

False Structure in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*

Aaron Winslow

In *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, published in 1929, Alfred Döblin renders a frenzied vision of Berlin on the cusp of modernity. This kaleidoscopic representation of the modern city parallels the city as described by the German sociologist Georg Simmel in his 1903 essay on modernity “The Metropolis and Mental Life.” Using the complex technique of montage Döblin portrays a vision of modern isolation and objectification: characteristics which Simmel found to be present in the psychological make-up of the modern city-dweller a quarter-century before. However, Döblin’s simultaneous use of a Biblical structuring element in his novel, with its portrayal of sacrifice and false order, ironically undercuts Simmel’s conclusion that, in the modern urban sphere, “our task is not to complain or to condone but only to understand.”¹

The most striking narrative element in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is Döblin’s montage effect. Immediately reminiscent of the cinema, Döblin appears to borrow heavily from such films as Walter Ruttmann’s 1927 documentary, *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, in which montage played an important part.² It feels entirely appropriate that *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, a novel about the most modern of cities, should stand in such close proximity to film, the most modern of art forms. The cinematic approach that Döblin takes is essential to an accurate portrayal of Berlin.³ The montage elements are generally attached to characters found in the streets. It is here that “people work, shop, eat, and, most significantly, where they are born, sleep, have sex, love, and hate.” In the streets, the life of the city is created and performed.⁴ Without depicting the streets, any story of Berlin would remain incomplete.

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Berlin Alexanderplatz is the story of Berlin, the story of the city, as much as it is of Franz Biberkopf.⁵ Save for the concern of his editor, Samuel Fischer, Döblin would have called the novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, minus the subtitle *The Story of Franz Biberkopf*. Indeed, David B. Dollenmayer argues that the original title implies “that place, the exclusively urban space of this novel, is just as important as character, the traditionally central concern of the bourgeois novel.”⁶ The suggestion of this phrase closely parallels the sentiments of Simmel in “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” when he discerns that the modern city exhibits “its essential independence even of the most significant individual personalities” (Simmel, 335). By using the effect of montage, Döblin demonstrates the particular character of the city, and with it the character and traits of the masses who live in the city.⁷

The modern metropolis of Simmel is characterized by a never ending barrage of stimuli, due to the incredible volume of people and things amassed in a small area. Simmel theorizes that the human mind develops a “protective organ.” This organ manifests itself as a “mental predominance,” an intellectualizing of the mind as opposed to the traditional emotional state. It is a mindset least akin to the natural human personality and leads, inherently, to the emotional isolation of urban dwellers (Simmel, 326). One of the main causes of this is the “intensification of emotional life due to the swift and continuous shift of external and internal stimuli” (Simmel, 325). The city appears to speed up life because it is constantly changing.

There is constant destruction and creation in Berlin; the city is never the same one moment that it is the next, as the city is in search of “all the energy he [Berlin] can obtain in order to demolish and build.”⁸ Book II of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* opens immediately with an image of physical change, one of many that occur throughout the novel:

The scheme for the permanent restriction of the building lot situate in the Communal District of Berlin Center due to the addition of an ornamental rosette to the street wall of No. 10 An der Spandauer Brücke is hereby published, together with a sketch plan, for public inspection.⁹

And in contrast to this promise of creation, there are portrayals of destruction: “On the Alexanderplatz they are tearing up the road-bed for the subway. People walk on planks” (Döblin, 154). The essential characteristic of Berlin becomes its transience, its refusal to keep the same physical face from day to day.¹⁰ Klaus Scherpe claims that a modern city “exists only in rebuilding; transience is its form of existence.” Any appropriate representation of the city must, therefore, act as a record of this continual transformation.¹¹

Döblin further reinforces this constant movement with his depiction of the streetcars, which symbolized the industrialization and modernizing of Berlin.¹² The Alexanderplatz itself is a major intersection of streetcars above ground and trains below, and in this square there is perpetual movement.¹³ Dollenmayer equates the rhythm of the text with that of the streetcars which are continuously on the move.¹⁴ The first image in the novel is of Franz Biberkopf outside the gates of Tegel Prison, watching “one street-car after another go by” before finally boarding (Döblin, *Berlin*, 4). In Chapter 1 of Book II, Döblin reels off in quick succession the line of Car No. 68: “Car No. 68 runs across Rosenthaler Platz, Wittenau, Nordbahnhof, Heilanstalt, Weddingplatz, Stettiner Station, Rosenthaler Platz, Alexanderplatz, Straussberger Platz, Frankfurter Allee Station, Lichtenberg, Herzberge Insane Asylum.” (Döblin, *Berlin*, 53) Döblin does not pause to analyze this information, there is no editorializing. There is only a nonstop presentation of facts and images in which the text imitates the very movement of Berlin.

Döblin’s use of the Berlin public transportation system fully displays the “rapid telescoping of changing images” that Simmel sees as a major cause of urban isolation (Simmel, “Metropolis,” 325). The streetcars, symbolic of the fast pace of the city, certainly contribute to the urban population’s shattered nerves “with every crossing of the street” (Simmel, “Metropolis,” 325). The most illustrative example of this is found in the passage immediately following the description of the streetcar system.¹⁵ A man, carrying packages, jumps from car 41 and crosses the street while “an empty taxi glides just past him.” The police officers who bear witness to the event call the man “damned lucky” (Döblin, 54). The fast-paced and modern transportation system, one of the items in the barrage of rapidly moving objects, has nearly

cost a man his life. The emotional response of the men is distant and casual. This incident is a presentation of both the cause of urbanite emotional isolation, as exhibited in the fast pace of the streetcars, and its external manifestation, the emotional nonchalance of the urbanites.¹⁶

This short anecdote passes almost without notice by the reader despite its significance. In its demonstration of the emotional isolation of city dwellers it also reveals the way in which people have become commodities. The police officer and the streetcar inspector express little concern for the man, and can only distinguish him because of the “two yellow packages” he carries (Döblin, 54).¹⁷ They brush off a man’s near-death with the same carelessness as dropping a penny. The nameless man essentially loses all individual value to the masses of people. He is one of many, not an individual, and as such there is no need for any kind of real distinction or recognition.

As well as being the focus of modernity, Simmel locates the city as the “seat of money economy,” and posits that the intellectualized, distant attitude of people stands in close relationship to this capitalist economy. Both are highly objective, with the rational man factoring out qualities of individuality from relationships because they are not assessable by reason alone. Similarly, distinguishing facets of individuals are non-factors in the transfer of money because the money itself is the implicit common denominator (Simmel, 326). Naturally, these two factors contribute to a distinct lack of the personal in all business transactions, and this transfers very readily into all normal, day-to-day interactions (Simmel, “Metropolis,” 327). All “qualitative distinctions” are reduced to quantitative distinctions when the worth of men can be expressed in monetary units. People “all float with the same specific gravity in the constantly moving stream of money” (Simmel, 330).

In many instances, Döblin’s technique of montage takes on the form of a capitalist montage. Advertisements hold a significant place within his representation of the city. In Book II, Döblin presents a collage of advertisements, reeling them off in much the same way that he lists the stops of the streetcar line:¹⁸

To face her hour of travail well prepared is the desire
and duty of every woman...Therefore the selection of

the right drink for the mother-to-be is of especial importance. Genuine Engelhardt Stout and Ale possess, above all other drinks, the qualities of palatability, nutritious ness, digestibility, tonic vigor — Provide for your child and your family by contracting a life insurance with a Swiss life insurance company, Life Annuities Office, Zurich — Your heart is light! Your heart is light with joy, if you possess a home equipped with the famous Hoeffner furniture. (Döblin, *Berlin*, 155)

These advertisements appeal to the most basic human desires of family, health, and happiness in order to sell a product. The end goal of a specific emotional desire is achieved by buying that specific product. Thus, emotions are appropriated by products. Desires become objects within the advertisements, as easy and necessary to manipulate as the paper and ink with which the ads are printed.

This montage technique dominates the book, and despite its seemingly chaotic approach to representing the multitude of people in Berlin, Döblin balances the work by providing it a tight structure. Always a great admirer of James Joyce, when *Ulysses* was translated into German in 1927 Döblin had no reservations about giving it his wholehearted praise.¹⁹ On one occasion he went so far as to tell the playwright Bertolt Brecht that *Ulysses* “should be used as a reference book”²⁰ for modern writers.²¹ In addition to the basic techniques of montage and stream of consciousness which Joyce employed, it seems that Döblin also embraced Joyce’s use of structure, what T. S. Eliot calls the “mythical method.”²² But rather than basing his masterwork on classical Greek myth as Joyce does, Döblin structures *Berlin Alexanderplatz* around Judeo-Christian stories, especially those of the Old Testament.

Literary critic Kathleen Komar has argued that the novel is structured around three major stories of “trial” from the Bible, although several other allusions are frequently used.²³ Adam and Eve, Job, and Isaac and Abraham: these three legends “form an incremental repetition of the theme of sacrifice and victims.” Further, Komar shows how the allusions form a “triad of temptations and trials dividing the book”

into segments that follow Franz Biberkopf's three main crises: his betrayal by his friend Luders, the loss of his arm, and the death of his girlfriend, Mieke.²⁴

The references to Adam and Eve are the first of the three main Biblical structuring stories. The story of Adam and Eve promotes the idea of a fall that is "caused partly by pride and partly by a naïve inability to recognize evil." This theme parallels Franz's first major setback to a "straight" life, when he finds that he has been betrayed by Luders.²⁵ Because of his pride and naiveté Franz "suffers his first blow" (Döblin, 131).

The story of the tribulations of Job is the second major Biblical allusion which Döblin employs. After recovering from Luders' betrayal, Franz "reenters Berlin life with his overconfidence in his own physical strength still undaunted." Komar proves that this directly follows the theme of the Biblical Job, whose "difficulty lies not in his inability to recognize evil, but rather in his desire to defeat it by his own strength." Franz recognizes the evil that Reinhold and Pums' gang represent, but overestimates his strength, believing that he has the ability to confront them by himself. However, much as Job loses all of his worldly goods, "Franz loses the symbol of his brute physical strength, his arm."²⁶

Like the two earlier stories, Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac is a tale of pride, innocence, and self-sacrifice. For his sacrifice to mean anything, it is necessary for Isaac to recognize his sins and to accept the need of his own sacrifice. Franz, too, becomes a "self-sacrificer," and his return to Tegel after Mieke's death shows that he has a "subconscious recognition of the need to accept personal responsibility for guilt, the need to become a willing victim."²⁷

Döblin's structuring of the novel, his use of classical models to give an order and structure to the modern world, closely follows the ideas of Joyce, Eliot, and other literary modernists. It also continues to follow the ideas of Simmel. Despite its apparent randomness, Simmel theorizes that there is nonetheless an inherent order in the modern metropolis, a "precision and a degree of certainty" (Simmel, 328). He believes that this order is not just present, but also necessary, as "the technique of metropolitan life in general is not conceivable without all of its activities and reciprocal relationships being organized and coordinated in the most punctual way into a firmly fixed framework

of time which transcends all subjective elements” (Simmel, 328).

Döblin parallels the insights of “The Metropolis and Mental Life” in the intricate structure *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, yet at the same time he subversively undermines Simmel’s conclusion.²⁸ Peter I. Barta correctly sees Döblin’s ending as a “mock catharsis,” arguing that there have been no answers to Franz’s problems, as he has been challenged thrice and has failed each challenge. There is no evidence within the text to suggest that he will lead a new, better life. Modern Berlin has no way of giving Franz any sort of resolution to his problems, either physically or spiritually.²⁹

Döblin highlights the dehumanizing effect of the city with his portrayal of sacrifice throughout *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. The most poignant of these moments is when Mieze is killed by Reinhold. Barta points out that Ecclesiastes is alluded to throughout the murder scene:³⁰

Its season, its season, to everything its season! A time to strangle, a time to heal; to break down and to build up, to rend, and to sew, to everything its season. She throws herself down, trying to escape. They wrestle in the hollow. Help, Franz! (Döblin, 488)

Of course, this begs the question “By whose standards can there be a proper time for violent murder?”³¹

The utter pointlessness, of Mieze’s death is further underscored when it is compared to the slaughtered cows from Book IV. Moments before Reinhold attacks Mieze, the narrator conjures the image of a calf being prepared for slaughter:

When a little calf is to be slaughtered, they tie a rope round its neck and lead it to the bench. Then they lift the little calf, put it on the bench, and tie it firmly. They walk to the hollow. He [Reinhold] says: “Lie down.” (Döblin, 487)

This image recalls and parallels the previous descriptions of the slaughterhouse from Book IV:

But what is this man doing with the cute little calf?
 He leads it in alone by a rope; this is the huge hall in
 which the bulls roar; now he takes the little animal to
 a bench. (Döblin, 188)

Immediately afterward Döblin gives a lurid description of the butchering of the calf.³² Döblin exposes the disturbing mixture of brutality and carelessness with which the calf is killed, as the butcher “keeps on cutting calmly and more deeply, his peaceful expression unchanged, he seeks and gropes in the depths with his knife, pushes through between two vertebrae, it is a very young, soft tissue.” After this the man “washes his hands in a pail and goes off” (Döblin, 189). This precise language connotes the objective, aloof attitude that the narrator has towards the scene, supported more so by the simple numerical tally at the beginning of the chapter: “Cattle-Market supply: Hogs 11, 543, Beef 2016, Calves 1920, Mutton 4450” (Döblin, 188). The emphasis is upon numbers, the animals are reduced to a purely quantitative value.³³

By paralleling Mieke’s murder with the slaughter of the animals, Döblin severely undercuts the horror and inhumanity of the event. The slaughter of the cows is seen in an objective, dispassionate light, and their death can hardly be called a “sacrifice” or “murder.” Mieke is no Isaac, despite the parallels within the narrative. Her death is not a Christian sacrifice, one that ultimately leads Franz to become a better person. It is merely the loss of someone who has ceased to be a human being in the traditional sense and is now simply an object.

Nor is Mieke alone in her fate. In many respects the inhabitants of the Alexanderplatz resemble the cattle both in their naiveté³⁴ and in their complete loss of qualitative value, their individuality. As the people in *Berlin Alexanderplatz* have lost their humanity and are “distinguished only by their amounts,” they have been transformed into mere cattle. Like the rest of the people in metropolitan Berlin, Mieke has become objectified, her emotions and her self a mere commodity. Her death is a pointless and brutal faux sacrifice, and her link to the rest of the Berliners suggests that they are sacrificing their humanity daily. One wonders if a sacrifice is worth anything when a human life is meaningless outside of purely numerical, economic terms.

Döblin's use of a structure that presents any sort of sacrifice as beneficial is highly ironic. By portraying the dehumanizing effects of modern city life, Döblin severely undermines Simmel's idea that "the lack of the most exact punctuality in promises of performances would cause the whole to break down into an inextricable chaos" (Simmel, 328). Rather, the city of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* is actually a "place of disorder, danger, suffering, and even death."³⁵ Following Eliot's assessment of the task of the modern writer, Döblin has applied a superficial narrative structure as "a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history."³⁶ The novel's structure is a purely aesthetic one, one that mocks the punctuality and precision that Simmel believes to be intrinsic within the city.

Döblin himself wrote in 1932 that the masses "are the calamity of the day and the genuine obstacle to being really human."³⁷ *Berlin Alexanderplatz* supports this notion by giving an order to the novel, an overarching structure that a student of Simmel would presuppose. However, by illustrating the objectification of urban-dwellers in the modern metropolis, Döblin reveals the basic irony of the urban crisis. In fact, he argues, the sacrifice of living in the city does not stimulate a better life for the greater mass of people. Far from it, there is instead a distinct loss of humanity. Döblin carefully subverts Simmel's objective, dispassionate notion of the city as a smoothly-running machine of which "our task is not to complain or to condone but only to understand" (Simmel, 339). By the end of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* we have witnessed betrayal, destruction, and death, all to the peculiar rhythms of the modern metropolis, all leading to a sacrifice of humanity with no real gains. Mieze is dead, and Franz is in an all-too-familiar situation (jail) with no evidence of fundamental change. The two characters to whom the reader has become emotionally attached are broken. Döblin poignantly demonstrates the results of modern urban life, and the results are horrendous.

Throughout his career Döblin worked to create a literature that would have a sociopolitical impact.³⁸ This concern may have had its roots in Döblin's career as a practicing physician. Several years after completing his medical degree at the University of Freiburg in 1905 he set up both a practice and a home in the Alexanderplatz, a

district that was primarily working-class. His familiarity with this particular society surely gave Döblin a realistic understanding of lower-class Berlin, which he then fully represented in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*. The novel makes a political stand in its representation of the society and city of Berlin,³⁹ much more than the works of other contemporary German writers of “experimental novels.”⁴⁰ Therefore, when Döblin cultivates a negative image of the metropolis it is much more than Simmel’s scientific, psychological diagnosis of the city.⁴¹ It is a passionate, emotional rejection of this diagnosis, an urge for change. It is active social protest, urging the readers of the novel towards a reformation of urban values.

Notes

¹ Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans and ed. Kurt H. Wolff (Free Press, 1950), p. 339.

² Peter I. Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin: Peripatetics in the City Novel* (University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 83. Barta also notes the close association of Ruttmann’s cinematic montage and Döblin’s literary variety, believing that the documentary “proved an influential source for *Berlin Alexanderplatz*.”

³ Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz, “Introduction,” in Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz (eds.), *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (University of California Press, 1995), p. 1. Charney and Schwartz proclaim that all of the essays in the collection “presume that modern culture was ‘cinematic’ before the fact.” From this standpoint, it not only is unsurprising that Döblin borrowed elements from film, but it is also necessary.

⁴ Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin*, p. 85.

⁵ Brian Ladd, *The Ghosts of Berlin* (University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 96. Berlin, capital of the democratic Weimar Republic, was expanding rapidly throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries. With a population of 170,000 in 1800, by the 1850’s it held 500,000. Several decades later, the population had doubled to one million, and by 1900 it had again doubled, with two million people living in the city. In 1920 the population climbed to four million as the suburbs

were annexed into the city proper. With this, Berlin became the third largest city in the world, behind London and New York, and was the prime example of the modern metropolis within Germany.

⁶ David B. Dollenmayer, "An Urban Montage and Its Significance in Döblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*," *The German Quarterly* 53 (1980), p. 317.

⁷ Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin*, p. 80. "The network of montage vastly expands the range of experience that founds the conventional single-, double-, or even triple-decker realist novel."

⁸ Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin*, p. 83.

⁹ Alfred Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz: The Story of Franz Biberkopf*, trans. Eugene Jolas (Frederick Ungar, 1983), p. 52.

¹⁰ Klaus R. Scherpe, "Modern and Postmodern Transformations of the Metropolitan Narrative," trans. Mitch Cohen, *New German Critique* no. 55 (1992), p. 80.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹² Ladd, *Ghosts*, p. 116. Ladd concentrates his description of Berlin's mass transit system to Potsdamer Platz. Potsdamer Platz itself was a transport hub, home to many intercrossing lines of electric streetcars, trains, the subway, and an assortment of buses, cars, and horses, all combining to assure that the area "moved incessantly." Also of interest is the fact that the English translation of *Berlin Alexanderplatz* by Eugene Jolas displays Potsdamer Platz on its cover instead of the Alexanderplatz.

¹³ Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin*, p. 82.

¹⁴ Dollenmayer, "Urban Montage," p. 321.

¹⁵ See Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, p. 53, for the description of the streetcars.

¹⁶ Martin Heidegger, "Creative Landscapes: Why Do We Stay in the Provinces?," in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (eds.), *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (University of California Press, 1994; reprint 1995), p. 427. Heidegger displays similar sentiments of urban isolation in this essay. After a vivid description of the natural world that exists away from the metropolis of Berlin, Heidegger says, "People in the city often wonder whether one gets lonely up in the mountains among the peasants for such long and monotonous periods of time. But it is not loneliness, it is solitude. In large cities one can easily be as lonely as almost nowhere else. But one can never be

in solitude there. There is a major distinction between loneliness and solitude. In the city, the frenetic pace and constant movement isolate people by numbing their nerves. However, in the country a man is alone with his thoughts, no distractions to harm the mind.” This opinion of the city is very much analogous to Simmel’s diagnosis and Döblin’s portrayal.

¹⁷ It is also of worth to note that the streetcar inspector’s job is to collect fares, a further intrusion by the capitalist state. The other figure who witnesses the scene is part of the police, which also figures prominently in the novel. The meeting of these representative characters further suggests the importance of this scene, despite its disproportionate size.

¹⁸ Döblin, *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, p. 53. This parallel further implies a link between modern technology and capitalism in much the same way that Simmel does.

¹⁹ Breon Mitchell, “Joyce and Döblin: At the Crossroads of *Berlin Alexanderplatz*,” *Contemporary Literature* 12 (1971), pp. 173-4.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 185. Breon Mitchell discovers much textual and compositional evidence that support the notion that “Döblin...made use of those elements in it [*Ulysses*] which particularly appealed to his own sense of what a novel should be.”

²² T.S. Eliot, “*Ulysses*, Order, and Myth,” in Seon Givens (ed.), *James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism*, (Vanguard Press, 1948; reprint, 1963), p. 202.

²³ Kathleen Komar, “Technique and Structure in Döblin’s *Berlin Alexanderplatz*,” *The German Quarterly* 54 (1981), p. 321. In this essay Komar explains that Jeremiah, Ecclesiastes, and Revelations play important parts in making criticisms of the events in Franz’s life.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 319.

²⁶ Komar, “Technique and Structure,” p. 320.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 339. “...it is our task not to complain or to condone but only to understand.”

²⁹ Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin*, p. 94.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

³¹ Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin*, p. 95.

³² Susan Hayward, "Editing," in *Key Concepts in Cinema Studies* (London/New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 77-81, 78-79. This interweaving of two scenes, which contributes to Döblin's montage effect, is an example of literary "parallel editing," which Susan Hayward describes as "the paralleling of two related actions that are occurring at different times." Hayward goes on to say that a third scene, that of a resolution of the two scenes in "one space and time," is inferred. However, no such scene follows in *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, and it is up to the reader to create such a resolution. This reveals a further influence that film had upon the novel (the first being Ruttman's *Berlin: The Symphony of a Great City*), that of the "Soviet montage." Pioneered by Sergei Eisenstein, Soviet montage involves the violent juxtaposition of scenes, a collision, that forces the formation of a final scene which exists entirely in the spectator's mind. Interestingly, Döblin's work was quite communist-friendly, and much of his work after 1949 was published exclusively in East Germany.

³³ Mitchell, "Joyce and Döblin," p. 175. In Döblin's review of *Ulysses* he praises the novel's "technical innovations," and "placed special emphasis on the work's 'scientific' objectivity..." This interest in objective prose is expressed most directly in Döblin's treatment of the slaughterhouse.

³⁴ Barta, *Bely, Joyce, and Döblin*, p. 84.

³⁵ Dollenmayer, "Urban Montage," p. 327.

³⁶ Eliot, "Ulysses," p. 201.

³⁷ Alfred Döblin, "May the Individual Not be Stunted by the Masses," in Anton Kaes, Martin Jay and Edward Dimendberg (eds.), *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. (University of California Press, 1994; reprint, 1995), p. 386.

³⁸ Judith Ryan, "From Futurism to 'Döblinism,'" *The German Quarterly* 54 (1981), p. 417.

³⁹ Döblin would make a more overt plea for sociopolitical reform in 1931 with the publication of a group of essays under the title *To Know and to Change! Open Letters to a Young Man*. These essays outlined Döblin's ideas of social change and urged intellectuals to work towards this to become politically active as the National Socialists became more powerful.

⁴⁰ Ryan, "Futurism," p. 424. Ryan contrasts Döblin's sociopolitical attempts and achievements mainly with the Futurists, especially Otto Flake. She places Döblin within the appropriately named "Döblinism," which she defines as a form of Naturalism, textually experimental with a return to more political concerns.

⁴¹ See Ryan's article "From Futurism to 'Döblinism'" for a more in depth discussion of Döblin's own theories about psychology.