandschaft Berlin. Orte und Ereignisse, Bd. 2, Tiergarten, Vom Brandenburger Tor zum Zoo. Berlin 1989, p.198.

#### Chapter six

1 See Volker Klotz, 'Forcierte Prosa', pp.244-271; Helmut Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit, pp.142-167.

2 See bibliography for references to catalogues on *Neue Sachlichkeit* and articles written by the art historian Wieland Schmied.

3 See Jost Hermand, 'Neue Sachlichkeit: Ideology, Lifestyle, or Artistic Movement?' in Kniesche / Brockmann (eds.), Dancing on a Volcano, pp.57-67.

4 See, for example, Horst Denkler, 'Sache und Stil. Die Theorie der "Neuen Sachlichkeit" und ihre Auswirkungen auf Kunst und Dichtung' in Wirkendes Wort 18, 1968, pp.167-185; Karl Prümm, 'Neue Sachlichkeit. Anmerkungen zum Gebrauch des Begriffs in neueren literaturwissenschaftlichen Publikationen' in Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie, 91, 1972, pp.606-616; Jost Hermand, 'Unity within Diversity? The history of the concept *Neue Sachlichkeit*' in K. Bullivant (ed.), Culture and Society in the Weimar Republic, Manchester 1977, pp.166-182.

5 Gustav Hartlaub quoted in F. Schmalenbach, Die Malerei der "Neuen Sachlichkeit", Berlin 1973, p.74.

- 6 Ibid. p.74.
- 7 Simmel, ('Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben' 1903) quoted in Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit, p.9.
- 8 Carl Schmitt, (Politische Theologie 1922), quoted in Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit, p.13.
- 9 A. Messer ('Sachlichkeit als Ziel der Volks- und Jugenderziehung' in Württembergische Schulwarte 1932); E. Hermann ('Sachlichkeit als ethischer Grundbegriff' in Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie 1927); J.M. Verweyen ('Zur Charakterologie der Sachlichkeit' in Deutsche akademische Rundschau 1927). All cited in Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit, p.11.
- 10 See footnotes 1, 2, and 4.
- 11 Volker Klotz, 'Forcierte Prosa', p.260.
- 12 Ibid., p.264.
- 13 Helmut Lethen, Neue Sachlichkeit, pp.142-167.
- 14 See, for example, the recently published Dancing on a Volcano. Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic, Thomas W. Kniesche and Stephen Brockmann (eds.); and The Weimar Republic Sourcebook, Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (eds.), Berkeley 1994. See also more generally the whole series on 'Weimar and Now: German Cultural Criticism' to which the Sourcebook belongs. The renewed interest in the continuities of Weimar history was already underway before 1989, the most influential text being Detlev Peukert's The Weimar Republic.
- 15 Jost Hermand, 'Neue Sachlichkeit: Ideology, Lifestyle, or Artistic Movement?', pp.57-67.
- 16 Ibid., p.57
- 17 Ibid., p.59. Hermand also uses the terms Fordism and White Socialism in connection with this process.
- 18 Ibid., p.61.

- 19 See for example John Willett, The New Sobriety, pp.124-132; and Karl-Heinz Hüter, Architektur in Berlin, 1900-1933, Dresden 1987.
- 20 Adolf Behne, ('Von der Sachlichkeit' in Bruno Taut, Bauten und Pläne, Berlin 1927, p.22) in Eine Stunde Architektur (1928), Berlin 1984, p.43. Also in Schrader/Schebera (eds.) Kunstmropole Berlin 1918-1933, p.146.
- 21 Hans Poelzig, (Der Architekt, 1931) in Schrader/Schebera (eds.), Kunstmropole Berlin 1918-1933, pp.148-149
- 22 Erich Mendelsohn, (Der Schöpferische Sinn der Krise, 1932) in Schrader/Schebera (eds.), Kunstmropole Berlin 1918-1933, p.149.
- 23 A. Behne / M. Wagner (eds.), Das Neue Berlin, 8, 1929, p.161.
- 24 Albert Sigrüst, (Das Buch vom Bauen, 1930) in Schrader/Schebera (eds.), Kunstmropole Berlin 1918-1933, p.151.
- 25 Erwin Redelob, (in E. M. Hajos/L.Zahn, Berliner Architektur der Nachkriegszeit, 1928) in Schrader/Schebera (eds.), Kunstmropole Berlin 1918-1933, p.155.
- 26 Hüter, Architektur in Berlin 1900-1933, p.326-329.
- 27 See Karl-Heinz Metzger / Ulrich Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, p.144.
- 28 Karl Böttcher, 'Vorschlag zu einer Geschäftsstraße' in A. Behne / M. Wagner (eds.), Das Neue Berlin, 8, 1929, pp.161-162.
- 29 'Deutsche Bauzeitung' (1926) quoted in Metzger / Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, p.148.
- 30 For more on the Capitol, the Firma Grünfeld, the Uhlandeck and other commercial buildings see Metzger / Dunker Der Kurfürstendamm, pp.101-156
- 31 Heinrich Grünfeld, quoted in Metzger / Dunker, Der Kurfürstendamm, p.112.
- 32 For an illuminating commentary on advertisements and the structure of commercial *Neue Sachlichkeit* buildings see Michael Bienert, Die Eingebildete Metropole, pp.111-118; and Karl-Heinz Hüter, Architektur in Berlin 1900-1933, pp.321-335.

- 33 Adolf Behne, 'Kunstaussstellung Berlin' in Das Neue Berlin 8, 1929, pp.150-152.
- 34 Ibid., p.150.
- 35 Ibid., pp.150-151.
- 36 Ibid., pp.151-152.
- 37 Siegfried Kracauer, 'Straße ohne Erinnerung', (Frankfurter Zeitung 16.12.1932) reproduced in Kracauer, Straßen in Berlin und anderswo, Berlin 1987, pp.15-18.
- 38 Ibid., p.15.
- 39 Ibid., p.16.
- 40 Ibid., pp.17-18.

#### **Conclusion**

- 1 A. Behne, 'Kunstaussstellung Berlin', p.152.

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