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Berlin Transfer – The City on Roads and Rails

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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS
Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures

Berlin Transfer – The City on Roads and Rails
by
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A thesis presented to the
Graduate School of Arts & Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Introduction: Movement in Spaces – Spaces in Movement: Representing Urban Mobility

Literatur läßt das Mobile des Wissens hervortreten, ja sorgt als Mobile des Wissens dafür, daß die unterschiedlichsten Wissensbereiche und Wissenssegmente einer, mehrerer, vieler Gemeinschaften und Gesellschaften ständig in neuer Weise experimentell aufeinander bezogen werden. Dieser ununterbrochene Transfer beinhaltet notwendig Transformationen: Die kulturelle Verdichtung, welche Literatur vornimmt, impliziert stets mehr als bloße Verflechtung – und eröffnet dergestalt Spielräume, die sich einer Vernichtung von Kultur und von Kulturen widersetzen. (Ette 2012:5)

In the immediate vicinity to Potsdamer Platz you find one of Berlin's largest traffic junctions, the so called "Gleisdreieck" (the railway triangle). Ever since its inauguration in 1902, the *Gleisdreieck* has been one of the largest transportation hubs in Berlin and is considered, even to this day, an essential experiential realm (Erfahrungsraum) of the modern era (Cf. Müller 2006:155). The convergence of subways and electric trams alongside freight and passenger traffic upon this junction, encompassing platforms both above and below ground, comes to embody the new temporal and spatial dimensions of a modern city. Moreover, the metonymy of a major traffic and transportation hub serves as a well-defined model for an altered perception of human coexistence in, and geographical understanding of, the 20th century city.

Although *Gleisdreieck* is not the main focus of my study, its impact on the spatialization of 1900s Berlin provides a solid point of reference in the study of mobility in the modern age. In the same way that the infrastructure of a city has to adapt to the increasing demand for efficient transportation and the ever increasing pace of life in the city, the human city dweller has to be able to navigate in the jungle of converging trajectories and transportation networks in order to successfully operate within their everyday habitat. This causality between and interdependence of networks of transportation, coupled with the mobility of urban subjects, raises the question of

whether we can engage with and understand a city without incorporating the moving vectors, or lines, that constitute the space.¹ In this thesis, I stress the impact of increasing movement in the city and its critical role in textual works and representations of the city of prominent writers and cultural critics of the 20th century. Following this train of thought, the aim of this study is to explore the nexus between modes of transportation in the city and narratives centered around early 20th century metropolitan Berlin. I work under the supposition that the artistic and critical engagement with urban transportation and rapid communication in works of literature and cinema can be viewed as a project of the modern. This project showcases the transformation of the city into a complex network of moving trajectories that introduces a conceptualization of space as a moving, non-stationary, entity that alters and shapes how urban subjects understand their surroundings. Shaping all aspects of urban life, the increase in modes of transportation constitutes an integral role in textual representations of the city as an organizing structure and comes to constitute a new framework of viewing and perceiving the city for its inhabitants.

New modes of transportation, accelerated mobility owing to electrified vehicles, and the spatial expansion of the city's transportation network to the underground, I argue, manifest in texts and provide the basis for an innovative turn in human experience and imagination of the metropolis. This altered understanding of the city owing to modern transportation has ramifications for the city that go beyond the walls of the actual vehicles. The complex networks and transportation routes within the city contribute to the mapping and remapping of the city within the context of 20th century Berlin. The key to understanding the spatial frames and layers of the diegetic world lies hidden within the ways in which the urban space is textually constructed. Some

¹ For further reference on the topic of vectors and movement in literature, see Ette 2012: "Die längst beobachtbare fundamentale Vektorisierung aller Raum-Bezüge muß literatur- wie kulturtheoretische Konsequenzen haben, die uns erlauben, die unterschiedlichen Phasen beschleunigter Globalisierung, aber auch die zwischengeschalteten Phasen globaler oder regionaler Entschleunigung, besser und präziser zu fassen und zu erfassen." (Ette 2012:30)

concrete examples of this phenomenon include how the experience of the daily commute functions as a conduit to narrate what it means to come to terms with an ever-expanding modern Berlin as well as how the subway network's intrusion into the dark underground challenges the way in which experience of urban travel and urban spaces are rendered in texts.

In the following three chapters, I set out to explore the implications of modern modes of transportation for the chosen narratives. The first chapter is an analysis of Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927). The omnipresence of cars, trams and trains in Ruttmann's film creates the image of a city that moves to the beat of traffic. Ranging from the daily commute to privately owned cars, the vehicles of the city enable movements and mandate the ways in which the city subject navigates its habitat. Thus, the daily lives of the city's inhabitants appear to move along predetermined tracks and roads just like cars, trams and trains. Ruttmann, however, challenges this linearity by inserting motifs of spinning circles and spirals to portray the tensions that arise between the stability of the city and the volatility of the human mind. Ruttmann first and foremost concentrates on the masses of the city and his portrayal of the individual only functions as an anomaly that foregrounds the importance of adapting to the urban masses, whose movements stand in a symbiotic relationship with the city's various modes of transportation.

Contrary to Ruttmann, Alfred Döblin focuses on the individual response to city traffic. In *Berlin Alexanderplatz, Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf* (1929), Döblin tells the story of the newly released convict, Franz Biberkopf, who has trouble adapting to the rules and regulations that modern transportation networks impose on the city. As a result of Franz's alienation from the city and its rules, he goes insane and ends up in a mental home. Franz's transformation into a functioning urban subject is finally consummated when he comes to terms with the spatial layout of Berlin, which is a function of the transportation networks within. In the light of these events, I

argue that Döblin's story testifies to the importance of understanding the transportation networks of the city in order for Franz Biberkopf to be able to lead a successful life within it.

In the last chapter of the thesis, I shift my focus away from the roads and tracks on the city surface and move down to the city's interior, namely to the Berlin subway system. The text basis for this chapter consists of excerpts from early 20th century writers and critics such as Kurt Tucholsky, Egon Kisch and Franz Kafka. Drawing on their textual rendition of the experience of travelling underground, I analyze and discuss the implications of the intrusion into the city's interior. The experience of travelling underground, based on the chosen texts, is characterized by a lack of vision. In an attempt to fill this void in human perception, otherworldly metaphors are employed in the narrative in order to explicate the dark, imperceptible spaces between stations. Thus, I argue, the experience of travelling with the U-Bahn is elevated to a fantastical realm. This realm departs from the image of effective, high-velocity travel that has thus far been the leading analytical concept in discussions of the intersections between the human experience and modern modes of transportation.

Owing to the multiplicity of new spaces and modes of transportation at the turn of the 20th century, electric trams, subways, and cars possess inherently disparate albeit indispensable significance in scholarly debate on the rise of the German *Großstadt*. On the one hand, the streamlined and predictable trajectories of urban transportation networks provide the city dwellers' everyday life with a sense of stability, comfort, and structure. They simultaneously mark anyone unable to adapt to the new modes of transportation as the "stranger" or the "other," who is unable to adapt to the rhythmic movement of the urban masses. Thus, by comparing the experience of the individual with that of the collective, the importance of mastering and understanding the "art" of transportation comes to the foreground. Furthermore, I claim that in order to "conquer" any given

geographical space, the spatial layout has to be empirically verifiable, which in the city can only be accomplished by understanding the transportation networks within.

My working concept of “space” relies heavily on German cultural critic Wolfgang Kaschuba’s definition.² Kaschuba claims that the ways in which urban subjects position themselves and behave within urban spaces provide insight into how the city is perceived by its inhabitants whilst simultaneously informing us about temporal, social, and communicative practices of the time. Adapting this framework of space appears the most fruitful to my study in grappling with the ways in which transportation alters how texts construct space. The spatial planning (Raumordnung) of the city that grows out of the transportation networks of the young city of Berlin might at first glance appear natural to us, even though it is a fundamentally cultural and manmade construct. Even since the early 20th century, this construct has legitimately and authoritatively governed the experience and perception of city spaces by temporal and spatial means such as timetables and rails. The knowledge and mastery of this system is important tacit knowledge, or “street-smarts”, for any city resident, but the acquisition of this mastery, as I will stress throughout the chapters, is not taken for granted by writers and cultural commentators of the time.

This introduction discusses topics and theories of mobility, transportation, and the city in order to provide an initial discussion of historical and theoretical aspects of the nexus between metropolis, transportation, and the urban subject. The three chapters of the thesis focus on different modes of transportation and textual media, from the fragmentary portrayal in Ruttmann’s *Berlin, die Sinfonie der Großstadt* to Tucholsky’s mythical allusions in his descriptions of the Berlin

² Kaschuba defines space as following: “[Raum] ein kulturelles Koordinatensystem gesellschaftlichen Lebens ... [das uns] ganz konkrete räumliche, zeitliche und soziale Sichthorizonte anbieten, in die sich unsere Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen schlüssig einordnen lassen, in denen sich aber auch unser Denken, Kommunizieren und Handeln als soziale Praxis vollzieht.” (Kaschuba 2004:13)

subway and Döblin's story of hopeless Franz Biberkopf who repeatedly fails at conquering the city. Especially *Sinfonie* and *Berlin Alexanderplatz* have for a long time been part of the 20th century forefront of scholarly interest on the city. The role of transportation in the aforementioned works have, however, been neglected. In these thematically varying stories, modes of transportation function as spaces of public display and heavily engage the human senses, both in the case of readers and fictional characters in the diegesis. In other words, the cramped spaces place emphasis on the visual not only on the level of the diegesis but also in the actual technique of narration. Ruttmann's cinematic montage and Döblin's literary montage rely heavily on the notion of moving vehicles and transportation networks in order to tell the story of modern Berlin.

By looking at narratives of transportation in the city, the story of a "mobile" urban space emerges. In my reading of mobility in the city, modes of transportation and transportation networks represent an awareness and knowledge of life in a modern age. The functional role of connecting various locations and people in economically and socially disparate quarters, changes the way in which people coexist and interact. The emergence of public transportation marks a historical shift in human interaction. For the first time, people living under diverse social and economical conditions are forced together in the cramped space of a vehicle. Even the average citizen is for the first time forced to be confronted with the diversity of a city.³ While my focus is not so much on the confrontational encounter between social classes in the city, it is an important historical factor to acknowledge. My aim is targeted toward looking into the conceptualization and descriptions of the very space in which such encounters occur. Leading questions in my reading

³ For elaborate discussions on this phenomenon in 20th century Tokyo, see: Freedman, Alisa, and Yasunari Kawabata. *Tokyo in Transit: Japanese Culture on the Rails and Road*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2011.

And for the New York context, see: Brooks, Michael W. *Subway City: Riding the Trains, Reading New York*. New Brunswick, N.J: Rutgers University Press, 1997. Print.

rather grapple with the descriptions of the spaces and how transportation networks function as narrative devices. A deeper understanding of this experience, I argue, can provide further insight into one of the most prominent experiment fields of the modern age, the city and the urban subject.

The urban experience of the modern age of technology and modernity has traditionally been analyzed based on the human perceptual system. In "The Metropolis and Mental Life," originally published in 1903, Simmel comments on the emergence of ephemeral and impersonal urban encounters beginning in the early 20th century and the city's effects on the individual mind. According to Simmel, the deepest problem of modern life is the individual's struggle to maintain its independence and individuality against the weight of the external urban culture. The city creates psychological conditions of experience and stimulation that are based on rapidly shifting images that bombard our senses. This bombardment, Simmel maintains, leads the "metropolitan type" to react rationally instead of emotionally to situations, in order to protect itself from the domination of the volatile nature of the metropolis. In a more recent study, Sennet describes the shift of public spaces from intimate social contact into a realm in which experience is dictated by surface appearance (1977). The rise of a metropolitan space provided a space for people to make themselves public, but people began to see social interactions within this space as inauthentic. In a similar vein, Marxist critiques focus on commodity fetishism and its reification in interpersonal relations that favor visual exchange over tactile stimulation. Moreover, in relation to modern temporality, Rosa delineates his theory of social acceleration and traces its roots back to technological progress as an answer to the problem of time scarcity (Cf. Rosa 2010:26). According to Rosa, technology is not the *cause* of the problem, but an *answer* to a problem that stems from human nature and are logical consequences of a competitive capitalist market system. Each of these discussants of urban spatial and temporal transformation identified new patterns emerging

in the social, economic, infrastructural and political relationships, and how these newly acquired dynamics developed the city and its dwellers to take on a new gestalt to embody the reigning social and economical conditions of its time.

Each century has had its characteristic city or cities to act as pioneers and trendsetters for its contemporary day and age. Although Walter Benjamin dubbed Paris the capital of the 19th century, he was unable to make a claim for any other city as its 20th century successor. Whether to be counted as a capital or not, Berlin develops as an object of analytic, literary and cinematic attention over the course of the late 19th and 20th century. Beginning in the city's Weimar period, Berlin – along with New York – becomes “the prime case for new urban discourses at large: a city coming late to modernity but embracing it with spectacular effect” (Webber 2008:11). Berlin is nowadays referred to as a modern metropolis in the 20th and 21st century context. The rise of the modern metropolis has been the main research object in a wide array of studies over the last century. For the ancient Greeks, the Metropolis was the mother city of a civilization that stimulated the formation of smaller cities in the close vicinity. The Metropolis and the smaller surrounding cities would gradually grow into a complex network of economical and cultural exchange. One might thus be safe, or wise, to consider the importance of transportation networks in the modern metropolis to facilitate these economical and cultural exchanges both within the city itself, and with the rural areas connected to the city through transportation.⁴ Contemporary scholars still consider the city the “dominant organizing structure of modern culture” (Webber 2008:1) and it is

⁴ However, the term “metropolis” did not enter into debate on European cities until the late 19th century. Initially the term was applied to London, Paris and Tokyo, all three of which were considered to be central locations with superior economical and cultural functions that drew the attention of surrounding cities and countries and embodied what was perceived as an urban lifestyle (Cf. Bendikat 1999). Thus, in the beginning phases of the industrial urbanization phase, the term “Metropolis” was generally only applicable to a few world cities that the city architect Theodor Fischer in 1910 described as the real “Großstädte” (Joll 1993).

thus a key place of interest for disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. My study enters into discussion with scholarship on the city on a number of different points.

Images and textual representations of transportation and the networks along which they operate, I argue, highlight traditional urban issues such as control and disorder, inclusion and exclusion, mapping and disorientation. Particularly in the context of Germany, Berlin provides a solid basis for research on the interplay between urban environment and human subject. This does not come as a surprise considering the fact that by the end of 1925 every third German citizen lived in a *Großstadt*. Philosophers, artists and writers among many others have, and still are, dedicating their art and craft to an attempt to portray and understand the urban experience. Theories of alienation, acceleration, class and post-humanist subject have all made attempts to explain the effects of the modern city and the grip it holds on our urban imagination. In a recent literary study on the field of urbanity in the 1900's, Sabine Hake argues that ever since the creation of Greater Berlin around 1920, Berlin has defined urban imagination through architecture (Hake, 2008:1-19). In "Topographies of Class," she sets out to uncover the "symbolic function of public spaces and urban spaces ... as spatial manifestations of social conflict and change" (Ibid: 1). Following this study, the contribution I wish to offer to the scholarship on the discourse of modernity, modernism and the 20th century city concerns the manifestation of urban culture and city life revolving around public intercity transportation. I wish to further explore how modes of public transportation function as a narrative device to describe the experience and perception of the modern metropolis and shape the urban imagination. I suggest that the emergence and propagation of transportation vehicles and hubs in Berlin during the first half of the 20th century contribute to the development of transportation spaces as new narrative spaces that can inform new readings of canonical and under-represented texts alike.

In the German context, the notion of fast paced, long- and short distance travel had been present every since the construction of the German railway in 1835. At the end of the 19th century, the bicycle was on the upswing and celebrated as inexpensive and worthwhile for individual movement and the emergence of the personal car arranged for a revolution in traffic and personal transportation. Following the age of steam, the engine enabled accelerated, privatized and flexible movement. Based on the understanding that the modern city exposes its inhabitants to new forms of risk and accident through fast paced mobility, the term *shock* is introduced in 1870 in medical discourse in the context of traumatized victims of railway accidents (Killen 2006:12). Shortly thereafter, in the 1880's, medical specialists had begun in greater frequency to encounter patients suffering from neurasthenia, which toward the latter part of the 19th century was a characteristic “Zeichen der Zeit und Folge der technischen Zivilisation” (Borscheid, 2004:169). Popular magazines of the time quickly placed the blame on “die Elektrizität, die wir uns so sehr unterthan gemacht haben“ (Messerli quoted in Borscheid 2004:169) and it soon became evident that the ever increasing acceleration of everyday life had a negative impact on people's nerves. The newly “invented” velocity of the city impacted all aspects of human life, from the telephone at home to new machines at work, and, most certainly, modes of transportation. Moreover, the propagation of the concepts of speed and distance in literary debate were first made available through technological innovations of the 19th century, such as the telescope and the railway (Cf. Kaschuba 2004:17).

Never has the range of available modes of transportation in Berlin been as wide as in 1900 (Cf. Steinhorst 2006). At the time, traditional horse busses still pulled carriages through the city, but for those who were in a rush, motorized busses, the first electrical trams, and the subway became available. Alternative modes of transportation in the city started to come into their own

and quickly became an essential part of the urban lifestyle. Furthermore, elevators and escalators offered mobility inside buildings and exploited vertical dimensions as route of transportation. The rapid progress of means of communication and transportation, however, leads to overstimuli of the senses and, as some argue, a “spiritual flattening” (geistige Verflachung). In an article from 1900 in the weekly journal “Die Gartenlaube,” Paul Dehn discusses the impact of transportation and traffic on inter-human relations and states that:

Der gesellschaftliche Verkehr wird hurtiger, knapper. Man unterhält sich am liebsten in rascher Wechselrede mit kurzen Geschichten, man schreibt nicht mehr lange Briefe, man bevorzugt Postkarten, geht an Tiefe verloren. Quantitativ und technisch haben wir große Fortschritte gemacht, nicht aber in gleichem Maße qualitative und geistig. Wenn die Verkehrsmittel die Beine der Gesellschaft sind, dann haben sie sich unverhältnismäßig entwickelt. (Dehn 1900)

In general, however, the acceleration of traffic and communications coupled with the consequential contraction and maneuverability of space was considered a major technical and economical symbol of progress. In the final years of the 19th century, the word velocity (*Schnelligkeit*) had positive connotations, and pace (*Tempo*) was understood as an “angemessenes Zeitmaß.” (Cf Borscheid 2004:10). However, during the 20th century, a semantic shift occurred. The terms *Schnelligkeit* and *Tempo* now bore a negative connotation for rapid movement and this “haben die Menschen geschaffen – Kaufleute, Militärs, Industrielle, Ingenieure, Informatiker” (Ibid. 7). On the basis of this semantic shift, we can discern that the general mindset in regard to fast movement had been fundamentally altered as new modes of transportation spread in the city. The interpretations of the altered and internalized acceleration principle, or the *Tempo-Virus* as Borscheid calls it, vacillate between hortatory virus and beneficial bringer of good luck. The more

critical approaches claim that, at the turn of the century, the “Katerstimmung des Fin de Siècle” (Messerli 1995:220) kicked in. In the backdrop of this critical approach, modern means of transportation and mobility, combined with the high pace of the urban working environment, were made responsible for people’s deteriorating mental and physical health, as well as for societal progress and economic efficiency.

The development of a connection between time management and the newly developed modes of transportation in a German context also started as early as 19th century. The internalization of a bourgeoisie concept of time were omnipresent in popular reading materials in the later half of the 19th century, and permeated by the three concepts “Zeitsparen, Zeitplanung und Pünktlichkeit” (Messerli 1995:227) preconditioned and came to shape everyday life in the city. Society had to internalize these concepts in order to cope with an increasingly complex economy and working environment. Beginning already at the end of the 19th century, the bourgeois industrial-capitalistic enforcement of time (*Zeitordnung*) swept across Europe, visible in the form of clocks, calendars, the division of labor and, of course, modes of transportation and traffic. Furthermore, the new “commerce,” foregrounding and focusing on time efficiency, gave rise to the “Fahr-Plan” (Cf. Kaschuba 2004:39-50). By means of timetables, city planners first try their hand at coordinating movement in space with a standardized notion of time.

The existence of the city requires efficient transportation networks. In an explanation of the basic qualities and forces that constitute a town, Deleuze and Guattari foreground the importance of the road:

The town is the correlate of the road. The town exists only as a function of circulation and of circuits; it is a singular point on the circuits which create it. It is defined by entries and exits ... it imposes a frequency. It effects a polarization of

matter, inert, living, or human – it is a phenomenon of transconsistency, a network because it is fundamentally in contact with other towns. (Deleuze and Guattari 1988:195)

For the context of the metropolis, I would like to modify this claim slightly and emphasize that the transportation networks function as a circulatory device. The metropolis can never be a singular point on the circuits, i.e. the networks, that create it, since these networks lay bare the plurality of spaces within the urban landscape. In my approach to public transportation and their networks, they are the entities that are defined by entries and exits owing to the importance of stations. They simultaneously impose frequency through the employment of timetables and strict travel routes. Consequently, transportation polarizes and connects metropolitan spaces to other spaces through the mapping and distribution of time. Road, streets, and rails literally create lines through the city that are governed by the temporal lines of traffic flows, as well as class lines between different territories and quarters of the city. Grosz argues that the city organizes and links unrelated bodies of the city together through different lines – creating a unified city body (Cf. Grosz 1992). Similar arguments were made in early 20th century, specifically in relation to modes of transportation: “Die neuen Mittel des Verkehrs geben die Möglichkeit, Städte zu bauen, in denen die Entfernung keine große Rolle mehr spielt” (Fischer 1928:15). The dissemination of issues relating to networks, movements, and velocity in the city showcases major shifts and debates in the conceptualizing and realizing of urban mobility through public transportation. With the emergence of public transportation, it became easier for people to traverse the city. However, in contrast to the pedestrian who can choose the pace and route of their own volition, the public transportation passenger has to adapt to the trajectory and time table of the transportation device. Many scholars have argued that, as a result of this shift from the spontaneous journey to the streamlined, regulated

journey through the urban space, the traveler's spatial and temporal perception underwent a transformation. In a Swiss medical periodical from 1890, one author identifies such a transformation, or acceleration of time, already in conjunction with the railway and steam power, and comments:

In der guten alten Zeit ging man zu Fuss oder fuhr gemächlich mit der Postkutsche und erreichte gemütlich sein Ziel; heutzutage geht's nur noch per Dampf und findet der Kaufman Eisenbahn und Dampfschiff noch viel zu schneckenhaft langsam, um seine Geschäfte mit der nöthigen Geschwindigkeit abzuwickeln, denn 'Time is money!' (Borscheid 2004:169)

In a similar vein, Schivelbusch argues that the emergence of new modes gave rise to a new perception of space. Increased mobility, he argues, has two dimensions. On the one hand, it opens up new spaces to the public, on the other hand, it destroys the spaces that are traversed. Spaces and geographical locations receive a new identity as they become part of a transportation network. With the advance of modern transportation, geographical locations of relative insignificance that became part of a network obtained new identities. Small towns flourished as new transportation hubs or border towns, and through the means of commuter traffic, industries could now be positioned at the outskirts of the cities, giving rise to new social and economic divisions in the city.

A 2011 dissertation on the topic of mobility in urban spaces: *Medialität Urbaner Infrastrukturen – Der öffentliche Nahverkehr, 1870-1933*, argues; “dass in den Ausbildungen des öffentlichen Raums der Geist einer Zeit zum Ausdruck ... [und,] dass die materialen Formen immer auch als Stabilisatoren, wenn nicht als Produzenten der geistigen Verfasstheiten fungieren”⁵

⁵ Porombka bases her theoretical framework on Richard Sennett's *Civitas* (1991), in which he argues that “Die alten Griechen konnten die Komplexität des Lebens mit den Augen sehen. Die Tempel, die Märkte, die

(Porombka 2013:105). Transportation as a part of the city infrastructure and public space “nimmt die Funktion eines mediums ein ... durch die die gesellschaftlichen Praktiken und Diskurse zwangsläufig hindurchlaufen muss“ (Ebd: 133). Porombka’s theoretical framework, which she calls “Inframedialität,” seeks to explain how the effect of transportation as an urban infrastructure is mediated in textual narratives. Her thesis sets out to investigate the implications of public transportation on the perception and portrayal of urban spaces. Included in her analysis is a reading of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* that focuses on public transportation as a system of ordering the otherwise unclear urban space.⁶ I expand on Porombka’s concept by also taking into account the narrative technique that Döblin chooses in his rendition of the cityscape, namely literary montage. Moreover, in comparison to my approach, the focus of her study is less dedicated to the ways in which transportation affects the urban subject and the ramifications of this new “modern” perception of spaces on the individual. As Porombka herself states, no analysis has taken a systematic approach to modes of transportation as an object of analysis, and I thus hope to contribute to the topic by entering into discussion with Porombka.

In the context of global history, Ette describes the lack of precise and differentiated terminology for the study of language and literature on the topic of mobility (Cf. Ette 2001). Therefore, in order to apply comprehensible terminology in my reading of the texts, I mainly rely on concepts from theoretical frameworks within the fields of spatial theory, narratology and

Stadien, die Versammlungsorte, die Mauern, die öffentlich sichtbaren Statuen und Bilder der antiken Stadt, sie alle verkörpern die Wertvorstellung dieser Kultur in bezug auf Religion, Politik und Familie“ (Sennett, 1991:11). Porombka aims to illustrate that the same relation exists between the infrastructure of the modern city and its inhabitants as Sennett sees in the classical world (“die antike Welt”).

⁶ Porombka formulates her leading question as follows: ”Die Frage, welche Rolle dem Nahverkehr – als einzelner Transportmittel und als vernetztem Transportsystem – in diesem Zusammenhang zukommt, muss die Frage danach sein, welche Auswirkungen er auf die Wahrnehmung und die Darstellung des urbanen Raums hat, wie er die Ereignisse und Diskurse strukturiert – oder eben auch gerade nicht strukturiert -, so dass sich in der Folge eine Wahrnehmbarkeit und Darstellbarkeit des urbanen Raums daraus ergibt“ (Porombka, 2013:231).

commentaries on the discourse of philosophies of modernity. In my methodological approach, I work under the presupposition that the narrative act of describing spaces can be considered an event in and of itself. In cases where the presence of transportation cannot be properly defined as an event, as we will see in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the focus is instead directed toward the influential power that lists of stations and timetables have over the narrative. Such discussions raise questions regarding the reciprocity between diegetic and extra-diegetic levels, insinuating a relation between the rigidity and efficiency of transportation networks and the production of text-based narratives. Parallel to the increase in transportation options available, the degree of mobility in the city increases and triggers movement within the city. Movement within any space happens both on the inside and outside of a being – which in turn makes it essential for the development of subjectivity. Such an approach moves away from the spatial dialectic of inside/outside (Cf. Deleuze 1988) and instead allows me to focus on events taking place within the space. Subjectivity in the city, Grosz argues, is better understood in “corporeal rather than conscious terms” (Grosz 1995:84). As will become evident in the case of the U-Bahn, it is difficult to completely distance oneself from the spatial dialectic of inside/outside that proves to provide a productive mode of spatial analysis. Even in following Grosz’ argument that we should thus focus on the actual human bodies in space and how they behave and react to their surroundings, the importance of the city’s and transportation vehicles’ inside and outside comes to the foreground. A fitting analogy to the body’s position in space can be found in Bauman’s *Liquid Life*, where the need to adapt to modern velocity and pace is a way “to save yourself from the embarrassment of lagging behind, of being stuck with something no one else would be seen with, of being caught napping, of missing the train of progress instead of riding it” (Bauman 2005:9). The narration of the city and its inhabitants requires images of transportation in order to tell the story of progress. Consequently, as will become clear

in the following chapters, the inability to deal with new modes of transportation has ramifications for the story as well as for the storytelling.

The chosen materials discussing public transportation expand beyond the fictional literary bookshelf and include accounts from diaries, journalistic articles, visual imagery, films, and commentary by cultural, architectural and political critics. The two primary works of my thesis, Walter Ruttmann's "Berlin, Sinfonie der Grosstadt" (1927) and Alfred Döblin's "Berlin Alexanderplatz, die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf (1929), offer panoramic views of Berlin in the form of filmic and literary montage. Woven into the fragmentary, albeit orderly, organized montage, images of public transportation networks make their way into the narrative and narration in an attempt to synthesize and experiment with two major aspects of the modern city; the impact of the new visual experience owing to modern modes of transportation and the increasing velocity of urban mobility.

Chapter 1: Massification of Movement in “Berlin – Sinfonie der Großstadt”: Symbiosis of Transporter and Transported

“Verkehrswege verkörpern den Rhythmus der Großstadt” (Treuner,

“Vision der Großstadt.” *Scherl's Magazin*. 1928)

Through a prismatic camera lens sweeping across the city in Walter Ruttmann’s “Berlin – Sinfonie der Großstadt” (1927) (Henceforth *Berlin*), the viewer finds herself on an hour-long dawn-to-dusk journey alongside the inhabitants of a modern metropolis. In the film’s depiction of city life, themes of economic growth, technological progress, social change and the rise of commodity culture interweave with footage of goods and passenger traffic and transportation, in attempt to portray what moves the city and its inhabitants forward. Accompanied by Edmund Meisel’s symphonic soundtrack, life in *Berlin* goes through phases of hectic crescendos and diminishing diminuendos that leave the viewer with a sense of what the modernized city encapsulates and how it affects its inhabitants. The documentary footage of the film shows a city with features that are strikingly similar to those of a giant machine set into motion as commuter trains disgorge their passengers and the streets slowly fill up with workers marching off to work. Throughout *Berlin*, people and machines are constantly in motion, and scholars have recurrently commented on Ruttmann’s ambition to provoke and mediate the experience of movement in his films (Cowan 2014:41). In *Berlin*, a fine balance between an organic rhythm of life on the one hand, and an industrial pace brought about by new economical circumstances and technological innovations on the other hand, finds its equilibrium through the combination of avant-garde technique, documentary material and the *Querschnitt*-editing as a montage principle. In mediating this equilibrium, Ruttmann cross cuts shots of stable and neurotic states in the city and creates an ambiguous view of life in the modern metropolis.

Ever since the film premiered in the Taentzienpalast on 23 September 1927, it has been considered an important contribution to the cinematic avant-garde and remains, up until today, a well-known and celebrated encounter with modernism, urbanism and cinema during the Weimar period. The product of the encounter is a film that heavily emphasizes visual contrasts, machinery, and a fragmentary portrayal of the city. Owing to the film's editing, which resorts to analogies between different movements and shapes that are prevalent within the boundaries of the city, the viewer is faced with all the complexities Ruttmann sees in modern Berlin. The aspect of transportation in the city that I wish to further elaborate upon regards the coordinated movements of humans and traffic in the city. The figuration of the daily commute becomes an especially important factor in understanding the topic of transportation in Ruttmann's film. This figuration of transportation is thus also connected to production and the city's economy insofar as the mobilization of the working masses required ways of efficiently moving through the city spaces, in which the concentration of people steadily increased by the hour (Kenny 2014:10). People had to be able to move efficiently across the urban space in order to be able to work and consume, two aspects that define urban existence in *Berlin*. Public transportation and private personal modes of transportation, be it by car or foot, mandate the rhythm and rules according to which *Berlin* functions. The repetitiveness of the daily commute falls in line with the film's dawn-to-dusk structure, and the lines of traffic in the shape of roads, rails, elevators, and even airplanes construct the spatial frames and boundaries of the urban landscape.

By referring to the circular and repetitive movements of humans and machines alike, Ruttmann raises questions regarding the role of, and reciprocity between, technological progress and mankind in the early 20th century. The paradigmatic execution of similar daily schedules and tasks by the inhabitants and machines in the city, accompanied by the implied daily repetition of

the workday, create a critical representation of the city in a time of industrial labor and production. In this representation, modes of transportation in the city play an integral role. The mobility that modern modes of transportation enable, ranging from the long-distance train to the commuter trains, simultaneously embody and enable the dynamic powers that beat life into the city body. All movements, ranging from mechanized traffic to the human pedestrian, exhibit a symbiotic relationship to one another and portray an idealized mass movement. In Ruttmann's city, the masses never clash; only the fallible human individual is capable of creating disturbances. Ruttmann's judgment of those who fail to resonate with the city is harsh and comes to the fore in the film's staged suicide scene that depicts the demise of the "other" in the city. Transportation and traffic thus come to symbolize the order and structure to which the human masses ought to adapt in order to function in the city. In this chapter, I aim to take a closer look at the interplay between forms of movement and modes of transportation in *Berlin*. My basic argument is that the transportation and movement of people by means of vehicles and machines in *Berlin* conjure an urban space whose identity is shaped by the coexistence and multitude of moving trajectories that synchronize with one another and enter into symbiosis. The city's transportation network facilitates this symbiotic relationship between human and city body by coordinating and limiting the multitude of trajectories. In doing so, the city resembles one united body whose individual parts all adhere to the same will and rhythm of life. Furthermore, in *Berlin*, if any individual part resists the mass movement and fails to enter symbiosis, it is easily replaceable. The transportation network's foregrounded function of transporting workers acts as a reminder of the replicability of the individual. The monotonous daily commute by means of public transportation symbolizes stability, order and continuity within the city, whereas the motif of spinning spirals, revolving doors, and rollercoasters break the equilibrium and process of symbiosis. When such occurrences

arise, however, the stable and predictable nature of transportation networks, and the habits they create repeatedly manage to balance the scales.

Berlin has been described as an aestheticization of the machine or as a fetishized urban spectacle, and has served as inspiration for many later city-films such as *Das Lied vom Leben* (1931), *Polizeibericht Überfall* (1928) and *Menschen am Sonntag* (1930). The montage technique that Ruttmann employed cut production costs significantly and “offered a gratifying opportunity of showing much and revealing nothing” (Kracauer 2004:188). Kracauer voiced further concern about the film and its fragmentary veneer that avoids “any critical comment on the reality with which [Ruttmann] is faced” and thus produces a mere “ambiguous reality” (Kracauer 2004:187). Underlying Kracauer’s criticism is the assumption that fragmentation obscures the totality of a given piece of art and thus fails to resonate with and faithfully depict reality. Kracauer’s critical tone is also echoed in later scholarship conducted on the film. For example, scholars have accused Ruttmann’s *Berlin* of “[falsifying] reality through its emphasis of unresolved visual contrasts” (Hillard 2004:78). The filmic montage technique that Kracauer and Hillard have identified as weaknesses in Ruttmann’s creation, I believe, can be discussed in a positive light and provide a deeper understanding of the city itself. The ambiguity that arises from the editing allows the viewer to discuss the variance in representations on a given object or occurrence. Scenes of transportation are crosscut by a variety of shots from all over the city, and the tension that arises from the cuts provide grounds for productive discussions on and comparisons of what constitutes the urban experience in Ruttmann’s city.

The multiplicity of possible readings of Ruttmann’s *Berlin* has caught the attention of many cultural scholars. Ruttmann’s film provides a platform to discuss the origins of modern city life.

Sinfonie captures and fuses the aesthetics of movement in the city and how these express the functions underlying everyday urban life. Ruttmann, as Goergen explains:

Versteht sich in der Tat nicht als [...] Reporter [...] Er will vielmehr eine neue künstlerische Wirklichkeit entstehen lassen; er betrachtet Berlin ästhetisch – es sind seine künstlerische Empfindungen, die er an den Zuschauer weiterleiten will. Diesen will er berauschen, ihn zum Schwingen bringen, Vibrationen auslösen.
(Goergen 1989:30)

In similar words, Ruttmann himself expressed his desire to trigger within the viewer, a sense of experiencing the “feel” of the city through film: “Und wenn es mir gelungen ist, die Menschen zum Schwingen zu bringen, sie die Stadt Berlin erleben zu lassen, dann habe ich mein Ziel erreicht” (Ruttmann 1989:80). He expresses a goal for viewers to feel resonance with the film. Successful urban subjects, according to Ruttmann, need to identify themselves with the rhythms of the city and become one with its mass movement. The most prevalent rhythm of the city, in my reading of the film, is that of the daily commute and the coordinated movement of traffic and human masses.

Despite his critical tone, Hillard stresses the importance of fragmentary juxtaposition and the interweaving of seemingly unrelated, possibly even opposing, footage in Ruttmann’s *Berlin*. In his analysis, Hillard finally arrives at the conclusion that *Berlin*, in the end, “cannot resolve this tension” (Hillard 2004:91). The problem scholars have with Ruttmann is that they are dissatisfied with his evenhanded, over-aestheticized depiction of the city. However, I believe that Ruttmann makes a clear statement by showcasing his conviction of the sheer impossibility of faithfully depicting the multiplicity of the modern city. Instead, he seeks to engage viewers in contemplating their daily existence and routines and in trying to understand the role they fill within the flowing

mass-movement. Ruttmann's fragmented and incoherent editing hints toward the impossibility to render and establish a totality within the Berlin of the film. In the same way that Ruttmann is unable to capture a clear narrative, or picture, of the city, the viewers themselves must experiment and find their own resonance within the film. Moreover, the construction of particular sequences and editing of individual shots function differently than the film's larger structure (ebd. 90). In other words, not only are the scenes, per se, ambivalent, but the overarching cyclical dawn-to-dusk structure of the film and the editing, "[protect], like a Freudian *Reizschutz*, the integrity of [the film's] inherently reconciliatory narrative from the possible trauma of modern perception" (ebd. 90). I believe such a claim can be refuted when taking into consideration the functions of the daily commute and mass production, both which are important topics in the film. Both of these trends follow a cyclical pattern that falls in line with the dawn-to-dusk structure. The constant movements in the city captured through the camera view testify a new view of how people see themselves among others – in the city masses, constantly in transit and in a state of symbiosis with their surroundings. Moreover, Ruttmann has never made any realist claims in regard to his filmic creations; they are first and foremost aesthetic expressions. Regardless of whether the diegesis of the film manages to successfully depict the world it wishes to represent, the film foregrounds elements of movement and transportation that open up a broader discussion on the topic of mobility and subjectivity in the urban space.

The wide range of scholarship that approaches *Berlin* from different angles speaks to the complexity of the cityscape Ruttmann creates. Ruttmann's city takes on a multitude of roles in the lives of humans in organizing the daily lives of the city dweller. The frequent employment of transportation images conjures a sense of belonging and meaning derived from being part of a bigger whole, the city mass. Furthermore, transportation brings people together also in a literal

sense. In her essay on the reciprocity and relation between the city and the bodies within, Elizabeth Grosz describes the city as a space that “orients and organizes family, sexual, and social relations insofar as the city divides cultural life into public and private domains, geographically dividing and defining the particular social positions and locations occupied by individuals and groups” (Grosz 1992:250). In relation to this, traffic roads and commuter train tracks in *Berlin* serve as a way to divide the city into different domains and create clear boundaries in the urban landscape. This provides an opposing conceptualization of transportation to my argument on how Ruttmann employs transportation in order to bring people together. The division that comes to the fore in the film, however, foregrounds the division of spaces rather than of people. The factories and industrial areas in *Berlin* are geographically separated from the city, yet connected to it by the larger transportation network.

In relation to transportation and identity creation within the city, it is important to consider not only what routes are traversed, but also who travels along them. Sabine Hake argues in relation to *Berlin* that the film attempts to “diagnose the disappearance of class difference as the central category of urban life and the emergence of the white-collar culture as an agent of social and cultural leveling” (Hake 2008:246). My reading follows a similar line and focuses on the unifying potential of the city. In my analysis, I stress the importance of the film’s attempt to unite the city and its dwellers, who comprise one working body.⁷ There are indeed outliers represented that hint at the possibility of diversity and diasporic experience within the city, as well as in relation to class. In the end, however, Ruttmann treats these rather like exceptions that confirm the rule. Over the course of Ruttmann’s film, it becomes clear that the way in which people move about the city

⁷ I have chosen not to engage in the topic of class since the film strips down locations and people to their pure functions in their city. I do not believe it is safe to assume that their function as portrayed in Ruttmann’s film directly translate to societal class belonging.

is conditioned by social class and profession. The daily movements of the blue-collar workers are shown in a different light than those of the white-collar workers. In the end, however, they all utilize transportation for the same purpose; to get to work.

Over the course of the first act, *Berlin* opens up the themes of mass transit and the relation between circular and linear movements in the city that come to harmonize and create the pacing of the working day for blue-collar workers. The daily commute moves people along a track that has a beginning and an end, and serves the needs of productivity. That movement has to be repeated every day, in a repetitive, circular fashion. In portraying the daily commute, traffic assumes a critical function and comes to serve as a symbol to uncover a paradox underlying modern mobility; that is, despite an increase in modes of transportation, the constraints of modern life bind us to the same routines every day, similar to how a train-car is bound to run along its established tracks, and how factory machines disgorge the same products every day. What at first appearance might appear as tedium, also constitutes the stability of the lives of the workers.

Much more so than a critique or warning, Ruttmann delivers the projection of a city in an objective, almost blasé, manner. Initially commissioned as a “quota quickie” by Fox Europa film studios, *Berlin* was most likely not meant to deliver a radical societal critique of exploitation and suffering in the city. The film is more so a representation of a mass metropolis in all its glory. Ruttmann, the cameraman Karl Freund (Head of Fox Europe) and the scriptwriter Carl Mayer (also known for “Das Kabinett des Dr. Caligari”) intended to create a film about Berlin itself, rather than the people within the city (Cowan 2014:80). The people are thus treated as only one part of the city body and this comes to the fore through the congruence and analogies between movements in the film. The story of a day in *Berlin*, however, does not commence within the city.

In the abstract opening of the first movement of the film, linear ripples of flowing water dissolve into straight lines. These lines suddenly start flowing into each other in a similar fashion to the movement of waves. Still unaware of our location, the straight lines once again dissolve and appear as level crossings, and a train, most likely a night express, swoops in across the screen. Judging by the surrounding rural landscape, the story of *Berlin* commences outside the actual city. The abstract transitioning and molding of the water scene and the travelling train suggest not only a state of transition, but also a symbolic relationship between the movements of water and that of the train. The way many scenes are cut as *Querschnitt*, or *Durchschnitt* “allows the observer to perceive the internal contents and, crucially, analyze the relations between them” (Cowan 2014:66). Bearing in mind the focus on movement, water and the train exhibit disparate qualities. Unlike the train, the movement of water is free and aimless. In the comparison of water and the train, Ruttmann suggests to compare and reflect on the conditions of movement and mobility on rails or roads, in opposition to the unrestricted “natural” movement of water. The freedom of water stands in stark opposition to the movements not only of the train, but also the moving masses that will fill up the city streets at dawn. The decision to open the film outside of the city, implies that there is no story to be told whilst the public spaces are void of human bodies. In other words, the city is insignificant and lifeless until its occupants infuse it with meaning through movement. Here it is through the long distance network of the national railway that the city is injected with human substance. Consequently, Ruttmann stresses that the production of meaning is equally dependent on movement into and within the city. The film’s abrupt relocation from the rural to the urban hints at the inevitability of urbanization in a time of industrial production. Apart from the economic incentive of relocating to the city, the phenomenon of urbanization also has a sociological aspect to it. People want to be part of the mass. People living outside of the city, “the outsiders,” fear

“being found to be inferior” to the city dwellers (Griffin 2011:63) and are thus inclined to join life in the city. Judging by the opening scene, it is by boarding the train and travelling to the city that you can achieve the goal of being one with the masses. Thus, before you engage and immerse in the intercity public transportation network, you first have to travel by train. This also gestures toward the train’s historical precedence in the shaping and imagining of transportation and mobility.

The train takes on a critical function as a narrative device to foreshadow the structure of everyday life in the city. Through the camera’s close-up on train-tracks and the spinning wheels of the train, an important motif of city life has already been generated. The train-tracks symbolize a horizontal, streamlined movement between a point of departure and destination, whereas the spinning train wheels resemble the repetition of the workday. During the train ride, the camera offers a mix of angles. Eye-level shots provide the viewer with a scenery akin to that of actual train passengers, and low-angle medium-shots offer visions of the electrical wires that colonize the landscape around the city. Moreover, the camera’s focus on electric wires affirms the city’s technical hold, spread and influence on the surrounding rural areas. Already in the first sequence of the film, the themes and visual motifs of movement, parallel lines and spirals have come to the fore and the train transports them to the city of Berlin. Here, the city symphony truly begins. As will become evident, parallel and spiral motions are not regarded as opposites, but constitute the experience and daily rhythm of the city in the same way as the train’s wheels roll along the parallel train tracks. Throughout *Berlin* things are constantly in motion owing to the multitude of modes of transportation. Especially the daily commute embodies a combination of two forces that otherwise stand in opposition to one another. On the one hand, the daily commute complies with the linear tracks, traffic and telephone lines that colonize the landscape and conquer not only the

city but also the rural surroundings. On the other hand, the repetitiveness of the daily commute also correlates to symbols such as spirals, cogs, revolving doors and clocks that convey the cyclical elements of the film.

En route to the city, the train passes through the suburbs and industrial areas at the city outskirts. Through a low-angle shot, you can glimpse a flock of birds flying above the wires that stretch out over the tracks, and through the passenger view we see houses in typical suburban communities. As we roll into the city, however, the houses grow bigger and the walls are cluttered with advertisement. After the train has rolled into the station, an aerial shot hovers over Berlin and rapidly changes positions to show images of the city's empty streets from five different angles. Serving as a reminder of the city network's hold on the urban and the surrounding rural areas, low-angle shots show wires hanging over the city in a similar fashion to the shots in the surrounding rural areas. As opposed to the shots outside of the city, there are no birds to be seen flying above the houses.⁸

This overhead view of the city ends with a zoom-in on a clock. It is early in the morning and the city slowly starts to wake up. There is a shift in mood and focus, away from the silent serene city at dawn, to the hectic movements of the human masses and machines. The commuter trains leave their engine sheds and the streets fill up with people and electric trams. After the first scene that foregrounds the train's role as a long-distance transportation vehicle, its importance for intercity transportation becomes evident as the masses begin the daily commute. The first wave of workers to set out is the blue-collar workers. As the masses travel along their daily route to work,

⁸ The animals of *Berlin* are, from this point on, all domesticated, ranging from dogs on leashes to lions in their cages at the zoo. Ruttmann's employment of animals suggest that they are unable to enter symbiosis with the mass movement of mechanical vehicles and human bodies. The restriction of the animals' movements by leashes and cages attests to the fact that their movements need to be controlled. Animals in *Berlin* lack the necessary qualities to adapt and learn the structured and organized movement patterns that are needed to achieve symbiosis with the city masses. Everything within the geographical boundaries of the city, machines, humans and animals, are equally bound to abide by the city's rules, but not everyone is equally adaptable.

the boarding and alighting of the trains appear as natural to the people as the preceding walk to the station. This first wave of workers showcases a tremendous flexibility in traversing the city. Their movements are goal-oriented and, instead of them adapting to the surrounding traffic, it almost appears as if surrounding vehicles make way for the workers' march. On one occasion you can even spot an electric tram stopping for a pedestrian who smoothly skips across the street. The interaction between people and traffic stand in a symbiotic relation to one another; the movement of traffic and the human masses are not competing, but they all share the same destination, namely the workplace.

The masses move from home to work along a line that is similar to that of the train-tracks. It is impossible for a train to go anywhere but where the tracks lead it, and the movement of the morning workers have taken on similar qualities. Nonetheless, Ruttmann does not signal the function and purpose of the march to work by editing in shots of a train or any other vehicle or machine, but instead cuts to images of cattle and soldiers during the scene. In doing so, Ruttmann views the movements as being ordered, or herded, by an outer-force or by a greater will in similar fashion to the way in which cattle are herded and soldiers are ordered by an authoritative power. This brings the topic of agency into the picture and questions are raised concerning who actually maneuvers the traffic and transportation networks. Indeed, it appears as if the flowing of the city is dictated by powers other than an actual driver. The vehicles and movements of people are first and foremost anchored in the regulatory frameworks of transportation and traffic in the city.

Over the course of the third act, commencing around halfway through the film, several key scenes of traffic ensue. Multiple trams, cars, horse-drawn carriages and busses cut across the screen in all directions and give off the impression of a looming scenario of a clash. The packed streets, however, maintain their structure and order through the efforts of the traffic officers who guide the

traffic. We are also shown a scene of an officer gently guiding a young boy across the scene. Protecting and teaching the child, the traffic officer serves as a reminder of the importance of urban subjects teaching each other how to be symbiotic with the city. Coordinated movements are thus not viewed as an inherently natural quality, but a learned behavior. The ground-level footage focuses on the work of the human traffic officers to maintain order, but shots from above reveal an important aid to their work, namely the traffic crossing. The traffic crossing embodies the orderly characteristic of coordinated manmade lines. A further dimension that Ruttmann foregrounds in the traffic footage of the second act is the horizontal ordering of traffic in movement. If there is no more room for rails on the ground, they are elevated and run across bridges. The focus is clearly put on an upward relocation that includes footage of elevators and even airplanes that fly over the city.

In Ruttmann's *Berlin*, the traffic officers embody the authoritative power of transportation and traffic regulations. Consequently, they are responsible for coordinating and stopping potential collisions and clashes between both men and machines. The human role of starting the mechanical apparatus in the morning becomes clear as Ruttmann focuses on human agency at the workplace, but we do not know for certain who moves the transportation vehicles. As a matter of fact, there is no clear shot of somebody actually driving a public transportation vehicle in *Berlin*. Other than people polishing and driving their cars in private, the camera focuses on capturing the interaction between pedestrian and vehicle, rather than driver and pedestrian. From an outside view, we see who gets into what vehicle, but there are no shots of *Berlin* originating from inside a vehicle. Other than a couple of shots from inside the train in the opening sequence, the camera positions itself only to observe the movements in the city and refuses to move along with the flow of the masses.

Assuming the position of observer rather than traveler, the film's focus on destinations marked as a destination. It is a space that pulls its surroundings toward itself through means of railways, commuter traffic and electrical wires. The foregrounding of destinations and the camera's positioning to merely observe movements and transportation within the city narrate an experience of travel and movement, in which the function of transportation is to take you from one place to another, is foregrounded at the expense of the experience of travel.⁹ The mechanical vehicles are the transporters, and the city dwellers are the ones transported. Human agency over the transportation network thus only comes to the foreground in the coordination of traffic and transportation – not in the operation of it. The economical function of transportation in moving people between locations of work and leisure thus appears to adhere to a will over which the city dwellers have no control. We are left with an ambiguous impression that human agency dictates and shapes the organization of transportation, but not the operation of the actual vehicles. The symbiosis of traffic flow and human masses should be, therefore, on the one hand, considered as a learned and manmade construction, and a economically stimulated movement on the other.

Ruttman prioritizes sheer numbers over the qualities of individual cases. On our daily journey through Berlin, we do not follow the continuous movements of only a handful of people or machines, but the masses. *Berlin* is not a film that prioritizes the individual psyche, but rather a space of multiple individual minds and movements that come together and form a unity. Ruttman's view of individuality coincides with that of later thinkers such as Bauman, who deems personal emancipation impossible within mass society: "*Individuality is a task set for its members by the society of individuals* – set as an individual task, to be individually performed, by individuals

⁹ On one occasion, however, Ruttman depicts through a series of dissolving destination signs for trains that *Berlin* is indeed also a point of departure. The destination signs are cross-cut with shots from Berlin central station, thus marking the train station as the entrance and exit to the city.

using their individual resources. Yet such a task is self-contradictory and self-defeating: indeed, impossible to fulfill” (Italics in original, Bauman 2005:18). In *Berlin*, the simultaneousness of movement deemphasizes the role and existence of the individual in the urban mass. As lunchtime commences, all inhabitants of the city eat, human and animals alike,. At 8 o’clock, the rolling-up of metal curtains declare the opening of stores and the commencement of daily chores of housemaids and the children’s’ walk to school. All city dwellers execute their daily tasks simultaneously. In highlighting this, Ruttmann disregards not only the representation of an individual psyche, but also the individual schedule.

The dialectic of urban life that Ruttmann pursues does not emerge out of opposing ideas, but through a symbiotic relation between what at first glance might appear as contradictory entities. Moreover, I believe that the decision to open the film with a shot of water, testifies to the timelessness and universality Ruttmann sees in all things that make up *Berlin*. Another one of Ruttmann’s films, *Melodie der Welt* (1929), offers a similar vision of a universal rhythm throughout the history of culture by revealing rhythmic recurrence in the existence of people. Work, traffic, sports, war and theater, “all composed along symphonic principles” (Cowan 2014:89), are shown to be synchronized by common rhythms which run through everything, ranging from the waves of the ocean to industrial labor. Such later attempts by Ruttmann to mediate the past and present, in order to find universality in nature and industry, leads me to believe that he had similar ambitions for *Berlin*. In trying to find this balance, he compares numerous individual instances of movement in the city. It goes without saying that he handpicked the urban phenomena in the film which creates what Cowan calls the “statistical epistemology” of the film, which “with its montage of individual photographic images, sought to convey a [...] curve: namely the statistical curve of regularities resulting from the comparison of particular phenomenon”

(Cowan 2014:78). This logic puts further emphasis on the importance of comparisons when engaging with the film. Most of the time, the comparisons between extremes do appear to add up to an equilibrium, but this does not render unstable states any less important. There are times of soothing breeze and violent storms in the city. Akin to water, traffic and technology as seen in *Berlin* are not intrinsically good or evil. They do, however, connote an unpredictability that could pose potential risks to human life.

Alongside the vertical movement and organization of the masses and vertical streets and crossings, spiral motifs make their way into the scenery. In the first movement of the film, during the morning commute to work, a man playing the barrel organ entertains the moving masses. Besides the prefiguring theme of the masses marching to the symphonious sound of music, the barrel organ introduces a concrete object that signals toward the spiral motif. The camera zooms in on the spinning handle and the scene shifts to spinning cogs and machines of the buzzing factories. The spinning machines in the factory produce a stable stream of goods. Continuously spitting out products, the interior space of the factory bears an astonishing resemblance to the shots of the masses getting off the commuter trains. The act of transportation that brings people to the workplace appear not all that different from the movements that take place within the spaces of production. Just as the factories and machines mass-produce goods at a steady flow, no individual worker is incommutable.¹⁰ In this regard, the function that workers have in the city takes precedence over their movements.¹¹ Many of the motifs from the opening make their way back as recurring objects and concepts of comparison in Ruttmann's montage.

¹⁰ Images of cattle and marching soldiers that cross-cut the workers' march to the factories come to further deemphasize the value of the individual. Every soldier, every cattle and every worker is equally replaceable.

¹¹ The end of the film's first movement draws the viewer's attention also toward the destructive power of industrial labor. A circular saw blade cuts through metal objects and you see smoke rise from the factory chimneys, hinting at the perils and waste involved in mass production.

For most of the film we see traffic running along the city streets in vertical lines, and we are given the impression that the movements of the vehicles and the surrounding pedestrians are well coordinated and in symbiosis with one another. The omnipresence of vehicles is evident in the way they sweep across in the back- middle- and foreground of the film's mise-en-scene. The stable and constant motion of the machines in the factories and the time-bound daily march to work can, however, lead to neurotic, disturbing states when it accelerates out of control. Leading up to scenes of conflict or nervousness, accelerated traffic and spiral motifs play leading roles in Ruttmann's film. Even though traffic officers safeguard and orchestrate crossings, there are quite a few scenes that point towards the instability and unpredictability of city traffic, which is foreshadowed by spirals. As soon as we are confronted with a spiral or a canted camera shot, something is about to destabilize. The complexity of such key images consists in their multidirectionality; the film offers no clear understanding of the phenomena it seeks to capture, and it appears rather as if Ruttmann prompts personal contemplation on the matter, rather than articulating, as already mentioned, a clear critique. This multidirectionality opens up for a comparison between scenes of symbiotic, harmonious movements, and cases of disturbance.

At the film's 45-minute mark, another key image of disturbance follows, namely that of a staged suicide. Contrary to the rest of the footage of the film, the suicide scene is highly theatrical in nature. The suicide act is set up much like a theatre. An audience is watching the performance of a woman who is about to jump off a bridge. This relation between spectator and spectated, as well as the make up and styling of the woman, foreground, for the first time in the film, a constructed artifice, and thus seek to draw attention to the constructed "other." In contrary to the vast majority of the film's footage, Ruttmann's focus on the artifice allows us to view the scene symbolically in its relation to the rest of the film, which appears documentary-like, or "natural."

The woman is the “other,” the one who cannot adhere to, and does not fit into the greater whole that dictates life in the city. In quick succession leading up to her deathly leap, Ruttmann cross-cuts a spiral image of a whirlpool in the water beneath the woman, a first-person rollercoaster view and a close-up of the woman’s wide-opened eyes and deranged look. After her suicidal leap into the water below, having been subsumed by the spinning whirlpool beneath her, she never resurfaces, and Ruttmann quickly exits to a new scene. We are left wondering what caused this woman’s distress and also why none of the spectators did anything to help her. Left with a bitter aftertaste, the viewers realize that there is no time for anyone to stop and contemplate the death of an individual. Ruttmann insinuates that alongside the filmic narrative of the city, the urban crowd is likewise unable to acknowledge the death of one person. If the city body is tainted by one malfunctioning individual piece, this piece will be forcefully ejected. It is unable to stop in an attempt to repair, nor does it need to, since there are plenty of replacement parts being transported around the city to take the place of the missing piece. The rollercoaster movement that was cross-cut with the suicide scene was unable to synchronize with the surrounding flow of traffic and movement, and the symbiosis subsequently fails. As geographer Doreen Massey explains, “all spaces are socially regulated in some way, if not by explicit rules [...] then by the potentially more competitive (more market-like?) regulation which exists in the absence of explicit (collective? public? democratic? autocratic?) controls” (Massey 2005:152, parentheses and question marks in original). The regulations in *Berlin* appear to dictate that the one who fails to go along with the industrial pace of the city will perish since the city is unable to accommodate for needs other than those of the majority. This falls in line with Massey’s suggestion of a more market-like regulation of space, in which a replacement part is always available to fill the void of a missing piece.

The theatrical suicide scene in Ruttmann's film suggests that only humans who can move in symbiosis with the city's modes of transportation can function as urban subjects. The movement of the roller coaster and the spirals come to symbolize the opposite of the streamlined transportation and movements of the masses. They are disturbances, or deviations in the city and function as counter-narratives to the city as a space of anonymity and conformity. As Griffin observed: "the city is often constructed as a site of opportunity, material condensation and of massification, in which people operate as anonymised crowds; however, diasporic experience and [...] communities challenge this perception" (Griffin 2011:61). Even amidst the movements and trajectories of the masses, *Berlin* attempts to narrate the individual experience. However, the individual experience is only present as a means of proving the statistical superiority of the mass movement. This is, in many aspects, the total opposite of the situation that Döblin creates for his protagonist in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Franz Biberkopf. The narrative of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is centered around the very individual who does not manage to understand the city. However, where Döblin portrays the torturous struggle of the organism, akin to an initiation rite, to find its place within the city, Ruttmann chooses to eject the individual organism from the city body.

Ruttmann creates a panoramic view of paradigmatic movements throughout the city in order to establish a totality. This totality comes to the fore through the projection of the city mass moving about the city like a unified body – like flowing water. Traffic and transportation aid this endeavor while simultaneously being part of the mass movement. In this chapter, I have sought to stress the symbolic and reciprocal relation between moving trajectories in the city and the lives of the bodies there within. *Berlin* mediates an experience of urban life that is dependent on masses in movement and prioritizes abstract, symbolic analogies between moving machines and humans at the expense of plot and content. Despite the neutrality and ambiguousness that surfaces through

the editing, the depiction of movement and the failure to adapt to the rules and daily patterns brought about by new forms of transportation on the one side depicts a unified mass of people working toward a similar goal, and on the other exhibits the harshness of anonymized human relations. Commuter traffic and spinning cogs mirror the daily lives of the workers in the city and constitute the balance and stability from which *Berlin* derives its identity as a quickly growing city of the early 20th century. However, amidst this balance, successive shots of rollercoasters, rotating spirals and revolving doors indicate a loss of balance and moments of tension that disrupt the symbiotic, orchestrated trajectories of humans, machines and vehicles. These states, however, are solely attributed to the individual subject and have little to no effect on the bigger picture. Ruttmann's panoramic view of Berlin suggests that the key to even attempt a representation of the city lies in the symbiotic mass-movement of people and modes of transportation. Ranging from the daily commute to long-distance travel by the national railway, the city's transportation network organizes and facilitates the lives and daily needs of the people within the boundaries of the city. Where some people identify tedious repetitiveness of movements and trajectories in the city, Ruttmann, however, sees splendor, beauty and also structure.

Chapter 2: Mapping and Remapping the City: Franz Biberkopf Lost in Transition

Ja, viele [Gesichter] biegen auch seitlich um, von Süden nach Osten, von Süden nach Westen, von Norden nach Westen, von Norden nach Osten. Sie sind so gleichmäßig wie die, die im Autobus, in den Elektrischen sitzen. Die sitzen alle in verschiedenen Haltungen da und machen so das außen angeschriebene Gewicht des Wagens schwerer. Was in ihnen vorgeht, wer kann das ermitteln, ein ungeheures Kapitel (Döblin 2011:168)¹²

The great city novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz, die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf* (1929) serves as an astute testament to a literary character's perception of, and more broadly life in 20th century Berlin. The author Alfred Döblin (1879-1957) creates a textual world that highlights, as Sabine Hake puts it, "the writing of the modern city novel and the making of modern subjectivity" (Hake 2008:210). *Berlin Alexanderplatz* counts as Döblin's masterpiece and is his only work that managed to secure a wide readership shortly after publication. Before the book was published in 1929 by the Samuel Fischer publishing company, the novel was serialized in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and, within five years after its publication, the novel had already sold 50.000 copies (Mitchell 1971:2) and been adapted to film by Phil Jutzi (1931). Concerned about sales numbers, Döblin's publisher requested the addition of the subtitle *Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf* to clearly indicate that the book was, indeed, a novel. (Dollenmayer 1980:1). Nonetheless, the simplicity of the original title (later reintroduced by DTV) emphasizes the importance of the city of Berlin as an urban topography and space of the novel. In the detailed descriptions of the cityscape, the narrator often zooms in on individual people and tells us stories that are totally unrelated to the protagonist. These mini narratives seem unconnected to *Die Geschichte vom Franz Biberkopf*, but they are nonetheless invaluable pieces of the puzzle that establish the story of the city. Among common motifs, images of public transportation vehicles repeatedly make their way

¹² Döblin, Alfred. *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Die Geschichte Vom Franz Biberkopf*. München: DTV, 2011. All page references will be to this edition.

into the panoramic views of the city, followed by detailed descriptions of the exact routes along which they travel. Images of modern transportation constitute an indispensable aspect in the construction of the city's spatial layout. In this chapter, I set out to investigate the ways in which public transportation networks serve as symbols and mediators of the rapidly modernizing city in Döblin's Berlin.

As Lynch notes in his classical study from 1960, *The Image of the City*, in imagining the city there would be “dominant figures and more extensive backgrounds, focal points, and connective tissue [...] we can speculate that metropolitan images could be formed by such elements as high-speed highways, transit lines or airways” (Lynch 1986:112). Through the deployment of local transportation vehicles and their corresponding networks that organize urban spaces, Döblin creates a textual world in which machines and quantifiable regulations reign supreme. The human subject, in particular the protagonist of the story, Franz Biberkopf, stands in stark contrast to the predictable nature of the transportation network. I argue that public transportation in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* portrays a dichotomy of man vs. machine that highlights the potency of the mechanical to construct and shape the reader's , and protagonist Franz Biberkopf's imagination of the cityscape. The conflict between Franz and the city comes to the fore through a discrepancy between different modes of narration and Franz's interactions with the electric tram. Döblin tells the story of Franz using a traditional narrative and sequencing of events, whereas the story of the city and the collective comes about through literary montage. The tension that arises between the individual and the city is apparent already in the title: *Berlin Alexanderplatz* refers to the collective city body, and *Die Geschichte von Franz Biberkopf* to the individual. In order to shed further light on this, I aim to elaborate on how the interplay between the human subject and the transportation network functions. This interplay comes to the foreground through

the contrasting experiences and representations of the collective knowledge and understanding of the transportation system's functions and Franz's lack of understanding and compliance with the aforementioned network. Owing to the dual nature of Döblin's storytelling, I have split this chapter into two sections. Section I pursues the notion of public transportation as regulatory framework through which the Berlin transportation network imposes order onto the otherwise vast and chaotic spatial layout of the city. This framework regulates the time frames and spatial trajectories of everyday life, transforming the cityscape into a navigable space for the urban subject. Section II elaborates on the individual response and experience within that collective regulatory framework. Here I stress the point that Franz is incapable of making sense of the spatiality of his urban surroundings up until the moment in which his experience fuses with that of the collective.

The phenomena related to the experience of public transportation most clearly come to the fore in the text over the course of the story's first two parts, when Franz is released from prison and reenters Berlin. The way in which transportation vehicles make their way into the descriptions of the urban scenery does not change much over the course of the story, but Franz's response and feelings toward mass transportation do. Troubled by the masses of the city and the rapid changes of his surroundings, Franz's body and mind suffer from the modernization of the city's infrastructure. The electric tram especially comes to stand in as an embodiment of Franz's sense of disorientation. As a recently discharged convict, he attempts to reestablish himself as a decent ("anständig") member of society but repeatedly fails to do so. Franz tries to make a living as a newspaperman and street merchant but his endeavor is brought to a standstill by an outer force, namely the city itself, which is described as an apocalyptic demon and the Whore of Babylon, with all their temptations and pitfalls. Eventually, Franz finds himself in bad company and commits a burglary and, as a consequence thereof, when his newfound friend Reinhold pushes him out of the

getaway car, he loses an arm. Despite this unfortunate turn of events, Franz finally finds the love of his life, Mieke. But once again misfortune befalls the poor man, when Mieke is raped and murdered by Reinhold. Franz goes mad as a result, and the latter parts of the story deal with his psychological transformation and rebirth as a new man.

The story plays over approximately one and a half years and is divided into nine books, all of which employ different stylistic and rhetorical devices. Franz's deadly struggle with the city has been extensively analyzed ever since the novel's publication, which testifies to its great complexity in terms of its structural form and narrative technique. As far as the structure of the novel is concerned, Keller (1980) investigates the outline and unfolding of Franz's three attempts to conquer Berlin and the three subsequent failures according to the *Dreierprinzip*, which Keller argues is present in most of Döblin's fictional texts. Furthermore, many scholars have analyzed to what extent Döblin's texts thematically cross-reference one another, stylistically and in terms of subject matter. Previous research on the early manuscripts of the novel has arrived at the conclusion that Döblin wrote it over the course of two years, starting sometime late in 1927 and finishing around the spring of 1929 (Keller 1990:15). Scholars have also researched to what extent *Berlin Alexanderplatz* may or may not have been influenced by James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922). According to prior inquiries on Döblin's relation to *Ulysses*, he must have read it sometime in 1927-1928 (Mitchell 1971:185) and, based on Döblin's notes and manuscripts, numerous changes were made to the style of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* during this time, such as the addition of precise dates and newspaper excerpts (Keller 1990:15). Mitchell argues that Döblin incorporates more newspaper articles, filmic features and advertisement only after having read Joyce, but he appears to forget a possible connection to Walter Ruttmann's, *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt*, which Döblin had seen upon release in 1927. Cross-genre influences were of great importance to Döblin

in the late 20's and Scheunemann (Cf. Dollenmayer 1980:320 and Scheunemann 1978:167-74, 182-183) argues that Ruttmann's film probably had as much influence on Döblin's work as *Ulysses* might have had.

In portraying the urban cityscape, Döblin mixes objective reportage, stream of consciousness, mythological references and literary montage to construct, in textual form, a perception of the city that had become "standard of the avant-garde" (Fortmann 2009:125) at time at which he was writing. With respect to urban aesthetics, schools of aesthetic criticism active during the first half of the 20th century, such as Impressionism, Futurism and Dadaism, declared the literary conventions of the 19th century inadequate to the task of representing city life and insisted that new literary modes of expression be established. Hence, many readings of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* grapple with the question of how Döblin manages to rewrite and construct a narrative in accordance with the unique manifestation of subjective experience in the metropolis. As far as this new style or mode of writing is concerned, scholars' main subject of inquiry has been Döblin's use of literary montage.¹³ Literary montage will also be important for my discussion of the separation of the individual and collective. As a literary technique, montage in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* transforms time and space within the text to more closely align with the high pace and accelerated way of life brought about by electrified modes of transportation. The montage technique, too, is dual in character. Despite having part of its origin in the experience of the chaotic nature of the metropolis, Döblin's montage in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* does not automatically portray the city as fragmented, dehumanized and chaotic. Instead, as Dollenmayer suggests, it

¹³ Montage as a narrative device in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* has been extensively commented on by a number of scholars. Sabine Hake (2008: 218-219) comments on montage's potential to itself constitute a topographical quality of the cityscape. Others have hinted that the city narrates itself by means of montage (Schöne, 1965: 323). Walter Benjamin has also extensively commented on the literary montage and, what he calls, its inherent constructive dimension "as the only form in which modern philosophy could be erected" (Buck-Morss, 1989:77). In a commentary on the employment of montage in "BA," Dollenmayer suggests that montage is a mode of experience which the individual psyche of the bourgeoisie novel cannot do justice (Dollenmayer, 1980:332)

“presents a complex reality in all its complexity” (Dollenmayer 1980:17). It is through what I would like to call a “perceptual lens” of montage that public transportation in Döblin’s city comes to emphasize the predictability and strict regulations of transportation networks. These systems serve as the “other” in relation to Franz, the individual. Furthermore, the same systems stand in for spatial trajectories and navigation grids that conjure a sense of stability, comfort and order in the minds of the collective.

I. Regulation through Transportation

As the story begins, Franz Biberkopf is just about to board the 41 tram that will transport him directly to the central regions of Berlin. The choice of commencing the story by transporting the protagonist to the central area of the story, Berlin, is highly reminiscent of Ruttmann’s opening of *Berlin – Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927). Akin to Ruttmann’s editing of a sudden disruption of rippling water by the train’s forceful movement through the rural landscape, Döblin disrupts the textual flow in the opening passage by inserting, right as Franz is about to board, the line; “die Strafe beginnt” (Döblin 15). The effect that this has in the narration is very strong, especially considering its contrast to the first sentence of the story that reads; “Er stand vor dem Tor des Tegeler Gefängnisses und war *frei*” (Ebd. *emphasis added*) In creating this discrepancy in the text, the accentuated statement functions as a foreshadowing of the tragic story about to unfold. Franz has spent four years in prison as punishment for having killed his girlfriend, but the real punishment is not the prison sentence but readjustment to the life outside. The first obstacle that Franz needs to overcome is the journey into the city by means of the tram. Before actually boarding, Franz stands on the platform with his back to the prison wall and watches “Elektrische auf Elektrische vorbeifahren” (Ebd.) Other than Franz’s evident hesitation to board the arriving tram, the perpetual, habitual motion of the tram comes to the fore. No matter how long Franz waits, another tram will pull up by the station and present him with the chance to go, whether or not he

is ready. As he stands on the platform “drückte [er] den Rücken an die Rote Mauer und ging nicht” (Ebd.). His position and unwillingness to separate from the prison hints at his reluctance to leave behind the prison routines and the structures these imposed on his everyday life. Franz imagines the flow of life in prison and that of the city as distinct worlds. This becomes even more evident shortly after he boards, when Franz looks to the walls of the prison with a nostalgic gaze as the narrator states “es ist ein großes Glück, in diesen mauern zu wohnen, man weiß, wie der Tag anfängt und wie er weiter geht” (Döblin 19). Franz’s body has already been heavily influenced by the cultural and habitual milieu of the prison, and now, he involuntarily finds himself in a new environment. Now, however, Franz has to adapt to new routines that are governed by the daily rhythm and (infra)structure of the city.

Yet despite what Franz at first believes, the strictly regulated, monotone flow of life in prison; “Bum, ein Glockenschlag, Aufstehen, bum fünf Uhr dreißig, bum sechs Uhr dreißig, Aufschluß, bum bum [...] Arbeitszeit, Freistunde [...] Einschluss, guten Abend, wir habens geschafft” (Döblin 15.) might not be as different from the timetables according to which the city runs. Constantly travelling along the same routes day in and day out, one can argue that the transportation vehicles of the city impose a similarly rigid daily program. Throughout the course of the story, he reminisces about prison and returns to the topic of his release as punishment: “Das ist die Strafe, mich haben sie rausgelassen, die andern buddeln noch Kartoffeln hinter dem Gefängnis an dem großen Müllberg, und ich muss die Elektrische fahren, verflucht, es war doch ganz schön da” (113). Once again, Franz establishes a connection between his punishment and his unwillingness to travel on the tram. The structure and regulatory system of the public transportation system, despite its ability to structure and impose order on urban spaces, fails to enforce any logical order on Franz’s life. In his mind, the space and rules of the prison are more

sympathetic to human life. As opposed to the schedule in prison, public transportation does not require actual bodies to function. Döblin seems to suggest that Franz senses something uncanny about the mechanical tram's indifference to the individual body. Thus, right from the start, it is not the city itself that is intrinsically alienating or unnatural. Instead, what creates problems for Franz are the practices enforced within it by new modes of mobility.

In Berlin at the beginning of the 20th century, the city's inhabitants together took 638 million journeys a year by public transportation (Porombka 2013:161). The timetables and routes along which the vehicles operated mandated the pace of everyday life for a great number of people, and the masses of 1920's Berlin were all subject to the same exposure to transportation as Franz. Following this train of thought, I wish to further elaborate on the different effects Döblin suggests that new modes of transportation have on the individual and the collective. For the general population that utilizes street cars, subways and commuter trains on an everyday basis, the travel lines form a type of inner coordination system, and stations serve as conventional waymarks to navigate oneself around and to use as reference points. Not acclimatized to the rules of the public transportation system, Franz is confused and it unable to properly perceive his surroundings. The stability and organizing principles for the collective thus becomes Franz's chaos. This becomes all the more evident as his journey continues.

At the opening of the second book, a series of iconographic illustrations (see figure on next page) titled "Franz Biberkopf betritt Berlin" depict various regulating departments and institutions of the city administration, including two icons that represent transportation: "Verkehr;" and "Tiefbau" (50). The iconography draws attention to the orderly, written, institutional rules that manage the city, while simultaneously pointing toward the notion of exhibiting, or showing, rather

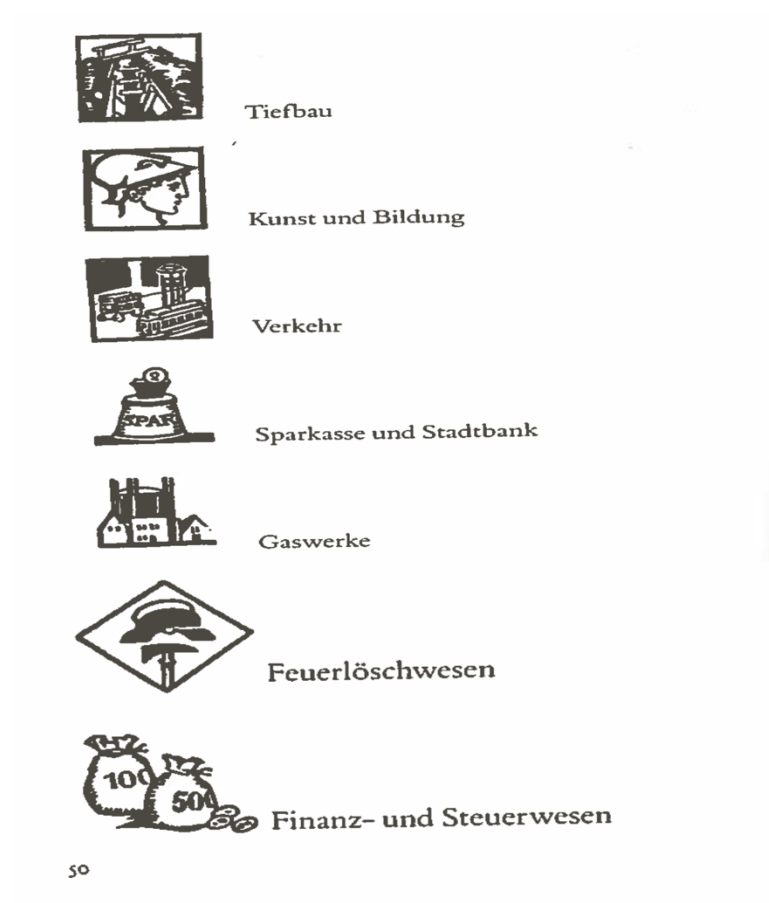


Fig. 1. Franz Biberkopf betritt Berlin. Döblin 2001. Pp. 49-50

Figure 1. Franz Biberkopf betritt Berlin. Döblin 2001. Pp 49-50

than telling through the use of icons. Similar to the way in which stations are traversed in succession, the iconography starts off with the coat of arms of Berlin, the Berlin Bear. Grouped together with traffic (“Verkehr”) and underground construction (“Tiefbau”) – indicating the construction of the subway - we find institutions such as the bank, gas plants and educational facilities. The seemingly arbitrary yet inseparable connections between the icons reflect the complex yet predetermined arrangement of the city’s spatial planning, proposing that the city as a functioning system can extend to a pictorial imagery as well. This proposition speaks to the recognition of artists to configure Berlin “not only in terms of its appearance, but also in terms of its workings, while it led others to devise ways to obscure the workings of the city” (Czaplicka 1990:3). The little icons take on qualities similar to pictograms; icons that convey meaning through a pictorial resemblance to their reference while obscuring any explicit description of the institutional function. The resemblance is established through eyesight and the abstract, albeit clear organization of city institutions that the reader sees in the text. This organized view of the city that Döblin portrays with the iconography stands in stark opposition to the fragmentary spectacle that unfolds before Franz’s eyes. Furthermore, the reference to and description of these institutions might just as well have been rendered in written discourse, but in its deploying of graphic icons, Döblin evokes the importance of visual stimuli in the city. This sudden shift from the written to the visual, and back to a panoramic rendering of Berlin as literary montage, attests to the interwovenness of the city and all of its elements. The role of the visual also seems to suggest an invitation to the reader to visually imagine and partake in the urban spectacle alongside Franz.

In the midst of this complexity, the tram travels along its constant, automated trajectory:

Die Elektrische Nr. 68 fährt über den Rosenthaler Platz, Wittenau, Nordbahnhof, Heilanstalt, Weddingplatz, Stettiner Bahnhof, Rosenthaler Platz, Alexanderplatz,

Strausberger Platz, Bahnhof Frankfurter Allee, Lichtenberg, Irrenanstalt Herzberge.

(52)

Even though the sentence, at first glance, appears as a simple list of stations, it reveals information as far as the geographical layout of the storyworld is concerned. Akin to the iconography, an enormous apparatus and network is stripped down to assessable signs that come together to create the complexity that makes up the modern city. The focal point of this scene originates from Rosenthaler Platz, since that is where the plot unfolds, but the information that the montage provides is not limited to its immediate surroundings. Instead, the spatial frame¹⁴ is set up as a network within which spaces are organized in relation to the transportation network of 1920's Berlin. Franz's surroundings, in this case Rosenthaler Platz, are not described based on what they look like, but are classified according to their position along the public transportation grid. The city spaces do not exist autonomously, but instead exist as parts of the city puzzle that they comprise. Hence, the list of stations creates an understanding of Berlin's spatial layout as a continuum, in which spaces exist across and in relation to other spaces. The image of Berlin that the montage presents is very limited, albeit geographically extensive. Following the geographical expansion from Wittenau in the north to the Lichtenberg area east of Alexanderplatz, tram nr. 9 further expands the frame of the city:

Die Elektrische knirscht um die Ecke, Nr. 9, Ostring, Hermannplatz,
Wildenbruchplatz, Bahnhof Treptow, Warschauer Brücke, Baltenplatz,

¹⁴ The spatial frames constitute the “immediate surroundings of actual events [...] shown by the narrative discourse or by the image” (Ryan, 2) and is one aspect of what Ryan calls “narrative space” in her article “Space” (2011).

Kniproderstrasse, Schönhauser Allee, Stettiner Bahnhof, Hedwigkirche, Hallesches Tor, Hermannplatz. (87)

Through a closer look, the lists of stations create an environment in which all spaces are stripped down to functional points of departure and destination. There is no space represented in between the points of departure and destination (Cf. Schivelbusch), which stands in sharp contrast to the way cities have been narrated through city subjects such as the flâneur, who would wander around in the city and savor the travel space on his aimless journey through the city. Despite the possibility to see out on the tram, the traversing of the city mimics a ride in the subway, which I further elaborate upon in the next chapter, during which one, between stations, can only stare at a dark concrete wall, thus not perceiving space between stations. Rather than viewing this merely as a destruction of space, however, there is a transformation in how travelling is rendered in narrative discourse that creates a tension between the interest of the destination and of the journey there. Here, the tension consists in the fact that the travel experience is recounted from an observer's perspective. It is as if the narrator gazes upon the city from above. The new form of vision, frequently linked with modernity – the panoptic view or what Foucault called “un régime panoptique” (Foucault 1995) –, showcases a mastery over the city space in its ability to describe the ways in which urban spaces are linked through the transportation network. Looking at the stations individually, only Rosenthaler Platz, Alexanderplatz and Herzberge¹⁵ are important to the plot. As it so happens, in the latter parts of the story, Franz undergoes psychiatric treatment at the Irrenanstalt Herzberge. Unbeknownst to the reader, the recital of station names functions as a

¹⁵ All station names are still in use except the “Irrenanstalt Herzberge,” which today corresponds to the station Lichtenberg for S- and U-Bahn. Up until 1992 Herzberge used to be a specialty hospital for neurology and psychiatric, hence the added “Irrenanstalt.” After it went through an expansion it was renamed “Das Evangelische Krankenhaus Königin Elisabeth Herzberge (KEH).” For further details on the history of Lichtenberg with surroundings, refer to; Feustel, 1996.

minor spoiler, or a hint of what is yet to come. Although being of relative insignificance to the plot, the spaces in-between can be seen as crucial pieces of a city puzzle that comprise the textual urban space. Furthermore, in the text, the stations are bound to one another exclusively by spatial means since there is no indication of how long it takes to travel between them.

Already indicated by the first verb in previous text passage: “fährt,” the relation between time and movement is arbitrary. This mode of narrating temporality forces the reader herself to connect the temporal relationship to the sequences of action. The use of a verb in the present tense has the potential to evoke further arbitrariness as far as the temporal dimension of the text is concerned. The present tense has the potential to express both a habitual, ever-ongoing process of an activity as well as a one time occurrence. We also do not know whether the tram is depicted as currently in motion or if Döblin essentially offers the reader a frozen still-shot with a camera. There is thus a disagreement, or even a separation, between the flow of time and the movements of the vehicles. The duration of the vehicles’ activity is perceived as a perpetual motion. Franz also notes this separation between two different time perceptions: “immer bimmeln die Elektrischen, wir wissen aber schon, was die Glocke geschlagen hat” (134). The urban scenery takes the flow of traffic for granted and does not necessitate a clear reference to time to indicate motion. By not providing any further adverbial phrases such as e.g. “jetzt,” or “kurz vor drei,” the present tense “fährt” essentially shows the reader a static image. Herein lays part of the secret of the montage technique that Döblin employs, or as he himself referred to it: *Kinostil*. New forms of mobility and motion introduce new modes of time perception. The reader creates a moving image by filling in the missing motion and velocity by drawing upon her own experience of the world, and the passing of transportation vehicles come to stand in as a new way to measure duration. This

new sense of duration or longevity echoes the previous passage in which Franz watches “Elektrische auf Elektrische vobefahren” (Döblin 15).

Like Döblin’s definition of his writing style as *Kinostil*, montage is a term borrowed from film studies and can be defined as “the editing technique of assembling separate pieces of thematically related film and putting them together into a sequence” (Encyclopedia Britannica Online). Walter Benjamin’s commentary in his *Das Passagen-Werk*¹⁶ provides an understanding of literary montage (Work unfinished, published in Benjamin 1972) when he states: “Method of this work: literary montage. I have nothing to say, only to show” (Benjamin 1972:574). Literary montage, as characterized by Benjamin, foregrounds the idea of exhibition, or showing, at the expense of telling or narrating an event in the traditional Genettian sense.¹⁷ Following this definition, along with my suggestion of the tram’s implicit motion, a shift from progressive action, or sequencing of events, to the more static form of exhibition, emerges. This prompts an emphasis on visual stimuli and readers’ knowledge of the world to regulate the temporal perception of public transportation. For someone who is familiar with the urban scenery, the way in which the vehicle moves is not of the most importance, but, more so, the stations to which one travels and the way in which one navigates the system as a passenger. Following the list of stations, the montage provides further information regarding the use of the electric tram:

¹⁶ Harvard university press provides the following description of *Das Passagen-Werk* (Eng: “The Arcades Project”); “The Arcades Project is Benjamin’s effort to represent and to critique the bourgeois experience of nineteenth-century history, and, in so doing, to liberate the suppressed ‘true history’ that underlay the ideological mask. In the bustling, cluttered arcades, street and interior merge and historical time is broken up into kaleidoscopic distractions and displays of ephemera. Here, at a distance from what is normally meant by “progress,” Benjamin finds the lost time(s) embedded in the spaces of things” (<http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674008021>) accessed 2015-12-15 18:42

¹⁷ In the introduction to *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (1980), Genette delineates three definitions of the term narrative. The first meaning refers to the telling of an event or a series of events; the second refers to the succession of events, which form the “study of a totality of actions and situations taken in themselves” (Genette, 1980:25); and the third meaning relates to the recounting of an event. By following the Genettean definitions, it becomes clear that the classical study of narrative boils down to the necessity of having something happen – an event - and that this happening needs to be told through narrative discourse.

Der Fahrschein für Erwachsene kostet 20 Pfennig, der Schülerfahrschein 10 Pfennig. Fahrpreismäßigung erhalten Kinder bis zum vollendeten 14. Lebensjahr, Lehrlinge und Schüler, unbemittelte Studenten, Kriegsbeschädigte, im Gehen schwer behinderte Personen auf Ausweis der Bezirkswohlfahrtsämter. Unterrichte dich über das Liniennetz. (Döblin, 52)

This sentence structure is reminiscent of information pamphlets that can be found in any station or transit hub even today. Containing no real sense of narrativity, the raw facts communicate only rules and are reminiscent of signs one might find in the tram or hear from the conductor. Now, instead of mapping the geography of Berlin, the information regarding the operation of the tram accentuates the institutional aspects of the network. It is unclear, however, who the narrator is. Porombka ascribes the information and knowledge of the transportation grid to Franz and argues that “[er] glaubt sich durch dieses Wissen in einer Art Machtposition” (Porombka 2013:240), but I remain hesitant to establish a direct link between the awareness that the montage presents to Franz’s individual consciousness. The narrating act provides no clear evidence that could prove that Franz is the focalized character. Rather than narrating Franz’s individual experience of the city, the information that the text provides resembles general knowledge. More so than an individual mind at work, the semantic field of public transportation engages with the collective mind of the inhabitants of the city. Travel trajectories, costs and discounts all relate back to the semantics of transportation. The list of rules escalates and intensifies with the mentioning of the danger posed to one’s life by breaking the rules in boarding procedures. The narrator’s command “to educate oneself” places a responsibility on the individual. In order to function in the collective public spaces of the crowded city, the city subject has to learn:

[Unterrichte dich über das Liniennetz.] Während der Wintermonate darf die Vordertür nicht zum Ein- und Aussteigen geöffnet werden, 39 Sitzplätze, 5918, wer aussteigen will, melde sich rechtzeitig, die Unterhaltung mit den Fahrgästen ist dem Wagenführer verboten, Auf- und Absteigen während der Fahrt ist mit Lebensgefahr verbunden. (Döblin 52)

The mix of objective language continues and likely stems from a number of different sources. Thus, the enumeration of rules is not just a montage of information about the transportation system but also a montage of sources, such as signs, announcements and descriptions the city dweller is exposed to when moving through transportation spaces. This information is equally available to all who use public transportation, and comes to signify the collective experience of using this system. Another noteworthy feature of this is that the sources are anchored in reality. In *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (1984), Bürger argues that by inserting “reality fragments into the work of art [it] fundamentally transforms that work. [...They] are no longer signs pointing to reality, they *are* reality” (Bürger 1984:78). The way in which Döblin connects the storyworld and the real world resembles what Genette calls “metalepsis,” that is “the act that consists precisely of introducing into one situation, by means of a discourse, the knowledge of another situation” (Genette 234). The discourse in this case is the text *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, or, to be more specific, its montage, which presents the reader with a scene that exists and operates within the same ontological framework as the extradiegetic world. As such, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is more than just a novel that tells the story of Franz Biberkopf, it is also historical documentation in regards to the “Berliner Nahverkehr” of the 1920’s. Although not a new phenomenon per sé, the anchoring of rules and spaces in reality provides the reader with information that is relatable and important knowledge for anyone who wishes to navigate the city. As a result, *Berlin Alexanderplatz* enables an

immersive narrative experience in which the Berlin of the diegesis orients itself around the same rules, or spatial frames, as the extratextual city.

Alongside the effects of the metalepsis, this blending of the diegetic and the non-diegetic world, I argue, is preconditioned by what Henry Jenkins calls environmental storytelling, or narrative architecture (Jenkins 2004). Environmental storytelling, Jenkins argues, can affect the narrative experience “in at least one of four ways: spatial stories can evoke pre-existing narrative associations; they can provide a staging ground where narrative events are enacted; they may embed narrative information within their mise-en-scene; or they provide resources for emergent narratives” (Jenkins 123). Depending on the reader’s relation to and knowledge of Berlin, the text can evoke a multitude of associations. Nevertheless, any reader who has ever navigated a city can relate to the operation of public transportation. For one who lives in Berlin and operates the system, the narrative evokes recognition and familiarity, and for one who does not, the story, as Döblin would have it, “educates” the reader. This duality also exists within the text as Franz takes on the role of the naïve, or first time reader who attempts to establish meaning and stability by reading the signs and rules of the city. The way in which these signs and rules read in the form of literary montage, replicates the confusion that the public transportation system evokes within Franz. For the experienced reader, however, the list of stations may instead create a sense of familiarity and help the reader navigate the storyworld.

The figuration of the public transportation system in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* establishes the geographical spatiality of the storyworld– its spatial frames – and creates a textual world in which the city spaces are inextricably linked to one another by the transportation network. Moreover, along with the importance of the trajectory along which the vehicles travel, the rules and regulations that apply to the spaces, relevant to the use of the same network, are emphasized and

come together to create a collective experience of the city. In narrating this collective experience, the montage technique resembles a consciousness through which various signs and sources of information are filtered. This resembles what Palmer refers to as “free indirect perception,” which he describes as the “presentation of the interface between characters and their physical context ... [and] can be expanded to *include descriptions of aspects of the storyworld* that are perceived from their perceptual, cognitive and evaluative point of view” (Palmer 2002:43-44, *emphases added*). In turn, through the lack of a clear consciousness to filter the information and experience regarding the public transportation network, Döblin’s montage transmits a narrative of urban experience as a collective one, to which the individual has to adjust. Furthermore, a microcosm of the city as a whole arises as a consequence of montage’s capacity to contract and diminish space and efficiently compile numerical and functional information regarding the public transportation system from a number of different sources. In other words, Döblin’s montage compresses the time tables, travel routes and codes of conduct that regulate the experience of travelling with public transportation and transforms the city into an accessible network for the extradiegetic reader and the characters of the diegesis alike. By mastering and understanding Berlin’s network, one can become part of the collective city body.

II. Nerves and Networks – The Individual Response

The idea of mastering modern means of transportation to move around the city appears as a motif in different forms in the early 20th century. In his poem “Kannst du radfahren?” (1917), George Grosz conflates multiple aspects of the urban experience, including that of the public transportation passenger and the visual stimulation of images that flash before his eyes. But, in the end, the emphasis is placed on the last line that sets up the stakes and contrasts cultural and modern knowledge: “Kennst Du Schiller und Goethe - ? – ja! / Aber kannst Du radfahren?” With the emergence of the metropolis, new sets of expertise needed to be developed in addition to the

classical notion of enlightenment and rationality. The ability to travel through the city is the first and foremost priority in “Kannst du radfahren?” Beals analyzes the optic experience of the speaker in the poem as he travels in a streetcar and advertisements flash before his eyes. Beals arrives at the conclusion that various stimuli to which the passenger is exposed affect his psyche and “will rumble on in [his] head!” (Beals 2013:10). *Berlin Alexanderplatz* similarly underlines the ramifications for the individual of the acceleration of everyday life in the city. The extreme contrast between Franz’s limited vision from within the prison walls and the panorama that opens up before him as the tram transports him into the heart of Berlin leaves him shocked. Indeed, the transportation network even impedes Franz’s inner nervous system. Shocked by his journey to the heart of Berlin, it renders him incapable of engaging in sexual intercourse. In contrast to the collective regulatory frameworks that Döblin alludes to in literary montage, Franz’s individual response comes to the fore through intimate, personal experiences. The mode of narration in the telling of these experiences resembles the traditional narrative style centered around events. This discrepancy in the narrative style further cements my argument concerning the public transportation network’s capability of foregrounding the collective and individual responses simultaneously.

Freedman investigates the effects of increased velocity in transportation and how it manifests itself in and creates new collective and individual narratives of daily life in the city. In her pioneering study from 2011 *Tokyo in Transit: Japanese Culture on the Rails and Road*, she argues that public transportation vehicles stand as metonymies for the rapidly modernizing city itself and that authors’ depictions thereof respond to the contradictions they perceive in modernity and expose the effects of rapid change on the individual (Freedman 2011:20). Along similar lines, I argue that the notion of transport as a trope and narrative device in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* provides

insight into ways in which the urban experience shaped and affected, and possibly still shapes and affects, human identity and subjectivity. The identity of the city-dweller is brought to the fore by the way it stands in relation to the rigid transportation network. Monika Fludernik maintains that identity “becomes notable only when set into relief against one or more others: others than can be non-human (landscape, nature, the city, society); or human subjects ...” (Fludernik 2007:271); in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* the transportation network stands in as the “other” to open up a discussion of human identity in the city. The effects that the narrative employment of public transportation has on the story of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* have the potential to enter into discussion with modernity’s effect on the individual mind, body and construction of identity.¹⁸

The consistency of the transportation system and the reiterations of tram stations in the first and second book stand in stark juxtaposition to Franz’s failure to impose any kind of logic or order onto his surroundings. As he travels on the tram toward Berlin, he watches the city scenery unfold before him. It is clear that Franz senses a great distance between himself and the spectacle that reveals itself before his eyes.

Draußen bewegte sich alles, aber – dahinter – war nichts! Es – lebte – nicht! Es hatte fröhliche Gesichter, es lachte, wartete auf der Schutzinsel gegenüber Aschinger zu zweit oder zu dritt, rauchte Zigaretten, blätterte in Zeitungen. So stand das da wie die Laternen – und – wurde immer starrer. Sie gehörten zusammen mit den Häusern, alles weiß, alles Holz. (16)

¹⁸ In the light of Rita Felski’s work though, it is important to bear in mind that the novel at hand portrays the male experience of modernity as the paradigmatic one. The female identity and her individual experience of the transportation grid is subject to the male gaze through not only the male protagonist Franz but also through the writer Alfred Döblin. The single woman adrift in the city has been a recurring theme in 20th century writing (Griffin 64) Frequently, these women secure themselves in the city by finding a man who will support them as their partner.

Franz sees a mass of people, which he refers to as “es“ – it - and he detects an emptiness behind this *it*. The view of the city from inside the tram detaches Franz from the outside world. He exhibits an inability to either differentiate the individual from the mass, or the mass from the houses surrounding it. The urban landscape and the people in it blend together. There is not a trace of the individual but only an anonymous “es” that appears no different than the rigid street lamps.

It is not until Franz arrives in the city that he starts to think about what to do next. Once outside, Franz’s libido takes over: “Franz war schon draußen auf der Straße im Regen. Wat machen wir? Ich bin frei. Ich muß ein Weib haben. Ein Weib muß ick haben. Schöne Lust, fein ist das Leben draußen“ (33). As he ends up in bed with a woman (most likely a prostitute), Franz fails to perform and rushes out on the street: “Luft! Regnet noch immet. Was ist nur los? Ich muß mir ne andre nehmen. Erst mal ausschlafen. Franz, wat ist den mir dir los?” (34). Döblin suggests that the abrupt transitional journey to the heart of the city and overstimulation have repercussions on Franz:

Die sexuelle Potenz kommt zustande durch das Zusammenwirken 1. des innersekretorischen *Systems*, 2. des Nervensystems und 3. des Geschlechtsapparates ... In diesem *System* ... wird der gesamte Sexualapparat von der Hirnrinde bis zum Genitale geladen. Der erotische Eindruck bringt die erotische *Spannung* der Hirnrinde zur Auslösung, der *Strom* wandert als erotische Erregung ... Dann *rollt* die Erregung ... Nicht ungehemmt, denn ehe sie das Gehirn verlässt, muss sie die *Bremsfedern* der Hemmungen passieren, jene [...] seelischen Hemmungen ... [spielen] eine große Rolle. (34-35 *emphases added*)

The predictability of the transportation system that operates according to set timetables and schedules can here be contrasted to the complexity of sexual potency. By using wording such as “System,“ “Spannung,“ “Strom“ and “Bremsfeder,“ Döblin suggests a connection between the

human body as a system and transportation networks as a modern system created by human hands. The tripartite system that enables the male erection is related to the functioning of the electrical tram. Franz's release from prison and his exposure to the mechanical, electrified transportation network disrupts his biological performance. Furthermore, the way in which the narrative describes the "Tarifgemeinschaft" (employers' association) further cements the relationship between a biological and economically constructed system: "Die drei Berliner Verkehrsunternehmen, Straßenbahn, Hoch- und Untergrundbahn, Omnibus, bilden eine Tarifgemeinschaft" (52). We are informed of a collaborative corporation that operates the system. Akin to the three bodily functions that account for the male sexual potency, there are three separate companies that comprise the one "Tarifgemeinschaft." The network's dominance over the human system underlines the precarity of the latter and, in this case, foregrounds Franz's individual response to the organization imposed by networks of transportation. Emerging from this comparison is an image of transportation networks as the city's nervous system and Berlin as a body to which Franz consistently fails to adapt, or possibly a body that refuses Franz.

In *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, dealings with public transportation are not limited to Franz's perspective. Occasionally, the montage zooms in on other individuals in the city to narrate their stories. There is thus a discrepancy between the urban scenery as registered by Franz, in which he cannot make out the individual of the mass, and the parallel vignettes offered through the panoramic view of the narrator.

Ein junges Mädchen steigt aus der 99, Mariendorf, Lichtenrader Chaussee, Tempelhof, Hallesches Tor, Hedwigskirche, Rosenthaler Platz, Badstraße, Seestraße Ecke Togostraße, in den Nächten von Sonnabend zu Sonntag ununterbrochener Betrieb zwischen Uferstraße und Tempelhof, Friedrich-Karl-

Straße, in Abständen von 15 Minuten. Es ist 8 Uhr abends, sie hat eine Notenmappe unter dem Arm, den Krimmerkragen hoch ins Gesicht geschlagen, die Ecke Brunnenstraße-Weinbergsweg wandert sie hin und her. Ein Mann im Pelz spricht sie an, sie fährt zusammen, geht rasch auf die andere Seite. Sie steht unter der hohen Laterne, beobachtet die Ecke drüben. Ein älterer kleiner Herr mit Hornbrille erscheint drüben, sie ist sofort bei ihm. Sie geht kichernd neben ihm. Sie ziehen die Brunnenstraße rauf. (58)

In this passage, Döblin describes the situation of a young woman journeying through the city. Despite no real indication of where she exits (although presumably at Rosenthaler Platz), the montage identifies her tram by number. Furthermore, at the expense of further explanation and details of this young girl's appearance and movements, Döblin instead acknowledges deviations in the time table. In the same way as the vehicle is identified and described in the light of their number and travel route, so is this girl's identity restricted to the line she has traveled. Instead of a sequencing of events, we can here observe a sequence or ordering that creates a hierarchy of information, in which public knowledge of the network takes precedence over an individual's personal traits. Judging by the description of the woman, she could be a working class woman, possibly a secretary. The folder she is holding might be an indication that she has come directly from work and she appears to be slightly nervous, or possibly afraid. The faux fur-collar is turned up, almost as if she were hiding behind it, and her back-and-forth walking on the street signals that she is either nervous, lost or that she is waiting for somebody. She gives off a striking resemblance to the women wandering the streets in Irmgard Keun's *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen* (1932) which the protagonist Doris describes as: "Die gehen nur. Sie haben gleiche Gesichter und viel Maulwurfpelze – also nicht ganz erste Klasse – aber doch shick" (Keun 2002:67). The resemblance

is most striking insofar as these women are described as well put-together, yet not flawless. In the case of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, however, the female plays the role of the observed. The woman's individual response to her surroundings, as opposed to the individual Franz, is not focalized through her experience, but through the gaze of the narrator, sweeping across Berlin. The woman, as opposed to Franz, appears to be a part of the network. The repetitive motion of walking back-and-forth mimics and represents the movement of the daily commute, travelling back-and-forth between the home and workplace. This relation between the movements of the vehicles and the individual woman establishes a similarity between her and the public transportation vehicles, which are both objects of the look, of montage, in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. Contrary to Franz, this young woman does not suffer from any repercussions due to her travelling with the tram, but appears to be more assimilated to the system. What affects her is not the exposure to urban overstimuli, but, instead, the unknown man who approaches her. As far as mobility and intercity transportation are concerned, she is the successful navigator.

Franz never truly finds comfort in traversing the city by means of public transportation. Over the course of the story, he learns how to operate it, but he also experiences a nostalgic feeling toward the pedestrian, slower paced rhythm of life. In book four, walking to visit the Jewish quarters in Münzstraße, Franz looks upon the people of the city in a new light, in comparison to what he observes from within the tram: "Er bemerkte zufrieden, daß alle Menschen ruhig die Straße entlangzogen, die Kutscher luden ab, die Behörden kümmerten sich um die Häuser, es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall, alsdann können auch wir hier gehen" (131). The thundering call that resounds (es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall) is directly quoted from Max Schneckenberger's "Die Wacht am Rhein" from 1840, a popular marching song from the Willhelinian Period that expresses the complicated relationship between France, Germany and the Rhineland. In this case,

however, rather than alluding to the Rhineland situation, the insertion of a marching song further emphasizes the rhythm of walking. Despite the emphasis and clear outline of the stations along which the trams travel, Franz only really finds his way in life as a pedestrian. The omniscience of the transportation network that comes to the foreground through montage should thus not be attributed to Franz. Furthermore, the vehicles that operate within this network also carry out the city's attempt to expunge Franz. The new modes of transportation cause him harm. The harm inflicted on Franz ranges from the mentally disorienting effect triggered by his travels with the electric tram, to his body's loss of an arm to a car.¹⁹ Transportation in the city figures both symbolically and literally as obstacles for Franz to overcome, physically and mentally.

Franz's struggle to adapt to the pace that modern transportation orchestrates, or the structure it imposes on life in the city, does not coincide with the larger point that Döblin suggests about transportation in the novel. Through the enumeration of station names, the frequent reference to trams and busses passing by, and the concise and assessable descriptions of how to operate the network, Döblin creates a Berlin that is highly functional and mobile. Franz's is a story of the individual who has trouble acclimatizing and changing along with Berlin, and does not define the response of the collective. To describe what is going on inside the heads of those who simply go along with the flow, is not, as Döblin suggests, worth writing a book about: "Was in ihnen vorgeht, wer kann das ermitteln, ein ungeheures Kapitel. Und wenn man es täte, wem diene es? Neue Bücher? Schon die alten gehen nicht, und im Jahre 27 ist der Buchabsatz gegen 26 um soundsoviel Prozent zurückgegangen" (168). In the narrative of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the figuration of public transportation becomes a conduit to tell the story not only of an individual, but the general

¹⁹ In my reading of the text, Franz's loss of a limb functions as a catalyst for his transformation. It can be viewed as a ritualistic sacrifice that triggers his process of initiation into the city. Franz's incompatibility with the city's transportation network literally required a piece of his body to be removed. The fact that the limb is lost to a private car and not to, e.g. the tram, also deserves further investigation.

population navigating the urban space by means thereof. Franz, in his inadaptability, is affected in body and mind. The process of his mental decay finally ends after a confrontation between Death and the Whore of Babylon, out of which Death emerges victorious. Reborn as Franz Karl Biberkopf, “[hat er] für diesmal eine Rückfahrkarte bekommen” (446) and travels back to a Berlin that finally makes sense to him:

Und was er dann tut? Er fängt langsam an, auf die Straße zu gehen, er geht in Berlin herum. Berlin, 52 Grad 31 nördliche Breite, 13 Grad 25 östliche Länge, 20 Fernbahnhöfe, 121 Vorortbahn, 27 Ringbahn, 14 Stadtbahn, 7 Rangierbahn, Elektrische, Hochbahn, Autobus, es gibt nur a Kaiserstadt, es gibt nur a Wien ... Er geht durch die Stadt. Da sind viele Dinge, die einen gesund Machen können, wenn nur das Herz gesund ist.” (448)

The return ticket to Berlin grants him not only new life, but a new mastery of the city. Despite the chaotic layout of the city, the network binds all pieces together and creates one unified city. In this case, the layout of the city is no longer characterized as a list of stations, but is defined and marked by exact coordinates. Geographically, the city is now placed in a tangible spot on the world map which suggests that Franz finally manages to anchor his knowledge and understanding of his local surroundings onto a global system. In relation to the city dweller’s connection to their surroundings, Elisabeth Grosz informs us that: “in order for a subject to take position as a subject, he needs to be able to locate himself in the space occupied by his body” (Grosz 1995:89). Once Franz manages to position himself within the transportation network, the city is no longer a scattered puzzle, but, instead, the interwoven urban spaces that constitute a unity, held together by the network of, and numerous means of transportation.

Through these numerous references to public transportation in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, both in relation to the individual and the collective, Döblin documents what it means to come to terms with a rapidly changing city. Döblin's innovative rendition of transportation networks in shape of literary montage showcases an attempt to stipulate the city as text and text as city. Moreover, by examining Franz's response to public transportation over the course of the story, it becomes clear that the tension between Franz and the system functions as a narrative device to gauge his inner constitution, while also bringing to the fore the collective, or modern society's relation and understanding of urban spaces. The scattered pieces of the city are held together by the transportation network and Franz's resistance and failure to be a part of this system make it clear that the problems Franz faces are not part of the city body, but within the individual, the organism, Franz himself. Franz's individual consciousness and experience reflect the reciprocity between the city and its inhabitants. As Kenny puts it in his analysis of the implications of the senses of our understanding of modernity: "the body played a fundamental role in mediating the relationship between city dwellers and urban environments, propelling the tangible physicality of streets and buildings into the realm of individual consciousness and public discourse" (Kenny 2014:4). The new modes of navigating and networking within the city pose challenges that prompt adaptation and evolution in becoming a successful, initiated urban subject. Franz's new understanding of the city coincide with a new attitude toward the conduit of all evil he sees in Berlin: the tram. In the end, Franz's problem with Berlin's transportation network is a matter of perspective more so than the actual mode of transportation. "Die Elektrische" embodies Franz's inability to abandon the ground-level view of the city; only by zooming out and understanding the city's placement on a global scale is he finally able to come to terms with his urban demons.

Chapter 3: Making Sense of the Subway:

Tunnel Vision in the Berlin U-Bahn

In most mythology, the underworld is a serious and not necessarily pleasant place.

It's a place you want to get out of. Hell, for example.

An analogy might be drawn to the New York subway,

whose riders, let's face it, want out.

(Edidin, P. "A Playful Helper in the Subway's Depths." *New York Times*, March 9 2000)

The importance of the subway for the urban image of Berlin is easily, and many times literally overlooked. Hidden from view, deep below the crowds and bustle of the Berlin streets, it pierces its way through the city via a complex network of underground tunnels and shafts. The Berlin subway (U-Bahn), however, is one of, if not the most important, transportation networks in the city. Although imperceptible to the bustling urban masses above ground, the underground stations, tunnels and subway cars are inseparable from the imagination of the modern European metropolis. Every day they exude a metropolitan aura while simultaneously controlling the flow of millions of people. The Berlin U-Bahn is also much more than an efficient mode of transportation: "U-Bahnen sind auch Aushängeschilder der Städte, machen sie zu etwas Besonderem und verhelfen ihnen zu Identität und Image" (Schmucki 2012:543). Even more so than shaping the identity and image of the metropolis, the subway enabled new travel routes and changed the way people moved about the city. With the introduction of a subterranean layer to the city, a vertical dimension is added to the way in which the urban subjects traverse and maneuver themselves in the cityscape. I argue that, in early 20th century Berlin, this newly introduced subterranean spatial component to early 20th century Berlin challenged the human imagination to find appropriate and commensurable modes and narratives of representation for travel and transportation below, or "inside" the urban landscape.

When the first Berlin U-Bahn station opened in 1902, the dark tunnels below ground were unknown territory to most urban dwellers. Spaces deep below the surface world had been, up until

the excavation of underground tunnels in early and mid 19th century,²⁰ isolated from the living and reserved for the dead. Even today, pieces of art in the U-Bahn exemplify the spatial and mental separation between the realms of the inhabited surface world and subterranean Berlin. For example, as you walk down to the metro at Rathaus Steglitz in Berlin, Hades' multi-headed dog and gatekeeper of the underworld, Cerberus, guards the front hall of the station.²¹ Indeed, the invasion into the depths of the city initiates a new way of imagining and conceptualizing the urban landscape. In order to provide further understanding of this problem, I will investigate textual reflections on the early phases of the U-Bahn's history (1902-1930's).²² Of special interest to me are the paradoxical visual associations in my chosen texts. On the one hand, the construction of the subway laid open previously hidden spaces of the city's inside for the human gaze to behold. On the other hand, however, a lack, or limitation of vision is omnipresent in imageries of the underground U-Bahn stations and subway cars. The texts that I have worked with clearly depict an experimental literary enterprise to make sense of the new urban underground travel-space. Owing to the railway, traveling above ground at high speed had been a familiar phenomenon in Germany since the 19th century. Works of cultural representation had thus already developed a certain degree of familiarity and conformity with vehicles travelling above ground.²³ The intrusion into the underground challenges the ways in which urban travel is rendered in textual narration.

As this chapter shows, the discrepancy between what the U-Bahn network highlights and

²⁰ The most prominent early 19th century underground construction project is the Thames Tunnel in London, connecting Rotherhithe and Wapping.

²¹ The Rathaus Steglitz subway station was built between 1969-1973. Shortly after opening, the station was decorated with the plastic sculpture "Höllenhund aus Edelstahl" by Waldemar Grzimek (1918-1984). The analogy and comparison of the underground to Hell is mostly a Western habit; Amarendranath Basu, in discussion of a Bombay subway, used eastern mythology and instead argues that the urge to go underground expresses a longing for the safety of the womb. See: "Metro-Rail and the Unconscious," *Samiska* 39, 1995. 16-27.

²² In 1930, the last major expansions of the Berlin U-Bahn finished. These included the route extension Nordring-Pankow and the opening of the route between Alexanderplatz and Friedrichsfelde (Cf. Bosetzky 2000).

²³ For further information on the early history of the German railway in literature and art, see: Schivelbusch (1986) and Youngman (2005).

obscures in Berlin gives rise to an uncanny alienation, or “othering” of the U-Bahn as a mode of transportation and changes the ways in which literary representations of urban travelers read their surroundings. The texts I have chosen to analyze rely heavily on otherworldly metaphors in the descriptions of the underground space. Their employment of otherworldly metaphors, I argue, is connected to the lack of vision and absence of natural light in the underground. The visual qualities of the underground, combined with experience of traveling through tunnels, come to heavily shape the ways in which representations of the subway take shape. Furthermore, the texts I examine also show that the installation of the underground transportation network in the dark underground affected day-to-day travel in the city, giving rise to an urban transportation culture that is analogous to the experience of traveling through a tunnel, drawing the travelers’ attention away from the periphery toward what lay before them.

The actual operation of the subway from its inception in 1902 gave it an independent and unique status. Porombka comments of the reliability on the U-Bahn and its potential to operate freely from the transportation networks above ground:

Sind die Fahrten in S-Bahn und Bus grundsätzlich von den Stockungen und Kollisionen eines stetig zunehmenden Verkehrsaufkommens begleitet, dann wird die U-Bahn zum Symbol der reibungslosen, störungsfreien Perfektion der Nahverkehrsinfrastruktur, deren oberirdischer Teil zum maßgeblichen Auslöser jener nervösen Reizung erklärt wird, wie sie als typisch für den modernen Großstädter gelten. (Porombka 2013:334)

In Porombka’s view of early 20th century Berlin traffic, the reasons for expanding the city’s transportation network below ground were two-fold. First, it diminished the risks for accidents that could potentially occur by adding further transportation lines on the surface, and secondly it could

avoid the “nervöse Reizung” (nervous stimulation, overstimuli) that could easily be triggered in the hectic streets of the city above. The darkness and limited field of vision in the subway space result in an experience that makes for productive comparisons to the ideas and concepts I brought into discussion regarding the figuration of transportation in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Sinfonie*. In previous chapters I discussed montage as a way of representing transportation and urban mobility in works of art. Rather than the figuration of an unsuccessful user, in portraying the human experience of the U-Bahn, it is not the style of representation that problematizes the space, but the symbols, topics and metaphors of vision that the narratives employ that mark and foreground the “otherness” of the system. This ambivalence and “otherness” of the U-Bahn space, I argue, come to the foreground through mythological and otherworldly allusions in the texts.

As previously mentioned, the chosen materials showcase an experimental effort to make sense of Berlin’s underground transportation network. I have divided this chapter into four parts. The first part provides a brief history of the Berlin U-Bahn and the following three parts each grapple with different phenomena that are present in the texts. In the second section, I discuss the position of the subway within the “city body.” In relation to this, I discuss how authors imagined the intrusion into the actual interior of the city as a living body and the employment of otherworldly metaphors that function as a way of undermining the scientific medical discourse of city-as-body. In the second part of the chapter I take a closer look at how authors saw the journey by subway car as differing from the experience of traveling on the surface. In the concluding section, I zoom out and discuss the Berlin subway network’s influence on the image of Berlin’s public transportation. Throughout the chapter I stress the importance of the underground as an “othered” urban space

whose existence has drastic consequences for the image of public transportation networks in Berlin between 1902-1930.²⁴

I. The Birth of the U-Bahn

To begin with, I would like to provide a brief historical overview of how the Berlin U-Bahn relates to other metropolises' underground transportation systems and what makes it unique. First and foremost, the Berlin U-Bahn differs from other subway systems built in the early 20th century through its balanced combination of aesthetics and functionality:

die Berliner [...] Untergrundarchitektur ist [einmalig]. Die weitgehend reine Funktionalität der Pariser Métro oder die Nüchternheit der Londoner Tube ermöglichen kaum, in einem solchen Maß Bau- und Architekturgeschichte [...] nachzuvollziehen, wie das in Berlin der Fall ist. (Bongiorno 2007:9)

Despite being situated underground, urban architects in Berlin have dedicated, and continue to dedicate up until today, to invest equally in both functionality and design. In the case of Berlin, a great deal of effort is put into making the transition between the underground and surface worlds materialize naturally in the traveler's mind (Cf. Salm 1998). The theme of visual perception and appropriation was thus an important topic already in the planning phase of the U-Bahn. The ultimate goal of orchestrating a smooth transition between the two layers of the urban landscape is to make the subway feel like part of the city. Too strong of a rupture between above and below might cause a sense of disorientation, achieving the very opposite of what the introduction of the network was meant to embody, namely order and improved navigability in the city. One of the leading architecture critics of early English modernism, Philip Morton Shand, describes the Berlin

²⁴ Even though my main object of inquiry is the subway system in Berlin, I have also drawn inspiration from Kafka's visit to Paris in 1903-1920 and Brook's extensive 1997 study of the history of the New York subway.

U-Bahn stations, short and simple as “Order on the underground” (Weber 2006:90) and greatly praises the Swedish architect Alfred Grenander’s thoughtful construction of the Berlin U-Bahn stations. The construction of the Berlin U-Bahn system also relied heavily on inspiration from cities such as Paris, London and New York. Owing to the underground stations and tunnels, world metropolises of the 20th and 21st century, Paris, London, Moscow, New York, Tokyo and of course Berlin have a significant portion of the city body hidden from plain view. The origins and assemblage of each underground space, however, vary and bestow a unique aura to each city. Some cities invest more than others in the interior design of the space, which is not solely based on budgetary questions, but also on the history of the subway networks.²⁵

Underlying most motivational statements regarding the introduction of subway system in major cities is the desire to construct a network that can unite scattered communities within the city. In the case of London, however, the reason to expand the tube was the literal opposite, namely to scatter crowds of people - to move workers away from the inner-city in order to reduce the amount of people living the slums (Krewani 2002:187). In Berlin, the U-Bahn’s main purpose was to remedy the overcrowded streets at the turn of the 20th century by introducing an additional mode of transportation. The streets of the city, similar to my description of Ruttmann’s *Berlin*, had turned into “riesige[] Fließbänder[] für die Arbeitskräfte der Massenproduktion” (Bendikat 1999:22). Responding to this sense of urban crisis, the electrical companies Siemens and AEG (Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft AG) competed to construct an underground transportation system. AEG

²⁵ The inauguration of subway transportation lines stems from a wide range of reasons that influence our perception and understanding of them. For example, the Moscow subway was not primarily initiated as a transportation system, but rather as a “Entwurf einer wahren Stadt der kommunistischen Zukunft” (Groys 2004:36). The introduction of an underground network of tunnels was part of a larger ideological project in the 1920s to create a utopian subterranean city and the space was decorated accordingly. Also the New York subway was partly an ideological statement of optimism. In 1888, New York Mayor Abram S. Hewitt implied his hopes of making the transportation system into a means for the city to achieve its “imperial destiny as the greatest city in the world” (Brooks 1997:53). Roughly 50 years later, on the other side of the globe, the Tokyo subways opened in 1927 and it remained until after the 1930s before they even became an integral part of the urban infrastructure (Freedman 2011:6).

built two test tunnels in the image of the highly successful London tube, but in 1899, Siemens ended up with a contract for the Berlin U-Bahn and the first underground station opened in 1902 at Potsdamer Platz. The project was successful and the U-Bahn has ever since been considered a reliable mode of transportation in Berlin. After a couple of successful years in operation, the U-Bahn network rapidly spread and expanded throughout the central areas of Berlin, only to come to a halt at the end of WWI, owing to lack of materials and manpower. Shortly after the war, on January 1 1920, eight cities, 59 rural municipalities and 27 “Gutsbezirken” came together to establish the township of “Groß-Berlin” and in 1929, at West Berlin Mayor Ernst Reuter’s initiative, all of Berlin’s transportation companies came together as BVG (Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe – Berlin Transport Authority) (Salm 1998).

II. Entering the “Guts” of the City.

The U-Bahn’s impact on the surface world first and foremost becomes visible during construction phases of new stations. Expanding the network across Berlin, starting with the first station in 1902, was naturally not a task that could be completed overnight, and the installation of the electrified tunnel network required extensive digging, drilling and cutting in the streets above.²⁶ In his 1930 response to Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Benjamin describes the “violent transformations” that took place during the construction of the U-Bahn on Alexanderplatz (finished in 1930):

[Alexanderplatz] Das ist die Stelle, wo seit zwei Jahren die gewaltsamensten Veränderungen vorgehen, Bagger und Rammen ununterbrochen in Tätigkeit sind, der Boden von ihren Stößen, von den Kolonnen der Autobusse und U-Bahnen

²⁶ The Berlin U-Bahn is best seen as a work in progress. Owing to the city’s volatile 20th century history of war bombings and division of post-war Germany, the network has constantly had to adapt according to the changing geographical layout.

zittert, tiefer als sonst wo die Eingeweide der Großstadt [...] sich aufgetan haben.
(Benjamin 1977:233)

The language Benjamin uses here is carnal in nature and provides a picture of the construction site as an operating table. Moreover, the method of construction used to build and electrify the tunnels, the so called *cut and cover* technique, can be compared to a surgical cut on the city body. The construction literally opened up and laid bare a vision of the city's interior. Here, the analogy and similarity between the actual human body and that of the city offers a comprehensible, yet disturbing, comparison. Benjamin identifies the transformation done to the space as a violent act that lays bare the "guts" (Eingeweide) of the city, establishing a link between the bowels of a human body and the city. In Benjamin's description, the construction machines seem to violate the space. The words he uses to describe the process do not leave a positive impression on the reader, but rather act as a way of signaling and describing a trespassing or violation of spatial boundaries. Furthermore, writing in 1930, Benjamin is already familiar with the functions of the network that is currently under construction, and his critical tone first and foremost appears to be related to the wound that the machines inflict on the city surface. Reading the construction of the U-Bahn as such, the transportation networks' invasion of the city's guts problematizes the textual narrations of the urban landscape even before they start to operate.

In literary depictions, reflections and theories on urbanity, the city is often conceptualized as a body.²⁷ This analogy, however, appears troublesome when employed in representation of spaces below ground – beneath the visible surface skin. If the city is imagined as a human body,

²⁷ Owing to such anthropomorphism, authors and theorists alike have the possibility to discover the potential of using the city as the actual protagonist of a narrative. Thomas Mann, Henry James, Friedrich Nietzsche and Marcel Proust have applied it to Venice, whereas Victor Hugo and Honoré du Balzac have done it to Paris. Alfred Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* provides a perfect example. For further reference, see: Walther and Matthey 2010.

the intrusion into the “carnal” interior appears to give rise to a troubling image of the U-Bahn network. The city’s expansion through digging downward contributed a new and unexplored scenery in the urban scenery. Spatial expansions of the city were of course nothing new per sé, but this expansion had so far been either horizontal or, if vertical, upward.²⁸ This feeling or sense, of discomfort I argue, stems from a position of doubt as to the readability of the city. Previous analogies and modes of representing journeys through and spatial expansions of the city were no longer applicable, and new symbols, motifs and images were required to depict the experience of traveling underground.

The underground stations in particular have fascinated writers and artists over the last century. Kafka writes about his experience of the Paris Métro in one of his diary entries²⁹ (Kafka 1994). Owing to the lack of sunlight and dark steel walls in the wagon, Kafka’s first impression of the metro hints at a failure to properly perceive his surroundings: “Die Metro schien mir damals leer” (Ebd.). The combination of “scheinen” (seem, appear) and “damals” signals that his first impression of the space was later proved false. Not yet adjusted to the space below and fooled by the artificial light, Kafka fails to perceive the reality of his surroundings. Kafka, as a naïve – or first-time-reader of the underground space - has a very optimistic understanding of the subway that is reminiscent of a tourist brochure: “Die Metro ist wegen ihrer leichten Verständlichkeit für einen erwartungsvollen und schwächlichen Fremden, die beste Gelegenheit, sich den Glauben zu verschaffen, richtig und rasch im ersten Anlauf in das Wesen von Paris eingedrungen zu sein” (Ebd.) Once again the analogy of the subway being “inside” the city comes to the foreground. The

²⁸ As a point of comparison, the construction of the Berlin U-Bahn coincides with the beginnings of flight which date back to the years around 1903-1910.

²⁹ Franz Kafka traveled from Prague to Paris twice together with Max Brod in 1910 and 1911. His notes about the Paris subway combines with impressions from both visits. Important to note is that there was no subway in Prague at the time. In other words, his diary entry describes his very first encounter with the new vehicle. In both Brod’s and Kafka’s records, it is evident that they were very interested in the social and physical phenomena that accompany the new mode of transportation. (Cf. Kafka 1994)

semantics of the verb “eindringen” (invade, penetrate, intrude) is much in line with Benjamin’s word choices in describing the construction site over Alexanderplatz that lays bare the “Eingeweide” of the city. This time, however, the emphasis is placed on *being* “inside” rather than merely exposing it.

By reference to the intrusion into the city’s interior, we catch sight of a crisis in the human imagination of the urban which consequently raises questions regarding human nature in the city; If we project our own image onto that of our habitat, we will have negative associations with any actions that inflict harm on the body. In the midst of this interplay between the textually constructed urban body and metaphorical use of the human body, I argue, urban myths of the U-Bahn remedy the notion of harming the body by positioning the U-Bahn within an imaginary realm and thus moving away from a more scientific, biological view of the city. Berlin-born Kurt Tucholsky (1890-1935), who counts as one of the most important writers of the Weimar Republic, provides commentary on the Berlin U-Bahn in his 1929 picture³⁰ book *Deutschland Deutschland über alles*.³¹ In Tucholsky’s view, the dark tunnels of the city host creatures that do not belong inside the human body: “der schwarze Tunnel ist ein unheimlicher Schlauch, in dem die Riesen wohnen; auf die lastet der Steindamm und hundert rollende Wagen, die du leise hörst” (Tucholsky 1994:115). The subway network below the city provides the city not only with a means of transportation through hundreds of rolling cars, but also hosts mythical creatures in a city where technology and machines reign supreme.³² In an attempt to visualize what might exist in the dark tunnels, Tucholsky alludes to a mythical tradition and projects imaginary creatures onto the space.

³⁰ Pictures taken by graphical designer John Heartfield (1891-1968)

³¹ This picture book project can on the one hand be seen as a celebratory work by Tucholsky that exhibits everything he loved about Germany, whereas, on the other hand, he does not hesitate to express what he disliked about the country.

³² This can in many ways be compared to Franz Biberkopf’s relation to the Whore of Babylon, residing beneath the city, who embodies what he sees as the violent and seductive characteristics of Berlin.

In doing so, the space he creates in his description reads like fiction and foregrounds, I argue, the “otherness” of the U-Bahn rather than its function as a mode of transportation. In reading the underground tunnel network as such, the reciprocity between the user of the Berlin U-Bahn network and the space in which it operates comes to the fore. In contrast to surface travel in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* or *Sinfonie*, Tucholsky situates the human experience of travelling with the U-Bahn within an imaginary realm instead of within the geographical spatial frames of the “worldly” Berlin.³³

Despite the movement away from a factual, or documentary style of narration, Tucholsky’s text manages to achieve similar ends to Ruttmann’s *Sinfonie*. The interplay between urban transportation and its users remains intact despite the shift toward fictive motifs and symbols. The effect of being on the literal insides of the city, according to Tucholsky, conjures within the urban subject a sense of being one with the city: “[E]inen kurzen Augenblick lang ist da so eine Art Romantik, es riecht nach Untergrund, deine Venen sind voll von der Großstadt” (Tucholsky 1994:115). Here we can see a symbiotic relation between the city and its inhabitants. Being inside the city also means that the city is inside of you. The resemblance between underground tunnels and human blood veins further empowers this reciprocity between city and human. Thus, in a similar vein to Ruttmann’s *Sinfonie*, Tucholsky’s image of the U-Bahn station facilitates a symbiosis between city and human. The way the symbiosis succeeds, according to the image that Tucholsky presents, is by smelling the scent “Untergrund,” thus effectively internalizing a perceptual quality of the surrounding space. As a result of the lack of vision,

³³ This notion of the underground hosting otherworldly creatures, be it giants of Hade’s multi-headed dog, also conjures a sense of danger. On an account of what the U-Bahn connoted to passengers in London, we are informed of the interplay between the mythical and danger: “Als bevorzugtes Transportmittel für die Arbeitermassen wird die U-Bahn in literarischen Stilisierungen für die Ober- und Mittelschichten auch vielfach zum mythischen Ort von Gefahr und Bedrohung” (Krewani 2002:188).

Tucholsky alludes to the sense of smell (riechen) and listening (hören) to account for the experience of the underground, but further down the tunnels, where you are unable to see, he enters into the realm of imagination and fills the void with giants, providing a clear example of the connection between the employment of metaphors and the lack of vision in the U-Bahn.

We can find yet another description that foregrounds an otherworldly image of the U-Bahn in the character Doris's description of the U-Bahn in Irmgard Keun's 1932 novel *Das Kunstseidene Mädchen*, "Es gibt eine Untergrundbahn, die ist wie ein beleuchteter Sarg auf Schienen – unter der Erde und muffig, und man wird gequetscht. Damit fahre ich. Es ist sehr interessant und geht schnell" (Keun 2002:67). In a similar vein to Hade's Cerberus in Steglitz, the analogy to a coffin draws attention to the underground as an otherworldly realm of the dead. The tendency to position the space of the U-Bahn within a discourse of mythology and death reveals an attempt to differentiate and come up with new unique ways of narrating underground travel. Previous scholars have argued that urban mythology functions as "Bindemittel einer heillos zersplitterten Gegenwart" (Fuchs 1995:13), which is applicable also when considering the nature of the Berlin U-Bahn. The mythological allusions aid in establishing a totality within a fragmented space by filling out the spaces that are otherwise shrouded in darkness in the underground tunnels. When traveling through the dark tunnels, a piece of our world of experience (Erfahrungswelt) is broken apart by the loss of vision.³⁴ Anything could potentially be out there, and we would be unable to perceive it. The reference to the otherworldly can thus be seen as an attempt to explicate the hidden space of the U-Bahn, whilst simultaneously fulfilling the function to "other" it from the surface world.³⁵

³⁴ The phenomenon of "tunnel vision" will be further elaborated upon in section 3.

³⁵ As a point of comparison, mythological creatures and characters have been used in the past, notably Oedipus and Elektra in Freud's psychoanalysis, to make a point clear.³⁵ Also in the context of the New York subway, when

Previous scholarship has looked into a similar phenomenon in the case of the New York subway. Brooks argues that the city's constant growth activates human imagination that "rises to the challenge by seeking coherent images of its surroundings" (Brooks 1997:2). The answer to the challenge, also in the case of Berlin, translates into metaphorical and analogous descriptions that aid both writer and reader in their attempts to understand the position of the space within the city. Just as novels depict truth within the hypothesis of "as if", it is equally important to stay aware of, and further investigate the "metaphoricity of language" (Schwarz 1999:56) that can provide further understanding of the reciprocity between the city, its inhabitants and the transportation networks within. Furthermore, the rise of impossible narratives revolving around the city and urban myths can be considered an answer to the "Deutungsbedarf in der neuen Unübersichtlichkeit der Lebensverhältnisse [und dem] Orientierungsbedürfnis gerade des Stadtmenschen" (Fuchs 1995:16). The otherworldly allusions and the longing for isolation or solitude in narratives of the U-Bahn lend themselves to a similar argument in my readings. In the absence of other methods of narrating the space, the portrayal of the U-Bahn and its tunnels in literature, poetry and art as an otherworldly realm, depicts an attempt to understand this new subterranean layer's effect on, and position within, the city.

These mythological symbols and motifs from early narratives might at first glance seem to clash with the more modern, medical discourse-oriented approach to conceptualizing the city as a body. The result of this clash, albeit troublesome for writers such as Benjamin, is nonetheless productive and provides a common point of reference for underground spaces all over the world by establishing new analogous spatial frameworks of the city's interior. The "veins" that run

underground travel was first introduced in the 1860s, New Yorkers instantly drew references to the subterranean journeys of Odysseus and Aeneas (Brooks 1997:3).

through the city, hidden from sight, play an essential role, not only for reasons of infrastructure, but also in imagining the city as a whole:

U-Bahnen sind nicht wegzudenkende Adern der Metropolen, sind uns seit ihrer Erfindung als positive Symbole der Fortschrittlichkeit und Moderne präsentiert worden und geben uns im täglichen Chaos des Straßenverkehrs eine beruhigende Vorstellung von geordneten europäischen Großstädten, die alle etwas ähnlich und deshalb vertraut sind. (Schmucki 2012:549)

As the above quote informs us, the presence of an underground transportation network conjures a sense of stability in our conception of otherwise chaotic urban spaces. Indeed, it even establishes a point of comparison at a global level. Based on the textual representations of the Berlin U-Bahn, however, it appears that the space is volatile as a result of the limitation of clear vision. By further investigating literary representations of the U-Bahn that foreground the rather unstable aspects of underground travel, the historical master narrative of the subway as an embodiment of urban stability can be challenged and developed upon. As we saw in the case of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the sense of stability and order in the collective mind of a city does not necessitate that the individual subject feels the same. What appears to have taken precedent in historical records of the U-Bahn is its indispensable functional role at a macro level that improves the mobility within the city. However, similar to Franz on the tram in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, the focal point of the perceptual experience of travelling with the U-Bahn radiates from the individual within the car. Once you change from the street-level perspective and board the actual subway car, the loss of vision that is incurred by traveling through the tunnels takes on new representative forms.

III. Riding the U-Bahn

Looking at commentary and images on urban traveling practices, one can identify a shift from an attempt to visually explicate the underground space by filling the dark blanks with mysticism to a focused gaze on what is directly ahead of the traveler. Inside the space of the car, the main focus is drawn to the experience of the individual user. As we have discovered in previous chapters, any disruption or disturbance in relation to the flow of transported humans stands out and draws attention toward the individual – the stranger in the crowd. In Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, Franz Biberkopf's very existence is rejected by the city until he abandons the ground-level perspective and anchors his bodily existence to a stable geographical location. And in Ruttmann's *Sinfonie*, the disturbance of the coordinated mass movement is embodied by the suicide scene. The ambition to maintain a steady flow, or pace, in the city's movements is taken to an extreme condition in the commentaries of "Der rasende Reporter," Egon Kisch, who wrote journalistic reportages of life in Berlin in the 1920s. He problematizes the apathy of modern city life and the new obsession with efficiency and acceleration. As a consequence of a new accelerated pace of life, according to Kisch, the modern traveler has time for neither accidents nor aligning between different modes of transportation:

Das Berliner Tempo verträgt keine Rücksichtnahme auf die Möglichkeit eines Unfalls. Man will sich in den Zug setzen, die Zeitung oder die Akten durchstudieren und, ist man damit fertig, an Ort und Stelle sein – Umsteigen, das ist nichts für Berlin. (Kisch 2013:45)³⁶

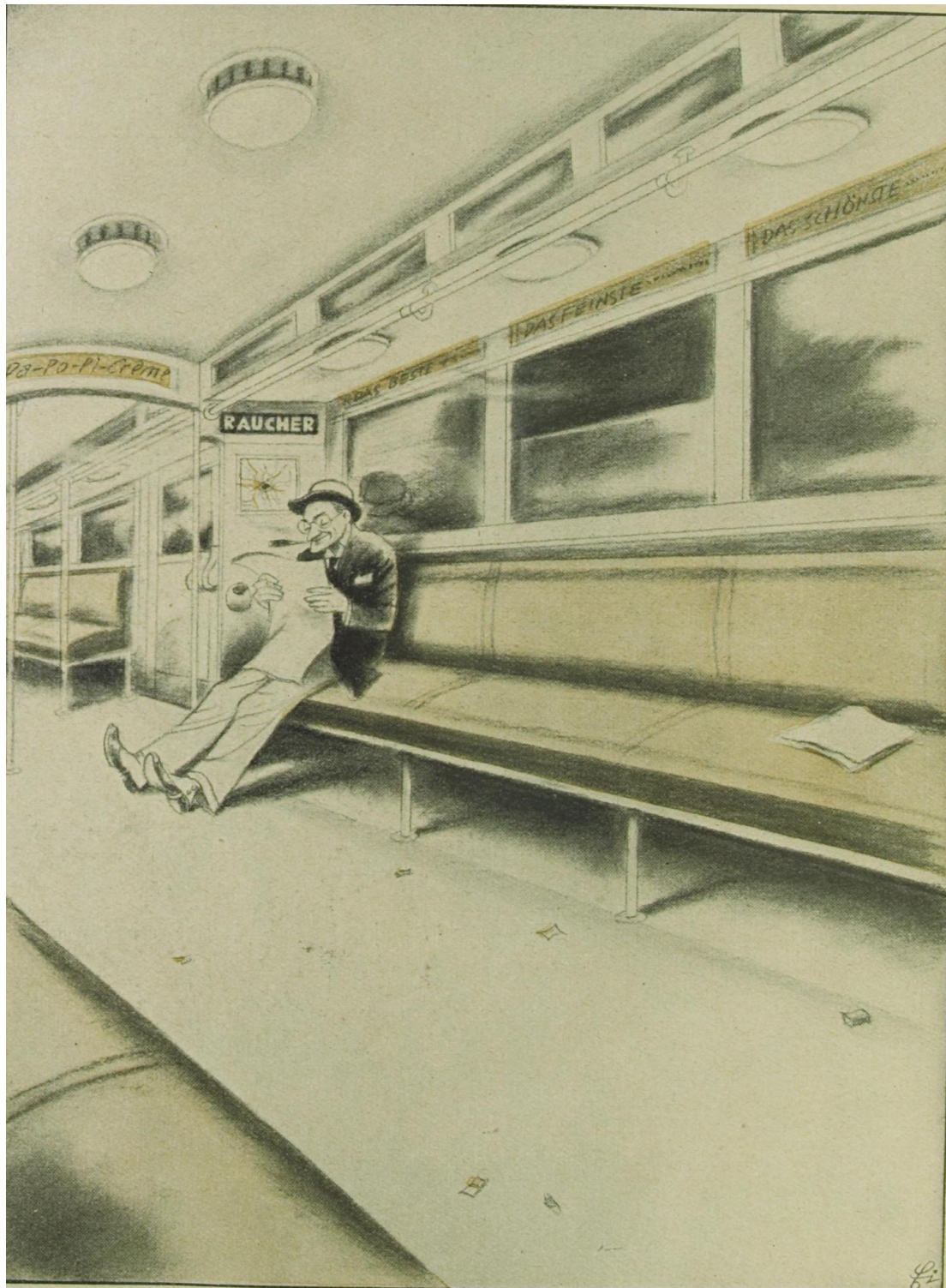
³⁶ The mentioning of "Akten" also hints toward the U-Bahn as a working space, or even more so, a space en route to work.

Similar to *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Sinfonie*, Kisch suggest that the city's pace is unable to take individual situations or deviations into account. The pace of the city adheres to a higher power that appears to trigger a kind of mass hypnosis. This hypnosis turns the single individuals into a blasé urban mass that simply wants to move efficiently through the city. When public transportation has reached the desired velocity for efficient mobility, only the transitions in-between different modes of transportation can be subject to improvement. According to Kisch, the obsession with efficient travel has made urban dwellers unwilling to switch between different vehicles as they traverse the city: "Berlin hat keine Zeit: keine Vergangenheit und keine Zukunft. Und hat nur eine Gegenwart, die trübe ist, weil niemand umsteigen will." (Kisch 2013:46) Kisch equates the streamlined trajectories and decrease in the number of transportation experiences with a timeless, dim and joyless urban present. This description draws attention toward the inside of transportation vehicles as a static space in which time is perceived differently from the outside. This static, timeless interior offers refuge from the hectic movements of the masses above ground; therefore, I argue, people are willing to go to great lengths for the convenience of staying in one vehicle. This wish to retreat into the individual travel mode, away from the mass movement, can be read as the urban subject's sense of discomfort in the modern city. In Kisch's reading of the situation, the passenger does not care about anything but his or her fast, convenient and timely arrival, but fails to take the positive aspects of streamlined travel into consideration.

In order to shed further light on the image of the subway car's interior as a static space, I will take a further look at how contemporary literary representations of the era depicted the ways in which Berlin urban subjects spent their time while travelling with the U-Bahn. Going along with the idea of the underground as a refuge, the subway traveler spends their time reading. By retreating into a text, or by literally shielding oneself from one's surroundings with a newspaper

or magazine, one can achieve a sense of calm and isolation that would otherwise be impossible in the hectic crowded streets. This sense of security and comfort is amplified by the underground space of the U-Bahn, but is shattered once one has to exit the car and change to a new mode of transportation. An illustration in Uhu-magazine's picture series "Unglaubliche Geschichten" (see fig. 1) provides a clear example of how the act of reading affects the travel experience. The man in the picture is alone in one of the most frequently used commuter traffic vehicles of the city, right after the end of office hours. A piece of a newspaper lying next to the man on the far right, as well as the small slips of paper tickets on the floor indicate the presence of other people in the wagon, but the reading man, focusing on the newspaper before him, is seemingly unwilling to perceive other people in his surroundings.

Next to the man you can spot a map of the city's transportation network and advertisements, as well as a sign that says "Raucher." The space is, in other words, transcribed with textual information that is similar to Döblin's montage. The traveler, however, wishes to read nothing except what is right in front of him. Shades and flashing lights in the window reveal that the vehicle is in motion and stands in stark contrast to the inside that appears static. The man is affected by the strictly forward looking movement of the U-Bahn and literally suffers from tunnel-vision, unable or refusing to perceive anything but what is right before his eyes. The paper from which the passenger reads, acts as a shield that protects him from any other visual input. Furthermore, the caricature does not include the rear ends on the wagon and thus gives the viewer a sense of an



Un glaubliche Geschichten:
Um 6 Uhr nachmittags nach Büroschluß allein in der Untergrundbahn.

Figure 2. Unbelievable story of man sitting alone in the subway. Eichenberg, F. "Un glaubliche Geschichten: Um 6 Uhr nachmittags nach Büroschluß allein in der Untergrundbahn" Uhu: 8.1931/32, H.4, Januar: 72. Internet resource.

endless motion through the tunnels. The U-Bahn as represented in this picture, as far as the observer is made aware, has no teleological or functional purpose, but is bound to forever circulate along the tracks underground. Thus, the isolated individual experience of travel is foregrounded at the expense of the journey's function to transport masses of passengers between points of departure and destination.

However, there is no such thing as being alone in the U-Bahn; that is an "unbelievable," utopian story, a myth, that testifies to the "otherness" and ambivalence of understanding the complexities of the dark underground. One can see this as the limitations of vision in the actual space carrying over into literary representations. Authors attempt to fill the dark space by alluding to the otherworldly, and in our image of the newspaper reader we witness a transfer of the U-Bahn's forward motion through tunnels into human tunnel vision. This problem postulates itself within a larger discourse of the ways in which the city is rendered in textual narration that is different from that of Ruttmann and Döblin. In experiencing the city from the transportation space of the subway, the journey is signified by the lack of vision rather than by visual overstimulation. Franz's problematic experience of using the tram is related to the chaos he perceives visually through the tram's windows and Ruttmann's editing constantly switches between different locations in the city. Such an abundance of visual perception is not possible within the underground U-Bahn tunnel, and consequently the experience of travel must be narrated and depicted accordingly.

Tucholsky connects the unique experience of U-Bahn travel to the act of reading:

Liest der Mensch in der Untergrundbahn? Ja. Was? Bücher. Kann er dort dicke und schwere Bücher lesen? Manche können es. Wie schwere Bücher? So schwer, wie sie sie tragen können. Es geht mitunter sehr philosophisch in den Bahnen zu. Im

Autobus nicht so – der ist mehr für die leichtere Lektüre eingerichtet. (Tucholsky 1975:173)

Tucholsky does not provide a clear answer to what exactly it is that enables people to read more difficult texts in the subway.³⁷ Beyond considering the act of reading actual books, Tucholsky suggests that the U-Bahn offers a more complex space to read and depict when trying to come to terms with the travel experience. The underground offers asylum and refuge from the hectic surface and thus allows for the urban dwellers to concentrate on their own thoughts rather than their surroundings. Moreover, the darkness of the tunnels ensures that no visual stimuli in the window periphery can distract you. Kisch also foregrounds the separation between surface and underground, albeit in a critical tone:

Die Stadt jagt dir über dem Kopf davon, du siehst nichts von ihrer Hast, kein Schaufenster lockt dich, kein Bekannter ruft dich, nichts hält dich auf. Du liest deine Zeitung, und es ist, als wärest du in München in den Schlafwagen eingestiegen und solltest in Venedig aussteigen. (Kisch 2013:43)

Kisch further expands the function of reading in the U-Bahn, but, based on his previous description of Berlin's "trübe Gegenwart," appears to be concerned by the lack of interaction with the surroundings. To aid in his argument on how the U-Bahn makes way for a new perception of time efficiency, he discusses the potential of reading to virtually accelerate the journey. The combination of being below the haste of the city, the absence of display windows or any other distraction allows you to perceive your journey as unimpeded, which here appears to be of far greater importance than the goal of the journey. This once again underscores that reflections on

³⁷ It is difficult to tell whether he is also referring to the S-Bahn in the sentence "Es geht mitunter sehr philosophisch in den Bahnen zu."

the U-Bahn appear to place an emphasis on the actual spaces of travel, both subway car and station, rather than points of departure and destination.

Tucholsky's allusions to the mythological and philosophical qualities of the underground, alongside Kisch's emphasis on a modern desire for acceleration, demonstrate the transition to a highly functional and rational mode of transportation below ground as an uncanny experience and heavily shaped discussions of urban life in the early 1900s. The shift away from the overstimuli of the city to the separated "other" urban experience below ground gave rise to new ways of viewing and perceiving the totality of the urban landscape. Traveling in the U-Bahn car, the experience of the journey and the perception of your surroundings take on the shape of a tunnel. The underground thus offers refuge from the prismatic view on the surface and facilitates a space in which the urban subject is able to channel their attention directly toward what is in front of them. This reciprocity between the actual shape of the space and the practices within, consequently informs and shapes the creation of U-Bahn narratives of the time as well as the ways in which these narratives conveyed information about the U-Bahn to their readers.

IV. A New View of the City

In 1930, a journalist comparing the transit systems of the world concluded that New York's subways were more an expression of itself than any in Europe: "[in no European city] would the subway be chosen as the symbol of urban life" (Ybarra 1930). Based on my findings, I would like to contest this claim or at least underscore the importance of the U-Bahn for the urban image of Berlin. During a special exhibition in "Deutsches Technik-Museum Berlin" from 2002, the construction of the first U-Bahn line was named as "Großstadt-Durchbruch;" a breakthrough that continues to heavily sway our conception and image of the urban (Cf. Böndel 2006). The labyrinth of urban underworlds that exist below the streets of Berlin compress the urban space, shorten the

distance between home and work and develop a mental map of the city that goes beyond that of the immediately visible. Deep below the ground, the rail wagons of the Berlin U-Bahn, alongside the “reading” passengers within, come to change the ways in which people mentally map, perceive and traverse the city by piercing it’s way through the human imagination both below and above ground.

One important common similarity for descriptions of the U-Bahn is the employment of otherworldly allusions to explicate the spatial and temporal aspects of U-Bahn travel. In commenting on the effects of loss of vision on human perception of time, Müller draws a comparison to the force of nature: “In der Bahn glaubt man eine Naturgewalt zu erblicken, die geschossartig die verschiedenen Ebenen überwindet, unsichtbar wird und wieder auftaucht und dabei den Rhythmus der Stadt beschleunigt” (Müller 2006:147). The lack of visual perception between points of departure and destination, combined with the high speed of the vehicle, drastically changed the way people perceived and conceptualized their surroundings. The journey might, I argue, be more closely aligned with teleportation than travel by car. A journey by U-Bahn practically renders it impossible to perceive the locations traversed which consequently deprives the traveler of any chance to comment on anything outside the static interior. In Müller’s words, the abrupt transitioning between different tiers (“Ebene”) in the city is essentially a power that exceeds that of any human. In turn, the very same power flows through all of the city and simultaneously embodies the rhythm of Berlin above and below ground. The true powers that mandate movement in the city, similarly to how the space of the U-Bahn is described, have been described by referring to the otherworldly in my sources. Indeed, the impact that the U-Bahn had on human imagination of the time positioned the underground space and temporality within an

otherworldly, mythical discourse in establishing links between the vehicle and otherworldly powers and occurrences.

The inauguration of the underground network also highlights the crossing between the literal, albeit metaphorical, underground city and the surface world. Learning how to properly navigate between the two can thus be seen as a necessary lesson for the city dweller. During his two visits to Paris between 1903-1920, Kafka encounters a subway network for the first time. In one of his diary entries from the time, he comments on the transition between the surface and underground and how it comes to shape the perception and experience of city and human subject alike: "die Fremden erkennt man daran, dass sie oben schon auf dem letzten Absatz der Metrotreppe sich nicht mehr auskennen, sie verlieren sich nicht, wie die Pariser, aus der Metro übergangslos in das Strassenleben" (Kafka 1994:73). Kafka describes the crossing of the space between the city's underground and streets almost like a test. In order to be one with the city, one needs not only to be inside of it, as Tucholsky suggests, but furthermore to be able to properly "lose" oneself in the streets. This emphasizes the importance of being able to navigate and operate the networks both above and below ground – and most importantly, to blend in while doing so in order not to be perceived as the individual "stranger" in the city. The true image of movement in the urban necessitates a seamless flow between different modes of mobility and transportation, as well as in-between the spatial layers of above and below.

Hidden from view, deep below the bustling crowds and streets of the Berlin streets, the U-Bahn paradoxically highlights urban phenomena through darkness and a travel experience that is characterized by imperceptibility. Yet, the Berlin U-Bahn turns the subterranean realm of the dead into a network for the living. Textual representations of the early phases of the U-Bahn's history have proven to be useful in providing commentary on how this network informed people's view

of early 20th century Berlin. Owing to the reliance on metaphors and imagination to explicate the dark space, the conceptual, or dimensional separation of the surface and underground layers of the city makes its way into texts and images of the city. The focus on metaphors even managed to make their way into the subtitle of this chapter: “Tunnel Vision in the Berlin U-Bahn,” and thus provides yet another example of the imagination’s usefulness in dealing with the topic of reading textual spaces. In relation to the larger topic of transportation in textual narratives, however, I stress the importance of the spatial relocation into the underground in the production of these metaphorical narratives. The experience of the U-Bahn is first and foremost informed and shaped by the qualities of the underground space rather than by the mode of transportation. On a larger scale, this shows us that a further understanding of the effects of spatial relocation and expansion to new vertical layers of the city can be of equal importance in understanding Berlin in an era of migration and urbanization as the movements between the city center and periphery. As we zoom out and try to understand urban phenomena, one ought to make sure to avoid tunnel-visioning the predominantly visible, and consider what might be hidden in the dimly lit tunnels beneath.

Conclusion: Vertical Layers and Seamless Flows of Berlin

To journey through the city of Berlin by means of public or private transportation, be it above or below ground, is a distinctive experience of the 20th century urban landscape. The textual representation of the city that I have incorporated in this thesis portray Berlin as a center of traffic on the inside and outside; both as a concrete part of the city's infrastructure as well as a junction for long-distance transportation networks that connects to other towns and cities. The continuous expansion of these networks in conjunction with the public transportation spaces that run through the city's streets, rails, and underground tunnels transform into a mobile topography that organizes the city through connections and movements between various locations. This organizational and formative aspect of transportation correspondingly makes its way into narratives of the city. Viewing transportation as such, the network according to which it operates can be read as a text, or a manual on urban life. The failure to properly read this manual will result in a sense of disorientation and estrangement in the city. In order to overcome these feelings and be properly initiated in modern urbanity, one must be capable of assembling the city puzzle. The key to solve this puzzle lies in the the vector dimensions of transportation and mobility. These dimensions connect the puzzle pieces through networks while simultaneously setting the perimeters between rural and urban, drawing the border lines between different quarters of the city.

My study set out to investigate the role of representations of transportation and its interplay with the city and its inhabitants. *Berlin Alexanderplatz*; *Berlin, die Sinfonie der Großstadt*; and the selected U-Bahn narratives have successfully explicated various aspects of the topic. Döblin's usage of the public transportation network, which serves as a narrative device in the form of montage and as a plot device to gauge Franz's mental constitution, showcases the intimate interdependence between city and text. Döblin's text seeks to describe and define Franz's

continuously failing existence, which necessitates the experience of transportation to depict his feelings of disorientation and lack of compliance with his surroundings. In Ruttmann's text, the city itself as well as its inhabitants are equally dependent on transportation to connect the nodes of home and work, thus intertwining transportation with the city economy. Moreover, through the comparison between the circular, repetitive production and the daily commute, transportation transforms the city into a conveyor belt of produced goods and human workers. In both these cases, the function of movement and transportation to connect locations in the city to one another is brought to the foreground. This opens up for framework through which one may analyze the urban subject's connection and attitude to varying urban spaces. In narratives of the U-Bahn, however, the metaphoricity and uncanniness that arises from the experience of underground travel takes precedence over any functional qualities of transportation.

The experience of underground travel challenges human imagination in a different fashion from the experience of transportation on the city surface. The intrusion into the depths of the city triggers mythological references in an attempt to make sense of the subterranean space. Thus, the metaphoricity and mythological allusions testify to the incommensurability of human imagination to realistically depict what it means to travel in darkness below the inhabited surface. Consequently, the narrative act of recapitulating events taking place in the underground appear to be fictive rather than factual in nature. Any narrative has the ability to simultaneously exclude and obscure as well as define and highlight elements of texts. The uncanniness of the narratives arises from the spatial relocation of travel to the new territory of the underground more so than from the actual mode of transport.

Although the main focus on this study has been on spatial aspects of transportation, an analysis of space must also take temporal aspects into consideration. Present in practically all

theoretical debates on time in modernity, the product of the interplay between the city in an age of industrial production and time is the acceleration of life. It would be an exaggeration to claim that transportation has had a greater significance on the phenomenon of acceleration than any other modern hallmark of efficiency, such as modern means of production, lean organizational structures, the spread of news and propagation of commercial ads around the city etc. (Cf. Borscheid 2004). Nonetheless, the relationship between the compression and shrinkage of space through efficient transportation should be brought into discussion with temporal aspects of travel. Spaces of transportation may even serve as a clear example to showcase the inseparability of time and space in spatial theory debates.

Furthermore, the spaces produced in texts through the narrative employment of varying modes of transportation create and lay bare dynamic relations between mobile and immobile areas. The transportation network connects parts of the city body to one another, while simultaneously connecting human bodies to different spatial contexts. The shift from leisurely traversing the city by foot to accelerated, time efficient travelling by modern means of transportation qualitatively changes the experience of travelling while quantitatively increasing the number of spaces that can be visited in a limited amount of time. In comparing *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and *Berlin, die Sinfonie der Großstadt* in regards to the quantity of spaces that are opened up by intercity transportation, an important discordance emerges: *Berlin Alexanderplatz* emphasizes the sheer number of stations along any given line on the transportation grid, whereas *Sinfonie* zooms in on the spatial connection between the surrounding rural areas and the city. And once we are within the boundaries of the city, the two central categories of discussion include the working place and spaces of private consumption and commodity culture, i.e. where the city's inhabitants spend their time off work. Representations of the U-Bahn function similarly in their analogies of inside and outside, above

and below ground. Consequently, both the city and the people within it derive part of their identity from predefined patterns of movement that spring from the public transportation network. These predefined patterns likewise create collective stories and make the urban space equally experientiable for all urban subjects.

In order to even attempt a depiction of city life in an urban age, the notion of mobility is essential. The rise of modern means of transportation created new spaces of movement in the city that were necessary in order to establish a totality within the fragmented city. The fragmentation of the city is not only an effect of the bombardment of stimuli but equally a geographical fragmentation, or division, of the urban landscape that is held together by rails and roads. The texts' employment of transportation networks can thus be viewed as an attempt to make sense, or even remedy, the divided and scattered parts of the city body. This geographical linking of locations also constructs the spatial frames of the city that mandate where the inhabitants of the city are able to go. Images of transportation vehicles and networks in literary and cinematic representations of the city function in a similar way, laying bare the spatial frames of the narrative and drawing our attention toward the plurality of locations in the city. Here, the impact of transportation on the institutional character and spatial imagination of the city come to the forefront. As previously mentioned, Döblin creates a city that extends far beyond the focalized subject's immediate surroundings, be it Franz or any other character of the diegesis, whereas Ruttmann narrows down the diversity of locations and groups them together based on their function. Both of these ideas differ from the U-Bahn texts insofar that representations of the U-Bahn foreground the spatial location of, or relocation to the underground.

Despite these qualitative differences between function and plurality of urban spaces, transportation synchronizes and coordinates the city through predetermined trajectories.

Transportation is an everyday practice that makes its way into all types of media, ranging from novels and poetry to photography and cinema. It is thus formative for the everyday practices of fictive and real urban subjects alike. The importance of mobility and transportation in the aforementioned representations of the city demonstrates that movements of traffic and human masses embody flows between different locations of the city. This flow of movement lays siege to all human senses, visual and auditory and anyone unable to move along the seamless watery flow of human masses stands out as the stranger in the crowd. As textual preoccupation with spaces of public transportation shows, spaces can only be sufficiently and adequately comprehensible, tangible and perceptible when we understand the complexity of the dynamics that configure the movements that constitute and create meaning within these spaces. The complex narration of the connections between different spaces in the city and the movements in-between points toward the interlacement of literature, cinema, and dynamic mobility. In order to reveal this interplay, the regulations of transportation networks create and cement relatable movement patterns which play essential roles in literary and cultural representations and processes. Likewise, textual and cinematic expressions and representations of urban mobility and transportation remind us of the multiplicity and diversity of urban subjects in motion and their significance in beating life into the city of Berlin.

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